



Gender Equality Committee

## **Achieving equality in education opportunities and labor market participation**

### **Introduction**

The United Nations state that women globally participate 30% less in the labor market than men. Erasing this gap can lead to a 12-17% decrease in the number of people suffering from hunger. Empowering women in the labor market is also a way to dramatically improve their quality of life. However, achieving this will require a strategic approach involving the cooperation of all countries, which the first step must be enabling women's education.

### **Education opportunities**

The UN has been striving to achieve gender equality since 1945, and this process is still incomplete, since in hundreds of nations women still face discrimination. In 1945, the UN adopted the charter, which was the first international tool in setting the principle of equality between men and women. In 1960, UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education initiated equal opportunities for girls and women. On October 11th 2015, UNESCO released a new gender report, showing that fewer than half of the countries have achieved the goal of ensuring gender equality in both primary and secondary education before 2005. The report states that girls continue to face challenges in accessing primary school. Over a third of boys are out of school, and around 15 million girls worldwide will never be able to set foot in a classroom. Although the division in gender inequality in secondary education is reducing, the gap still remains wide.

The regions with the highest numbers in gender inequality include the Arab States and regions in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, in 2012 the Central African Republic and Chad had half as many girls as boys in secondary school.

The report states that gender inequality gaps in youth literacy are gradually narrowing. However, less than seven out of 10 young women in Sub-Saharan Africa were expected to be literate by 2015. The report also revealed that two-thirds of adults who lack basic literacy skills are women. The lack of progress in literacy has remained unchanged since 2000.

Additionally, the report added that gender based violence in schools is a factor in holding back education. Also, child marriage is another unfortunate manifestation of gender discrimination which acts as a persistent barrier to girls' education. According to reports, almost one in five women who got married in 2012 were aged 15 to 19.

### **Gender equality in labor markets**

A report was released on the 11th of December in 2012 which stated that globally women face higher unemployment rates than men, and that the situation is not likely to improve in the near future. The report called for social protection measures, investments in education and policies to promote access to employment.

“While women worldwide contribute to the economy and its productivity, they continue to face many barriers that prevent them from realizing their full economic potential. This is not only holding back women; it is holding back economic performance and growth,” said UN Women’s Executive Director, Michelle Bachelet.

Globally the gaps in unemployment and employment-to-population ratios were moving towards convergence before the global economic crisis erupted in 2007. The crisis destroyed 13 million jobs for women, but reversed this trend in the hardest-hit regions.

The report also found that the gap in labor force participation converged in the 1990’s, but showed no convergence in the last decade. However, both men’s and women’s participation rates fell equally in the last decade, mainly because of education, aging and the “discouraged worker” effect. Also, the report states that women were more limited in their choice of employment across sectors, and also states that women continue to be segregated into particular types of occupations.

The report lists a number of policy guidelines to help households reduce gender bias in their work decisions and gender gaps in labor markets, including providing care services, particularly child care. It also suggests the improvement of infrastructures to reduce the burden of housework. This can range from the availability of electricity and water, to sanitation, roads and transportation facilities, depending on the level of development.

### **Sources and links:**

- <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>
- [https://www.ifad.org/topic/tools/tags/gender/gender/knowledge\\_note/2594277](https://www.ifad.org/topic/tools/tags/gender/gender/knowledge_note/2594277)
- <http://www.adb.org/publications/women-and-labour-markets-asia-rebalancing-gender-equality>
- <http://www.gender-equality.webinfo.it/cd/content/theory/theory05/fcontent.html>

### **Past resolutions**

- <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/resolutions.htm>
- <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/major-resolutions>