



Girls' Education Challenges

Winter 2016

Scale Up Educational Scholarships

Female education rates are highly correlated with a variety of positive social, economic, and health outcomes, and targeted scholarships can eliminate prevalent financial barriers preventing women from completing secondary school. In three months, create an online fundraising program that raises scholarship funds for 100 girls to attend secondary school in three months, then grow to help 5,000 girls over two years. A successful model will be evidence-based, will include continuous monitoring and testing, and a commitment to change if evidence suggests your approach is not working.

The Problem: Educating women is widely accepted as a crucial path toward development. “There is clear and convincing evidence, amassed over the past two decades, that investing in girl-specific resources leads to better educated, safer, healthier, and economically powerful adolescent girls. This can contribute to a substantially better future not just for the individual girls, but for their families, communities, and our world”.¹

- Educated girls increase their earning potential by up to 25 percent per year of secondary school, and reinvest 90 percent of earnings into their families.²
- Girls who complete education are also three times less likely to contract HIV.³
- A girl who completes secondary school will on average marry 3 years later compared to a non-graduate, and will have two fewer children on average,^{4, 5} and have children who are 49 percent more likely to live past the age of 5.⁶

¹ Why invest in adolescent girls? United Nations Foundation and the Clinton Global Initiative. http://www.clintonglobalinitiative.org/ourmeetings/PDF/actionareas/Why_Invest_in_Adolescent_Girls.pdf

² <https://camfed.org/what-we-do/>

³ ibid

⁴ National Statistical Office of Malawi: Gender Report 2008. <http://www.nsomalawi.mw/index.php/site-map/40-malawi-in-figures.html>

⁵ National Statistical Office of Malawi: Fertility Report 2008. <http://www.nsomalawi.mw/index.php/site-map/40-malawi-in-figures.html>

⁶ <https://www.norad.no/en/front/thematic-areas/education/girls-and-education/>

- A 1 percent increase in female secondary school attendance single handedly grows a country's average annual per capita income by 0.3 percent.⁷

Yet financial constraints remain a major barrier to education for young women. Public school in most countries is tuition-free, but indirect costs and – in secondary school - tuition costs are substantial.⁸ Fewer than 50 percent of girls in sub-Saharan Africa will complete high school, largely because they cannot afford these costs.⁹ Data from Kenya indicate that average total expenditures on high school students can almost equal average household expenditures for a year, leaving poorer children unable to attend.¹⁰ Moreover, when poor families cannot cover all the costs of education for their children, they tend to prioritize boys' education.¹¹ As a result, 84 percent of Kenyan girls attend primary school, while only 48 percent enroll in secondary school.¹²

The Proven Solution: Scholarships offered to smart girls can solve this problem. It can cost as little as \$250 to send a girl to secondary school for a year, which will significantly improve her economic and health opportunities.

The benefits extend past the scholarship recipient. Randomized control trials have shown that merit-based scholarships for girls led to increased attendance and test scores in classrooms overall.¹³ In one Kenyan school, a scholarship program raised test scores of girls who were eligible for scholarships – but scores also improved among boys who were ineligible. Student absenteeism was also reduced by 25 percent, and teacher attendance was increased by nearly 5 percent.¹⁴

Your Challenge: We will award up to \$20,000 to a social entrepreneur who can raise \$25,000 over three months, and use this money to support 100 scholarships for the smartest yet poorest girls entering high school. Winning entrepreneurs will have a vision for growing their fundraising to \$1.25 million and supporting 5,000 girls within two years.

Because the effectiveness of scholarships depends on external variables, you must have a localized plan that can manage uncertainty, including:

- An evidence-based model which identifies the strongest factors limiting quality educational access, specific to the region in which you will operate

⁷ Girls Grow: A Vital Force in Rural Economies. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs.
http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/GirlsGrowReportFinal_v9.pdf

Original research available: Knowles, S., P.K. Lorgelly, and P.D. Owen. 2002. "Are Educational Gender Gaps a Brake on Economic Development? Some Cross-Country Empirical Evidence." *Oxford Economic Papers* 54: 118-149.

⁸ <http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/234809E.pdf>

⁹ Girl's Education in Africa, Programme Insights: Education and Gender Equality Series. Oxfam.
[http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/files/oxfam_edPaper3\(1\).pdf](http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/files/oxfam_edPaper3(1).pdf)

¹⁰ "Access and Quality in the Kenyan Education System: A Review of the Progress, Challenges and Potential Solutions." (2011).
<https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/publications/Access%20and%20Quality%20in%20the%20Kenyan%20Education%20System%202011.06.22.pdf>

¹¹ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002348/234809E.pdf>

¹² http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/kenya_statistics.html; More data on school enrollment by gender is compiled by the World Bank, and is available on Gapminder: <http://www.gapminder.org/data/>

¹³ http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=748644

¹⁴ <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/incentives-learn-merit-based-girls-scholarship-program-kenya>

- An evidenced-based model of how and why your intervention will boost educational learning outcomes in the long run
- A plan for continuous testing and evaluation of the program
- A commitment to change the plan if the evidence suggests that the approach isn't working

Market Information:

- The major challenge is connecting with donor communities. Your plan must identify a donor base, and explain how you will inspire them to donate. **80-90% of your proposal should focus on this challenge.** There are a near infinite number of nonprofits asking donors for money, and your project will need to stand out.
- Another potential barrier is selecting a proper school partner. Studies have found that scholarship programs are only successful if girls attend *quality* school.¹⁵ Providing a scholarship to a poor quality school will not lead to real impact. Operationally, school administrators may be wary of partnering with a startup organization, and will likely need assurance that any scholarship promises will be fulfilled. A proposal which includes criteria for selecting partner schools to ensure positive impact will be particularly attractive.
- This intervention is appropriate throughout many countries. According to UNESCO, 31 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have gender parity indices of less than 1.0 (i.e., girls' enrollment is measurably less than boys) in primary school enrollment, and none has parity in secondary school enrollment.¹⁶ Identifying smart girls with high potential can be done by accessing existing national test scores.
- Past winners of this challenge include [Watch Me Go](#) (Kenya), [YouthGlobe](#) (Burundi), [SponsorHer!](#) (Ethiopia), [PayToEducation](#) (India), and [FutureSpark](#) (Mozambique).

Ready To Start?

Download a First Round Application Packet at www.d-prize.org/application.pdf

Questions? Email the D-Prize team at help@d-prize.org

¹⁵ www.givewell.org/international/education/detail

¹⁶ <http://mdginafrica.wordpress.com/2012/09/19/why-many-girls-drop-out-of-schools-in-africa/>