

## **Literacy and gender-focused school management in Northern Tanzania and Northern Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

The TEGINT project is an initiative implemented by Maarifa ni Ufunguo in Tanzania and CAPP in Nigeria, with the support of ActionAid and funded by Comic Relief. The overall goal of the project is to achieve a transformation in the education of girls in Tanzania and Nigeria, enabling them to enrol and succeed in school by addressing key challenges and obstacles that hinder their participation in education and increase their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. The project works with girls, boys, teachers, parents and communities, school management committees and policymakers.

To facilitate the analysis of data collected for the project baseline, information was gathered into two composite indicators to help increase our understanding of the impact of different variables on girls' enrolment and retention. Our analysis showed that there was likely to be a positive impact on girls' education if there was a high level of women's literacy in the community, school managers and teachers were trained on and taking actions on issues related to gender and HIV/AIDS. While these factors may not seem surprising, the paper supports TEGINT's assertion that what will make a difference in girls' education is understanding how these factors interact and creating opportunities to evaluate process and change.

The paper concludes that the impact of women's literacy on girls' education cannot be understated and challenges policymakers to go beyond conventional programming and examine opportunities for working on adult literacy as part of interventions on girls' education.

### **1. Background: The Transforming Education for Girls in Nigeria and Tanzania Project**

The Transforming Education for Girls in Nigerian and Tanzania (TEGINT) project is working with 132 schools across Northern Nigeria and Northern Tanzania. The project is implemented by Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) in Nigeria and Maarifa ni Ufunguo in Tanzania, with support from ActionAid in both countries and at the international level. The project began with an inception phase in 2007, and formally began implementation in 2008. The project aims to build evidence-based practice in tackling some of the gendered barriers that prevent girls from enrolling in and succeeding in school and protecting themselves from HIV/AIDS. The project works with three interlocking and mutually reinforcing strands: community intervention (working with girls, boys, parents, teachers and school management), evidence-based advocacy and research.

### **2. Methodology**

At the start of the project, a baseline study collected data from project schools in Northern Nigeria and Northern Tanzania. The research was guided by Professor Elaine Unterhalter and Jo Heslop at the Institute of Education, London, working in partnership with BERE at the University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania and IDR at Amadhu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. The baseline aimed to uncover the reasons for the current gendered patterns in enrolment, attendance and progression, deepen understanding of the quality of provision and map out forms of mobilisation by communities.

Ninety-five primary schools and 38 secondary/junior secondary schools are included in the TEGINT project.

## **Tanzania**

Twenty-five enumerators worked under the direction of Professor Galabawa at BERE, supported by staff from Maarifa ni Ufunguo. Data was collected from 57 schools in six districts. In each district, 2 secondary schools were surveyed, although administrative data was not collected in the secondary schools. In total, 1001 stakeholders were interviewed.

## **Nigeria**

Enumerators worked under the direction of Dr Bonat and Kezie-Nwoha supported by staff from CAPP. Data was collected in 72 schools - 36 primary schools and 36 junior secondary schools - in six states. Data on enrolment and attendance was only collected from primary schools. The total number of respondents surveyed was 1,735.

The baseline study involved both a quantitative data collection (e.g. administrative data from schools and other sources) and a qualitative component including interviews with stakeholders and detailed studies into key areas such as poverty. Stakeholders were interviewed either individually or in focus groups and included teachers, older girls, Principals, SBMC/PTA and Village Heads in each region. The instruments were tested and refined by local research teams, Maarifa and CAPP with the support of IoE.

In order to analyse our data two summary measures were created.

**School Gender Profiles:** A series of key variables was grouped together and transformed into an overarching school 'score' on gender and education. Variables included gender parity on enrolment, retention and progression and exam success.

**School Management Profile:** Data was brought together to create a summary variable for school management performance on girls education. This includes training and information for teachers, parents and pupils on issues such as gender, HIV/ AIDS, reproductive health and educational management; involvement with political campaigning organisations; outreach activities to help the most disadvantaged and socially excluded families; and the mobilisation of pupils and staff in order to promote community development.

The data presented beneath looks at school performance on a range of gender profiles, by state or district, followed by girls' views on the constraints they are facing. This is followed by an examination of what schools are doing to address these constraints, and a presentation of data that may indicate what level of political awareness girls have in terms of their analysis. In the analysis section some potential factors that may enable schools to adopt strong management practices are examined.

### **3. Conceptual framing of the TEGINT project: gendered processes, empowerment and capabilities**

TEGINT – both in theory and practice- can be located at the intersection of three connected, but different, approaches to girls' education in an international development context. The baseline aimed to work on these three interconnected approaches which, as noted by Unterhalter (2005), can all provide a partial explanation (and partial approach to tackling) girls' exclusion from school.

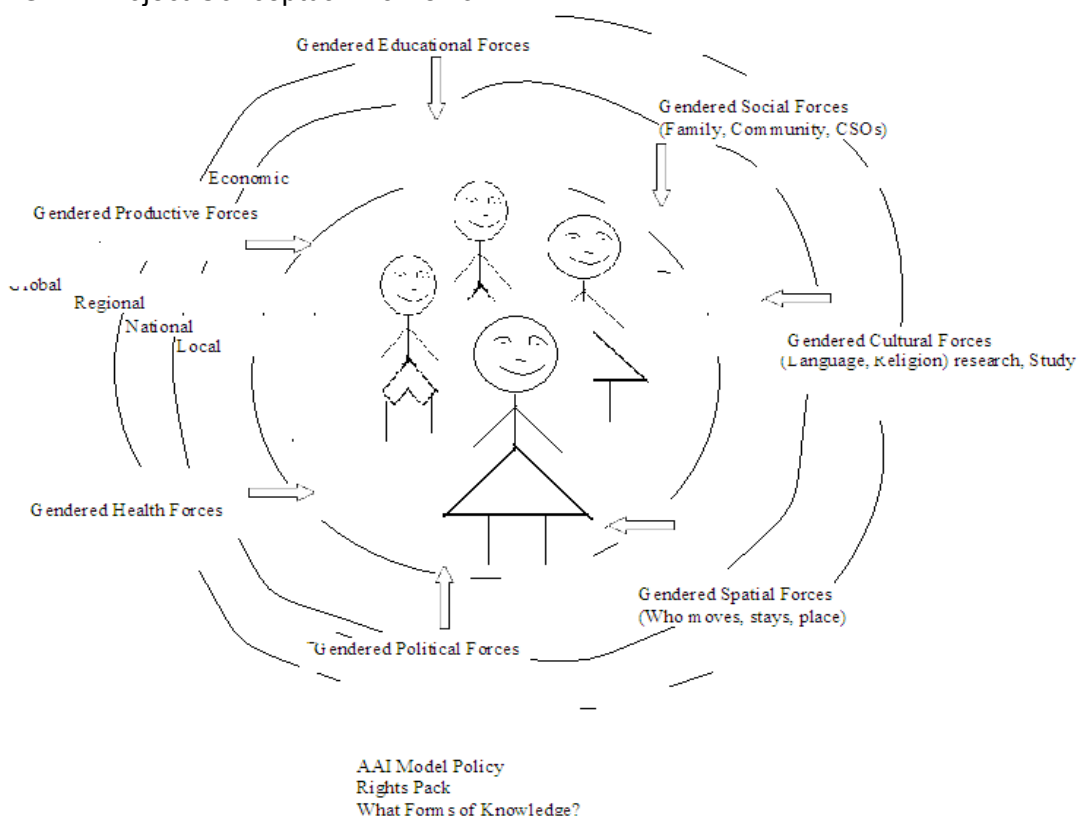
The Women in Development (WID) approach is primarily concerned with the expansion of education for economic growth and stability. It is useful to us in TEGINT because it sees gender in terms of observed, biological differences, which can be easily counted. It is utilised in our baseline study and conceptual framework in so far as it is able to provide us with a clear picture of the status of girls' education in the TEGINT districts and in so far as it enables us to measure women's level of involvement in school management structures and the number and qualification level of women and men teachers.

Of additional benefit is the use of the Gender and Development approach (GAD). This is a lens through which we were able to examine the more complex processes taking place in schools and communities, looking at changing social relations and power. This is relevant to the baseline study in that it enabled us to develop instruments and indicators for examining the processes within schools through which exclusion was challenged or tackled.

Finally, the project has utilised the gender, empowerment and capability approach, which is concerned with an individual's capability or 'ability to do valuable acts or reach valued states of being' (Sen, 1993, 30). The capability approach has helped us to frame the project in terms of identifying which factors might facilitate or inhibit girls' participation in education, and has helped us to view those factors in relation to one another, as can be seen in our data analysis. TEGINT is particularly concerned with looking at factors that enable girls empowerment as an element of their ability to convert education into 'functionings' (or achievements) and how these may help them live healthy, fulfilled lives.

Figure 1. below, was developed by the project team at the start of the project to conceptualise TEGINT, and specifically some of the factors that may support or constrain girls' capabilities. It identifies 'forces' that may press down on girls inhibiting their substantive involvement and benefit from school. TEGINT aims to 'create spaces' through the project activities for girls to 'push back' on some of these forces.

Figure 1: TEGINT Project Conceptual Framework



This paper is particularly concerned with both *gendered social forces* (the social factors at play within the school environment among teachers, management and girls and boys themselves as well as at home and from parents) and *gendered educational forces* (which enable us to identify what girls and teachers have reason to value within the school system, and also reflects on educational forces outside of the formal school system. Literacy of women in the community is conceptualized as one of these forces, building on the work of Stromquist (2006) who sees developing adult literacy as critical in developing new ways of thinking about and challenges gendered imbalances of power.

#### 4. Research Findings

Of the two countries in this study, Tanzania has made significant progress towards Education For All targets in recent years, and Gross Enrolment Ratio is generally good, although overall enrolment is lower (UNESCO, 2010). However, these headline figures mask significant fluctuations across districts and areas. The data collected shows that while gender parity has been almost achieved in respect of enrolment in some districts, in pastoral areas girls represent significantly less than half of the school population. The data also showed that girls were less likely than boys to be retained to grade 7 and pass their exams (56% of girls vs 63% of boys), which indicates that there are likely to be issues within some schools in terms of support for girls education.

Nigeria has one of the largest out-of-school populations in the world. National education figures based on the school year ending in 2006 present a NER of 59% for girls and 68% for boys with a GPI of 0.86 (UNESCO, 2009, p.307). However, data for Nigeria as a whole masks the huge inequalities between states, and most significantly between the southern states and the northern states. The latest UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (2010 p. 145) illustrates this by showing that a Hausa girl (the majority of girls in this project in Nigeria are Hausa) has a 97% chance that she will have less than two years of education. Education management in Nigeria also poses difficulties as the education system is highly complex with responsibilities divided between LGA, State and Federal government.

The baseline study had wide-ranging findings on a number of indicators. For this paper we will concentrate on our findings with regard to the ability of school management to manage the school in a 'gender friendly' way in relation to school performance on girls' education, poverty and literacy.

#### 4a. Findings: school performance on gender

##### 4.a.i Tanzania

Table 1 (below) sets out how well schools in each district are performing overall on delivering education to girls.

Table 1: School gender profiles, by district, in order of performance

District	School gender profile			
	Below average	Average	Above average	Total
	%	%	%	%
Moshi rural	30	10	60	100
Hai	13	38	50	100
Mbulu	20	40	40	100
Babati	44	33	22	100
Monduli	43	43	14	100
Arusha municipal	57	43	0	100

In Monduli, (which is the district with the lowest level of women's literacy) and Babati,(the district with the highest level of poverty), there were larger proportions of schools with below average gender profiles, while in Moshi, with high levels of women's literacy and low poverty, and Hai, also with high levels of women's literacy, despite larger numbers below the poverty line, there are high proportions of schools with above average gender profiles. In Moshi and Hai, outcomes for girls are therefore much better than in Moduli and Babati.

##### 4.a.ii. Nigeria

Data limitations in the Nigerian context meant particular school trends were unable to be explored for Nigeria. These included enrolment and attendance broken down by class in different years, so that ‘progression’ of pupils from junior years at time point X (e.g. 2002) to more senior years at time point Y (e.g. 2008) could be assessed as for Tanzania. Data was also absent on school level examination entry and examination results in different years, meaning that proportions of girls and boys ‘completing’ primary school over time could not be assessed.

Table 2: School gender profile, by state, in order of performance

State	School gender profile			
	Below average	Average	Above average	Total
	%	%	%	%
Katsina	0	33	67	100
Kaduna	0	50	50	100
Plateau/ Nasarawa	0	67	33	100
FCT/Niger	67	0	33	100
Bauchi	40	40	20	100
Gombe	67	33	0	100

In an attempt to develop a version of the school gender profile score used in Tanzania, a ‘gender profile’ score was calculated for each Nigerian school within the TEGINT project where enrolment and attendance data had been collected. Although based on fewer key indicators than the gender profile score constructed for Tanzania, this still provides a good summary picture of how different schools fared in terms of gender outcomes. Schools within Gombe tended to cluster into ‘below average’ in terms of gender profile. Schools in Plateau/ Nasarawa by contrast were either average or above average. The best performing state in terms of overarching gender profile was Katsina

#### 4b. School performance on gender management

##### 4.b.i. Tanzania

Table 3, below, shows the relative strength of different districts in terms of active management for enrolment of girls.

Table 3: School management profiles, by district, in order of performance

District	School management profile			
	Below average	Average	Above average	Total
	%	%	%	%
Hai	11	22	67	100
Arusha municipal	13	38	50	100
Moshi rural	20	30	50	100
Monduli	30	40	30	100
Babati	70	20	10	100
Mbulu	50	50	0	100

Arusha, Moshi rural and Hai in particular have greater proactivity in terms of school management. In Arusha, this does not seem to have made a great deal of difference to its low performance on school gender profiles as shown above. However in Hai and Moshi rural, both of which also have high levels of women’s literacy, there does seem to be an association between stronger performance on school management and schools having above average performance on girls’ education. From the management summary variable, it can be noted that schools in Babati largely had below average proactivity in terms of management.

4.b.ii. Nigeria

Table 4: School Management Profile, by district, in order of performance

State	School management profile			
	Below average	Average	Above average	Total
	%	%	%	%
Kaduna	0	13	88	100
Plateau/Nasarawa	29	0	71	100
Bauchi	17	58	25	100
Gombe	60	20	20	100
Katsina	50	38	13	100
FCT/Niger	36	55	9	100

Here we can see that school management was particularly strong in Kaduna – an area with high female literacy. It was also strong in Plateau/ Nasarawa where gender outcomes are better than in most regions. Management was particularly weak in Gombe, which is to be expected given poorer gender outcomes for this region shown in table 2.

**4c. Connections between gender profile and school management profile**

In Tanzania It can be seen that in Monduli, the district with the lowest level of women’s literacy and Babati, the district with the highest level of poverty, there were larger proportions of schools with below average gender profiles, while in Moshi and Hai there are high proportions of schools with above average gender profiles.

Arusha, Moshi rural and Hai in particular have greater proactivity in terms of school management. In Arusha, this does not seem to have made a great deal of difference to its low performance on school gender profiles as shown above. However in Hai and Moshi rural, both of which also have high levels of women’s literacy, there does seem to be an association between stronger performance on school management and schools having above average performance on girls’ education. From the management summary variable, it can be noted that schools in Babati largely had below average proactivity in terms of management. This corresponds with below average gender profile performance in Babati as shown above.

In Nigeria, Table 2 shows gender profile scores for Nigeria banded into below average, average and above average, and broken down by state. Schools within Gombe tended to cluster into ‘below average’ in terms of gender profile. Schools in Plateau/ Nasarawa by contrast were either average or above average. The best performing school in terms of overarching gender profile was Katsina.

In terms of proactivity on school management, the results at state level are given in Table 4. Here we can see that school management was particularly strong in Kaduna. Kaduna also performed well on the gender profile. School management was again strong in Plateau/ Nasarawa where gender outcomes are better than in most regions. Management was particularly weak in Gombe, which is to be expected given poorer gender outcomes for this region shown above. Katsina performs badly on the school management profile, which does not correlate well with the gender profile scores. However, our data was incomplete in Katsina and only recorded scores from schools where data was kept, which may perform better than schools who did not keep data, artificially elevating their score.

#### 4d. Poverty levels in districts

##### 4.d.i. Tanzania

Table 5: Tanzania: selected socio-economic indicators for TEGINT project districts

	Percentages				
	Population below poverty line (2000/1)	Children under 18 whose mother and/or father have died	Households using piped or protected water source	Households with flush toilet/improved ventilated pit latrine	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)
Arusha	12	9.0	99	21.7	39
Monduli	24	8.1	49	1.3	35
Moshi (rural)	28	9.3	75	3.7	40
Hai	22	8.8	68	3.5	44
Babati	50	8.0	56	1.5	59
Mbulu	49	7.2	24	0.6	69

*N.B: percentages from 2002 unless stated otherwise.*

Source: Govt of Tanzania (2005). Tanzania Poverty & Human Development Report. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers. Accessed March 2009

[http://www.repoa.or.tz/documents\\_storage/PHDR\\_2005\\_Prelim.pdf](http://www.repoa.or.tz/documents_storage/PHDR_2005_Prelim.pdf)

Babati is the TEGINT district with the highest number of people (49%) below the poverty line and the highest infant mortality in the project. There is a large disparity between the richest district, Arusha, where 12% of people are below the poverty line and Babati. Moshi and Hai are also relatively wealthy. Wealth in Monduli district is likely to be closely linked to cattle ownership, and analysis by project staff shows that income poverty in the district is high with high levels of child labour.

##### 4.d.ii Nigeria

Table 6: Household poverty, In TEGINT Project States, Nigeria 2002

	Female headship rate 1991	% female economically active 1991	Poverty incidence 1998
Bauchi	4	47.1	81.5
Katsina	4.7	35.6	71.8
FCT	6.8	73.3	53.8
Kaduna	5.9	49.6	56
Niger	4.1	57.8	52.9
Plateau	6.1	58.3	65.9

According to a 2002 study of household poverty in Nigeria, the incidence of poverty is highest in Bauchi state in comparison with other project states (Okojie, 2002), as illustrated in Table 6 above. The relative wealth of FCT and the high levels of female economic activity are related to its location in the capital, which provides employment opportunities. Niger state and FCT are grouped together for the purposes of the study and it can be seen that they have similar characteristics. Kaduna is an ethnically diverse state and benefits from close connections between the state and federal government.

#### 4e. Connections between poverty, gender profiles, and gender management

In Tanzania, districts which have lower poverty levels tend to have better performance in terms of both gender outcomes and school management, with some exceptions. Babati, the district with the highest level of poverty, has a larger proportion of schools with below average gender profiles, while in Moshi, with low poverty, and Hai (with larger numbers below the poverty line than Moshi) there are high proportions of schools with above average gender profiles.

Hai in particular has a strong history of women’s education and political activism along with coffee wealth (which is now declining). An interesting exception to this pattern is Arusha, which, while the richest area, has the lowest outcomes on gender. This could be attributable to a number of factors, but may be related to the urban nature of the district, where richer parents may have taken their children out of state education and into private education. Monduli district performs moderately on school management indicators and poorly on gender outcomes (most schools fall into ‘average or ‘below average’ categories, but has fewer people below the poverty line

In Nigeria, the pattern is slightly different. Plateau/Nasarawa performed well on both gender outcomes and school management profiles. Plateau is not, however, the richest state (although it does score well on other indicators, such as economically active women). Bauchi is the poorest state in the study, and does score poorly on gender outcomes. However, more proactive school management is happening in Bauchi than in other, richer states (FCT/Niger, for example). Kaduna also scores well on gender outcomes and school management, while only having moderate wealth.

It is clear from the data above that poverty and school performance show a general correlation, but there are exceptions in the data which shows that poverty itself is insufficient as an explanation. The tables below explore another potential factor in quality school management and gender outcomes.

#### 4f. Womens’ literacy levels

##### 4.f.i. Tanzania

Table 7. Literacy levels in project districts in Tanzania.

	% literate people 15yrs +	%literate males 15yrs+	% literate females 15yrs +
Arusha	94	96	93
Monduli	43	53	35
Moshi (rural)	89	92	85
Hai	86	89	83
Babati	70	76	64
Mbulu	67	71	62

It can be seen that Arusha has the highest women’s literacy levels of the Tanzanian project districts. Monduli, a predominantly pastoral area has the lowest women’s literacy level at 35% which fits with descriptions by project staff of a district that has limited experience of education.



#### 4.f.ii Nigeria

Table 8. Female adult Literacy, Nigeria.

State	Female adult literacy 1991
Bauchi	28.2
Katsina	30.6
FCT	43.0
Kaduna	46
Niger	25.4
Plateau	32.7

Literacy levels in Nigeria overall are far lower in the north of the country, with North East Nigeria having the highest overall levels of adults who have had no education in the country. Bauchi and Niger have the lowest levels of women's literacy of the Nigerian project districts. Kaduna has the highest levels of women's literacy

#### 4g. Literacy and school performance and management

From the data above we can see that while high poverty levels in the community are not correlated with weaker gender management profiles. Higher literacy levels in the wider community were correlated with stronger gender management profiles.

For Tanzania, it can be noted that Arusha, Moshi rural and Hai in particular have greater proactivity in terms of school management. In Arusha, this does not seem to have made a great deal of difference to its low performance on school gender profiles as shown above. However in Hai and Moshi rural, both of which also have high levels of women's literacy, there does seem to be an association between stronger performance on school management and schools having above average performance on girls' education.

Schools in Moduli are particularly interesting, there is low women's literacy in this district. Poverty levels are also low. The poor performance of Monduli schools correlates more accurately with literacy levels than it does poverty levels. This is supported by data from Moshi rural and Hai.

For Nigeria, we can see that school management and gender outcomes were particularly strong in Kaduna – an area with high female literacy. Bauchi and FCT/Niger also had lower levels of women's literacy and performed quite poorly on both the school management profile and the gender profile. Bauchi is the poorest state, however FCT/Niger is the wealthiest, supporting the pattern in Tanzania of better performance alongside higher literacy levels. Poverty seems to be an insufficient explanation for poor performance.

#### 4. Discussion

With reference to the conceptual framework for the project, the baseline study sought to identify what some of the key constraining factors were for girls developing 'functionings'. Examining the different factors that make up the gender profiles and school management profiles can give us some ideas of what these are.

School profile scores were based on documentary data available at the school level. This provides us with a useful performance measure, but is not useful for determining what the enabling factors are for increasing girls' analytical capacity.

The school management profiles are likely to provide us with a fuller picture of some of the factors which contribute to both schools' success and in providing some idea of why girls may be better able to articulate their concerns. The school management profiles looked at the provision of training and information for teachers, parents and pupils on issues such as gender, HIV/ AIDS, reproductive health and educational management; involvement with political campaigning organisations; outreach activities to help the most disadvantaged and socially excluded families; and the mobilisation of pupils and staff in order to promote community development.

The variable on training and information is likely to have a significant impact here as this included information being given to girls on their right to stay in school, to not be subjected to early marriage and their rights to hold senior positions in government and to participate in school management.

Outreach activities to more socially excluded families could also have had an impact on girls; ability to reflect on barriers to education and some of the steps to overcome these. For example, if a school management committee takes action on something which is causing the exclusion of girls in the community (such as levies), girls in the school are likely to note that this was a barrier and what actions have been successful.

In these higher-performing schools, there was also significantly more awareness of barriers to educational success, even though these schools were less likely to have these barriers than other schools.

A critical finding of our data is that in order to successfully develop school based strategies for tackling gender inequality, literacy levels in the general population are critical. This is important for the project implementation as it seeks to draw on girls' experience of their education and then work with girls to develop action at a local and national level to address some of these constraints. If literacy is a constraining factor, it has implications for the effectiveness of activities planned to increase girls' enrolment that may focus only on the school environment.

This is supported by other data that the project gathered, which asked girls for their opinions on the constraints to their education, and also asked them to develop ideas to tackle these constraints. In addition to the overall performance of schools on the gender profiles and school management profiles we also found that girls in schools in states and districts with higher literacy levels were more likely to be able to analyse the barriers and constraints they faced at school in a 'political' way. This meant they were able to cite 'political' solutions to barriers such as abolishing fees and levies and the education of parents, rather than simply citing sponsorship or classroom building as solutions.

Good gender practices in schools could be seen as a reflection of Stromquist's (2006 p. 140) 'new mentalities' for reflecting on and challenging conceptions of gender. Writing on literacy and women's empowerment, she describes illiteracy as 'basically due to differential distributions of power' and points out that illiteracy is a result of multiple exclusions- not just from education but in the social and domestic sphere. She also refers to the requirements of literacy for participation in active democracy, not just in terms of an ability to read and respond to important documents and the media, but also in terms of language skills-- giving us the ability to move into new forms and ways of analysing the world around us.

This analytical ability may have been developed in the high-performing TEGINT schools over a long period of time. Schools with good gender outcomes tend to be in locations with a historical commitment to the education of women and girls. They are more likely (as seen in the school management profiles) to make time and space for coming together as a school community and reflecting on some of the barriers that girls face, and being more likely to relate them to issues of gender.

## 5. Conclusions and implications for practice

TEGINT is premised on a principle that working with different groups at a number of different levels is essential for ensuring transformation of education for girls. The findings and analysis above show that each of the groups in the project play a critical role in ensuring girls' enrollment and success in school, and should be worked with, but that women in the community and involved in teaching and school management are most critical. In addition, the data shows that some groups are able to reflect, or facilitate a reflection, on barriers to education. It is therefore necessary to encourage the characteristics of these groups that enable them to do this, and to try and replicate these conditions in other areas.

### *School management should focus on gendered barriers to education*

A well trained board and teachers are critical. High performing schools had paid specific attention to training teachers and the board on both gender and HIV and were also associated with unions or other NGOs working on education. A well trained school management committee and teacher body are more likely to be able to reflect on the issues in their school and are more able to take action.

### *Improving literacy levels in the general population*

Our data shows that literacy is an important enabling factor for quality education for girls. This makes a strong case for a renewed and continued focus on adult literacy programmes in communities where girls' educational outcomes are also poor. These literacy programmes should be sensitive to women's position in the community and constraints, and should adopt methodologies such as REFLECT (Archer and Cottingham, 2005) which provide space for critical reflection.

### *Hearing girls' views*

Our data shows that girls are able to reflect on their experiences and barriers when the culture of the school encourages and enables it. Our work to date on TEGINT also shows that when given space and time by school management, children can make useful contributions to school processes and can highlight issues adults have not considered. Schools should create opportunities to bring girls and school management together to discuss constraints and develop solutions. Our data also shows the importance of listening to girls on a *local* level. Constraints highlighted were very different between areas, and so policy responses will also need to be different.

## Acknowledgements

This paper draws heavily on the work of the TEGINT project partnership's 'Report on Baseline Studies carried out for TEGINT Project' (2009) and thanks go to all partners who developed the report. Thanks also go to Jo Heslop of the Institute of Education, London and Akanksha A. Marphatia of ActionAid International for their comments and input.

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