

Building Bridges

Effective Post-Secondary Transitions
for Girls in Developing Countries



CENTER FOR GENDER EQUITY





Transitions

between education cycles represent one of the greatest hazards for girls in their educational journey throughout the developing world.

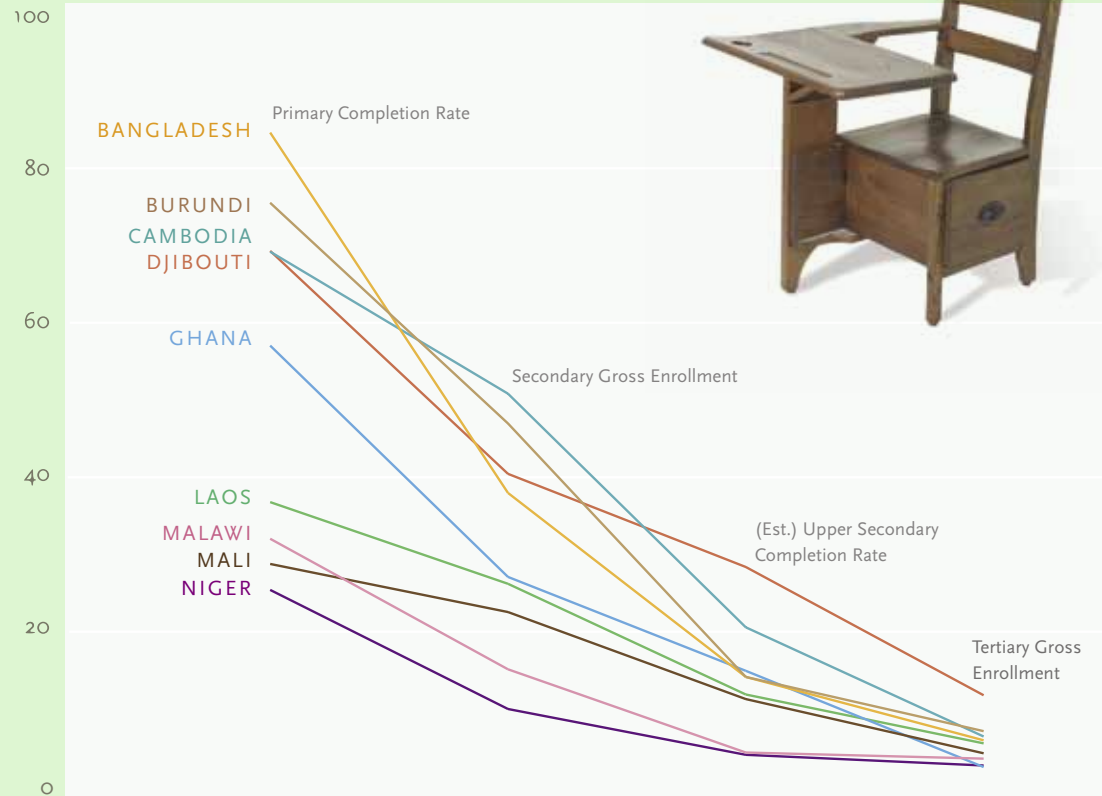
It is not uncommon across sub-Saharan Africa for girls' secondary enrollment rates to drop 75% from primary enrollment rates. Between the secondary level and the tertiary level, enrollment rates often go down more than 90%, with some developing countries recording female tertiary enrollment rates of 1–2% of the age-appropriate population. Challenges with quality and relevance often prevent effective transitions between education cycles, and school-to-work planning and support is not available for the vast majority of students in the developing world. Without effective post-secondary transition strategies, investments in both primary and secondary education will be called into question.

The numbers tell the story:

COUNTRY	PRIMARY COMPLETION RATE	SECONDARY GROSS ENROLLMENT	(EST) UPPER SECONDARY COMPLETION	TERTIARY GROSS ENROLLMENT
Bangladesh	74.2%	45.3%	12.1%	5.0%
Burundi	30.2%	13.1%	2.2%	1.4%
Cambodia	83.4%	36.2%	12.1%	3.8%
Djibouti	26.9%	20.6%	9.2%	2.1%
Ghana	67.8%	49.2%	18.6%	4.3%
Laos	67.9%	38.7%	26.5%	9.7%
Malawi	55.5%	25.2%	12.9%	0.3%
Mali	35.0%	24.3%	9.8%	3.4%
Niger	23.5%	7.9%	1.9%	0.5%

Sources: World Bank, UNICEF, AED EPDC, 2005–2007 Data.





$$AB = \frac{\pi}{360} \times 2\pi R$$

$$AC = \frac{\pi}{360} \times 2\pi R$$

$$= 3437 \text{ nm}$$

Ex

A (40°S , 30°E)

30°E) lie on the

circle. find the

difference in latitude

between them



To address these complex issues, AED and Advancing Girls' Education (AGE) Africa recently hosted the public forum, **“Building Bridges: Effective Post-Secondary Transitions for Girls in Developing Countries”**, held June 16th, 2010 at AED's Globe Theatre in Washington DC, followed by a workshop focused on post-secondary transitions for girls in developing countries. The goal of the workshop was to supplement the presentations presented at the public forum with a more in-depth dialogue about the complex and critical issue of post-secondary transitions. Workshop participants included a full range of experts working in this field including researchers, foundation representatives, policy advocates, and practitioners.

In the two hour workshop; a number of core themes, concepts, questions and pathways for progress emerged. This booklet was created to share these ideas with a larger audience and to promote a continuation of the dialogue among stakeholders concerned with education in developing countries.

Workshop Findings

At the outset of the workshop, it became clear that creating policies and programs to make transitions more effective requires multi-faceted analysis and multi-sectoral cooperation. Both the challenges and opportunities of transitions defy easy categorization and bring forward the existential question of “Education for What?” Viewed through the lens of transitions to and from secondary school, the question of “Education for What?” takes on increased importance and relevance as successful transition planning must take into account what has been **accomplished in the past, what is possible in the present and what is expected in the future.**

THE RELATIVE MERITS OF HOLISTIC APPROACHES AND FOCUSED APPROACHES TO EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

There was a deliberation about the relative merits of holistic and focused approaches to education interventions and a rigorous debate about where each of these approaches ideally and realistically “lives”. It was recognized by the group that both approaches have their own intrinsic value and place in education interventions. Although the attributes of each approach are listed separately below, we caution against viewing the attributes outlined as strictly delineated or exclusive to either approach.



Holistic Approach

Approaches analysis and intervention at systemic level.

Can influence macro (societal) and micro (individual) norms, policies.

Implementation more difficult/complex than focused approach.

More successful in addressing interdependencies, interconnections and linkages.

Broadly framed to capture more diverse and unexpected opportunities.

More flexibility in response to the “Education for What?” question.

Supports improvement in both demand and supply factors.

Necessary for the advancement of a common, integrated research and data platform.

Challenging for individual stakeholders and stakeholders with limited resources and/or narrow interests to effectively contribute.

Increase opportunity to engage policy makers.

More difficult to mobilize support and resources.

Might take longer to reach tangible and visible results.

Sustainability might be achievable.



Focused Approach

Approaches analysis and intervention with focus on issue, technical area or individual(s).

Can influence macro (societal) and micro (individual) levels.

Greater implementation success likely.

More likely to result in catalytic interventions.

Greater opportunities for context-specific interventions.

Necessitates more specific decisions in response to the “Education for What?” question.

Supports improvement in both demand and supply factors.

Risk of too narrow focus and missing support for transitions and linkages to other processes and systems.

More fully leverages capacities of many stakeholder groups including individuals and stakeholder groups with limited resources and narrow interests.

Greater leverage of technical expertise.

Easier to mobilize support and resources.

Easier and possibly quicker to reach tangible and visible results.

Sustainability might be harder to achieve.

Consensus Points and Core Questions

Beyond the debate about the approach to education interventions, there were some consensus points and core questions that emerged from the discussion. The following is a brief summary of those items:

There is a need to reconcile strategies and tactics to support and improve the current state of education while creating pathways for where education needs to go in the future. This applies at both the macro and micro levels; with unique challenges at each level. Of particular importance to address this challenge is the question of “Education for What?” Without a clear vision for the future, it is not possible to design the bridge from the current state of education to the future state, much less implement programs and policies to make it a reality.

The impact of girls’ education is experienced at both the societal and individual levels. Where the gains of girls’ education are predominantly societal, but the decisions and immediate cost burdens are individual; researchers and advocates should help policy makers identify and measure societal gains. This will in turn promote policy-driven incentives that target individual decision makers and modify social norms. Each context will have its own tipping point that determines when societal gains are substantial enough to create individualized incentives for action.

There was a general recognition of the limits surrounding cross-context methodologies and models because of the importance of context-specific and community-driven interventions. No definitive determination of where these limits are and how we might most effectively port lessons learned and models from one context to another was agreed upon.

A conceptualization of education as an open system of opportunities with flexible, non-linear pathways was put forward and largely endorsed by the participants. Along these lines, it was recognized that interventions should strive to be catalytic and create the conditions for self-organizing pathways where young people leverage their skills to advocate for themselves and create the context that best suits their opportunities. There are limits to this approach, especially if operating in a context where societal and political norms do not support individual rights, gender equity and responsive policies.

A strengthened focus on education systems that are responsive and connected to market opportunities was broadly endorsed; with the aim of creating more “pull” factors (demand from economy, job market and the future) than “push” factors (access, incentives for enrollment). This conceptually ties into creating education opportunities that are more relevant to future opportunities and responsive to the absorption capacity of labor markets and tertiary institutions.

There was strong support for more research and data associated with secondary education and transitions between education levels in developing countries. The concept of a shared collaborative platform and/or knowledge base across actors and contexts was recognized as an initiative that could advance more effective, evidence-based strategies and interventions. Additional deliberation is required to identify what existing platforms might be well-suited for this and how different stakeholders can partner to make open collaboration a reality.

Key Conclusions

1.

Gender parity in school enrollments has improved, but parity alone is not sufficient to realize the full potential of girls in developing countries. For genuine and lasting change, **gender equity** (opportunity) and **gender equality** (behavior) must also be advanced.

2.

There is a **critical and reciprocal relationship** between the completion of secondary education and the creation of employment opportunities. Of particular importance is the **expansion of science and technology** competencies at the secondary level for girls.

3.

Strong linkages between education systems and markets are necessary for innovation and growth; these crucial **linkages are missing** in many developing countries. More **demand from labor markets** will encourage students in general and girls in particular to complete secondary education.

4.

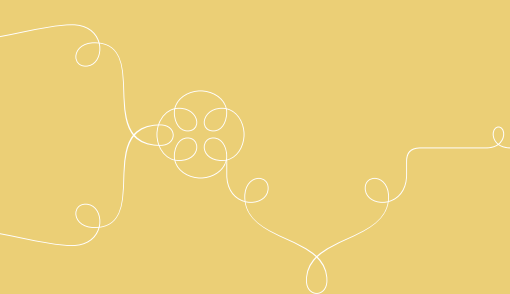
Education, conceived of as an **open system of opportunities with flexible, non-linear pathways** is essential for progress in developing countries.

5.

Policy makers need to fully recognize the societal benefits produced by educating girls and **create individualized incentives to advance girls' education** while building more equitable gender norms in the education sector.







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Adel Safty

Niara Sudarkasa

Sandra E. Taylor

Allen J. Weltmann

Workshop Participants

MAY RIHANI
Academy for Educational Development (AED)

CHRISTINE BEGGS & XANTHE ACKERMAN
Advancing Girls' Education (AGE) Africa

ARIANA CHILDS GRAHAM
Coalition for Adolescent Girls

JACOB BREGMAN
International Education Quality Services: Consultant

ANJU MALHOTRA
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)

CAROLYN ROSE-AVILA
Plan USA

DAVID CHAPMAN
University of Minnesota

SARAH WRIGHT
USAID

MICHAEL GIBBONS
Wellspring Advisors: Consultant



1825 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20009
Tel. (202) 884-8000
Fax. (202) 884-8400

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