



KEEPING THE PROMISE:

Five Benefits of Girls' Secondary Education

By MAY A. RIHANI
With Lisa Kays and Stephanie Psaki

AED •
CHANGING LIVES FOR 45 YEARS



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1825 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20009
202.884.8000
202.884.8400 (fax)
www.aed.org

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May A. Rihani

Assisted by
Lisa Kays and Stephanie Psaki

2006





DEDICATION

*To the young girls and boys of
Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.*



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Foreword

My colleagues and I at AED are delighted to see the publication of this important report on the status and progress of girl's education and participation in the developing world. For many years, this has been a high priority of our work when collaborating with ministries of education to increase not only the participation rates, but also the quality of education and ultimately the completion rates for girls and boys at the primary level.

As the report points out, tremendous progress has been made over the past 15 years in addressing the EFA agenda. Countries are making extraordinary strides, often faster than many countries historically have been able to achieve, in addressing the needs for improved access and quality for primary education. The goal of universal primary education and other EFA goals still need to be met, and much work needs to be done.

We have realized for some time the need to focus on investment in secondary education opportunities for all children and youth — especially for girls. The data we have assembled clearly shows the dramatic “gender gap” in the availability of education for girls in most parts of the world — especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The implications for our resource planning, for managing of significant enlargements of the education system to meet these needs, and for adequate policy debate in considering the best ways to achieve a significant increase in secondary education opportunity are important issues that call for serious debate and dialogue.

The debate and dialogue must engage the whole of the education development community. This includes policy leaders in various countries, donor agencies, communities, associations which advocate for children and women's wellbeing, and NGOs like ourselves that are deeply dedicated to achieving these goals.

Without the opportunity for girls and young women to participate fully in the secondary level of education, the social and economic disparities that result can undermine the achievements made for the well-being of citizens and their participation in the global economy.

This report presents an up-to-date picture of the dialogue and actions being taken on investments in secondary education. AED is pleased to be an active participant and partner with many ministries and donor agencies. We welcome the increased interest and attention now being demonstrated by the corporate sector and its social responsibility partnerships, and by community-based organizations in addressing these critical education development needs.

I want to express my thanks to May Rihani and her colleagues for this rigorous analysis and the presentation of this report. It is my expectation that it will contribute to a dialogue with a wide range of our colleagues and partners.



Stephen F. Moseley
President and CEO
Academy for Educational Development

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First and foremost I am indebted to the girls of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East whose thirst for knowledge continues to inspire me. Through my years of travels in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and as a result of working in the field of education, I have had the opportunity to meet and talk with urban and rural girls both at the primary and secondary levels. I have always found their resilience, aspirations, and dreams a motivation to work harder on their behalf.

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I have come to understand that without the support of marvelous colleagues and staff, it is nearly impossible to complete such a research project. My thanks go to each and every one of you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Rihani". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

May A. Rihani
Senior Vice President and Director
AED Global Learning Group