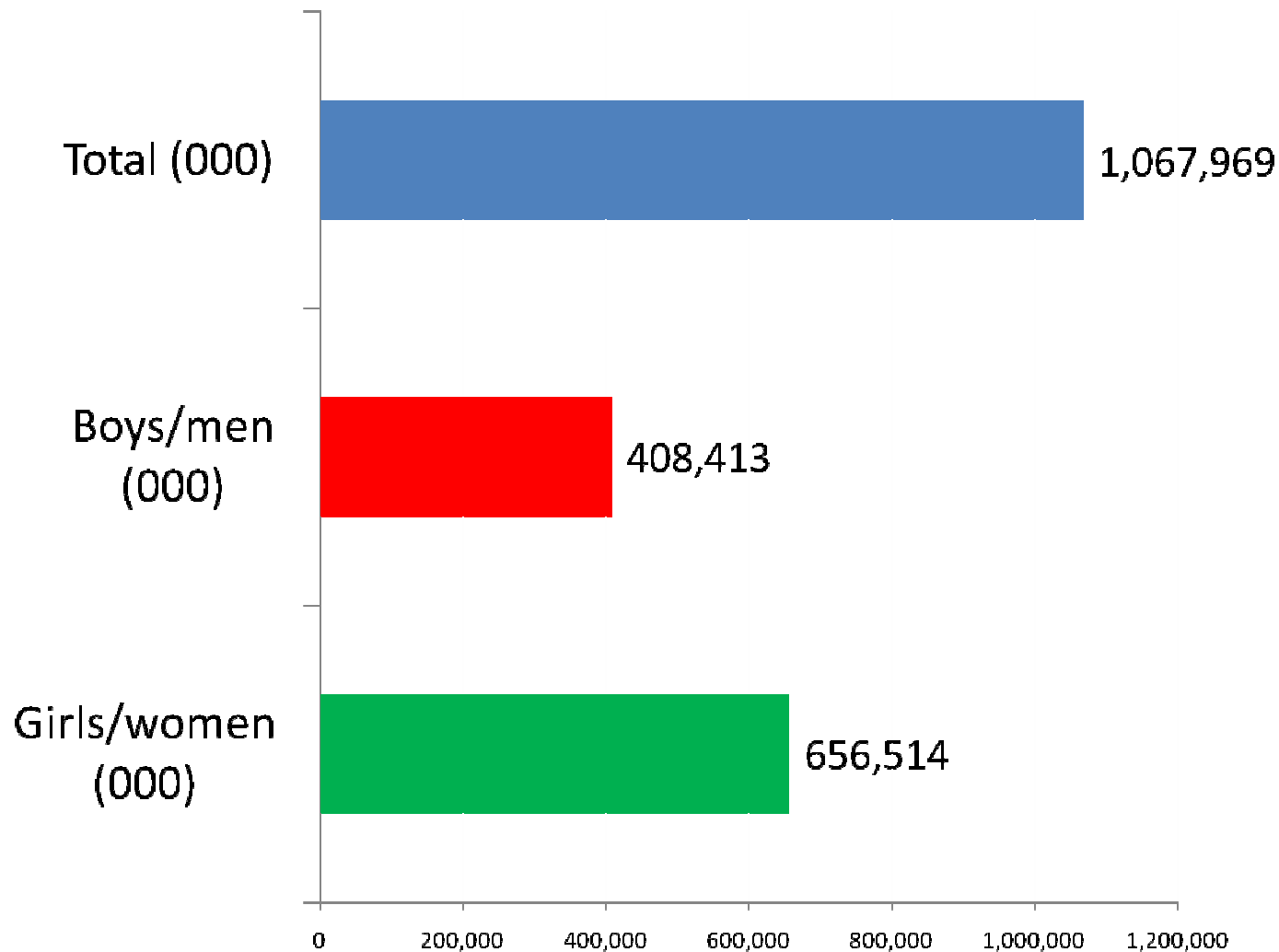


# **Global justice: The challenge of gender equity in education**

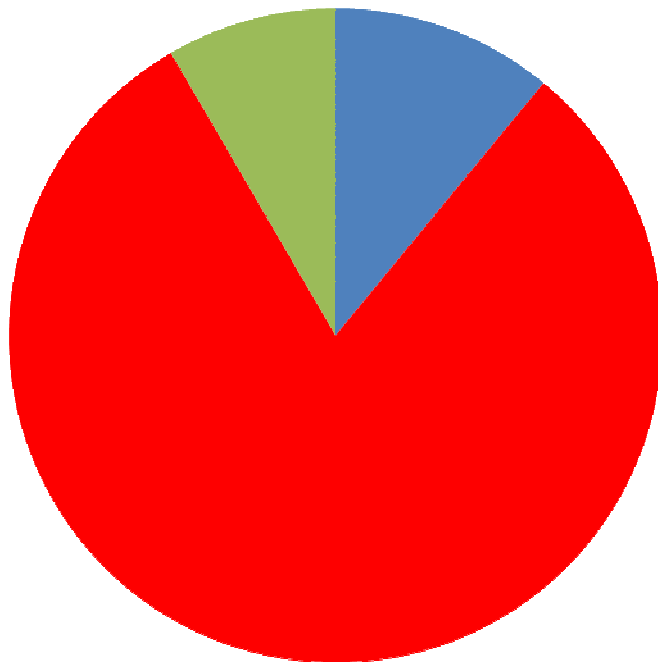
**Elaine Unterhalter  
Institute of Education  
University of London**

# c.2000 over a billion people had little or no education

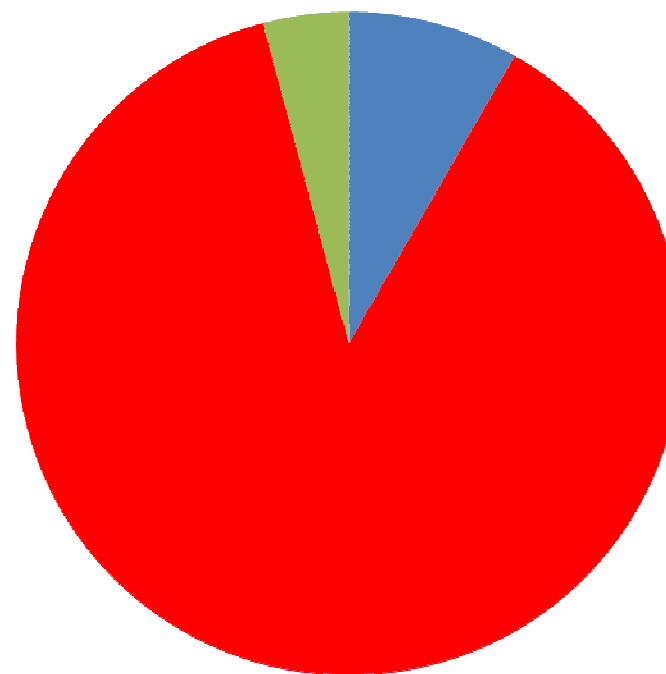


# Comprising

**Boys/men**

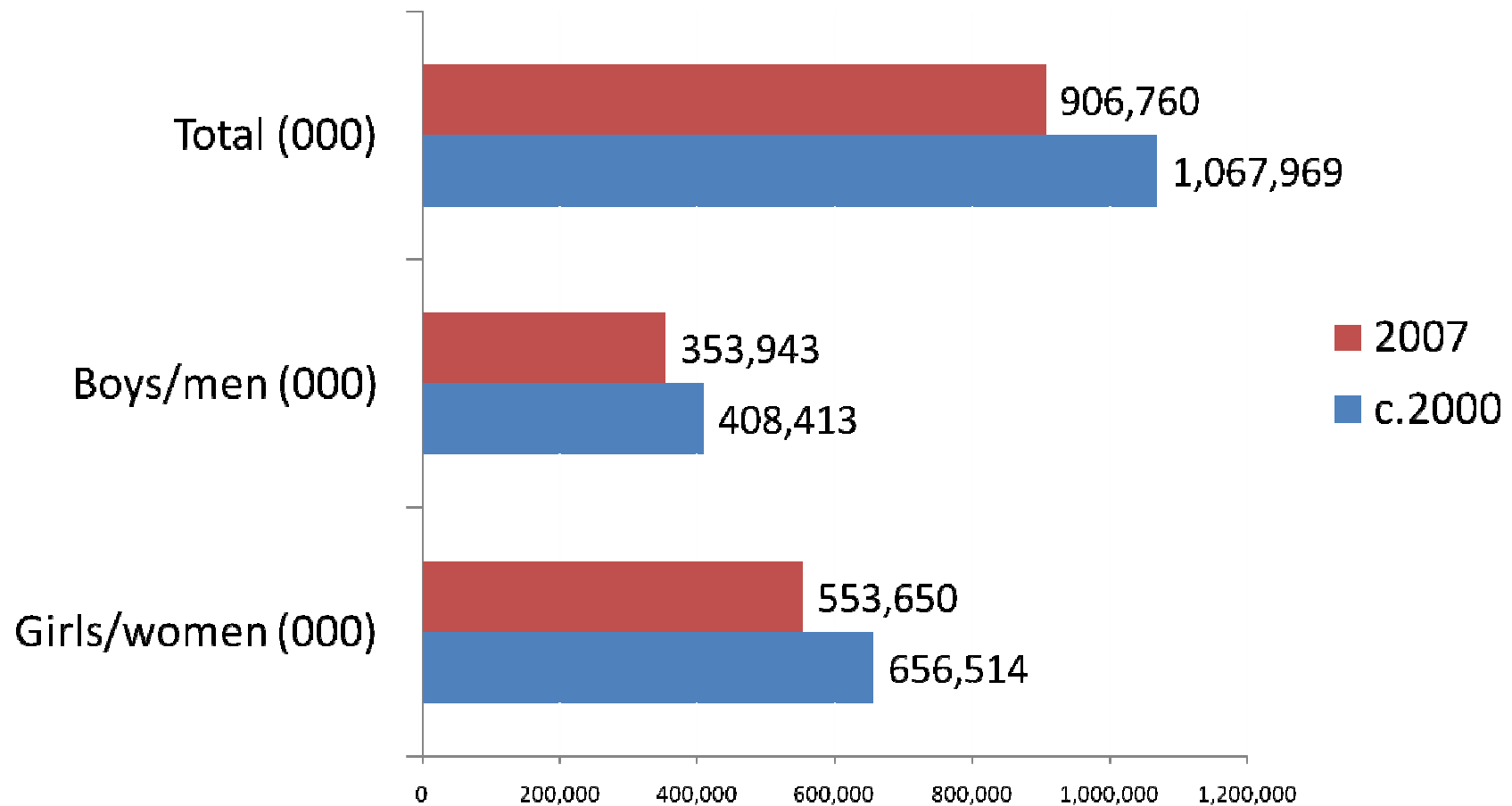


**Girls/women**

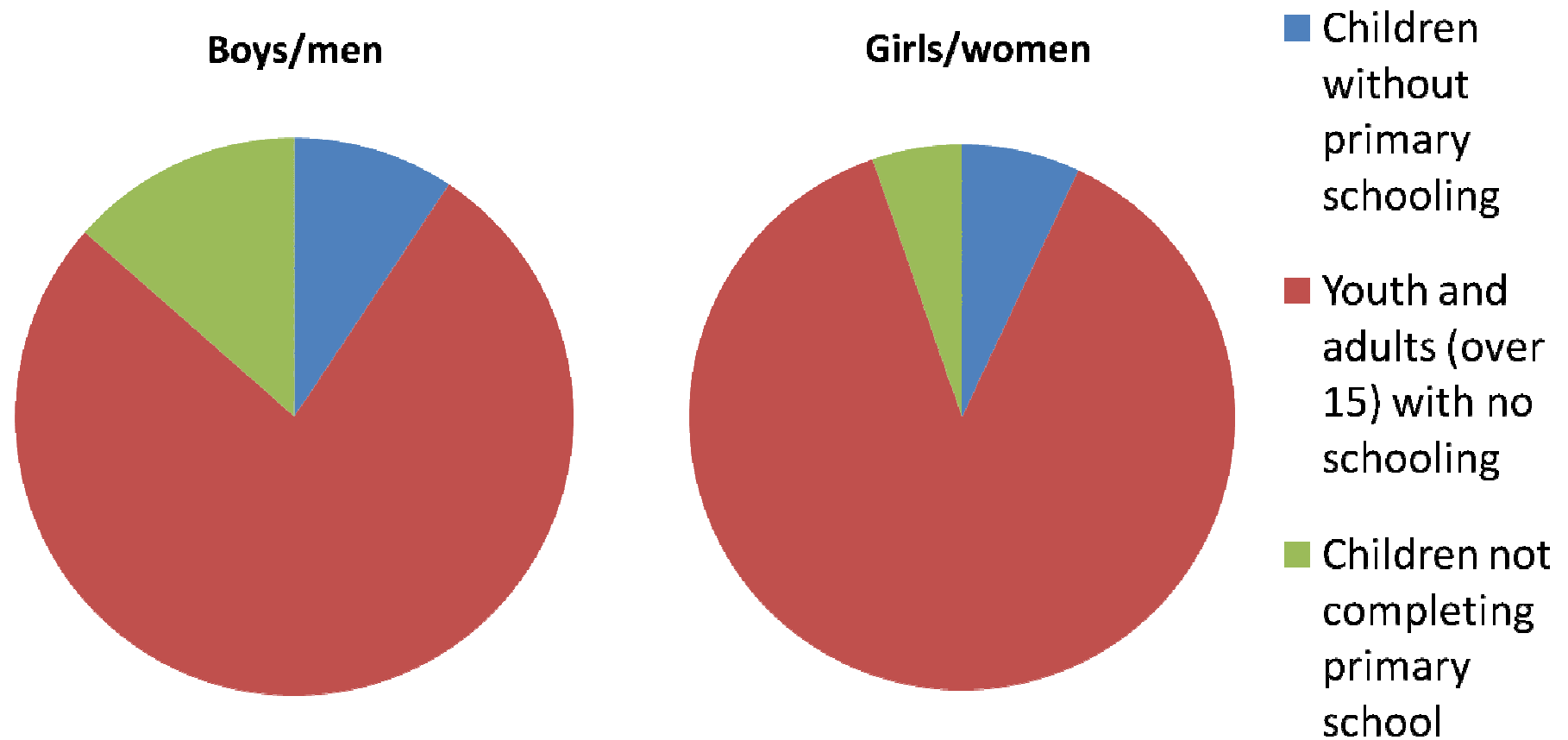


- Children without primary schooling
- Youth and adults (over 15) with no schooling
- Children not completing primary school

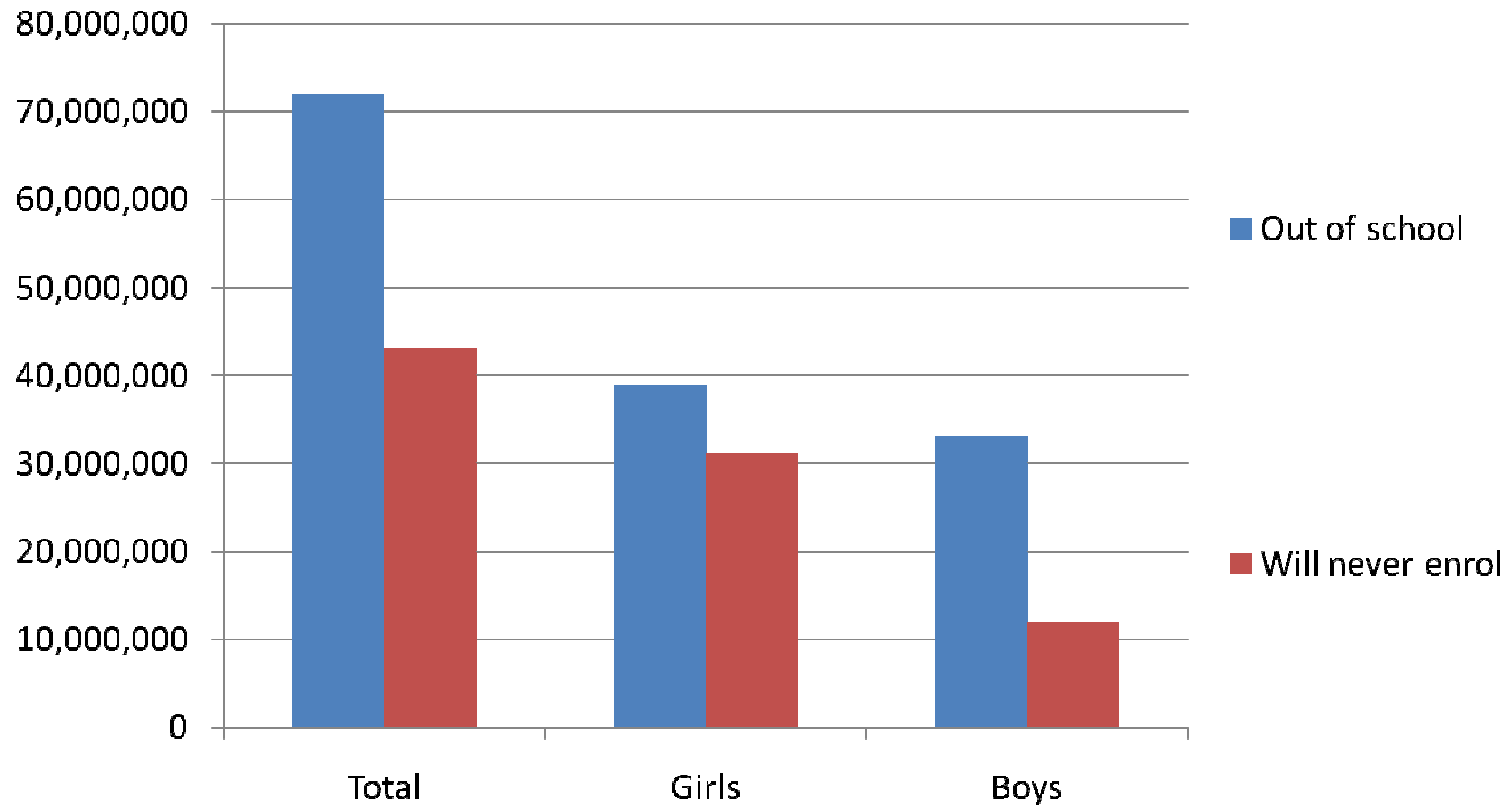
## In 2007 girls & women are still the largest group with little or no education



# Proportions c. 2007

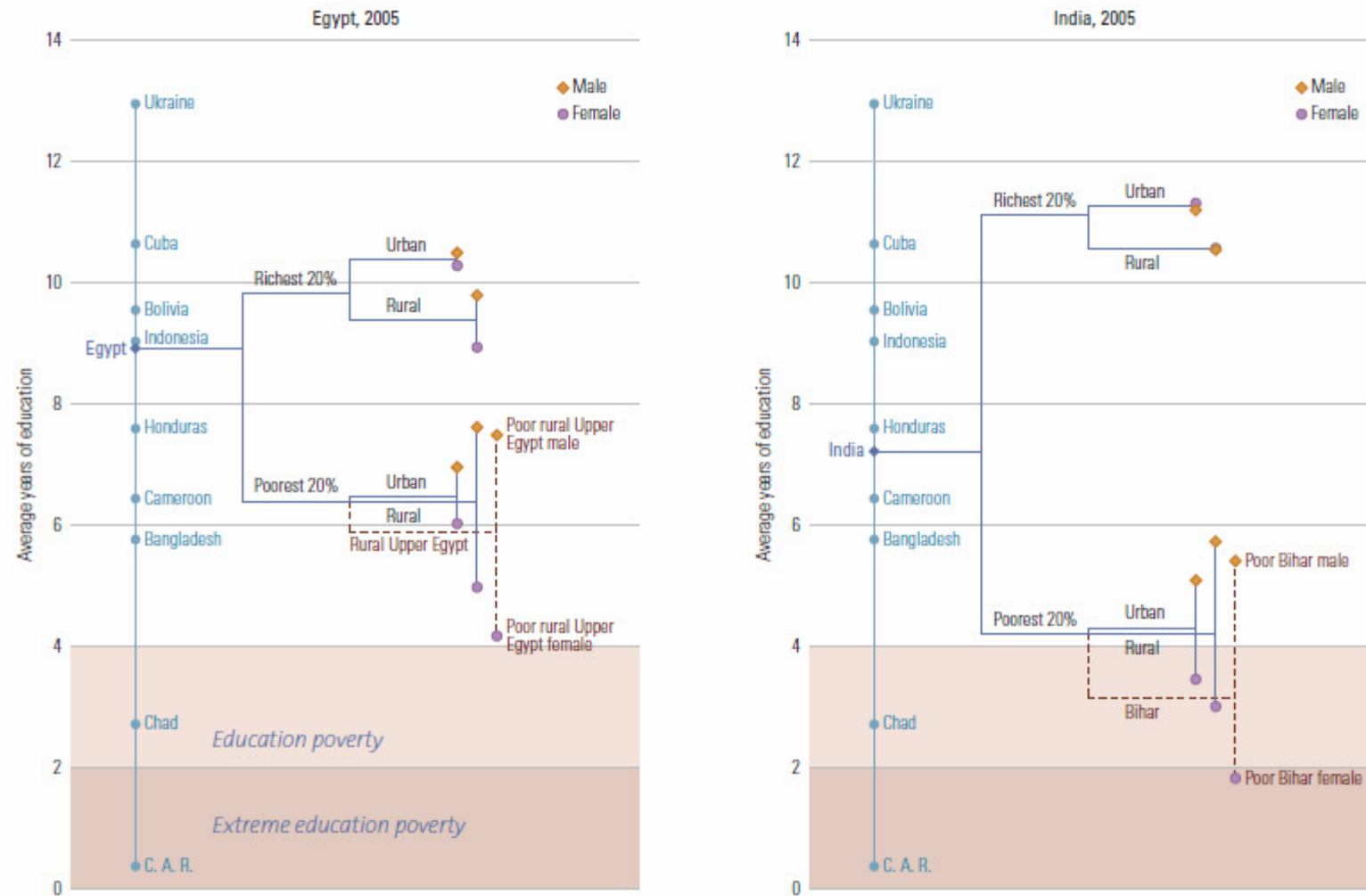


# Numbers out of school c.2007



**Figure 3.4: The education inequality tree**

*Average number of years of education of the population aged 17 to 22 by wealth, gender, location, and other selected drivers of marginalization, latest available year*



Source: UNESCO-DME (2009).

# Blame

‘..parents, who do not support the school in its running, in that they do not positively guide their children, given that the school is in a slum...The parents keep shifting and at times they don't have money. They don't want to pay’ (Head teacher, Kenya)

‘No one motivates such children to attend school so they go and start working then the parents become dependent on them for food and income ‘ (Head teacher South Africa)

‘ Parents have enough income to support schooling but they do not give priority to education...girls have no material support for uniforms, textbooks or transport’ (Head teacher Tanzania)

‘The other parent, who is illiterate, can trade off his daughter for a few cows which will die even after a few days because of drought... if they are ignorant and illiterate, they marry off their daughters at a very young age’ (Government official Kenya)



# Achieving a target minimally

‘We have taken the EFA goal and what we do is in our reporting, we continually monitor the issue of whether there’s, there are any particular problems. And all our data we have at the moment shows that we don’t have any problem in terms of gender parity. We may have a slight problem, in fact, in terms of boys rather than girls.’ (Government official, South Africa)

‘At the TSC we have policies to ensure that we bring gender on board. For example in a mixed school , if the head teacher is male, if the female is head, then the male is deputy’

‘So as we implement activities we always ensure there is gender equality. Like you can see this report I am making now. We always have male and female.’ (Government officials Kenya)



# Shame

‘Torn clothes make girls feel more embarrassed than boys [at school]’  
(Mothers’ focus group , Tanzania)

... the burden of school expenses is a key factor ...Poor families, unable to sponsor all children to school may have to come to a decision to withdraw female children for either marriage or hawking. The male child is seen as a strong member who can struggle on his own to continue schooling ....  
(Report of mothers’ focus group, Nigeria)

.. A schoolgirl , living with her grandmother got pregnant and her grandmother kicked her away... She returned with a one week old baby. Her grandmother agreed to receive her on condition she sends the baby to the parents of the father. She did it but was kicked away. The village government intervened and commanded the father’s parents to take care of them. They took her but mistreated her. She was working too much and sometimes they would frame her for stealing. Finally she left the village and I think she went to Dar es Salaam. The whole community abandoned her  
(Head teacher, Tanzania)

# Some material solutions



- Free schooling
- Improve distribution of learning materials
- Employ more teachers
- Improve teacher conditions

# Some non-material solutions to address blame and shame

- Include concerns with equality and poverty in teacher training
- Support cross sectoral work in eg. Education, health, nutrition
- Work on in depth community mobilisations
- Promote gender equality as a matter of global obligation



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# The Dakar Declaration on accelerating girls' education and gender equality concludes...



## Dakar Declaration on Accelerating Girls' Education and Gender Equality

We the participants of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative global conference 'Engendering Empowerment: Education and Equality', assembled in Dakar in May 2010, call for urgent action in support of girls' rights to education, gender equality and empowerment opportunities.

The rights of girls and women are guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Discrimination in Education and the Beijing Platform for Action.

In Jomtien in 1990, we established the Education for All Framework; in Dakar in 2000, we strongly endorsed the need for targets for education, especially for girls.

Since then, there has been considerable progress: about 22 million more girls enrolled in primary schools from 1999 to 2007, and gender gaps in primary school enrolments have narrowed in many countries.

Despite the progress that has been made, poor quality of education, extreme poverty, structural inequality and violence against girls continue to jeopardize the achievement of the education- and gender-related Education for All and Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Powerless and poor girls make up the most disadvantaged group in education. Achieving equity in education will entail putting in place a rights-based empowerment framework that will target the most vulnerable and transform power hierarchies in learning spaces, communities and policy structures in order to give poor and vulnerable girls a voice and ensure that their right to quality education is sustained.

Gender equity is at the centre of transformative, quality education. Attention to the physical, social and academic aspects of multiple learning environments is necessary to enhance opportunities, especially for adolescent girls, and to move beyond basic education. Recognition of teachers as professionals, supported by gender-responsive curricula, is likewise key to ensuring gender equality.

Because poverty is both structural and multidimensional and has differential impacts on girls and women, interventions for girls' education must cover multiple sectors. Education policies, strategies, plans and budgets must all be gender-responsive.

Gender-based violence remains an obstacle to the full achievement of girls' rights to education. We call for effective strategies and for enforcement of legislation and policies to ensure safe and secure learning environments for girls. Protective and innovative learning opportunities must also be created for children and young women affected by HIV and AIDS and for those in armed conflict and emergency situations.

We envision a world in which a special initiative for girls' education is no longer needed – a world in which all girls and boys are empowered through quality education to realize their full potential and contribute to transforming their societies, so that gender equality becomes a reality.

Dakar, Senegal, 20 May 2010

‘We envision a world in which a special initiative for girls’ education is no longer needed – a world in which all girls and boys are empowered through quality education to realize their full potential and contribute to transforming their societies, so that gender equality becomes a reality.’