

Educate A Girl or Lose Half the World

Picture this. You are sitting in a classroom. There are people of all different genders and identities. Now imagine all the girls in the classroom, missing. This is the case in many classrooms all over the world. Gender inequality is an international issue and is the most important topic for my generation because females assume half of the population. Losing half of the world would mean losing half of the potential we have. However, everyday girls are treated disdainfully. Even so, there are solutions if governments and individuals act before it is too late.

Gender inequality has been an issue for countless years for countless reasons. This is a problem because, what happens when we lose half of the world? We would be no better than cave dwellers in awe over fire. Fifteen million females are sexually abused or raped in the world, which equals to 1 in 3 women being sexually harassed, raped, or abused. Almost 91% of rape or abuse victims identify as female, versus 9% being male. And because of this, 99% of the perpetrators are male. This is an example of how women have unequal power to men. Since most of the victims are female, this implies that these men have a sense of control over women, and many women are afraid to stand up to this. Correspondingly, countless females are deprived of education. 129 million girls are without an education world-wide. This happens for unfair reasons, like lack of money or need of water. Imagine yourself as a 10-year-old girl who wants to go to school. You have asked your parents dozens of times to allow you to go to school, but they tell you that they need someone to cook, clean, and fetch water. What would you do? I doubt that you, as someone deprived of an education, would you want to sit and watch that happen? And in 2022, most of African countries had a high population of girls that were married at the age 15 or younger. This is harmful to growth for young women because any partner can harm the other. Younger girls are prime victims for abuse because they can be naiver or feel less of a sense of a control. This is also harmful because girls' husbands tend to want to have children while his wife is still quite young. Mothers aged 10-19 have a higher risk of infection, eclampsia, and so much more.

Afghanistan has one of the worst cases of gender inequality in the world. Girls and women have been rejected the right of education, leaving Afghanistan the only country without any education for girls. Education is a human right, and Taliban has refused it. However, Afghanistan agreed to the SDGs, and education is a constitutional right in Afghanistan. In 2001, The USA military and allies moved into Afghanistan and shook the Taliban from power. However, 20 years later in 2021, the troops left, and Taliban regained power. On December 20th, 2022, Taliban banned women from going to university, which sparked outraged protests and rallies. Many girls have lost a sense of power because they were born while the U.S. was present in Afghanistan. Because of this, women and girls have had to resort to secret virtual schools. These schools are being ran by people in the USA, attracting Afghans. Girls go to extreme measures to ensure that these schools are not discovered by the Taliban or citizens who would report them. However, they want girls and families to discover the schools for equal access to education. On the other hand, six out of thirty-six provinces in Afghanistan still have unrestricted access to education for both females and males. But think about it like this; what if the country you lived in put a ban on education? If only six states or provinces continued to teach, would you find that fair? As a citizen with a similar identity as others who continued to learn, but did not get to yourself?

So, as you can see, there is a problem. But what are solutions? Both governments and individuals can act. Yes, even you can help! For example, you can help fund girls in Afghanistan and their educations with organizations like Camfed. Camfed is a nonprofit organization helping girls in Africa and Asia. can also tell others about what you have learned today. Tell friends and family about girls in Afghanistan and the hardships they face. Inform them about what you have learned and that they can help, too. And finally, governments can act by pressuring Afghanistan to change the law.

You are in a classroom. You feel nervous due to the old ban on education, but you take your seat at a desk. A girl about your age is wearing a blue hijab takes a seat next to you and opens her schoolbook. The teacher begins to take attendance. You can't help but smile. You feel at ease. This could be the case in Afghanistan if we act now.

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