GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN AFRICA

BY

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Introduction
In this presentation, we will first of all try to explain the key concepts in the title, namely, girl-child and education. Then we will present and discuss the issues/factors in the girl-child education, citing examples from some African countries. Such issues include: access, equity, enrollment, retention/drop-out, and achievement in school subjects. Solutions of the constraints raised will be proffered.

This conference is timely and apt. On Monday July 20, 2009, the President of Nigeria, President Musa Umaru Yar’Adua, GCFR, will flag off the National Campaign on access, while the Federal Minister of Education will launch the Roadmap for the Nigerian Education sector, which includes:

- Access and Equity
- Standards and Quality Assurance
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and
- Funding and Resource Utilization.

In the course of this conference, we are going to discuss some of these and proffer recommendations which will be useful to the Federal Ministry of Education for effective implementation of the Minister’s roadmap.

The Girl-Child
The girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. This is the age before one becomes young adult. This period covers the crèche, nursery or early childhood (0 – 5 years), primary (6 – 12 years) and secondary school (12 – 18 years). During this period, the young child is totally under the care of the adult who may be her parents or guardians and older siblings. It is made up of infancy, childhood, early and late adolescence stages of development. During this period, the girl-child is malleable, builds and develops her personality and character. She is very dependent on the significant others, those on whom she models her behaviour, through observation, repetition and imitation. Her physical, mental, social, spiritual and emotional developments start and progress to get to the peak at the young adult stage.

Concept of Education
Education is the process of providing information to an inexperienced person to help him/her develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, politically and economically. That is why at graduation ceremonies one hears the Vice-Chancellors pronounce these words while awarding degrees to their institutions’ graduates, “you have been found worthy in character and learning…” In education parlance, it means that the individual has acquired adequate and appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes and values, known as cognitive, psychomotor and affective behaviours to be able to function optimally as a citizen. These behaviours are the focus of training individuals in institutions of learning. The planned and systematic training given in an institution of learning is formal education. The programme or is organized, planned and systematically implemented. In an informal education, there is no plan and the training is haphazard and incidental.
Education is the process through which individuals are made functional members of their society (Ocho, 2005). It is a process through which the young acquires knowledge and realizes her potentialities and uses them for self-actualization, to be useful to herself and others. It is a means of preserving, transmitting and improving the culture of the society. In every society education connotes acquisition of something good, something worthwhile.

Education is one of the fundamental rights of individuals. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December, 1949 stipulated that:

- Everyone has the right to education. This shall be free at least in the elementary and primary stages.
- Elementary education shall be compulsory while technical and professional education shall be made generally available.
- Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (Nwangwu, 1976).

Why should every one have the right to education? The answers to this question are given thus:

1. The child is born helpless and has to rely entirely on parents and other older members of the society to survive and satisfy her growth needs in all their ramifications.
2. The degree and quality of participation in the life of the society depends to a large extent on the degree and quality of her education. This will enable her perform her political and other citizenship duties and exercise the rights pertaining thereto effectively.
3. Since every citizen benefits from the result of the education of her fellow citizen and since every generation receives its education from an older generation, every generation has a duty to reciprocate by educating the generation that comes after it. (Ocho, 1988).

There is an adage that says “educate a man, you educate an individual, but educate a woman, you educate a nation” The above summarizes the essence of education to the girl-child and indeed, to every educable human being, and so calls for special attention to be focused on education of the girl-child. No nation can afford to toy with the education of her citizens, especially, the child, who will be the father or mother of tomorrow, because education is the bedrock of all facets of development.

Children are future leaders of tomorrow and mothers are guardians of the future, and the first aim of every family and society should be to raise healthy and productive individuals who are physically, psychologically, socially, and mentally well developed. These can be achieved through the education of the girl-child who is the mother of tomorrow.
Crucial Issues in Girl-Child Education

In this section we shall discuss major and crucial issues in girl-child education. The issues to be discussed include:
Access to education
Retention and Dropout
Equity
Enrollment
Quality, and
Achievement in school subjects

Access to Education
Access simply means the right to education. It is also the opportunity provided for the girl-child to be educated. Access deals with the availability, convenience and ability to be educated. It is true that many governments make provision for the education of their citizens, but the provisions most of the time do not take cognizance of the peculiarities of the girl-child. In that case the girl-child may not have access to education, which is a fundamental human right.

Research has shown that millions of girls do not have access to school despite the concerted efforts to push the cause forward. Okeke, Nzewi and Njoku (2008) identified child labour, poverty and lack of sponsorship, quest for wealth, bereavement, truancy, broken home, engagement of children as house helps, as factors or the clog in the wheel of children’s access to education in the UNICEF A-Field made up of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Benue, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo and River states of Nigeria. According to World Bank (2003), More than 350 million people, over half Africa’s population, live below the poverty line of one dollar a day. This implies that poverty, too, excludes children, including the girl-child, from school.

In Ethiopia, girls are sometimes abducted for marriage when they are no more than eight years. In West Africa, they are recruited from poor rural families to work as domestic servants in coastal cities or even neighbouring countries. In Nigeria it is very difficult to find a house help today. This is because there is awareness of the values of education, and so parents do not give out their children any more as house helps. When, His Excellency, the Honourable Minister of Education was the Executive Governor of Ebonyi state, he prescribed some punishment for any parents that gave out their child for house help, especially the girl-child. The story is different today in that state.

In South Africa, a recent report by Human Rights Watch warns that sexual violence and abuse are hampering girls’ access to education. In Afghanistan, they have simply been barred from school under the Taleban regime. According to Guttman (a UNESCO courier journalist), customs, poverty, fear and violence are the reasons why girls still account for 60% of the estimated 113 million out-of-school children, and majority live in sub-saharan Africa and South Asia.
Most of the factors that militate against the girl-child access to education are socio-cultural. Many countries on the African continent rank among the poorest in the world. The on-going HIV/AIDS epidemics, over-crowding in cities, tribal warfare and despotic governments have contributed to the degeneration of the beautiful African land into a human rights catastrophe. At the centre of the devastating situation is the girl-child. The girl-children appear to be the most vulnerable and most undervalued members of the world society. In a region where many are struggling to get enough food and to stay alive, remain out of reach of the various violent rebel armies, and to care for those stricken with various diseases, a basic education, especially for girl children, is low on the list of priorities.

The right to education, which is a fundamental human right, is frequently denied to girls in some Africa countries. The then United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, stated that in Africa, when families have to make a choice, due to limited resources, of educating either a girl or a boy child, it is always the boy that is chosen to attend school. In Africa, many girls are prevented from getting the education entitled to them because families often send their daughters out to work at a young age, so that they can get the additional income they may need to exist beyond subsistence level, and finance the education of sons.

It has been reported in BBC News (2006), that African patriarchal societal viewpoint favours boys over girls because boys maintain the family lineage. Additional reasons why girls do not have adequate access to education in Africa include the fact that many have to stay home to nurse relatives with HIV/AIDS. That their mothers were not educated is another reason that makes them feel that their daughters do not need education. Furthermore, some families do not believe in education of girls. In Ethiopia child brides face early pregnancy, responsibilities to their children and in-laws, and reticence of their husbands, who are usually much older, to let them out of the house.

In Uganda, Birungi (2008) cited the rampant fire in schools as examples of the gaps in implementation of the girl-child education. She noted that the previous year’s floods in eastern Uganda left many schools in disrepair and these were seen as forms of exclusion. Children in Bundibugyo district cannot access schools during the raining season and ‘Government has done nothing to alleviate the problem’.

In Kenya, girl–child education is elusive. Mwangi, (2004) wrote that a combination of poverty, disease and backward cultural practices continued to deny the girl-child her right to education. Even with the introduction of free primary education, access to education is still remaining a wide dream to many Kenyan children. Despite the introduction of free primary education in the country which accounted for an increase in enrolment, a sizeable number of children, especially girls, still find themselves out of school owing to a number of reasons. These reasons are: demands for their labour in the homes such as assisting in looking after their young siblings; child marriage, doing house chores, death of mother, and looking after the sick member of the family.

Some of the girls are given to marriage against their wish and when they refuse, they are threatened with death. The children are given to marriage at a tender age in quest of
dowry from the husbands. But how much is the amount and for how long does it last? The girls lament that because of the setbacks they still did not escape from poverty and their parents had nothing to show for the dowry received.

Some parents justify the denial of girls of their right to education to prevent them from bringing shame to the family through early pregnancy. Yet others believe that women who are at the same level of education as the men are a disgrace to the community because more often than not, they will not get married and if they do, it will be to a foreigner. For such parents, early marriage is the best way to prevent this and at the same time preserve traditions.

**Retention/Dropout**

UNICEF (2003) reported that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of girls out of school each year has risen from 20 million in 1990 to 24 million in 2002. Of the 25 selected countries studied, fifteen (15) were in sub-Saharan Africa. The criteria studied were: low enrolment rates for girls; gender gaps of more than 10 percent in primary education; countries with more than one million girls out of school; countries included on the World Bank’s Education For All Fast Track Initiative and countries hard hit by a range of crises that affect school opportunities for girls, such as HIV/AIDS and conflict. The fifteen countries included Chad, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Eritrea, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The worst hit is Southern Sudan, which has been seriously affected by civil war for decades. UNICEF said to wait for an end to the conflict would be to dismiss the rights of generations of children. UNICEF noted that in the area, as few as 15 percent of primary school-aged children were in school and girls represented only one quarter of the number. By the time the upper primary level was reached, there were hardly any girls left in school and at the territory's foremost secondary school, Rumbek, there was a solitary girl. Only 560 of the 8,000 teachers in southern Sudan are women, which was merely seven percent (Nduru, 2003).

In rural areas, social and cultural patterns combined with relatively poor quality of schooling place girls, their education and development in a disadvantaged and vulnerable position. Girls bear the heaviest burden for household responsibilities, including care of sick parents and siblings, and are first ones to drop out of school.

In the South eastern Nigeria more boys than girls drop out of school shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3 below (data from UBEC, 2003). The drop-out syndrome is a function of some factors that distract the boys from schools. These factors include: preference for a trade, quest for money, parental decision, lack of employment opportunities, hawking/street trading, long process of education and lack of counseling.
### TABLE 1: PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA (2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>MALE ENROLMENT</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>FEMALE ENROLMENT</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abia</td>
<td>24,775</td>
<td>50.62</td>
<td>24,165</td>
<td>49.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>137,390</td>
<td>51.20</td>
<td>35,640</td>
<td>48.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebonyi</td>
<td>5,811</td>
<td>33.79</td>
<td>10,936</td>
<td>66.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enugu</td>
<td>7,403</td>
<td>50.46</td>
<td>17,083</td>
<td>49.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imo</td>
<td>32,182</td>
<td>49.80</td>
<td>32,432</td>
<td>50.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2: PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA (2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>MALE ENROLMENT</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>FEMALE ENROLMENT</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abia</td>
<td>138,165</td>
<td>49.80</td>
<td>139,278</td>
<td>50.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>174,243</td>
<td>45.31</td>
<td>139,278</td>
<td>54.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebonyi</td>
<td>205,615</td>
<td>49.42</td>
<td>210,325</td>
<td>50.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enugu</td>
<td>350,052</td>
<td>49.62</td>
<td>355,369</td>
<td>50.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imo</td>
<td>242,267</td>
<td>51.22</td>
<td>230,771</td>
<td>48.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 3: Secondary School Enrolment in South East Nigeria (2003)***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>Male Enrolment</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female Enrolment</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abia</td>
<td>63,824</td>
<td>44.79</td>
<td>78,684</td>
<td>55.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>74,690</td>
<td>42.88</td>
<td>99,499</td>
<td>57.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebonyi</td>
<td>89,636</td>
<td>49.78</td>
<td>90,427</td>
<td>50.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enugu</td>
<td>83,311</td>
<td>43.36</td>
<td>108,835</td>
<td>56.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imo</td>
<td>89,923</td>
<td>46.41</td>
<td>103,835</td>
<td>53.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Equity**

Under this heading we shall examine the enrolment trend from pre-primary to secondary school in Nigeria to see the extent of equity or parity between male and female learners (the boy-child and girl-child). The data covers all the thirty-six (36) states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Tables 4 and 5 show gender disparity from pre-primary to secondary school levels. The enrolment percentages of the boy-child are consistently higher than that of the girl-child. These differences are significant. Despite government’s programmes for children’s education, there are still gaps in the enrolment of the boy-child and the girl-child education in Nigeria.

**Table 4: 2004 Enrolment by Gender from Pre-Primary to Secondary Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Primary</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>937,997</td>
<td>51.13</td>
<td>12,273,046</td>
<td>55.12</td>
<td>1,567,011</td>
<td>56.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>896,522</td>
<td>48.87</td>
<td>9,994,361</td>
<td>44.88</td>
<td>1,204,623</td>
<td>43.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,834,519</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22,267,407</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,771,634</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** FME: Basic and Senior Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria, 2004 & 2005
Table 5: 2005 Enrolment by Gender from Pre-Primary to Secondary Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>PRE-PRIMARY</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PRIMARY</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SECONDARY</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>956,475</td>
<td>51.42</td>
<td>12,273,046</td>
<td>55.12</td>
<td>1,559,038</td>
<td>56.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>903,796</td>
<td>48.58</td>
<td>9,994,361</td>
<td>44.88</td>
<td>1,214,380</td>
<td>43.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,860,271</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22,267,407</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,773,418</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The FME (2006:4) found out that ‘In the south, a moderate bias towards boys’ enrolment is evident in the south west, while the south east displays a bias towards girls’ enrolment. In the north there is a strong evidence of bias towards boys’ enrolment...’ Offorma, (2008) confirmed that disparity is more in the Northern part of the country in favour of the boy-child than in the southern part. In South- eastern states there are more girls than boys in the secondary schools, but more boys than girls in the pre-primary, except for Ebonyi and Imo state.

In South Africa, the enrolment of girls in schools has increased to 53% in secondary school. The intake and access to primary school has attained 100%. This implies that the girl-child at that level of education equal access to school as the boy-child.

In a report by Asare (2009) National Programme Officer of the Ghana Education Campaign Coalition, he stated that the complexities in the challenges to attain gender parity in basic school enrolment, retention and completion, and appreciating that the existing quantity and quality defects in girls’ education, is a result of structural deficiency deeply rooted in policy and practice, is vital. He added that working to remove barriers to quality girls’ education should not only be seen as a statutory in fulfillment of girls’ right but a building block to sustainable development. In his opinion, the need for Government and Civil Society to collaborate to safeguard gender interests in basic education is immediate and imminent for Ghana to remain on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on education and gender.

Quality
The Jomtien Conference of 1990 launched the Education For All (EFA) initiatives, which aimed at getting children into school within ten years and also stressed that the urgent priority was to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for girls and women. Many countries mapped out programmes to facilitate the implementation of the initiatives. Nigeria embarked on Universal Basic Education. All these are in a bid to meet the Millennium Development Goal number two, which is to achieve Universal Basic Education.

The question is what is the quality of education given to the girl-child that will help her to adapt to the knowledge based economy of the 21st century? The answer to this question can be attempted by ex-raying what happens in the schools today. Demotivated teachers, examination malpractice, gender biased curriculum, lack of school facilities and
instructional materials, incessant strike actions are some of the variables in the quality of education of children.

UNICEF education chief in South Africa, Wamahiu (2008) said quality education was not about how well a child was performing in school but a number of factors that enrich the wellbeing of a child in school. She cited the issues of administration of discipline, corporal punishment, sexual harassment, child abuse and child labour as some of the things that lead to exclusion of groups of students from accessing quality education.

United Nation statistics, national reports and studies initiated by non-governmental organizations in 2005 repeatedly showed that girls, as a group, had lower literacy rates, receive less health care, and more impoverished than boys. Today we are in a revolution and this will be reflected in teaching, research and community work, which will help the girl-child to fit into the global society.

Achievement

Table 6: Mean Performance of Pupils in Core Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIMARY</th>
<th>MATHS</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>SOCIAL STUDIES</th>
<th>PRIMARY SCIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>36.72</td>
<td>37.22</td>
<td>26.05</td>
<td>24.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>47.06</td>
<td>37.77</td>
<td>25.02</td>
<td>25.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>35.65</td>
<td>35.57</td>
<td>20.38</td>
<td>20.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>39.81</td>
<td>36.85</td>
<td>23.82</td>
<td>23.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 6 shows the mean performance of Primary 4-6 pupils in four (4) core subjects. Boys have higher mean scores in Mathematics and Social Studies while girls presented higher mean scores in English and Primary Science. The achievement of the two groups is poor from the mean scores. The implication is that the foundation is weak as the primary level of education is the foundation for higher education. If Nigeria and indeed African are to achieve the Education For All goals, particular attention must be paid to the primary school level.

Table 7: Higher Scorer in Core Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Scored higher in 14 states</td>
<td>Highest scorer M=44.58.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Highest scorer M=28.88</td>
<td>Scored higher in 19 states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Scored higher in 14 states</td>
<td>Highest scorer M=29.88.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Science</td>
<td>Highest scorer M=46.88</td>
<td>Scored higher in 25 states</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 presents a summary of achievement at the primary school level in four (4) core subjects, namely: Mathematics, English, Social Studies and Primary Science in 37 States of Nigeria. The evidence as shown is that boys performed higher than girls in English and Primary Science, while girls performed better than boys in Mathematics and Social Studies. In both cases, the mean scores are higher than the national mean score.

It is interesting to observe that the girl-child does well in school when given the opportunity. Females scored higher than the males in 25 states in Primary Science and had the highest score in Mathematics. Females also scored higher than males in 19 states in Social Studies. Generally, performance at the primary school as shown by the national mean score is poor. This can be attributed to the quality of education offered at that level.

Some of the factors that influence quality education include: teacher quality, availability of facilities, instructional resources, infrastructure, supervision of instruction, provision of school meals, hands-on and learner centred methods and approaches, parental involvement and learner-friendly environment.

**Solutions to the Girl-Child Education Issues**

Since liberation from the Apartheid, South Africa has changed their curriculum to be responsive to the demands of the nation. Their curriculum is child-centred, no more the talk and chalk approach. This idea could be borrowed by the African countries.

In Kenya, all hope is not lost. The government has however taken some initiatives in the promotion of children’s education by enshrining this right in the Children’s Act, 2001. The Act also created a department for children to deal with their rights and welfare. Application of such laws as, imprisonment of any person found guilty of negligence in this case, knowingly and willfully causing a child to become in need of care and protection has helped towards the promotion of the children’s right to education. According to Section 127 of the Children’s Act 2001, “any person found guilty of negligence is liable for a maximum of five years’ imprisonment or a fine of a sum not exceeding KES 200000 or both fine and imprisonment”. Other countries can promulgate such laws so as to improve access to education of the girl-child.

Of significance also is the fact that a number of NGOs have been allowed to operate in areas where early marriage is prevalent. They are now educating the people on the importance of taking girls to school rather than marrying them off to older men. The government, in collaboration with NGOs has also established centres where girls rescued from early marriage are accommodated and counseled, before being sent back to school.

Through strict intervention of the government there is hope for the children who have been out of school to pursue their lifelong dreams.

Braun, Swaminathan, and Rosegrant (2004:11) observed that ‘feeding children in school has paid significant educational dividends. A school feeding programme in Bangladesh, for instance, has resulted in a 35% overall increase in enrolment and a remarkable
increase 44% increase for girls.’ It is recommended that governments should emulate Bangladesh so as to achieve the Millennium Development Goal number two, which is attaining Universal Basic Education.

Most of these are to be found in the urban areas, leaving very few teachers in the rural areas. Teachers should be equitably distributed and social amenities put in place in the rural areas to retain teachers.

Most countries of Africa are multi-cultural, multi-linguistic and multi-religious. The diversity and value system must be the focus of education to ensure that quality education is given to the children. I want to commend Professor Kader Asmal, the South African Minister of Education for seeing to the introduction of History into teaching in their country. It is good for children to know their history so as to use the knowledge to reconstruct their life for effective citizenship.

Conclusion
Education is the right of every girl everywhere and key to transforming her life and the life of her community. Without education, girls are denied the opportunity to develop their full potential and to play a productive and equal role in their families, their societies, their country and their world. Finally, that schools in Africa are often substandard, especially in rural and isolated areas, means that even the few girls lucky enough to get access to an education often receive one of poor quality and limited duration. Many schools in Africa are nearly destitute, with classes being held in crowded, poorly constructed structures, in which there is very limited access to paper and pencils, and even less access to text books and computers.

Although much has been done to improve the caliber and existence of girls' education in African countries, there is still much that needs to be done. The largest hurdle that needs to be overcome before all African girls can all get the education they deserve is the prevailing social thought that discourages or minimizes the importance of education for girls. To stop this, countries in Africa need to pass laws banning the early marriage practices that keep girls out of school. Finally, African governments must pass legislation that makes the education of girls mandatory for primary school, and then enforce these laws stringently in the rural communities.

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