

FINANCING GIRLS' EDUCATION IN LIBERIA

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The **National Policy on Girls' Education (NPGE 2021 – 2026)** aims to provide adequate access to affordable and quality Education and promote gender equity and equality through the educational system. The key purpose of the NPGE is to "establish guiding principles in Liberia's endeavors to eliminate gender disparity and identify priorities for government and stakeholder action."

"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

Over the years, there has been a fluctuation in the national budget allocated to education, with no specific funds set earmarked for girls' education programming or the effective implementation of the National Policy on Girls' Education. However, recent trends in financial investments in girls' Education in Liberia show a comprehensive and multi-sectorial approach. While progress is evident, significant challenges remain, particularly in ensuring sustainable funding, appropriate fund allocation, and adequate tracking of education expenditure. Inadequate and inconsistent funding for girls' education programs limits their reach and impact, particularly in marginalized and rural areas.

Budget decision-making forums remain a closed-door operation, and adequate tracking of government expenditure is relatively unavailable. Civil society is increasingly important in monitoring government commitments and holding public officials accountable for resource allocations and utilization. Civil society must employ strategic actions to secure real commitments and track tangible financial investments to implement the NPGE effectively.

We aim to develop a well-defined operational plan with a budget for effectively implementing the NPGE with apparent gender transformative targets and strategies to guide policy actors, funders, and practitioners.

POLICY FOCUS

Policy Focus: Align the Education Sector Plan with the National Policy on Girls' Education to ensure a Gender-Transforming Education Sector.

POLICY POINTS

CONSOLIDATE: Map out corresponding strategies to develop a comprehensive gender transformative implementation plan and budget

COORDINATE: Establish a multi-sectoral taskforce of national and international partners to guide the holistic and coordinated execution of gender-transformative interventions.

EVALUATE: Support the Planning, Research and Development at MoE to set a comprehensive MEL e-platform and tools for tracking girls' education indicators in Liberia.

See page 8 for more details.

Consistent policy engagement and strategic budget advocacy initiatives will influence the size and distribution of government budgets.

The objective is to ensure adequate financial support for implementing the NPGE and Girls' Education in Liberia. Our advocacy focus is **to develop a well-defined operational plan with a budget for implementing the NPGE** with apparent gender transformative targets and strategies to guide policy actors, funders, and practitioners.

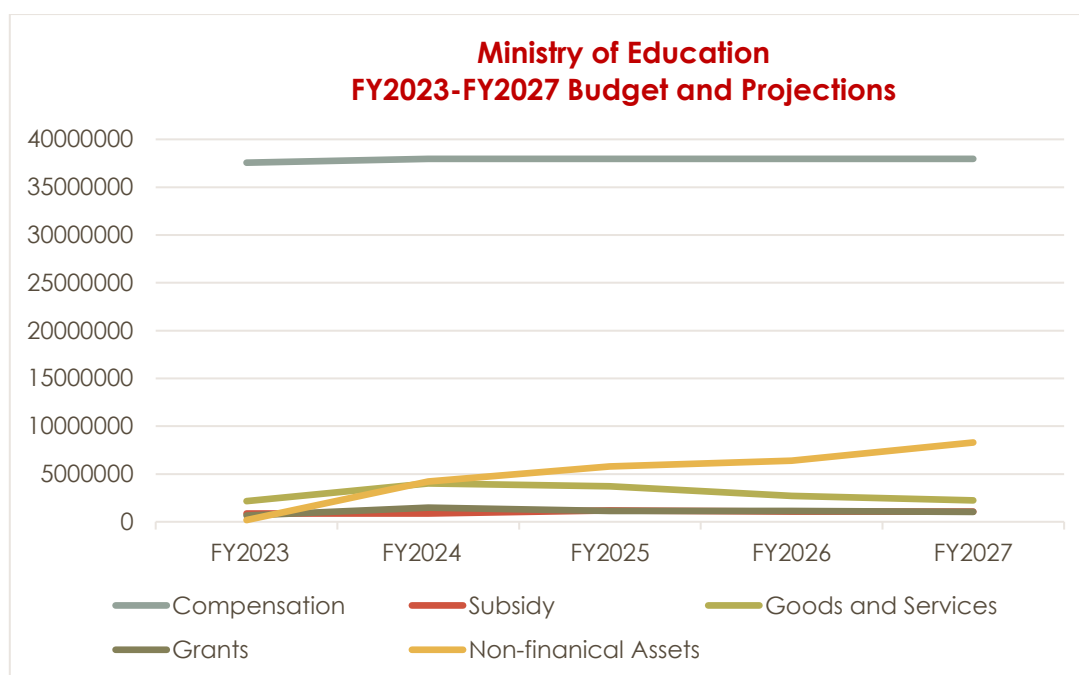
This Policy Brief analyzes the current financial investments in girls' education and recommends key strategies for action.

OVERVIEW OF THE FY2025 NATIONAL BUDGET ALLOCATION TO GIRLS' EDUCATION

Source: National Budget - Fiscal Year 2025¹ (Budget calculated in United States Dollars)

National Budget 2025						
301 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION						
Mission:						
Established by an Act of the National Legislature in 1912, the Ministry of Education has the mandate to plan and direct all educational programs in the country. The Ministry coordinates and regulates efforts of all national and international actors participating in every form of scholarly activity involving public and private schools, as well as out-of-school programs. At the higher education level, through the National Commission of Higher Education, the Ministry coordinates and closely monitors the work within the government's education plan.						
Achievements (FY2024):						
N/A						
Objectives (FY2025):						
Increase equitable access; Improve quality and relevance of teaching and learning; Strengthen efficiency and management capacity.						
	FY2023 Bud. Actual	FY2024 Budget	FY2024 Est Outturn	FY2025 Budget	FY2026 Projection	FY2027 Projection
Authorized Number of Positions - FTE	-	-	-	14,435	14,435	14,435
Summary by Major Object of Expenditure						
ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION	FY2023 Bud. Actual	FY2024 Budget	FY2024 Est Outturn	FY2025 Budget	FY2026 Projection	FY2027 Projection
21 COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES	37,561,604	37,959,399	29,971,693	37,959,399	37,959,399	37,959,399
22 USE OF GOODS AND SERVICES	2,162,045	4,011,994	4,279,783	3,717,057	2,716,764	2,232,787
25 SUBSIDY	873,444	868,250	456,384	1,187,000	1,068,300	1,068,300
26 GRANTS	657,673	1,481,750	842,665	1,135,000	1,135,000	1,021,500
31 NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS	181,824	4,230,747	0	5,800,000	6,380,000	8,294,000
Total	41,436,590	48,552,140	35,550,525	49,798,456	49,259,463	50,575,986

¹ Government of the Republic of Liberia, Draft National Budget - **Fiscal Year 2025**, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, www.Mfdp.Gov.Lr



1. Employee Compensation accounts for approximately 76% of the MoE budget, while Goods and Services account for 7%, totaling 83% of the ministry's budget allocated to staffing and administrative costs.
2. \$1,135,000 is allocated for Grants, and \$1,187,000 is allocated for Subsidies, totaling 4.6% of the MOE allocated for programming.
3. All the funds allocated for Girl's Education come from the funds earmarked for Grants.

Funds Directly Allocated for Girls Education

Girl-Centered Funding (26 Grants)	FY2023 Budget	FY2024 Budget	FY2025 Budget	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Budget
Transfer to Girls Education	0	0	100,000	100,000	90,000
Transfer to Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting	21,000	60,000	40,000	40,000	36,000
Total Funds	\$21,000	\$60,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$126,000

The achievement of the goals set out in the National Policy on Girls' Education heavily relies on adequate funding within the Ministry of Education's budget. **Chapter 8 (Resource Mobilization) of the NPGE** provides information on financing the National Policy on Girls' Education². Several strategies have been outlined to mobilize resources. A key strategy is **Budget Allocation**.

"The Ministry of Education is committed to allocating at least 5% of its annual fiscal year budget towards projects and programs promoting girls' education".
~National Policy on Girls Education, 2021-2026

² National Policy on Girls' Education 2021-2026, Government of Liberia

Let's do the Math.

Percentage of MOE's Budget Allocated to Girls Education

Fiscal Year	Total MOE Budget	Total Allocation to Girls' Education	Percentage of Total
FY2023	\$41,436,590.00	\$ 21,000.00	0% (0.0005068)
FY2024	\$48,552,140.00	\$ 60,000.00	0% (0.00123578)
FY2025	\$49,798,456.00	\$ 140,000.00	0% (0.00281133)
FY2026	\$49,259,463.00	\$ 140,000.00	0% (0.00284209)
FY2027	\$50,575,986.00	\$ 126,000.00	0% (0.0024913)

As per the National Policy on Girls' Education, the Ministry of Education has committed to allocating 5% of its budget to girls' education.

The total amount allocated for girls' education for the next three fiscal years is less than 1% of the ministry's budget.

5% of the total budget for FY 2025 is \$2,489,922

Critical issue: The Girl Education Division does not have adequate funds to support the effective implementation of the policy or roll out of national initiatives.

Think about the impact on girls in Liberia if \$2,489,922.00 (5%) of MOE's budget was allocated to girls' Education.

How do stakeholders work together to ensure that a minimum of \$2.5 million is allocated annually within the national budget to girls' education over the next three fiscal years?

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE FOR FINANCING GIRLS' EDUCATION

Liberia is a signatory to the Dakar 2000 Framework and the Incheon Declaration, which espoused increased funding for Education. The framework states that 20% of the national budget should be allotted to Education. Moreover, the National Policy on Girls' Education calls for 5% of the education budget directly allocated to girls' Education.

Through the Educate HER Coalition's efforts, stakeholders' knowledge and awareness of the NPGE have been enhanced, and stakeholders' commitment to promoting girls' Education has increased. However, real commitments must be aligned with financial investments. Much must be done to translate these commitments into increased budget support for girls' Education.

The Education Sector Plan (ESP) addresses barriers to girls' Education through cross-cutting initiatives that strengthen the gender-responsiveness of the education management and accountability system. Per the ESP, the projected funding gap without external funding is large, totaling USD 325.5 million over the plan period and representing 34 percent of the total plan cost. The Education Sector Analysis outlines the significance of addressing funding gaps in ESP financing. However, the ESP doesn't capture whether the total investment in Girls' Education over multiple years will reach the 5% MoE annual budget minimum threshold mandated by the NPGE. Greater alignment and harmonization between the NPGE and ESP, as well as increased funding and political will, are needed to translate policy commitments into concrete actions and results for girls' education.

The Educate HER coalition was invited to attend the 2024 Legislative Joint Committee on Education 2-Day Stakeholders Retreat. The retreat highlighted critical challenges and potential solutions to improve the education sector through presentations, discussions, and collaborative group work. The coalition advocated for inclusivity, efficient resource allocation for girls' education, and the strengthening of TVET programs to transform the education system in Liberia. A Joint Resolution was developed outlining key priority actions. Those relating to girls' education are as follows:



- **Access for Marginalized Groups:** Design and implement programs that specifically address the educational needs of girls, children with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. This includes scholarships, mentorship programs, and accessible learning materials.
- **Community Engagement:** Work with communities to address cultural and economic barriers to education, including early marriage, child labor, and poverty, by raising awareness and creating supportive structures for keeping children in school.
- **Inclusive Curriculum:** Ensure the national curriculum reflects diverse learning needs and abilities, incorporating inclusive education strategies that address the unique challenges faced by marginalized students.

The National Legislature has plans to roll out the Public Expenditure and Research Tracking Survey (PETS). PETS aligns with national goals of improving education access, retention, and quality. By collecting data on budget allocations, resource distribution, and school infrastructure, this survey will identify gaps that hinder educational progress. This evidence-based approach will inform policy reforms, improve budgetary planning, and ensure equitable resource allocation. Key activities include data collection, analysis, and dissemination. The outcomes will guide legislators in making informed decisions and addressing pressing needs in Liberia's education sector. This initiative will also enable civil society to:

- access and influence the budget decision-making processes
- track available financial resources to support girls' Education and
- identify the funding gaps for points of public review and advocacy.

GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Though stakeholders' knowledge and awareness of the NPGE have been enhanced, there is a need for increased stakeholder commitment with actionable recommendations for financing girls' education. However, several challenges and gaps hinder increased budgetary support for girls' education.

1. Budgetary constraints and non-compliance from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Development, and the National Legislature to ensure 20% and 5% allocations set by the Dakar 2000 Framework and the National Policy on Girls' Education, respectively
2. There is a lack of access to information on public expenditure on Education.
3. Budgeting and auditing are closed-door operations with minimal participation from civil society.
4. Limited representation of women and girls in decision-making spaces.
5. Much lip service is still paid to address gender issues in Liberia effectively.
6. Policymakers lack the political will and limited interest to fund and fully implement national frameworks/policies that support girls' education.
7. The allocation of funds does not necessarily ensure full disbursement of the allocated funds.
8. There are bureaucratic delays in disbursement of funds. For instance, private universities faced difficulties withdrawing funds allocated in the national budget due to bureaucratic red tape.
9. Lack of sufficient funding for inclusive educational programs, particularly those focused on girls' education, remains a critical issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct Budget Advocacy

Budget advocates and civil society need the capacity to analyze budget data and access opportunities and platforms to engage decision-makers at key points to increase their chances of influencing budget policies and outcomes. The key points of entry and accountability documents are shown below:



2. Diversify Funding Streams

Key donors and influential organizations have shown commitment to girls' education. The Education Sector Plan, GPE Compact, System Capacity Grant, and the EXCEL program have key targets and funding outlined to support girls' education in Liberia. The National Policy on Girls' Education also highlights several potential local funding sources to enhance girls' educational opportunities. Outside of donor funding, these include:

- County and Social Development Funds,
- Government taxes/levies and concessions agreements
- Public-private partnerships
- Corporate social responsibility mandates and programs
- Community contributions and
- Contributions from the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs)

3. Identify the Priorities

According to UNICEF³, including girls in quality education could boost developing countries by \$112 billion yearly. Beyond economics, this shift could support social justice, reduce gender-based violence, and empower women in decision-making. The Girls Education Taskforce can research the gendered root causes for the lack of access and early dropout, such as poverty, lack of parental guidance, cultural practices, SRGBV,

³ <https://www.unicef.org/media/113166/file/Gender%20Transformative%20Education.pdf>

school distances or location, and the quality of the learning environment, and develop strategies to address these challenges. These strategies should be earmarked as priority funding areas.

4. Track the Funds

Government funding and other donor support should be tracked and reported regularly. Chapter 7 of the NPGE (Overall Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators) outlines key financial indicators used to evaluate the extent to which the policy's objectives are achieved. These indicators include;

- Public Expenditure on Education as a % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Public Expenditure on Education as a % of Total Government Expenditure
- Public Recurrent Expenditure on Education as a % of Total Government Recurrent Expenditure
- Unit Cost (public recurrent expenditure per pupil) by Level

Additional education financing indicators to be tracked are:

- Proportion of the national education budget allocated to girls' education programs.
- Proportion of grants allocated to girls' education interventions.
- Proportion of schools receiving school grants or other financial support for girls' education.
- Proportion of girls receiving scholarships, stipends, or other financial incentives.

This can be achieved by empowering the requisite units/departments at MOE to track these indicators annually, just as other indicators have received attention in the previous annual school census.

CONCLUSION

Multiple actors have invested significantly in girls' education in Liberia, but challenges persist. Key findings include:

- a. The government has demonstrated commitment by developing policies and frameworks, but implementation and funding gaps remain.
- b. International donors, NGOs, and civil society organizations have provided critical financial support, technical assistance, research, and advocacy to support girls' Education; however, the adequate tracking of exact allocations to girls' education, expenditures, and long-term impact remains a gap.
- c. The private sector has contributed through corporate social responsibility initiatives, school adoptions, and public-private partnerships, again, the adequate tracking of exact allocation to girls' education, expenditures and long-term impact remains a gap.
- d. Despite these investments, sustainable funding is an ongoing challenge, particularly for infrastructure and addressing socio-cultural barriers.
- e. Increased domestic resource mobilization and coordinated efforts among stakeholders are desperately needed.

We aim to develop a well-defined operational plan with a budget for the effective implementation of the National Policy on Girls Education (2021-2026), aligned with and supported by the Education Sector Plan (2023-2026), that will provide apparent gender transformative targets and strategies for policy actors, funders and practitioners.

Policy Focus: Align the Education Sector Plan to the National Policy on Girls Education to ensure a Gender Transformative Education Sector

1. **CONSOLIDATE: Map out corresponding strategies to develop a comprehensive gender transformative implementation plan.** The plan will identify the key strategies for promoting girls' Education as outlined in both documents and develop gender transformative outcomes that will produce joint results for the ESP and NPGE. This plan will help to consolidate the financial and technical resources to meet joint targets. The implementation will focus on consolidating the financial resources available in reaching the girls education financing target of at least 5% of the Ministry of Education budget. The strategies will consider the perspective of diverse education stakeholders.
2. **COORDINATE: Set up a multi-sectoral taskforce of national and international partners to guide the execution of gender-transformative interventions in a holistic and coordinated manner.** There is a strategy in the ESP to develop an inter-sectoral task team to research the gendered root causes for the lack of access and early dropout, such as poverty, lack of parental guidance, cultural practices, SRGBV, school distances or location, and the quality of the learning environment and develop strategies to address these challenges. This taskforce should also be mandated to review and advise on policies and programming, to ensure the collective efforts of education officials and stakeholders are more gender transformative.
3. **EVALUATE: Support the Planning, Research and Development department at MoE to set a comprehensive MEL e-platform and tools for tracking girls' Education in Liberia.** The government can ensure its commitment to research and develop in Education by approving the National Education Sector Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Policy. Education partners can lend their technical and financial support in developing and managing a comprehensive M&E Tool and system for Girls Education. Tracking of the 16 indicators listed in the NPGE can be supported by the development of a database framework for girls' Education. This database will translate into tools like the Girls' Education Report Card which will inform decision-making and adequate financing for Girls' Education. This will unequivocally boost targeted and cross-sector investments, driving inclusive and sustainable gender mainstreaming and integration efforts forward.

EDUCATE HER'S CURRENT COMMITMENT

Since 2022, Educate HER has worked closely with the Department of Planning, Research, and Development to conduct quarterly data collection and analysis on girls' Education. We are committed to expanding that partnership to provide tangible supports that align with section 3.1 of the ESP and section 7 of the NPGE. With financial support from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) Education Out Loud through Oxfam Denmark, we will partner with MoE to develop and manage the National Girls Education Dashboard. This dashboard allows stakeholders to access (gender-) disaggregated data needed to inform school policies and gender-specific programming and accelerate the implementation of the National Policy on Girls' Education. Educate HER intends to ensure data related to girls' education in Liberia is collected in line with the Girls' Education Policy, is up to date, and is publicly available for education stakeholders to review for program planning, education financing, and policy review.

ABOUT THE EDUCATE HER COALITION

The Educate HER Coalition advocates for implementing policies that promote girls' education in Liberia. Their work focuses on leveraging strategic partnerships and strategic advocacy initiatives to promote gender equity and equality in education. The coalition strives to maintain already established relationships with the key stakeholders. It builds strategic partnerships with government line ministries, civil society organizations, donors, women's rights groups, autonomous social movements, and media institutions to promote gender equality and equity in education in Liberia. This coalition currently comprises approximately 30 civil society organizations, women's rights groups, media institutions, and allies committed to gender programming and advocacy in the education sector.

The Educate HER Coalition is supported by the Educate HER Consortium, which comprises two women-led civil society organizations in Liberia: Helping Our People Excel (HOPE) and Paramount Young Women Initiative (PAYOWI). HOPE and PAYOWI are national-level, women-led organizations with experience in advocacy, education, policy development, and gender mainstreaming. To join the Educate HER coalition, please get in touch with us at info@educateherlib.com

Visit our website: www.educateherlib.com to access the Girls Education Dashboard and download the electronic copy of this document and the publications listed below:

- Desk Review of Gender-Responsive Interventions in Education: Informing GPE Program Development in Liberia
- Simplified Version and Full Version of the National Policy on Girls Education
- Educate HER Policy Brief: Align the Education Sector Plan with the National Policy on Girls Education
- EDUCATE HER: Increasing Financial Investment for Gender Equality and Equity in Education Budget Policy
- Mapping of National Education Policy and Decision-Making Forums & Platforms
- And more!

Educate HER

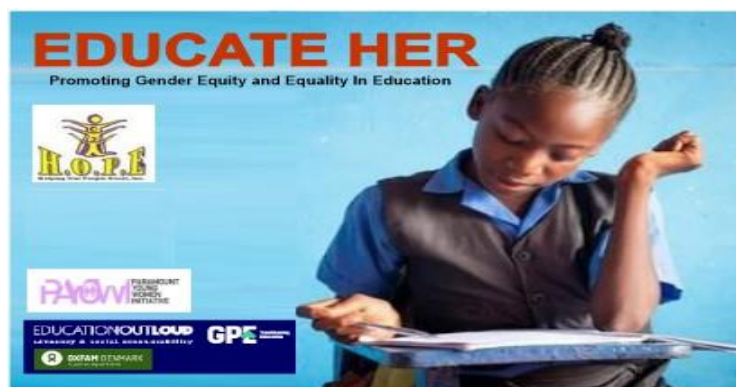
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Educate HER seeks to improve the implementation and monitoring of the National Policy on Girls' Education by increasing the commitment of policymakers and key stakeholders to create an enabling environment and improve the monitoring and accountability of county and national stakeholders.