

ADOLESCENT GIRLS' EDUCATION

STEP

4

EMPOWER OUR DAUGHTERS TO GIVE BACK



KAMALARI SURVIVORS at Room to Read's girls' education program in Bardya, Nepal. PHOTO: MARTHA ADAMS, NYRTO.ORG

Girls are the backbone of rural economies

The Girls in Rural Economies project is spearheaded by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs with generous support from the Nike, Bill & Melinda Gates, and United Nations Foundations.

Chaired by Catherine Bertini, executive director of the World Food Programme (1992-2002), 2003 World Food Prize Laureate, the project shines a light on the experiences and potential of rural adolescent girls living in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The project will culminate in the next volume of the Girls Count series, including recommendations directed to national developing country policy makers about why investment in rural adolescent girls is key to sustainable economic and social development.

The rural population of developing nations faces extreme poverty, with 70 percent of the approximately 1.1 billion people living on

less than \$1.00/day located in rural areas. Rural dwellers are often isolated from good jobs, schools, and clinics, with limited infrastructure to improve their access.

Harness the potential

Girls are the backbone of rural economies in the developing world. They labor in fields and off the farm—fetching water and firewood for their households and caring for their younger brothers and sisters. The lucky ones also go to school. These girls have great potential as leaders and contributors in agricultural transformation, non-farm work, education, and entrepreneurship. However, they are some of the most invisible people in the world. In societies where women are barely heard, rural girls' rights and needs are often not considered.

As these girls do so much, investing in them can help harness their great potential and have enormous impact on their families, communities and countries—not to mention the girls themselves.

So what is needed?

- Equitable access to quality primary and secondary education, vocational and agricultural training—structured to develop skills that are meaningful in rural environments.
- Access to quality health information and services.
- Adequate nutrition, with a particular focus on reducing anemia, so rural adolescent girls can learn, grow, and act.
- Personal security—in schools, at home, and in the community.
- Social connections with peers and role models, particularly adult women, to support rural girls' learning and empowerment to pursue their goals and act on their choices.
- Training and opportunities for non-farm employment so rural young women can pursue employment to raise rural family incomes and sustain rural communities.
- Equitable access to assets, such as land, credit, and savings, is necessary to capitalize on these opportunities.

■ Labor saving technologies to reduce the time burden for women and girls, particularly in firewood and water gathering, which in turn can potentially reduce a family's need for child labor and increase time available for women's employment and girls' education.

■ Policies and programs aimed at rural girls must take into account the social and cultural norms that affect their lives and consider family systems where decisions about rural girls are made.

When we invest in rural girls—in their education, health, social/cultural well-being, economic development, and civic engagement—they can grow to act as drivers, in equitable partnership with men, to lift families and societies out of poverty.

To find the other reports on adolescent girls in the Girls Count series, please go to www.coalitionforadolescent-girls.org

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DID YOU KNOW?

An extra year of education can increase a girls' income by 10 to 20%.



CREDIT: PLAN.ORG, 2008. BECAUSE I AM A GIRL: THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS, 2009. GIRLS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY: ADOLESCENT ALL UP

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Aid for Africa is a unique alliance of U.S.-based charities and their African partners dedicated to helping children, families, and communities throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Our grassroots programs focus on health, education, economic development, arts & culture, conservation, and more.

Every day we witness the plight and promise of girls and young women throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. **Aid for Africa's Girls Education Fund** helps these girls go to school and succeed in life.

Consider the facts in Africa:

- One out of every two women is illiterate.
- One in 16 women dies during pregnancy or in childbirth.
- 12 million women live with HIV/AIDS.

But through education, facts can change:

- African girls who go to school and find work, spend 90% of their income on their families.
- Educated women have smaller, healthier families.
- A girl who stays in school is three times less likely to contract HIV/AIDS.

Learn more and how you can help at www.aidforafrica.org and www.aidforafrica.org/girls.

Aid for Africa
Girls Education Fund
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Philanthro-teens: The next generation changing the world

Meet the emerging "philanthro-teens"—the new face of philanthropy in the United States.

Today's youth could change the way America views the next generation: They are globally aware, want to get involved with international humanitarian causes, and identify with commercial brands that share the same aspirations.

Twins Jillian and Sydney Medina are fourth-graders in New Jersey. Jillian participates in her school's math league and literary magazine; she plays soccer and basketball. Sydney is a dancer, plays guitar and violin, and loves to write and draw.

At an early age, Jillian and Sydney decided to help girls around the world and engage friends in their efforts. For their birthday, rather than presents, they asked people to donate to Girl Up, a United Nations Foundation campaign that helps American girls channel their energy and compassion to raise awareness and funds for United Nations programs that help girls in developing countries.

With signs, a fun video and plenty of enthusiasm, Jillian and Sydney raised more than \$3,000 to help improve the lives of girls in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Liberia, and Malawi.



PHILANTHRO-TEENS Jillian and Sydney Medina raise money to help girls in developing countries. PHOTO: UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION

The twins' story is not an isolated case. Research shows a high level of charitable engagement among today's girls. A survey of girls ages 13-18 found that 79 percent had donated food, clothes, or household items to charities in the previous year. Seventy-six percent had volunteered their time. More than half (53 percent) had donated their own money, while nearly three-quarters (66 percent) had raised money or asked friends and family members to volunteer.

Ten-year-old Katherine Comale of Pennsylvania shows how powerful this trend can be.

When Katherine learned from her mother about the dangers malaria poses for many kids around the world, she wanted to help. Katherine started making gift certificates to raise \$10 at a time—enough to purchase an anti-malaria bed net, deliver it to a family in Africa, and educate communities on its importance and use—through Nothing But Nets, a global, grassroots campaign to end malaria in Africa, where a child dies every 45 seconds from the disease.

From that starting point, Katherine and her family have raised more than \$180,000 over four years to send life-saving bed nets to families in Africa. Their hard work is helping thousands of children sleep safely.

The virtuous cycle

Girls may be the answer to some of the world's most challenging problems. Research shows effectively investing in girls in developing countries creates a virtuous cycle that improves health and prosperity for entire communities. Girls who are better-educated earn more money, get married later, are healthier, and have fewer children than their peers. As earners, they invest more of that money back into their families, which accelerates the benefits of the initial

investment, improving the lives of a whole new generation.

Girls in the United States are creating their own virtuous cycles to create a better world. They influence their families and friends, and their purchasing power could help steer the decisions of major corporations. Nearly nine in 10 parents surveyed said their daughters influence the family's charitable giving. Fifty-seven percent of girls said they have made purchases of which some portion of the proceeds went to charity. More than half (51 percent) said they have talked with others about causes in which they are interested. With many consumer companies focused on engaging the youth market, this is marketing intelligence that will make many sit up and take notice.

Today's emerging philanthro-teens have a giving, activist spirit they want to turn into action. The organizations that are working to help solve major problems around the world are finding ways to channel that youthful energy. Philanthro-teens represent the future of America, and they are already working to build a better world.

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