



Aim

to explore why girls and young women are less likely to receive an education and the impact this has on their life choices

Age

12 years and over

Time

30 minutes

Materials

role cards

What to do

Form five groups (or pairs). Give each group a role card – girl, parents, teacher, Government and international organisation. Allow the groups 5 minutes to discuss their role. Explain that an international organisation working in the country has organised a meeting to find out why girls are not getting an education. Ask for a volunteer to chair the discussion. Each group should present their case to the large group as to whether the girl should have access to education. The chairperson then makes a decision based on the arguments. This should take 15 minutes. Which arguments were most persuasive?

Ask what the likely impact of the decision will be on the girl in terms of health and employment opportunities. Is this fair? What can be done to allow girls to go to school?

Action

Join in the Global Action Week 2005 organised by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). The theme of Global Action Week (2005) will focus on empowering women and girls through education, which is the first target for the UN Millennium Development Goals (see activity six). This target will be missed by some 88 countries. The GCE wants to hold governments and international agencies accountable for their failure to achieve the goal, to make them make up for lost time by committing the money, and implementing the policies needed to make it happen now. For further details of Global Action Week 2005 and how you can participate, visit the website www.campaignforeducation.org

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR

EDUCATION

Note to Leader

Fewer girls go to school than boys due to: poverty; girls have too much to do at home; son preference; early marriage; the cost of going to school; and limited employment opportunities for women.

Education Instruments

Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals on gender equality and empowerment of women includes the target of achieving gender equality at all levels of education by 2005.



Role Cards

Girl

I'm up at six every morning to light the fire and cook. Then I have to fetch water. I bring a meal at midday to my parents. My parents say that they can't afford to educate me. Anyway, they say I'll be getting married soon so my husband will provide for me. But I don't want that. My younger brother will start school soon. I dream of going to school and getting an education. Then I'd become a teacher and help other girls to realise their potential.

Government

We are proud of our education record. Under this Government, we have built schools and made education free. However many parents did not get an education so they don't send their daughters to school. There's very little we can do about it. Most people are living in poverty. Education for girls is not a priority to them. A major problem we face is that there aren't enough teachers. We've asked the international community for support, but while big on words they don't back it up with money.

Parents

It is a daily struggle just to put food on the table. We both have to work long hours so we need our daughter to stay at home and mind the younger children. Otherwise who will cook their meals and clean the house? Of course we'd like her to be educated, but it would be easier to do so if she was a boy. They can earn far more money. She'll be getting married soon, so our investment in her education would only benefit her husband's family.

International Organisation

We are a large international organisation that works in Africa, Asia and Latin America. We strongly believe that educating girls is essential if countries are to effectively tackle poverty. Currently girls are less likely to receive an education than boys and we have the figures to prove it. Educating girls reduces the incidence of HIV/AIDS, reduces malnutrition and increases food availability. We understand that families are living with poverty and that there are cultural barriers to girl's education, but the longer it's left the worse things will get.

Teacher

The Government says that education is free, but the parents have to pay for a uniform, for school books and for exams. I sympathise with the parents but I also need to be paid. There have been some incidents recently of girls being attacked on the long walk home from school. Parents reacted by removing their daughters from the school. There should be more local schools. This will require more teachers, paid properly, to replace the ones who have left due to illness, such as HIV or malaria, or to seek other work.

Region	No. out of school	% Girls
Sub-Saharan Africa	44 million	53
Latin America and Caribbean	2 million	55
South Asia	32 million	66
World	104 million	57

Source: Global Campaign for Education (2004). Learning to Survive.