

GIRLS' EDUCATION AND WORLD BICYCLE RELIEF



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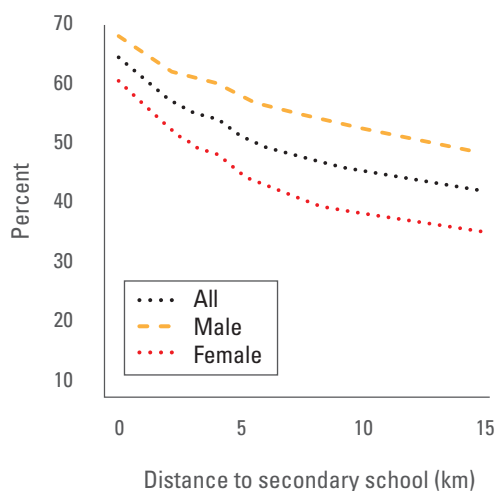
Around the world, about 258 million children are currently not attending school – including 12 million children who never enrolled and will likely live out their lives having never set foot in a classroom. A majority of these out of school children are girls.

According to the World Bank, "The single most important determinant of primary school enrollment is the proximity of a school"

In country after country around the world, the further children are from school, the less likely they are to attend school – this is especially true for girls.

IN INDIA >>>

16- and 17-year-olds enrolled in or completed grade 9 by distance and gender



Source: Muralidharan, K., & Prakash, N. (2017). Cycling to School: Increasing Secondary School Enrollment for Girls in India. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 9(3), 321–350. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20160004>



In low and middle-income countries, the long walk to school amplifies the already considerable challenges facing rural girls including poverty, insecurity and violence, and social norms hostile or indifferent to girls' education. The walk to school can leave girls exhausted, vulnerable to harassment and assault, and can deepen their family's poverty, by preventing girls from helping on the family farm or helping make ends meet before or after school. When the walk to and from school is in addition to daily chores such as fetching water and fuel (girls are traditionally responsible for fetching water and fuel in rural areas), girls may be forced to make part of their journey before dawn or after dusk.

In the face of these challenges, many parents, fearful for their daughter's safety or concerned about making ends meet, pull their daughters out of school. According to UNESCO,³ just 1 percent of the poorest girls in low-income countries complete secondary school. This has been exacerbated by COVID, which has significantly increased adolescent pregnancies, child marriage, and pressure on girls to help their families who slid deeper into poverty.

GETTING GIRLS TO SCHOOL

A robust global body of evidence has found that getting girls to enroll in school and keeping them attending for as long as possible is one of most powerful levers for empowering girls, sparking sustainable economic growth, improving health outcomes, and reducing exploitative practices such as child marriage.

Until recently, governments and funders working to increase girls' enrollment and attendance focused their efforts on three levers: building more schools, lowering school fees, and conditional cash transfers to families. Researchers have found that building more schools can be effective, but in many rural areas can lead to an educational model based on sub-scale one-room schoolhouses incapable of delivering high quality education. Lowering school fees and providing conditional cash transfers to families who enroll their daughters in school do not address the fundamental challenge facing girls – miles and miles of unpaved roads between their home and their school.



"We have seen enrollment of girls going up," said Monica Mudonidongo, Vice Principal of Bukhaywa Secondary School in Kenya, which distributed 200 Buffalo Bicycles to students in 2015. "They are able to get to school early in the morning. They are no longer tired...It is like a liberation."



"The bicycle helps me cover long distances in a short time. I will reach school early to perform well in class. At home, there is a lamp. I use it to read Chemistry and Biology which I like very much...With science, you learn about the cause and effect. My bicycle will cause punctuality. Work will be easier because the bicycle reduces the energy of working. — PHOEBE, A 17-YEAR-OLD KENYAN STUDENT WHO WANTS TO GROW UP TO BE A TEACHER.

EVIDENCE THAT BICYCLES HELP GIRLS GET TO SCHOOL AND STAY IN SCHOOL

There is increasing recognition, based on data from Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Colombia, and India,⁵ and a high quality randomized control trial in Zambia⁶ that bicycles can serve as an effective conditional non-cash transfer to help girls get to school and keep them attending school. World Bicycle Relief has documented a similar impact in its bicycles for education programs around the world. To date, these programs have distributed specially-designed Buffalo bicycles to more than 158,000 students, 66 percent of whom are girls.

For the last ten years the Ministry of Education in Zambia has partnered with World Bicycle Relief to help 38,051 rural girls get to school quickly and safely through a cost effective locally managed program. Girls enrolled in the program sign "study to own" contracts with their community, pledging to complete their studies in return for use and eventual ownership of the bicycle. In addition to providing rural girls with commutes of more than three kilometers each way with specially designed bicycles, the program trains local mechanics to keep those bicycles in the service of the girls for years to come.



A rigorous independent randomized control trial and other subsequent evaluations of the Zambia program, have found that girls provided with a bicycle:

- Were **19 percent** less likely to drop out after owning a bicycle for two years
- Reduced their absenteeism by **28 percent**
- Cut their commute time of nearly two hours each way by **33 percent**, saving more than one hour a day
- **Scored higher** on mathematics assessment
- **Reported feeling more in control** of the decisions affecting their lives
- **Ranked themselves higher academically** and had a greater belief in their potential to succeed in life
- Experienced **22 percent** less sexual harassment and/or teasing on their way to school



PARTNERS



ABOUT WORLD BICYCLE RELIEF

World Bicycle Relief partners with communities, governments, and the private sector to improve access to healthcare, education, markets, and critical government services for rural communities left behind by current development initiatives. Founded in 2005, World Bicycle Relief has already helped accelerate the journey out of poverty for more than 3.5 million people in 21 countries. When women, girls, community health workers, farmers, and entrepreneurs have durable bicycles, they can access the services and opportunities they need to build a better life.

1 "Out-of-School Children and Youth | UNESCO UIS." Unesco, uis.unesco.org/en/topic/out-school-children-and-youth#:~:text=About%20258%20million%20children%20and,million%20of%20upper%20secondary%20age. Accessed 10 Feb. 2022.

2 "UNESCO Warns That, without Urgent Action, 12 Million Children Will Never Spend a Day at School." UNESCO, 2 June 2020, en.unesco.org/news/unesco-warns-without-urgent-action-12-million-children-will-never-spend-day-school-0.

3 "Her Education, Our Future: UNESCO Fast-Tracking Girls' and Women's Education." UNESCO, 26 Nov. 2019, en.unesco.org/news/her-education-our-future-unesco-fast-tracking-girls-and-womens-education.

4 Fleisher, Chris. "Biking to a Better Future." American Economic Association, 9 Aug. 2017, www.aeaweb.org/research/india-bihar-bicycle-girls-education-program-karthik-muralidharan.

5 Muralidharan, Karthik, and Nishith Prakash. 2017. "Cycling to School: Increasing Secondary School Enrollment for Girls in India." American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 9 (3): 321-50

6 "Wheels of Change: The Impact of Bicycles on Girls' Education and Empowerment in Rural Zambia." World Bicycle Relief, https://worldbicyclerelief.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/WBR_2021_IPA_Wheels-of-Change_Global.pdf