

Beyond Access:

**Transforming Policy and Practice
for Gender Equality in Education**

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Beyond Access:

Transforming Policy and Practice for Gender Equality in Education

Edited by
Sheila Aikman and Elaine Unterhalter



Oxfam

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Sheila Aikman (Oxfam GB)

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Introduction

Sheila Aikman and Elaine Unterhalter

This is a book about transforming policy and practice to promote equitable processes in education, in response to the need for equality, quality, and justice for all. It considers the significance of gender equality in education, and the ways in which gender inequality relates to other sources of division and conflict in society.

We live in a world in which education is characterised by extensive gender inequalities. Two thirds of all those who have no access to education are girls and women. Sixty-five million girls never even start school, and an estimated 100 million do not complete primary education, often because its quality is poor and their opportunities are far from equal to those of boys (Herz and Spurling 2004: 2). More than 542 million women are illiterate, many as a result of inadequate or incomplete schooling. Lack of literacy is generally associated with poverty and discrimination (UNESCO 2003: 87). In an age of enormously expanded access to all levels of education, of high aspirations for political participation, and huge growth of knowledge economies, nearly three quarters of a billion girls and women are being denied education.

The manifest injustice of this state of affairs, and the marked gender inequalities associated with it, prompted the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 to set two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to address the problem:

MDG 2: achieve universal primary education, with the target of ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015.

MDG 3: promote gender equality and empower women, with the target of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and in all levels of education by 2015.

The MDGs complement other international declarations on gender equality in education, formulated several years ago but not yet realised: the Beijing Platform for Action for gender equality (1995), and the Dakar Education For All (EFA) Framework of Action (2000).

This book examines policies and practices which can contribute towards achieving these goals and declarations. For decades, governments, non-government

organisations (NGOs), and individuals have been working to improve girls' access to formal education and the quality of education that they receive in school. Their initiatives have been linked to widely differing aims and expectations of what the education of girls and women can do for economic and political development, social change, and women's empowerment; but these diverse aspirations have often resulted in programmes with significant similarities, supporting both the access of girls to education and greater gender equality and quality beyond the point of access. Considerable knowledge and experience have been accumulated to indicate the policies, strategies, and approaches that improve the access and retention of girls in school in different contexts. But much of this knowledge is not widely shared. We need to learn more from the outcomes of initiatives to promote gender equality in particular economic, social, cultural, and geographical contexts. We need to consider what has made them successful or unsuccessful, in order to develop policies and practices that will transform girls' and women's lives and thus contribute to achieving wide goals for gender equality.

Considerable momentum has built up around the world in support of the commitments expressed in the MDGs. Signatory governments are engaging in debates and negotiations on the question of how to put the goals into practice. There is a huge popular demand for education and for governments to fulfil the promises that they made at the Millennium Summit. During the Global Week of Action for Education in April 2005, hundreds of thousands of activists in 110 countries urged governments and international organisations to recognise education as the key to ending poverty, and to fulfil their millennium commitments. The popular demands are echoed by governments, UN agencies, multilateral financial institutions, and a very wide range of civil-society organisations and coalitions. For Northern donor governments, there is pressure to meet financial commitments made in 2000; for developing-country governments, there is pressure to develop good-quality plans and transparent means of achieving Education For All (EFA).

Parity, equality, equity, and quality

However, while widespread support has been expressed for the challenge of achieving universal primary education by 2015 (MDG 2), the target for MDG 3 (gender parity in primary and secondary schooling by 2005) has not been met. *Gender parity* means that the same proportions of girls and boys enter and complete schooling. When there is no gender parity, there is a gender gap, and a greater proportion of either boys or girls is receiving education. While there are encouraging moves towards increased parity in many countries (for example in Bangladesh and Malawi), in many others the gap in favour of boys is wide (in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Pakistan, Chad, Yemen, and Ethiopia, to name a few).

UNICEF estimates that across all developing countries the gender gap is 10 percentage points (UNICEF 2003). In sub-Saharan Africa, 54 per cent of all girls do not even complete primary education, and only 17 per cent go on to secondary education. At least one in every three girls who completes primary schooling in South Asia cannot read, write, or do arithmetic (Herz and Spurling 2004: 2).

In our view, gender parity is a rather narrow aspiration. A focus on gender parity means measuring quantitative change and counting the numbers of girls, as compared with the numbers of boys, enrolling in school. Concern with parity may be complemented by a focus on other tangible and measurable factors, such as quality of infrastructure and facilities, numbers of textbooks and supplies of teaching/learning materials available to teachers and students, and the measurement of performance through examination results and numbers of girls graduating from primary school. But this is not always the case. Many countries are making progress on gender parity, but the limited concept of parity means that more challenging dimensions of gender equality and equity are often not considered, analysed, and monitored.

This book is concerned with a wider notion of *gender equality*, which is expressed most fully by the Beijing Platform of Action. Gender equality is an aspiration contained in many international conventions and national constitutions; but its precise meaning in relation to education is often unclear. We interpret gender equality in terms of respect for human rights and a set of ethical demands for securing the conditions for all people, men and women, to live a full life. We use the term *gender equity* to characterise institutional and social processes that work for this interpretation of equality. But often *equality* and *equity* are used interchangeably. Some approaches to equality are based on a limited definition, requiring only that resources should be equal: for example, there should be equal numbers of places in school for boys and girls. Other approaches consider that equality entails the removal of deeply embedded obstacles and structures of power and exclusion, such as discriminatory laws, customs, practices, and institutional processes, all of which undermine opportunities and outcomes in education (Unterhalter 2005). Drawing on Amartya Sen's 'capability approach', we consider that achieving gender equality entails developing the freedoms of all individuals, irrespective of gender or other markers of discrimination, to choose actions, aspirations, and attributes that they have reason to value (Sen 1999). Gender equity entails putting in place the social and institutional arrangements that would secure these freedoms. An education system would lack key dimensions of equality in this sense if it was discriminatory or did not develop capabilities in children to achieve an education that was personally and socially attuned to developing freedoms. Some aspects of this equality are the freedom to attend school, to learn and participate there in safety and security, to develop identities that tolerate others, and to enjoy economic, political, and cultural

opportunities. Putting gender equity in place in the classroom is a key to connecting schooling and citizenship with human rights. Equity and equality underpin values of care and respect for children and their teachers.

Evidence from the UK, where girls perform as well as (if not better than) boys in examinations, is taken to mean that gender equality has largely been addressed, and quality education has been achieved for all. Focus has shifted to the task of widening access to higher education for all social classes, without attention to gender. But research suggests that women's opportunities to secure graduate and professional employment on a par with men are still constrained by their domestic and family responsibilities (David 2005). Thus gender equality entails more than the attainment of equal numbers in school, or parity in examination results: it implies a fuller meaning of equality, which includes conditions in school and post-school opportunities. We believe that gender equality in education cannot be separated as a goal from gender equality in society as a whole.

Educational quality is crucial for the achievement of gender equality in schooling. Concerns to improve quality include the framing of the curriculum, the content and form of learning materials, the nature of the pedagogy, and teacher–pupil relations. Quality requires gender-sensitive use of human resources, and consideration of gender in the allocation of finances. Quality education entails a concern to include the views of all members of a community, and to take account of local languages and cultures. A quality education is not therefore acquired in isolation from the social setting in which students live. It embraces the notion of education as a transformative process which promotes social change and contributes to building a just and democratic society. A quality education rejects gender discrimination and social injustice. Quality education cannot be achieved without gender equality and equity.

Beyond Access

This book has developed out of the work of our project **Beyond Access: Gender, Education and Development**, a partnership between an NGO (Oxfam GB), a research organisation (Institute of Education, University of London), and a UK government department (the Department for International Development – DFID), working together to contribute to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 3, by generating and critically examining knowledge and practice regarding gender equality and education, and second by providing appropriate resources to share and disseminate the lessons learned, in order to influence the policies of government departments, national and international NGOs, and international institutions, including UN agencies. The founders of the project were concerned to

address the fact that the three constituencies – policy makers, practitioners and activists, and researchers – generally worked in isolation from each other, unaware or unappreciative of each other's work; they feared that this fragmentation of effort would hamper work to achieve and support MDG 3.

The project's concern to maintain dialogue between these three constituencies is reflected in this book. Some of the chapters have developed from the work of MA students at the Institute of Education, where we have both worked. Other chapters are based on the work of NGO coalitions like the Global Campaign for Education, and Elimu Yetu in Kenya. Some chapters were initially presented at a series of Beyond Access seminars which ran from 2003 to 2005 as a discussion forum for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers. Chapter 3 draws on work on measurement commissioned by policy makers in the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNESCO, and UNICEF.

Advancing MDG 3

Because MDG 3 is a key concern of the work of **Beyond Access**, this book addresses several issues related to the MDG project. First, it is concerned to raise the importance of gender equality and ensure that it is not overlooked in the big push towards achieving EFA by 2015. There is no room for complacency: the 2005 target has been missed, and there is a need to question why this has happened and what can be done to ensure that gender equality is recognised as a key element of a rights-based approach to EFA and quality education.

Second, the book challenges the narrow framing of the 2005 target in terms of parity, emphasising the need to engage with all the complexities of gender equality, as it is expressed and manifest both within the education system and in the wider society in which that system operates. Where relations within school and between school and family contribute to maintaining gender inequalities, the MDGs and other international targets have not provided a strong impetus for change. On the contrary, the apparent sequencing of gender targets in the MDGs has put a misplaced emphasis on gender parity, with the result that it seems as if gender equality and equity can be addressed only after the achievement of parity. This presents us all with the challenge of switching the focus of the debate from parity of access to quality, equality, and equity.

Third, the book questions the overwhelming focus of the MDGs on primary education and schooling, which results in the neglect of adult basic education and literacy. Despite the existence of more than 800 million non-literate adults in 2002, of whom 64 per cent are women (UNESCO 2003: 225) and despite widespread agreement that adult education and literacy are crucial for achieving many of the goals currently enshrined in the MDGs, there are no commonly agreed goals or

targets for adult education, and very limited resources devoted to it. Governments proclaim their commitment to ensuring adult education and literacy, but their actions belie their words. It has been a low priority for most governments and has been addressed through inconsistent and unco-ordinated programmes of different sizes, durations, and aims, implemented by NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs). While there *are* good examples of innovative practice – although only a limited number have been documented and disseminated – they remain isolated examples, unable to influence government policy or practice.

Fourthly the book demands that education planners, policy makers, and practitioners adopt a comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS and gender, because gender inequality is a major driving force behind HIV epidemics. The importance of promoting girls' education in addressing gender inequality cannot be overemphasised, but it should be addressed as part of a holistic approach to gender equality. The development needs of boys should not be neglected in initiatives to combat HIV/AIDS, and there needs to be a strong focus on addressing traditional concepts of masculinity and some forms of male sexual behaviour. At the same time, harmful practices, such as violence at school and the sexual harassment and abuse of girls by teachers, need to be eliminated (Clarke 2005:1).

Advocating the need for a wider framing of the MDGs, contributors to this book illustrate what needs to change in order to bring about gender equality in education. They present factors that make schooling and education gender-inequitable, and they indicate factors that contribute to positive change. It becomes clear from a reading of these chapters that women and girls are not a homogeneous category, and that a one-size policy, approach, or curriculum will not fit all. Women themselves need to participate in decision making about their own education, to ensure that it is flexible and meets a wide range of different needs.

The chapters reveal the complex interrelationships between poverty, cultural and ethnic differences, geographical marginalisation, and gender inequalities, which are obscured by nationally aggregated statistics. For this reason, many of the authors choose to examine initiatives for change in some of the most complex and marginalised contexts, involving some of the poorest girls and women, who experience the most extreme exclusion from State provision. What strategies can be employed, and what lessons can be drawn upon in contexts where governments are fragile and/or communities are nomadic or semi-nomadic? What are the options available in countries where decentralised governments have no budgets for education, and communities are expected to raise their own revenues? These questions need to be considered in relation to countries affected by conflict, as well as those that relate to more stable settings, because there may well be lessons in societies emerging from conflict – for instance, South Africa or Northern Ireland – for countries where conflict is still acute.

A key theme of the book is the interplay between policy and practice. We do not consider policy to be expressed only in official documents and made only by people in leadership positions. We consider that the policy expressed in official documents is made each day by practitioners. Policy making is a diffuse process. Our contributors consider the ways in which official policy is re-interpreted in practice, and how policy is itself a form of practice. Some present examples of practice that offer particularly challenging issues to be considered in the remaking of policy.

The structure of the book

The book is divided into three parts. The first examines the extent of inequality and the nature of the challenge to achieve gender equality in education. It provides a picture of what has been learned, and identifies some changes that are needed if gender equality is to be achieved. The second part presents accounts of government policies and their intended and unintended consequences for women's empowerment. They examine the dynamics of policy making and policy implementation, and pose questions about how policy promotes and secures gender equality in education. The third part examines a range of local settings where gender-equality initiatives have flourished, and raises questions about the policy implications of different forms of practice. The examples in this section present work for gender equality in education by an HIV/AIDS drama group, a faith-based organisation, and a girls-only private school. These are settings outside the remit of conventional work with State institutions and large NGOs, and these chapters raise some key issues that are still unaddressed in policy declarations.

The concluding chapter considers the challenges that remain for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers if they are to advance concerns for gender equality in education as part of work to promote the MDGs.

Part One: The Challenges for Gender Equality in Education

The scene is set in the first chapter, written by **Elaine Unterhalter**, which reviews various approaches to gender, education, and development. Approaches associated with WID (women in development), GAD (gender and development), post-structuralism, and human rights and capabilities variously define the nature of the problem of gender inequality in education and have led researchers from different disciplines to emphasise different aspects of the issues and suggest contrasting policies. This chapter sets subsequent chapters in the context of this framework.

The second chapter, contributed by the **Global Campaign for Education** (GCE), reports on a study of the state of girls' education in nine countries in Africa and Asia which informed a week of campaigning throughout the world on girls' education in April 2003. The research indicates that progress has been made towards gender equality in education in places where a range of factors cohere and reinforce each other. These include a strong political commitment by the government to gender equality, and a policy development process that actively involves an informed body of teachers, parents, and representatives of the women's movement. This combination of forces, working together with strategies that are not isolated or *ad hoc* initiatives but a series of interrelated measures, supported by government and donor resources to sustain implementation, can deliver change.

Where change is not happening or is very slow to take place, a range of measures need to be taken; they include ending the queue for education: all children should have access to school. This is not an end in itself, but a means towards achieving gender equality. Governments need to invest in girls and their education, and invest in poor families and poor schools so that they can offer a high-quality experience for all children.

The GCE analysis is reinforced by the work on new strategies for measuring achievement, documented by **Elaine Unterhalter, Chloe Challenger, and Rajee Rajagopalan**. Their chapter questions the limited measures of quality and empowerment currently in use and calls for a wider conception of gender equality, over and above mere attendance at school and completion of primary education. The authors suggest a new form of measurement of progress towards gender equality and education. Using this measure indicates the level of global mobilisation needed to achieve gender equality in and through education.

Part Two: Transforming Action – Changing Policy Through Practice

The chapters in this section take a critical look at contexts and experiences where changes in government policy, together with alliances developed with civil society, have promoted changes in practice, of different types and different degrees, in the direction of greater gender quality. They question the forms of policy and partnership needed to ensure that educational practices intersect appropriately with policy to promote gender equality and quality education.

Janet Raynor shows how policy and practice in Bangladesh are sometimes out of step with each other. The government's attempts to increase the access of girls to secondary education have brought about change in terms of large numbers of adolescent girls now attending secondary school. Raynor argues, however, that it

is now time for this programme, which has been greeted with international acclaim, to make modifications to allow the programme to adopt an agenda of empowering girls and women, rather than merely aiming to extend existing gendered roles. Raynor considers the need to improve the quality of girls' education in seriously overcrowded schools, argues for efforts to increase the supply of women teachers to be accompanied by the provision of gender training, and asks why, if the main purpose of education is seen to be enabling girls to take up paid employment, there has been no research into employment opportunities for girls.

The chapter contributed by the Kenyan national education coalition, **Elimu Yetu**, based on its own research in Kenya into the status of girls' education, charts the government's commitments to achieve gender equality through enabling legislation. It counterposes this with the variety of initiatives that members of the coalition have been developing and implementing, both in response to increased government-sanctioned opportunities for increasing gender equality in basic education, and to provide evidence for civil-society's adversarial role in lobbying the government for change. It also emphasises the important role played by civil society in holding government accountable to its commitments, and it offers valuable information about grassroots contexts and issues which demand innovative and context-specific responses.

The chapter by **Ian Leggett** illustrates some of the issues raised in preceding chapters. While national statistics show high rates of gender parity in overall access to education, only by understanding local dynamics and factors external to the school will current policies of building more schools actually achieve progress towards educational equality for girls from groups that are marginalised from the mainstream society. Leggett shows how the national picture of expansion of education in Kenya belies what is happening in one province. He reflects on how a national policy aimed at expanding access where there is demand, but with inadequate resources or acknowledgement of local conditions, falls far short of its objectives. In this case it is the needs of pastoralists and their children that have not been sufficiently acknowledged. Without a comprehensive and imaginative set of initiatives which recognise the depth and breadth of the subordinate status of girls and women and provide specific measures to promote the participation of girls, the policy of expansion is doomed to failure in this province.

From the other side of the globe, **Patricia Ames** contributes a study of Peru which reinforces the message that merely accessing schooling is not enough to ensure a gender-equitable education. Her chapter exemplifies the fact that while national statistics may show 100 per cent enrolment and gender parity, inequalities of access exist for some of the poorest and most disadvantaged groups in society. Research in rural schools identifies a range of external and

internal inequities which influence the retention of girls in school and shape expectations of their performance and ability. Teachers' low expectations of rural indigenous children, compounded by their low expectations of girls, in a school environment characterised by aggression and physical punishment, have meant that for girls the social costs of schooling are often too high, and they drop out in large numbers. This cycle of low achievement and high drop-out rates has reinforced girls' low social status.

While the general situation in these Peruvian rural schools is bleak, Ames is careful to maintain that girls are not passive victims of the schooling in their communities; she suggests that a range of strategies could be adopted to improve girls' educational experience dramatically. As earlier chapters confirm, there needs to be a package of integrated measures for change and gender equality, including teacher training, support for schools in poor communities, and social provision that emphasises the importance of investing in girls' education.

The chapter by **Mora Oommen**, on the other hand, evaluates the degree to which women were empowered by the national literacy campaign in India. Although this was a national government initiative, responsibility for its implementation was given to local government and CBOs. This encouraged local ownership and unprecedented voluntary participation. The author argues that the large-scale mobilisation acted as a 'social sanction' for women's participation in the literacy programme, thus breaking through traditional limitations on their participation in the public sphere. To this extent the programme went beyond imparting literacy and questioned a number of social norms constraining women's participation in public life.

From Mali, **Salina Salou and Sheila Aikman** contribute an example of strategies for transforming gender relations in the school and the wider environment. They remind us that poor quality and poor provision of education have a greater negative effect on girls than on boys. In northern Mali, where women's educational attainment rates are very low, few positive examples of what education can do for girls are available to be used to challenge strong patriarchal systems. The chapter examines multiple interventions – school and family animators, curriculum reform, and decentralised decision-making – stressing that several different changes have to take place at the same time for them to have a sustainable impact and improve not only girls' educational experience but also their lives. While education reform at the national level has opened up new opportunities for a skills-based curriculum which reflects the differing cultural and geographical realities of the learners, these realities are also gendered and demand a gender analysis that challenges the continuity of long-established attitudes and practices.

Part Three: The Challenge of Local Practices

The third section of the book highlights a range of innovative approaches being taken at the community and school levels, in response to specific contexts in which women and girls aspire to equality. The chapters show how these approaches and practices are founded on the energy, commitment, and determination of learners and teachers/facilitators.

The challenge of gender inequality is well documented in the fight against AIDS, but the importance of taking a gendered approach to HIV/AIDS education programmes is not well understood. The chapter by **Mark Thorpe** documents a non-formal education approach which used drama in schools to increase young people's understanding of HIV/AIDS prevention in South Africa and Mozambique. To ensure that inequitable relations are not reinforced during and through HIV education itself, they need to be challenged in a process-based approach with specially trained staff who can ensure that young women and men have the space to ask questions and explore issues that closely affect their lives.

Alicia Zents provides an insight into the participation of women in the Pentecostal movement in Burkina Faso. In contexts where African women have a long history of maintaining the vitality of the church, yet occupy a low position in Burkinabé society, Zents examines the extent to which the movement is able to transform concepts of gender, and documents the ways in which women are pushing against the movement's gender hierarchies.

The final chapter in this section considers the case of Loreto Sealdah, a high-prestige girls-only school in India, its ethos of reaching out to girls from underprivileged families, and its philosophy of education for community and solidarity. **Ruth Doggett** discusses the meaning and values that girls (both fee-paying and non-paying 'underprivileged' students) attach to their schooling and its enabling curriculum, which encourages students to identify with their own and others' realities and become active agents of their own lives, able to take on non-traditional roles. The evidence suggests that the fee-paying students were better able to do this than the non-paying students, who were more aware of external constraints on their future options.

The Conclusion highlights some of the intersections and disjunctures of policy and practice, assesses the nature of change that has been achieved, and considers some of the key challenges that the chapters have highlighted which need to be addressed if MDG 2 and MDG 3 are to be achieved. It emphasises the importance of multi-sectoral initiatives and a respect for human rights in support of gender equality in education, to ensure high-quality education and consequently a better quality of life. A multi-sector approach entails partnerships, and many of the chapters illustrate the importance of partnerships outside the education

sector for initiating and sustaining gender equality. While the book indicates that there are no 'quick fixes' to the deep-rooted and often widely accepted forms of gender discrimination that limit girls' educational opportunities, it also demonstrates the imperative need for political will at all levels if change is to be achieved. It shows how dramatic actions, such as the abolition of school fees, can have a major impact in terms of increased numbers of girls in school, and how training or other forms of structured reflection on gender inequality by teachers, officials, and NGOs can yield significant results.

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Part One

The Challenges for Gender Equality in Education

1 Fragmented frameworks?

Researching women, gender, education, and development

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This chapter critically reviews contrasting frameworks which present different ways of understanding the nature of the challenge to achieve gender equality in education. Different meanings of gender equality and schooling have consequences for our understanding of two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): MDG 2, which is concerned with gender equality in schooling, and MDG 3, concerned with the empowerment of women. Different meanings entail different actions, and, as will be shown, organisations have interpreted *gender*, *education*, *development*, *empowerment*, and *equality* in very different ways. These interpretations are underpinned by different approaches to research and analysis: how one undertakes research on gender and women will determine the conclusions. This chapter examines different meanings of the challenge for gender equality in education and evaluates the implications of each approach for policy and practice.

Four approaches to gender equality in education

Table 1 summarises the four approaches and main phases of thinking and action concerning gender education, development, and equality that have prevailed since approximately 1970. (For a fuller discussion of some of the theoretical issues raised, see Unterhalter 2003a, 2005a.)

In practice there are considerable overlaps between the four approaches, but I have separated them out analytically to emphasise some of their key differences. The WID (women in development) framework, with its stress on expansion of education for girls and women, linked to efficiency and economic growth, is the framework with the longest history and the most powerful advocates in governments, inter-government organisations, and NGOs. It is the framework that views gender in relatively uncomplicated ways and generates clear policy directives regarding, for example, the employment of more women teachers to reassure parents about girls' safety at school.

The GAD (gender and development) framework considers gender as part of complex and changing social relations. Influential for more than twenty years

Table 1: Gender, education, and development: contrasting frameworks

Framework	Linked theories	Understandings of gender	Understandings of development	Understandings of education	Understandings of equality
Women in Development (WID): from 1970s to the present	Modernisation; human-capital theory	Gender = women, girls	Growth, efficiency, good governance, social cohesion	Schooling	Equality of resources. Sometimes termed <i>parity</i> .
Gender and Development (GAD): from 1980s to the present	Structuralism; Marxism	Constructed social relations, power	Challenging inequity and oppression	Conscientisation	Redistribution of power. Sometimes termed <i>equity</i> .
Post-structuralism (from 1990s to the present)	Post-colonial theory	Shifting identities	Struggling with the past in the present to shape multi-faceted identities and new narratives	Deconstructive	Stress on difference
Human development (from 1990s to the present)	The capability approach	Inequality and capability denial	Development as freedom	A basic capability	Equality of rights and capabilities

among women's organisations concerned with development, GAD has only slowly made an impact on the thinking of some governments and education NGOs. Because GAD is alert to complex processes entailed in the reproduction and transformation of gendered relations, it is less easily translatable into simple policy demands. However, GAD approaches have had some impact on practice, particularly with regard to teachers' understanding of work in a gendered classroom, women's organisations' linking of education-related demands to wider demands for empowerment, and the ways in which advocates of gender equality work in institutions.

The post-structuralist approach questions the stability of definitions of gender, paying particular attention to fluid processes of gendered identification and shifting forms of action. While the issues raised by this approach have not influenced government policies directly, they have put on the agenda the affirmation of subordinated identities, and they have made some impact on the development of learning materials and forms of organisation that recognise the complexity of social identities.

The final framework analysed is concerned with human development and human rights in development. In some ways this is a meta-theory, working at a higher level of abstraction, and suggesting not concrete policies or forms of practice but rather a framework in which these can be developed ethically. However, the human-development approach also differs significantly from the other three with regard to how gender and education are understood, and some of the processes entailed in developing policy. It thus allows us to see the three other approaches in a somewhat different light.

I now want to look in more depth at the assumptions and research base of each approach, drawing out its policy and practice implications, its achievements, and some associated problems and questions.

Bringing girls and women into school: the dominance of the WID approach

The WID framework, with its emphasis on bringing women into development, and thus girls and women into school, has links to aspects of liberal feminism in Northern contexts. It stresses the importance of including women in development planning to improve efficiency, but not necessarily challenging the multiple sources of women's subordination. Histories of the WID approach point to its beginnings in the early 1970s with the work of Ester Boserup, which illustrated how women, who do the bulk of farming in Africa, were neglected in rural development projects (Boserup 1970; Moser 1994).

WID has had the strongest resonance for analysts of education in governments and inter-government organisations. The most influential policy thinking on gender, education, and development in the 1990s drew on this approach, expressed most clearly in a collection of papers edited by King and Hill and first published in mimeographed form in 1991 for the World Bank. This was to have enormous influence on governments, and on large-scale development assistance projects. King and Hill emphasised the importance of counting girls and women inside and outside schooling, overcoming the barriers to access, and realising the *social* benefits of their presence in school: increased GDP per capita, reduced birth rates and infant mortality, and increased longevity (King and Hill 1991; 1993). This analysis was framed in key policy documents throughout the 1990s, including the World Bank's *Priorities and Strategies in Education* and UNESCO's *Delors Commission Report* (World Bank 1995; Delors 1996). Its influence is still evident in key passages of important strategy documents from the World Bank, including *Engendering Development* (2001), and DFID's *Girls' Education: Towards a Better Future for All* (DFID 2005).

In the WID approach, 'gender' is equated with women and girls, who are identified descriptively in terms of biological differences. 'Education' is understood as schooling. 'Development' or 'empowerment' is linked with economic growth or social cohesion and sometimes improved governance. Herz and Sperling's influential analysis *What Works in Girls' Education*, written in 2004 in response to the failure to meet the MDG on gender parity in schooling, uses some forms of WID analysis, identifying the benefits of girls' education in terms of faster economic growth, more productive farming, smaller and better-educated families, and reduced infant and child mortality. While the report also argues that the education of girls will result in benefits to them, such as higher earning potential, better protection from HIV and domestic violence, and greater political participation, the assumption is that these personal benefits are acceptable because they fit with accepted social benefits (Herz and Sperling 2004). Intrinsic benefits from education that might be more personal and private are not acknowledged.

Questions of exploitation, subordination, and social division are generally not considered in this framework. The slogan '*If you educate a woman you educate the nation*' nicely captures the thinking that underpins the mainstream policy support for WID. The education of women is for others, not for themselves. The benefits of women's education are to be realised in the household, often the site of the harshest discrimination. Some critiques draw attention to WID's narrow assumption that 'education' is always delivered in formal schools; that gender is not a political relationship, but merely a set of descriptive categories; and that the concerns of individual women are not to be taken into account (Unterhalter 2000; Fine and Rose 2001; Brighouse and Unterhalter 2002).

The WID approach to the challenge of gender inequality in education is to get more girls into school. A great deal of the empirical work using this framework has concentrated on counting the numbers of girls in or out of school and measuring the breadth of the gender gap between girls and boys in enrolments or achievement (UNESCO 2003; UNICEF 2000–2004). This work has been carried out by government ministries, including census departments. District household surveys have been a key instrument in collecting data on school attendance. Additional surveys have looked at how household relations affect decisions about sending girls to school and keeping them there (Hadden and London 1996; Filmer and Pritchett 1999; Alderman, Orrazo and Patterno 1996). Analysis has also concentrated on quantifying the benefits of girls' and women's schooling in terms of reduced birth rates and improved uptake of immunisation (Klansen 1999; Subbarao and Raney 1995; Gage *et al.* 1997). Much of this work has been undertaken by researchers working for multilateral organisations, including the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO. Generally these researchers are economists, and very often research teams have been led by international experts who employ local research assistants for fieldwork.

Some work mixes qualitative and quantitative data to consider gender in relation to achievement at school (Nath and Chowdhury 2001). In the Caribbean this work has studied how boys underachieve because of their relations with female teachers and other boys (Kutnick *et al.* 1997; Parry 1997). While the qualitative research provides some of the insight about social relations that is difficult to discern in the quantitative work, the assumptions that underpin it are the same: that is, the importance of bringing girls into school and assuring achievement for girls and boys.

This quantitative work on gender, access, retention, and achievement tends not to deal with other dimensions of inequality, particularly race, ethnicity, caste, and disability. While some acknowledgement is made of differences between rural and urban girls, there is little engagement with the complexity of social division. This resonates with the way in which writers in the WID framework interpret equality. Within this framework, equality is generally understood in terms of equal numbers of resources: for example, places in school for girls and boys, male and female teachers employed, or equal numbers of images of women and men in textbooks. Studies thus concentrate on describing the gender gap, that is the inequality in numbers of boys and girls at school (UNESCO 2003), the lack of female teachers (King and Hill 1994; Herz and Sperling 2004), and the numbers of boys and girls in children's textbooks (Joshi and Anderson 1992; Obura 1991). This approach pays little attention to gendered processes of learning, the conditions in which women teachers work, the way their work is regarded by their societies, or the meanings that children make and take from the images they see in textbooks. Chapters in this book by the Global Campaign for Education (Chapter 2) and Elimu Yetu (Chapter 5) are examples of a WID approach.

Policies associated with the WID approach have concentrated on improving access for girls, through giving them stipends or abolishing school fees, providing food in return for attendance at school, developing the infrastructure of training or accommodation to ensure that more women teachers are employed, digging latrines, and providing water. Some associated practice has entailed mobilising teachers and communities to encourage girls to enrol in school and ensure that they pass examinations. These are often seen as ends in themselves. In Malawi and Kenya, the abolition of school fees led to hundreds of thousands of girls enrolling in school – with little provision to support them. WID practice is not much concerned with the content of what girls learn, how they learn, or whether gender inequalities face them after their years in school are over. Generally WID analysts will comment on the content of schooling when it has a bearing on access, but not more generally. For example, Herz *et al.* highlight the importance of girls' studying science in Kenya because it encourages parents to send their daughters to school, not because learning science might provide intrinsically useful knowledge (Herz *et al.* 1991). The stress in WID practice is on bringing girls into school and ensuring that they learn appropriately. The framework is not concerned to raise questions about the gendered practice of teachers in relation to children's learning styles, management practices in school, or gendered structures of power in society.

The WID framework is not able to explain more complex aspects of gender equality and inequality in school. GAD critiques of WID, discussed below, have taken issue with some of these limitations. However, it must be acknowledged that WID's simple messages about policy and practice, despite – or possibly because of – their lack of analytical complexity, have galvanised huge programmes by government and inter-government organisations, mobilised additional funding, and led to some important legal changes with regard to the provision of education. Despite the many limitations of WID's failure to look beyond the school gate, the policy achievements associated with the framework in the past two decades must be acknowledged.

The gendered power structures of school and society: drawing on GAD in education

In opposition to WID, the GAD (gender and development) approach emerged in the late 1980s, emphasising the significance of gendered power structures of inequality in a range of contexts. GAD theorists argued that inequality needed to be challenged politically and could not merely be ameliorated by a process of inclusion, by the provision of welfare support, or by a belief in the greater efficiency of projects or programmes that included women (Moser 1993). GAD