

GIVOLGY

THE WOMEN'S ISSUE

Editorials discussing the *state of global education for females* plus an one-on-one interview with Apne Aap Women Worldwide founder *Ruchira Gupta*

“You educate
a man; you
educate a man.
You educate
a woman;
you educate a
generation.”

-Brigham Young



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letter from the CEO

We are so excited to introduce to you our inaugural issue of the Givology magazine, in time to celebrate the New Year! This issue highlights the work of our Givology partners who are champions of girls' education, one of the most powerful ways to break the cycle of poverty. Educated women are more likely to have healthy babies, to send their kids to school, to invest in their families, and to contribute to a ripple effect of community development that influences future generations to come. From the work of Ruchira Gupta and Apne Aap in India to Katie Meyler and More than Me in Liberia, we're constantly inspired by our Givology partners and hope to share their stories with you.



Looking back at the past year, we are so thankful for our incredible community of supporters and volunteers. Through small dollars and volunteer hours, we've helped over 4,000 students through our network of 50 grassroots partners in 30 countries. Givology is a 100% volunteer-run organization – from our website to our social media and outreach efforts, we do everything out of a strong belief that every individual is empowered to make a difference, with no contribution of time, skills, or support too small.

Even though it's too tough to encapsulate all the stories, events, and campaigns from this year, below are some of the interactive highlights!

- **Givology Book, Second Edition** – When we set out with a mission to bring more Givology partner stories to you, our reader, we never envisioned that we would end up achieving more than 6,000 copies downloaded! Our second edition features 16 additional profiles of inspiring social entrepreneurs and changemakers, with the intent of convincing each individual to think about his or her impact in the world and maximizing the effectiveness of giving.
- **Tweetchats** – To help our donors and volunteers tangibly understand the impact that they have created through their contribution, we initiated a #givchat series on Twitter in which we featured a Givology partner every week from around the world and encouraged participation and debate. From probing the impact of Abaarso School in Somaliland to learning more about the Tea Leaf Trust in Sri Lanka, our #givchats gave anyone the opportunity to ask questions and think deeply.
- **Growing chapters** – From Shanghai to Philadelphia, we're always excited to have new chapters advocate for change in their local community. Our existing chapters contribute roughly half of the funding that we raise annually to support our partners, and are instrumental to spreading word about our campaigns and developing our volunteer base.
- **#Givinspiration** – Our Givology product line is finally here! With designs contributed by artists and created globally, we now have sustainably-sourced T-shirts and stationery of which 100% of the profits go directly to our Givology students and schools. Consumerism with a cause is a very powerful phenomenon, and we expect to grow our products this upcoming year.
- **How many pennies would you give?** – Our MGMT 100 team at the University of Pennsylvania created this video for us to help viewers visualize how income is spent, and how easy it is to make a small contribution for a philanthropic cause.

These are just a few of the developments from this past year...given that our network extends to 200 volunteers, 18 chapters, and over 13,000 donors, we have too many stories to share! From our perspective, it's so rewarding to see how each community is doing their part to increase access to education around the world.

Our goal is to publish this magazine twice a year to share some of our latest developments and our thoughts on some of the essential themes within education that we think about every day. We welcome all comments directed to info@givology.org and hope to hear from you!

- Joyce Meng
Givology CEO

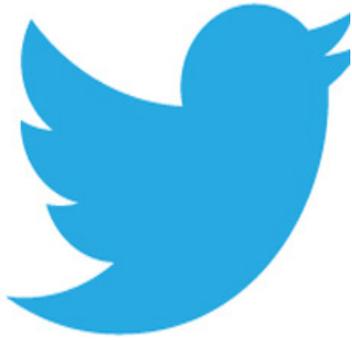
letter from the *Editor-in-Chief*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Givology magazine! The magazine symbolizes months worth of preparation by the Givology team in a collaborative effort to reflect on the current state of global education: to celebrate the achievements made as well as to acknowledge the battles that still need to be fought. My vision in launching this magazine is that each issue will provide you with a greater awareness of the bigger picture and galvanize you as a Givologist to further change. In the initial planning stages of this magazine, I was not sure how the magazine would turn out, but looking at the final product now, I am proud of this magazine, which was built on the enthusiasm and support for this magazine from the team.

For our first issue, the team decided to focus on an issue that is centuries old yet still very modern: girls' education. Throughout the developing world, there remains a great disparity between the number of males in school and the number of females in school. This disparity is the result of a great number of factors, the majority of which are unfortunately well-entrenched in cultural values and are intricately tied with other complex issues such as poverty. Many girls are still married off young, relegated to an adolescence spent in the household rather than in a classroom. A great number face a tragic fate as victims of a thriving sex trafficking industry. And yet more simply cannot afford an education. As a team with a collective and strong belief that education should be a right available to all, we hope to change these facts, and through this issue, we aim to show you ways to do so as well. This issue covers these issues and offers possible solutions, while also spotlighting partner organizations who have made progress in these broad and complex issues, whether it is Apne Aap and its work in preventing sex trafficking or More Than Me and the impact it has made on West Point, a Liberian slum. I hope that our editorials will provoke thought and that our partner organizations' stories will highlight the impact that commitment to change could have. I also invite you to engage in this discussion regarding the advancement of girls' education because, really, our magazine is a worldwide forum for open exchange. To that end, we hope you enjoy this magazine, and we welcome any thoughts from you!

- Joyce Ou

Givology Magazine Editor-in-Chief



reflections on #givchat

By Amy Fan

#Hashtags aren't only for sharing your new #tbt photo.

For the past few months, Givology has been hosting weekly Twitter chats, in which Givologists from all around the world would follow the #givchat hashtag Wednesday night at 7PM EST and tweet about a topic relevant to Givology's mission.

What started as a suggestion to the social media team when I first joined Givology in late June became a three month campaign that brought together our partners and the global Givology community into a passionate discussion about education in the developing world. All in 140 character bites.

However, we had to do some creative work before the chats became a success. Back in July, we held our very first #givchat with Jennifer Chen, the president of Givology, in order to build interest in the chats before we invited outside guests. There was little structure to the chat, and few people showed up. The chat had two critical problems: (1) we had made the chat 2 hours long which is way too long of a time commitment, and (2) we had not done much promotion.

Afterwards, my partner Woojung and I changed our promotion strategy to attract more people to future #givchat's. This meant sending out hundreds of individual tweets to potential sponsors in the days leading up to the chat, and aggressively promoting on all of Givology's social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram) the day of the chat. We also cut down the chats from

two hours to one and wrote more focused questions that our guests would be able to answer.

The next chat with Olivia Wyllie, our social media director, went significantly better. We were now prepared for our external guests, whom Joyce Meng, our CEO, selected from our partner organizations. First up was Harry Lee from Abaarso Tech in Somaliland.

During the hour-long chat, we managed to keep a steady stream of tweets going, and the discussion was structured very much like an interview, but with ten times the people asking questions at the same time. Also with a 140 character limit.

Generally, we asked our guests about their inspiration for starting their organization, challenges that the students and the community faced, future goals, and advice they had for other social enterprises. Additional questions would organically come up as the chat progressed.

Our guests had first-hand experiences with the regions that their schools were in, so we were able to ask them about relevant global issues. In the case of Abaarso Tech in Somaliland, this meant government instability, and with Katie and Emily from More Than Me, this meant Ebola.

In the following weeks, we invited guests from all around the world, each with a unique story to share, who were ready to answer a series of rapid-fire tweets. The guests often reported back that they had fun participating and that the hour went by quickly.

Once our last scheduled #givchat was over, we thought: Why stop #givchat here? So we extended #givchat for another six weeks but changed the format: instead of inviting a partner to participate, we would shift to a more debate-like format. This meant that we would present questions revolving around the week's topic, and participants could bounce back tweets sharing their opinions. When appropriate, we would invite outside non-profits to join as well.

Many of these topics for these tweetchats were relevant both in the developing and the developed world. Examples of topics include service trips abroad, the role of technology in education, the merits of vocational training versus basic education. These topics allowed for students like myself to tweet about our personal experiences and relate them to those of students in the developing world.

After more than a month of these debate-style #givchat's, we decided to wrap up the series and tie together more than 10 weeks of #givchat's by bringing the focus back to Givology. To do this, we asked our participants about possible improvements in our social media outreach and potential projects we could pursue.

At the end of this, the #givchat hashtag had been tweeted thousands of times. We successfully featured various non-profit sites and generated a good amount of content for our blog. Most importantly, we had generated quite a bit of discussion on topics relevant to education and engaged our partners with a simple hashtag.



Featured Guests

TWEETS 7,280 FOLLOWING 2,530 FOLLOWERS 4,613 FAVORITES 362 LISTS 10

Givology

@Givology

P2P educational philanthropy marketplace directly connecting donors to students and projects . Give to learn. Learn to give.

📍 Everywhere!

givology.org

[Tweet to Your Name here](#)

Tweets Tweets and replies

Abaarso Tech @AbaarsoSchool 5hr ago

Highlights: Abaarso Tech is a boarding school in Somaliland. For \$6,400, it provides room, board, and a rigorous education to a student for four years. Many of their graduates go on to top colleges around the world, including Georgetown and MIT, often with full scholarships.

↩ 150 ↻ 35 ★ 50 ⋮

More Than Me @MoreThanMeORG 12hr ago

Highlights: More Than Me is an all girls school in Liberia whose motto is to "get the most vulnerable girls off the street and into school in Liberia". They plan on starting a K-12 boarding school, but right now, they are focusing on the Ebola outbreak in Liberia.

↩ 150 ↻ 35 ★ 50 ⋮

Tea Leaf Trust @TeaLeafTrust 1d ago

Highlights: Inspired by a visit to the tea plantations in Sri Lanka , Tim started Tea Leaf Trust in 2008 and has reached over 20,000 people through the school and various community projects. Tea Leaf Trust offers English lessons and emotional support groups to tea pickers in Sri Lanka.

↩ 150 ↻ 35 ★ 50 ⋮

Emerge Global @EmergeGlobal 2d ago

Highlights: Emerge Global gives abuse victims in Sri Lanka the tools to lead confident and independent lives. They teach the girls how to create jewelry and make a living for themselves. The jewelry is then sold in local stores and online, with 50% of the proceeds going back to the girls.

↩ 150 ↻ 35 ★ 50 ⋮

MORE THAN ME: EMPOWERMENT AND PROGRESS FOR GIRLS IN LIBERIA

By William Flattery III

In June 2014, Will, Givology's Director of Corporate Sponsorships, embarked on a Givology fellowship to Liberia, where he worked closely with More Than Me, a nonprofit organization that runs a boarding school for girls. He outlines the impact of his experiences and discusses the changes More than Me is creating in Liberia.



“What does it take to recover from two civil wars within a 25 year period?”

Traveling to Liberia was very difficult. I am a seasoned international traveler but was apprehensive because of the Ebola virus. I am so glad I was strengthened by loved ones and enabled to go the distance. My experience in Liberia was profound. It increased my already burning desire to be of service during my lifetime. Everything was new, but the virtue of the Liberian people in contrast to the typical American was my primary observation.

It's an interesting paradox that at arguably the pinnacle of human material and technical achievement, we find ourselves anxiety-ridden, prone to depression, far too concerned with how others see us, driven to consume, and with little to no community life. Lacking the virtue I saw in the average Liberian, we seek comfort in unhealthy behaviors or obsessive consumption and spending.

The virtues contributing to the stark contrast are temperance, courage, and transcendence. Nearly every Liberian I met exhibited these three qualities. They were temperate by practicing self-control, prudence, and humility; courageous by perseverance and diligence; and transcendent by their gratitude, zest for life, playfulness, and humor.

The personal impact for me was observing these traits and how they result in happiness, meaning, and fulfillment. I believe these traits are learnable and must be intentionally exercised. No matter what comes in my life, I hope and pray I will always choose to be like my Liberian friends.

Overview:

Givology fellows serve as Givology's eyes and ears in the field by collecting updates, assessing progress, conducting diligence, and identifying the priorities and needs of our partners. In essence, our fellows help our Internet donors better understand the outcomes of our students and communities, as well as assist our partners in areas of need. I was able to witness first-hand the impact of Givology donations and document findings through photos, videos, and

reflections. Furthermore, I was able to help More Than Me, a non-profit organization, address important topics such as impact evaluation, breadth and depth of reach in the community, and data collection.

“They were temperate by practicing self-control, prudence, and humility; courageous by perseverance and diligence; and transcendent by their gratitude, zest for life, playfulness, and humor.”

The state of girls' education globally is improving significantly because of organizations like More Than Me. According to the World Bank's report “The State of Girl's Education,” although the number of students not in

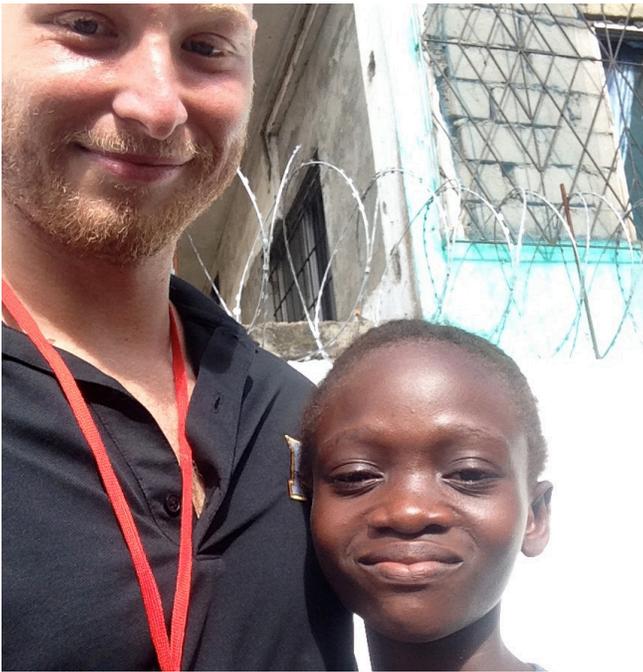
school is decreasing, the gender parity still remains as there are many more girls out of primary school than boys. More Than Me is working to decrease this disparity by taking girls out of the West Point slum and enrolling them in primary school. In addition to a primary school education, More Than Me provides health and social services to help transform the trajectory of students' lives. The holistic approach to education addresses the extensive barriers the girls face.

More Than Me is the first tuition-free, all-girls school in Liberia. The school is outfitted with a cafeteria providing two free meals per day, healthcare, access to a computer lab and library, and a robust afterschool program. The school operates from 7 AM to 5 PM, thus significantly decreasing the hours the girls spend at-risk in the West Point slum. With a mission to ensure that education and opportunity, not exploitation and poverty, define the lives of the most vulnerable girls from the West Point slum, More Than Me is helping improve girls education in Africa and across the world.

Implications for girls' education:

The implications for Liberia are tremendous. The nation faces remarkable





every aspect of quality of life determinants.

Given the circuitous relationship between economies, public health, and education, More Than Me's impact is a prime driver for the overall development of Liberia.

What was going well:

Throughout my time in Liberia, I noticed areas that were working well, not so well, and areas of need.

In development, there are things to get involved with, things to avoid, and things to leave alone. More Than Me's leadership has done an excellent job in understanding the most pressing needs as well as understanding areas of low return. Managing priorities is key in Liberia because everything needs help and rebuilding at this point in time.

The school is also doing well in encouraging the girls to achieve their dreams. Empowerment is accomplished via More Than Me's core value system. The system consists of ethos such as sisterhood and excellence. The system

has led to the girls adopting a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset. The girls believe anything is possible and are well-rounded thinkers. They are learning patience, belief, and persistence. The central ambition of More Than Me is to create conditions for the girls to take control over their own lives, and they are definitely meeting this goal.

What wasn't going so well:

More Than Me was created to reduce the exploitation of young girls. The most optimal situation would be

boarding school because this greatly reduces exposure to the West Point community where rape and other areas of exploitation occur. In addition, from going from a day school to a boarding school, More Than Me also needs professional teachers with experience managing classrooms. This skillset is difficult to come across in Liberia, but securing experienced help will move More Than Me away from reacting to inattentive or disruptive students the majority of the time.

More Than Me is a young organization characterized currently by an early systematic approach. The organization is beginning to carry out classroom operations intending to move the girls along a continuum rather than to just keep them busy for a day. To move to a more advanced classroom operational system, More Than Me will require experienced teachers that understand how to move students from point A to point B by fully integrating them into the classroom and raising daily expectations. Daily expectations should specifically result in daily outcomes which move students towards mastery of the material. More Than Me also needs to restructure teacher contracts. The current system is a one to two year contract which brings about all of the negative results of turnover. Experienced teachers rather than individuals with a bachelor's degree volunteering, sometimes leading a classroom for the very first time, will help achieve More Than Me's key learning indicators.

Conclusion:

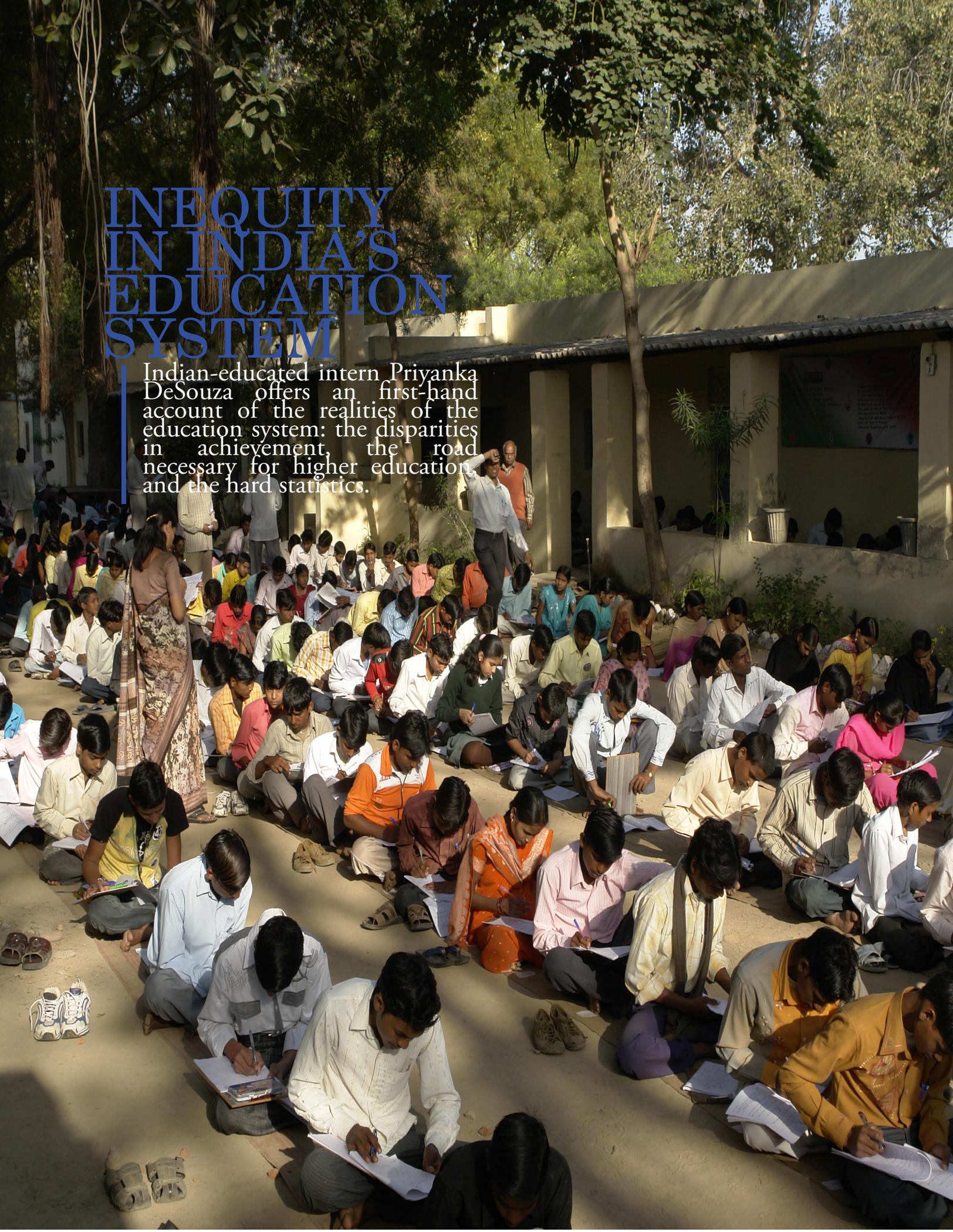
More Than Me is having a wonderful impact and changing the girls lives. There is increasing recognition of the key influence of women's well-being on overall family functioning and on the economic performance of a community or country. This insight is reflected in the eight Millennium Development Goals, six of which have a powerful link to the health, nutrition, education, and empowerment of women. The organization is only a few years old, but has received great praise from Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Girls are earning opportunities to live the life they choose for themselves, and will stride into the future like colossi.

infrastructure issues since it is only a decade removed from civil war. More Than Me is helping advance the World Bank's SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results) initiative by helping close the gender equity gap in education.

Actions taken to improve the condition of girls' education in Liberia will reduce the steepness of the social gradient with regard to health. Improved health will lead to a better economy for Liberia. Improving girls' education in Liberia will also provide options and career opportunities, thereby improving

INEQUITY IN INDIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

Indian-educated intern Priyanka DeSouza offers an first-hand account of the realities of the education system: the disparities in achievement, the road necessary for higher education, and the hard statistics.



In April 2008, my family sat in front of our old family desktop computer. My mother feverishly clicked on the “refresh button,” waiting for my scores to appear. My father and sister stood behind her clutching themselves in agony. I decided that I couldn’t bear to watch, went into the next room and flung myself on my bed.

And then, I heard my mother scream. My family rushed into my room and hugged me fiercely. I had cleared the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) and had qualified for a place to do my undergraduate in engineering at the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

From that day forward, family, teachers, friends, Quora, and everyone else who knew about the JEE, never let me forget that I belonged to the privileged One Percent.

What is the One Percent, you ask?

JEE is the admission test for the 15 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), ITBHU, and India School of Mines Dhanbad. The total number of seats available in all these institutions is about 10,000. Many of the IITs are new and have come into operation recently. 5 IITs—Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur, and Madras—are well established and have about 5,000 seats in all.

Approximately 24,000 candidates of the approximately 500,000 who write the JEE every year meet the subject cut-offs required to clear the exam. Of these 24,000, the 5000 top ranked candidates get admission in one of the old, well established IITs (~1%). The other qualified candidates who do not get a seat in one of the 17 institutions mentioned above, can get seats at other institutions which also use the JEE rank as their criterion for admission. None of these institutions are as well known as the IITs however, and are usually a candidate’s second choice.

I will gloss over the problem of the scarcity of good institutions in India, which make getting admission into one of the IITs (which provide a great education at an affordable cost) so coveted, and go straight to question that I want to discuss in this article: Was the probability of me being in the

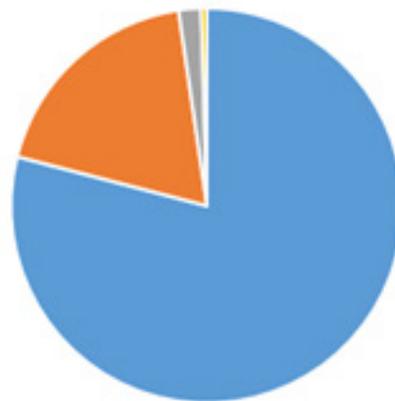
Candidates who registered for JEE



Candidates who Passed the JEE



Common Merit List



“From that day forward, family, teachers, friends, Quora, and everyone else who knew about the JEE, never let me forget that I belonged to the privileged One Percent.”

top 5,000 really 1%?

One report produced by IIT Kanpur says no. The report is an analysis of the 2012 JEE. It provides details of the background of candidates who sat for the exam, and of those who cleared the exam. The results are striking.

The assumption I will make here is that the 2012 statistics reported is representative of the general JEE result over time. A quick look at different reports suggests that this is not an unreasonable assumption.

Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) are historically disadvantaged people that are recognized by the Constitution of India. They form 16.6% and 8.6% of India’s total population, respectively. Other

Backward Classes (OBC) is a collective term used by the government of India to classify castes which are educationally and socially disadvantaged. They form 52% of India’s population according to the Mandal Commission of 1980. This number is under dispute. Seats are reserved for SCs, STs and OBCs in order to level the playing field, and make up for the injustices they have suffered in the past.

The qualifying criteria for General Category (GE) candidates are at least 10% in each subject (Physics, Chemistry and Math), and a 35% in total. The qualifying criteria for OBC candidates was at least 9% in each subject and 31.5% in total. The qualifying criteria for SC/ST candidates is at least 5% in

each subject and 17.5% in total.

The percentage of GE candidates giving JEE is greater than their actual demographic percentage. In addition they do much better in the exam than other candidates. The probability of a registered GE candidate appearing in the Common Merit List (the condition of success of the common merit list is that of the GE category for all candidates) is 5.2% as compared to the 2.5% for OBC candidates, 0.7% for SC candidates and 0.5% candidates for STs.

The report also examined the gender demographic of the candidates who wrote the exam, and of those that cleared the exam. The percentage of OBC candidates of both genders that qualify for the exam is disproportionately smaller than the candidates that registered for the exam.

The number of female candidates that qualify are even fewer. Defects in the primary and secondary education system for girls due to societal reasons could possibly account for these highly skewed ratios.

The report also looked at the educational qualifications of the parents of the students who wrote the exam which is evidently an important factor in determining the success of a candidate. Candidates whose parents

were in the agricultural business had a much lower probability of qualifying for JEE as compared to candidates whose parents were lawyers. This may be because of several reasons. Perhaps the average salary of people engaged in agriculture is less than that of

“The probability of someone like me getting into IIT is much higher than say, a girl living in a village.... This privilege needs to be recognized and spoken about.”

people who work in law. This means that lawyers could afford to send their children to better schools and this could give them an edge over other children. In addition, studies have shown that highly educated parents set high expectations of their children. This could be another factor contributing to

the success of their children.

The report also examines the parent's income of candidates that registered for the exam, and that of those that qualified. It indicates a very clear inverse relationship between parents' income and a candidate's success rate.

Another interesting factor the report considered was the candidates' primary schooling types. The primary education system consists of several different boards with different syllabi and different exams.

A shocking result is that the number of students from State Boards that qualify is half that of students from the CBSE board in spite of more children from State boards registering for JEE. This indicates a real problem in the primary education system in India. CBSE and ICSE are national boards. It is generally accepted in India that the curriculum of most state boards is more conducive to rote learning; while the CBSE and ICSE curriculum teach children how to critically think.

The final point of difference considered in the report is that of place of residence: whether the candidate was from a village/town/city. Candidates who live in cities, perform much better than candidates from other areas. A possible reason for this could be that schools in cities are better than schools in other areas.

As a girl, educated in an ICSE school in Bombay, whose parents are doctors and earn > 4.5 lakhs a year, I belong to a privileged section of society. The probability of someone like me getting into IIT is much higher than say, a girl living in a village, going to a state school whose father is a farmer. This privilege needs to be recognized and spoken about.

The education sector of India has to be evened out and improved so that all children, regardless of their background have an equal shot at clearing JEE. The deep inequality inherent in the system has to be fought.



ABOVE: Author deSouza (far right) with classmates at her graduation from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

Priyanka is reading for an MBA at the University of Oxford. Her undergraduate degree was in engineering. She is an intern columnist for Givology. Priyanka plays chess and has represented her country India in the past. She is also a magician and gives frequent shows.

SPOTLIGHT ON PEACH

XU CAI YANG



My name is Xucai Yang, and I was born in a rural family. I live with my father, mother, grandmother, and brother.

My grandmother is 80 years old; however, she still has to do some work because of our lack of a labor force. My parents work all day long in our land and have to take care of the livestock...My mother is not

very healthy so she often needs medicine. Father sometimes also feels uncomfortable because he is too tired.

We make a living by curing tobacco, and it is exhausting. During the short time period when tobaccos are planted, we have to work all days and all nights...When they are ready to cure, we need to take care of them every single minute.

I only go home during the long breaks so I cannot really help them. I am studying in the city and I am now a 9th grader....

I study so I can use my knowledge in the future which is not far away. I want to get into a good college and find a job that can reduce my family's burdens. I will not give up!

YONG MEI LI



I am Yongmei Li. I am an optimistic 15-year-old girl...I am going to Yulong Fifth Middle School...

I was self-abased when I was young because I did not want others to know my poverty...

When I was bullied by others, I did not dare to fight back.

However, I learned to protect myself as I grew up...I know that I have to overcome the

difficulties.

Although we do not have a big house, I still love my small one and my family. I love my grandfather, father, mother and brother. They make me feel the warmth of the world. I know they have their own stress and we all worry about our low income.... My parents, said they will support us to colleges no matter what the cost will be. I know it is impossible and I probably cannot even get into a high school. But everyone is trying so I cannot let them down...I wish I could be successful and pay this debt and live a happy life with my family. I might also have power to help those in need.

...One day, I hope I can catch my own sunshine!

YAN HE



My grandmother and my father raised me up. After my mother's death, the family was in poverty for a long period of time and my father was depressed....

When I became a middle school student, father told me everything about my mother. I was shocked and could not accept it...After a few days, I got back on my feet, because I realized that people cannot revive and I should work harder in order to keep my father from sorrow.

I also do not want my step-mother and grandmother to worry.

...Now I am a middle school 9th grader, and the school is harder than before yet I try my best to tackle every problem. I especially love calligraphy because I think it can help me to my inner peace. I also like sports such as: track and field, badminton etc.

I live happily with my father, step-mother, grandmother and sister now and forget about the sorrow. They are all meaningful to me. As the economy situation improves, we can put more focus on studying and I hope we can live like this forever. However, this is just a "hope" and cannot come true. This is the reason why I cherish this home. Everyone in this house is priceless.

LIU YUN FANG



My name is Yunfang Liu and I am a middle school student....[L]ast September when my father was told by the doctor that he has serious lung disease....We have to not only support my father's medical treatments, but also pay the tuition of us....

One day, I saw [my mom] working tiredly, and I suddenly told her that I want to quit school and help her. She was so mad that she shouted at me, said: "What can you do if you come home? What else can you do beside studying? You are the hope of this family!" ...[My parents] have their faith in us because they do not want us to live same lives as they did. I will not give up, in fact, I will work harder.

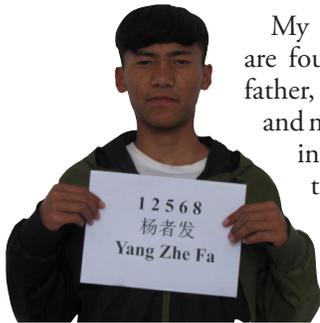
I think I am fortunate because I have a chance to study. I want every children who live in poverty can face the challenges and fulfill their dreams. We should work hard for those who helped us.

...I hope that I could be a doctor when I grow up so I can help more people fight against sicknesses. This is my dream and I am confident in it.

FOUNDATION/

Translations by John Chen & Jessica Lim. Full-length letters and more stories on givology.org/blogs

YANG ZHE FA

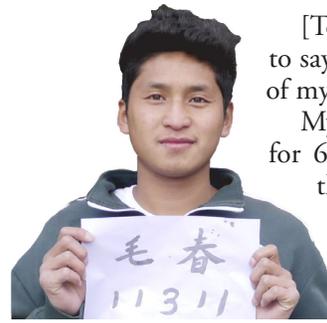


My name is Zhe Fa Yang...There are four members in my family...my father, mother, my younger brother, and myself. Both my brother and I are in middle school.... I only noticed that my parents' superficial burden but ignored their spiritual torture. Especially at school, I was unable to discipline myself and often made mistakes that made

them worried about me. Ignoring their sorrow, I kept acting imperfect which hurt them deeper. By that time, my brother was going to school, which increased their financial burden....When I was in 6th grade, my grades improved significantly and they became happier; however, I knew that there was sorrow behind their smile....My father, who is the only breadwinner in my family now, is already 44-years old and might not be able to work in a few years which will leave us without any income. Since their burdens are heavy, and I really want to learn more knowledge and help them, I want help from [you] and to get your recognition.

If I receive your help, I will work hard and requite you. Thank you.

MAO CHUN



[To my supporters], I would like to say "thank you" from the bottom of my heart. I will never forget you.

My life in high school....We study for 6 days a week....I do not have the time to go home during weekends. I will stay at school and do homework and clean up....

As for the most challenging task... my grades are not good enough....Somehow I think that no matter how much effort I spend on daily study, my grades will never improve....But I think now I should be more confident, and adjust my attitude towards studying. I will work hard and study more....There will be times for hardship and bitterness. We need to have the courage....I promise I will do well.

...My dream is to become a policeman; I will do my best to serve the citizens. and I wish I can earn money to give a life for my parents and try to repay your kindness...

[My supporters] taught me to be brave; no matter what I will never give up and become a successful person. Meanwhile, I hope you will have a good life.

LI YUMEI



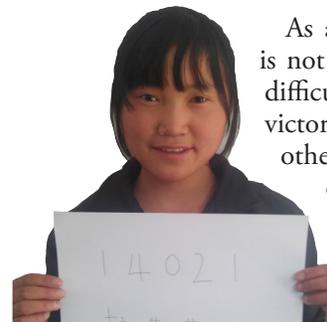
My name is Li Yumei.

....

I have thought about giving up on school despite my love for it. I just can't bear to see my parents so tired and stressed all the time. We can get our tuition covered most of the time, but the expenses of school equipment, books, and other materials add up.

When I brought up quitting school to my dad, he immediately dismissed it. He doesn't want me to be like him, working physical labor jobs all the time, and he hopes that we can grow up to live a better life than him. Ever since that incident, I have set my mind to continue school. In my heart, I vowed: I will work hard at school, making sure that I will not waste my parents' sacrifices. I will return the huge favor to my parents and loved ones to thank them for giving up so much for me. I want to thank everyone who has ever and will continue to support me in my educational endeavors....I truly hope that you will help me complete my education and schooling. I need to work harder to give back to society, to help more people like me in the world one day.

YANG YING YING



As a student born in poverty, life is not easy. In fact, my life is full of difficulties, and defeats are more than victories. My parents married each other very late and gave birth to us even later, so they are already old now and I, the firstborn, am still a freshmen. An old saying goes: "Economy is the foundation and science is the guide." Sometimes

I am really worried that when both of them are old and cannot support us, I cannot fulfill my dream. How can I help the society if I am not strong enough? These questions became my agonies.

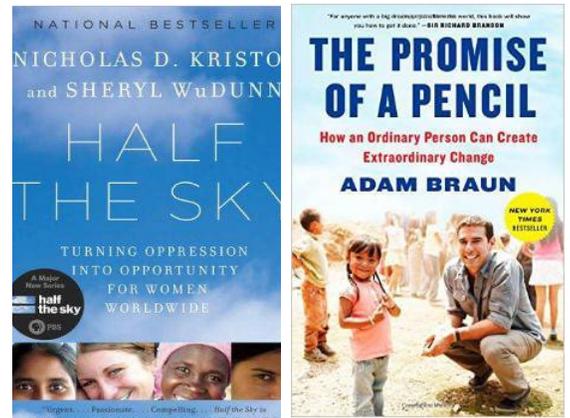
....Time flies, I am now a middle school student. These past three years I faced different challenges. The failures felt like thorns that prevented me from reaching my goals. They stabbed me yet I never stopped fighting for my dream. I turned them into motivations that pushed me forward. After many failures, I realized that thorns are actually roses. If we are brave enough, we can enjoy its wonderful smell. I only have one year of middle school left and I will work hard for my dream....

GIVOLOGY READING LIST

BY JULIA TOFAN

1. *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* By Adam Braun

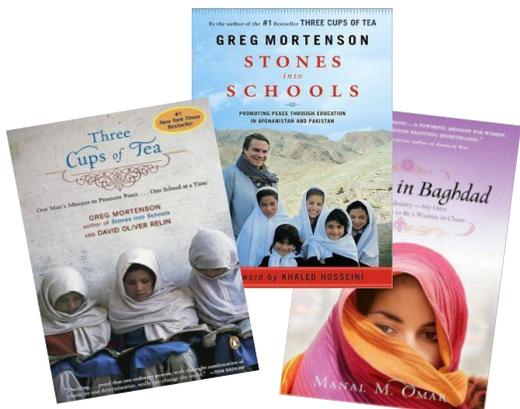
While traveling Braun met a young boy begging on the streets of India, who after being asked what he wanted most in the world, simply answered, “A pencil.” This small request led to a staggering series of events that culminated in Pencils of Promise, the organization he started with just \$25 that has since built more than 200 schools around the world. Driven by compelling stories and shareable insights, this is a vivid and inspiring book that will give you the tools to make your own life a story worth telling.



2. *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace... One School at a Time* & *4. Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace Through Education in Afghanistan and Pakistan* By Greg Mortenson

Mortenson was inspired by a chance encounter with impoverished mountain villagers and promised to build them a school. Over the next decade he built fifty-five schools that offer a balanced education in one of the most isolated and dangerous regions on earth. As it chronicles Mortenson's quest, which has brought him into conflict with both enraged Islamists and uncomprehending Americans, *Three Cups of Tea* combines adventure with a celebration of the humanitarian spirit.

In this dramatic first-person narrative, Mortenson picks up where *Three Cups of Tea* left off in 2003. He shares for the first time his broader vision to promote peace through education and literacy, as well as touching on military matters, Islam, and women—all woven together with the many rich personal stories of the people who have been involved in this remarkable two-decade humanitarian effort.



3. *Barefoot in Baghdad: A Story of Identity-My Own and What It Means to Be a Woman in Chaos* By Manal M. Omar

An American aid worker of Arab descent, Omar moves to Iraq to help as many women as she can rebuild their lives. She quickly finds herself drawn into the saga of a people determined to rise from the ashes of war and sanctions and rebuild their lives in the face of crushing chaos. This is a chronicle of Omar's friendships with several Iraqis whose lives are crumbling before her eyes. It is a tale of love, as her relationship with one Iraqi man intensifies in a country in turmoil. And it is the heartrending stories of the women of Iraq, as they grapple with what it means to be female in a homeland you no longer recognize.

6. I Am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced

By Nujood Ali

Ali's childhood came to an abrupt end in 2008 when her father arranged for her to be married to a man three times her age. With harrowing directness, Ali tells of abuse at her husband's hands and of her daring escape. With the help of local advocates and the press, Ali obtained her freedom—an extraordinary achievement in Yemen, where almost half of all girls are married under the legal age. Ali's courageous defiance of both Yemeni customs and her own family has inspired other young girls in the Middle East to challenge their marriages. Here is an unforgettable story of tragedy, triumph, and courage.

7. Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books

By Azar Nafisi

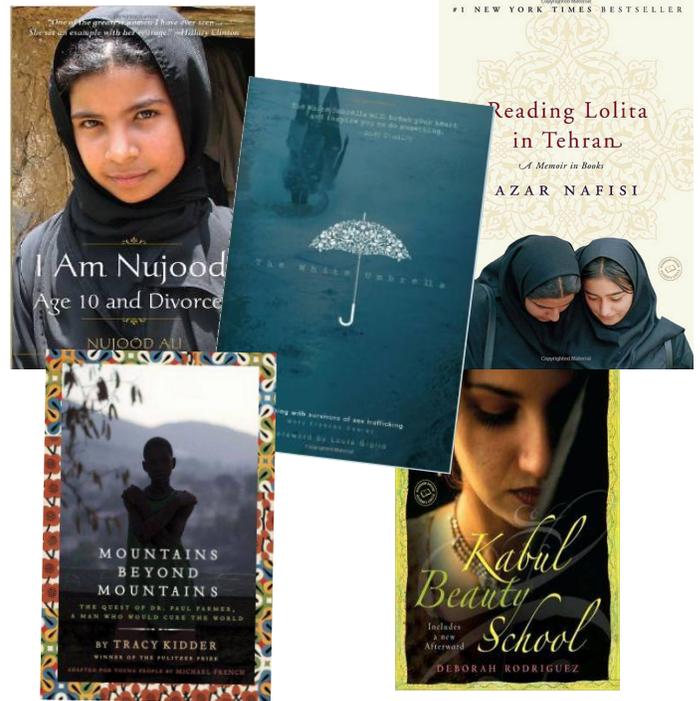
Nafisi gathered seven young women at her house every Thursday morning to read and discuss forbidden works of Western literature. They were all former students whom she had taught at university. Some came from conservative and religious families, others were progressive and secular; several had spent time in jail. They were shy and uncomfortable at first, unaccustomed to being asked to speak their minds, but soon they began to open up and to speak more freely, not only about the novels they were reading but also about themselves, their dreams and disappointments.

9. Mountains beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World

By Tracy Kidder

At the center of *Mountains Beyond Mountains* stands Paul Farmer, a doctor and Harvard professor, who found his life's calling: to diagnose and cure infectious diseases and to bring the lifesaving tools of modern medicine to those who need them most. As readers follow Farmer's treatment of developing ideas and practices of public health, his gentle interactions with rural Haitians, his development of a private charity, and his attempts to change international medical policies, that challenge will always be echoing through their minds.

Julie is a Connecticut high school student who aspires to become a doctor and advocate for access to healthcare in developing countries. As a blogger for Givology, she enjoys writing about human rights issues, education, and opportunities to make a difference.



8. The White Umbrella: Walking with Survivors of Sex Trafficking

By Mary Frances Bowley

The White Umbrella tells stories of survivors as well as those who came alongside to help them to recovery. It describes the pain and the strength of these young women and those who held the “white umbrella” of protection and purity over them on the road to restoration. This book offers principles and guidance to anyone with a heart for these hurting young women and a desire to help. It is an ideal resource for individuals or organizations seeking to learn what they can do to assist these victims in becoming whole again.

10. Kabul Beauty School: An American Woman Goes Behind the Veil

By Debbie Rodriguez

Soon after the fall of the Taliban, in 2001, Rodriguez, a hairdresser, went to Afghanistan as part of a group offering humanitarian aid to this war-torn nation. She soon found a gift for befriending Afghans, and once her profession became known she was eagerly sought out by Westerners desperate for a good haircut and by Afghan women, who have a long and proud tradition of running their own beauty salons. Rodriguez stumbled through language barriers, overstepped cultural customs, and constantly juggled the challenges of a postwar nation even as she learned how to empower her students to become their families' breadwinners by learning the fundamentals of coloring techniques, haircutting, and makeup.

RUCHIRA GUPTA & APNE AAP:

A mission against sex trafficking and for female empowerment

By Sherry Zheng



Givology is ecstatic to partner with Apne Aap Women Worldwide, a grassroots organization that targets to end sex trafficking. Givology fully supports Apne Aap's mission and visions. The courageous Ruchira Gupta, founder of Apne Aap, began as a journalist and traveled to Nepal. When she was in Nepal, she came across loads of villages that did not have young women. Perplexed, she asked some local men that were gambling and playing cards, "where are the girls?" Some of the men smiled sheepishly and responded "don't you know they are in Bombay?" She began to explore what was going on; Ruchira stated, "to my horror I found that the sex trade still exist." It starts with poor farmers that lack education. An agent from this sex industry would pay the parents or families a low price to buy their daughter, similar to \$50. The agents tell the fathers that they can offer their daughters a job in the cities or even a marriage. They even tell the girls' fathers that their daughters are starving and they can be prostituted but at least they will have a bed and food. The agent then takes

the girls across the border and transports them to Bombay. The brothel owner is the person who buys the girls from these agents. They would negotiate the price of these girls based on their beauty, skin color, and age. The girls are locked up in 4x4 rooms for 5 years with iron bar windows where they would be raped by 8-10 customers a day. These girls were a kilometer away from the beach in Bombay but these girls have never seen the sea.

Ruchira mentions the youngest girl she has met was a girl aged seven. These girls would be forced to have children so their children could be kept in the industry. The brothel brainwashes the girls that they were devalued and nobody will transport them home. Ruchira states "[the girls] forgot the possibility of even trying to escape this situation." Then there are the landlords who own the brothels, the money-lenders, and then finally the customers. This whole chain is considered an industry with a never-ending supply to making a fortune. "I was a journalist, I have covered war, I covered famine, I covered hunger, I

covered conflict, but I have never seen this level of exploitation of one human being by another. I was really angry, as a woman, a citizen of India, a citizen of the world." This is happening "in my lifetime, in my generation, in my country" she declared.

Ruchira spent 18 months on the research and filming of the Emmy award-winning documentary *The Selling of Innocence*. During the filming period, one of the brothel owners pulled out a knife on Ruchira and asked her, "Why are you here? You cannot film this." However, the women from prostitution started to surround Ruchira and told the brothel, "it is our story and we want her to tell it." Ruchira passionately spoke about how life-changing this documentary was to her. She formed friendships with the girls in prostitution. As a woman herself, Ruchira understood their stories, their jokes, and their dreams. The woman told Ruchira that they do not want to see this happen to their daughters. They wanted a school for their children, a job and an office, a voice, legal protection, justice and a room of

their own “just like Virginia Wolf” quoted Ruchira. This was how Apne Aap Women Worldwide was born.

Apne Aap organizes small groups of women and girls who are at the risk of or those who were affected by trafficking into self-empowerment groups that enables them to access fundamental rights such as education, dignified livelihood, and legal empowerment. Ruchira proudly announced that Apne Aap has impacted over 10,000 females and continues to impact more. Apne Aap is making an effort in breaking the cycle of poverty and discrimination that forces women into prostitution.

Apne Aap means “self-empowerment” in Hindi because “we believe we can help ourselves by helping each other” stated Ruchira. When Ruchira was asked how Apne Aap is changing the lives of the women, she answered “the 10 assets.” The

10 assets are both intangible and tangible. These assets combine work in grassroots to initiate change in policy. The ten key Assets are: access to a safe community space, access to nine friends for collective empowerment, access to an education for self and children, ability to express self-confidence and allow their voices to be heard, courage and tactics to express one’s problem to the government and legal authorities, knowledge and courage for political participation, access to learn about financial stability, capacity for a dignified livelihood, legal empowerment, and access to government programs and services. Apne Aap teaches young girls vocational skills, job training skills, jewelry-making, computer skills, and more. Apne Aap sends girls to colleges and allows them to fully flourish instead of being trapped in the sex industry. The Red Light Dispatch is a monthly newsletter written by women who suffered from prostitution and those

who live in red light areas of India. Prior to Apne Aap, most of these women did not have a voice in even their own lives. They are gradually learning that their stories are the most powerful force in the movement to end sex trafficking.

Being the fearless leader she is, Ruchira, as well as the Apne Aap staff, often face threatening challenges. A few challenges included the brothel and agents snatching the girls from Apne Aap and performing violent actions against Apne Aap’s staff. One of the staff members was arrested by corrupted police officers, and other staff members have been stabbed. Another challenge is “society’s attitude toward the sex industry,” announced Ruchira. Society thinks prostitution is inevitable and normal. They claim that prostitution is a legalized system and the situation for women will improve. However, as women age, they are not as “valued” in prostitution. They get kicked out because new younger girls are replacing them. The older women are left on the streets and “slowly die.”

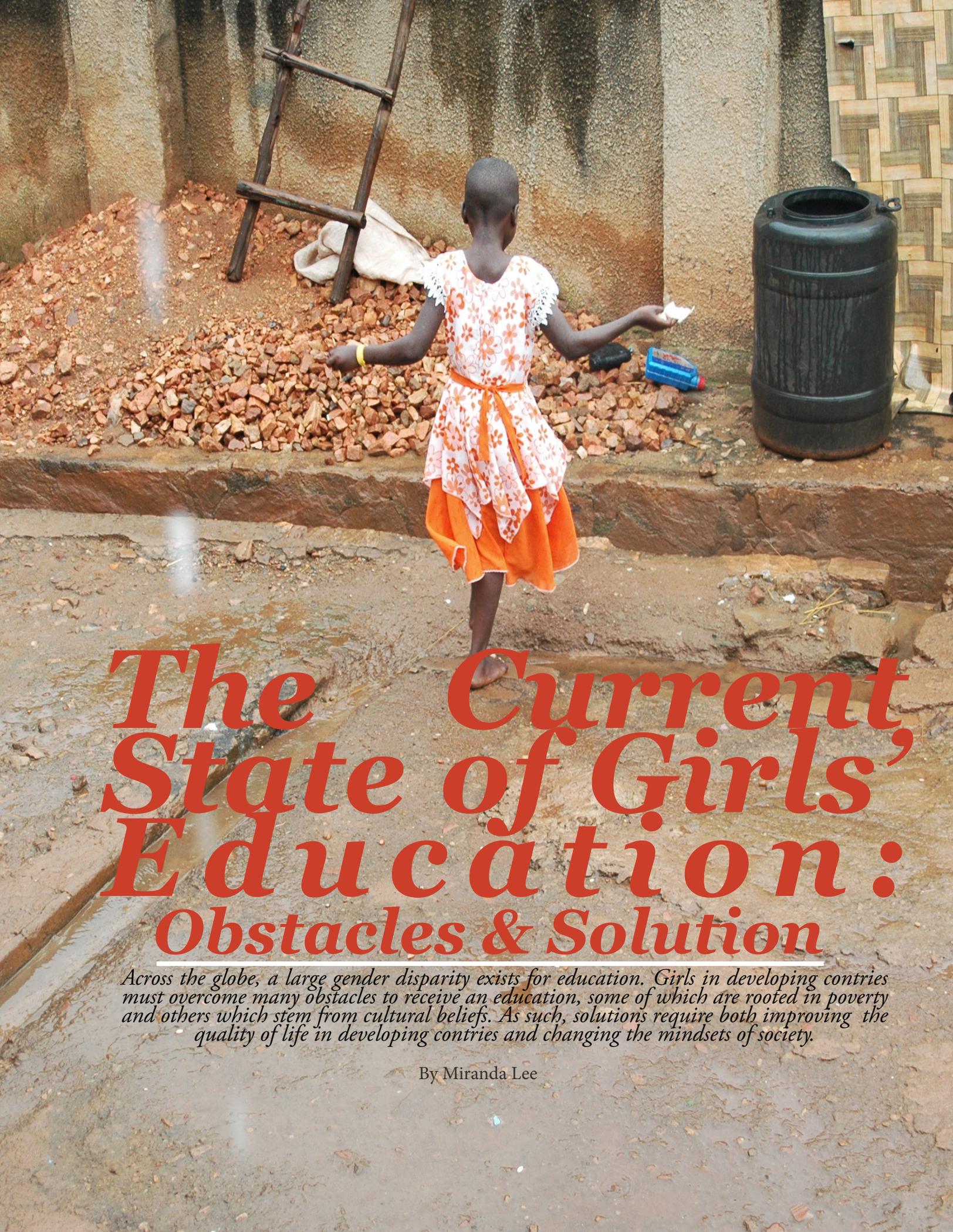
Apne Aap is constantly altering the attitudes of society and bringing change on the Indian government. The campaign “Cool Men Don’t Buy Sex” highlights the role of men in cultivating the sex industry. Without the demand of men buying sex, the sex industry would be driven out of business. The “Cool Men Don’t Buy Sex” campaign successfully reached 10,000 signatures and initiated the office of the president of India and the Ministry of Women and Child to review the petition. To join this campaign, start by signing the petition, wear the wristband, listen to the podcast, spread public awareness through social media and donate. For more information, visit apneap.org) The goal of this campaign is to bring about societal change and legal change.

The heroic Ruchira advises to not look at actions as how big or how small they are; instead, look at it because it matters and it will make a difference. Apne Aap is able to transform women that were victims into leaders. Let’s combine our joined efforts to help end the cycle of prostitution, by preventing the trafficking of girls and enriching those who were prostituted.

Sherry is passionate about health and finding new adventures! She is extremely excited to be apart of the Givology Newsletter and Magazine team and believes every student deserves quality and equitable education.

“ I have covered war, I covered famine, I covered hunger, I covered conflict, but I have never seen this level of exploitation of one human being by another. I was really angry, as a woman, a citizen of India, a citizen of the world.”





The Current State of Girls' Education: Obstacles & Solution

Across the globe, a large gender disparity exists for education. Girls in developing countries must overcome many obstacles to receive an education, some of which are rooted in poverty and others which stem from cultural beliefs. As such, solutions require both improving the quality of life in developing countries and changing the mindsets of society.

By Miranda Lee

Education as a basic human right is recognized in Article 26 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The world's countries agreed to Millennium Development Goal target 3.A to eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education no later than 2015. Numerous international agreements such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA) (2000), and national or state policies similarly undertake to ensure every child has access to quality education.

However, these goals have yet to be achieved, and gender inequality in education exacerbates the lack of opportunities for females. The UN states 126 million 15-24 year olds are unable to read and write, and over 60% of these are female. Over 90% of countries with a gender gap of at least 5% in the primary Net Enrollment Ratio are to the detriment of girls. Moreover, 54% of children out of school are females according to the World Literacy Foundation, and World Bank gender statistics indicate the enrollment and completion rate for females is lower at each successive stage of education.

UNICEF has identified a number of impediments to female education and potential ways to address the problems. For some families, the cost of school fees, clothes, materials, and foregoing their daughters' work during the school day is prohibitive. The burden of costs can be relieved by addressing poverty levels generally, offering scholarships, subsidising provisions/food/uniforms, and offering services like childcare for younger siblings which girls would otherwise need to stay home to look after.

Moreover, impoverished people often suffer from poor health. If they are sick or they need to take care of sick family members, the ability of teachers and female students to attend school and learn is diminished. Access to clean water and sanitation as well as integrating health education in the lessons conducted (particularly in relation to the significant threat of HIV/AIDS) can assist in improving the situation.

Even if students and teachers are in good health, many teaching institutions are located too far away to facilitate widespread attendance, as girls who must travel long distances are vulnerable to attacks on their

way to school. Offering proximate schools or girls' boarding houses could combat the lack of enrollment and attendance.

Obstacles to girls' education are not always contained to the teaching staff, students and sites. Disaster situations due to political strife and warfare disrupt education and have lingering effects. Damaged school buildings, bodily injury, and emotional stresses can inhibit teachers and students from teaching and learning effectively. Efforts to restore physical structures and psychosocial support are required to ensure continuity of education is available as soon as possible.

Outside of emergency situations, the more routine practice of amending laws can help to establish the framework for all children to be educated. Birth registration, mandatory school attendance, (including during/after pregnancy) and prohibition of child labor are rules which can encourage communities to become accustomed to girls being educated. Governments can also direct funding towards programs and infrastructure to support gender equality in education.

One of the most difficult obstacles to resolve is the entrenched perspective that girls' education is superfluous and even detrimental. For communities where girls marry young and their duties are limited to looking after the home, it is important for those in leadership positions to advocate girls' education and explain the advantages of females being given the opportunity to learn.

The benefits of a girl's education continues beyond her school years and the positive impact extends to her family and the community. Girls' education boosts both family income and health as well as unlocking the potential for females to be included in decision-making and make advances in non-domestic vocations.

The 2014 Education For All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) reveals that if all girls received primary education, child mortality could reduce by a sixth and maternal mortality by two-thirds. Increasing awareness of such significant repercussions is required in order to change attitudes towards sending girls to school. Parents, teachers and policymakers need to recognize the value of girls' education so due emphasis is given to working towards gender equality in education. Their roles are integral to the success of any initiatives—the quality and execution of education

programs will determine how effective the facilities actually are. If schools are too full, unhygienic or physical/sexual assaults are prevalent, these conditions may mean children attending are exposed to more risk as opposed to benefiting from education.

Last but definitely not least, the delivery of education is integral to effectiveness. The beauty of education is its transformative power which can itself be harnessed to break down the barriers to girls' tuition. Curriculum should be reviewed to ensure useful skills and topical subjects are taught in a gender neutral manner. Language and lessons perpetuating gender stereotypes need to be replaced with instruction which fosters and instills equality of the sexes. Historical female role models as well as inspiring women teachers can encourage the perspective that girls have an equal capacity to contribute and improve our world for the benefit of future generations.

Miranda connected with Givology when living in NYC as the focus on children's education and idea of encouraging everyone to give any amount resonated strongly with her. She's since moved back home to Sydney but continues to help out at Givology.

QUICK FACTS

THE ISSUE:

- Over 60% of the 126 million illiterate 15-24 year olds are female
- 54% of children out of school are female
- Female enrollment and completion rate is lower at each successive stage of education
- Political strife, high cost of education, poverty, and sexism impact the possibility of a girl receiving education

THE SOLUTION:

- Alleviate poverty through subsidies, scholarships, and daycare services
- Improve quality of health
- Greater government involvement and reformed laws
- Advocacy for female education and the fostering of greater awareness
- Effective delivery of education



THE VALUE OF EDUCATING WOMEN

“If we educate a boy, we educate one person. If we educate a girl, we educate a family—and a whole nation.”

— African proverb

By Lily Li

Disparities between men and women can still be seen in countries all across the globe. The fundamental root of this problem lies in the differences between the education women and men receive. As UNICEF reports, more than half of the 100 million children around the world not in school are girls. UNICEF also states that twice as many women are illiterate as men. While the number of girls attending school worldwide has increased in the past 20 years, these gains are mostly due to an increase in primary school attendance, and few of these girls are able to continue their education. The Atlantic reports that over 30 million girls currently do not attend secondary school or cannot use their education to get a decent-paying job. The lack of education among women has harmful effects, both to the women themselves and to society.

The obstacles women across the world face are staggering, especially in the developing world. For instance, women

face sexism, abuse, and neglect. They are frequently married off at young ages in arranged marriages that they had no say in. They are also beaten, raped, and killed for expressing their opinions, questioning their elders and husbands, or for trying to win rights that we take for granted, such as driving or voting. Moreover, women are taught that they are less important and valuable than their male counterparts and that their only worth lies in their ability to bear and raise sons. This line of thinking can only be eliminated by educated women.

Women who receive an education are more capable of fighting back against injustices and better informed about their personal health. For example, sex education allows women to avoid unwanted pregnancies, helps prevent the spread of STDs, and decreases the mortality rate of infants and mothers giving birth. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports that receiving a primary education saves

189,000 women globally from dying from childbirth. Women become more aware of symptoms such as bleeding and high blood pressure and can react to those symptoms accordingly.

Educated women also have more control over their lives. Reuters reports that if all girls in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia had a primary education, there would be 14% fewer child marriages, and if all girls received a secondary education, 64% fewer school-aged girls would be locked into marriage. Educated girls and women are less likely to be victims of domestic and sexual violence or to tolerate it in their families. Clearly, giving women an education makes them stronger and more confident. These women are able to articulate their opinions and have a voice in society.

Providing women with an education also gives them the power to improve the lives of others. As the World Vision Australia’s Program Advisor, Simone Charnley, states, “Educating



a girl is one of the highest returns on investment in the developing world. When you educate a girl, you instantly improve not only the social, health and economic benefits to the individual, but the community reaps benefits as well. It is the single most effective strategy for pulling people out of poverty: educated girls are a real force for change. Educated women are more confident, which allows them to become more involved in the political process, both locally and nationally. This contributes to the creation of a fairer and more representative government.

Moreover, educating women will have a positive impact on future generations. UNESCO reports that educated girls are far more likely to be able to protect their children from preventable diseases and to stave off malnutrition in their children's early years. At least 12 million children—a quarter of the world's population of malnourished children—could be saved from malnutrition if all

mothers in poor countries were given a secondary education, according to UNICEF. Receiving an education allows mothers to better protect and raise their children, resulting in longer-living, healthier children. If all women had a primary education, there would be 15% fewer child deaths, and if all women had a secondary education, there would be 49% fewer child deaths.

The economy also benefits from greater access to education for girls. As Global Horizons for Women reports, an educated woman will invest as much as \$0.80 of every dollar she earns back into her family, as compared to only \$0.30 from men. Greg Mortenson, the co-founder of the Central Asia Institute states, "Once you educate the boys, they often leave the villages and search for work in the cities, but the girls stay home, become leaders in the community, and pass their knowledge onto their own children. If you really want to empower societies, reduce poverty, improve basic hygiene and

health care, reduce the population explosion, and fight high rates of infant and maternal mortality, the answer is to educate girls."

Educating women is one of the most pressing concerns in the world today. It is not an issue that can be eliminated overnight. However, the benefits of the efforts and funds used to achieve equal education for all far outweigh the costs. Education empowers women to speak up for themselves and gain a say in their life choices. It gives them the strength and confidence to make demands and voice their opinions. Stronger women will lead to a better and more equal world—one with a higher standard of living for all.

Lily is a Development Intern at Givology. She was inspired to join Givology due to her interest in improving education systems around the world. Outside of Givology, she is a high school senior at the Albany Academies and participates in debate, music journalism, and Mock Trial.

ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF UNITED NATION'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

An assessment of their effectiveness in improving quality and equality in global education

By Susan Liu

In June 2010 at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as the Rio +20 conference, UN member states agreed to create a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). These are meant to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in representing the UN development agenda beyond 2015. Since Rio +20 did not elaborate on specific goals, the UN General Assembly has established a 3- member Open Working Group (OWG), tasked with preparing an official proposal of goals for SDGs. According to the official Rio +20 outcome document, this group also

must “decide on its methods of work, including developing modalities to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system in its work, in order to provide a diversity of perspectives and experience.” The selection of the thirty representatives by nominations of member states through the five UN regional groups was meant to ensure fair, equitable, and balanced geographic representation.

One of the eight MDGs is the achievement of universal primary education. This goal is considered one

of the core “unfinished business” of the MDGs, although the international community has made notable improvements. From 2000 to 2010, over 50 million additional children enrolled in primary school; a majority of them are girls who now attend primary and secondary schools.

Why is it particularly important for girls to receive an education? Aside from combating overall gender inequality, studies show that girls’ education in particular can generate more immediate and intergenerational payback across several areas of development. Each extra year of a mother’s schooling reduces the

“With each government that signs on to these agreements, their nations’ respective civil societies have a written statement they can hold their leaders accountable for.”



probability of infant mortality by five to 10 percent. An extra year of primary school boosts girls' eventual wages by 10 to 20 percent. Each additional year of secondary school: 15 to 25 percent. When women and girls earn income, they reinvest 90 percent of it into their families, as compared to only 30 to 40 percent for a man.

Unfortunately, there also areas where efforts in expanding education have fallen short. Over 50 percent of primary-school aged children in sub-Saharan Africa remain out of school. According to UNESCO, over half of these children were girls. Around 120 million children either do not make it to school or drop out before their fourth year. Not only that, but contrary to what the ambitious MDG education target suggests, it is not enough to only measure quantitative metrics such as enrollment, funds, and schools opened; studies have found that the number one reason children drop out is dissatisfaction and boredom, rather than economic affordability. The overwhelming evidence suggests that in pursuing progress, we must account for educational quality as well as quantity.

So has there been much of an improvement in the content and focus regarding girls' education with these new SDGs? If we were to take the vague text literally, you could say so. Goal 4 is to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all." Subsections of this goal cover the idea that all boys and girls should have "free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education" by 2030. Subsection 5 manages to be more explicit, asking to "eliminate gender disparities in education" as well as addressing access to education for "persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations." The language manages to be specific in defining an educational ideal that looks at both quality and accessibility in education.

Goal 5 follows this idea of equality with trying to achieve "gender equality" and trying to "empower all women and girls." While the wording suggests more of a focus on quality in education than the previous MDGs, we can see more specific policy suggestions addressing

educational quality brought up by UN affiliated nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Education International's policy statement pointed out the need for quality teachers. Their report points out that teacher training is often viewed as "unproductive and expensive", and as a result, is often neglected at schools. This results in teachers that are "untrained and barely educated". Treating teachers as respected professionals with adequate support is also emphasized; considering how more developed countries governments are expected to help carry out these SDGs, but have also faced criticisms over how they treat their teachers, it should be interesting to see how policies

"It is not enough to only measure quantitative metrics.... The overwhelming evidence suggests that in pursuing progress, we must account for educational quality as well as quantity."

attempt to address this vital aspect of education.

On the focus of accessibility, Chronic Poverty Network points out that effective inclusive education policies must begin with policymakers viewing excluded groups as citizens with valid cultures, livelihoods, and, of course, equal rights to an education. In terms of educational quality, the NGO emphasizes factors such as textbook quality and supply, teacher training and support, and keeping class sizes to "conducive" levels. In terms of motivating kids to stay in school, conditional cash transfer programs, school feeding programs,

and scholarships were emphasized by several NGOs and OWG members who acknowledged the obstacle that opportunity costs placed on families who might otherwise see education as a viable option. These programs have already shown success to a diverse range of regions, including areas in Mexico, Bangladesh, Malawi, Pakistan, Yemen, Indonesia, and Brazil.

The MDGs have received plenty of criticism in the past for being overly ambitious and unrealistic. If we were to look at the SDGs in the same manner, we could say they are hardly an improvement. At the same time, we should acknowledge the gains that the international community has been able to make with having such ambitious goals, even if the exact target numbers were not fulfilled. It is good to see that stakeholders and negotiators for SDGs have tried to emphasize quality in education, something that MDGs have failed to give the attention it deserves.

While I am looking forward to seeing how UN Member States attempt to reach these goals through policy, it's important to remember the role civil society will need to play in order to achieve the future we want to see. In the end, these agreements are nothing but words on paper if concrete action and results are not achieved. With each government that signs on to these agreements, their nations' respective civil societies have a written statement they can hold their leaders accountable for.

Not only that, but we still have a duty to find our own ways to make progress. My time at Givology has opened my eyes to many of the amazing impacts our grassroots partners have made on the communities they work in. In conjunction with the policies that we expect our governments to adapt, the simple act of giving, whether through time or funds, is enough to bring us all a step closer to the kind of difference that we would like to see in this world.

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