GEM Gender Report 2024
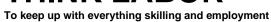
Originally published by: UNESCO

Introduction:

This report is a companion to the 2024 GEM Report. It highlights the growing progress in girls' education, signaling a positive shift away from decades of discrimination. It discusses how technology can improve educational access for girls, especially in crisis situations, but also notes persistent global disparities in access and digital skills, largely due to cultural biases. Additionally, the report examines how education shapes technological development. Women face significant barriers in pursuing STEM careers. Ensuring women are equally represented in technology is crucial for creating tools that benefit everyone.

Key Findings:

Progress Achieved by The SDG Midpoint:

- In the last 30 years, significant efforts have been made toward gender parity in education. However, tertiary education saw a shift by 2004, with women outnumbering men by 2020.

- Despite challenges in the 1990s, improvements in upper secondary education accelerated notably from 2015 to 2020.

- The parity index measures average educational disparity, revealing that while many girls and young women benefit from improved access, some remain disadvantaged due to factors like location and poverty.

- In India, two rounds of the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) were conducted in 2015–16 and 2020–21. If adult education programs were effective, the literacy rates for women aged 30 to 34 in 2020–21 should exceed those of 25 to 29-year-olds in 2015–16. Notably, literacy among women has improved significantly: in 2020–21, 90% of women aged 15 to 19 were literate, compared to 46% of women aged 45 to 49, effectively closing a nearly 30 percentage point gender gap over 30 years.

Technology affects girls' education opportunities and outcomes

- In 2023, 81% of men and 75% of women owned mobile phones, with the gap wider in low-income countries compared to high-income ones. Women in South Asia are 42% less likely to own smartphones.

- Programming skills are present in about 0.5% of youth in low-income countries, 2% in lower-middle, 6% in upper-middle, and 14% in high-income countries.

- Low-cost, private digital platforms like apps and social media can offer personalized learning, particularly to marginalized groups. Examples include the Nokaneng app in Lesotho, Help Pinky in India, and the CSE Learning Platform in Africa.

- On average, across Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries with available data, 12% of 15-year-old girls reported having been cyberbullied, compared to 8% of boys.

Education can determine whether technological development is gender equal

- Globally, women are significantly underrepresented in STEM fields, with only 35% of STEM graduates being female between 2018 and 2023. One in three young men but only one in six young women choose STEM courses.

- Policies in Europe are shaped by the EU Digital Decade 2030 goal, which aims to equip 80% of adults with basic digital skills and employ 20 million ICT specialists, focusing on gender balance.

- International plans to address gender gaps in digital and STEM skills include improving teacher education, updating course materials, and monitoring progress toward gender balance in STEM fields.

- Efforts to bridge the large gender divide are also underway in South Asia.

Conclusion:

The report reveals a trend of more girls than boys completing education globally. While over two-thirds of countries set targets for secondary completion rates, only about one-third focused on closing the gender gap, despite fewer than 25% achieving parity. In countries where young women lagged behind men in 2015, the gender gap narrowed from 6.9 to 4.2 percentage points by 2022. Conversely, where boys were underperforming, the gap widened from 6.8 to 9.5 percentage points. It calls for educational reforms to leverage technology positively and ensure equal access for girls in STEM.

Read more: [GEM Gender Report 2024](#)

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