Impact of COVID-19 on Gender and Education
#generationequality

The Caribbean Webinar Series n° 3. Impact of COVID-19 on Gender and Education

2 June 2020

UNICEF, LACRO
Contents

- Gender inequalities in Education
- Consequences of school closures
- Recommended Actions to mitigate deepened gender inequalities due to COVID-19
## Gender inequalities in LAC prior to COVID 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 in 10</th>
<th>13 million</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent girls, ever-partnered, have experienced violence at the hands of their partner.</td>
<td>young women aged 15-24 (compared to 7 million young men), neither study nor work.</td>
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<td>1 out of 4</td>
<td>62</td>
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<td>Adolescent girls is married/in union before reaching 18 years.</td>
<td>Births per 1,000 adolescents between 15 and 19 years old make LAC the Region with the second highest adolescent pregnancy rate in the world.</td>
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## Gender inequalities in Education

<table>
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<th>Inequalities in access to, and completion of, secondary school. Although girls outperform boys in terms of secondary school completion, the reasons as to why girls and boys drop out of school are gendered.</th>
<th>Gender segregation in curricular areas continues to be predominant while the percentage of girls who reach the basic level in reading and writing is higher than that of men, it is lower in relation to science and mathematics.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early pregnancy, marriage/union, a higher burden of care-giving on girls and inadequate access to menstrual supplies and WASH infrastructure, impacts their school attendance, performance and completion.</td>
<td>Violence in and around schools occur, including gender-based violence. However, not all schools have formal, established referral pathways, or competencies within school staffing, to address GBV disclosures.</td>
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<td>In LAC, of all adolescents, <strong>27.5% of girls neither study nor work</strong> compared to 14.5% of boys. While general time use data shows girls more represented in care work, 2016 data showed boys more represented in paid labour.</td>
<td>Gender, ethnicity and household income affects access to technology <strong>digital literacy</strong>, with girls from rural, poorest quintiles and indigenous households more affected.</td>
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These, among other gender inequalities in the Region, will worsen as a result of COVID-19.
Teen pregnancy, child marriage/early unions and GBV increase by almost 9 times.

Digital, on-line learning requires access to technology (tablets, laptops, internet) that will disadvantage certain children and adolescents.

- If there is only one tablet/laptop in the household, but more than one child – who will have privileged access and why?
- Who will be left behind due to lower digital literacy?

The longer marginalized children are out of school, the less likely they are to return.

- Who are the most marginalized girls and boys in the Caribbean? Will they return to school?
The **Framework** (UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP and World Bank) proposes six key dimensions that should be used to assess the school state of readiness and inform planning. Gender issues should be considered throughout all 6 dimensions. Implementing gender responsive measures could also have a longer-term positive impact on gender equality in education.
Policy, Financing and Safe Operations Recommendations

Policy
✓ Implement **policies to assist girls returning to class** when schools reopen, including those who are pregnant and adolescent mothers;

Financing
✓ Increase financing flowing into education systems and ensure it benefits girls and boys equally.
✓ Build **gender responsiveness into education planning and budgeting** and target funds for maximum impact and account for the disproportionate impact of the crisis on girls.

Safe operations
✓ Ensure that every school has water and sanitation facilities, including menstrual supplies, such as sex-separate toilets, with adequate lighting and locks from this inside for adolescent girls to **manage their menstruation in dignity and as a GBV prevention measure.**
Learning Recommendations

✓ Ensure adequate attention to the learning needs of girls and boys.
  - Advocate for girls and boys to have equal access to learning equipment (tablets, laptops, internet connection, etc) as well as space within the home to undertake distance learning.
  
  - Ensure that alternative learning opportunities are not limited to digital devices. Leverage public radio, television and community platforms to ensure no boy or girl is left behind.
  
  - Facilitate girls’ access to STEM and digital skills.

✓ Adopt gender-transformative curricula to debunk gender stereotypes and promote equitable relationships from the earliest to oldest of school ages.
  - Teacher training required!
Wellbeing and Protection Recommendations

✓ Develop clear roles for the Education sector in the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence, including child marriage and early unions.
  o Support school systems to ramp up efforts to prevent and address gender-based bullying and school-based violence, with clear prevention and referral pathways.
    o Refer to the UNESCO SR-GBV Guidelines, WHO/UNICEF/World Bank et al Inspire Framework and IASC GBV and Education guidelines.
  o Include the promotion of gender equality and the prevention of GBV in teacher training, school operations.
    o At all times, information on where girls, boys and adolescents can go for more information or help should be provided. Do not raise awareness without providing info on where to get help.

✓ Strengthen life skills programming for adolescent girls and boys specific to COVID impacts (confinement, stress due to lost school year for older adolescents, etc).
  o Develop the content of these life-skills programmes with adolescent girls and boys to ensure their concerns are front and centre.
Reaching the most marginalized

Recommendations

✓ Collect gender-disaggregated data on reenrollment in order to assess whether girls’ enrolment is on par with, or above, pre-crisis levels and work with schools to develop action plans to return girls to education.

  o Identify and remove regressive policies that may discriminate against girls, such as not allowing pregnant girls or girls in union to enroll.

  o Promote targeted messaging to ensure that children from the most disadvantaged groups reenroll – intersectional approaches needed!
5 actions to help bring the most marginalized girls back to school after COVID-19

#1 Lift financial barriers that prevent girls from going to school and that are likely to increase as a result of COVID-19 economic impacts.

#2 Scale up gender-responsive distance education to reach the most marginalized girls.

#3 Intensify community mobilization and support for girls’ education, including for pregnant girls and those who were out of school before the COVID-19 crisis.

#4 Prioritize girls’ safety and protection.

#5 Ensure meaningful participation for adolescent girls.
With a focus on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, the UN System in the Caribbean will support regional institutions and partners to end VAWG with the following focus on education, and its gendered factors.

- **CSE**
  - Understanding and addressing early unions in the Caribbean

- **Education standards – VAWG/ESP**
  - Whole-of-sector approach to prevent VAWG

- **Gender Competencies 4 Frontline Workers**
  - ECD, parenting and adolescent girls’ empowerment
Thank you.

Shelly N. Abdool-Zerezeghi
Regional Gender Advisor
Sabdool@unicef.org