

The Power of Educating Girls By Shoshi Fine

When she was only 18, Rebecca got pregnant. Living in one of the poorest countries in the world - Sierra Leone - she had already lost her mother, sister, and uncle due to Ebola, and her father was extremely ill. The man who got her pregnant denied being the father, leaving Rebecca to care for the child alone. She had to work whenever possible in order to support her and her son, which meant she could no longer go to school. Unfortunately, Rebecca's story is not an uncommon one.

123 million youth are illiterate. 76 million of them are female. Girls not attending school is more predominant in Sub-Saharan Africa and southwest Asia, although it is widespread. Educating girls will impact their lives individually and in the global economy. If girls finish school, they can get better jobs, which means more money for them, their families, and the economy. The Malala Fund stated that women have the potential to make another \$12 trillion globally. This is why educating girls is the key to the prosperity of our entire world.

Girl Effect (GE) said, "When a girl turns 12 and lives in poverty her future is out of her control." "She faces the reality of being married by the age of 14, pregnant by the time she's 15, and, if she survives childbirth, she might have to sell her body to support her family." A girl's life depends greatly on whether or not she's in school. If she's not, it's not only detrimental to her life, but also her children's. Going back to when she's 12, let's say she stays in school. By the time she's 18, "She uses her education to earn a living." "She can marry and have children when she's ready. And her children are healthy like she is." If that spread, there would be a large positive impact on the world.

This is a two-sided problem. The first is access and affordability for schools. The second is the mind of those in power - parents or governments. Some believe girls should not be in school at all, they will only ever be housewives, so there's no point. However, there are solutions. As GE states, "50 million 12-year-old girls in poverty equal 50 million solutions". You can pressure your leaders and governments to make education laws for girls and provide necessities for them in school (like pencils, uniforms, sanitary items, etc.). You can help to educate parents and leaders about why it's important to send girls to school. Donate to organizations such as; the Malala Fund, Girl Rising, and Global Citizen. Take action to ensure girls stay in school, and ultimately, help our world to succeed and thrive.

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