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Gender-related barriers to schooling: What do we know about the effects of sexuality and life skills education?

Nicole Haberland Population Council

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Gender-related barriers to schooling: What do we know about the effects of sexuality and life skills education?

Nicole Haberland Population Council

Expert Group Meeting Population, Education and Sustainable Development Population Division, UN DESA 6-7 September 2022



Overview 1. Background

 Systematic Review
 Exploration of Life Skills and CSE



The Girls' Education Landscape

The Good News

- Dramatic increase in girls' enrollment globally
- Gender parity achieved globally in primary and secondary enrollment

The Remaining Challenges

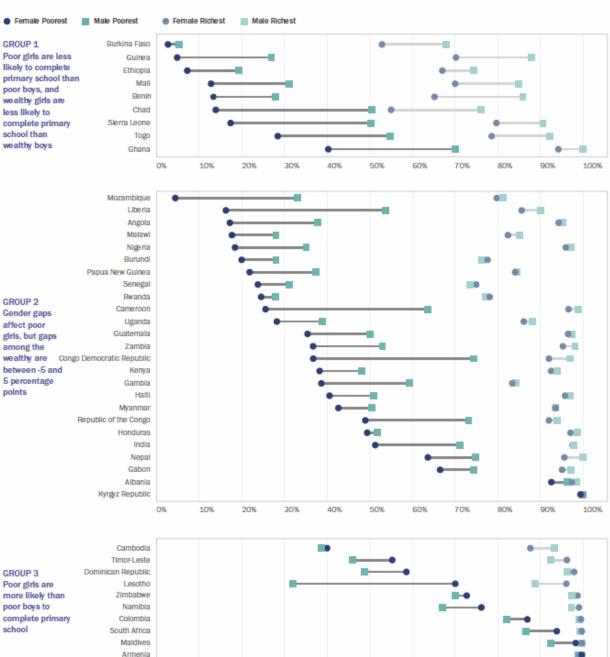
- Gender gaps in enrollment remain
- Progress in attainment has stagnated
- Very low levels of learning
- Conflicts between schooling and adult roles (marriage, parenthood)
- Extended learning disruptions due to epidemics (COVID-19), environmental disasters, conflict, etc.

Gender disparities in education persist, especially when we take an intersectional lens.

The poorest girls have the lowest attainment, worst learning outcomes, and biggest gender gaps.

FIGURE 5 Percent of population aged 20-24 completing primary school, by wealth quintile

This figure shows the gender gap in primary school attainment stratified by the poorest and richest quintiles, as defined by the DHS wealth quintile variable.



0%

10%

20%

30%

40%

50%

60%

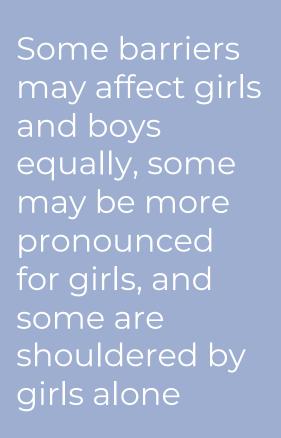
70%

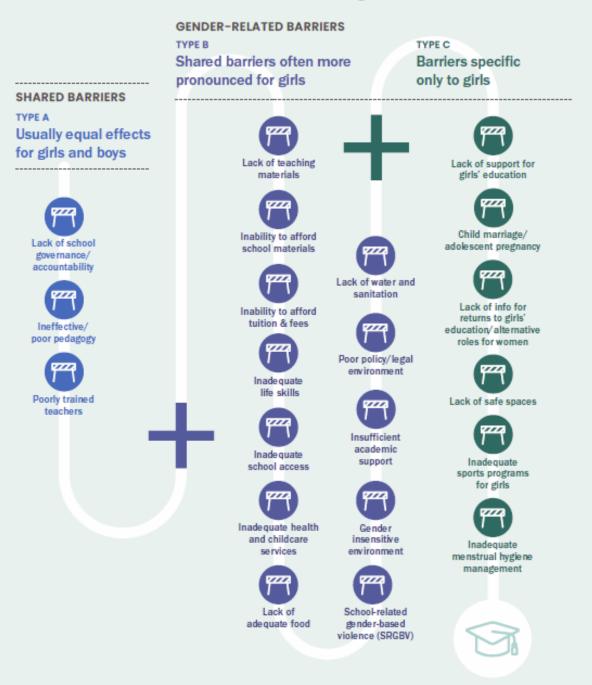
80%

90%

100%

Perceived barriers to education for girls





GENDER-RELATED BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

COMMUNITY



Lack of Safe Spaces & Social Connections



Lack of Support for Girls' Education



Child Marriage & Adolescent Pregnancy



Poor Policy/Legal Environment

Inadequate Sports Programs for Girls



Inadequate Health & Childcare Services

SCHOOL





Insufficient Academic Support

Inadequate Life Skills

Gender-Insensitive School Environment

Lack of Water & Sanitation

Lack of Teaching Materials & Supplies

School-Related Gender-Based Violence

HOUSEHOLD



Lack of Access to School



Inability to Afford Materials

Inability to Afford

Tuition/Fees



Lack of Information

on Returns to Girls' Schooling

Lack of Adequate Food



Inadequate Menstrual Hygiene Management

Systematic Review

DOI: 10.1002/d2.1207

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW



Policies and interventions to remove gender-related barriers to girls' school participation and learning in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review of the evidence

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Funding information Echidna Giving

Abstract

Background: Gender disparities in education continue to undermine girls' opportunities, despite enormous strides in recent years to improve primary enroiment and attainment for girls in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). At the regional, country and subnational levels gender gaps remain, with girls in many settings less likely to complete primary school, less likely to complete secondary, and often less likely to be literate than boys. The academic and policy literatures on the topic of gender-related barriers to girls' education are both extensive. However, there remain gaps in knowledge regarding which interventions are most likely to work in contexts with different combinations of barriers.

Objectives: This systematic review identified and assessed the strength of the evidence of interventions and exposures addressing gender-related barriers to schooling for girls in LMICs.



Search Strategy

- The AEA RCT Registry, Africa Bibliography, African Education Research Database, African Journals Online, DEC USAID, Dissertation Abstracts, EconLit, ELDIS, Evidence Hub, Global Index Medicus, IDEAS-Repec, Intl Clinical Trials Registry, NBER, OpenGrey, Open Knowledge Repository, POPLINE, PsychINFO, PubMed, Research for Development Outputs, ScienceDirect, Sociological Abstracts, Web of Science
- Relevant organizations' websites
- Review of bibliographies
- Inquiries to authors of included studies, relevant researchers and relevant organizations

Inclusion Criteria

- Randomized controlled trials
- Quasi-experimental studies that used quantitative models that attempt to control for endogeneity
- Data from LMICs
- Published, peer-reviewed articles or grey literature such as working papers, reports and dissertations
- Published in or after 2000
- Analyzed the effects of the intervention/exposure on primary outcomes of interest (girls' enrollment/attainment and learning)
- Intervention or exposure that attempted to address a gender-related barrier to schooling

Data collection/analysis

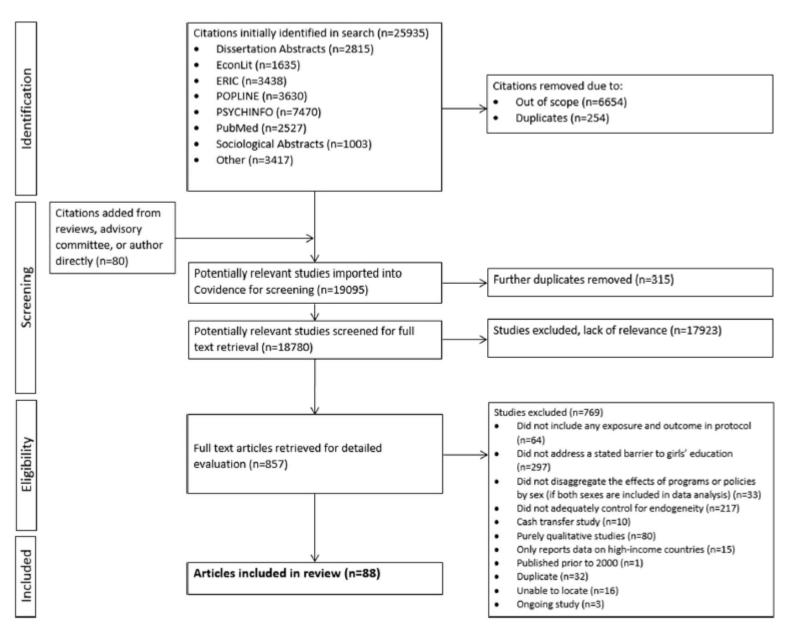
- Pairs of reviewers independently screened for relevance, extracted data, assessed risk of bias
- Risk of bias assessed through:

 RoB 2 tool (experimental studies)
 ROBINS-I tool (quasi-experimental studies)
- Converted effect sizes to partial correlation coefficients given variety of model types
- Used the GRADE (Grading of Recommendation, Assessment, Development and Evaluation) approach to synthesize research as opposed to meta-analysis, due to heterogeneity of study characteristics and reported outcome measures between studies.

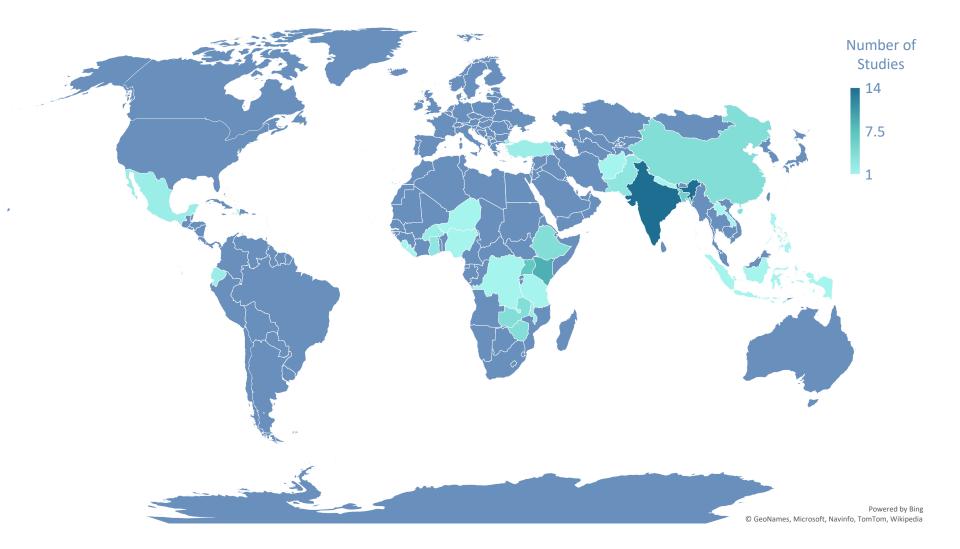
Results



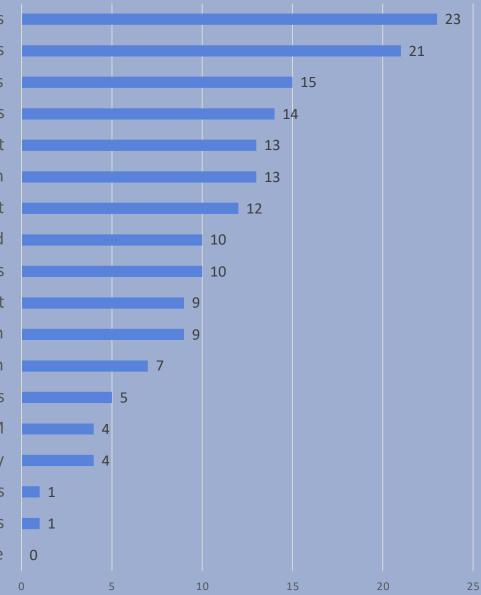
PRISMA Flow Diagram



Studies by Country



Studies by Barrier



Inadequate school access Inability to afford tuition and fees Inadequate life skills Inability to afford school materials Insufficient academic support Lack of information on returns to education Poor policy / legal environment Lack of adequate food Lack of safe spaces and social connections Gender insensitive school environment Lack of support for girls education Lack of water and sanitation Lack of teaching materials and supplies Inadequate MHM Child marriage and adolescent pregnancy Inadequate health and childcare services Inadequate sports programs for girls School related gender based violence

Effective Interventions Exist to Address the Following Barriers:

Inability to afford tuition and fees



Addressing the cost of schooling, e.g., conditional cash transfers, scholarships, elimination of tuition and fees

Lack of adequate food



Providing food in school or as take-home rations

Insufficient academic support



Providing academic support, e.g., tutoring, remedial education, integrating technology into curriculum

Promising Interventions Exist to Address the Following Barriers:

Inability to afford school materials



Addressing the cost of schooling, e.g., provision of uniforms, provision of textbooks

Inadequate school access



Making schools accessible, e.g., school construction, community schools, school transport

Lack of water and sanitation



Providing clean water, constructing/improving toilets at school

More Research is Needed for the Following Barriers Due to Too Few Studies:

Lack of support for girls' education

Child marriage and adolescent pregnancy

School-related gender-based violence

Lack of safe spaces and social connections Lack of teaching materials & supplies

Inadequate sports programs for girls

Inadequate health and childcare services

Inadequate menstrual hygiene management

More Research is Needed for the Following Barriers Due to Heterogenous Effects:

Lack of information on returns to education/ alternative roles

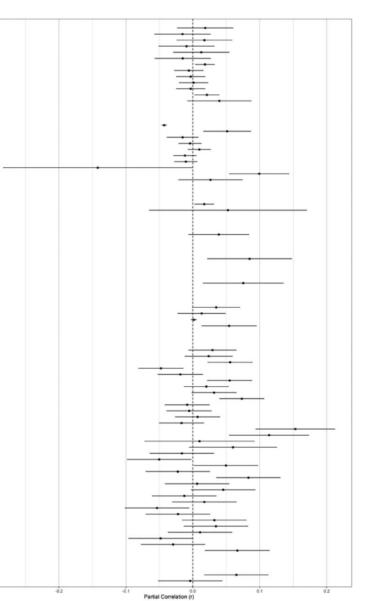
Inadequate life skills

Gender insensitive school environment

Poor policy / legal environment

Forest Plot showing partial correlation coefficients and 90% confidence intervals

Author (Year)				
	Country	Age at Baseline 10-19	Subgroup/Study	Albdu Outcome Category 01) Grade attainment
Austrian et al. (2020)	Zambia	10-19	; Arm No.1	01) Grade attainment
Austrian et al. (2020)	Zambia	10-19	; Arm No.1	01) Grade attainment
Austrian et al. (2020)	Zambia	10-19	; Arm No.2	01) Grade attainment
Austrian et al. (2020)	Zambia	10-19	; Arm No.2	01) Grade attainment
Austrian et al. (2020)	Zambia	10-19	; Arm No.3	01) Grade attainment
Austrian et al. (2020)	Zambia	10-19	; Arm No.3	01) Grade attainment
Buchmann et al. (2016)	Bangladesi	h15-17	; Arm No.1	01) Grade attainment
Duflo, Dupas & Kremer (2014)	Kenya	13.5 (average)	; Arm No.3	01) Grade attainment
Duflo, Dupas & Kremer (2014)	Kenya	13.5 (average)	; Arm No.2	01) Grade attainment
Duflo, Dupas & Kremer (2014)	Kenya	13.5 (average)	: Arm No.3	01) Grade attainment
Duflo, Dupas & Kremer (2014)	Kenva	13.5 (average)	; Arm No.2	01) Grade attainment
Edmonds, Feigenberg & Leight (201618	6th and 7th grade	; Arm No.1	01) Grade attainment
Edmonds, Feigenberg & Leight (Ozler et al. (2020)	Liberia	13-14	; Arm No.1	01) Grade attainment
Ashraf et al. (2018)	Zambia	14 (average)	; Arm No.1	03) Enrollment in primary school
Ashraf et al. (2018)	Zambia	14 (average)	: Arm No.1	03) Enrollment in primary school
Bandiera et al. (2014)	Uganda	14-20	: Arm No.1	03) Enrollment in primary school
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Duflo, Dupas & Kremer (2014)	Kenya	13.5 (average)	; Arm No.3	03) Enrollment in primary school
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Ashrar et al. (2016)	Zamola	14 (average)	Arm No.1	10) Absenteeism
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Edmonds, Feigenberg & Leight (2016	6th and 7th grade	; Arm No.1	10) Absenteeism
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However...

Education outcomes aren't the only reason to address gender-related barriers to schooling.



How do life skills programs do when we look at a broader range of outcomes?

Life skills and sexuality education: What does a wider lens suggest?

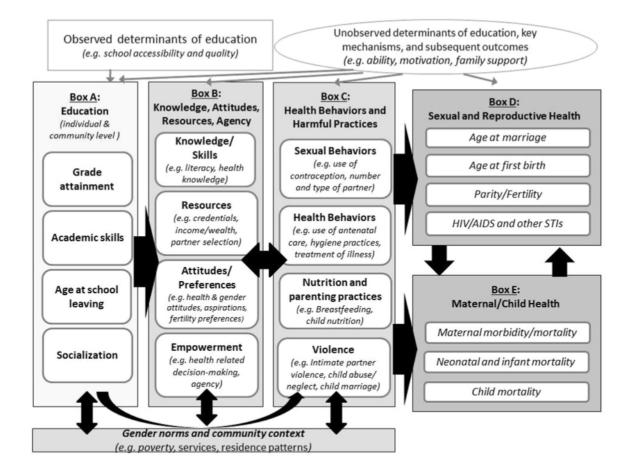
Again, we're confronted with the same challenges:

- Heterogeneity of programs (content, implementation, context)
- Comparison groups vary
- Heterogeneity of outcome measures
- Directness of evidence (multi-component programs)

Life skills and sexuality education: What does a wider lens suggest?

- Mixed but broad potential for:
 - SEL/Transversal/21st Century skills
 - Gender (gender attitudes, child marriage)
 - Sexual and reproductive health/ behavior and outcomes
 - o Violence
 - Economic
 - Education
- Content, complementary elements, and how taught matters quite a bit
- Lack of evidence on pathways (direct and indirect)

Underway: Systematic review of causal mechanisms linking education with fertility, HIV, and child mortality



Zahra et al 2022, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cl2.1250

Some next steps / recommendations

- Research that directly measures the effects of life skills education / sexuality education on a broad range of outcomes across sectors
- Measure (and figure out how to best measure) indicators such as agency, and other SEL and 21st century skills
- Research on longer term outcomes is urgently needed
- Research on implementation such as optimal duration, saturation, grade level, etc. – is another evidence gap

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STUDIES

EVIDENCE TO PRACTICE



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