



## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

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### EWIC STAFF REPORT: WOMEN AND EDUCATION: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Overall enrollment in higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa has shown faster growth than any other region in the past 40 years. Between 1970 and 2008 students enrolled in tertiary education rose from 200,000 in 1970 to 4.5 million in 2008. However, despite the fact that tertiary education in Sub-Saharan Africa has seen dramatic increases in enrollment in the last four decades women are still presented with substantial barriers when it comes to attaining higher education.  
<http://www.one.org/c/us/progressreport/776/>

UNESCO research has indicated that there is a direct correlation between countries with higher gross GDP and women's enrollment in tertiary education. Studies have indicated that even a slight increase in GDP can result in higher enrollment levels for women. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/FactSheets/Documents/fs10-2010-en.pdf>

Slightly over half of children who are not enrolled in school are female. Children and particularly girls who are denizens of more rural areas, or are living in conflict zones and those who speak a language other than the standard vernacular have a lower academic enrollment and attainment rate. A major current barrier to Sub-Saharan girls receiving education is the lack of basic aid. UNESCO estimates that aid to Sub-Saharan Africa has decreased from \$1.72 billion in 2007 to \$1.65 billion in 2008. This decrease in aid has had a negative impact on enrollment.

Literacy rates in Sub-Saharan Africa for youths ages 15-24 have shown an upsurge in the past 20 years. However, gender parity is still an issue in terms of literacy in the region. Currently only half of the female population is considered literate while 7 out of 10 men are literate.

As of 2008 Botswana had a literacy rate of 83%. The government in Botswana devotes 21% of its GNP to education, which it is worth noting is considerably more than the United States. <http://www.africanlibraryproject.org/our-african-libraries/africa-facts>

In Ethiopia there has been a dramatic increase in primary school enrollment. Enrollment has reached 71%. Part of the credit for this achievement is due to a nation-wide movement to create a larger number of schools in rural areas. This has the direct effect and benefit of reducing the distance required for children to travel to and from school. In Ethiopia text books are available in twenty-two endoglossic languages with content that is relevant and specific to the student population.

The United Republic of Tanzania has almost universal primary school attendance. In 2001 steps were taken to make primary school education more accessible. One such concrete step was the elimination of the requirement that students pay an enrollment fee. This growth in primary school attendance was also encouraged by burgeoning public investment.

Benin had 80% primary school enrollment in 2007. Along with this increased enrollment the male to female ratio student population settled into greater equilibrium.

In Senegal in the span of one primary school cycle the gender gap in enrollment was completely closed. In 1999 Senegal had 88 girls enrolled for every 100 boys; by 2007 the numbers were equal.  
<http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/GMR/pdf/gmr2010/aid-release-ssa-brief-en.pdf>