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Barrier to Girls' Education in the Liberian School System and How to Empower Them to Remain in School

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BARRIERS TO GIRLS' EDUCATION IN THE LIBERIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM AND HOW TO

EMPOWER THEM TO REMAIN IN SCHOOL

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To my Lord and Guidance for strengthening me to come this far.

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to enter and remain in school.

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daughter, Lady Vorkpor and Webster Ateka for their physical support during the project

every step of the way.

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to identify barriers to girls' education in the fifteen years war ravished and impoverished country of Liberia, West Africa. With similar circumstances in developing countries around the world, comparison research is also explored and it is clear that the consistent education of girls is often challenging and undervalued compared to the perceived and actual contributions girls make in the home without formal education.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A Personal Account of Liberian Education

I have a special corner in my heart for helping children to go to school, especially girls.

Based on my experience as a girl who was born and raised by uneducated parents who lived in

poverty, I consider myself an advocate for girls who have parents who cannot afford to support

them to enter and remain in school. Prior to becoming a classroom teacher, I was faced with

many challenges through my educational journey that would have caused me to quit school. I

did not have strong financial support, educational policy was faulty, and there was an

unfriendly school climate. I was just one of the blessed few that survived the obstacles that girls

face to be educated in developing countries including Liberia and around the world. I therefore

see myself as a role model, advocate and classroom teacher who has the potential to motivate

parents, and the educational authorities to empower girls to enter and remain in school.

I was born and grew up in Nimba County, in a little town/village called Dahnpa. There

was no motor road nor a school. Dahnpa had a Mid-Baptist church where a few parents and

children congregated on Sundays to fellowship and worship God. This was one of the activities

that united community members to meet collectively.

I started my primary school in Tappita City. I lived with my uncle who was attending the

Mid-Baptist Church training school for the period of two years. After he completed his Bible

training, we return to the village, Dahnpa. This broke my heart because I wished to have

remained in the city to continue school, but my uncle needed to keep me safe with him or my

parents. He was led to serve as pastor in the nearby village about ten hours walk away from Dahnpa and could not stay with me in Tappita City any longer.

I moved back with my parents because the community members had established a self-help primary and initiative school. It was here that I continued my early educational journey in the remote and rural area of Liberia. The school building had three classrooms plus one smaller room that was intended for teachers' office but was later added to the three classrooms to provide accommodation for the students' population. A little over ninety students attended the school. The self-help project school had no decent bathroom, safe drinking water, seating capacity, and many other inadequacies. Teachers' salary, school supplies, uniforms, registration fees, and other resources needed to run schools effectively and efficiently were parents' responsibilities in the Dahnpa initiative school. It was a difficult task for parents who lived in abject poverty in a developing country to operate a school without government assistance. The most memorable thing for me was that the teacher and the students were always excited to be in school, and this encouraged the parents to continue to support and empower the school community.

I completed my primary education at the village. The good news is, Dahnpa school still exists! Improvement has been made through government support system, town and school community, individual, and advocacy groups in regard to teacher's salary, bathroom facility, safe drinking water, the structure of school building, and many more improvements.

When we are willing, God can provide the resources for a project. I am reminded of this Scripture reference: Nehemiah 2:18 "…And they said, let us rise up and build. So, they

strengthened their hands for this good work." A three classroom building was constructed, but there were major challenges to the smooth operation of the school though the children were willing and school ready. The common obstacles to their learning were safe toilet facilities, seating capacity, and safe water facilities. Teachers at Dahnpa school had challenges such as no salary stipulation (household would pay them in kinds) for teachers and insufficient resources (chalk, textbook, curriculum guide).

I moved back to the city school in Tappita where I completed junior high school and again relocated. Moving to Lamco Yekepa, a large mining city in Liberia before the civil war led me to the path of my career. It was here that my desire to become a teacher became a goal. Attending high school here, I realized the importance of trained teachers because I became an improved student. I then found that there was a school for training anyone who wanted to become a teacher in another part of the country. Though I knew no one in Kakata, Margibi County, Liberia, I knew this was where I was heading. I completed the course of studies at the junior college for teachers and decided to go back to my alma mater to teach, here I remained until the war started.

During the crisis, I sought refuge in the neighboring countries of Guinea and the Ivory Coast. When it was safe to return home, I did and graduated from the nation's own institution of higher learning, the University of Liberia in 2009. I earned a bachelor's degree from the Teacher College with an emphasis in Secondary Education.

According to my father's story, his parents wanted him to be educated. He was sent to friends/ family members in the city to live with them and start school. He said they attended

classes for two weeks, but the school climate caused him and others to discontinue classes. Corporal punishment caused them to drop from school. This form of correcting students' behavior is deadly, and was commonly practiced in schools, especially rural/city schools where children were forcibly taken from parents in their villages with hope of educating them. My father explains that school was a form of slavery during that time. For example, most of the teachers who taught in the school then also served as disciplinarians, flogging students for both mischiefs at home and school. Children were collected from the villages in the name of education, but they were considered as house boys and girls. Endless home duties hampered their study time, when they failed to participate in a class lesson, they were overly punished. For this reason, students quit schools, and parents stole their children away from this so-called teachers/guidance.

My father thought school was not safe for his future children and others' children. However, my mother knew school was good for children. I joined two of my earliest siblings to start school and we lived with different families. My mother always said, "I did not go to school, I did not learn how to write my name, all of you, my children will go to school." My parents made a garden and sold half of the harvest to pay for uniforms, books, and registration fees. Sometimes we have little food to eat. We went to school hungry because half of the proceeds from the garden was being traded for school items. Though primary education should be universally free (UN, 2013), it is not free if parents must pay for uniforms, registration fees, and school supplies. It is free on paper, but not in reality to people living with very little income (2019/11educationfactsheetsliberia). This should not be so.

In 2014, the Education Fact Sheet on Liberia report says Liberia had a population of 4.9 million and the girls' literacy rate was 47.9%. Liberia has had many challenges in her strive to rebuild from its war status between 1990 and the early 2000s. One of the nation's hardest challenges has been education. Liberia is notably behind most African countries in almost all education data (UNICEF/USAID Liberia report). This report says that the Primary School Net Enrollment Rate, the percentage of primary students attending primary grade levels is 44 percent. After the 14 years of brutal, civil war which destroyed plenty of the nation's trained workforce, as one of the poorest West African countries, Liberia continues to build its educational system. Donor organizations including USAID, UNICEF focus on education programs and, supporting the Liberian government to improve the school sectors, there are still a lot to be done. Education Fact Sheet declares that in some schools, students are still sitting in a pool of water from leakage into school buildings. Children are also sitting on the bare floor, placing writing pads and books on their laps to write while others would stand at the classroom doors to listen to instructions. There should be free primary universal education for all children around the world, no matter where they live, or the color of their skin (United Nations report, 2013). To do this, local governments need to value educating all children and focus their resources there.

Definition of Key Terms

In this thesis, *barriers* will refer to any situation that prevents you from receiving something or achieving your goal**.** *Child marriage* is a marriage of a girl or boy before the age of 18 or less and refers to both formal and informal marriages union in which children under the

age of 18 live with a parent as if married. *Empowerment* is the process of becoming stronger and more confidence, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's right. *Gender-based violence* includes acts of threats or sexual, physical, or psychological violence happening in and around schools. This type of violence is due to gender norms and stereotypes. *Corporal punishment* refers to a physical punishment and in the past, these were very common in African schools.

Research Questions

This literature review will consider the research question of what are the barriers to girls' education in the Liberian school system and how can we empower them to remain in school? Various research studies will be reviewed in hopes of identifying what can be done to support the education of girls in Liberia and other countries with similar challenges.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Search Procedures

Chapter Two reviews the published literature on the situations surrounding girls'
education around the globe. It will examine the benefits to girls' education. It will identify the
barriers to girls' education, how they could be seen in the community, and distinguish these
components from what would be observed in girls who are not educated. This information
should help to determine whether girls' education is beneficial to their livelihood, household,
community, and the world at large. The expected ages of girls to finish high school is 6 to 21.
However, in many developing countries girls ages may range from 6 to 22, and above to
complete high school because of various factors. These factors may include cultural beliefs,
safety, financial, conflict, discrimination and many more.

Barriers to the Education of Girls

Over the last fifteen years, there has been significant progress towards girls' education
worldwide, but despite the progress, there are still major challenges to girls' education.
According to World Bank (2010), over half (55%) of all out-of-school children are girls.
Increasingly, in the sub-Saharan Africa many girls continue to drop out of school before
completing secondary schooling and others still are never enrolled in senior secondary school
(Sutherland-Addy, 2008). In many developing countries, including Liberia, women still are not
getting a proper education, this directly impact themselves negatively and indirectly impacts
the world around them. Only 37 percent of young women in Liberia are literate (UNICEF, 200).
The literacy rate for young men is doubled that, at 74 percent.

Financial Barriers

According to Herz and Sperling (2004), there are huge benefits to educating females, but why then do plenty girls not start and stay in school? When families were interviewed, they shared several reasons why more girls are not enrolled in school.

Culturally, parents believe that when girls are educated, the benefits to their learning come in the future, and, only to the family girls are married into, but all the costs of their education fall in best part on their parents now (Herz, & Sperling, 200). The study notes that, where education is a choice for parents to decide for their children to enter school, or which one of them should be educated, is the family's decision; This would be motivated by how much it costs them to enroll and keep their children in school.

When it comes to children acquiring quality education, it is a challenge for parents, especially those who live in poverty, may feel that the benefits to educating children, especially girls, may not be realized in the moment, even if it (benefit) does come in the future, it will go to the family that girls are married into. For example, in South Asia, where many young girls marry out and parents depend more on sons to help and support them in their old age, the benefits of educating girls are unpredictable. They would rather educate their boys who may support them during their old age than educating girls who may be the next family's property (Herz, & Sperling, 2004).

Most of the reasons why girls are not in school in South Asia are the cost of educating girls. Sending females to school costs families more than boys, especially, where girls and parents live in rural settings, they may need protection on their way to and from school; They

may need chaperones for security, better outfits to dress modestly in and out of school. Many poor parents would sacrifice greatly to send their children to school (Herz & Sperling, 2004).

However, they would not send their daughters to school for long, because in their opinion school is not good for girls; society may ridicule them for educating female. On top, family may also depend on their daughters to be home makers including caring for siblings, aged parents, cooking/cleaning, running errand. Parents also feel that the benefits to women's education come only in the future to girls themselves, and their families. So, education quality is not strong choice, especially for girls (Herz, & Sperling, 2004; Njie, 2015).

Poverty. In 2000, Melaniece Nicole Bradley wrote a report outlining several challenges girls face to be educated in Ghana and the sub-Sahara. Bradley outlines barriers to Girls Education in Ghana and explains that many parents in developing countries cannot afford to send their children to school. The cost of textbooks, uniforms, or fare can be too high for parents living in poverty. Too many parents choose to keep their daughters at home and send their boys to school. In Ghana, majority of school age girls are street sellers alongside their mothers, they are trained to become good homemakers.

In many parts of the developing world, children's health is a bigger concern than education, especially if parents are living in abject poverty. If there's not enough food or sufficient clean water to keep girls nourished and healthy, they may not be well enough to attend schools. Every passionate educator is aware that a hungry child will not listen, learn/ follow instruction in the classroom (State of the World's Girls Learning, 2012).

Cost of Education. According to, "Educate A Child", an NGO actively involved in work in

Kenya to improve quality education for girls, since 2003, girls' enrollment rates stepped up to 84 percent. However, only 19 percent of girls are enrolled in some areas (rural areas) where people live in abject poverty and gender inequality causes problems. The report says that primary education is free in Kenya but, parents and guidance often must pay for textbooks (outdated ones), uniforms, and sometimes teachers' salaries. Moreover, when school-age children attend school, they are no longer making contribution to the family's income. These costs and other added costs (unknown) make it difficult to make sense of sending a child to school, especially female who would do a lot more to assist parents with household chores. Parent's cultural and traditional practices did not give them benefits of sending a girl to school (Educate A Child, 2003).

According to the International State of the World's Girls Learning Life Report (2012) there are several major barriers to girls' education that need to be addressed. One of these was the cost of education. Though education should be free, there are a lot of costs associated with sending children to school. The cost of uniforms, textbooks or bus fare can be too much to bear for a family living in poverty. Too often, parents choose to keep their girls at home and send their boys to schools; for girls as in the traditional African settings, girls are good for bringing money in the home for the upkeep of the entire household, caregiving for the siblings as mother and models, and preparing for how she may become a good housewife to her future husband.

According to the State of the World's Girls' Learning Report (2012) a major barrier to girls' education is the cost of education do not make it possible for parents to send children

(both boys and girls) to school considering the costs of school supplies, materials; even uniform cost and other related fees. It is not affordable for all of their kids and given the choice, they will send their male children over their female ones.

Safety Barriers

Educating girls goes above getting girls into school. It is also about ensuring that girls learn and feel safe at school and when going to and from school (World Bank, 2020). Girls are faced with several safety challenges that need to be identified and improved, including conflict and war, distance to school, and dangers while at school.

Conflict and War. According to Pereznieto et al. (2017), girls' education results are worse in war-affected environments, especially when girls enter adolescence. A significant number of girls are more likely to be out of school when they live in countries that are fighting a war. Almost 90 percent of females are more likely to be out of school in nations that are experiencing conflict (UNESCO, 2015a).

In 2011, The Education for All Global Monitoring Report shared that in all the countries affected by conflict, girls comprise 55 percent of primary school aged children who are not in school. This report also says that the percentage of children out of school is even higher for lower secondary school-aged children (UNICEF, 2011). School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), including discrimination related to the value of girls' right to education, is violated during times of war and conflict.

Even though girls' educational outcomes are poor in conflict settings (Pereznieto et al., 2017), the results of not sending them to school are far more. So, state governments and donor

agencies must support girls to continue in school during a crisis. Because the benefits to female education increase economic growth, increase women's health, reduce child marriage, and increase individual and community empowerment (Herz & Sperling, 2004; Woodon & Claudi, 2018), the chances of women remaining in school during combat may promote their well-being and communities (Fyles et al., 2017).

When people engage in actions that increase individual and community empowerment in conflict affected contexts, history shows that the recovery process is effective and rapid (Hill, 2017; Holms, 2010). In addition, actions that ensure girls' education in conflict-affected contexts can open doors of opportunity that may not have existed before the conflict (Hill & Mascu, 2017). For example, during conflicts donors may provide funding, grants, scholarships, etc. to enable children, especially girls, to enter and remain in school (Dukuly, 2004).

Holms (2010) agrees that children should be encouraged to continue attending school during war; with this support, children may easily be adjusted back to their normal school environment after the conflict. Making sure children, especially girls, remain in school during a crisis can kick start their re-entering and rebuilding process when the war ends. Supporting girls' education in war affected contexts may keep them remain on track with peers' education around the world so they are not falling far behind in their academic journey (Dukuly, 2004; Holms, 2010).

Distance to School. In 2012, the International State of the World's Girls Learning Life Report outlined the situations surrounding the education of girls around the globe. In many parts of the developing countries, the nearest primary school to a particular community might

be four or five hours walk away. On top of that, girls may face dangers or violence on the way to school, so many parents opt to keep their daughters at home and out of harm's way. Some parents would rather a girl child remains safe at home and uneducated than walking miles to school daily when parents are not sure of their securities. Some fathers may sacrifice to walk their daughters to school, but again this would affect their farming lives as going on the farm late may reduce their production hours' and may cause low food production to meet the family's supply. Some parents would opt to keep their daughters safe at home and out of harm's way. Girls may face danger or violence on their way to school and therefore keeping them home avoids these dangers (Girls Educ, World Bank).

Dangers at School. Once they have arrived at school, girls may face various forms of violence at the hands of teachers, peers and other people in the school environment (State of the World's Girls Learning, 2012). If parents find out school is not safe for their daughters, they may remove them from school.

In most of the rural schools, especially where teachers are not paid salary regularly, students are taken to some ones' garden/farm by their teachers to work or perform- hard labor, and teachers receive tokens from farmers as a compensation. These situations can put girls into dangerous areas where they may be hurt or suffer abuse by strangers.

Bradley (2020) states that sexual harassment by male teachers, peers, or male workers causes girls to avoid going to school where it may be dangerous. Males were known to rape, abuse, humiliate schoolgirls, causing them shame that sometimes required them to quit school anyway.

Teachers and other school officials in developing countries, especially in rural areas, whip girls more than boys for wrongdoing at schools because girls are expected to exhibit some level of responsibilities according to traditional practices that set them apart from boys. Girls are supposed to be role models to their siblings and families, even when at schools they should showcase positive lifestyles. Adolescent girls are whipped publicly for situations they have no control over such as performing household chores that would cause them to come to school late, not wearing school uniforms or for failing to have school supplies (Human Right report, 2018).

Culture and Gender Barriers

Different cultures have different expectations of their people and sometimes those different expectations are related to gender and gender roles in their society. Being aware of how cultural and gender barriers impact educational access for girls will be explored next.

Pastoral Culture. Places to encourage and plead with parents and to allow their girls to enter and remain in school. For example: in Kajlado, Kenya, Nashipal's family is in a pastoral group (a social group whose life is centered on tending to a flock), who are settled in the Kajlado region. This family depends on their cattle for food and other incomes and therefore the care of the animals is their highest priority. Nashipal would care for the herds while her brothers go to school. Nashipal was not given the chance to go to school. The Girl Child Network (GNC), connected with child education teams, educated the community about the consequences of not sending girls to school. The parent's reason for not sending her to school was based on traditional and cultural beliefs. Their beliefs were that girls are considered as

home makers, care givers and breadwinners. Their belief is that girls should be trained to become good housewives to their husbands. After education and discussions with the community members, Nashipal was given a chance to enroll in school, along with other children in the village. It is important that teachers, educational authorities, and various organizations at world level continue to speak to the challenges that children face to get education in developing countries, and around the world. One educator, Mandy, encourages teachers to advocate for children's education around the globe, especially in developing countries, because, education will prepare children for a useful profession, which will create their future livelihood and improve their independency (Manning, 2018).

"Educate a Child", a study conducted in 2003 with the focus on specific communities in Kenya, found that the Nashipai's community, where girls are required to marry sooner than later and join their spouse's family, because mothers and fathers do not see rewards of girls' education for parents and families. The review states that Nashipal's family is a pastoral (social group whose life is centered on tending to flock), who are particularly settled in Kajlado region who look up to caring for their cattle for food and other income ("Educate A Child", 2003).

Furthermore, according to the review, Nashipal would often care for the herds while her brothers attend school nearby, because she was not given the chance to enter school. The Girl Child Network (GNC), in connection with educate a child, educated the community members about consequences of not letting their children to attend school. Based on cultural and traditional beliefs, parents never thought education is a child's right. The study confirms, after the conference, that Nashipal was enrolled to a primary school. The conference educated

and motivated parents that education is a child's right, and not a privilege; every child needs

education no matter their gender and orientation ("Educate A Child" 200), especially girls,

when they are educated, they will have self-confidence, self-worth and strength that will give

them potential to return to their household and community to empower others and make a

difference. The GNC staff pointed out the negative impacts of not allowing a child to attend

school. Community education and engagement are key strategies that work with parents in

the review and existing research in developing countries, especially in rural areas which

motivate parents to allow their children to enroll at school ("Educate A Child" 2003).

Gender Norms. Traditional/cultural beliefs impact access to education. In Ghana,

women are homemakers and are not given the opportunity to have formal and effective

education (Bradley, 2020). Therefore, they are trained to become good housewives to their

husbands. Also, many female students are occupied with endless household responsibilities;

caring for younger sibling, cooking, fetching water and finding fire (fuel) wood. African parents,

especially those who dwell in rural settings, value training girls to become strong home keepers

than enroll in school. According to Bradley (2000), traditional gender roles dictate that boys

remain in the family to care for their parents when they are aged. So, they would need formal

education to be prepared for future tasks, while girls would be married and considered the

wealth of another man's home.

According to Ambree et. al., (2014), cultural barriers to girls' education in Paskistan

include lifestyle, traditional beliefs, decision makers, inheritance and "padah" which

supersedes all the other barriers to girls' education. Though Pakistani parents are aware of the

importance of literacy and the benefits of educating their daughters.

Parents are still reluctant to enroll their girls in school and allow them to remain in school. Though parents are aware of the reality about literacy and the benefits of educating their daughters, family, community, and the society, yet there still exists gender gap. Parents are still reluctant to enroll their girls to school and allow them to remain in school. Amdree et. at. (2014) also confirmed that fathers belong to different groups and classes and have personal reasons for not sending their girls to school. When Ambree et. al. (2014) studied why fathers hesitate to send their daughters to school in their culture, they found that fathers over 60 years old were more concerned about "pardah", while the group of fathers age 20-40 years old had their own economic reasons. Over time, the reasons have changed, but the outcome remains that girls are not always allowed to go to school.

Ambree et. al. (2014) stated that the literacy rate in Pakistan is 45% as of the 1998 census, with females comprising only 32.6% of that portion. Only 20% of females are literate in Pakistan. According to a report in (2016) on Literacy Strength and Statistics, comparing the rural and the urban population of Pakistan shows that the rural literacy rate is (32.64%). The urban female literacy rate (34.64%), both of which are less than the urban males (56.6%). This report shows that female literacy rate in the rural settings pose problems for the females themselves as well as society. Being half of the population of the country, women cannot play an effective role in national development and decision-making with such low literacy levels. Gahfoor, (1994) agrees that in most of the remote settings in Pakistan, the female literacy rate is low, despite measures taken by the government to improve literacy rates in the country.

These measures are meant to ensure that "education" is a right for boys and girls without segregations, however, this has not successfully solved the gender inequality in education in this country.

The priorities surrounding gender roles in Pakistani culture are clearly defined. Ambree et. al., (2014) declare that it is against the traditional norms (padah) of Pakistan for a girl to be asked about her consent in marriage. When a girl talks in favor of or against her own marriage, she is labelled as, "bayghairat" (shameless). Culturally, women are not allowed to talk about their daughters, sisters, wives or even mothers when it comes to marriage. It is considered a sinful act if a girl appears in front of strangers without wearing a "padah". Girls must serve their family members, parents, brother-in laws, husbands, and children, and they are also expected to master their house duties (responsibilities). It is their duty to be obedient and tolerant in all matters against their will. In this culture, teen girls are considered objects or possessions which can be handled by others without any due respect (Ambee et.al., 2014). For this reason, many parents in Pakistan believe that educating a girl is of no use to them, their daughters' education will inevitably only benefit her husband and his family members. However, in contrast, parents believe that boys are rulers who need to be served. Because boys are expected to care for their parents in their old-age and carry on the family legacy, they need to be educated, respected, and recognized as the heads of the family. Therefore, it is a priority to give boys the opportunity to be enrolled at school in order to prepare them for their future role as head of the household (Ambree et al., 2014).

Despite these strong customs and traditions practiced in Pakistan communities,

positive change has been realized among the largest regions, though some groups still hold more strongly to their more traditional belief. In the past, all women wore "thick bukah" and covered themselves in harsh weather, but now, these straight practices have been lifted. Most girls now cover their heads and faces with lighter more flexible chadders and veils instead (Ambree et al., 2014).

The norms regarding gender segregation against girls, in terms of education have also changed greatly. Other changes observed include females are now allowed to visit family members independently during the daylight without male chaperones. Girls now go to school and "madrass" (type of educational institution in Arabic); girls have the opportunity now to seek education in Pakistan based on various reports from the media. Abree et.al. (2014) concluded that, in the past, women were not given the chance to speak out directly to their male relatives (fathers, uncles, and brothers), but now females have started communicating openly against denying their female siblings access to school. Though these changes may be small, if implemented throughout the country, it could greatly affect girls' access to education and their lives and country as a whole.

Even though the traditional "padah" prohibited girls from attending school has officially changed, some parents are still reluctant to educate their daughters. Many parents, particularly fathers, argue that they do not encourage their daughters to find jobs because there is no need to educate girls (Abree et. al., 2014). Fathers who sent their daughters to find jobs have bad reputations in the community. A society that depends on women for economic growth are considered "baygharity" (shameless). On the other hand, parents who

educate their children and allow them to work have a different and more progressive view; they are finding that it is not wrong to depend on their daughters for financial support.

According to African tradition, educating girls is considered as "the roof of next man's home". It is normal in the developing world/ Africa; parents strongly belief that educating girls is a "waste of time". They also think that sending their daughters to school is watering the next man's garden because it has no benefit for them (parents). Traditionally, parents may choose to let their daughters stay out of school because attending school may only benefit future husbands and families. Culturally, girls are notably homemakers. They should be learning from mature females, routines such as being good housewives, caregiving, running errands, etc.

One teacher says girls' education is being hampered by familial responsibilities in Gambia (Njie et al., 2015). The relationship between girls' education and domestic workloads in this study is referred to as girls' familial responsibilities. Similarly, to many countries of the developing world, gender inequality remains one of the major issues that stops girls from entering and remaining in school in Gambia, especially at the secondary school level (Njie et al., 2015). The relationship between girls' education and the heavy domestic workload is a barrier to girls' education. According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2017) Reports, every child should have an equal right to education; however, culturally, parents in developing countries have different perspectives. Girls are viewed as homemakers and should be trained to be good housewives to their future husbands and families, while boys are enrolled at school because they will remain at home to take care of

their parents when they are old. Familial responsibilities can work against the goal of gender equality in formal education.

Though access to girls' education has improved in Gambia, parents still place great value on female roles as mothers and care takers of their families. Girls are allowed to enroll at formal school but are expected to retain their feminine place in and out of school daily. While it seems apparent that girls' domestic duties have negative impacts on their school performance, parents do not pay much heed to it because they think their daughters learning how to tend to domestic chores early will pay-off once they are married (Njie et al., 2015). Mothers are especially focused on their daughter's domestic skills because it is understood that if a girl is not a good homemaker society will blame their mothers.

One educator says there is proof from this study that girls' education is been hindered by their familial responsibilities. About 96% of girls confirmed that their domestic responsibilities, such as, washing dishes, cleaning the house (including toilet facilities) sweeping compound yards, taking care of children and siblings, shopping from the market and cooking were obstacles to their education (Njie et al., 2015). It is also believed that girls' house duties are gendered. For example, 83 of girls in the literature review said that they believe that the Gambian society expects them to perform these chores as girls/women.

In 2015, Njie et al. conducted research in Gambia, at selected primary and secondary schools among teenaged girls. The respondents in the study also included mothers who had no connections with the female (students) participants. The purpose of the review was to gather information on whether girls' familial responsibilities were challenges to their

education process. The researchers had separate dialogues with each interviewee, but the findings from the females were similar; nearly all the girls argued that the endless family workload seemed to stop them from enrolling in and continuing with school (Njie et al., 2015).

The girls outlined familial responsibilities that hinder their schooling journey. Girls are the first to be pulled out of school when an emergency occurs in the home; they are needed running family errands. For example, during seasonal changes, a mother may remove her daughter from school to fetch firewood (fuel), food, water, etc. for her family upkeep. Girls are often kept home to care for siblings or aged parents. Njie et al. (2015) noted that some girls also asserted that cooking, cleaning the yard or compound are persistent chores that will not permit them to do their schoolwork. Yet, another adolescent (female) asserted that school is a respite for her because she can only go there to rest from the unending house's duties.

In addressing the challenges that heavy home workload poses on girls' education, one mother in the study noted that society might blame them if they fail to train their daughters to become good housewives (Njie et al., 2015). She added that they are aware of the benefits of girls going to school, but culturally, they are home makers and they should be trained by mature women on activities such as fetching fired wood, cooking, and cleaning. These girls also need cultural training from mothers to be good wives in their future homes (Njie et al., 2015).

Typically, girls are to stay along sides of their mothers to learn how to become good housewives to their husbands, fetch water, take care of their younger siblings. If parents were to make decision regarding sending one of their children to school, the boy child is typically

their preference, for girls are considered home makers; sending them to school is a "waste of time" (State of the World's Girls Learning, 2012).

There are also biases against educating women in certain subject matter. Bradley, in a 2020 report, indicated there is a general, negative mindset of people in Ghana about women's education based on Science and Technology. Girls are made to believe that they cannot do those courses because schools train them to be western-style housewives and they would only become "petty traders, and farmers, rather than scientists, professionals, and civil service workers."

Bradley also observed and realized that many females are the first in their family to attend school. In rural areas parents are illiterate; mothers are mainly farmers, and they would train their daughters to become successful housewives (2020). Mothers are farmers, as such, girls would model making a garden to provide food for their household rather than to be enrolled at school.

Sometimes the girls themselves don't want to go to school because of unattractive school environments and poor infrastructure. Bradley (2020) reports that in Ghana, a lack of furniture (mixed shifts/ benches used in the classrooms are from students' homes, students sit on the floor, place writing pads in their laps to read/write) especially in the rural areas, and lack of separate latrine facilities kept girls from wanting to attend school.

The teachers too are in a difficult situation in Ghana (Bradley, 2020). Their humble salary is insufficient to take care of their own needs. They must augment their income by street selling alongside their children. Some would tutor students whose parents have enough

money to add to their salaries. One female teacher sold deodorant in the market after school which made it difficult to than be preparing lessons for the next day. Bradley (2020) notes that girls see that even their teachers struggle despite being educated and it causes them to question if education is worth the challenges.

Value of Marriage and Childbearing. According to Evann Orleck-Jetter, (2018), child marriage is another significant barrier to girls' education in the country of Togo. Nearly 25 percent of girls in Togo are forced into marriage before age 18, due to cultural norms. Girls are trained from young age how to be good wives rather than being taught the importance of education. Togo is one of the poorest countries in West Africa. The country has inadequate education, which contributes to the country's poverty. Education is key component to eradicating poverty (Orleck-Jetter, 2018). Due to gender inequality inherent in structure of the society, female children are unlikely to be educated. According to UNICEF, 44.5 percent of Togo women between the ages of 15 and 24 cannot read/write.

Almost 30 percent of children in Togo are forced into child labor, and the majority of them are girls/porters. Porters are children consisting mostly of girls who carry loads to various market stalls. They are sent to work in nearby communities and countries as prostitutes to help support their families and themselves instead of sending them to school. These girls have unwanted pregnancies, they are placed in porter houses, as a form of slavery, if they attempted to escape living in the porter houses in the streets of Togo, they are shunned by family members and the society.

Similar to the World International Girls' Learning State of the world's International

Learning Plan, the State of the World's Girls' Learning report (2012) highlighted another major barrier to girls' education which is, "early marriage and teenage pregnancy." This stops girls schooling because they are unable to attend school when they have to care for family and home. Once married, husband and children's care will have influence on their educational process making it very difficult to attend school.

Among large swathes of India's population, there is a longstanding obsession with having girls married as early as possible preferably to people in their own castes and sects (Save the Children, 2017). Women are, therefore 'destined' only to be subservient housewives. As they are considered 'someone else's wealth', it is only logical for many to consider female feticide. Therefore, women's education promotion must involve parents, brothers and all Indians to promote a woman's autonomy an independent decision-making. Both men and women, in all roles, must be educated that women are equals, in every arena.

In addition, many teachers and school officials do not allow pregnant girls to stay in school. Discrimination in Education Against Pregnant Girls and Adolescent Mothers- Human Rights Watch (2018), explained that the feeling of most communities is, "We do not allow pregnant girl to continue with school-We ask her to go home and return after the baby is born. If she attends pregnant, she can be ridiculed by other students and be a bad influence" (p.8). According to Human Rights and government policies that discriminate against girls on grounds of pregnancy or marriage, failing to respect their global and national human rights influences their lawful obligations and compromises their national development. Stopping pregnant girls and adolescent mothers from attending school is harmful to the developing

countries. These states are already struggling from the effect of poverty, internal conflict, missed labor and high illiteracy rate; sending expecting mothers homes from school would mean leaving them behind in the development process of the African continent and the advancement of the region, which does not support the national and international human rights (Human Right Watch, 2018).

For example, countries such as, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania expel pregnant girls from school and deny adolescent mothers the right to study in public schools; such educational law creates negative opportunities for teen-age girls who would decide to re-enter school after giving birth to their children. This practice is discriminatory and shows clear segregation against girls' educational process; this act is not only harmful to them (girls), but to their households, communities, and the developing countries. Mandating teenage pregnant girls to leave school while boys who cause the pregnancy remained in school is an injustice to teenage girls, as educating them is crucial to their livelihood, household, and community. The study argues that some countries conduct stigmatizing, forceful public pregnancy tests that are human shaming to girls; because these examinations are not willfully conducted to adolescent mothers, some fear and feel humiliated and may drop from school, while others would go beyond expectation and perform secret abortion, causing harm to themselves and their unborn babies. Human Right Watch (2018) declares, through the literature review, that some 24 countries, including Morocco and Sudan, attach morality laws that allow the state to criminally charge adolescent girls for indecency- having sexual relationships outside of marriages and bringing shame, and disgrace to the family. Some countries would even execute girls by stoning

them to death publicly.

According to the United Nations, (2013), the African continent has the highest adolescent pregnancy rates around the world. Every year, thousands of girls become pregnant when they should be learning history, algebra, and life skills. Teenage girls who have early, unexpected pregnancies face many financial, social and career challenges.

The UN's universal report (2013), states that all girls have the right to education, regardless of pregnancies, marital or motherhood status. The right of a pregnant and sometimes married teen to an education has been an issue of discussion across African Union member states in recent years. These debates always focus on arguments based on "morality"- opinions on pregnancy outside of wedlock being morally wrong and interpretations of religious principles about having sex outside of marriage. The result of this debate is that pregnant girls are faced with all kinds of punishments and many girls have been denied the right to an education. In some of the countries researched, education is viewed as a privilege that can be withdrawn as a punishment from girls who become pregnant. For examples, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania expel pregnant girls from school and deny adolescent mothers to study in public schools. In most cases, these policies end girls' chances of ever going back to school report UN's universal report (2013). The legal obligation for governments to provide all children, even girls, with an appropriate education, without discrimination, is clearly needed and not consistently provided (United Nations Reports: Discrimination Against Pregnant Girls in School, 2013).

Although all the AU countries have made agreements to protect pregnant girls and

adolescent rights to education, in reality, teenage mothers are treated differently based on the educational policies of country where they live (UN, 2013).

African governments adopted these policies that protect girls' right to stay in school during pregnancy and during motherhood. These are good practices for more countries to protect young mothers' right to education in national law or policy than to discriminate against them. The minority member states can encourage other countries that lack adequate policies to adopt human right compliant policies with particular, punitive, and discriminatory measures for nations that deny pregnant girls and adolescent mothers the opportunity to education.

The UN report gives information on the status of laws, policies, and practices that block or support pregnant or married girls' access to education (UN, 2013). Gabon, Kenya, and Malawi are among the 26 African nations that have adopted "continuation or "re-entry" policies and strategies to ensure that pregnant adolescents can resume their education after giving birth. However, the application of these policies and agreements varies across these countries, particularly regarding the length of time a girl should keep from school, the process of withdrawal and re-entry, and available support structures from schools and communities for adolescent mothers to remain in school.

Benefits of the Education of Girls

The persistent crisis of tens of millions of children who grow up around the globe in developing countries without receiving the most primary education has attracted significant public attention in recent years. This problem is visible in poor and rural areas of sub-Saharan

Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. More than 180 governments pledged to address this problem, to execute a plan that every boy and girl will enroll in school by 2015. To do this, there are targeted and accepted plans under the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals, to reach the goal of universal education for all children. The plan instructs policymakers to exert special efforts to address the financial, social and cultural barriers that may stop even larger percentages of girls in poor countries out of school. Extensive research (Herz & Sperling, 2004), (UNESCO, 2013), confirms that investing in girls' education yields high returns, not only for female educational acquirement, but also for maternal and children's health, more sustainable families, girls' empowerment, democracy, income growth, and productivity.

In 2004, Herz and Sperling, set out to conduct a study on "What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from Developing World". This study focused on the benefits of girls' education. There is a growing concern among the developing countries around the world that educating girls has future results. This is realized later when they (girls) are matured. Therefore, poor parents cannot send their girls to school because they rely on them for opportunity costs. Girls may also need protection on their ways to school. Significant numbers of girls are kept home to help parents with domestic duties (Nijie, 2015). The study examined the benefits of educating girls, the impact it has on the economic growth, families, and nations. This information should help to determine if educating girls can be a benefit to girl herself, families, nation, and the world at large.

Economic Benefits

Studies prove that educating girls pays off in wage gains similar to educated boys. The greater the wages will be (Herz, 2004). An educated female can afford better health care and education for her children. Education would improve girls' livelihood through earning a better standard of living; they could have better jobs and provide for the entire household. Better education could limit childbearing until women are prepared to become mothers. In the developing countries, some educated women become bread winners for their household. For example, they could become street sellers to feed their families or become home teachers to protect their children from harm. All of these above, plus more can be beneficial to households, communities, nations and the world at large. There are several benefits and barriers to girls' education that reports suggest are evidence to women's education. Girls' education yields benefits not just for economic growth, but in other important arears including, improving children's and women's survival and health, decreasing population growth, protecting children's interest and delaying child-marriage, empowerment in the community and in the workplace and improving climate change adaptation. Women who earn higher levels of education are more likely to spend more than twelve years in school. Faster economic growth benefits and promotes income; a society that invests in women's education may likely experience faster economic growth.

Evidence from many studies prove that educated women boost economic growth, have smaller and better educated family- the benefits that improve women's capacity and change their aspiration, including family size and health. Women's level of education empowers them to make decision that may affect their marriages such as family planning

(when to have children and the number of children). Female empowerment and education- the benefits that do not suffice. They give women the tools to act when they are directly or indirectly affected. Females' education is an investment- benefits that strengthen a nation, community and household (Herz, & Spering, 2004).

Education for boys and girls increases productivity and contributes to economic growth. However, getting more women to enroll in school helps boost the country's economic growth and improves the future of the country (Alcid, 2014). When girls are educated, they contribute to the economy, this helps to alleviate poverty. Better educated women have higher paying jobs, can invest their earnings into their families. Many times, most females, especially those in the developing countries are not in the formal job market as men. However, many studies show that there are economic benefits if women are allowed to join the labor force (Herz, 2014). Educating girls and young women increases a country's development. An educated woman could take on a professional job with higher wages which has the effect of addressing gender imbalances in the labor force. Increased levels of education have greater influence on women's earning. Educating girls could break poverty cycles and is likely to have significant impacts on access to formal jobs in the long term. Every added year of a woman's schooling gives her the opportunity to acquire knowledge. That may enable her to make her own decision and speak to what affects her community (Hill, 2017). Empowering women to be educated also has the way of making them economically independent. They are capable of caring for themselves, households, communities, and state.

Health and Wellbeing Benefits

Too often marriage is considered a higher priority than education to individuals, especially in the developing world. Child marriage and early childbearing limit girls' education. However, if an educated woman defers entering in a marriage union before age 18, this could delay her early childbearing (Woodon & Claudi, 2018). An educated female will prefer education to child marriage/early childbearing, which could weaken her career advancement. Girls who are better educated usually get married at a later date and have fewer children. An educated mother may plan and calculate when she would have first child to be adequately supportive of her/him. When women are educated, they are more likely to have the opportunities for healthier and more prosperous lives for themselves and for their families (Herz, 2014). It has been seen that if girls are educated, the highest child marriage rates among underaged girls in some West African States, especially Niger, Chad, Mali, and many more, decreases in those regions were reported (UNICEF Report, 2003). Girls who are educated will get married when they are older and more prepared and have healthier children, which leads to better outcomes for the mothers and children.

According to "Missed Opportunities, the High Costs of Not Educating Girls" World Bank (2018), there are other positive benefits of educating girls. Better education for girls could decrease female fertility rates and reduce the global population. For example, a girl with a better education may decide to mother only two children that she can easily support and educate. Those two children would then have a brighter and healthier future. Investing in girls' education can also help improve maternal health and tackle the spread of HIV/AIDs. It buttresses the achievement of all the other Millennium Development Goals (MDG), an

organization established under the World Health Organization. Its goal is to eradicate human suffering (extreme poverty and hunger) and to achieve universal primary education for all children around the world. The Millennium Development Goals also supports world leaders to combat communicable disease and promote gender equality among women and men around the world. By reducing over population, the world is more likely to achieve these goals. When women are well educated and aware of their fertility options, they often choose to have fewer children.

Nutritious food is an important part of a healthy lifestyle (World Bank, 2018), and an educated woman is more likely to be able to provide a healthy diet containing adequate amounts of the right kind of food needed for the health and growth for the entire household. Not only will educated women provide balanced diets and choose right activities /exercise for herself and family members, but she will make informed decisions about their well-being, such as choosing to utilize affordable health care plans, insurance, hospitals and doctors visits. A better educated woman can help households, communities, and nations to stay healthier. Females with higher levels of education will not only help her household, community, and state but, she may also educate others about the importance of nutrition to eat well and keep healthy. She is more likely to develop meal plans, considering cost and choice, that would regulate spending regards to her incomes. She will show concerns about her community members' well-being. For example, she will encourage her community members to be strong in times of disaster and challenges that may come, such as child illness caused by malnutrition. An educated woman would have the ability to explain what others can do to keep healthy.

According to a UNESCO report, if every woman had a primary education there would be 15% fewer child deaths and if all women had a secondary education, child deaths would be limited to 3 million lives (UNESCO Report, 2013). Females with high levels of education are better informed about sanitation, nutrition, and immunization for their children, leading them to lower death rates of children from preventable diseases such as, malaria, malnutrition, and pneumonia. The UNESCO goes on to say that educated mothers will have lesser number of children to adequately support to minimize mortality, should they choose to become parents. Infants born to educated mothers are more likely to survive until adulthood, for their acquired skills application will lengthen and sustain children's lifespans. We are all aware, as mothers and female teachers, that soda is not good for our student's health. It may have more sugar than we expect, being knowledgeable of the health hazard from soda, we cannot let kids have that at homes neither at schools. We do all in our power to save student's/children's lives; we know what is good for them, health wise. Educated mothers will save children's lives.

Women who are better educated have a smaller chance of contracting and spreading HIV/AIDs, reason being, they are more informed about how it travels from person to person through sexual activity and, blood transfusion (UNESCO Report, 2013). Highly educated females would practice safe sex methods to prevent contracting HIV/AIDs. Educated mothers are also more aware that HIV/AIDs can infect infants through mothers during breast feeding and delivery. Educated girls and women are more likely to use techniques to prevent malaria, such as using bed nets, mosquito repellent and staying in well-screened areas at night (UNESCO Report, 2013). Educated girls help reduce to population growth (World Bank, 2018).

Educated women have fewer conceptions and are also less likely to conceive as teenagers. Women with an education will decide to have nuclear families that they will be able to effectively support through education, nutrition, healthy lifestyle, and their well-being.

A girl with a highest level of education can help prepare families for coping with shocks. Girls' education is associated with extreme weather that results from climate change, (Woodon T, & Claudi, 2018). Universal education for girls could reduce challenges and negative lifestyle changes for girls caused by climate change; for examples, girls removal from school to secure firewood, food security, preparedness for heavy rain during rainy season, especially in developing countries. Girls are the first to be pulled out of schools to care for ill siblings and relatives during disasters. Girls are taken from schools to run family errands andwalk longer distances between villages to fetch water/food. Girls are even sent away to raise money for their family upkeep in the midst of the hardship during climate change. Better educated women will step up into the hearts of Earth, with courage and confidence, to advocate for children that are affected by the challenges of climate change. Educated women will be a part of the solution to ensure that children, especially girls, return to school.

Leadership and Social Growth Benefits

Girls' education brings several positive rewards that may not be seen in females that are not educated. Education will benefit girls themselves, their family members and their household (Herz & Sperling, 2004). Educated girls will meaningfully contribute to the community and state around the globe. There are several benefits to girls' education that will

be discussed below. Better educated woman tends to earn higher income, participate more in formal labor market, earn higher incomes, have smaller, healthier, and have better educated family. A better educated girl will also be empowered, and her education will be an investment.

Education helps women to gain the skills needed to take on leadership roles at local, national and international levels (Alcid, 2014). Getting more females into school kick starts the country's economic growth and improves the future of reform. Education has profound effects on girls/women's ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence, political representation/standing and speaking for their human rights. Better educated women are more likely to join bodies, whether volunteer or elected, where they can be a part of decisions that affect their lives and those of their communities. For example, in Limpopo, South Africa, a 15 years old girl was married to an older man, and she dropped out of school after the marriage. Her female classmates went to the house where she lived with the husband, and chanted and sang, for her to return to school. The girls would not stop until her husband got angry and asked the parents to take the girl back home. When girls go to school, they are less likely to be subjected to domestic violence and will participate more in decision-making in households and communities that affect them directly or indirectly. Reports also state that women are at the hearts of most societies around the world (DFID, 2000). Educating girls is one of the most significant investments any country can make for its own future, most developments are successful through the leadership of women. They have communication skills that promote teamwork. Having an education can make an enormous difference to

women's chances of finding well-paid job that will make them economically independent, raise

a healthy family and prevent the spread of diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Regardless if they

have jobs or not, high or low pay, mothers are very influential people in children's lives, as well

as themselves and their community members and states; mothers take initiatives to connect

and motivate others. Once people are encouraged and motivated, they would feel the sense of

belonging to a greater society. Educating girls is the most significant saving/investment that

any nation can make for its future generation. When mothers are educated, they are more

likely to exercise their self- confidence and self-esteem abilities to speak to imbalances

affecting themselves and their communities.

Better educated women will return in the classroom to make a difference in the lives of

the young generation, and influence future leaders (Hills, & Mascu, 2017). The presence of

more women would provide a student-friendly environment especially for young girls in

developing countries. It would put adolescents at ease and allow them to feel safe in the

classroom. Females in leadership in schools will not only help girls feel safe in the classroom,

but also create positive role model for younger girls at school, making them to believe in

system, and be motivated to reach their highest potential. The presence of a female teacher in

the school will also empower a younger girl to imagine that she too, can enter and remain in

school like her teacher to gain educational skills, be a role model, and give to her children,

household, community, and state. The presence of female teachers in the classrooms would

enhance girls' behavior patterns.

Female students are more likely to imitate the examples set by their teachers such as,

dress habits, manner among males, and how they teach and interact with students. The

presence of female teachers in schools motivates parents to send their girl children to school

(Pereznieto et al., 2017). Women teachers' presence in schools is important to communities,

parents, students, and especially girls. More often parents believe that the presence of female

staff at schools would create a safe environment for their children to enroll and stay in school

to reach their goal and live independently. Although reports confirm that girls continue to

suffer Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and are vulnerable to sexual abuse, rape and other forms

of sexual molestations at the hands of their peers and male teachers in school. Parents still feel

that their daughters are safer when under the leadership of females administrators, teachers,

and staff because, traditional duties of motherhood in families makes it easy for them to relate

to students in school effectively so they are able to perform in class comfortably. A female

teacher's presence in school not only provides security for her students, and makes them feel

comfortable in that environment, female teacher is very important in the child's world. A

female teacher would foster behavior change in her students. Women with higher levels of

education will encourage and confront parents to send their children to school (Herz, 2004).

According to readings, educated women have a way of persuading parents in their

communities, villages, and states to send their children to school, especially, for a girl whose

higher level of education will benefit herself, her household, her family members, her

community, her state and her world at large (Fofana, 2019; Thelwell, 2019).

According to (UNICEF, 2012), education is a more powerful tool and shelter for all,

especially teenage girls. It protects them against barriers such as child labor, increased

participation in work force, increased early marriage, and reduces infant and child mortality.

Education impacts children's nutrition and is more likely to make females aware of their social,

political, and economic rights and how to exercise them. Girls' education can create a positive

cycle: educated mothers are more likely to enroll their own daughters in school and promote

them to higher levels of potential (UNICEF, 2012).

Efforts to Improve Girls' Education in Similar Circumstances

In 2013, UN reports said all the countries that make up the African Union (AU) adopted

Agenda 2063, which was a continent-wide economic and social development strategy. Under

this strategy, African governments committed to build Africa's "human capital", which it

describes as their most precious resource, "requiring necessary and sustained investments of

education." Two years after the adaptation of the Agenda 2063, African heads joined other

nations in adaptation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is

intended to make sure nobody is left behind, including a promise to make sure inclusive and

quality education is available for everyone in Africa. The UN (2013) also confirms that African

governments agree, under this agenda, to end child marriage and, introduce a complete

package of sexuality and reproduction health education in order to find a solution to the

problem of rates of teenage pregnancy (UN, 2013; Crosby, 2018; Suliman, 2017) all of which

are barriers to the education of girls many countries in the African Union. This, although not a

complete plan, does provide some hope and progress.

Herz and Sperling (2004) suggest plans that would work for all children's education to

enjoy the resources of a country. To do this, the government must make education mandatory

at both the primary and secondary levels, cut the costs of education to families, and improve the quality of education overall. Herz and Sperling (2004) observed and believed that no country can develop without educating its citizens. Hills and Mascu (2017) agreed that when children, especially girls, are educated, they can return to their community and render services back to it.

Herz and Sperling (2004) outlined plans that work for girls' education as follows: governments should be encouraged to offer scholarships that cover direct as well as indirect costs. As an example of this, Bangladesh girls' high performance at a secondary school encouraged the government to provide scholarships for them to reach their goals.

They also suggested that countries must provide a safe school setting close to home with highly trained female teachers, who come to school daily, have updated textbooks/ tools, and have close community ties in order to make schools girl-friendly. For example, in Sri Lanka and some areas of India, schools were hiring more female teachers and building strong relationships with the parents and community members. These regions also built schools near-by living quarters, including day-care centers that enable adolescent girls to attend school, while their siblings are kept safe (Herz, & Sperling, 2004) These changes motivated parents to let their daughters enter and remain in school.

To make education achievable for children, especially girls, it is important to focus on overcoming the key challenges they face, which means the obstacles must be identified and addressed. It is also important to equip parents and students with the resources of the 21st century and education is the best way to do that (Herz & Sperling, 2004).

Other countries are implementing plans to improve the education of girls. The plans have many elements because the barriers that keep girls from being educated are complex and multifaceted.

Senegal

According to Quelle (2018), Girls' education in Senegal has greatly improved in the last 20 years, partially thanks to Senegal's government. This was made possible through the World Bank's support to the Senegalese Government which allocates almost a quarter of its budget toward education, the highest percentage of any country in northwest Africa. The money pays for the construction of school buildings, teachers' salary and equal education initiatives. Despite the government's commitment to education, cultural norms and widespread poverty still prevent many Senegalese girls from completing their education and less than 50 percent of Senegalese women are literate.

According to the report, there have been some notable improvements. Achieving gender parity in primary schools is one improvement the government has made in girls' education in Senegal. Thanks to substantial budget allocations and initiatives for equal education, Senegal's government has maintained gender parity in primary schools since 2010. For example, girls only make up 35 percent of Primary School's student body when it first opened in 1996. In 2010, the percentage of girls had risen to 49 percent. The World Bank reports that Gross Enrollment Ratios (GERs) have also risen across the small country. In 2016, 87.9 percent of girls were enrolled in primary schools according to the World Bank. However, only 63.5 percent of girls actually complete their primary education and only 57.9 percent

enroll in lower secondary education (equivalent to middle school). The GER for girls enrolled in

secondary education falls even lower at 48.4 percent.

Though some improvements have been made, the fight to improve girls' education in

Senegal continues. First, educators fought to get girls enrolled in schools. Now, educators

fight to keep them there. BuildOn is a non-governmental organization that works in the U.S.

and around the world. Its global program helps build schools in poor villages. Employees and

volunteers continue working with the communities to ensure each school's success. Some of

the notable challenges and mitigation efforts are shown below:

Aminata Ndiaye, a BuildOn Education Coordinator in Senegal, has worked directly with

children in Senegal's rural communities since 2015 to bring students back to school. Ndiaye's

program was able to enroll more than 2,000 students back to school in just a couple of years.

As a woman, Ndiaye is particularly sensitive to girls' struggles to get an education, noting that

Senegalese parents often prioritize boys' education over girls' education.

Tostan is a community-led NGO (a non governmental nonprofit) that works to educate

and empower African women. Harouna Sy, a Tostan regional coordinator, says that poverty,

rather than culture, is actually at the heart of girls' education issues in Senegal. Poverty is a

widespread issue in Senegal and girls are often singled out to help support their families

instead of attending school.

Aisatou Ba's parents took her out of school at age 11 so that she could help her

mother at home and work as a maid to support her family. She watched her brothers

continue going to school and eventually earn higher paying jobs. Ba's little education

disqualifies her from many higher paying opportunities. She still works as a maid and earns the equivalent of $70 per week.

Even though poverty is at the root of girls' unequal education, cultural norms do still affect girls' education in Senegal. Many Senegalese parents take their girls out of school early to force them into marriages. Senegal's government prohibits marriage for girls under 18 but it does not have the resources to enforce the policy, especially in rural villages. Girls forced into marriage at a young age are also forced to take on new responsibilities in their new homes, such as cleaning, cooking, and doing laundry. Even if the girls' husbands allow them to stay in school, they have less time to devote to their studies. Many of these girls are also expected to get pregnant and those who do often leave school entirely.

There is still more work to do to keep Senegalese girls in school, but girls' education in Senegal has made great strides thanks to government funding and help from NGOs.

Rwanda

In 2011, Plan International Rwanda reports that 40 million girls around the world are still missing out on any kind of education in developing countries, because sending girls to school is not considered as important as educating their brothers. However, simple challenges that prevent girls from enrolling and remaining in school once they reach their teen include lack of decent bathroom facilities, dormitories, etc. The study declares that with support from "Plan Rwanda," one secondary school in Rwanda has made effort to reverse situations. For example: "Plan Rwanda" is empowering schools like Kiziguro secondary school to build new dorms, hygiene facilities, and holding classes to help girls who have fallen behind (Plan

Rwanda, 2011). What is also important for girls to attend school is latrine facilities. Without

proper sanitary accommodation young women may avoid school during menstruation which

means they are left behind in class. Twelve ventilated latrines have been built and renovated in

school, and toilets are now separated by gender. These small changes have created healthier

environments; the result have improved the overall quality of young women's education at

school (Plan Rwanda, 2011).

Mawali

According to UNICEF (2017) report, Andrew Brown outlines barriers to girls' education

in Malawi as follows: poverty, pregnancies, and child marriages force girls out of school. The

authors reports that it has been a long road back to school for young teen mothers in Malawi.

Though government regulates that children should start school at age six, this would mean that

they would finish primary school by age 13. However, children will be found in school at 19 and

22 years old still in primary school. For example, Nelly is 15 years old in primary school, at 22

she becomes a mother who lives in Nkulumba village, in Malawi. She is accepted in school after

she had a child. A women team, "mothers groups" in the village visited and motivated Nelly to

return to school. Mothers groups are outreach teams organized in most villages in Malawi,

supported by the Norwegian Government that works with teachers, parents and girls to

promote girls' education in the nation. The study concluded that UNICEF empowers

community structure- mothers' groups to promote girls' education under the auspices of the

UN joint program for girls' education (Phwitiko & UNICEF, 2017).

They have increased powerful advocates for girls. In one school, a principal loves

making a difference in the lives of children under his care. For example, he set up a by-law to keep girls in school; parents are not allowed to send children to run errand while school was in session. In the new school year first week, he keeps track of new and returning students. During the weekend, he sends the lists of students who have not come to school to the chief and the police to investigate.

There are lots of changes in the schools where teachers use positive discipline to enforce school rules and regulations. For example, a group of teacher counsellors engage with learners who break school rules in a peaceful, non-abusive manner. A special changing room for girls during their menstruation was created. The interventions are strategic; addressing many problems that force girls out of school.

Tunisia

According to the report "Continuing the Fight For Girls In Tunisia"Illiteracy rates and education levels for women in many Arabic/Islamic countries are among the least on the globe. This situation is caused by suppression by theocracies (government guided by religious beliefs), but Tunisia is an "oddball" in the case of the Arabic/Islamic world in case of the level of girls' education. According to the review, Tunisia has one of the highest literacy rates among predominantly Islamic countries. The review confirmed that 96.1 percent of women in Tunisia are educated-a statistic rarely heard of in multiple regions of the world.

The high level of female education in Tunisia did not take place over night. Before 2011, the overthrow of the Ben All regime, trends of female education were clear because the Tunisian government sternly took steps to decrease gender inequality to improve their

overarching socioeconomic development.

According to the report, Tunisian women have the highest level of rights of their surrounding neighbors. Article 21 of the 2014 Tunisian constitution declares that women and men citizens are equal in rights and services (responsibilities). They are equal before the constitution without judging who they are or where they come from (discrimination). This aspect of gender equality should be practiced around the world in developing and developed countries. The African country preference to girls' education is widely acceptable and set for success. Tunisia is learning that educating and empowering women brings a state many benefits and resources otherwise that are not attainable.

Guinea

In 2012, Serody reported that the female completion for primary school in Guinea was only 61.5 percent (). In other rural regions, this figure was as low as 34 percent. Moreover, the secondary school participation rate was around 40 percent for male students, compared to less than 26 percent of their female peers (Serody, 2018).

According to UNICEF, the largest barrier to girls' education in Guinea is based on the long-lasting and established sense of tradition and cultural practices. Guineans believe that women are often viewed as mothers and are home makers. In a study by UNICEF between 2008 and 2012, 36 percent of teenage girls were married. This caused many of them to drop out of school. In addition, it is the value that always overshadows the perceived benefits of educating girls, particularly in rural settings. It is a common mindset in the developing world that, if a girl is allowed to enter and remain in school, she will leave her parents (home) and lose her morals.

This will make marriage and reproduction more difficult for her, because childbearing and moral ethics are the sole duties of a girl/ young woman (UNICEF,2012).

According to Serody (2012), many female adolescents leave school to take on domestic responsibilities in countries like Guinea, such as watching over younger siblings, cooking, early marriage and childbearing (Serody, 2012). These traditional practices create a dangerous cycle of illiteracy. Uneducated mothers are less likely to become advocates for their own daughters' schooling.

Serody (2012) states that UNICEF has organized programs include COMEF, which encourages mothers to become advocates to learn more about the important benefits of their daughters' schooling, and how to help them to become champions of female's education in Guinea. Serody (2012) states that, through this participation and self-growth, illiterate mothers can become better role models for other mothers and their daughters.

Boys' education is viewed as more favorabe by Guinean communities. It is often looked at as a better investment, in contrast to girls' education (UNICEF,2012). This deep-rooted gender bias is difficult to overcome. If parents with limited resources might only choose to send one child to school, they will prioritize a son, because they feel that boys face fewer challenges at school and are a better long-term investment for the financial future of the family.

Female students in Guinea are often subject to sexual abuse, assault, and exploitation at school which further discourages families from sending girls to school (UNICEF,2012). It is much too common among schools in Guinea that teachers demand sexual favors from a

female to give her passing grades. Usually, there is no backlash for a guilty teacher to ensure that this action should stop and not be repeated. There must be codes of conduct for teachers and strict ramifications for teacher's behavior, including termination and not being qualified for future employment at any school system if abuse is discovered (UNICEF, 2012). This is one of several measures that will make the school environment safe for female students.

Girls are also at risk at school in Guinea for lack of adequate sanitation facilities. United Nations Children's Fund estimated that 10 percent of school-age girls in Africa skip school during their menstruation period. A slight improvement was made in sanitation in Guinean schools from 1997 to 2002. These measures increased enrollment rates of girls to 17 percent (UNECEF, 2012). However, many schools still lack adequate separate latrines for both sexes, and others are lacking crucial privacy measures such as cracked windows and broken doors.

There is a strong tie between the number of female students and number of female teachers at the Guinean schools (Serody, 2012). In 2017, less than half of the primary school teachers and only 30 percent of secondary teachers were female. Having a female teacher not only makes young girls feel safe in the classroom, but it gives them a positive role model, empowering and motivating them to complete their own school process.

Even though Guinea has made significant progress in girls' education. Improvement is still needed. The government, religious leaders, and local community leaders need to help to eradicate the traditional and apathetic views toward girls' education. Girls need to be protected against gender-based violence and sexual abuse. They need to be secured, adequate sanitation facilities and a safe learning environment. Leaders can also advocate for

increased representation of female teachers which will promote female enrollment and

empowerment (UNICEF, 2012). Once the major barriers to girls' education are removed,

school enrollment and completion rates will skyrocket.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

I decided to attend the Bethel University seeking methods that would enhance girls' education in the Liberian school. My guiding question was, what are the barriers to girls' education in the Liberian School System and how to empower them to remain in school?

In my hunt, I read applicable academic literature and summarized my results in a literature review, which is considered Chapter II of my thesis. At this end, I have identified several barriers to girls' education and what work for them to remain in school.

Summary of the Literature

Girls face several barriers to be educated. The cost of textbooks, uniforms and other school items can be too high for parents who are poor. They may choose to send their boys to school and keep their girls at home to help with house responsibilities because when girls attend school, they are no longer contributing to familial responsibilities (Bradley, 2000; Educate a child, 2003; Evann Orleck-Jetter, 2018; Herz & Sperling, 2004; International State of the World's Girls Learning for Life report, 2012; Njie et al., 2015).

In developing countries, children's health matters more than education for parents living in abject poverty. Shortages of food, water, and sanitary supplies needed to keep girls healthy, may cause them to quit school (Bradley, 2004; State of the World Girls' Learning for Life, 2012; Plan International Rwanda, 2011). Even though research says that primary education is free in some developing countries, families must often pay for textbooks, uniforms, and teachers' salaries which make education inaccessible (Educate a Child, 2003; United Nation universal report, 2013).

Cultural and traditional practices do not suggest immediate benefits to sending girls to school. Sending females to school is seen as a waste of time, like watering another family's garden (Educate a Child, 2003; Herz & Sperling, 2004; Njie et. al., 2015). Girls often stay at home to care for siblings, aging or sick family members, and through this they also learn to become good housewives to their husbands.

Educating girls is more than just getting girls into school, it is also about ensuring that girls learn in safe school environments (Human Right Report, 2018; Internal Learning States of the World's Girls Learning for Life, 2010; Girls Education: World Bank, 2018). In rural settings of developing countries, the closest primary school to a community may be up to several hours of walking away. Girls may face danger and violence on their way to and from school. If parents find out that their daughters are not safe, they will remove them from school. When teachers are not paid regularly, or if their salary cannot sustain the teacher's family, teachers will take students to someone's farm to perform hard labor, and the teacher will receive compensation from the farmer (Bradley, 2000; Human Right report, 2018; Plan International State of World's Girls Learning, 2012). Students may suffer sexual harassment, rape, and abuse from strangers; this can cause parents to keep their children at home where they will be safe (Human Right Report, 2018; Internal Learning States of the World's Girls Learning for Life, 2010; Girls Education: World Bank, 2018).

School officials in some third world countries may also whip or punish girls more than boys for wrongdoing at school; this includes not wearing a uniform, arriving late to school, or not having school supplies. Often these are things the girls have no control over. Culturally, females

are expected to exhibit good behavior patterns and be role models or they face corporal

punishment from the school's authority (Human right Watch, 2018; Njie et.al., 2015; UN

Universal report, 2013) Girls may choose to leave school because of cruel punishments.

Many girls are likely to be out of school when they live in countries that are fighting war

(Education for All Global Monitoring; UNICEF,2011; Human Right, 2018; Perez Nieto et al., 2017;

UNESCO, 2015a; UNICEF, 2012). During times of war, there is a lot of insecurity. School-related

and gender-based violence (SRGBV), sexual harassment, and discrimination against females

increase and often this violates their right to education during the conflict. Government or

donors must support females to continue school during crisis (Herz & Sperling, 2004; Hill, 2017;

Holms, 2010; Perez Nieto et al., 2017).

Some cultural practices and traditional beliefs assert that education is not good for girls.

They are considered as homemakers or breadwinners, and parents depend on them for

incomes. Educating females is also considered as increasing another family's wealth since girls

marry and leave the families to which they are born (Educate a Child, 2003; Herz & Sperling,

2004; Bradley, 2000; Njie et. al., 2015).

Gender norms dictate that a boy remains in the family (as a head) to care for parents

when they are aged and therefore, boys need formal education to prepare for future tasks

(Ambree et al.; Bradley, 2000; 2014; Njie et al., 2015; State of the World's Girls Learning for Life,

2012). Males are given the opportunity to enroll in school and are encouraged to complete

their reading or schoolwork at home, while females, if enrolled in school, are engaged with

heavy home duties, (cooking, cleaning, caring for siblings) which makes schoolwork at home

unreasonable (Ambree et al.; Bradley, 2000; 2014; Njie et al., 2015).

Sometimes girls themselves do not want to attend school. Unattractive school

environments including, a lack of clean water and hygiene supplies, or even cracked bathroom

doors cause them to hate school (Bradley,2000; Human Right report, 2018; Plan International

Rwanda, 2011; Serody, 2012).

Early marriage and childbearing or teen age pregnancy are significant barriers to girls'

education in developing countries. Girls are unable to attend school and care for family and

home (Human Right Watch, 2018; Orleck-Jetter, 2018; Plan State of the World's Girls Learning

for Life, 2012; Save the Children, 2017). Pregnant girls are not accepted in school because it is

thought that they will be a bad influence (Human Right Watch, 2018; United Nations Report:

Discrimination Against Pregnant Girls in School, UN report, 2013). Although AU countries

agreed to protect pregnant girls and adolescent rights to education, they are treated differently

depending on the region in which they live (Human Right Watch, 2018).

Being advocates for children is the heart of this research Governments, teachers,

educational authorities, organizations, donor agencies, and cultural groups must advocate for

children, especially girls' education around the globe, particularly in developing countries so

that all girls may enter and remain in school (Educate a Child, 2003; Quelle, 2018; United Nation

universal report, 2013; Walker, 2018). Public education can reduce poverty cycle and harmful

cultural practices that are biased against schooling children. Educating boys and girls has shown

to increase a nation's production, however, research shows that educating a girl promotes

economic growth to her community, nation, and the world at large (Herz & Sperling, 2004; Mascu, 2017; UNESCO, 2013; World Bank, 2018;). Girls must be empowered to enter and remain in school (Human Watch, 2018; Walker, T. 2018)

Educated woman are known to defer childbearing until they are prepared to become a parent. This will reduce population growth (World Bank, 2018). In the time before parenting, these women can become teachers to serve as role models, and motivate children to remain in school (Bradley, 2000; Girls' Education: Key to Malawi's Development, 2018; Herz & Sperling 2004; UN Human Right, 2013). Educated women will claim their rights, and speak to issues that affect them directly, and also work to make a difference in society (Bradley, 2000; Department for International Development, U.K. 2000; Herz, & Sperling, 2004; UNESCO, 2013; UN Universal report, 2013).

There is evidence of the effectiveness of efforts to improve girls' education (United Nation report,2013). African countries under the Africa Union (AU) adopted a development strategy, Agenda 2063, which committed African governments to build "human capital" through sustained investments in education for all Africans. Most African heads joined other states and adapted the Agenda 2063: the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goal is to have no child is left behind (Human Right Watch report, 2018; UN Universal Report, 2013). All children in Africa have a right to education. SDGs agrees to end child marriage, teenage pregnancy including other barriers to girls' education in developing countries. This strategy gives hope and progress (UN report, 2013) for females' education.

African heads are collaborating with educational authorities, world organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), cultural, and advocacy groups around the world to support girls' education (Quelle, 2018; UN report, 2013; World Bank, 2018). Some organizations contribute funding for teacher's salaries, to construct school buildings, and mitigate educational projects (Educate a child, 2003; Quelle, 2018; Plan Rwanda, 2011; UN report, 2013; World Bank, 2018). This donation helped to increase gender equity in some primary schools in some African regions, by erecting bathroom facilities and conducting extra classes for girls who are falling behind (Educate a Child, 2003; Plan Rwanda, 2011; Quelle, 2018). By empowering girls to be educated, and advocating for all children especially girls to enter and remain in school we may increase the number of girls who are education throughout the world(Department of International Development (DID) U. K. 200; Herz & Sperling, 2004; Walker, 218).

Limitations of the Research

An initial search of research focused on barriers to girls' education provided many high-quality studies to be reviewed. By investigating the reference lists of these studies, additional studies were found. This then expanded the review to include a focus on girl's empowerment strategies. The study findings were condensed to include literature reviews that had a link between barriers to girls' education and how they can be empowered to break those obstacles. The topic of girls' education is significant to educators, especially female teachers, who are advocating for girls' right to be enrolled in school and the condensed results included building partnership and forming advocacy groups among teachers, parents, governments, and none-government organizations (NGOs) to work as a team to motivate, seek, and formulate

strategies that enable girls to enroll and stay in school. The resulting pool of literature included discussions about barriers to girls' education, and how they can be empowered to enter and stay in school during challenging situations.

Implications for Future Research

Future research on barriers to girls' education in the Liberian School System and how can they be empowered to remain in school should be directed toward the following efforts. We need longitudinal studies on outcomes of parental involvement in their children's, especially girls', education process, including giving them the opportunity to enroll in school. There were two research studies on this topic where girls' advocacy groups traveled many miles to encourage parents to change the negative mindsets of families about not giving girls the chance to enter and remain in school. The task of measuring this effort is not easy.

Additionally, we need to study the impact of providing better salaries for educators according to their qualifications. By doing so the incentives may help to discourage teachers from taking children, particularly girls to a stranger's farm/gardens to perform hard labor for which the teacher is compensated. These activities often cause females to suffer rape, sexual harassment, abuse, and gender-based violence from strangers. Better salaries/incentive structures for teachers may enable them to focus on planning lesson for subsequence instructions and clear data to prove it would be helpful.

By studying the effect of punishing teachers for committing sexual abuse, rape/unwanted sex against girls in exchange for grades/ favor we may bring attention to these

atrocities. Teachers must be terminated from their teaching positions to deter other educators from abusive practices.

Corporal punishment should not be a correct measure taken for reprimanding a student. It can be deadly, often unlawful, and should not be practiced in schools around the world. Corporal punishment is one of the common but major barriers that prevent children from enrolling and remaining in school. It is practiced extensively at schools in developing countries around the world. There must be detailed research and mention about it in future research.

Implications for Professional Application

In my research I found that there are many barriers that stop girls from going to school. The common challenges in developing countries that girls face to enter and remain in school are financial, safety, and cultural. Based on UNICEF/USAID mandates, universal primary education should be free world-wide. My experiences as a primary student in my village and a primary teacher in Liberia has taught me that primary education was not and still is not free. It is considered "free" because there is no tuition to pay for government schools, however, parents must pay fees for outdated textbooks, school supplies, uniforms, breakage/ maintenance fees (though we took stools from our homes to sit on), and sometimes sugar to sweeten our cornmeal. Provisions were sometimes provided from the school feeding program, World Food Program organization, but sometimes not.

My parents could not afford the costs of uniforms, textbooks, registration fees and writing pads for all three of their children. Our parents were illiterate farmers/gardeners, and

we would sell portion of the proceeds from the harvest, and purchase some items for school,

and sometimes do hard-labor on community members farms to pay off fees for school supplies.

Like many parents in Liberia, my parents knew that females' education would benefit girls

themselves, their family members, community, and nation, even though they (my parents)

were not educated.

For girls and parents, success starts with a safe school environment. Girls would not want

to be enrolled and remain in school if school could not keep them safe. Girls need safe toilet

facilities including enough clean, safe drinking water, sanitary supplies during menstruation,

and protection/safety at school. Thanks to NGOs organizations, many separate bathroom

facilities and dormitories for girls have been constructed. The facilities provide safety, and

school-based shelter for girls. These strategies made room for campus-based group studies,

reducing parents worries about their daughters being molested while walking to and from

school.

School principal/staff provide a safe school climate for all children, especially girls. I also

learned from my study about a principal who treats girls with respect by establishing strong

guidelines that show he is a powerful advocate for girls. He set up a by-law to keep girls in

school daily, so parents were not allowed to send children on errands while school was in

session. During the weekend he would send the roster of students who have not come to

school to a higher educator's office for questioning. This was the right thing to do because

parents think that school is not good for girls. They are the first to be pulled out of school for

any eventuality including caring for aged family members, siblings, and running errands.

My research taught me that children must attend school during crisis, even though the outcomes might not be promising, particularly for girls. Because during the insecurity of war, school related gender-based violence (SRGBV) and human rights violations increase. But by continuing in school, girls have a greater overall well-being, including learning new skills that enable them to adjust when war is over. For example, during the Liberian civil war, a group of women refugees in Guinea (including me) started tutorial classes for children. We were glad we did. Students were glad to learn reading and math daily. They were busy at school and kept out of harms' way. They quickly adjusted during and after the conflict. The outcomes are great. The results still make a difference in the lives of students.

Finally, although not part of the research specifically, I learned through this process to pray for my students. My teacher, thesis prep instructor, and my thesis advisor taught me to pray for the students and myself daily. God's strength is perfect in our weakness.

Conclusion

Liberians must deliberately address the school needs of their children, particularly, girls whose' education is pivotal to the nation's growth. Liberians should not only wait for school support systems from America, Europe, and the developed world. The Liberian government is not in the position to fully tackle the educational challenges across the entire country. There are needs for the citizens to unite and collectively put their resources at work in various villages, towns, districts, and counties to invest in the type of education system with a vision for the next generation.

My research question was "what are the barriers to girl's education in the Liberian schools and how can we empower them to remain in school?" To begin, the common challenges that girls face in to enter and remain in school are, financial, safety, and cultural/traditional beliefs. Poverty is the major barrier that stop parents from sending their children, particularly girls, to school. Parents and their communities must take the responsibility to identify and work collectively on projects that may enable them to support their daughters to enter and remain in school. Liberians, we need to take the lead to educate our own children, and not wait for UN, UNICEF, and overseas support. Some parents in the community may believe that their daughters should not go to school, and instead believe that they must stay home and make money for the family. This thought is wrong. Parents, brothers, farmers, marketers, and pastors, please support your children, and especially girls to be enrolled at school. Empower them to begin and remain in school!

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