

FACT SHEET

Align the Education Sector Plan with the Girls Education Policy

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Liberia is ranked 178 out of 191 countries on the UN Gender Inequality Index¹. Poverty, discriminatory social and gender norms, lack of sexual health and reproductive rights, and high levels of sexual and gender-based violence negatively affect girls' access, retention, and completion of secondary school in Liberia.

“To ensure gender equality, education systems must act explicitly to eliminate gender bias and discrimination resulting from social and cultural attitudes and practices and economic status.” — Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, UNESCO, 2015

Challenges in Ensuring Gender Equity and Equality in Education

- Early childbearing and early marriage rates remain high in Liberia, with 25 per cent of women married before the age of 18 and 30 per cent of women giving before the age of 18 the country's adolescent birth rate remains one of the highest 32 in the world, despite showing signs of decrease (LISGIS, 2021). Early marriage is effectively the end of girls' education prospects and heightens their vulnerability.
- There is a low proportion of female teachers at the primary (20%) and junior and senior secondary levels (11.8% and 9.6%, respectively).²
- Despite existing legal protections for equal rights of women, studies have revealed that gender equity is still not broadly supported in Liberia, with 33 per cent of women and 62 per cent of men cited as opposing gender equality in 2021.³
- During the Educate HER project Bi-annual assessment(2023) FGD participants reported that school administrators and education stakeholders are unaware that discrimination against girls due to pregnancy is a violation of their right to education.
- Disparities in access to education are the most prevalent between wealth quintiles. Poor and rural girls are seen to experience the highest levels of disadvantage, with 57 per cent having no formal education and only 2 per cent having attended secondary.⁴
- Female TVET students make up only 31 per cent of TVET enrollment and are overrepresented in traditionally gendered trades.⁵
- While women's participation in the workforce at 72 per cent is higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa's average, they are concentrated in lower level, lower paid, and often precarious positions that are more likely to be unpaid.⁶

¹ Gender Inequality Index | Human Development Reports (undp.org), 2021

² Annual School Census Report, 2019/2020

³ The Education Sector Plan 2022-2027, pg. 31

⁴ The Education Sector Plan 2022-2027, pg. 37

⁵ The Education Sector Plan 2022-2027, pg. 52

⁶ The Education Sector Plan 2022-2027, pg. 53

- Government spending on education is significantly lower than the international benchmark (20 per cent of the budget to be allocated to education).⁷

Comparative Analysis of the Education Sector Plan and the National Policy on Girls’ Education⁸

	Education Sector Plan (2023-2026)	National Policy on Girls’ Education (NPGE 2021 – 2026)
Framing	The ESP provides a sector-wide strategy for implementing the National Education Act of 2011, corresponding policies, frameworks, and programs, streamlined using a system-based approach.	The NPEG provides a structure and measures to address the barriers to and improve girls' education in Liberia. It is intended to establish guiding principles in Liberia’s endeavors to eliminate gender disparity and identify priorities for government and stakeholder action.
Policy Goal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure equal, disability-inclusive access to quality education and training for all, at all levels, 2. Develop capable citizens who possess skills that meet the demands of the labor market, and that contribute to national development and prosperity 3. Improve educational management and leadership that enhances efficient and effective delivery and system resilience 	To provide an enabling environment for gender equality in education, training, and management
Alignment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ESP references the NPGE as the national policy for addressing girls’ education in Liberia. 2. Both policy documents reference the Education Reform Act 2011 and the following goals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Goal 2: promoting equal access to education opportunities for all, without discrimination; — Goal 5) promoting and protecting human rights with respect to access and opportunities for quality education; — Goal (7) promoting gender equity and equality throughout the educational system) 3. Both policy documents contribute to the achievement of SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG5: Gender Equality by ensuring implementations of national policy frameworks that are supportive of the rights of all children by increasing access to quality education and promoting gender equity and equality in Liberia’s education system. 4. Both documents highlight the Ministry’s commitment to the fundamental principles of equity, gender equality and inclusion, and the social justice goals of reducing disparities wrought by gender, disability, and geographical location. 5. There are many similarities and overlapping in the documents in addressing cultural barriers and gender-sensitive programming. 6. Both documents call for the development of a MEL system to track indicators for promoting girls’ education 7. The timeframes for the implementation the ESP and the NPGE are well-aligned for joint actions (ESP:2023-2026), (NPGE: 2021 – 2026) 	
Gaps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ESP strategies to address social-cultural demand-side barriers to girls’ education are considered cross-cutting interventions. Therefore, they are broad and may not attract the 	

⁷ computations based on National Budget, Ministry of Finance Budget

⁸ To maintain the integrity of the analysis, the information below is quoted directly from the policy documents.

- needed attention and support.
2. The NPEG (16 indicators) are not clearly highlighted in the ESP as mandated by the National Girls Education Strategy. Hence, the plan only provides surface-level data through M&E reporting documents like the Annual School Census Report.
 3. There is no mention of the Girls Education Report Card in the ESP's monitoring framework and how this dataset will inform changes and intervention designs within the ESP.
 4. The NPGE does not have an implementation plan or a set budget, therefore the strategies have not been translated into measurable actions.
 5. There are many areas in the ESP where gender outcomes are implied but are not clearly spelled out or adequately accounted for in the planned activities. (i.e. gender indicators like the number of males vs. the number of females were captured, but no intentional interventions to affect those indicators)
 6. The ESP doesn't capture clearly whether the total investment in Girls' Education over multi-years will reach the 5% MoE annual budget minimum threshold as mandated by the NPGE.
 7. As per the ESP, the projected funding gap without external funding is large, totaling USD 325.5 million over the plan period and representing 34 per cent of the total plan cost.

For a copy of the FULL Policy Brief on this topic visit:
<https://educateherlib.com/documentresource>