

Overview: Who are the out-of-school girls—and what can be done to get them in school?

Impressive strides have been made in bringing girls into primary school over the past 25 years, with many countries achieving universal primary education and gender parity. But considerable disparity exists within and across countries, with intracountry differences stemming largely from the lagging involvement of excluded groups—rural tribes in Pakistan, lower castes in India, Roma in Europe, indigenous peoples in Latin America. Of the 60 million girls not in primary school, almost 70 percent are from excluded groups. If further progress is to be realized, educating these girls must be a priority.

Who are the 60 million girls who remain out of school nearly two decades after the worldwide declaration on Education for All? These are their faces:

Meera, 8, lives with her family on a sidewalk in New Delhi, India. During the day she roams major intersections, her infant sister hanging from her hip, begging drivers for coins in the few words of English she knows. She does not go to school. In a few years she will be married off to a stranger. She will have six children, one of whom will go to school. Or she will die young, possibly immolated in a kitchen fire for having brought with her an insufficient dowry.

Sonia, 10, lives on the outskirts of a capital city in Eastern Europe. Like her siblings, all of whom speak only Romani, she does not attend school. Instead, Sonia spends her days

committing petty theft to support her family. Adults in the town spit at her and warn visitors to watch their purses when they see her.

Lia, 12, went to school for a few years in her remote hill village in Thailand. Then her family sent her to the capital to earn a respectable living in a factory, but she was sold into the sex trade instead. She lives in a brothel and services dozens of clients a day. She will die young, most likely from HIV/AIDS.

Wambui, 14, goes to boarding school because no secondary school is available in her Kenyan village. But she will soon be expelled from school because she is pregnant, having been raped at school by boy students from another tribe, who considered it a mere prank.

Many developing countries have achieved gender equity in education, with near-universal girls' participation converging with that of boys:

Indrani, 10, is the daughter of illiterate parents living in rural Bangladesh. She goes to school. Her older sister is finishing secondary school and plans to work in the garment factory in the market center. While her mother was betrothed at 12, her parents have decided that their daughters must finish school before marrying.

Monique, 12, is excelling in secondary school in Tunisia. She and her siblings have finished primary school, with the exception of her eldest sister, whose arranged marriage interrupted her schooling. She expects to work before she marries and plans to have two children.

Are excluded girls simply the daughters of the poor, or are other, more subtle factors at work? Why do some countries make better progress? School participation figures from six low- and middle-income countries offer some clues:

- In Laos, a low-income country, Lao-Tai girls living in rural communities complete five years of school, whereas hill tribe girls living in comparable communities complete fewer than two years of school.
- In Bangladesh, a low-income country, 86 percent of primary school-age girls attend school and 69 percent complete primary school. There is no significant difference between girls living in urban and rural communities.
- In Guatemala, a lower middle-income country, 62 percent of Spanish-speaking girls but only 26 percent of indigenous, non-Spanish-speaking girls complete primary school.
- In Tunisia, a lower middle-income country, 95 percent of all girls complete primary school and 68 percent are enrolled in secondary school.
- In the Slovak Republic, an upper middle-income country, 54 percent of Slovak girls but only 9 percent of minority girls attend secondary school.

- In Botswana, an upper middle-income country, 95 percent of all girls complete primary school and 57 percent attend secondary school.

Sources, forms, and levels of exclusion

What accounts for these differences? Most obvious is the presence or absence of significant subgroups. Bangladesh, Botswana, and Tunisia are largely homogeneous, while Guatemala, Laos, and the Slovak Republic have excluded subgroups.¹ In homogeneous countries higher shares of girls complete primary school, enroll in secondary school, and see higher achievement than those in heterogeneous countries (figure 1).

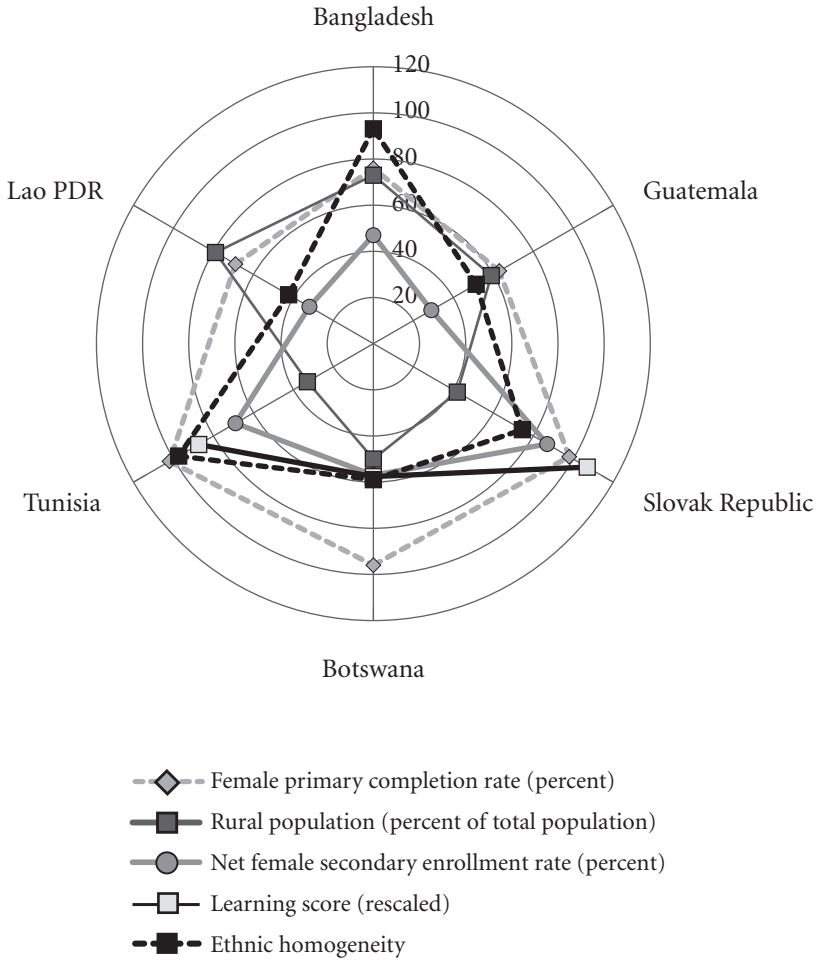
Excluded subgroups are based on tribal, ethnic, linguistic, or traditional occupational classifications, such as the “untouchable” occupations of the lowest caste groups in India. But ethnic or linguistic diversity within a country does not necessarily lead to a failure to educate girls—the Basques in Spain, for example, are linguistically diverse but have high levels of female education. It is diversity accompanied by derogation and discrimination that leads to exclusion. The main driver of the remaining gender inequalities in education is the existence of subgroups within countries, accompanied by social stratification and cultural norms that seclude women. This driver operates both culturally and structurally to exclude girls from school. It is thus a particularly pernicious barrier.

Exclusion can take many forms—the more severe, the greater its effect on school opportunities (table 1). At one end are extreme forms of exclusion leading to genocide. Only somewhat less severe is the exclusion associated with ethnically based slavery (not slavery as an outcome of conflict), where education is denied to children of slaves, as was the case for African slaves in the southern United States or Brazil in the 1800s. The shunning of a group, such as the Dalits in India or the Roma in Europe, is less severe. It can result in lack of schools, inaccessible schools, segregated or “special” schools, corporal punishment of students, teacher absenteeism, and generally poor-quality schools. Moderate exclusion can result in schooling that is poorly matched with the needs of students. Consider the conditions faced by Berber children in Morocco before 2005 (see box 3.2): teaching and school materials were not in their mother tongue, mild corporal punishment and ability tracking were used, and early qualifying exams excluded poorly performing children from further education.

A mild form of exclusion is that associated with individual social preferences, whereby teachers may overlook students from excluded groups or children from a minority group may not be included in social events. Exclusion can also result in decreased demand for education or for autonomy in the provision of education.

1. The excluded subgroups are: indigenous peoples in Guatemala, hill tribes in Laos, and Roma in the Slovak Republic

Figure 1. Homogeneous countries have stronger education outcomes than comparable heterogeneous countries



Source: World Bank 2005b; Alesina and others 2003; Martin and others 2004; Crouch and Fasih 2004.

Severe exclusion has structural consequences: schools are not built, curricular materials are not supplied, roads to schools are not paved, and teachers are often absent. Milder exclusion is cultural. It can affect the behavior of teachers and schoolmates, making teachers insensitive to excluded students' needs.

Language and ethnicity are only two of the sources of exclusion. Children living in remote rural communities face structural barriers to education due to distance, and these barriers are most pronounced for girls. Poor children face barriers to education

due to the direct and indirect costs of education. Because the poor in developing countries often show a strong preference for sons, education investments are biased toward boys. Residential segregation often results in access to poorer quality schools.

The cultures of subgroups can differ with respect to the status and roles accorded to women. Where women are secluded, or expected to work long hours performing domestic chores or agricultural labors, cultural beliefs and norms limit girls' educational opportunities. Girls face special cultural barriers associated with their roles in the home and as future wives. As a result, social exclusion from these multiple sources has severe consequences for girls' education and will require different, more tailored policies to remedy them. The degree and nature of exclusion dictates the approach and scope of interventions; often multiple efforts are needed.

How many girls are excluded?

How many girls are affected by exclusion due to multiple causes? No formal estimates of the numbers of excluded out-of-school girls are available, because most developing countries do not systematically collect or report data on school participation disaggregated by all of the subgroups subject to exclusion. Data from various sources can be used to estimate the figure, however. These data reveal a staggering finding: nearly three-quarters of girls who do not go to school come from excluded groups, while these groups represent only about 20 percent of the developing world's population (table 2).

Most out-of-school girls live in Africa and South Asia, which together account for 78 percent of all girls not in school (UIS 2005). In some large countries a small share of girls are out of school, but the size of the country means that large numbers of girls are affected. In some small countries the share of out-of-school girls is high, which represents a huge national challenge but adds little quantitatively to the global problem. For example, in Guinea-Bissau 55 percent of school-age girls never attend school, but because the total population of the country is little more than 1.2 million, only about 60,000 school-age girls are not in school. By contrast, in India 20 percent of school-age girls are not in school, but with a national population exceeding 1 billion, 27.7 million girls (ages 7–14) are not in school (Census of India 2001).

Data on excluded girls are limited. But recent Indian census data document how multiple exclusions can deter girls' participation in school. Of the nearly 50 million children 7–14 years old not enrolled in school in India, 55 percent are girls. This figure is disproportionately high, with girls representing just 48 percent of all children 7–14 years old. Of the 27.7 million girls 7–14 years old not enrolled in school, 33 percent

Table 1. Levels of social exclusion and their effect on education

Intensity of exclusion	Example of socially excluded groups	School participation indicators
<i>Extreme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Africans in Darfur • Tutsis in Rwanda • Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo • Tamil in Sri Lanka 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven attendance (even where schools are available)
<i>Severe</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roma in Eastern Europe • East Asian hill tribes • Dalits and scheduled tribes in India before 1980 • North American indigenous people in nineteenth century • Australian Aboriginals in twentieth century 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal enrollment • Poor attendance • High dropout rate
<i>Moderate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berbers in North Africa • Indigenous people in Central America • Maori in New Zealand before 1990 • Scheduled tribes in some states in India • Ethnic minorities in some provinces in China • Tibetans in China 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low enrollment • Poor attendance • High dropout rate
<i>Mild</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls in Yemen and North Africa • Minorities in integrated schools in OECD countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student underperformance • Student rejection of schooling

Demand for schooling and factors reducing demand	Schooling supply and characteristics of schools	Education policy priorities by intensity of exclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education not a top priority • Formation of separate national entity with its own education system and society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate school infrastructure • Destruction of schools • Violence against teachers and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Refugee Agency schools • Nongovernmental organizations • Private schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak demand and reluctance to send children to school • Dissatisfaction with poor or irrelevant schools • Concern about girls' safety and virginity • Low economic returns to education • Discrimination in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack or inaccessibility of schools • Language barrier • Segregated or "special" schools • Poor-quality schooling • Corporal punishment • High teacher absenteeism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce distance to school • Upgrade school infrastructure, improve quality and relevance of schools • Improve outreach to families • Tailor school programs to specific needs • Offer compensatory school programs • Conduct preschool in children's mother tongue; offer bilingual early primary education • Provide distance education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low demand • Lagging interest among children • Concern about opportunity cost of time • Low economic returns to education • Discrimination in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and school materials not in mother tongue • Mild corporal punishment • Ability tracking • Early qualifying exams in language other than mother tongue • Teacher absenteeism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mother tongue preprimary and bilingual primary school and materials • Provide culturally appropriate teaching and materials • Increase outreach to households and parental involvement in schools • Use interactive radio instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven demand • Alienated and disaffected students • Acceptance of discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers ignore students • Children from excluded groups may not interact socially with other children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address implicit discrimination • Adopt affirmative action • Provide teacher training and incentives for inclusion and tolerance

Table 2. Most primary school-age girls out of school are from excluded groups, 2000

Region	Girls out of school (thousands)	Excluded girls out of school ^a (thousands)	Excluded girls as percent of all girls out of school	Excluded subgroups
Sub-Saharan Africa	23,827	17,870 ^b	75	Members of nondominant tribes
South Asia	23,552	15,780 ^c	67	Rural people in Afghanistan, scheduled castes and tribes in India, lower castes in Nepal, rural tribes in Pakistan
Middle East and North Africa	5,092	1,680 ^d	33	Berbers, rural populations
East Asia and the Pacific	4,870	4,383 ^e	90	Hill tribes, Muslim minorities, other ethnic minorities
Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Commonwealth of Independent States	1,583	1,425 ^f	90	Roma, rural populations in Turkey
Latin America and the Caribbean	1,497	1,482 ^e	99	Indigenous and Afro-Latino populations
Total	60,421	42,620	71	

Note: Data are for girls 7–12-years-old, unless otherwise noted.

a. Estimated. The percentages in column 3 provide the basis for estimating the total number of out-of-school girls by region reported in column 2.

b. Based on the density of heterogeneity and the assumption that most out-of-school children are from minority groups.

c. Based on 2001 census data from India for the number of girls 7–14-years-old from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, on tribal breakdowns in the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey, a household survey of Nepal, and linguistic and ethnic data from non-urban girls in Afghanistan.

d. Percent of Berbers used to determine the number of out-of-school children.

e. Assumes all children out of school come from excluded groups.

f. Includes Roma and Turkish girls out of school.

Source: UIS 2005; India census 2001; Pakistan household survey 2001–02; Vietnam Living Standard Measurement Survey 1998; Ringold, Orenstein, and Wilkens 2003; Winkler and Cueto 2004.

come from scheduled castes or scheduled tribes.² This figure is also disproportionately high, because only 26 percent of girls this age come from scheduled tribes or scheduled castes.

The cost of excluding girls from school is high, and the benefits of inclusion significant, as chapter 1 documents. The social benefits of educating girls have been widely documented, and studies have also found economic benefits from educating girls.

Mild forms of exclusion often affect girls once they enter school, but the evidence suggests that when girls from excluded groups are given the opportunity to go to school, they tend to go—and to succeed—at least through primary school. Their achievement is often comparable to that of girls from nonexcluded groups and equal to or better than that of excluded boys. Given that the quality of primary schools attended by excluded children is often poor, this is remarkable.

A concatenation of sources of exclusion—gender, ethnicity, area of residence—greatly reduces overall achievement by the time girls reach lower secondary school. Designing interventions and proposing solutions thus require assessing the demand for and supply of education and examining the school practices that affect girls and other excluded subgroups. Chapter 2 defines exclusions, analyzes the demand and supply barriers to girls' schooling, and examines key policies.

Lessons from developed countries can guide donors and policymakers in developing countries. But even developed countries grapple with exclusion. In some, failure to establish a level playing field early on has resulted in a backlash that exacerbates rather than mitigates differences. In developing countries, the diversity of subgroups and the specificities of the cultural contexts make building a new body of knowledge essential. The experience of high-income OECD countries is examined in chapter 3, along with discussions of academic performance of excluded groups and girls in both developed and developing countries.

Ensuring that excluded girls go to school is a major challenge, requiring targeted interventions that address both the structural and cultural dimensions of discrimination in education. The costs of failing are tremendous in terms of lives lost and development opportunities missed.

Advancing excluded girls' education

Strategies for advancing excluded girls' education do not apply in all contexts—what works in one country may prove disastrous in another, and “one size does not fit all.” Consider busing. In Bulgaria the largely urban and peri-urban Roma community benefited greatly from being bused to better schools. In rural Turkey, busing led parents to

2. Scheduled castes are the lowest caste populations in India and include the “untouchables”. Scheduled tribes include indigenous people. They are both on a government schedule of disadvantaged groups, hence the name.

pull their daughters out of school over concern for their safety because the new school was in another village. Context is critical. The recommendations proposed in this volume, and elaborated in chapter 4, should thus be options for consideration, not a menu for direct implementation.

Policies to spark progress with the remaining out-of-school populations will require actions on various fronts:

- Altering education policies and addressing discrimination by changing laws and administrative rules.
- Expanding options for educating out-of-school children, especially girls.
- Improving the quality and relevance of schools and classrooms by ensuring that excluded girls receive basic educational inputs and providing professional development to help teachers become agents of change.
- Supporting compensatory preschool and in-school programs that engage and retain excluded children, particularly girls.
- Providing incentives for households to help overcome both the reluctance to send girls to school and the costs of doing so.

Donors could spearhead innovation by:

- Establishing a trust fund for multilateral programs targeted at excluded girls that supports experimentation, innovative programs, alternative schooling options, and the basic inputs for effective schools.
- Expanding the knowledge base about what works to improve the school participation and achievement of excluded girls through a girls' education evaluation fund. The fund could finance a range of evaluations to build the knowledge base for policy. It could also assist more heterogeneous countries in participating in international assessments of learning achievement to monitor change over time.
- Creating demand by financing the compensatory costs associated with reaching excluded children; promoting outreach programs for parents; building partnerships for conditional cash transfers; and providing school meals, scholarships for girls, and school stipend programs for books and supplies.

Altering education policies and addressing discrimination

Changes in policies and rules can help determine the environment in which excluded groups function and increase the credibility of government efforts to reach out-of-school children. Policies alone ensure little, however. Establishing clear mandates against discrimination, a legal system that enforces both entitlements and rights of all citizens, administrative rules that foster the completion of basic education for all children, and an articulated education policy for excluded groups are needed to strengthen the credibility of government, establish a foundation for action, and bring together

target populations. These actions also provide a context for engaging donors in advocating for marginalized groups, particularly marginalized girls, and in reaching underserved regions with education programs.

Antidiscrimination laws undergird both legal and policy efforts in fighting exclusion. Clear legal protection offers a beginning in reversing implicit and explicit discrimination against minorities. It has proved critical in Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, where official and public discrimination against minorities was once widespread. South African blacks suffered similarly during apartheid, as did Cuban blacks prior to the revolution of 1958. Unless discrimination is aggressively addressed in the labor market, returns to education will not materialize, reducing the demand for schooling, particularly by girls. Barring trained workers from jobs on the basis of ethnicity, language, or cultural differences has adverse consequences for education because it reduces demand for education by groups that believe the returns will not be positive.

Affirmative action—and the less controversial “preferential” action, which emphasizes bolstering the performance of disadvantaged students while maintaining common standards—has been effective in many countries. Summer math programs and after-school enrichment can strengthen the skills of disadvantaged children. Compensatory programs assume that the minority groups suffer from deficits that can be remedied through tutoring, behavioral guidance, or other compensatory interventions. Brazil, India, Malaysia, South Africa, and Sri Lanka use a combination of affirmative action and compensatory investments to mitigate the effects of discrimination.

Administrative rules often prevent girls from attending schools. In some communities, separate schools for boys and girls are required, which often results in too few schools for girls. Rules preventing children from studying in their mother tongue keep some children who do not speak the language of instruction out of school or make it harder for them to learn. Early ability-based tracking allows schools to provide unequal education programs and produces dropout. Expulsion of pregnant girls from school and lack of flexibility in school hours for young mothers attempting to continue their schooling after giving birth severely limit their educational opportunities. Changes in all of these rules could increase the number of excluded girls attending school.

Donors could expedite integration by fostering alternative forms of positive discrimination and expanding opportunities for girls who would otherwise have no options. The Open Society Institute assisted local nongovernmental organizations and governments in their efforts to initiate laws and regulations to protect the Roma and make schools safe havens for Roma children. Donor initiatives could also help countries analyze the educational regulations in place that act as barriers to girls.

Expanding options for schooling

One of the lessons from the high-income OECD countries is that targeted, tailored programs are essential to complement overall schooling investments in order to reach excluded populations and keep excluded children in school. A first step in improving access is making schools or school equivalents locally available. Increasing the number of local schools typically results in greater access for children who are historically excluded.

One way of increasing the number of locally available schools is to allow communities to establish their own schools. Community schools are formal schools that provide the basic elements of the school curriculum, adapted to local conditions, including variations in language of instruction and hours of operation. They are designed to shape schooling to meet the needs and ensure the involvement of community members. They are the ultimate means of giving parents voice in the running of schools. South Asia pioneered the approach in 1987 with its *Shiksha Karmi* Project in Rajasthan, India, which uses paraprofessional teachers, allows the community to select and supervise teachers, and hires part-time workers to escort girls to school.

Two alternatives to formal schooling are nonformal schools and distance education. Nonformal schools address gaps or compensate for limitations of existing schools, particularly for children who never started school or who dropped out early and are older than primary school students. In some cases nonformal schools provide basic literacy training. In others they serve as preparation for re-entry into mainstream schools. Nonformal schools can be highly important in preparing disadvantaged children academically and in developing appropriate social skills and self-discipline. Such schools have contributed to progress in primary education in Bangladesh, which has recently achieved gender parity in primary school.

When expansion of schooling requires the use of teachers with less education, radio or television can help provide better quality lessons. Primary education programs that combine radio delivery of a high-quality curriculum with local monitoring of children's progress have been rigorously evaluated and found to boost learning. The most widely used are interactive radio instruction programs, which use professionally developed curricula broadcast to children in remote regions. Thirteen countries have successfully applied such programs.

At the secondary level, distance education programs such as Mexico's *Telesecundaria* offer a full range of courses, which would be difficult to provide in schools serving small communities. For girls with limited access to information or learning outside the immediate community, such programs vastly increase educational opportunities.

What has not succeeded, though, is providing separate schools for children from ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minorities—often tried in earlier periods, as in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand. Separate schools, for example for the Roma throughout Eastern Europe or blacks in the United States pre-1954, are inherently unequal and suffer from poor quality. Similarly, creating separate schools for girls may

fail to improve girls' educational outcomes. Separate schools for girls can also limit their access and, because of poor quality, their performance. Indeed, the lagging performance of Pakistan in girls' education can be attributed in part to the need for double investments in schooling, one for girls, the other for boys. Bangladesh, which has co-educational primary schools, has sped ahead while Pakistan continues to struggle with expanding separate access for both genders.

Lack of funding often prevents experimentation with innovative means of expanding schooling to difficult-to-reach groups or adapting effective programs to new contexts. A trust fund for multilateral programs targeting excluded girls could provide the financial basis for expanding successful efforts of donors and governments.

Donors could also play a catalytic role in devising and financing alternative schooling options, particularly for innovative programs for adolescent girls. Programs such as English language immersion classes or computer training provide an alternative to secondary school that equips girls with marketable skills. Creation of a girls' education evaluation fund to finance bilateral, multilateral, and nongovernmental organization evaluations of new or ongoing programs aimed at reaching girls would help fill a major gap and offer guidance to both policymakers and donors eager to use their resources to promote girls' education.

Improving the quality and relevance of schools and classrooms

Excluded girls often attend schools that lack the basic inputs needed for learning. Failure to provide basic inputs in these schools drives even the poor away from publicly provided schools and lowers achievement of those who remain. In Pakistan, for example, girls have access to fewer single-sex schools than boys, and the schools that are available often lack essential inputs. So parents withdraw their daughters, preferring to send them to private coeducational schools. In Egypt lower quality schools—those with multiple shifts and temporary teachers—increased the likelihood that girls leave school; schools with adequate facilities and in-service teacher training reduced the likelihood of girls dropping out.

Basic inputs are necessary for learning. In Brazil, higher school quality—more educated teachers and better physical facilities—was associated with significantly higher student test scores. In Chile, 10 years of programs providing additional support to improve the quality of the lowest performing schools significantly reduced the gaps in learning achievement between indigenous and nonindigenous students.

Where excluded children do not speak the language of instruction, specific actions are required to bridge the gap. Because girls in remote areas have less experience outside their communities than do boys, they tend to be less familiar with the dominant language and experience greater difficulties adapting to a new language when entering school.

Effective bilingual education programs start with developing the child's reading, writing, and thinking skills in the home language—something that requires teachers who are fluent in that language. At the same time, the target language is taught as a subject. Children who need to transition from a mother tongue to a national language can benefit from programs that “flood” the classroom with storybooks in the national language and train teachers on how to use books to promote literacy. “Book flood” programs have achieved rapid gains in English skills in Fiji, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, and Sri Lanka.

Mother tongue-based bilingual education has been found to be particularly effective in breaking down barriers against girls. In Mexico children of monolingual indigenous mothers were more likely to attend school if the school was bilingual. In Guatemala students in bilingual primary schools had higher attendance and promotion rates, lower dropout rates, and higher achievement in all subjects, including Spanish. In Mali bilingual programs led to sharp declines in dropout and repetition rates, and rural children have outperformed urban children on national exams.

Policymakers and donors can support efforts ensuring that basic inputs reach poorly performing schools. Support to finance improvement programs for schools with average learning achievement below national standards has had spillover effects for girls and indigenous children (in Chile, for example) and avoids the potential political problems associated with ethnically or linguistically targeted programs.

Donors could help children transition into mainstream schools by underwriting bilingual programs, adding culturally relevant dimensions to curricula, and financing engaging bilingual storybooks. Use of mother tongue for instruction at school entry and in the early grades boosts both enrollment and retention in school, but effective bilingual programs require fully bilingual teachers, who are often in short supply. The lack of reading materials in many languages spoken at home and the lack of interesting reading materials in the national language are also barriers in many countries.

Teachers can be agents of change and beacons of tolerance, a characteristic of particular importance in ethnically mixed classrooms, where tolerance should be expected. Sensitizing teachers and providing them with tools to cope with and address inevitable gender and ethnic tensions in the classroom could contribute to both learning and the integration of cultures.

Donors could supplement publicly supported programs by financing school improvement grants for the worst performing schools. Such grants could support activities at the school level designed in consultation with local communities and teachers.

Supporting compensatory preschool and in-school programs

The OECD experience demonstrates that simply providing easy access to schools will not necessarily serve the needs of excluded children or ensure their education. Addi-

tional initiatives are needed. Five initiatives are preschools for underserved children, compensatory in-school programs, materials and teacher training for transitioning into a national language in upper-primary grades, outreach to parents, and transportation and busing. Middle-income countries such as Brazil, Chile, and Mexico have pioneered means of reaching the excluded, but many countries cannot afford the extra efforts. It therefore falls to donors to pick up the cost of initiatives aimed at ensuring that all girls can go to a good-quality school.

Preschools are one of the most effective means for ensuring later success in school and are particularly important for excluded children, especially girls. Programs for children of excluded groups reduce primary school dropout rates. Preschool programs in Bolivia, Brazil, India, and Turkey have had remarkable impacts on children's subsequent school progress, proving cost-effective in the long run.

In-school programs that compensate for the absence of education reinforcements at home may be critical to retaining children from excluded groups in school. Such programs, often involving tutors and curriculum enrichment, have been effective in Brazil, India, and Spain. They may be necessary to ensure that students keep up with their peers. Compensatory programs offer a major incentive to parents to keep their children in school. After-school supervision and academic support, remedial programs for those behind on entry, and special summer enrichment initiatives have been effective in OECD countries and deserve attention and investment in low-income settings. Children who do not receive reinforcement at home need school-based support to succeed, but like other extras, such support is generally not affordable in developing countries. Simple after-school activities can build social capital among children and ensure that students have a place to complete homework.

Parent outreach is needed to encourage illiterate, disadvantaged parents to support their children. International studies show parent involvement to be a predictor of student achievement. Parent outreach includes engaging parents and communities in the oversight of schools and engaging parents in establishing a supportive environment for learning.

Providing the means to reach a better school may be preferable to or more affordable than upgrading an existing school, especially where geographic divisions segregate schools. Busing can help to integrate minority children and provide them with a sound education. Experience in rural Turkey suggests that busing does not always work, however, especially when primary school children are bused to unfamiliar villages.

Financing transportation for excluded children, possibly separately for girls, could quell the safety concerns parents have about girls traveling to other villages to attend school. Older women could be paid to accompany girls to schools outside their villages.

A logical extension of the transportation issue is construction of basic roads and communication infrastructure. Roads make it easier for teachers, students, and textbooks to reach schools; communication and electrical infrastructure broaden school-

ing options beyond teachers and textbooks. School buildings, materials, and latrines also require donor financing, especially in the poorest areas.

Creating incentives for households to send girls to school

Cultural taboos, the opportunity cost of labor, low demand for education, and reluctance to allow children, especially girls, to enter mainstream schools contribute to low enrollment, low completion rates, and below-average achievement among excluded groups. Three types of programs—conditional cash transfers, girls' scholarships, and school feeding programs—have shown promise in meeting these challenges.

Conditional cash transfers provide resources to households to defray the costs of sending their children to school. They tie social assistance payments to desirable behaviors, in this case enrolling and keeping children in school. Although challenging to administer, conditional cash transfers provide financial incentives to families and put the onus on them to ensure that children actually go to school, something that school officials often find impossible to do. Robust evaluations have shown that conditional cash transfers increase both school enrollment and retention rates. Excluded groups, who are often more difficult to attract to these programs, have not been identified in these evaluations, so the impact on those groups is not yet known.

Scholarships for girls offer financing for primary and secondary school. They also encourage girls to stay in school. Scholarships compensate families for the direct and indirect costs of education. They are effective when households view cost as the impediment to girls' schooling. Scholarships also provide an additional revenue stream for secondary schools. They have been effective for girls at the secondary level in several countries, notably Bangladesh.

Various types of school feeding programs have been associated with higher attendance, higher enrollment, and, in some cases, lower dropout and higher student achievement. School feeding programs are most effective in meeting school attendance objectives. They are particularly successful where attendance is relatively low at the outset and children come from poor households. A concern, however, is whether school feeding provides additional nutrition or simply substitutes for home meals, particularly for girls; this issue deserves attention.

Governments and multilateral donors have forged partnerships for conditional cash transfers in many countries in Latin America. Expanding those initiatives to other countries and to difficult-to-reach groups could increase the number of excluded girls who attend school. How successful such programs can be in attracting excluded girls, especially adolescent girls, to school remains an open question. Donors could finance and manage household stipend components of conditional cash transfers for low-income countries that lack the managerial capacity and resources to conduct a conditional cash transfer program.

Scholarships for girls have demonstrated enormous promise. Donor initiatives to expand such programs to lower secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary education would increase the number of educated women in low-income countries. Educated women from disadvantaged households could serve as both community leaders and role models for excluded girls.

Stipends could be used to finance uniforms, school supplies, and books for girls—items parents often cannot afford or refuse to pay for because they do not appreciate their value. Providing assistance through stipends avoids the bureaucratic management problems of subsidizing inputs.

Financing school meals can attract children to school. It can also provide employment for adults and help involve parents in school, reinforcing the school as a focus of community life. Such initiatives offer an entry point to help upgrade schools and provide the potential for additional help to children with faltering attendance or performance. School feeding programs have not been tested specifically among excluded groups. Donor funding could help determine whether these programs are effective among excluded children.