Wikigender University
2010-2011
A selection of articles
**Wikigender University**

**About**

Wikigender University is a programme that was launched by Wikigender in January 2010 to enrich the platform with quality articles on gender equality issues. This programme was initially established with Paris-based universities, engaging students in adding articles, doing outreach and benefitting from the networking opportunities provided by Wikigender. The programme will now be expanded to universities in other countries - both developed and developing countries - to further enhance the range of perspectives and information that is available on Wikigender. Find out more information on the Wikigender University portal [1].

**Wikigender University: the book**

To conclude two successful years for Wikigender University, the Wikigender Team has decided to prepare a book compiling 15 selected articles written by some of the students from Sciences Po in Paris and the American University in Paris (AUP). Please note that these articles are not complete. Wikigender is an open source platform, therefore all these articles are work in progress and open for contributions and further improvements. The articles are evenly spread between three themes: **Education, Peace and Security** and **Migration**. Below is a short introduction to these themes.

**Education**

Are women and men performing equally in secondary education? What is the overall picture of women's access to education in Africa? Education is crucial for development, and needs to take into account both girls and boys' aspirations and needs. This first section of the book will look at issues as diverse as access to education, primary completion rates, education in sub-Saharan Africa and more.

**Peace and Security**

Women are among the most vulnerable victims in war and conflict situations, yet they are also often the ones that trigger peace mechanisms. What is women's role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding? How can we involve women more in peacebuilding processes? What can be done to enhance men's role in contributing to peace processes? These are some of the questions addressed by the Wikigender University students in this section of the book. They include, among others: Liberia's civil war, the Tunisian revolution, Haiti's post-quake environment.

**Migration**

While migration used to be a very South-North phenomenon, today the situation is very different, as a lot of migration flows remain in the Southern hemisphere. Also, while men used to make up the majority of migrants, women increasingly migrate as well; this has both positive and negative effects on women and on their families. Students from Wikigender University wrote in this section on global care chains, the Filipina migration phenomenon, women migrants' remittances and more.
See also

- Wikigender University: AUP 2011 final presentation
- Wikigender University: Sciences Po 2011 final presentation

References

Education

Education for All

Education For All is a movement organised by UNESCO. Its goal is to provide children, teenagers and adults all the learning tools that they need by 2015.

Education for All was started in 1990 during the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand. Representatives from 155 countries and 150 organisations at this conference pledged to provide education for all by 2000. The goal was that everyone would "benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs".

Goals

In 2000, member nations met in Dakar, Senegal and evaluated the countries, discovering that many had not reached the goal of providing basic education for all. They decided to achieve their goal by 2015, and created 6 solid goals:

The six goals are:
- Goal 1: Expand early childhood care and education (ECCE).
- Goal 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all.
- Goal 3: Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults.
- Goal 4: Increase adult literacy by 50 percent.
- Goal 6: Improve the quality of education.

UNESCO has been mandated to lead the movement and coordinate the international efforts to reach Education for All. Governments, development agencies, civil society, non-governmental organisations and the media are some of the partners working toward reaching these goals. [2]

See Also

- UNESCO
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics
- Gender Education and Advocacy [3]
- Intake Rate [4]
- Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) [5]
- Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa [6]
- Primary Completion Rates [7]
- Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa [8]
- Statistics: School Enrolment [9]
- Statistics: Education [10]
- Access to Education
- GID Variables: School Enrolment [12]
- GID Variables: Literacy Rates [13]
Access to Education

Background

As stated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (December 10, 1948):

"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."[1]

There are an estimated 101 million children not in school, the majority of which are girls. Many times, gender, socioeconomic background, location, religion, cultural traditions and health issues keep children out of school, and these issues disproportionately affect girls’ education. In order to address the issue of gender inequality in access to education, UNICEF includes the following in its interventions: "outreach to locate excluded and at-risk girls to get them into school, policy support and technical assistance for governments and communities to improve access for those children who are hardest to reach or suffer most from discrimination, and programs to eliminate cultural, social and economic barriers to girls’ education."[2]

Recent trends

The 2010 Global Education Digest found the following:

1. If present trends continue, boys and girls will have equal access to primary and secondary education by 2015 in only eighty-five countries. Seventy-two countries are not likely to reach Millennium Development Goal #2 (universal primary education) — among which, 63 are far from reaching parity at the secondary level.

2. Globally, girls are more likely to never enter primary school than boys. In South and West Asia, only about 87 girls start primary school for every 100 boys, according to UIS data. The situation is not much better in sub-Saharan Africa, where about 93 girls begin their primary education for every 100 boys, according to the regional average.

3. Boys also have greater access than girls to secondary education in 38% of countries, while the opposite is true in 29% of countries. Yet as is the case at the primary level, once girls gain access to secondary education, they tend to complete their studies more often than boys.
4. Gender disparities are equally marked in tertiary education in all regions of the world. The only countries to achieve parity at this education level are Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Hong Kong SAR of China, Mexico, Swaziland and Switzerland. In countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea and Niger – where the GDP per capita is below PPP$ 3,000 – there are fewer than 35 female tertiary students for every 100 male students. On the other hand, in wealthy countries, female students clearly outnumber men as tertiary students.

5. Despite the improved access to tertiary education globally, women face considerable barriers as they move up the education ladder to research careers and in the labour market. At the Bachelor's degree level, most countries reporting data have achieved gender parity in terms of graduates. Women are more likely to pursue the next level of education, accounting for 56% of graduates with Master's degrees. However, men surpass women in virtually all countries at the highest levels of education, accounting for 56% of all Ph.D. graduates and 71% of researchers.[3]

The Education at a Glance 2009 found that:
1. The enrolment rate for 15-19 year-olds in OECD countries in 2007 is 81%, up by eight percentage points since 1995.
2. An expansion by seven percentage points in the enrolment rate at age 20-29, meaning that on average, one in four people in their 20s in the OECD are studying.[4]

Definitions

Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals address access to education in two different sections:

According to Millennium Development Goal 2, *Achieving Universal Primary Education*, the indicators used to achieve UPE are found under Target 3, which is to "ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling."

These indicators are:

1. Indicator 2.1: Net Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education.
2. Indicator 2.2: Proportion of Pupils Starting Grade 1 Who Reach the Last Grade of Primary.
3. Indicator 2.3: Literacy Rate of 15-24 Year Olds, Women and Men.

Also, Millennium Development Goal 3, *Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*, addresses access to education through Target 4, "eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education by 2015.

This is measured by:

1. Indicator 3.1: Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.[5]

UNESCO Institute for Statistics

According to Nyi Nyi Thaung from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, access to education is defined by analysis of the following input indicators:

- Gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary/preschool (ECCE) programs
- % of new grade 1 intakes with preschool (ECCE) experiences
- Gross intake rate (AIR)
- Net Intake Rate (NIR)
- Gross enrolment ratio (GER) by Level
- Net enrolment ratio (NER) by Level
- % of girl enrolment by level
- Public expenditure on education as a % of GDP
• Public expenditure on education as a % of total government expenditure
• Public recurrent expenditure on education as a % of total government recurrent expenditure
• Unit cost (public recurrent expenditure per pupil) by level.\[6\]

**OECD Education at a Glance 2009**

The OECD Education at a Glance 2009 report uses the following indicators to measure access to education:

• Enrolment rates, by age
• Trends in enrolment rates
• Transition characteristics from age 15-20, by level of education
• Upper secondary enrolment patterns
• Students in primary or secondary education by type of institution or mode of study
• Students in tertiary education by type of institution or mode of study
• Education expectancy
• Expected years in tertiary education\[4\]

**See Also**

• Millennium Development Goals
• Access to bank loans
• Access to land
• Access to Water and Sanitation
• Access to property
• Education for All
• Gender Education and Advocacy
• Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
• Primary Completion Rates
• Statistics:Education
• Net Intake Rate
• Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)
• Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
• Statistics:School Enrolment
• Statistics:Education
• Statistics:Literacy Rates
• UNESCO
• UNESCO Institute for Statistics
• GID Variables: School Enrolment
• GID Variables: Literacy Rate
• GID Variables: Political Empowerment
• Maternal Mortality
• AIDS
• Adolescent Birth Rate
• Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
• Under-Five Mortality Rate
Primary Completion Rates

Primary completion rate is the percentage of students completing the last year of primary school. It is calculated by taking the total number of students in the last grade of primary school, minus the number of repeaters in that grade, divided by the total number of children of official graduation age. [1]

Rationale

The indicator, which monitors education system coverage and student progression, is intended to measure human capital formation and school system quality and efficiency. This indicator focuses on the share of children who ever complete the cycle; it is not a measure of "on-time" primary completion. Various factors may lead to poor performance on this indicator, including low quality of schooling, discouragement over poor performance and the direct and indirect costs of schooling. Students' progress to higher grades may also be limited by the availability of teachers, classrooms and educational materials. [1]

Data Collection and Source

The indicator is compiled by staff in the Education Group of the World Bank's Human Development Network based on two basic data sources used to compute gross and net enrolment ratios: enrolment data from national ministries of education and population data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Method of Computation

The numerator may include over age children who have repeated one or more grades of primary school but are now graduating successfully. For countries where the number of primary graduates is not reported, a proxy primary completion rate is calculated as the ratio of the total number of students in the final year of primary school, minus the number of students who repeat the grade in a typical year, to the total number of children of official graduation age in the population. [1]

Disaggregation Issues

Rural and urban differences are particularly important in the analysis of education data because of significant differences in school facilities, available resources, demand on children's time for work and drop-out patterns. It is also important to consider disaggregation by geographical area and social or ethnic groups. However, showing and analyzing data on specific ethnic groups may be a sensitive issue in the country. Gender differences may also be more pronounced in some social and ethnic groups. [1]

References

Limitations
The indicator reflects the primary school cycle as nationally defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education, as is the case for gross and net enrolment ratios.

The current database has many gaps, particularly for small countries, earlier years and gender breakdowns, and obvious anomalies and estimates that are suspect. The current database is a mixture of enrolment data and data based on different systems of graduation (exams, diplomas, automatic promotion), limiting international comparability.

The indicator captures the final output of the primary education system, and so responses to policy changes will register only with time.

The age-specific estimates are less reliable than overall population estimates, and this is particularly an issue in countries with relatively rapid changes in population and its age and gender distribution from such causes as internal and international migration, civil unrest and displacement. When age-specific population breakdowns are not available, the primary completion rate cannot be estimated.

Primary completion rates based on primary enrolment have an upward bias, since they do not capture drop-out during the final grade. This implies that once the data on actual graduates become available for a country, the completion rate of the country would appear to decline.\(^1\)

Gender Issues Addressed
More understanding is needed on the patterns of primary completion rates by gender.\(^2\)

Millennium Development Goals Addressed
Primary education completion rates are integral to the Millennium Development Goals.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education.

Target 3. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.\(^3\)

See Also
- Millennium Development Goals
- Global Campaign for Education\(^4\)
- Gender statistics\(^5\)
- UNESCO
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics
- Education for All
- Intake Rate\(^4\)
- Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)\(^5\)
- Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa\(^6\)
- Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa\(^8\)
- Statistics: School Enrolment\(^9\)
- Statistics: Education\(^10\)
- Statistics: Literacy Rates\(^11\)
- Access to Education
- GID Variables: School Enrolment\(^12\)
- GID Variables: Literacy Rates\(^13\)
- AIDS\(^6\)
- Maternal Mortality\(^7\)
- Adolescent Birth Rate\(^8\)
• Under-Five Mortality Rate [9]

References

External Links
• Primary Completion Rates:Male (http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.CMPT.MA.ZS)
• Primary Completion Rates:Female (http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.CMPT.FE.ZS/countries/latest)

Education in sub-Saharan Africa

Background
According to UNESCO's 2008 regional overview of education in sub-Saharan Africa, enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa increased significantly at all education levels between 1999 and 2006. Overall, sub-Saharan Africa, like the Arab States, South and West Asia, still lags behind other regions in terms of distance from universal education. [1] While sub-Saharan Africa is also lacking in the attainment of many Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), many believe that progress in education could help unlock progress on the MDGs, but will require a strengthened commitment to equity. Persistent inequalities are hindering progress towards the Education for All (EFA) goals at global, regional and national levels. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009 finds that, within countries, disparities based on wealth, location, gender, immigration or minority status, or disability are the main factors which deny millions of children a good quality education. [2]

Increasing the levels of participation in secondary education is an explicit goal of the Dakar Framework for Action, as well as MDG 3 on gender parity and equality. Unfortunately, progress in secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa is not growing as quickly as Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa [6] [2]
Present Condition

Primary Education
What happens during the very early years of a child’s life is vital for later success in education and in life. Programs of early childhood care and education (ECCE) can support health and nutrition, facilitate cognitive development and give children the basic tools they need to learn and to overcome disadvantage. Yet millions of children in sub-Saharan Africa are held back by health and nutrition problems, and access to pre-school provision remains limited and unequal.\[3]\n
The number of children entering primary school in sub-Saharan Africa has climbed sharply since 2000. In 2006, more than 23 million of the region’s children entered a classroom for the first time – an increase of some 7 million over the level in 1999. Sub-Saharan Africa’s Gross Intake Rate (GIR), which registers the number of new entrants regardless of age, recorded the biggest increase in the world between 1999 and 2006, by twenty-two percentage points. As intake has risen, so has overall enrolment in primary education. Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for the world’s highest increase in total primary enrolment, which rose by 42% during the period. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)\[5]\ for primary education in sub-Saharan Africa has risen from 56% in 1999 to 70% in 2006. But there is still a long way to go. In 2006, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 47% of the world’s out-of-school population. While the number of primary school aged children out-of-school has dropped by 10 million since 1999, there were still 35 million children of primary school age in sub-Saharan Africa not enrolled in 2006, about one-third of this population.\[2]\n
Secondary Education
For the school year ending in 2005, the median transition rate from primary to secondary was 62%. And it was noticeably lower for girls (57%) than for boys (66%).\[2]\n
Overall, enrolment in secondary education is rising in sub-Saharan Africa, with 12 million more students in 2006 than in 1999, up from 20.6 million to 32.6 million. However, despite this significant trend, the average secondary Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in sub-Saharan Africa was 25% in 2006. This implies that nearly 78 million of the region’s secondary school-age children were not enrolled in secondary school.\[2]\n
Gender disparities against girls are highest in Benin\[4], Ivory Coast\[5], Ethiopia\[6], Guinea\[7], Mali\[8], and Togo\[9], with fewer than 60 girls per 100 boys entering secondary education.\[10]\n
Regional Differences
The regional average figure conceals significant differences between countries. For example, while secondary NER levels in 2006 were less than 20% in Faso Burkina Faso\[11], Madagascar\[12], Mozambique\[13], Niger\[14] and Uganda\[15] they were over 80% in Mauritius\[16] and Seychelles\[17]. Participation in secondary education increased between 1999 and 2006 in most of the twenty-nine countries with data, and particularly in Benin\[4], Ethiopia\[6], Gambia\[8], Guinea\[7] and Mauritius\[16], where secondary Gross Enrolment Ratios\[19] (GERs) rose by thirteen percentage points or more. On the other hand, substantial decreases were recorded in Malawi\[20] where the secondary GER declined from 36% to 29% during the same period.\[2]\n
Inhibiting Factors
Several factors inhibiting universal access to education are gender-based though other, and sometimes more powerful, factors are not. Wealth, race, religion, ethnicity, disability, rural habitation, Child labour\[21], health barriers and language are also important factors regarding attendance and access to primary and secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa. The issues faced which are solely experienced by or which disproportionately affect girls are the issues of early marriage\[22], pregnancy, cultural norms and practices\[23] and especially poverty\[24]. Poverty
Education in sub-Saharan Africa

weighs more heavily on girls than boys because it is generally an indicator of higher instances of the other inhibiting factors that girls face in sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty is aligned with greater instances of child marriage \([25]\), malnutrition, pregnancy, child mortality \([9]\), cultural preference for males and child labour; all of which magnify the negative effect on girls more so than on boys in sub-Saharan Africa.\([3]\)

**Gender**

Girls’ limited access to school is of particular concern in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2006, they accounted for 54% of primary school-age children not in school in the region and 72% of them have never been enrolled, compared with 55% for boys. For example, girls’ access to school remains a big issue in Nigeria \([26]\), where 69% of girls not in school are unlikely to enrol, compared with 31% for boys. Similar if somewhat smaller gender differences (about twenty percentage points or more) are found in Burundi \([27]\) and Guinea \([7]\), \([2]\)

**Poverty**

Within countries there is a strong association between poverty and gender inequalities in education. Gender differences in net attendance rates tend to be wider for poorer households in countries with relatively low school attendance. For school attendance, poverty weighs more heavily on girls than boys – far more so, in some cases. For example, the attendance disparity ratios of the richest to poorest quintile are significantly higher for girls than for boys in Faso Burkina Faso \([11]\), Chad \([28]\), Guinea \([7]\), Mali \([8]\) and Niger \([14]\). These ratios say something important about the unequal distribution of opportunity. For example, in Mali girls from the richest households are four times more likely to be attending primary school than the poorest girls.\([2]\)

**Child mortality**

While 10 million children die before the age of 5 each year, half of these children are in sub-Saharan Africa. On average, 158 out of every 1,000 children will die before the age of 5 in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Malnutrition**

This has a large negative impact on achieving universal primary education. Progress in sub-Saharan Africa has been limited and between 1990-2006, 13 countries in the region have regressed in this category. One-third of all children in sub-Saharan Africa have been affected by stunting, and 23 countries have rates higher than 40%.
Child labour

Around one-quarter of 5- to 14-year-olds in sub-Saharan Africa were engaged in child labour in 2004. Because population growth has increased faster than child labour rates have fallen, there were about 1 million more child labourers in 2004 than in 2000.\(^3\)

Child marriage

As of 2004, early marriage\(^{22}\) rates were higher in sub-Saharan African than any other region in the world. On average in the region, 52% of girls were married, divorced, or widowed by the age of 18. This rate varies widely from 18% in Botswana\(^{29}\), to nearly 80% in Niger.\(^{30}\)

Secondary Education

Language

Speaking an indigenous or non-official language remains a core marker for disadvantage in secondary education. For example, in Mozambique\(^{13}\), 43% of people aged 16 to 49 who speak Portuguese (the language of instruction) have at least one grade of secondary schooling; among speakers of Lomwe, Makhuwa, Sena and Tsonga, the shares range from 6% to 16%.\(^2\)

Gender

At the secondary level, gender gaps existed in all of the region’s countries with data in 2006 (except Mauritius and Swaziland\(^{31}\)), and the mean regional Gender Parity Index\(^{32}\) (GPI) was 0.80, slightly lower than in 1999 (0.82), as compared to 0.89 for primary education. Overall, sub-Saharan Africa has a combined low participation in secondary education and low GPIs. In Benin, Eritrea\(^{33}\), Ethiopia, Mali\(^8\) and Niger\(^{14}\), the secondary GERs for girls were less than 70% of those for boys. On the other hand, Verde Cape Verde\(^{34}\), Lesotho\(^{35}\), Namibia\(^{36}\), Tome and Principe Sao Tome and Principe\(^{37}\), Seychelles and Africa South Africa\(^{38}\) had significant disparities favouring girls.\(^2\) Trends show a strong correlation between higher levels of expenditure in education and greater gender equity. There is also a strong correlation between more poor girls dropping out of secondary school due to school fees than poor boys or either gender with more wealth.\(^{10}\)

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The World Bank adds that factors affecting the participation of girls in secondary include policy and direction of aid flows at the international level, economic policies at the national level, family level economic decisions, and
sociocultural norms.\footnote{10}

**International Gender Parity and Equality Protocols**

**Primary Education**

- Millennium Development Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

The target of the Millennium Development Goal #2, is to "ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling."\footnote{41}

- Education for All

Education for All (EFA) is a set of six internationally agreed upon goals which are used to address the main hurdles to achieving universal education, and more specifically universal primary education, and Millennium Development Goal #2.

These six goals are:

1. **Goal 1**: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. **Goal 2**: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality
3. **Goal 3**: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.
4. **Goal 4**: Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. **Goal 5**: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality
6. **Goal 6**: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.\footnote{42}

- Dakar Framework for Action \footnote{43}

In order to achieve the UNESCO EFA goals, the Dakar Framework for Action, agreed upon in 2000, sets out a two-part gender equity agenda: first, to achieve gender parity in school participation and second, to improve gender equality in educational opportunities and outcomes.\footnote{44}
Secondary Education

- Millennium Development Goal 3
  Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
- Education for All
- Dakar Framework for Action

Statistical Indicators

Primary and Secondary Education

Primary enrolment ratio

Primary is defined as the ratio of females to males enrolled in primary education. It is based on a 1-point scale with 1 being gender parity.

OECD data is found here: Statistics: School Enrolment.

Primary completion rate

Primary completion rate is the percentage of students completing the last year of primary school. It is calculated by taking the total number of students in the last grade of primary school, minus the number of repeaters in that grade, divided by the total number of children of official graduation age.

See Primary Completion Rates for more.

- Primary Completion Rates:Male
- Primary Completion Rates:Female

Gender Parity Index (GPI)

The GPI is defined as the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes; a GPI above 1 indicates data in favour of females, while a GPI below 1 indicates data in favour of males. In sub-Saharan Africa, the primary school GPI rose from 0.85 in 1999 to 0.89 in 2006. 15 of the 41 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have achieved gender parity in the their primary education rates. The secondary school GPI fell from 0.82 in 1999 to 0.80 in 2006.

Gross Intake Rate (GIR)

The GIR is defined as the total number of new entrants to a given grade of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official school entrance age for that grade.

Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)

The NER is defined as the enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)

The GER is defined as the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. The GER can exceed 100% due to late entry or/and repetition.
See Also

- Millennium Development Goals
- UNESCO
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics
- Education for All
- Intake Rate
- Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)
- Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Statistics: School Enrolment
- Statistics: Education
- Statistics: Literacy Rates
- Access to Education
- GID Variables: School Enrolment
- GID Variables: Literacy Rates
- AIDS
- Adolescent Birth Rate
- GID Variables: Political Empowerment
- Maternal Mortality
- Share of Women in Wage Employment in the Non-agricultural Sector
- Under-Five Mortality Rate
- Net Intake Rate

References

Gender Differences in Secondary Education

The Programme for International Student Assessment

PISA is the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment, which evaluates the quality, equity [1] and efficiency of school systems in some 70 countries. Together, these countries make up nine-tenths of the world economy. [2] Starting in 2000, the PISA has been publishing a report every three years, which provides information about the key skills and competencies in reading, mathematics and science of 15-year-old students. PISA 2009 featured data for around 28 million students. [3]

Recent PISA studies have shown that a distinct gender gap [4] is present amongst 15-year-olds, just as they are coming to the end of their compulsory education and beginning to participate in society. [5]
Findings and Implications

Reading
PISA results show that there is a significant gender gap between the sexes with regards to reading. In every country represented, girls outperform boys in reading. Girls scored significantly higher than boys and in some OECD countries, girls were up to a year ahead of boys in their reading skills. The widest gender gaps were recorded in Albania, Bulgaria and Lithuania as well as in some Nordic countries. The proportion of boys with the lowest level of reading proficiency was also much higher than that of girls. The study also found that, in almost every country, girls read more than boys for enjoyment, particularly fiction and magazines whilst boys are more likely to read newspapers and comic books.\[6\]

Implications
These results have major implications for education. The underperformance of boys appears to be a serious issue in all countries. Literacy\[7\] proficiency is a fundamental aspect of learning and education policy will need to address male underachievement in order to close this gender gap. Reading habits would suggest that one of the reasons behind male underperformance is that girls associate more pleasure with reading. Policy makers will therefore need to develop engagement and enjoyment of reading materials in order to improve boys’ proficiency levels.\[8\]

Mathematics
PISA results show that boys outperform girls in mathematics in 35 of 65 countries. In five countries girls outperform boys and in 25, there is no significant difference.\[9\] OECD countries are where boys perform better than girls in mathematics, for example, in Belgium, Switzerland, the U.K. and the U.S. The gender gap is, however, less significant than that which exists in reading skills.

Implications
The results from the study indicate that levels of mathematics skills are not a gender-related problem since in many countries there is no noticeable difference and in some countries, girls outperform boys. What this does suggest is that the stereotyped notion that girls are “not good at numbers” perhaps has an effect on performance and enjoyment of mathematics.\[10\]

Science
Results show that science is the domain where the difference between the sexes is at its lowest. In 33 out of 65 countries there is no significant difference between girls and boys, girls outperform boys in 21 out of 65 countries and boys outperform girls in 11.\[11\] In OECD countries, boys and girls generally have the same competencies in science. Countries where girls outperform include Middle Eastern states such as Jordan, Dubai and Qatar. PISA 2006 gave a more thorough assessment of gender differences in sciences and showed that girls are stronger at identifying scientific issues and life sciences whereas boys are better at physics and chemistry and at explaining phenomena scientifically.\[12\]

The same survey also asked students about their aspirations of having a career in science. PISA noted a more marked difference here. Three times as many boys as girls saw themselves as engineers or technicians or as working with computers or in physical science, while more than twice as many girls as boys saw themselves in a career in health, the life sciences or nursing, the so-called “caring” professions.\[13\]
Implications

The findings for science indicate that performance is not linked to gender, despite the face that traditional stereotypes might suggest otherwise. Indeed, science is a domain where policies focusing on gender equality can be considered a success. Nevertheless, further down the line, in tertiary education or in their careers, women continue to be underrepresented in science and technology, particularly in the higher-paying jobs in the field such as engineering.

Conclusions: fighting the gender gap

Historically, education policy has been focused on girls’ underachievement and access to education. PISA studies show that in many countries, policy has evidently been a success in combating female underperformance, for example in the case of science. Educators are now faced with what has been termed the “boy turn,” as reading has become a gendered activity in which boys are lagging behind.

In light of this, education policy could focus on reducing the gender gap in literacy and improving young male performance. To do so, teachers need to be aware of the differences and provide new strategies and support for boys, for example, appealing to their interests, widening choices and trying to engender a more positive approach to reading. These kinds of strategies would also need to involve the family and society more widely. Literacy is a pivotal part of education and key to academic, societal and career success, therefore, an informed response to the growing gender gap in reading must be implemented. Similarly, educators need to encourage and develop girls’ interest and confidence in mathematics so as not to limit future career choices. A close interrelationship exists between subject interest and learning outcomes, therefore, varying habits, aspirations and interests of young females and males may have far-reaching consequences.

See also

- Access to Education
- Global Campaign for Education
- Gender Gap
- Wage Gaps Between Men and Women
- Gender Differences in Career Ambitions

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**External links**

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- PISA 2009 results (http://www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3746,en_32252351_32235731_46567613_1_1_1_1,00.html)
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Peace and Security

Haiti: Fighting gender-based violence in the post-quake environment

Introduction

Gender-based violence \[^{[1]}\] is a longstanding problem in Haiti \[^{[2]}\]. However, following the 2010 earthquake, the problem has worsened and the incidence of rape and sexual assault has risen dramatically. Grassroots women's organisations reported 230 incidents of sexual violence in 15 camps in the two months following the quake. Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) reported 212 cases in the five months after the earthquake. The earthquake has left Haiti in a critical state, which is believed to be responsible for the rise in sexual violence. There are 1.3 million people internally displaced, living in camps with inadequate resources and access to basic services. Unpredictable weather patterns, the risk of the spread of disease, lack of law enforcement and political instability also reign. Existing gender inequality and a lack of both faith in the justice system and knowledge in the health system means that many victims do not report incidents of sexual violence. This makes the collection of reliable data and figures difficult and impedes reconstruction efforts. \[^{[3]}\]

International and Governmental Response

United Nations

The UN, although rather belatedly, has recognised the danger and gravity of the problem of gender-based violence in Haiti. Its agencies, alongside the Haitian National Police and soldiers from the peacekeeping mission MINUSTAH, are working to improve security by deploying units and patrols in camps. The UN “sub-cluster” group on gender-based violence has also launched a medical information campaign and lighting installation in camps. Despite these efforts, there are conflicting reports on the adequacy of the work of the UN aid agencies. A failure to adequately include poor women in project planning as well as a lack of coordination with grassroots organisations have been evoked. \[^{[4]}\]

The Haitian Government

Since sexual violence \[^{[1]}\] has been a pervasive problem in Haitian society for many years, the government has undertaken a number of initiatives to address the issue. Penalties have been increased and in 2003 the “Table de Concertation Nationale contre la Violence Faite aux Femmes” (National Dialogue on the Prevention of Violence against Women) was introduced involving the Ministries of Women, Health and Justice, civil society, NGOs, service providers and UN agencies. In 2006, the National Plan to Combat Violence was also adopted. \[^{[5]}\] However, insufficient resources and implementation, followed by the earthquake and its aftermath, have left these initiatives defunct. UNFPA \[^{[6]}\] and UNICEF \[^{[7]}\] are currently working to re-establish them. \[^{[8]}\]

Indeed, ever since the earthquake there has been little concrete response by the government relating to this issue. There seems to be both a lack of resources and a lack of will to tackle the problem. \[^{[9]}\] The police force is inadequately equipped, with very few female officers. The presence of uniquely male officers can be seen to intimidate victims and prevent them from reporting. The UNPOL deployment of an all-female unit from Bangladesh \[^{[10]}\] was an improvement although the language barrier posed problems for local women. Despite the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 \[^{[11]}\], Haitian women are mostly excluded from full participation in the relief effort.
Grassroots Organisations

Local Haitian women’s organisations quickly mobilised to address the needs of the community after the earthquake. They are working to reduce sexual violence and establishing security for women and girls in camps and poor neighbourhoods. Despite some partnerships with national ministries, NGOs and international agencies, the coordination effort on this issue is poor. However, the proactive role of these women’s groups exemplifies the effective interventions that can be made when women are included in reconstruction efforts and could offer a model for international NGOs. Haitian women’s grassroots organisations, such as KOFAVIV and FAVILEK, have been establishing and implementing their own security measures, for example, escorting women to bathrooms and showers at night.

KOFAVIV

KOFAVIV is an organisation founded by and for rape survivors in the poorest areas of Port-au-Prince. Following the earthquake, the group quickly reconstructed their organisation in one of the camps. They now have over 1,000 members working in the camps, improving security and caring for and supporting victims. KOFAVIV provides escorts, lighting and security patrols, and has introduced a whistle alert system. In the Champ de Mars camp, KOFAVIV has reported a decrease in the incidence of rape.

Their aims are to:

• Provide a safe space for women to gather, support one another and get organized to meet their needs and rebuild their community networks.
• Offer trainings for women on how to stay safe, manage stress, care for traumatized children and maintain family health and hygiene in the hazardous environment of the camps.
• Facilitate psycho-social support through peer-counselling groups of rape survivors who empower one another to heal and rebuild their lives.

FAVILEK

FAVILEK is another grassroots women’s group from Port-au-Prince, which was formed following the coup d’état in 1991 by women who were victims of sexual violence during the military dictatorship. FAVILEK continues to fight for equality and justice for Haitian women and have increased their work since the earthquake. With limited resources they use the medium of theatre to promote their cause. Their “Theatre for Action” scheme is used as a means to share their experiences as victims of gender and political violence. They perform their piece, “Ochan pou tout famm yo bliye” (Tribute to all forgotten women) across the country.
See also

- Special Focus : 10th anniversary of UN resolution 1325 on Peace, Women and Security [19]
- Women, Peace and Security [20]
- Gender Equality in Haiti [2]
- Special Focus - Haiti's rape crisis [21]

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External links

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- KOFAVIV website (http://kofaviv.org/)
The Role of Women in Ending Liberia's Civil War

The instability of Liberia for the last thirty years is at the heart of the action of women’s groups, and women have played a significant role in peace efforts surrounding Liberia's two civil wars.\[2\]

Chronology of the two Liberian civil wars

- 1847: independence of Liberia\[1\]
- 1980: military coup by Samuel Doe
- 1985: “free” election won by Doe

1989-1996: first Liberian civil war

- 1989: Charles Taylor’s NPFL (National Patriotic Front of Liberia) starts an uprising against Doe
- 1990: Ecowas (Economic Community of West African States) sends a peacekeeping mission.
- 1995: signature of a peace agreement ordering encampment, disarmament and demobilisation of all the fighting groups.
- 1997: presidential and legislative elections, respectively won by Charles Taylor and its NPFL

2000-2003: second Liberian civil war

- 2000: the war starts when a group of rebels, LURD (Liberians United for Reconstruction and Democracy), started taking control of parts of the country.
- 2003: Another rebels group, MODEL (Movement for Democracy in Liberia) joins the civil war.
- During the summer 2003, conflicts gains the capital city, Monrovia.
- June 2003: UN Special Court in Leone Sierra Leone\[3\] unseals an indictment against Charles Taylor for war crimes.
- October 14, 2003: a new interim government is instituted, with Gyube Bryant at his head.
- September 19, 2003: UN approves Resolution 1509, deploying a UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia.
- 2005, November 23: Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf\[4\] is elected President of Liberia, being the first African female head of state. (note: she arrived second after Taylor at the 1997 elections\[5\])

The particular situation of women in Liberia

The situation of women in Liberia\[1\] could be seen as weak not only due to the importance of customary law in society but also due to the destabilising influence of civil war. The weight of tradition remains strong and married women have few rights within their family\[6\] and within the society as a whole. At the same time, Liberian women have a particular situation as they are more educated than their counterparts in other African countries (for instance, the literacy ratio\[7\] is one of the highest in Africa). As a result, women are very active on the political scene, the best example of this being the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf\[4\] as President of Liberia in 2005, the first woman in Africa being elected as a head of State. Also, a Ministry of Gender and Development exists since 2001.\[7\]
Women’s initiatives during the two Liberian civil wars

Although their role was more substantial during the second Liberian civil war, women’s movements participated in the resolution of the first civil war. Throughout the two conflicts, their action consisted in many demonstrations against the different fighting groups. The strength of Liberian women’s movement lays in their peacefulness and the refusal to use violence, contrary to all of the other actors of the civil conflict. [8]

Focus on: AFELL

One of the most active women’s movements in Liberia [1] was founded during the first Liberian war, remaining active during the two conflicts and since then. AFELL [9] (Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia) is a group of female lawyers based in the capital city, Monrovia, representing women in the entire country. They focus in particular on cases of rape [10], as it is a common practice among soldiers during war time. With the Center for Abused Girls and Women, they documented the experiences of Liberian women during the war years. [11]

A major success of the association happened in 2000, when AFELL was granted the right to prosecute rape cases, whereas before this date, only state lawyers were allowed to prosecute criminal cases. AFELL was later able to influence legislation, in drafting a new legislative bill that increased the penalty linked to rape. [12]

AFELL’s work is very close to women, notably through its legal aid clinic in Monrovia. There, lawyers give daily advice to women victims of rape or gender violence. However, AFELL does not limit its fight to rape and war crimes. It is also working in the field of inheritance rights and customary law. [13]

Focus on: MARWOPNET

AFELL was not the only women’s group acting during the Liberian civil war. Another major women’s group, MARWOPNET (Mano River Women’s Peace Network), launched a program of shuttle democracy between the capitals of the three Mano River countries, Liberia, Leone Sierra Leone [3] and Guinea [7]. Liberia’s neighbouring countries played an important role during the conflict: for instance, many fighters took refuge in Guinea [7] and Leone Sierra Leone [3] during the first conflict. The importance of the region was even stronger during the second conflict, when Liberia was engaged in a regional conflict with Guinea and Sierra Leone that supported the rebels of LURD. [14]

Facing this regional conflict and the impact on women, Mano River’s women got together to solve the conflict in these three countries. Eventually, they succeeded in this task by having the three respective leaders of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea to meet in Rabat in 2002. On this subject an anecdote is reported by African Renewal [15]: when the MARWOPNET delegation went to Guinea to convince President Conté to come and sit at a table next to Charles Taylor, the President answered to their offer: “What man do you think would say that to me? Only a woman could do such a thing and get by with it.” He finally accepted to participate to the summit admitting: “Many people have tried to convince me to meet with President Taylor. Your commitment and your appeal have convinced me.”

For its achievements, MARWOPNET received the United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights in 2003. [16]

Focus on: Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET)

WIPNET is a women’s association present in several countries of West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria [26]), created from the broader West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). WANEP was created in 1998, facing the need for civil action to counter the civil conflicts raging in West Africa. WIPNET was created to ensure that women would not be submitted again to a patriarchal society following the end of the war. WIPNET upholds that women had a substantial role to play in the peacebuilding process, but they also had a role to play in the society as a whole. [17]
WIPNET's women started acting from the beginning of the First Liberian Civil War, organising marches for peace and security from 1991 and attending the peace conference from 1993. The peak of their action happened during the second Liberian civil war, when WIPNET's women met Charles Taylor and after long talks, convinced him to meet with the rebel forces. Strong of the numerous contacts they had in the neighbouring countries, they were able to organise a trip to Sierra Leone, meet the rebel leaders and convince them to participate in the meeting with Taylor. Thus, it was women's actions that allowed the Accra summit – the peace summit – to happen. However, they were not invited to the peace talk and therefore they organised more demonstrations, but this time in Accra, Ghana [18], and joined by Ghanaian, Sierra Leonean and Nigerian women. [19]

When the 2003 peace agreement was signed, the actions of WIPNET went from resolving the conflict to building peace. An interesting example of the strength of these women can be found during this period: whereas the women were excluded from the disarmament process, they went themselves to the fighters camps to convince them to abandon their weapons. [20]

Finally, during the 2005 election campaign, women of WIPNET launched a campaign of registration, noting that many women were not registered to vote. [21]

WIPNET's women different actions were featured in a 2008 documentary Pray the devil back to hell. This film focuses on the actions that took place during the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign. In particular, it follows the leaderships of Leymah Gbowee and Asatu Ben Kenneth. These two women were respectively members of Christian and Muslim associations and they decided to join their efforts towards peace. They organised sit-in, mass demonstrations and even a sex strike to protest against the war and make men react. [19]

Women in Liberia after the war

One of the most significant illustrations of the empowerment of women following the end of the Liberian civil war is the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf [4] as President of Liberia. She has given an important place to women in her government, including at the head of the ministries of commerce, justice, finance, youth and sports and gender and development. [21]

2011 Nobel Peace Prize

In 2011 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to three women including two Liberian women: Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf [4], Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee and Tawakul Karman of Yemen [22]. They were recognised for their "non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work." [23].

"We cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women achieve the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society," said Nobel Committee chairman Thorbjorn Jagland in Oslo. Reading from the prize citation, he said the committee hoped the prize would "help to bring an end to the suppression of women that still occurs in many countries, and to realise the great potential for democracy and peace that women can represent". [24]
See also

- Gender Equality in Liberia [1]
- Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf [4]

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External links

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- MARWOPNET's website (http://www.marwopnet.org/welcome.html)
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Tunisian Women's Role in the Tunisian Revolution

The Tunisian Revolution was a series of street demonstrations that took place in Tunisia from December 2010 until February 2011. The demonstrations and riots were reported to have started over unemployment, food inflation, corruption, freedom of speech and poor living conditions. The protests constituted the most dramatic wave of social and political unrest in Tunisia in three decades and have resulted in scores of deaths and injuries.

The protests were sparked by a self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi on December 17 and led to the ousting of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali 28 days later on 15 January 2011, when he officially resigned after fleeing to Saudi Arabia. The protests inspired similar actions throughout the Arab world.

Status of women in Tunisia

Women in Tunisia are unique in the Arab world for enjoying near equality with men and they are anxious to maintain their status. Tunisia has been strongly secular ever since it won independence from France in 1956. Both Presidents Habib Bourguiba and Zine al Abeddin Ben Ali suppressed the Islamic veil on women and beards on men. Tunisia's legal system is based both on French civil and Islamic codes. Sharia courts were abolished in 1956, but the constitution declares Islam the state religion and stipulates that the President of the Republic must be a Muslim. The 1956 Personal Status Code gave women a key role in Tunisian society; it abolished polygamy and allowed women the right to divorce. Women also have access to birth control since 1962 and access to abortion since 1965.

Today, 99% of Tunisian women are educated. Women participate actively in politics, law, medicine, academia, media and business.

Tunisian women manifesting

On 14 January 2011, the day the former Tunisian President left the country, thousands of Tunisian women hit the streets, mainly the Habiba Bourguiba Avenue. Scenes of women holding a banner reading "Leave now" during the demonstration were frequent. Female voices rang out loud and clear during massive protests. In Tunis, old ladies, young girls and women in black judges robes marched down the streets demanding that the former President Ben Ali leaves. With the revolution all Tunisian citizens, men or women, united before one common goal, regardless of all sorts of differences. Lawyer Bilel Larbi states, "Just look at how Tunisian women stood side-by-side with Tunisian men. They came out to the streets to protest in headscarves. They came out in miniskirts. It doesn't matter. They were there!"

Tunisian women and the household

During the revolution, in the household, women maintained their classical gender role - that is cooking, cleaning, etc. Nevertheless, this role was extended geographically speaking to reach the whole neighbourhood sometimes. In fact, with the food shortage that some poor neighbourhoods suffered during the revolution, families started interhelping; cooking for each other, sharing food, and so on. When the secret police violence acts started taking place after 14 January, women even transgressed their traditional gender roles by contributing to safeguarding neighbourhoods at night along with men. Sometimes, they even suggested that men who spend the night doing that role stay home while
they take care of protesting. It was to give them the opportunity to rest.[7]

**Tunisian women and online activism**

In light of the dramatic development of events on a considerable scale, it has become evident that new media have been playing a key role this time around in keeping the momentum going and bringing the voices of the disengaged Tunisian youth to the attention of world media, and hence to international public opinion. Mobile phones, blogs, YouTube, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds have become instrumental in mediating the live coverage of protests and speeches, as well as police brutality in dispersing demonstrations. The role of women in this social media activism was again inevitable. Lina Ben Mhenni, creator of the "Tunisian Girl" [8] blog states: ‘I participated in most of the demonstrations in the capital, even the protest of the lawyers. In the last ten days of the events, I decided to go to Sidi Bou Zid to videotape the demonstrations there.’[9]

See also

- Gender Equality in Tunisia [10]

References


External links

- QADITA.net (http://www.qadita.net)
- Tunisian Girl Blog (http://www.atunisiangirl.blogspot.com)
- Aljazeera.net (http://www.aljazeera.net)
- EMAJ Magazine (http://emajmagazine.wordpress.com/)
Men's Role in Women's Rise to Power in Conflict-Resolution Processes

The role of women in peace building and conflict resolution has been embodied through contemporary global initiatives such as the United Nations's 1325 resolution \([11]\), numerous conferences and fruition of associations such as Women for Women International \([1]\), Code Pink and Femmes Africa Solidarite. But among this rise of women's voices, have men been silenced? Have they become inherently unqualified to speak as advocates for women's rights? If so, how could we overcome this ironic paradox? The following articles and media reflect current voices and views on this topic:

**Article: An uncomfortable truth: the gender turf war at UN CSW, By Lyric Thomson (2010)**

"It's the paradox of the global women's movement: we disapprovingly wonder aloud where all the men are when we convene to discuss so-called "women's" issues [...] but then we bristle when the boys show up and want a turn at the microphone." \([2]\)

In her article, Thompson draws on the issue of excluding men from conflict resolution and peace building. She argues that including men is not detrimental to women's rights but necessary, noting the importance of educating men in particular:

"Women for Women International \([1]\) have also piloted a men's program in four of our chapters - Iraq \([3]\), Afghanistan \([4]\), Nigeria \([26]\) and the The Democratic Republic of the Democratic Republic of the Congo \([5]\) - to engage male leaders as allies and advocates for women's rights and value to the economy and society. These leaders then spread the good word to other men in their networks, which tend to be the networks that control the majority of the power and resources in the community. Then we have men and women learning about women's rights and value, in an environment where women are increasingly able to access those rights and everybody understands it's a good thing." \([2]\)

**The value of education**

Lyric Thompson's claim\([2]\) is seconded by the Peace Building Initiative, in the report *Empowerment: Women & Gender Issues: Women, Gender & Peace building processes; in which context and education are considered fundamental:*

"Many formal peace building activities and policies suffer from an insufficient understanding or acknowledgment of the diverse communities in which they operate. Gender analysis can bring to light the experiences of men and women during conflict and peace, assess needs, and show how gender relations change during and due to conflict and peace."\([6]\)

**Voicing the men**

**NOMAS**

"We affirm that working to make this nation's ideals of equality substantive is the finest expression of what it means to be men. [...] We applaud and support the insights and positive social changes that feminism has stimulated for both women and men. We oppose such injustices to women as economic and legal discrimination, rape \([10]\), domestic violence \([7]\), sexual harassment \([8]\) and many others. Women and men can and do work together as allies to change the injustices that have so often made them see one another as enemies."\([9]\)
Video: A Call to Men

Tony Porter is the visionary and co-founder behind the non-profit A Call to Men: The National Association of Men and Women Committed to Ending Violence Against Women. In a TED Talk[10][11], he stresses the importance of being able to free oneself from the "man box".

Conclusion

Despite the understanding that men are most often the cause of violence against women[1] in conflicts, they are intricately linked to the solution. Silencing them or limiting their role in post-conflict reconciliation, reintegration and peace building could lead to lesser results in those domains. The solutions explored all revolve around education[12] and its importance in shaping respectful interactions between genders. Through education, limitations such as the "man box" described by Tony Porter can be overcome.

See also

- Engaging Men and Boys as Allies for Long-Term Change[13](UN Women) September 23, 2011
- Women and peace organisations[14]
- Special Focus: 10th anniversary of UN resolution 1325 on Peace, Women and Security[19]
- Women for Women International[1]
- The role of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding[15]

References

Women in UN Peacekeeping

Highlighted in Millennium Development Goal #3, Gender equality\(^1\) is one of the goals pursued by the United Nations. Trying to ensure gender equality in our societies, the UN also does everything possible to ensure it in its agencies and institutions. As a consequence, the UN has been working for the past ten years in increasing the number of female soldiers among UN peacekeepers.

Answering some of the objectives laid down in UN Security Council Resolution 1325

UN Security Council Resolution 1325\(^{11}\) (2000) asks for a higher proportion of women among peacekeepers:

Point 5: *Expresses its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and urges the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component*\(^{2}\)

This objective was reaffirmed in UN Security Council Resolution 1889\(^{3}\) (2009), from the first point:

*Urges Member States, international and regional organisations to take further measures to improve women’s participation during all stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution, post-conflict planning and peacebuilding, including by enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making at early stages of recovery processes, through inter alia promoting women’s leadership and capacity to engage in aid management and planning, supporting women’s organizations, and countering negative societal attitudes about women’s capacity to participate equally.*\(^{4}\)

These two UN Security Council resolutions point that the gender approach in peacebuilding operations takes place on two levels:

- Including more women among the UN peacekeepers
- In countries recovering from war, taking into consideration the specific needs of women and girls.

Key figures

Women represent a very small part of the UN peacekeeping forces, constituting 3% of the military personnel and 9% of police personnel. However, this data is on the rise, as women represented only 1% of the forces in 1993. Furthermore, they constitute about 30% of the civilian staff working on peacekeeping missions.\(^5\) Finally, three all-female police units are deployed around the world: Indian in Liberia, Bangladeshi in Haiti and Samoan in Timor.

Incentives and challenges for women Peacekeepers

In his working paper *Women with a Blue Helmet – The integration of women and gender issues in UN Peacekeeping missions*\(^6\), Francesco Bertolazzi reports the results of a survey identifying the five main reasons why women join the UN Peacekeeping forces:

1. Career
2. Economic benefits
3. Altruistic, value-driven goal of bringing peace to a war-torn society
4. Sharing experiences and meeting persons from other countries
5. Opportunity to work and live in a demanding, international environment

But in spite of these incentives, many women are reluctant to join the UN Peacekeeping forces. The main challenge faced by women peacekeepers is managing a family life. Most women peacekeepers are single, divorced and/or have no children. Furthermore, many are afraid of sexual harassment or gender discriminations, as underlined in many reports. However, it is essential to recruit more and more women as Blue Helmets and this is why the Department of
Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has developed a gender approach.

**The gender approach followed by the Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO)**

The Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) follows a series of actions to integrate gender equality among the UN peacekeeping force:

- Appointing Gender Advisers in missions
- Supporting strategies to increase female deployment in peacekeeping operations
- Providing gender training to peacekeeping personnel.[7]

Ensuring gender equality among UN peacekeeping forces takes its roots in the idea of ensuring gender equality in all of the UN institutions; it also has the objective of better answering the needs of girls and women victims of a conflict. In November 2006, the DPKO wrote a Policy Directive on Gender Equality in UN Peacekeeping Operations.[8] Section D.3 is dedicated to the “Recruitment and retention of high quality personnel” and advocates for "the adoption of gender sensitive policies which support the increased recruitment and deployment of uniformed women to peacekeeping". The policy directive also advocates for improvements in the hiring process, with a greater focus on gender equality in the vacancy announcements.

**Why women are essential in Peacekeeping Operations**

In his working paper[6], Francesco Bertolazzi underlines the fact that introducing women in peacekeeping forces is essential because they have a privileged access to female populations. And yet, they are often the first targets during a conflict. But the main reason why women need to be part of peacekeeping missions is to better reflect the society with which they interact, so that lasting peace can be built.

Furthermore, Bertolazzi highlights that the best force will be a mixed one, but:

1. the teams should be equally mixed (have a ratio closer to 1/1 than 1/10)
2. women should not be limited to support staff roles.

Gerard DeGroot[9] reports the results of a UN survey showing that the number of rapes decreases when female soldiers are present in the field. The journalist advocates for an increased number of women in the peacekeeping forces, since their presence reduces the incidence of gender-based violence and they are therefore better placed to ensure peace.
See also

- UN Security Council Resolution 1325\textsuperscript{[11]}
- UN Security Council Resolution 1889\textsuperscript{[3]}
- Women, Peace and Security\textsuperscript{[20]}
- Gender and Peacebuilding Initiative\textsuperscript{[10]}

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\textsuperscript{[10]} http://wikigender.org/index.php/Gender_and_Peacebuilding_Initiative

External Links

- UN Peacekeeping's website (http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/)
- UN Peacekeeping's website: section on Gender (http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/)
Migration

Global Care Chain

Concept & definition
The term 'global care chain' was first used by Arlie Hochschild to refer to “a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring”.\cite{1} In this pioneering work, a global care chain was seen to typically involve: “An older daughter from a poor family who cares for her siblings while her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a migrating nanny who, in turn, cares for the child of a family in a rich country.” \cite{2}

Thus, the global care chain is begun by a woman in a rich, developed country who, having entered the labour force, is unable to fulfil her “domestic duties”. She therefore employs another woman in order to take on the domestic workload. This other woman tends to be from a poorer household and is, more and more frequently, an international migrant. This other woman also, in most cases, has dependent children in her home destination and therefore solicits the help of another woman from an even poorer background, to substitute for her in her domestic duties. Gradually the chain continues and, as we go down it, the value ascribed to the labour decreases and often becomes unpaid at the end of the chain.\cite{3}

Many analysts speak of household internationalisation whereby this trade in domestic labour creates transnational networks between various households and families across the globe.

Typically receiving countries include the United States, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain and Switzerland. The principal sending country is seen to be the Philippines. Others include Sri Lanka, Mexico and Central America to the US, Poland, Albania and Bulgaria to Greece, The Dominican Republic, Peru and Morocco to Spain.

Causes
The global care chain is a characteristic of an increasingly globalised world in which demand for migrant workers in developed countries as well as supply of migrants from less developed countries continues to grow.

The underlying causes of this phenomenon include:

- The entry of women into the labour force in the developed world, resulting in a reduced ability to attend to children and the elderly
- A lack of family-friendly policies and childcare facilities at places of work makes the demand for at home child carers higher
- Changes in the family structure
- The "care deficit": A shortage of public care services in developed countries
- Increasing longevity and size of the elderly population in developed countries
- Growing prosperity in richer countries.\cite{4}
Effects

International domestic workers are presented with various personal and social benefits in developed countries. Their wages can be sent back in remittances, not only allowing for improved opportunities for the children left behind, but also often considerably contributing to national economic development. Indeed, for many countries such as the Philippines, the income generated from overseas workers is key to national development.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of the global care chain also has a potential destabilising effect on the family. Having one parent, or in many cases both, living abroad can have a detrimental effect on the well-being of children left behind, although it has been highlighted that remittance gains have helped improve the education of children left behind. Migration therefore seldom allows for a stable, united family. Scholars often refer to Filipino families as “transnationally split” for example,[5] and underline the increased probability of negative effects on children left behind in the case of an absentee mother.

The feminisation of migration

The international trade in domestic labour must be placed in the context of overall increased international migration and, in particular, of the feminisation of international migration. Now, as women migrate independently and, in many cases, become a household’s principal income earner, scholars talk about the feminisation of migration.[6]

Domestic work is one of the largest sectors driving international female labour migration today.[7]

See also

- Female Migration [8]
- Filipina Migration

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[6] For example, Castles & Miller (2003), The Age of Migration, p.67
Filipina Migration

Introduction

A culture of migration has emerged in the Philippines, one of the world’s largest labour exporting countries with one in ten Filipinos living abroad. Female migration has continued to grow and women migrants now outnumber men in the Philippines. Over half of all Filipinos living abroad are women[1] and they have become a prominent feature of Filipino migration and wider international mobility. In fact, the presence and economic contribution of women to international migration has become more and more important. Now, as women migrate independently and, in many cases, become a household’s principal income earner, the “feminisation” of migration is increasingly evoked.

Motivations & causes

Macro level: State policy

When considering the motivations and causes for Filipina mobility at the macro level, state policy helps to explain the phenomenon. The government of the Philippines exhibits a huge openness towards migration, particularly female migration. It promotes and pursues gender-selective labour migration with an emphasis on domestic and care work for women and with the aim of securing the benefits of remittances.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) regulates overseas recruitment and protects the rights of migrant workers. Having ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW) in 1995, the Filipino government also works with governments of destination countries in order to protect and guarantee the rights of Overseas Filipino Workers. The Commission on Overseas Filipinos primarily “registers and provides pre-departure orientation seminars to emigrants.”[2] Accordingly, an increasing number of schools have been created in order to train female care workers before they go overseas, additionally prompting rural to urban migration within the Philippines prior to departure.[3] The Overseas Workers’ Welfare Administration, whose mission is "to protect and promote the welfare and well-being of Overseas Filipino Workers" [4], has branches in principal destination countries and supports families with relatives abroad. The Central Bank also works on enhancing the financial products and services available to migrants and migrant families. Finally, an Overseas Absentee Voting Act cementing the Filipino migrant’s transnational citizenship as well as an Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act were introduced in 2003.

All these factors undoubtedly create an environment in which Filipinas are encouraged to migrate and feel reassured and protected during their migratory experience.
**Micro level**

In the Philippines, there are several conditions that are conducive to female mobility. Firstly, Filipino women have more autonomy than in various developing states. For example, in many cases, it is the wife who manages the household finances and women are not inhibited from making independent decisions. In fact, it is believed that one-sixth of Filipinas never consult their family members about their decision to migrate.

Secondly, Filipinas experience low salaries and limited opportunities for employment in the Philippines, despite being more educated than other Southern migrants. Moreover, extended kinship relations prevail in Filipino society, making many women feel responsible to provide for their wider family.

On top of this, one can add the influence of migrant networks, friends and relatives already abroad and the possibility of fleeing an unhappy marriage. Given that divorce is illegal and separation condemned, migration often provides the yearn for an escape route. Therefore at the micro level and in conjunction with state policies there exists, amongst Filipinas, the desire and motivation as a precondition for emigration.

**Meso level**

Combining the macro and micro level factors favourable to migration creates a social environment in which international female mobility is encouraged and embraced. This is what Oishi refers to as "social legitimacy", which can be seen to work at the meso level in the Philippines. Due to continued state policies, female migration is socially accepted and even promoted in the media. Filipino society is one in which women are educated, economically active and mobile, both internally and internationally. It is also one that has a long history of feminist movements and female involvement in the fight for human rights. Finally, female migrants are also often considered a more reliable source for supplementing family incomes than males.

**Filipina migrants: heroines or victims?**

**National heroes...**

In 1988, President Cory Aquino referred, for the first time, to the overseas Filipino population as national heroes. This image has been sustained and popularised to the extent that overseas Filipino workers are even endowed with a national holiday in their honour, celebrated on the 7th June every year. As by far the country’s largest export, Filipino migrant workers play an important role in the country’s nation-building and development policy, aimed at improving the economy and standards of living. Remittances therefore make up to 13% of the country’s GDP, with inflows reaching 19 billion US dollars in 2009, a figure that has consistently increased over the years. Remittances are also the single most important source of income for Filipino households with overseas migrants. Given that women constitute over half of the migrant population and that they are often stated as sending back more remittances than men, the state is effectively reliant upon female migration for its economic development.
Bridging the gender gap
Filipina migrants can also be seen as contributing to increased gender equality in the sense that their migratory experience provides them with a feeling of liberation and independence. Positing the female as the main income earner of a household also has the potential to change traditional, patriarchal gender roles, providing women with more power and autonomy. Nevertheless, the repercussions for constructions of masculinity could be a source of conflict, as men are obliged to stay at home or assume a less dominant role. The Filipina migrants have also acquired more political clout, becoming active "rights conscious" campaigners. For example, alongside NGOs and civil society, Filipinas campaigned to achieve a minimum wage for migrants in Hong Kong in the 1990s.

Or victims of the global capitalist system?
That said, there are various aspects of the Filipina migratory experience that justify the "victim" hypothesis. Studies examining the feminisation of international migration often evoke its association with the illegalisation of labour migration and the increased vulnerability of females migrating alone. The majority of the Filipina labour diaspora in Asia works on a temporary basis in low-skilled jobs. Indeed, several researchers note a tendency towards "downward mobility" for Filipinas in that they occupy jobs that are not only rejected by the local population, but also inferior to their educational qualifications. In destination countries, they are poorly paid, they experience unsatisfactory work, poor living conditions and they are often ostracised from society. Despite this, they continue to migrate, frequently pressured by the obligation to provide for their families.

Asian destination countries have limited policies for immigrants. They are keen to maintain a system of temporary migration which fulfils their labour requirements, yet restricts immigrant participation, integration and resettlement opportunities. In the majority of cases, immigrants are not protected by legislation or employment acts, making them legally invisible and susceptible to exploitation. In Singapore, for example, Filipinas working in the domestic sector have poor pay and living conditions because, since they do not work in the industrial sector, they are not considered to be “productive”. Moreover, if a migrant is exploited or experiencing abuse, there are little or no legal instruments at their disposal. This is especially problematic in the case of domestic workers employed in private homes.

There have been a number of cases signalling the exploitation and victimisation of female Filipino migrant workers overseas. The most famous was the case of Flor Contemplacion in 1995 who was hanged in Singapore for the double murder of a Singaporean boy and another Filipina migrant worker. It is widely believed that Flor was coerced into a confession and that the father of the household was actually responsible. The episode led to a serious deterioration in Filipino-Singaporean diplomatic relations and her story was used by the media and human rights groups as representative of the plight of the Filipina diaspora. Another example was the case of Maricris Sioson in 1991, employed as an entertainer in Japan, whose murder was suspected to have been concealed by Japanese authorities.
Transnationally split families

In analysing the negative outcomes of gender-selective mobility in the Philippines it is important to mention the potential destabilising effect on the family. Having one parent, or in many cases both, living abroad can have a detrimental effect on the well-being of children left behind although the improved education of children left behind, brought about by remittance gains, has been highlighted. The destabilising effect on the family is particularly problematic on the Asian continent since neither the possibility of naturalisation nor family unification is afforded to migrants by governments. Migration therefore seldom allows for a stable, united family. Scholars often refer to Filipino families as "transnationally-split"[20] and underline the increased probability of negative effects on children left behind in the case of an absentee mother.

Looking Forward

It would seem that today's Filipina migrants can still be positioned at the centre of the "heroine-victim" debate. Their impact on development in the Philippines is crucial and the support and recognition Filipina migrants receive from the state is significant. In response to cases such as those of Flor Contemplacion and Maricris Sioson, the government of the Philippines responded with legal and diplomatic measures on protecting migrant worker's rights and welfare such as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and the ratification of the ICRMW.[21] Filipinos in fact benefit from a more advantageous position in comparison to other intra-regional migrants. In part due to their reputation as reliable, educated and diligent workers, in part due to promotion by the government, Filipinos generally receive better pay and living conditions than other Asian migrants.

However, it is difficult to ignore how advances in female emancipation in the case of Filipina migrants are undermined in the face of continuing exploitation and pressure. The suggestion that though independent migration women may acquire more autonomy and gender equality is challenged by the fact that mass Filipina labour migration as maids, housekeepers and carers is simply reinforcing a patriarchal order in which women occupy domestic roles. Parreñas aptly gauges that "the economic growth of the Philippines in globalisation depends on the maintenance of gender equalities. The ideology of women's domesticity remains strongly in place as it undergirds the entrance of women into the global labour market" [22].

Nevertheless, the importance of considering gendered migration and its link to economic and social development, especially in the South, cannot be underestimated. The case of the Filipina diaspora is the most potent example of the phenomenon of feminisation in contemporary international migration. It highlights the gendered motivations and consequences of mobility as well as the increasing importance and impact of female migration, particularly in the Global South. Finally, it illustrates that women, as half of all migrants in the world today, makes gender a fundamental element of migration that should be integrated into migration studies, debate and policy.

See also

• Female Migration [8]
• Gender Equality in the Philippines [23]
• Global Care Chain

References

[3] International Organisation for Migration (2009), Gender and Labour Migration in Asia, p. 28
Mail-order brides

Understanding the phenomenon

History

The mail-order brides industry is not recent. It has known a new birth with Internet but it already existed before, with the concept of “picture brides”. International marriage agencies used to have paper catalogues listing the brides-to-be. This process took its name through the idea that the marriage was preceded by an exchange of pictures of the future wife and future husband, in order to allow them to recognise each other, as they had never met before.

This phenomenon has known a new birth with the new technologies of information and communication. It is indeed easier to match people living on different continents with the help of Internet and emails than going through catalogues or writing paper letters. The number of international marriage brokers has exploded since then.

Who are mail-order brides?

The data on the subject reveals that most mail-order brides come from the Philippines followed by women from the former communist bloc.

In the Philippines, the extent of the phenomenon can be explained by the fact that migration is common in the country. Following the rule of Ferdinand Marcos, about 10% of the population was led to work outside of the country. As a result, the economy of the Philippines relies a lot on the remittances sent by these workers and as a result, it relies on migration in general. We can also think that it has a role in explaining the big number of mail-order brides coming from that country.

Mail-order brides generally live in the countryside and they are very poor. Through the international marriage industry, they are looking for a wealthy man that could provide them with financial security. Many of these women are looking for American men, as marrying them is a way of accessing the American dream.
Mail-order brides

Image of the typical “consumer groom”

The “consumer groom” is the man looking through the international marriage agencies’ catalogues for a young foreign woman. He is generally older than his bride-to-be (with often around 20 years of age difference), him being around his forties and her being around her twenties. He has been married before but he wants to have more children. Also, he is looking for a woman with traditional values, meaning a woman that will stay at home and take care of the children.\[3\]

An example in South Korea

Many Korean men benefit from the international marriage industry, looking for women in the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Mongolia. In South Korea, the sex ratio \[4\] between men and women is very high. In 2012, it is thought that there will be 124 men for 100 women. This phenomenon can be explained by sex-selective abortions and other methods of gender selection \[5\]. Therefore, men need to look for foreign women if they want to marry and have a family. As a result, 11% of the newlyweds on average marry a foreigner and among them, a big majority consists in a South Korean man marrying a foreign woman.\[6\] Thus in South Korea, going through the international marriage industry is a way of finding women to build a family.

Dangers for mail-order brides

Mail-order brides tend to be more likely to be victims of domestic violence \[7\], sexual abuse \[8\] and prostitution \[7\].

Domestic violence

There have been cases of mail-order brides killed by their “husband”, fearing a divorce. However, it is very difficult to get data on the frequency of domestic violence among couples made of a mail-order bride and a consumer groom. Indeed, the studies in this field do not distinguish between mixed couples and others. Furthermore, mail-order brides are less likely to report such violence. In any case, not reporting domestic violence is a global tendency, since few women dare complaining about their husband due to moral and social pressure. Therefore, not only this phenomenon concerns mail-order brides but it is also more frequent among them, considering they are afraid of deportation, they are far from moral support from their family and sometimes they do not even speak the language of their host country fluently enough.\[3\]

Sex trafficking

According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, sex trafficking can be defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.”\[8\] Some consider that international marriage agencies’ work is trafficking per se whereas others consider the idea of sex trafficking through the observation that mail-order brides are very often involved in prostitution circles once in their host country. Trafficking per se is defined by Professor Kathleen Barry as a “situation where women or girls cannot change the immediate conditions of their existence, where regardless of how they got into those conditions, they cannot get out; and where they are subject to sexual violence or exploitation.”\[9\] And yet, this corresponds to the situation of mail-order brides who, once in the country of their husband, have few possibilities outside of the wedlock.

As a result, Itta C. Englander\[3\] underlines that the only difference between sex trafficking and international marriage agencies if that the latter involves marriage. All of the agencies focus on the sex qualities of the brides-to-be.
National and international regulations concerning mail-order brides

In the United States

In 1996 the Mail-Order Bride Act (MOBA) was passed. It recognised mail-order brides as a distinct category in terms of immigration and it required international marriage brokerages to provide information to mail-order brides about conditional permanent status, permanent resident status, waivers available for battered spouses, marriage fraud penalties and the lack of regulation in the international marriage brokerage industry.

This text was replaced in 2006 by the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act (IMBRA) \[10\], which aims at reducing the information gap existing between the bride and the groom. Often, although the groom can have a lot of information about the wife he is "ordering", the mail-order bride knows nothing about the man she is about to marry. Among others, the IMBRA \[10\] created a pamphlet to be sent to every K-1 visa applicant. This pamphlet is written by the Department of Homeland Security, the Attorney General and the Secretary of State, in cooperation with several organisations related to immigration or sexual crimes. Furthermore, the international marriage brokerages now have to provide women with information about the consumer grooms. In parallel, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) specifically focuses on the problem of trafficking. It provides assistance to the victims of trafficking.\[3\]

In the Philippines

The Philippines outlawed the international marriage industry in 1990. However, it has not had a big effect on the industry. The law forbids any international marriage brokerage to be created in the country, so the result was that they relocated outside, but it did not prevent Filipinas to be involved in this industry.\[3\]

International Conventions

The UN General Assembly adopted in 1979 the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW) \[11\].

See also

- International Marriage Broker Regulation Act (IMBRA) \[10\]
- CEDAW \[11\]
- Gender Equality in the Philippines \[23\]
- Gender Equality in South Korea \[12\]

References

External links


Women migrants' remittances

Remittances are the amount of money that migrants send back to their family left behind. Several studies showed that they have an impact on development and poverty.

In 2005, remittances represented about US$232 billion, of which developing countries received US$167 billion according to the World Bank. However, this amount only includes money transferred through formal channels. Thus, remittances are a lot larger than official development aid. Furthermore, they sometimes constitute an important part of a country's GDP. In Moldova[1], Lesotho or Haiti, they represent about 25% of the national GDP. [2]

Women now represent about 49.6% of global migratory flows according to an UN-INSTRAW [3] study.[4]

The specificity of women migrants’ remittances

The total amount of money women send may seem lower than the total amount of money sent by men, but we have to take into consideration that on average, women receive less pay for equal work. Furthermore, women tend to occupy low-paid jobs, being on average less able to send greater amounts of money. Nevertheless, data shows that women send a higher proportion of their earnings and that they do so regularly and consistently.[5]

Beneficiaries of remittances

A study by UN-INSTRAW in the Dominican Republic shows that 80% of women migrants' remittances go to other women. Therefore, remittances contribute to women's empowerment. Another positive outcome is that when they send remittances, women migrants gain more autonomy and negotiating power within the household.[4]

How remittances are used in the receiving country

Consumption or productive investment?

Studies show that in general, remittances are mainly used for family well-being, including education, health, basic consumption needs and house construction. They are rarely used for “productive investment” such as starting a business, opening a shop, etc. Remittances are mainly used for human and physical capital improvement, such as education and health. This can also be seen as a long-term investment or virtuous circle. Remittances tend to favour girls as they are the ones lacking from education and the first ones to suffer from poor health, and women who migrate and send remittances back home tend to favour girls’ empowerment and education. [5]

Economic or social remittances?

Some scholars differentiate between economic and social remittances, the latter being ideas, skills or knowledge: some women may have a stronger impact on the situation in their home country when they are abroad. For example, some Afghan expatriate women had a strong role in convincing their counterparts remained in Afghanistan to participate in the creation of the new constitution.[2] Furthermore, women migrants who are educated abroad can have a positive impact on the improvement of child health and the reduction of mortality rates.
**Individual or collective remittances?**

Collective remittances are sent through a group of people, mainly through the diaspora. It has been shown that these remittances rarely benefit women, except for a few exceptions. Among them, we can cite the Netherlands Filipino Association Overseas which uses the remittances received to support women through microcredit and the creation of small firms in the Philippines. This association is an example of how women take control of their remittances. However, overall women still lack the decision-making power over their money, both on the sending and receiving ends. To counter that, more and more migrant women organise themselves into groups in order to manage the way the remittances are sent, their amount, as well as who they will benefit.

**See also**

- Female Migration
- Filipina Migration
- Global Care Chain

**References**


**External links**

- Women migrants and remittances on Eldis (http://www.eldis.org/index.cfm?objectId=6D13123D-DF66-425D-C508ECFE66D0FAFA)
Women Migrant Workers in Saudi Arabia

Overview

While migrant workers in Saudi Arabia have generally been on the rise, the percentage of women[8] that venture to the oil-rich country in order to make more money than they can earn in their home countries has been notably increasing over the past decade.[1] While some have found the financial success that they were looking, many others have instead found themselves trapped in desperate situations with no one to turn to.[2] While most countries that depend on Saudi oil refrain from criticising the kingdom on their human rights abuses, international organisations such as The United Nations, the International Labour Organization[3] and Human Rights Watch[4] have alerted the international community to the dire situation of migrant women workers in the country.

Background

The majority of women migrant workers in Saudi Arabia come from Indonesia and The Philippines. Beginning in the early 1980s, in response to the rapid growth of wealth in Saudi Arabia, the monarchy began to put policies into place to recruit large amounts of foreign workers to do the type of work that most Saudis consider to be beneath them. The Indonesian government, for example, also enacted policies to help facilitate the migration of their women citizens to Saudi Arabia with the hope that it would alleviate their unemployment problems and also help their economy through remittances.[5] Private agents from Middle Eastern countries began to come to Indonesia to recruit able-bodied women for ill-defined jobs. Such recruitments resulted in 55,976 recorded migrant workers (male and female) that left Indonesia for Saudi Arabia between 1980 and 1984.[5] In 1990, women represented almost 34% of the migrants with almost 80% of them leaving to become domestic servants.[6] Additionally, many women and men try to avoid the complexities of the formal process and instead go through intermediaries that work in their villages and help them illegally enter Saudi Arabia so exact numbers are difficult to determine.

Current Situation

Many of these women leave their impoverished situations with the hope of earning enough money in Saudi Arabia to send back to their families and while that is the case for many, they are still legally unprotected from their employers once they have arrived. While the Saudi Arabian government provides guidebooks about their rights to newly arrived workers, most women do not understand Arabic and even if they do, they quickly realise that they do not actually have that many rights.[7] A report produced by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (Migrant workers in SAUDI ARABIA[8]) in March 2003 noted that migrant workers made up 50% of the Saudi workforce.[9] Women, in particular those coming from Indonesia and Philippines, often work as domestic servants.

Hopeful migrant workers come to Saudi Arabia legally under a sponsorship system in which they are invited by their employer - whether it is a company, the state or an individual. Once they arrive in the country, migrant workers are at the mercy of their sponsors who frequently detain their passports, limit their mobility[10] and have full authority over whether the migrant worker can change jobs or even leave the country. A 2004 report by the International Labour Organization[3] notes that in 2000, over 19,000 domestic workers ran away from their employers due to not being paid and being mistreated.[6] Additionally, in a country where sexual activities outside of marriage are considered to be a major offense in the eyes of the law, many domestic workers report being sexually abused and raped[10] by their employers. While the embassies and the Saudi government receive thousands of complaints a year from domestic workers, the actual number is estimated to be much higher given that most of these migrant workers are completely cut off from the world outside their employer’s home.[11]
For unskilled workers, legal action against their employers is nearly impossible and their ability to escape can be difficult. As noted, employers frequently confiscate their employees’ passport and if a migrant worker is stopped outside the home without proper documentation, they can be arrested as undocumented aliens and forced to pay a large sum. Whether arrested for not having documentation or on other grounds, foreign workers in Saudi Arabia are often held for long periods where they are mistreated and deprived of legal counsel and the ability to contact their consulate. They are often held without knowing the charges and many have been tricked into signing confessions that they do not understand due to the language barrier. The only option for these workers if they are mistreated by their employers is to contact their embassy to see if they can resolve the issue with their employer. This can result in a long process during which the employee may not be paid and is not able to return to his/her home country. As many workers fear these consequences, they often choose to run away to one of the safe houses that are operated by the embassies. Once in these shelters, women are unable to leave or to use cell phones and they often end up staying for months before being able to return home or being returned to their employers. Human Rights Watch reported that in July of 2007, the shelter run by the Indonesian embassy housed 500 women. Unfortunately, the women living in the squalor of the shelters are lucky compared to some of the other migrant workers in the country. Stories and reports of the mistreatment of these women have been trickling out over the years without bringing much change. An article published by Human Rights Watch in 2007 tells of the shocking killing of two Indonesian domestic workers by their employers which also left two other domestic workers in a critical condition. The Saudi family justified their actions by claiming that the four servants had practiced black magic on their son. The same article also interviewed Sri Lankan domestic workers who were sentenced to prison and lashings after being raped and impregnated by their employers. A more recent article published by The Guardian in June 2011 tells of the execution of an Indonesian maid who killed her boss after he tried to rape her. Due to extreme mistreatment, sexual abuse and forced isolation, some of the migrant workers resort to desperate measures when they realise that they have no legal way out of their circumstances and are denied permission to leave Saudi Arabia.

A need for change

While reports and articles have been written over the years about the plight of female migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, not much has been done to improve the situation. When it was requested requested that the Saudi Arabian government provide health insurance for maids and background information on their future employers before Filipinas depart for Saudi Arabia, their requests were promptly denied. Philippines government also refused a decrease of the minimum wage for domestic workers which resulted in a hiring freeze of maids from Philippines. In addition, the Indonesian government stopped the migration of their citizens to Saudi Arabia after one of their citizens was executed. While these governments attempt to improve the treatment and protection of their citizens in Saudi Arabia by stopping the flow of their unskilled workers to the country, the reality is that these efforts typically do not last very long. Such countries rely on the remittances provided by their foreign workers and Saudi Arabia is a huge source of this cash flow. While international organisations and NGOs have also put pressure on the Saudi government to improve domestic worker conditions, it is important for them to increase the visibility of abuses and mistreatments and to engage more powerful governments such as The United States or Germany in the effort to protect female migrant workers in Saudi Arabia. Women need more help in the form of legal protection and access to services during their stay. If the international community can push the Saudi government to make these changes, a large improvement in women’s rights could be achieved.
See also

- Female Migration [8]
- Women and Migration [15]
- Filipina Migration
- Gender Equality in Saudi Arabia [16]
- Sexual Segregation and Male Guardianship in Saudi Arabia [17]
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