



Goal: Empower women and eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005

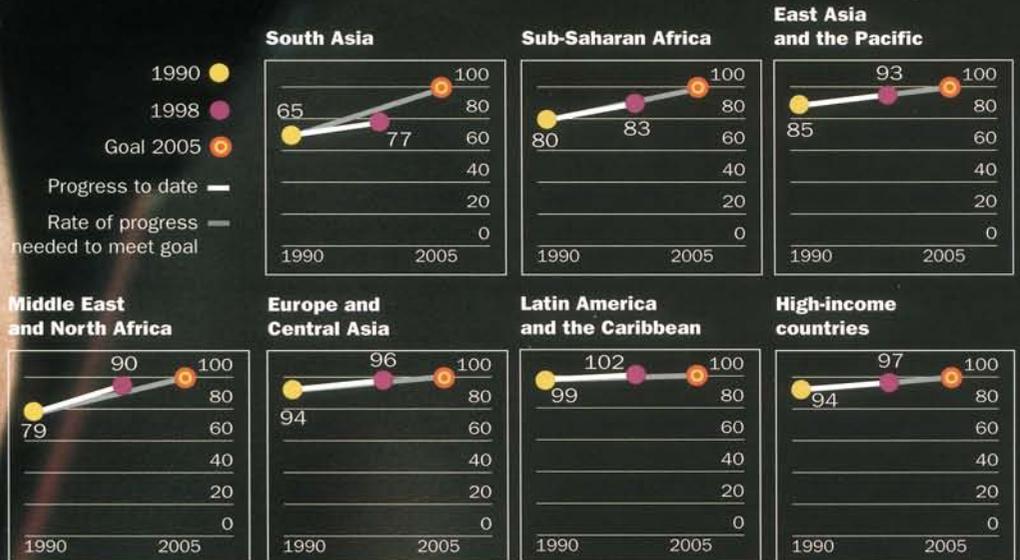
Gender equality

Closing the gender gap in education adds 0.5 percentage points to annual growth in GNP per capita

Educated girls have many more choices—in marriage, in childbearing, in work, in life. They can seize more economic opportunities. And they do more to shape their society's political, social, economic and environmental progress.

Enrolment gap between girls and boys—narrowing in all regions

Ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary and secondary school (%)



Girls' enrolments have increased faster than boys'. In such countries as Armenia, Mongolia, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Venezuela, their school enrolment rates even exceed those of boys. At the global level, the gender gap in primary and secondary enrolment is narrowing. But the current rate of progress is not fast enough to close the gender gap in education by 2005.



When we came here, we could not write or read anything, we sat in circles like stones and hardly made any response. Now we know how to read and write letters, we are aware of our rights and needs.

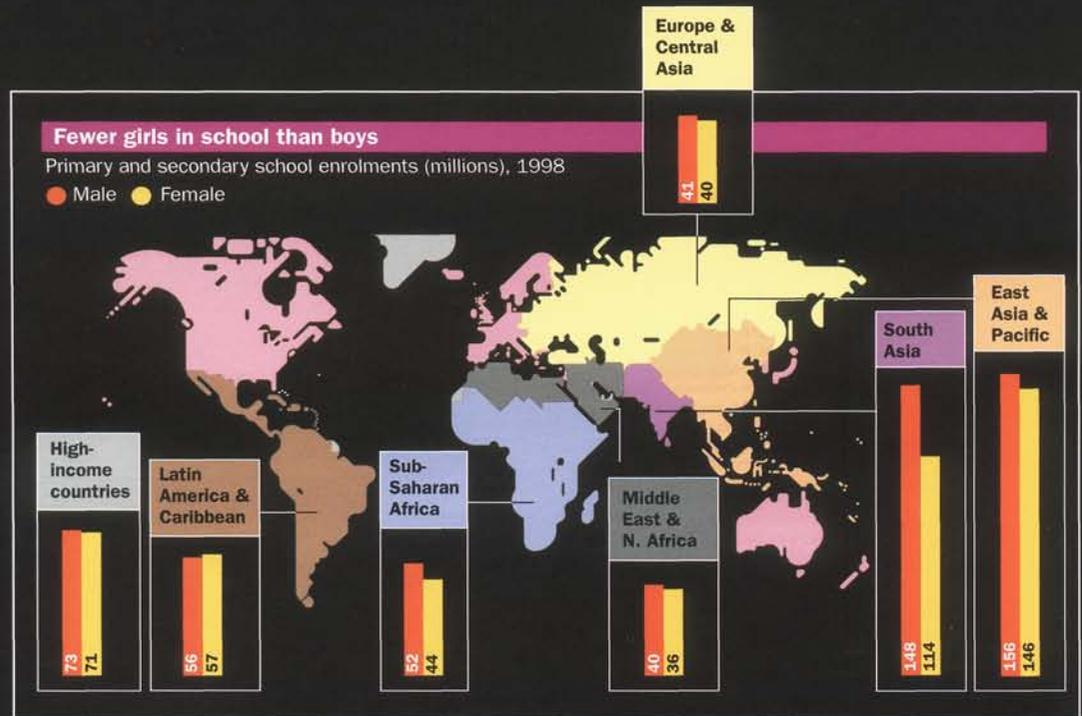
Girls' enrolments—increasing faster than boys' in Guinea

Between 1991 and 1998, girls' primary school enrolment in Guinea increased from fewer than 20% to almost 40%. That was the result of a series of

practical interventions by the government. It equipped schools with girls' latrines. It permitted pregnant girls to be readmitted after childbirth. It

distributed textbooks free of charge and updated textbooks to remove any gender bias. And it focused on hiring female teachers.

In recent years the gap between girls' and boys' secondary enrolments has narrowed, reflecting the higher enrolments of girls and the greater tendency for boys to leave school early. But even as the gender gaps in education decline, they persist in economic and political life.



In many places, children of the wealthiest families are as likely to finish their schooling as those in high-income countries. For those families the proportion of girls in school is roughly the same as that of boys. But for poor families fewer of their children go to school—and far fewer girls than boys. For many poor families the value of girls' labour exceeds the returns they expect from educating their daughters—so daughters don't go to school.

