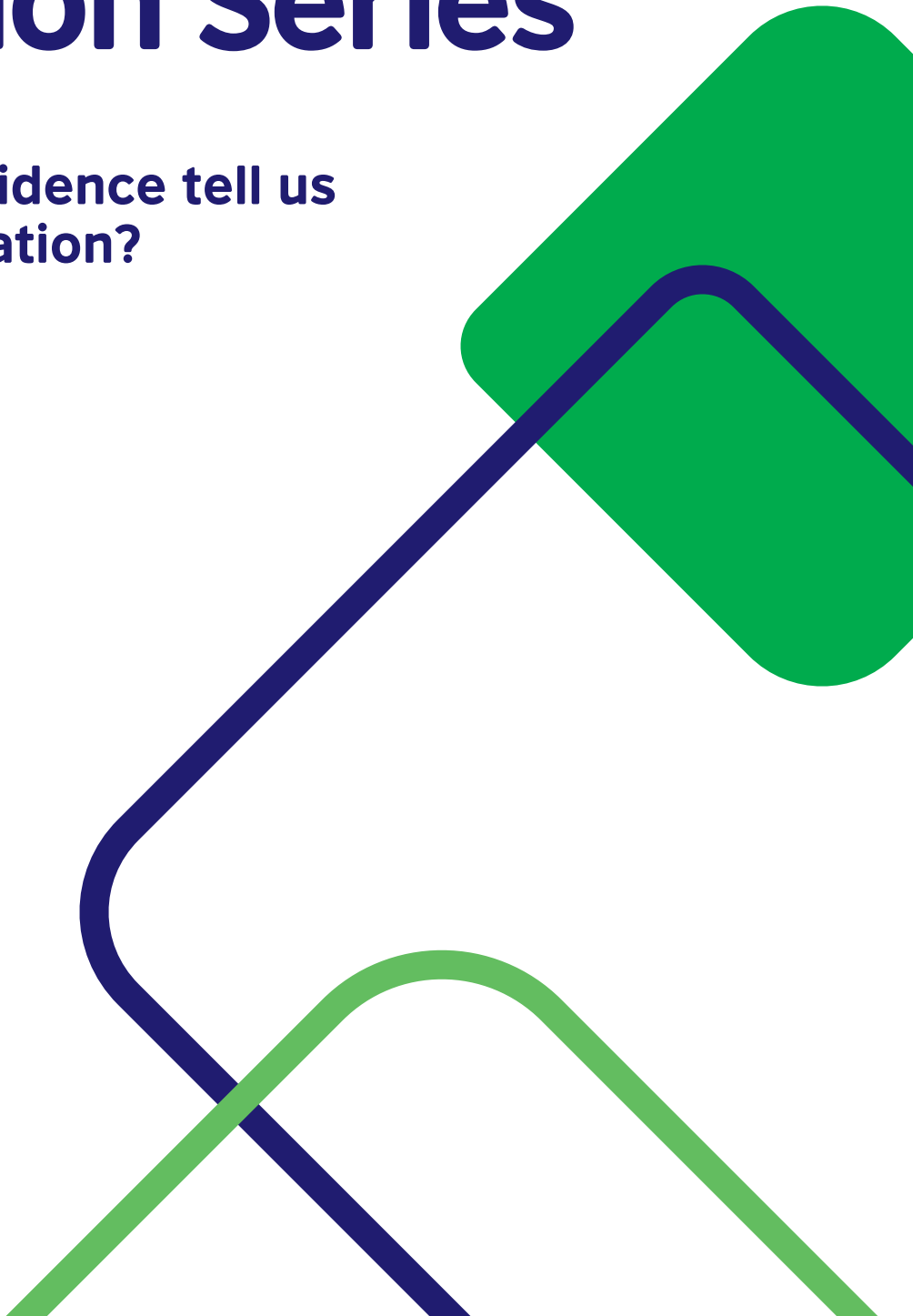


Sub-Saharan Africa Education Series

**What does the evidence tell us
about girls' education?**

June 2021



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Foreword

The story of girls' education in Africa is a complex one, full of challenges but also hope. It is a problem that has been exacerbated by Covid-19, the closure of education establishments, early marriages and pregnancies that mean millions of girls may never return to school.

In this series of three research reports, we take different standing points to look at girls' education: the big picture (through our review of literature undertaken with the University of Birmingham), the fine print (through our work with the Education Development Trust investigating girls' education in 477 schools in Kano and Lagos States in Nigeria) and through the opinions and practices of the teachers themselves through our Connecting Classrooms programme.

If we were to draw the broadest of conclusions across this work, it would be that all work to improve the outlook for girls' education needs disciplined data and an acute sense of context. There can be no significant, long-term improvements for girls without working with teachers, school leaders, government ministries and agencies and harnessing the power of local communities. There can also be no improvements without the data to measure them.

Measuring impact and working in the local context are core practices of the British Council across our work but we have an arsenal of other skills and experiences to turn towards the problem.

Our **long-term presence and commitment to quality education** in the region gives us an in-depth understanding of country education systems and the cultural context. Our relationships with key state and non-state agencies and actors helps to amplify the impact of our work.

Our experience of **strengthening national education systems** through our work with ministries of education enables us to engage strategically and encourage gender responsive approaches and focus on girls' education.

Our inclusion-focused **teacher professional development** includes sensitisation training and gender-responsive pedagogies, with modules on differentiated needs and teaching at the right level – approaches we feel will be essential in post-pandemic catch-up and recovery. This is mirrored in our work building foundational skills (including English literacy)

through remedial learning for primary school girls both to help them catch up and to encourage them to stay in education.

Improvements in classroom approaches are underscored by a focus on **Instructional leadership** approaches, which inform and enable school leaders to build an inclusive culture in school and which gives an entry point to encourage a focus on girls' education at school level and in the community. Instructional leadership concentrates on raising the standard of classroom teaching, particularly for literacy and numeracy.

Our experience of **building foundational skills such as English literacy** through remedial learning for primary school girls enables us to contribute to providing catch-up support to help children, particularly girls, who are falling behind (Kano Literacy and Maths Accelerator Nigeria, Building Learning Foundations Rwanda) and motivate them to continue learning.

Of the ten lowest performing countries for girls getting into secondary school, six out of ten are in Africa (UNESCO). The continent also has the highest gender disparity in education in the world across metrics such as literacy and drop-out rates. The problem is there to see, but the solutions require long-term, consistent work across a range of sectors by a range of organisations.

**Andrew Zerzan, Director Cultural Engagement,
Sub-Saharan Africa**

Introduction

The aim of this report is to synthesise key findings from three different types of research undertaken by the British Council during the first half of 2021 under the following themes aligned to its education programming areas of interest:

- Teacher professional development and instructional leadership
- Quality of teaching and learning
- Strengthening education systems
- Language and girls' education
- Remedial and non-formal education

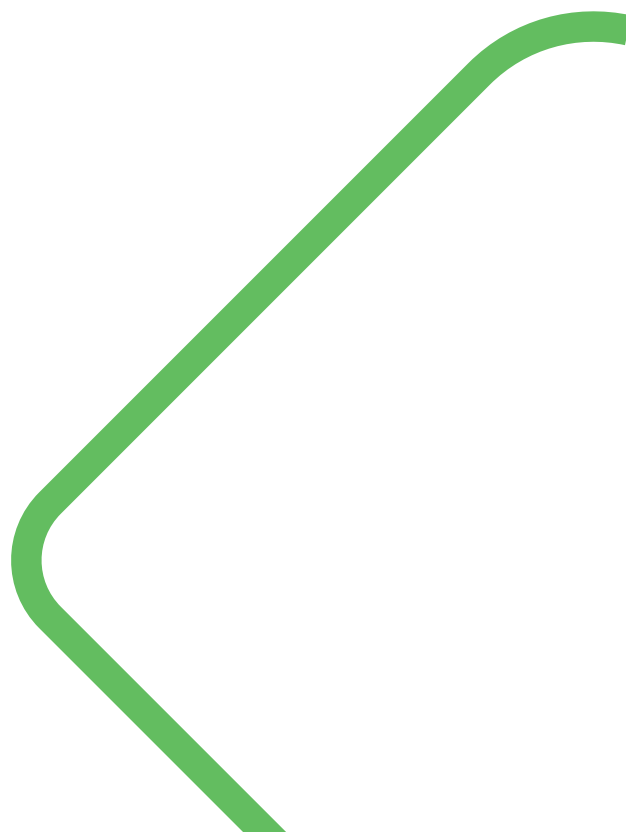
The aims and methodologies of the three research studies are detailed as follows:

- Education resilience research conducted through the British Council – FCDO Connecting Classrooms for Global Learning (CCGL) programme set out to understand the response of education stakeholders to the Covid-19 pandemic. The research team conducted interviews and focus group discussions with 1,758 teachers, 1,239 school leaders from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya and Ghana.
- A literature review: Assessing the evidence on addressing gender inequality through girls' education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), (Boateng et al: 2021). This study highlights key research relating to the progress, critical issues and ongoing barriers relating to girls' education in sub-Saharan Africa, review evidence on effective interventions in relation to British Council programming areas and identify potential programming entry points for the British Council for impact on girls' education in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The review collates recent relevant literature and international expert thinking. It draws on multiple sources and databases as well as the authors' collective expertise in this area. Focus countries for the report included: Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Somalia, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Illustrative examples were drawn from these countries and feature throughout the report.

- A mixed-method research study combining a survey with the development of 'bright spot' case studies through in-depth interviews. Teachers as Change Agents; how teachers are working in schools to improve girls' education and gender equity in two states in Nigeria (British Council and EDT 2021) investigates how teachers and school leaders might improve girls' education and gender equity in 477 schools in Nigeria.

In addition to this synthesis report, the full reports are available at <https://www.britishcouncil.org/society/womens-and-girls-empowerment/research-reports>

The first section of this report outlines an overview of the issues surrounding girls' education identified by the three research reports. This is followed by a presentation of the critical issues and barriers to girls' education through themes that are critical to the British Council's work in education. These themes include teacher professional development and instructional leadership, strengthening education systems, language policy and practice related to our work on English as Language of Instruction, remedial and non-formal education. The report then presents some of the existing evidence of 'what works' across the thematic areas in relation to girls' education in Sub-Saharan-Africa and concludes with recommendations for programming.



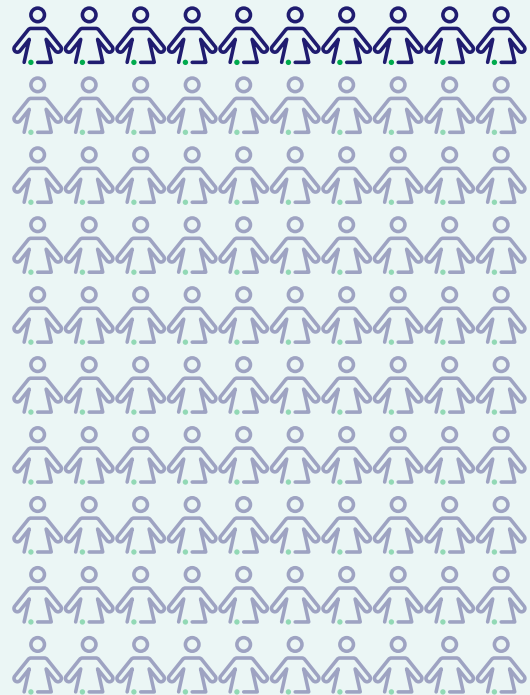
Overview of Girls Education

Globally, there have been **significant increases in girls' enrolment in education**. Since 1995, the number of girls enrolled in primary and secondary school has risen by 180 million. Between 1995 and 2018, the percentage of countries with gender parity in education increased from 56 per cent to 65 per cent at the primary level, 45 per cent to 51 per cent at the lower secondary level and from 13 per cent to 24 per cent in upper secondary education. Similar trends have been observed across countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Zambia in 2001, only one in five girls from poor households in rural areas were completing primary school, but this rose to 45 per cent in 2013 (Rose et al., 2017 cited in Boateng et al, 2021)

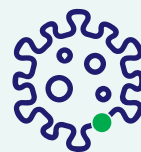
Girls' learning outcomes have also improved globally. In more than half of the countries that took part in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2000 and 2018, girls performed equally as well as boys in reading and mathematics and did better than boys in mathematics in one quarter of countries (UNESCO, 2020 cited in Boateng et al 2021).

However, girls in Sub-Saharan Africa still face a range of **intersecting barriers in accessing** quality education. For example, data from SSA found that in many countries, no more than 10 girls out of every 100 complete lower secondary school. Data from Cameroon and Malawi shows that only 24 per cent and 29 per cent of girls from poor households in rural areas completed primary school respectively (Ngware et al., 2018 cited in Boateng et al, 2021). Furthermore, one third of girls aged 10 to 19 from the poorest households are still in primary school. Additional barriers intersect with discriminatory gender norms; for example, in Ethiopia, only four per cent of children with disabilities were enrolled in school, with boys outnumbering girls three to one in lower primary school (Plan International et al., 2020 cited in Boateng et al, 2021).

Even when girls can access education, **there remain gender disparities in learning outcomes**. In Ghana, in 12 years of schooling, on average girls experience only six years of learning; in Tanzania, of an average of eight years in school, girls experience only five years of learning and in Nigeria, it is only four years of learning. In countries where fewer than 50 per cent of children complete primary school, learning gaps between boys and girls are the widest, with poverty compounding these gaps.



NO MORE THAN 10 GIRLS OUT OF EVERY 100 complete lower secondary school.



THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND PROLONGED SCHOOL CLOSURES have had a huge impact on girls and the gains of recent years are at risk of being eroded



Girls who spend **28 HOURS** or more per week in domestic and care work spent **25 PER CENT** less time at school than those involved in **10 HOURS** or fewer.

Economic factors exacerbate barriers to **girls' education**. **Girls' education is more vulnerable to income shocks**, and more likely to be mediated by low expectations about the potential returns from educating girls in comparison to boys. This was also explicit in the responses from teachers in Kano and Lagos with 49 per cent of the teachers surveyed stating that a lack of money for school fees, uniform and school supplies, followed by the need for girls to work for money (mentioned by 30 per cent of teachers) were the two most frequently mentioned barriers to girls enrolling and staying in school. The economic impact of Covid-19 and prolonged school closures have had a huge impact on girls and the gains of recent years are at risk of being eroded.

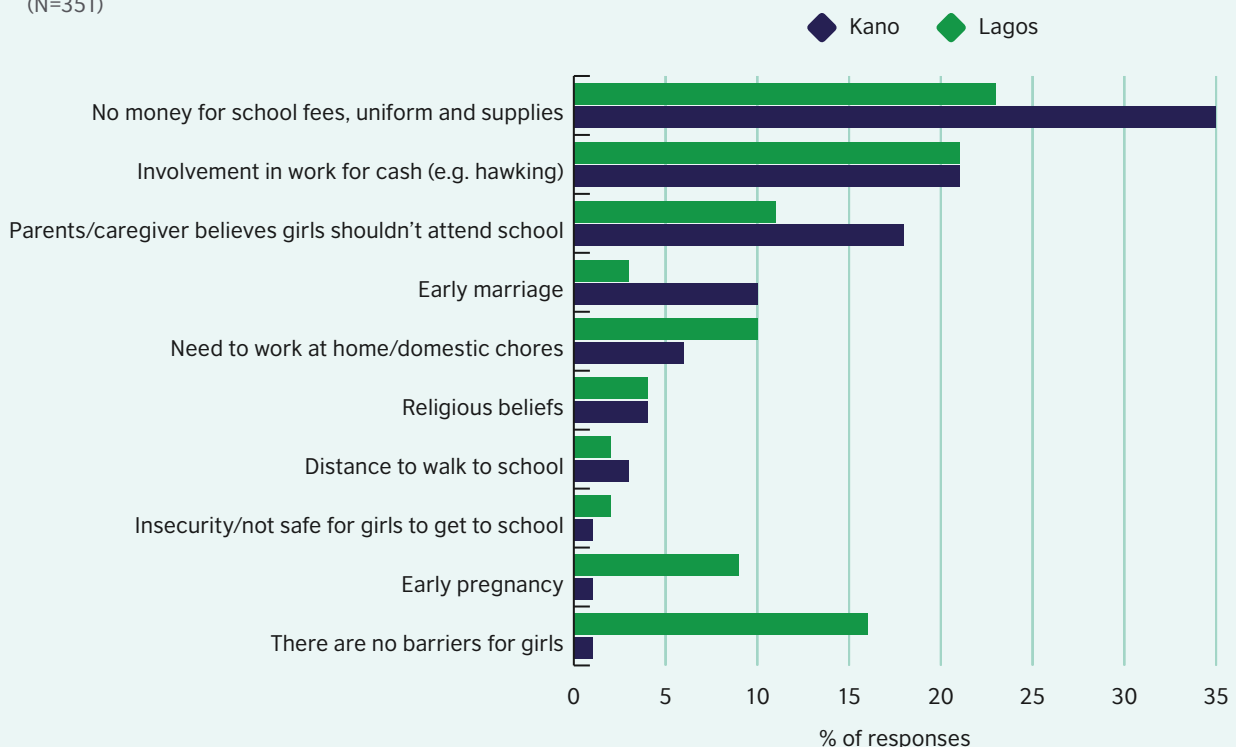
Social expectations and norms, particularly for adolescent girls, can lead to dropout. For example, social pressure surrounding marriage, or related to early pregnancy are often cited as reasons for dropout in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. More teachers in Kano (10 per cent) responded that early marriage was a cause of girls not enrolling in schools, compared to three per cent of teachers in Lagos state. Only a small number of teachers in the Nigeria research mentioned disability or learning disability as a cause of girls not enrolling in school.

Caregivers' attitudes to girls' education are often shaped by gender norms and were highlighted by 23 per cent of teachers in Lagos and Kano states as a barrier to girls enrolling and staying in school. The burden of **unpaid care and domestic responsibilities can disrupt girls' attendance** at school, for instance, girls who spend 28 hours or more per week in domestic and care work spent 25 per cent less time at school than those involved in 10 hours or fewer.

School-related gender-based violence affects girls' access to school and impacts their learning. In many rural areas, greater distance to school has stronger negative effects on girls' access to education due to concerns about the safety of girls on the journey to school. The most recent data also points to high levels of violence in schools with incidences of sexual violence seen to be higher in schools in the poorest communities.

Classrooms that are not gender-sensitive may reinforce gender stereotypes and exacerbate girls' exclusion. In many contexts the 'hidden curriculum', or gender bias from teachers or gendered stereotypes in learning resources, can reduce girls' motivation for learning and their self-esteem. The *teachers as change*

Chart 1 Economic factors and parental beliefs were believed to be the top three barriers to girls' education
 Teachers in all school types: In your community, why do girls not enrol in school. Please tell us the top 3 reasons (N=351)



agents research in Lagos and Kano states of Nigeria also established that teachers' attitudes towards girls, especially where girls were seen as less engaged with school and learning, is also likely to impact on their schooling experiences.

The socio-economic impact of **Covid-19** and prolonged school closures have had a **greater impact on girls than on boys**. Across the five countries surveyed in the Connecting Classrooms for Global Learning (CCGL) Education Resilience research, teachers and school leaders highlighted an increase in incidents of abuse and exploitation, both within and outside the home. The most prominent type of abuse mentioned by teachers and school leaders was sexual, which disproportionately affected girls. Education stakeholders also highlighted the high incidences of pregnancies among female learners during the lockdown, with some reported to have entered early and forced marriages.

Gender norms that already limit girls' access to technology have had a disproportionate impact on their learning opportunities during lockdowns (Amaro et al., 2020; Naylor et al., 2020 cited in Boateng et al. 2021). For example, studies have shown that 37 per cent of girls contacted in Uganda had no access to the television and radio-based study material provided by the Ministry of Education during Covid-19 and 50 per

cent of them reported not having any home school help (Tsegaye Tsemma, 2020 cited in Boateng et al. 2021).

The CCGL Education Resilience research also established that some parents and guardians saw the **lockdown and closure of schools as an opportunity to exploit the additional labour** presented by children being at home. Where the home-schooling environment was not conducive due to competing household needs, many learners missed out on attending lessons completely.

In Nigeria, the teachers and school leaders surveyed through the CCGL Education Resilience research stated that internally displaced children were also affected by the prolonged school closures, resulting in an increase of girls who do not have access to basic education; while for learners with special needs, learning stopped the moment schools were closed. They were further excluded by remote learning methods as they did not receive learning materials for self-study.



The socio-economic impact of Covid-19 and prolonged school closures have had a greater impact on girls than on boys. Across the five countries surveyed in the Connecting Classrooms for Global Learning (CCGL) Education Resilience research, teachers and school leaders highlighted an increase in incidents of abuse and exploitation, both within and outside the home.

Ongoing issues and critical barriers to girls' education within thematic areas

Teacher Professional Development and Instructional Leadership

Teachers in Kano and Lagos states generally demonstrated that they have a positive attitude towards their role as change agents and an understanding that the role of a teacher includes discussion, relationship building, and (to a degree) shaping the gendered attitudes and behaviors of students. In the classroom, teachers demonstrated their understanding of the value of inclusive and child-centred teaching approaches to improve the learning of all students and felt that these techniques were beneficial for girls.

A similar trend was observed across the five countries surveyed in the CGL Education Resilience research, where 59 per cent of the school leaders stated they used their professional knowledge to encourage discussion and changes to benefit disadvantaged students including girls. This is aligned with the findings from the *teachers as change agents* research where the majority of primary school teachers (62 per cent) across Kano and Lagos states *strongly agreed* with the statement that teachers should encourage male and female students to carry out the same activities in class and a further 34 per cent agreed with the statement. Secondary school teachers in the two states were equally positive about their own classrooms with 91 per cent of them *agreeing* that they had created a safe and supportive environment for girls in their classroom. The majority of school principals across Kano and Lagos states agreed with

“

I give equal opportunities like leadership to both girls and boys. School and classroom leadership are always assigned fairly and equally. We have both females and males as class reps and school prefects.

Interview - Male principal, School 20, Kano state

62
PER CENT



THE MAJORITY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

(62 per cent) across Kano and Lagos states strongly agreed with the statement that teachers should encourage male and female students to carry out the same activities in class

the statement that teachers in their schools take action to discourage gender stereotypes. However, eight secondary school principals (25 per cent of the respondents disagreed with this statement, along with four primary school principals (seven per cent).

“

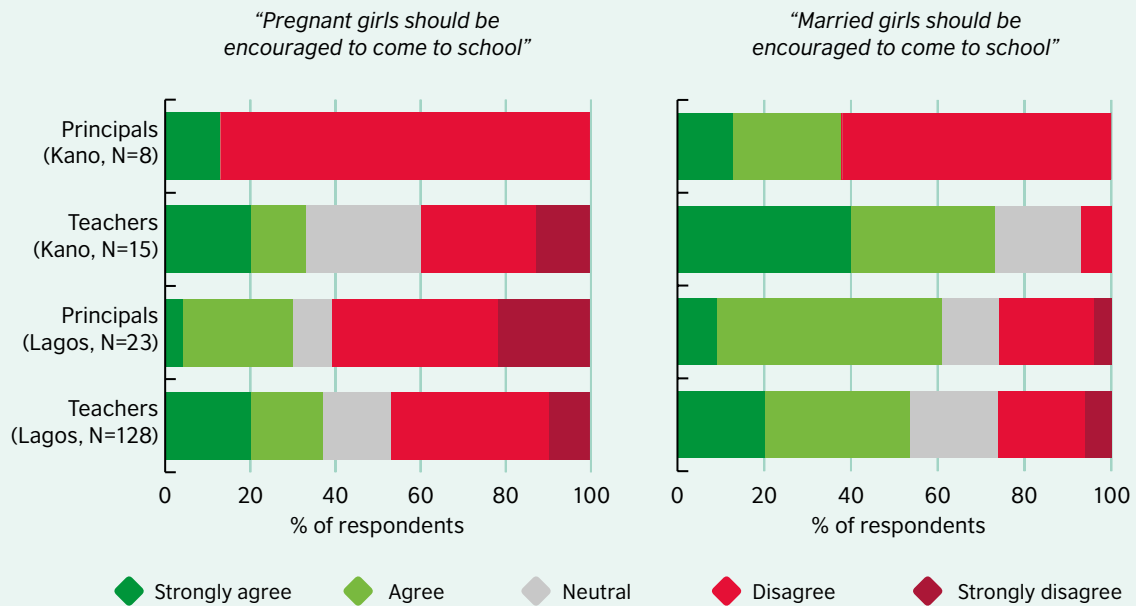
Duty roster for sweeping the classroom is made for both male and female [students]. Cleaning of class board is for both male and female [students]. Mopping of the classroom is for both male and female [students].

Open ended survey response 1597 – female teacher, Lagos state

Across many schools in Lagos and Kano states, teachers' responses also pointed to the steps taken towards the development of **strong relationships between staff and pupils that enable girls to seek support when faced with challenges**. This includes the development of more formal mentoring relationships with pupils and some staff indicated where they would refer a girl for help and support.

Chart 2 Mixed views on whether pregnant and married girls should be encouraged to attend school

Secondary school teachers and principals were asked their agreement with the following statements:



However, **discriminatory attitudes, especially towards pregnant and married girls persist.** This was evident in the responses from school principals in Lagos and Kano states; with 68 per cent of all principals strongly disagreed or disagreed that pregnant girls should be encouraged to come to school. Teachers, especially those from Kano State (73 per cent), had more positive attitudes towards married girls attending schools compared to their counterparts in Lagos (53 per cent) and school principals in general (61 per cent in Lagos State and 62 per cent in Kano State).

A lack of female teachers in some settings can lead to lower aspirations for girls from early childhood. For example, evidence in Sierra Leone found that female staff were important for reassuring parents that schools are a safe and welcoming environment for girls, which affects their initial access to education (UNGEI, 2017 cited in UNESCO, 2018).

Although teachers demonstrated positive practices and an appreciation of the value of inclusive education techniques for girls, none of the teachers interviewed in “bright spot” (schools with the best and most promising practices) interviews in the Nigeria research reported that they had received specific training in gender or girls’ education. This is consistent with the findings from the literature review that point to a gap in skills and knowledge for teachers in gender-sensitive pedagogy. The literature review also showed a lack of training and professional development for school leaders on how to create a gender sensitive school environment. This insufficient training often limits

teachers’ and school leaders’ ability to promote a gender-sensitive school environment.

Additionally, more than half of the 1,758 teachers surveyed through the CGL Education Resilience research **expressed interest in skills’ development in gender responsive and inclusive practices** that facilitate continuity of education during school closures. This is significant given that the closure of schools disrupted learning for the girl child, disabled learners and poor and vulnerable, leading to severe loss of learning.

The CGL Education Resilience research highlighted how the Covid-19 pandemic has presented **new challenges for inclusive pedagogies and underscored the increased importance of response strategies that core curricula and extra curricula**

MORE THAN HALF OF THE 1,758 TEACHERS



surveyed through the CGL Education Resilience research expressed interest in skills’ development in gender responsive and inclusive practices that facilitate continuity of education during school closures.

aspects of learning should be complementary. This requires teachers to be more agile in how they achieve learning outcomes. Identifying appropriate professional learning opportunities for in-service teachers to support new demands for hybrid models of teaching, especially for disadvantaged girls, is critical.

Strengthening Education Systems

- **Gender-specific laws and policies in education are essential**, but they should also be accompanied by **strong implementation plans**. In the Commonwealth, just 20 out of 53 countries have ratified the highest level of de jure commitment to gender equality in education (Gordon et al, 2019 cited in Boateng et al 2021). Almost half of education ministries globally have laws or policies promoting gender equality; however, these are often criticised for their lack of implementation in practice (UNESCO, 2020b cited in Boateng et al, 2021).
- Teachers and school leaders in Lagos and Kano states demonstrated **low awareness of state policies and programmes that provide support for girls' education**. If there had been advocacy and/or policy implementation focused on girls' education in these states, then the teachers and headteachers surveyed in the Nigeria study were largely unaware of it. However, this is not an isolated case, as the evidence review highlighted that across many countries where policies and national strategies exist, there is limited awareness and implementation in practice, **a situation sometimes compounded by a states' capacity to implement policy**, translate commitments into viable programmes and engage the widest range of stakeholders across different sectors (UNESCO, 2020 cited in Boateng et al, 2021).

Language Policy and Practice

- There is limited evidence and research on **issues related to Language of Learning and Teaching and gender**. However, Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) challenges have significant implications for access, participation and equity for all children and for girls in particular.
- Teachers' English proficiency impacts on the quality and type of teaching that teachers can engage in. Increased demand and use of English, as a subject as well as LoLT, is often not accompanied by appropriate teacher training in language supportive pedagogies or approaches. This is especially challenging for primary school teachers who are not



Across many countries, there is **DEMONSTRATED LOW AWARENESS OF STATE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES** that provide support for girls' education

necessarily language specialists but are expected to teach across a range of subjects (Erling et al., 2016 cited in Boateng et al, 2021).

- Differences in language competence can go unnoticed at school, especially if girls are given fewer opportunities to speak, and if teachers expect them to do less well than boys. Any reservedness on the part of girls to speak may be interpreted as lack of academic ability, rather than lack of exposure to the language of instruction.

Remedial and Non-formal Education

- The rapid literature review established that there is limited evidence on the gender specific barriers in remedial and non-formal education. However these can be said to be similar to those faced by girls in accessing and thriving in the formal education system. Given the current Covid-19 context, remedial and non-formal education is of increasing importance.
- Some approaches commonly used in the region, such as repetition, private tuition and automatic promotion have tended to be **ineffective and in some cases, enhance inequalities** for the most disadvantaged. Other methods such as Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) which involve grouping learners by ability and tutoring small groups have shown promising results. The Kano Literacy and Maths Accelerator (KaLMA) project implemented by the Kano State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), the British Council and TaRL Africa, has the potential to embed foundational literacy and numeracy skills for primary aged girls at scale. However, the gendered dimensions of such approaches have not been sufficiently interrogated.
- The CCGL Education Resilience Insights Research highlighted the need for strategies to recover lost learning time, especially due to the pandemic, that are **responsive to the differentiated needs of learners**, e.g. those disadvantaged by social considerations, geography, disability and gender, to ensure they are not left behind.

What works in girls' education in SSA:

Teacher professional development and instructional leadership

- What works for girls' education in relation to teachers is similar for all children. For girls specifically, **context-specific content** which integrates **gender awareness, effective pedagogies and reflection on classroom practice** is central to improving their overall schooling experiences (Evans & Yuan, 2019 cited in Boateng et al, 2021). In addition to this is the need for an approach which **promotes the agency of teacher professional learning communities**.
- After quality classroom teaching, **school leadership is the second biggest influence on pupil learning** (Leithwood et al, 2008; 2019; Global School Leaders, 2020 cited in Boateng et al, 2021). Successful school leadership which has the greatest impact on student outcomes focuses on developing teachers' skills, providing instructional support and monitoring student learning. As such, deliberate interventions which target the development of headteachers' skills, knowledge and attitudes regarding gender sensitive practices as well as the means in which to track and monitor girls' outcomes at the school level are key.
- A **whole-school gender responsive approach** that necessitates working with teachers, school leaders and community stakeholders has also proved effective.

Strengthening Education Systems

- Gender responsive **policy making** and education **sector planning** and **funding**. For example, Uganda's approach to enshrining **gender-responsive budgeting** in the Public Finance Management Act has been considered an important step in ensuring sustainability in resource-commitment to girls' education.
- **Cross-sectoral interventions** ensure that barriers to girls' education are tackled beyond the education system. For example, Ethiopia's cross-sectoral measures to strengthen girls' participation in education included working to eradicate early and forced marriage through the development of a national platform across ministries (Rose et al, 2020 cited in Boateng et al 2021).

- Language policy and practiceThe gender perspective on language issues is somewhat nascent although there is limited robust systematic data on the link between mother-tongue based instruction and girls' access, participation and achievement.
- Girls are often less exposed to other languages, therefore teacher support for inclusive and effective language supportive teaching at pre and in-service is critical.

Remedial and Non-Formal Education

- Programmes tailored to the local context, that engage with wider community (especially where girls have work and care responsibilities), and have **multiple** entry and exit points have proved to be effective.
- Also important is the need for remedial/catch-up and non-formal education programmes to be closely associated with **formal education systems and focus** on re-integration of learners into the school system.
- In-school foundational literacy and numeracy skills for primary aged girls such as the TaRL approach in KaLMA.

Recommendations

Teacher Professional Development and Instructional Leadership

- Pre-service teacher training programmes should ensure that gender is mainstreamed, with specific support given to teachers to understand how to ensure gender issues are addressed in training material and the curriculum. Ongoing mentoring and coaching to embed change at the school level should go hand in hand with the development of tools and support for education officials at the forefront of monitoring and supervising activities.
- In-service training programmes should embed gender responsive pedagogies as a cross-cutting theme and establish communities of practice to encourage ongoing reflection around discipline and classroom practices, active engagement of students and inclusive planning and assessment. TPD content focused on gender responsive pedagogies and teaching methodologies should be designed to be used across subjects and should include inclusive planning and assessment.
- Detailed understanding of contextual barriers, challenges and needs of girls in their context should inform programme design. Work with teachers and school leaders should also include acknowledgement of existing frameworks and policy for re-entry and girls' rights, to ensure that existing frameworks are known, understood and implemented in schools.
- There is need to leverage learning from school-based TPD initiatives to add to the evidence base of what works in TPD generally, how technology can help facilitate this and how gender sensitive issues can be embedded in TPD content moving forward. At the same time textbooks, teacher guides and student learning material reflect gender equality and that teachers demonstrate and teach gender equality through teaching practice by drawing on language supportive pedagogy approaches
- In addition to measuring changes in teacher practice, all TPD programmes should explicitly measure changes in student outcomes and ensure that data is disaggregated and analysed by gender and other forms of disadvantage such as socio-economic background, location and disability.

Improving the quality of teaching and learning

- The 'bright spot' schools, those that were seen to have better practices with regards to girls' education compared to their counterparts, identified in the research conducted in Nigeria, illustrate how much can be achieved by headteachers and teachers in the absence of other programming. Good and promising practices and leadership identified in such schools could form the basis for future networks or communities of schools working together to tackle the challenges to girls' education and learning in their communities.
- As schools re-open they will need to devise strategies to recover lost learning time and ensure learners catch up. This is especially important for disadvantaged learners who are most likely to have missed out on remote learning due to social considerations, location, gender or disability.
- There is also a need for appropriate psychosocial support for both learners (including drop-out learners, pregnant girls, and those forced into early marriages) and teachers as they return to school.
- It is crucial that "girl-friendly" is clearly defined in the context of each programme, tailored to the delivery context and embedded in school supervisory practices as well as programme monitoring and evaluation tools. This may also include providing girls with female mentors and role models, addressing School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) by engaging boys and men in wider school and community, while in conflict affected contexts school safety measures should protect girls from education related attacks.
- The Nigeria research further illustrates how girls' education encompasses actions in the classroom, factors in the school environment, and wider pressures and challenges. Programming which can link the girl, the school and the community in a holistic understanding of girls' needs offers greater potential for change and for ensuring that girls are able to stay in school and learn. This can also ensure that teachers and other school staff have the skills they need to deal with the challenges facing girls in their context.

- Although disability was mentioned as a barrier to education for girls by only three per cent of teachers and school leaders from Lagos and Kano States, the research did not consider the impact or interaction of disability on girls' education. But future programming and research should seek to understand the experiences of girls living with disability and how this impacts their likelihood of attending school and their experiences within school.

Strengthening Education Systems

- Investment in and use of data on education needs to be promoted, in particular, data disaggregated by gender and other sources of disadvantage. This will build evidence-based options for policy and reform through high-level stakeholder engagement. The data should inform formula funding which targets resources at girls who are most at risk of being left behind as well as other marginalised groups. This can be alongside visible high-level political commitment to gender-focused policies and advocate that this is backed up with resources.
- Teachers and school leaders in Kano and Lagos States often felt somewhat alone in their work for girls' education and gender equity. Supporting the development of school frameworks and policies alongside space for discussion of issues in girls' education, could facilitate the development of more consistent actions and activities and enable more teachers to engage with these issues.
- Support gender responsive coordination across sectors and provide capacity building support to government officials to implement gender-responsive budgeting, ensuring sufficient domestic resources are allocated to girls' education and appropriately distributed to the most marginalised groups.
- There is need to develop and implement deliberate strategies to support the re-entry and support for out-of-school and marginalised girls, including pregnant girls, young mothers and child labourers. At the same time learners should also receive lessons and awareness on the concept of abuse and be empowered to report cases of abuse
- Collaborate, engage with and create space for key stakeholders, including women and youth organisations, civil society organisations and local political, traditional and religious leaders at the community level during advocacy efforts.

Language and Girls' Education

- Interventions in language policy should move towards formulating more holistic language-in-education policies that promote 'sustainable additive bilingualism' or 'mother tongue-based multilingual education.' This will require in-service support for teachers in delivering multilingual lessons and advocacy to governments to strengthen these approaches at the national level
- Pre-service and in-service interventions should address the needs of teachers in effectively teaching English alongside mother tongue literacy, and support teachers to move towards language supporting pedagogy approaches in school-based projects. Additional gender-sensitive and age-appropriate resources that facilitate English learning need to be developed in schools-based programmes, and they should incorporate local contexts, multiple languages and be aligned to students' needs. Learning material should be gender-sensitive and not reinforce harmful stereotypes about girls.
- All programmes should systematically collect gender-disaggregated data on language and ensure that language indicators feature prominently in programme monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks as well as national benchmarks and assessment systems for school quality and education outcomes

Remedial and Non-formal Education

- Considering the gender inequalities of Covid-19 such as increased child marriage, pregnancy, sexual and gender-based violence, increased poverty and care responsibilities, remedial and non-formal education programmes can provide a targeted approach to keep girls engaged in education, with lifelong benefits for them and their families.
- The design of remedial and non-formal education programmes should take into account local conditions regarding specific community/school-level barriers facing girls and actively engage the broader community in programming around girls' education on an ongoing basis to secure buy-in and support for programme activities.
- There is need to disaggregate project data and explicitly measure girls' outcomes as well as intersecting forms of disadvantage to strengthen the evidence base on the effectiveness of remedial and non-formal education programmes

- Actively facilitate the participation of female educators in programming and develop pathways for ‘unqualified’ teachers to bridge the informal/formal education sectors and to help entry into the formal school system.
- Carefully consider the language of instruction and how this might be approached from the lens of teacher training and ongoing professional learning and support.
- Ensure projects provide sufficient, sustainable, scaffolded teaching and learning materials incorporating language supportive pedagogical approaches and enact gender-sensitive approaches in lesson delivery, resources and wider policies.
- Establish girls’ clubs where girls can develop wider life skills, vocational training and other relevant skills.

Other Programme Areas

- Support the establishment of “girl-friendly” schools which are clearly defined within each project context and supported by resources and wider school policies.
- Address issues of access and cost reduction of schooling via flexible cash transfers and/or merit-based scholarships.
- Embed community engagement programme components to sustain any impact from chosen interventions.
- Create successful transitions from school to work programmes. This may include aligning student curricula with the world of work, technical training, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships and entrepreneurial training and education.

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