



# ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN AND THROUGH EDUCATION

## Snapshot of 2020 USAID Activities

This brief illustrates USAID's commitment to advancing gender equality in and through education, around the world. Building back better during the COVID-19 pandemic, and after it, requires a focus on building resilient education systems that reach the most marginalized—including girls, people with disabilities and gender and sexual minorities. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, USAID's global education programs achieved the following:



learners reached across the education continuum,  
half of whom were girls and women



girls reached in  
crisis and conflict  
settings



HEIs\* guided by key  
principles of equity  
and inclusion



women provided  
with scholarship  
support

\*HEIs: Higher education institutions

“ Together, we can build on decades of experience in supporting girls' education to ensure we don't lose a generation of talent and potential. And we will continue to support women's empowerment, to ensure that all our daughters—and truly all our children, no matter how they identify—can dream limitless dreams.

[USAID Administrator Samantha Power](#)

Click below to learn more.



[Where We Work](#)



[Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)



[Providing Holistic Support for Adolescent Girls](#)



[Empowering All Learners with Literacy](#)



[Creating Safe, Quality Opportunities in Crisis and Conflict Settings](#)



[Strengthening Systems](#)



[Working in Partnership](#)



[Promoting Gender in Research and Data](#)



[Additional Resources](#)

## WHERE WE WORK

This map reflects more than 60 of USAID's Missions, Regional Bureaus, and other teams that worked to advance gender equality in and through education during FY 2020, and presents illustrative examples.

**LEBANON** | USAID's Quality Instruction Towards Access and Basic Education Improvement 2 activity supported reading and math skills of 300,000 students, including Syrian refugees, and ensured equitable gender representation in educational materials.

**LIBERIA** | USAID's Learning Links activity increased adolescent girls' access to education. The activity supported literacy and numeracy skills of 2,500 girls in Bong County who had left school due to pregnancy.

**EL SALVADOR** | USAID's Bridges to Employment activity helped women find employment in traditionally male-dominated industries, and conducted a nationwide campaign to improve perceptions of youth with disabilities and those who identify as LGBTQI+.

**GEORGIA** | USAID's Promoting Rule of Law in Georgia activity supported five Georgian university law schools to develop new courses and materials focused on anti-discrimination law, the protection of equality rights, disability law, gender equality and women's rights.

**CAMBODIA** | Through the Capacity Development Partnership Fund, USAID addressed school-related gender-based violence and supported women leaders within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO** | USAID and UKAID's joint ACCELERE! activity worked with the Ministry of Education and other donors to launch an interactive radio instruction program, empowering women and girls to continue their education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic and school closures have devastated education systems around the world and exacerbated pre-existing gender inequality. The examples below illustrate some of USAID's efforts to help the most marginalized learners, especially girls and young women, get back on track.



### Democratic Republic of the Congo

USAID and UKAID's joint ACCELERE! activity worked with the Ministry of Education and other donors to launch an interactive radio instruction program, empowering women and girls to continue their education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-four messaging campaigns encouraged parents not to increase girls' domestic burdens, and to support their radio lessons. USAID's Integrated Youth Development Activity finalized a gender analysis and provided training to activity staff on gender inclusion and school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) prevention.



### Guatemala

USAID's Puentes Project supported vocational training institutions to expand and improve the quality and coverage of programs during the pandemic, especially for young women. USAID provided technical vocational training for 4,235 youth participants, more than 60 percent of whom were female. The education services providers pivoted to distance learning in March 2020 and supported and motivated participants to continue project activities through virtual learning.



### Egypt

USAID's intergenerational Literate Village activity worked in underserved community schools to improve the reading and life skills of children and mothers. The activity reached 41,405 children and 13,507 women. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the activity distributed 37,620 family learning and hygiene kits to ensure continuity of education at home and to raise awareness about COVID-19 for students who were unable to access online learning.



### Laos

Despite restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID's Learn to Read Activity managed to ramp up and achieve significant results and continued improving the reading skills of pre-primary, grade 1 and grade 2 students. The activity supported the development, printing and distribution of 86,163 supplemental storybooks, including 31,205 pre-primary storybooks, and high-quality teaching and learning materials (TLMs), developed and promoted through the lens of gender, ethnicity and disability.



### Europe and Eurasia Regional Bureau

Through the Junior Achievement Student Company Program and Innovation Camps, part of the Supporting Entrepreneurship Education in Europe and Eurasia (SEEEE) activity, USAID helped to change gender norms and perceptions by engaging more female students in entrepreneurial education. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SEEEE leveraged Junior Achievement's network to share best practices across countries so that students, teachers and education systems could pivot to home-based learning.



### Malawi

USAID's Apatseni Mwayi Atsikana Aphunzire (AMAA, translated Give Girls a Chance to Learn) activity reached 16,593 learners with life skills programming. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, AMAA worked with district structures to disseminate health, safety and education messages targeting parents and community members to enhance protection for girls and support continuity of learning. AMAA also provided sanitary materials to girls and supported the dissemination of school reopening guidelines.

## PROVIDING HOLISTIC SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Adolescent girls face a unique set of barriers to accessing quality learning opportunities, including safety, health and social bias in their communities and classrooms. The examples below illustrate some of USAID's holistic support to help adolescent girls overcome these challenges.



### Ethiopia

USAID's Transform: Primary Health Care activity enrolled 1,700 young adolescent girls in the "Her Space" program. The courses include health and financial literacy, understanding bodies during puberty and accessing legal services in case of any instance of gender-based violence. USAID's Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed (READ II) supported the development of gender club guidelines and trained school gender club coordinators on running the clubs in primary schools. READ II also produced and broadcast a 13-episode radio drama to promote reflection, dialogue and behavior change around gender and SRGBV.



### Sri Lanka

USAID's Safe, Disaster-Resilient Drinking Water to Flood and Drought Prone Areas activity provided safe and clean drinking water to 41 rural schools, reaching 16,199 students. With the burden of transporting water significantly reduced, women and girls are now free to engage in other activities. The clean water source also encouraged more girls to attend school.



### Haiti

USAID's WASH-in-Schools component of the Community Driven Development project provided 1,500 students--56 percent girls--with access to clean water and improved sanitation. The project provided modern and private toilets to reduce wait times for girls during recreation periods, added a ramp for disability access and added separate changing rooms to meet menstrual and other hygiene needs.



### Tanzania

USAID's Advancing Youth (AY) activity trained 1,467 female youth in livelihood and income-generating opportunities, transforming them from economic contributors to economic drivers. 1,117 female-led microenterprises were established or improved. AY provided leadership skills training to young females, 87 of whom vied for leadership positions in their communities. AY also provided 5,129 women with referrals to family planning, sexual and reproductive health and nutrition services.



### Liberia

USAID's Learning Links activity increased adolescent girls' access to education, which has been impacted by the 14-year civil war, 2014 Ebola outbreak and COVID-19 pandemic. The activity continued to improve literacy and numeracy skills of 2,500 girls in Bong County who had left school due to pregnancy. Interventions included psycho-social services, training for tutor-mentors, SMS-based evaluations and performance-based micro-incentives and access to counselors and caseworkers.



### Timor-Leste

USAID's Reinforce Basic Health Services Project worked with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and a local youth-led NGO to design an interactive Adolescent Reproductive Health curriculum. The curriculum will help high school girls and boys stay physically and emotionally healthy, with the goal of reducing the maternal mortality rate of girls. The MOH approved the curriculum in August 2020, indicating it is now a formal curriculum for national implementation.

## EMPOWERING ALL LEARNERS WITH LITERACY

People who learn to read tend to be healthier, more self-sufficient and have better opportunities to fulfill their potential. The examples below illustrate some of USAID's efforts to ensure that reading materials and instruction empower learners of all gender identities with literacy and other foundational skills.



### Dominican Republic

USAID's READ activity's gender, inclusion and safe schools (GISS) mentors provided school psychologists and counselors with activities and resources related to gender equality and women's empowerment. A total of 10,602 fathers, mothers and guardians participated in "Reading Unites Us" sessions. The READ activity also promoted gender equality in schools and within communities through activities which included role playing, reading and painting.



### Nepal

USAID's Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP)'s work with the Government of Nepal's Curriculum Development Center helped to ensure that TLMs included a balance between male and female role models and avoided portrayal of gender stereotypical roles. EGRP maintained gender balance in radio program moderators, characters portrayed in radio drama segments, positive role models interviewed and characters depicted in public service announcements.



### India

USAID's Nurturing Early Literacy and Scaling-up Early Reading Intervention projects promoted gender and social equality among disadvantaged castes, tribes and economically disadvantaged populations. The projects worked with communities to ensure that all children, especially girls, enrolled in primary school and that girls and boys had equal opportunities for teaching and learning interventions. The projects also designed teacher training modules to encourage teachers' attention to girls' education.



### Rwanda

USAID's Soma Umenye activity helped to ensure that grades 1-3 reading materials portrayed both boys and girls in active roles, and trained 10,159 teachers on gender-responsive instruction. USAID's Mureke Dusome activity encouraged women's leadership in community-based reading activities, and encouraged fathers and mothers to participate equally in children's learning. Training for community librarians emphasized the importance of inclusive services for both girls and boys.



### Lebanon

USAID's Quality Instruction Towards Access and Basic Education Improvement (QITABI 2) activity supported reading, writing and math skills of 300,000 students, including Syrian refugees. The activity completed mapping of the reading curriculum to identify gaps and provided professional development to educators, of whom 65 percent were women. QITABI 2 also ensured equitable and empowering gender representation in educational materials.



### Senegal

USAID's Lecture Pour Tous (LPT) developed TLMs with content that was free from gender bias, and organized five orientation sessions with Senegalese publishers to encourage the continued development of TLMs that promote gender equality and inclusiveness. In addition, LPT revamped its "Gender and Inclusive Education" training module to help inspectors, directors and teachers proactively consider gender bias and equity as they educate Senegal's next generation.

## CREATING SAFE, QUALITY OPPORTUNITIES IN CRISIS AND CONFLICT SETTINGS

USAID provides safe, quality learning opportunities for children and youth who are facing adversity, crisis and conflict, particularly those who are displaced. The examples below illustrate some of USAID's efforts to provide opportunities for learners of all gender identities, especially girls and women.



### Bangladesh

USAID's Everyone Learns Together activity partnered with the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen inclusive school environments and instruction for children with disabilities, especially girls. USAID designed several new activities, including Promoting Education for Early Learners, which promotes gender equity in the pre-primary and primary grades, through the development of education materials, training of teachers and increasing public awareness about the necessity of providing education to marginalized children, especially girls.



### Nicaragua

USAID's Technical Vocational Education and Training Strengthening for At-Risk Youth (TVET-SAY) activity supported female students who are deaf to obtain a certificate in Administrative Computer Sciences. These young women were key in raising awareness of the needs of students who are deaf. Education for Success (EFS) also supported 408 young women and girls to find positions in traditionally male-dominated jobs, such as motorcycle maintenance and household electrical repairs.



### Burma

As part of USAID's Community Strengthening Project (CSP), the Center for Social Integrity increased learning opportunities for adolescent girls in Northern Rakhine State, supporting 100 students, eight community teachers, 40 PTA members and nine staff members. The activity provided trainings to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills for supporting non-formal education efforts, and to enhance students' basic literacy, numeracy and life skills.



### Yemen

USAID's Emergency Education Response, Quality Education and Protection of Conflict-Affected Children from Violence, Abuse, Exploitation and Neglect activity addressed gender disparities in education, including through school-based activities that equipped girls with practical skills to discuss, problem-solve and negotiate issues of importance to them and make empowered choices in their lives. USAID's Improving Access to Quality Education in Yemen project engaged parents on the importance of girls' education through back-to-school campaigns.



### Mali

USAID's Girls Leadership and Empowerment through Education (GLEE) activity addressed persistent gender gaps in education enrollment. As a result, 5,564 out-of-school adolescent girls were enrolled and 5,448 successfully transitioned to formal public schools. Facilitators, grandmothers and aunts and teachers mentored girls about reproductive health, gender equality and leadership. More than 8,000 mentoring sessions were attended by about 170,000 participants. Also under GLEE, 92 school management committee members were trained on gender, SRGBV and school safety.

## STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS

Advancing gender equality within an education system requires taking into account the motivating factors, constraints, capacity and commitment of partner countries' Ministries and other key stakeholders. The examples below illustrate some of USAID's efforts to advance gender equality through policies and practices at a systems-level.



### Djibouti

USAID's Workforce Development Project conducted a Gender and Social Inclusion training with CRIPEN, the personnel of a unit within the Ministry of Education and Technical Training responsible for curriculum development. Reviewing existing school materials, participants debated whether there were stereotypical representations of women and people with disabilities. Participants presented recommendations to CRIPEN management, who committed to their implementation in Technical and Vocational Education Training program materials.



### Pakistan

USAID's Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Program (MNBSB), implemented in partnership with the Government of Pakistan's Higher Education Commission, awarded full-tuition scholarships and stipends to economically disadvantaged Pakistani youth, committing at least 50 percent of the scholarships to women. The Government of Pakistan modeled its own scholarship program, "Ehsaas," after MNBSB, ensuring at least 50 percent of recipients are women. Additionally, MNBSB provides career development opportunities for awardees and students with disabilities, and builds institutional capacity at partner universities.



### El Salvador

USAID's Education for Children and Youth (ECY) activity worked with the Ministry of Education (MINED) to improve the sustainability of interventions focused on out-of-school youth. According to MINED, pregnancy is one of the main reasons that girls drop out of school by ninth grade. USAID assisted with curricular reforms, developed by MINED, to address academics, work issues, life skills and psychosocial support and help women prosper in the workforce.



### Philippines

USAID's All Children Reading activity facilitated the training of 195 Department of Education officials, including 127 women. The activity included the training of trainers on Peak Vision and Hear Screen electronic screening tools and Project Management in Leadership. USAID's Education Governance Effectiveness activity conducted a study on dropping out among 853 out-of-school children and youth in Marawi. The study yielded important insights on gender, including that more boys than girls were out of school.



### Jordan

USAID supported the Ministry of Education's gender equality strategy and action plan by helping to develop a training curriculum for early childhood education teachers about gender-responsive approaches in care, play and learning. USAID worked with the Ministry of Education and the Vocational Training Center to promote non-traditional vocational education by conducting needs assessments to integrate gender issues in counselling for prospective vocational education students and the development of visual content.



### Uganda

Through the Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA), USAID worked with the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Education and Sports to coordinate approaches to gender equality. Together with the Gender Unit, USAID finalized a protocol for creating and sustaining safe and positive learning environments to prevent and reduce incidents of SRGBV. The protocol will inform the next National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children (2021-2026).

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

A core tenet of all USAID programming is to collaborate and coordinate with local, regional and international stakeholders. The examples below illustrate some of USAID's diverse partnerships that advance gender equality with strategic interventions.



### Cambodia

USAID partnered with like-minded donors through the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) to strengthen Cambodia's education policies and governance. The CDPF worked to address SRGBV, promoted gender-equitable leadership at the national and subnational levels and offered professional development opportunities for 70 women leaders within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. The CDPF also conducted a gender audit to inform the Gender Mainstreaming Plan 2020-2024. Through All Children Reading-Cambodia, USAID developed inclusive TLMs depicting positive portrayals of girls and boys with and without disabilities from ethnic minority groups.



### Mozambique

USAID's Global Development Alliance partnered with the Gorongosa Project (GP) to support an integrated conservation and development program in six post-conflict districts of the Gorongosa National Park. GP's Girls' Clubs offered tutoring in literacy and numeracy, education on sexual and reproductive health, children's rights, citizenship and environmental conservation and career excursions to expose girls to various local institutions and wildlife safaris inside the park.



### Kosovo

USAID's After School Support for Teens (ASSET) activity partnered with the private sector to provide mentoring opportunities between girls and female business leaders, pivoting to online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. USAID's Commercial Justice activity continued its internship program in fields such as law, economy and business, with interns who are gender-diverse, balanced between public and private universities, and include ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and LGBTQI+ community members.



### Paraguay

USAID's two new Higher Education Partnerships in Paraguay conducted assessments to identify challenges and opportunities for marginalized populations, including women. USAID also provided mentorship and support to advance gender equity within the National University of Asuncion. The Chancellor of the National University is a woman, the first in that position, and has been a key ally in fostering women's empowerment in the academic sector.



### Morocco

Through the H2O Maghreb public-private partnership (PPP) with the Ministry of National Education, private firms and other partners, USAID improved the employability of young Moroccan women. The PPP equipped a vocational training center with modern equipment for virtual training in the water and waste management sector. Though these sectors are traditionally dominated by men, female trainees represented 88 percent of the first intake of students. Additionally, USAID promoted gender equity in Morocco's first Digital Supplementary Reading Materials, which included culturally-sensitive terms and illustrations that promoted social inclusion.



### Center for Education

USAID's support to the Global Book Alliance promoted gender-responsive and inclusive reading materials. Support to the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies promoted gender in COVID-19 response. USAID played a leading role in the development of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)'s 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and Operating Model, including a Girls Education Accelerator funding window. USAID helped shape GPE and Education Cannot Wait COVID-19 responses, with a focus on gender.



## PROMOTING GENDER IN RESEARCH AND DATA

USAID is committed to generating, analyzing and using data and evidence to inform education reforms and investments. The examples below illustrate some of USAID's efforts to promote gender in research and data.



### Georgia

USAID's Promoting Rule of Law in Georgia activity supported scholarship at five university law schools by enhancing the teaching of human rights. Partner universities developed new courses and materials focused on anti-discrimination law, the protection of equality rights, disability law, gender equality and women's rights, which are already or soon to be integrated into the curricula of the partner universities and shared with other law schools outside the capital.



### Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Bureau

USAID completed a longitudinal impact evaluation of the Leer Juntos, Aprender Juntos (Reading Together, Learning Together) program in Peru and made progress on three others. Each evaluation was designed to analyze differential impacts on girls and boys. USAID's Advance program applied the findings of its Study of Barriers to Access and Completion; gender-specific barriers to accessing tertiary education were taken into account throughout the program. For example, the program offered flexible modalities for course delivery, when possible.



### Indonesia

USAID's SHERA project facilitated the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) University's hosting of the 2019 Women in Research and Innovation seminar, where the 'Bogor Declaration for Women Researchers' was announced. With this declaration, 12 Indonesian institutions declared a commitment to increase women's participation in research. Indonesian distinguished women scientific leaders gathered to share their academic experiences with university leadership, lecturers, students and the public.



### Middle East Regional Bureau

USAID's Middle East Education Research, Training, and Support (MEERS) mechanism provided up-to-date and triangulated data on education in conflict zones, including disaggregation by sex intended to aid programming towards the retention of girls and young women in basic education in protracted conflict zones. The Training Future Leaders activity tracked whether male and female teaching fellows were supported equitably in Lebanon and Morocco.



### Kyrgyz Republic

USAID's Improved Basic Education activity conducted a supplementary gender analysis to identify gaps between boys' and girls' participation in the activity. The activity used these findings to adapt parent-teacher engagement approaches through provision of training modules that create nondiscriminatory classroom environments with regard to gender, social and economic status and disability.



### Nigeria

USAID's Addressing Education in Northeast Nigeria (AENN) activity based resource allocation on findings from the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion assessment conducted in the activity's second year. AENN used community-level data to advocate for prioritization of women's and girls' involvement in learning activities. AENN subsequently prioritized outreach to female facilitators and learners to increase their participation in safe space activities and non-formal learning centers.

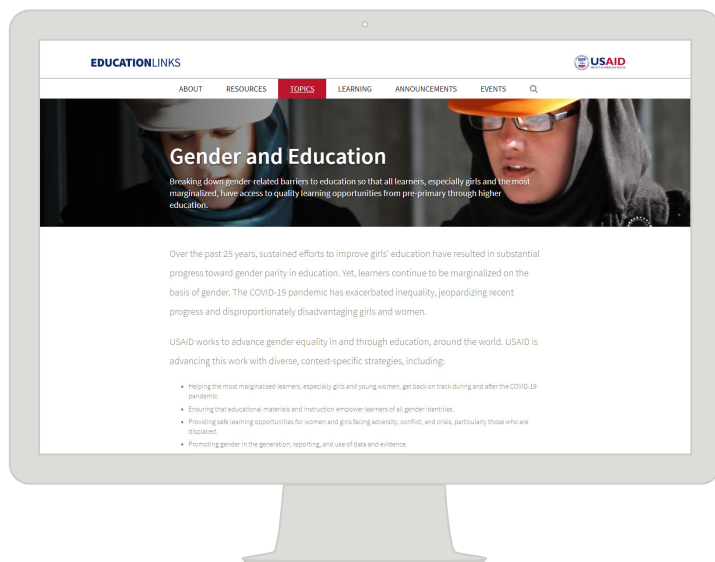
## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about USAID's commitment to advancing gender equality in and through education.



1

### Resources on EducationLinks



2

[Gender and COVID-19 Guidance](#)

3

[LGBTQI+ Integration in Education Guidance](#)

4

[School-Related Gender-Based Violence Measurement Toolkit](#)



For questions about this brief,  
please email:  
[edulinks@usaid.gov](mailto:edulinks@usaid.gov)