

## Theme: Educate Girls and Everything Changes

*“Research conducted in a variety of countries and regions has established that educating girls is one of the most cost-effective ways of spurring development. ... It is positively correlated with increased economic productivity, more robust labor markets, higher earnings, and improved societal health and well-being.... Well-documented evidence shows that educating girls and women also yields significant social and health benefits.” World Bank, 2008.*

### Forces that Keep Girls Out of School

There are many forces that prevent girls from being educated, including cultural practice, preference for using limited resources to educate boys, and lack of availability of schools within a reasonable distance. But other issues at work include:

- **Child Marriage:** Every day, more than 25,000 girls below age 18—almost 10 million a year--will be married, and most of them are forced marriages. The repercussions are many and lasting:
  - Almost always, marriage spells the end of her education
  - She is far more likely to be a victim of domestic abuse
  - A girl under the age of 15 is five times more likely to die in childbirth than a woman in her twenties.
  - The leading cause of death for girls 15-19 in developing countries is complication from early pregnancy.
  - She is far more likely than girls over 18 to suffer a childbirth injury
  - When a mother is under 18, her baby is 60 per cent more likely to die before its first birthday than a baby born to a mother older than 19.
  - Her children are less likely to be educated, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.
  - With no control over her sexuality, she is far more at risk for HIV/AIDS.



### Excellent Resources on Child Marriage

**National Geographic:** [ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/06/child-brides/gorney-text](http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/06/child-brides/gorney-text)

**The Elders:** [www.theelders.org/child-marriage](http://www.theelders.org/child-marriage)

**Trustlaw:** [www.trust.org/trustlaw/womens-rights/child-marriage/](http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/womens-rights/child-marriage/)

- **Death of a mother:** Girls are more likely to be taken out of school to carry water, collect firewood, cook, and take care of younger children.
- **Lack of sanitary supplies and sanitation facilities at schools:** Menstruation is considered shameful in many cultures. When girls can't afford sanitary supplies, they are likely to skip school during their periods, falling further and further behind in their studies until they drop out. Lack of private toilet facilities also leads to fear of a shameful accident. Having HURU as a partner in this project addresses this issue.

## The Value of Educating a Girl

*She will have skills and knowledge that make her better prepared for motherhood, and raise her status with both family and community:*

- She will marry later and bear children when her body is mature, reducing the chance of dying or suffering a childbirth injury, and increasing the chance of bearing a healthy child.
- She is less likely to be subject to domestic violence.
- She will have more say in family matters.
- She will reinvest an average of 90% of her income in her family versus the 30-40% reinvestment rate for men. Her family is far less likely to experience poverty and will be healthier.
- Her children will be educated.
- She will be less likely to contract HIV-AIDS, and more prepared to keep her family healthy.
- When a girl receives seven or more years of education, she marries four years later and has 2.2 fewer children.
- An extra year of primary school boosts girls' eventual wages by 10 to 20 percent. An extra year of secondary school: 15 to 25 percent.
- The higher the participation of women in the formal economy, the better the local and national economy will be.

*Smarter Economics: Investing in Girls* uses findings from the 2012 World Development Report and other sources to show how the simple act of adding girls to development plans delivers a huge economic upside and breaks the cycle of intergenerational poverty. We know what works. We now need the political will to do it. **You start the Girl Effect.**

Maria Eitel, President & CEO  
Nike Foundation

**Smarter Economics: Investing in Girls.** Nike Foundation 2012  
[www.girleffect.org/uploads/documents/6/wdr.pdf](http://www.girleffect.org/uploads/documents/6/wdr.pdf)

*The participation of women in the formal economy is a key factor in moving communities out of poverty, and ultimately in moving countries out of poverty.*

According to World Bank studies:

- If Ethiopian girls completed secondary school, the total contribution over their lifetimes is \$6.8 billion.
- Girls completing secondary school in Kenya would add \$27 billion to the economy over their lifetimes.
- In Bangladesh, the total cost of adolescent pregnancy over a lifetime is \$22 billion.
- With nearly four million adolescent mothers annually, India loses \$383 billion in potential lifetime income.
- If you invest in girls' schooling in Tanzania, it could add \$2 billion to Tanzania's GDP. That's four percent of the country's gross national income. (*Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, then an Acting Director of the World Bank, in an interview with Neal Conan on NPR's "Talk of the Nation", 9/23/10*)

## UN Millennium Development Goals

The **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** are eight international development goals that all 193 United Nations member states have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. The goals are:

1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieving universal primary education,
3. Promoting gender equality and empowering women
4. Reducing child mortality rates,
5. Improving maternal health,
6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases,
7. Ensuring environmental sustainability, and
8. Developing a global partnership for development.

Each of the eight goals has specific stated targets and dates for achieving those targets.

### *Goals that are addressed by MGEF and Huru International*



#### **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**

*Key Targets:*

- Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

In the program area, 48% of Maasai girls enroll in school, but only five of them will graduate from primary school (8th grade). Fewer than 1 in a 100 will graduate from secondary school.

*For Kenya as a whole, UNICEF lists primary school participation as 84% for girls and 83% for boys. Secondary school enrollment rates are 48% for girls and 51% for boys.*

Reasons that girls drop out include:

- Poverty
- Cultural beliefs
- Lack of long-term value to the family--she will marry and leave
- Onset of menstruation or chronic absenteeism due to menstruation causing girls to fall behind and eventually leave school altogether
- Early marriage, usually between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, at ages 12 – 15
- Teen pregnancy
- HIV/AIDS ; caring for infected parents and younger siblings, or because they themselves have acquired HIV/AIDS
- Female genital mutilation (FGM), a precursor to marriage, results in increased pressure to marry. It can also impact a girl's health. *An estimated 90 percent of Maasai girls undergo FGM.*



### Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a widespread practice in Africa and many other developing areas. It was once called female circumcision. It involves the cutting away of genital tissue with the aim of reducing or eliminating sexual arousal, and thereby limiting the probability of sexual activity prior to marriage. The cutting is done without anesthetic and usually with tools that are not sterilized—knives, razor blades, and broken glass.

About 140 million girls and women worldwide are currently living with the consequences of FGM. In Africa an estimated 92 million girls 10 years old and above have undergone FGM. The procedure is mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and age 15.

Immediate complications can include severe pain, shock, hemorrhage, tetanus or sepsis (bacterial infection), urine retention, open sores in the genital region and injury to nearby genital tissue. Later problems include problems urinating, cysts, infections, infertility, as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.

There are several types of FGM, some far more extreme than others. The two most common:

- Removal of the clitoral hood or clitoridectomy
- Total or partial remove of the clitoris and removal of the labia minora or both labia minor and labia maiora.



### Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

*Key Targets:*

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

In the program area, enrollment is low for both boys and girls. For boys, fifty-two percent enroll in primary school vs forty eight percent for girls. Sixteen percent of those boys and ten percent of those girls will go on to secondary school.

Huru International addresses the issue lack of affordable sanitary supplies, and enables girls to stay in school during their menstrual periods.



### Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

*Key Targets:*

- Girls 16 to 24 years old are four to six times more likely to become infected with HIV than their male peers.

Discussing sex is taboo in Maasai culture, so girls are not educated on how pregnancy happens or how they can avoid it, nor are they educated on how HIV/AIDS is transmitted.

- Though the average national HIV infection rate is 6%, the Maasai have a staggering infection rate of 13%.
- The MGEF program is designed to address those cultural taboos:
  - The Mothers Workshop explains the importance of talking to daughters about teen pregnancy, HIV, and the adverse impact of FGM.
  - The Life Skills Workshops educate Maasai girls about pregnancy and how to prevent it, HIV/AIDS and how it is spread, as well as national laws that forbid early marriage and FGM.
- Huru International, in conjunction with distributing sanitary supplies, educates girls on HIV/AIDS and how to protect themselves.

### Discussion Questions

1. We are all heavily influenced by our own cultural traditions. Thinking back to your adolescent years, how hard do you think it would have been to take a path that was frowned upon in your community—even though it was within your rights?
2. The Maasai mothers are being trained, and being asked to take on an advocacy role for their daughters—in opposition to both tradition and the will of their husbands. What they will be doing is groundbreaking work in their culture. What motivators and support do they need to take on, and be successful, in this difficult role?
3. How might the fathers be convinced that educating their daughters is a good thing? In essence, this program asks men to give up their near-absolute power over women and girls. What's in it for them?

### Source Materials

- **Child Marriage and Domestic Violence.** International Center for Research on Women, 2006. (Note, ICRW has a series of fact sheets on child marriage which can be found at <http://www.icrw.org/publications/child-marriage-factsheets>)
- **Fact Sheet: Child Marriage.** GirlUp, UN Foundation, 2011. (<http://www.girlup.org/>)
- **Female genital mutilation.** World Health Organization, February 2012. (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/index.html>)
- **Female genital mutilation.** Wikipedia. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female\\_genital\\_mutilation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_genital_mutilation))
- **Girls' Education in the 21st Century -- Gender Equality, Empowerment, and Economic Growth.** World Bank, 2008. (search title in Google)
- **Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls: The Girl Effect Dividend.** Policy Working Paper. World Bank, 2011 (search title in Google)
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- **Women Hold Up Half the Sky: Global Economics Paper No. 164.** Goldman Sachs, 2008. (<http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/women-and-economics/women-hold-up-half-the-sky.html>)-- link to download at bottom of page
- **World Development Report 2012: Gender equality and development.** World Bank, 2012. (search title in Google)