

## INVESTING IN GIRLS' SECONDARY EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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*MacArthur's international secondary education grant-making aims to improve participation by marginalized girls in quality, relevant secondary level learning, with the expectation that advances will have positive implications for both girls and boys.*



### AT-A-GLANCE

- More education for girls brings profound benefits for them and related benefits for their societies.
- Girls with higher levels of education marry later, survive childbirth at higher rates, experience reduced incidences of HIV/AIDS, have children more likely to survive to age five, contribute to higher rates of economic growth at the national level, and live more fulfilled lives.
- Education for girls is a vital tool in the battle against poverty. Sixty-five low- and middle-income countries lose approximately \$92 billion per year by failing to educate girls to the same standards as boys.
- MacArthur's grantmaking seeks to improve participation by marginalized girls in quality, relevant secondary education through investments in research, innovative pilot approaches, and evidence-based advocacy, so that every girl has the opportunity to realize her full potential.

### BACKGROUND

In recent decades there has been significant progress toward the goal of universal primary education, which has increased demand for secondary education. However, participation rates are much lower at secondary levels, especially in developing countries and particularly for girls. While girls' education is highly correlated with benefits for them and their society, according to UNESCO, just over 30 percent of girls in Nigeria and Uganda are enrolled in lower secondary education and as few as 12 percent are enrolled in upper secondary education in Uganda. In India, girls' enrollment ratios at the secondary level are also low, at 74 percent in lower secondary and 42 percent in upper secondary schools. While much is understood about the barriers to secondary education, less is known about which intervention strategies are best for keeping girls in school and improving learning outcomes. Addressing these knowledge gaps helps to guide MacArthur's grantmaking.

The Foundation's support for secondary education is further informed by the *Global Compact on Learning*, an agenda developed by a variety of stakeholders in the field of education and published in 2011 by the Brookings Institution's Center for Universal Education. The Compact lays out challenges, priorities, and key strategies in education for the developing world. Key elements of the Compact have been adopted by the UN Secretary General's special initiative, Global Education First, a five-year commitment to work toward enrolling



every child in school, improve the quality of learning, especially for the marginalized, including girls, and foster global citizenship. MacArthur, other donors, and partner organizations are building alliances to advance key elements of this agenda.

MacArthur operates with the belief that the scale and complexity of challenges to secondary education and the range of involved actors (e.g., public officials, civil society groups, multilateral organizations, private corporations, and foundations) requires a collaborative approach. MacArthur works in collaboration with other donors through the Partnership to Strengthen Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education, the Global Compact on Learning, The International Education Funders Group, and the Global Partnership for Education.

### WHAT WE FUND

The Foundation's girls' secondary education work supports efforts to improve girls' access to quality, relevant secondary education in three countries: Uganda, Nigeria, and India, where

support complements other MacArthur investments in the areas of maternal and reproductive health, human rights, and conservation. MacArthur also supports projects at the international level that contribute to building the evidence base and improving policy frameworks for expanded access to quality learning for girls at the national level, particularly in our focus countries.

Grantmaking supports efforts to pilot new approaches, research critical questions about how to innovate in secondary education, and improve policy implementation through evidence-based advocacy. This work focuses in four thematic areas: increasing girls' demand for secondary-level learning, improving teacher effectiveness, understanding how information and communications technologies can enhance learning, and promoting employment- and life-relevant skills. Collectively, projects will effect immediate change in communities where pilot programs are conducted and will contribute to an improved base of evidence on secondary education that shapes future interventions.



## REPRESENTATIVE GRANTS

### India

#### THE AKANKSHA FUND

New York, New York  
\$177,000 in support of an initiative to train a new generation of school leaders in order to improve learning outcomes among low-income children in India.

#### ERU CONSULTANTS

New Delhi, India  
\$55,000 to support a study evaluating the impacts of gender composition of teachers on secondary education, including the demand for education among girls and their parents.

#### POPULATION COUNCIL

New York, New York  
\$225,000 to fund the design and

evaluation of a pilot intervention in a rural district in the state of Gujarat, India, to support adolescent girls' transition to and retention in secondary education and to improve learning outcomes by increasing parental and community engagement.

#### PRATHAM USA

Houston, Texas  
\$257,000 in support of the Pratham Open School model, an intervention designed to reach girls at risk of dropping out of school and to re-engage those who have already left the formal education system.

### Nigeria

#### BRITISH COUNCIL

Manchester, UK  
\$476,000 to assess the availability and

effectiveness of in-service teacher trainings and their impact on learner achievement and outcomes across several states in Nigeria.

#### CO-CREATION HUB LIMITED

Yaba, Nigeria  
\$292,000 in support of a pilot project to use mobile phones to improve girls' learning in Nigeria.

#### DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AND POLICY CENTER

Nigeria  
\$425,000 in support of efforts to strengthen the implementation of a skills-based secondary school curriculum in girls' schools in Jigawa and Kano States, Nigeria.

#### THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Washington, D.C.  
\$92,000 in support of a project to evaluate efficacy of an established teacher training program in Lagos, Nigeria.

### Uganda

#### BUILD AFRICA

Tunbridge Wells, United Kingdom  
\$160,000 in support of research into how to address barriers to children's transition from primary to secondary school in Uganda.

#### INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN

Washington, D.C.  
\$385,000 to help enhance the participation and continuation of adolescent girls in secondary schools in Uganda through research into social norms and expectations related to reproduction and family formation.



## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

In April 2013, the MacArthur Foundation, The MasterCard Foundation, ELMA Philanthropies Services, Human Dignity Foundation, and another funder announced a call for proposals through the Partnership to Strengthen Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education. The group has committed \$10 million in support of projects to increase the participation, quality, and relevance of secondary education for economically disadvantaged and marginalized children in developing countries. Learn more at [www.macfound.org/girlseducation](http://www.macfound.org/girlseducation).

### International

ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB (J-PAL)  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
\$900,000 to support research on development interventions in post-primary education.

BROOKINGS INSTITUTION CENTER FOR UNIVERSAL EDUCATION  
Washington, DC  
\$550,000 to further support and institutionalize the Global Compact on Learning.



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### For More Information

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### About The MacArthur Foundation

The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society.

**For more information or to sign-up for news and event updates, please visit [www.macfound.org](http://www.macfound.org).**

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