Girls Education Can Not Wait - Budget Matters

Policy Brief

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PLAN INTERNATIONAL

FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines

SAT SRHR Africa Trust
GENDER EQUAL YOUTH HEALTH

FAWE Ethiopia Chapter

About the Programme

The **"Break Free!"** programme is an initiative of Plan International Netherlands, SRHR Africa Trust (SAT) and Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in collaboration with the technical partners 'The Royal Tropical Institute KIT' and 'Rozaria Memorial Trust' (RMT). It is a five-year program and started in January 2021. The Break Free! Programme will be implemented in nine countries in Africa as well as at the regional and continental levels. There will also be a component in The Netherlands.

The aim of the "Break Free!" Consortium is **to contribute to adolescents to exercise their right to live free from Teenage Pregnancy (TP) and Child Marriage (CM), supported by civil society.** The BF Program has three pathways of change leading towards the strategic programme objective:

- Pathway 1: **Adolescent girls at risk of CM/TP and FGM/C have access to quality education in a safer school environment with improved participation, retention and completion**
- Pathway 2: **Duty Bearers and decision makers at national and county level, review, resource and implement laws and policies that respond to adolescents' needs**
- Pathway 3: **Adolescent girls and boys access quality SRHR education, information and youth-friendly services.**

FAWE Ethiopia Chapter is the lead organization in Ethiopia implementing the program at the national level. As part of its implementation with the aim of providing evidence for lobby and advocacy events, after research has been conducted this policy brief has been prepared to map and analyze policies, development plans and budgets for girl's education with a specific focus on ESDP VI (2020/21-2024/25).

Executive Summary

Access to education is a basic human right enshrined in a number of international, regional and national agreements. The government has a strong commitment in reducing gender inequality in the education sector , which was reflected in its policies , strategies and education sector plans and programs. For instance, the latest Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP VI) 2020/21-2024/25 ESDP VI has taken key gender considerations in to context while prioritizing its objectives, strategies, activities and indicators.

However, practical efforts to ensure gender responsive budgeting in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education sector programs and plans are generally inadequate to address the existing gender inequality in the education sector through promoting girls education. While ESDP VI costing was made considering its key objectives and assumptions associated with achievement of the objectives, gender equality considerations are not reflected in any of the assumptions considered. In order to achieve anticipated outcomes, it is required to allocate sufficient resources for girls education. The existing national gender sensitive budgeting guidelines needs to be effectively implemented to assess education sector plans and budgets including ESDP VI from a gender perspective. Inclusion and adequate consideration of gender responsive assumptions in ESDP VIcosting and budget planning and consequently ensuring adoption of gender responsive budget allocation that addresses the challenges and needs of boys and girls differently in the education sector is also recommended. Operationalizing the girls education fund which is promised in ESDP VI would also play a key role in promoting girls equitable access to education in Ethiopia.

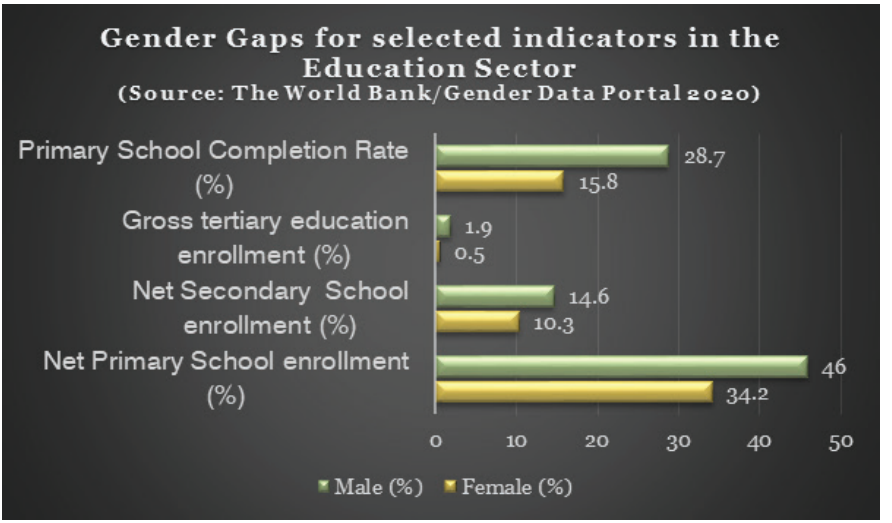
Introduction

Slow progress and fall backs in gender parity gains in the last few years call for increased budgets for girls education at all levels. Access to education is a basic human right enshrined in a number of international, regional and national agreements. In recent years, the momentum created by gender equality commitments, the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) agenda set off significant progress towards achieving universal primary education and improving educational opportunities for girls and women at all levels. However, ensuring equity in Education is a key challenge that the Ethiopian education sector faces.

Girls account for nearly 1.6 million primary school age children out of the approximately 3 million children who are out of school[1]. The gender parity index (GPI) at the primary level which showed improvement from 0.67 in 1999/2000 to 0.93 in 2013/14, declined to 0.91 in 2018/19 and to 0.90 in 2020/21[2] .

Within the schooling cycle, gender differences in dropout rate are the highest at the upper primary level (grades 5-8), where drop out for boys at grade 8 is 13 percent, as compared to 17 percent for girls. Inequality of opportunity as measured by differences in access to upper primary/middle school level, is partially explained by the lack of school infrastructure. Only 70 percent of primary schools are able to offer full grades 1-8 education. Moreover, most schools in the country are failing to provide an adequate learning environment for students. 2019/20 EMIS data indicates that 4,383 schools operating in tents or under the trees, without basic infrastructure and educational inputs. These poor conditions contribute to girls dropping out, especially when they reach puberty(adouclent).[3] In particular, poorest girls are least likely to progress in their education and therefore benefit from investments in education which has longer term implications such as participation in the formal labor market, economic productivity, earning higher incomes, marrying at a later age, having fewer number of children and providing better health care and education for their children.The

economic costs of girls' limited access to education and high level of child marriage and early childbearing are very substantial. Estimated by the World Bank, the data show that the loss in earnings from adult women working today as a result of that stands at US$4.9 billion in annual benefits by 2030.[4]



1- UNICEF Ethiopia. 2019. Education Budget Brief , 2018-2019
2 -Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education.2021.Educational Statistics Annual Abstract 2020/2021, October 2021
3-Global Partnership For Education. 2019. Ethiopia Education Sector Program Implementation Grant – ESPIG, 2019
4- Wodon, Q., Male, C., Nayihouba, A., Onagoruwa, A., Savadogo, A., Yedan, A., Kes, A., John, N., Steinhaus, M., Murithi, L., Edmeades, J., and Petroni, S. (2018). Economic Impacts of Child Marriage in Ethiopia: Synthesis Report, Washington, DC: The World Bank and International Center for Research on Women

The Problem

Government spending on education significantly contributes to addressing gender inequality. In this regard, the Education sector has been one of the sectors that have been the focus of government investment over the years, with the highest budget allocation for 2018/19 and 2019/20.[5] Education remains the priority sector with 24 per cent of total public spending going to the sector.[6] The share of spending on education is also higher than the government's commitment to internationally agreed targets set out by the Education for All (EFA) coalition which recommends 20 percent of the national budget to be allocated to education.

However, low education spending to general education as compared to higher education has been one of the key challenges to ensure gender equality in the education sector. Ethiopia's share of education spending on tertiary education , as compared to general education is higher even compared to some African countries. In 2017/18, general education received almost 44% of the country's investment in education,

while a slightly larger (45.6%) share of public resources went to higher education, showing that the shares of the total budget devoted to higher education exceeded those for pre-primary, primary and secondary education combined even though the number of learners at university represents only 3% of the student population compared to 94% in basic education.[7] With primary and secondary education being the mandate of regional governments, a significant proportion of the budget should be reflected at the regional level for increased investment in general education.

Furthermore, gaps in enforcing effective Gender Responsive Budgeting approaches in education sector programs and plans is a key bottle neck in promoting girls education and addressing gender inequality in the education sector. The government has a strong commitment in reducing gender inequality in the education sector , which was reflected in its policies ,

strategies and education sector plans and programs. However, due to policy makers low consideration to gender budgeting as one of the most effective tools to address gender inequality, most of these policy commitments have not been supported by budget that clearly reflects the needs of men and women and girls and boys, separately. Cognizant of the gap in gender responsive budgeting for effective policy implementation in the education sector, a guideline for gender sensitive budgeting on girls education was developed in 2009.[8] The guideline aimed to provide a guiding framework for concerned higher , middle and local government stakeholders to undertake gender budgeting for education during their budgeting processes so as to allocate and implement budget that address the needs, interests and constraints faced by boys and girls. However, there is lack of evidence on the extent to which the FMoE is using the guidelines in program monitoring and evaluation. The 2010 national Girls' Education Strategy also prioritized ensuring that gender budgeting is implemented at all levels through sustainably building the capacity and awareness of education sector officials and expertise to secure special resource for girls' education and strengthening support and monitoring at all levels. The strategy recognizes that financial constraint is the major cause for low enrollment chances, school dropout and low achievement level of girls and identified key priority activities to address the challenges. While these policy initiatives by the education sector to ensure gender sensitive budgeting have been promising, practical efforts to ensure gender responsive budgeting in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education sector programs and plans are generally inadequate to address the existing gender inequality in the education sector through promoting girls education.

The latest Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP VI) 2020/21-2024/25 ESDP VI has taken key gender considerations in to context while prioritizing its objectives, strategies, activities and indicators. Various gender sensitive activities that aim to promote girls access, retention , completion and transition at all levels of education have been integrated in

to the program. Program 4 of the ESDP VI in particular prioritizes improving equitable access from pre-primary to secondary education, through establishing support systems for women and girls such as a girls' education fund and providing scholarships in various forms, among others.

However, the design of ESDP VI has potential gaps in ensuring gender responsive budgeting for girls education. While ESDP VI costing was made considering its key objectives and assumptions associated with achievement of the objectives, gender equality considerations are not reflected in any of the assumptions considered. Inadequate consideration of assumptions related to gender equality considerations in the budget process may potentially limit gender responsiveness of education budget allocation during ESDP VI implementation. Furthermore, the costing does not clearly present budgets disaggregated by gender. As a result, there may not be a viable way of identifying and monitoring the proportion of ESDP VI budget allocated for girls' or boys' education. There is lack of clear evidence showing that the ESDP VI costing is based on a gender-disaggregated public expenditure benefit incidence analysis which helps to evaluate the distribution of education budget among girls and boys by estimating the unit costs of education for boys and girls and calculating the extent to which education is accessed by each of the groups.

5-UNICEF Ethiopia. 2021. Budget Brief: Analysis of the 2019/20 Federal Budget Proclamation , 2021
6-UNICEF Ethiopia.2018. Education Budget Brief , 2017-2018
7- The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Federal Ministry of Education. 2021. Education Sector Development Programme VI (ESDP VI) 2013 – 2017 E.C. 2020/21 – 2024/25 G.C. 2021, Addis Ababa
8- Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Budgeting on Girls Education in Ethiopia by MoFED and MOE in 2009

Recommendations

Integrating an effective Gender Responsive Budgeting system in the education sector : The FMOE and regional governments need to consider allocating sufficient resources to execute gender aspects of their ministries and clearly state the budget line in the program budgeting. The existing national gender sensitive budgeting guidelines needs to be effectively implemented to assess education sector plans and budgets including ESDP VI from a gender perspective and measure progress at various levels in translating policy commitments on gender equality in Education to concrete action. Furthermore, undertaking gender-disaggregated public expenditure benefit incidence analysis and using the evidence in education sector policy/program planning would be helpful to ensure effective gender responsive budgeting in the education sector. Strengthening the system for collection and reporting gender-disaggregated data in the education sector , incorporating gender disaggregated evidence and data during budgeting process and allocating sufficient resources accordingly and ensuring meaningful participation of gender experts in all the education planning and budgeting process would be instrumental to put in place an effective and sustainable system for gender sensitive budgeting in the sector. Inclusion and adequate consideration of gender responsive assumptions in ESDP VI costing and budget planning and consequently ensuring adoption of gender responsive budget allocation that addresses the challenges and needs of boys and girls differently in the education sector is also recommended.

Increasing government funding for general education as compared to tertiary education: Given that the major barriers and constraints to promote girls education in Ethiopia are more evident at primary and secondary education levels, the FMOE and regional governments needs to consider increasing budget allocation for primary and secondary education as compared to higher education in order to achieve the objectives of ESDP VI.

Operationalization of Girls Education Fund: ESDP VI aims to ensure girls equitable access to education through establishing support systems such as implementing a girls' education fund. The FMoE needs to ensure operationalization of this initiative to promote girls equitable access to education in Ethiopia.

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Ethiopia Chapter

FAWE-Ethiopia is one of the FAWE 34 National Chapters established in 1994 just after 2 years of the founding of FAWE- Regional Secretariat (FAWE-RS). It is registered and licensed as NGO by MoJ in 2003 and re-registered as Ethiopian Residents Charity Organization in 2010 by The Ethiopian Charities & Civil Society Organizations Agency. It was re-registered by the new Ethiopian law with a registration number of 0626 on July 1, 2019.