

## FOCUS ON

## Health and Education



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Reaching children, adolescents and young adults with services that span health and education is an emerging priority for the Global Fund. Efforts to end AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are intimately connected to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure quality education for all, empower women and girls, and encourage inclusive economic growth.

### The Challenge

HIV, TB and malaria are serious threats to communities' education attainment; this is particularly true for children, adolescents and women, who are disproportionately affected by the diseases. Gender inequality, discrimination and limited access to economic opportunities inhibit young women's and girls' access to health care and education, and fuel new infections. Due to early pregnancy, poor academic performance, significant responsibilities at home and other social challenges, girls are at greater risk to drop out of school prematurely – with girls out of school being three times more likely to contract HIV than girls who stay in school. In the hardest-hit countries in East and Southern Africa, girls account for more than 80 percent of all new infections among adolescents. Young children are also among the most vulnerable to malaria. Repeated bouts of malaria can affect intellectual development and reduce school attendance.

### The Opportunity

When linked together, education and health lead to more stable and prosperous communities. Investing in children's health improves their ability to learn and helps reduce school absenteeism and health expenses for families.

There is strong evidence that keeping girls and young women in school not only reduces their vulnerability to HIV infection but can yield healthy, educated and financially independent women who make well-informed choices about their lives. And it makes a difference for generations to come. A study published in the *Lancet* showed that secondary school students in Botswana who stayed in school for an additional year had an eight percent lower risk of HIV infection about a decade later.

Securing access to quality education for girls throughout adolescence can also lower young women's risk of being exposed to cervical cancer,

tuberculosis, malaria and gender-based violence. In Namibia, Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon and partners are working to integrate cervical cancer programming into their HIV grants from the Global Fund, to improve women's health as part of efforts to end the HIV epidemic by 2030.

## The Global Fund Approach

The Global Fund makes strategic investments to respond to the unique needs of youth and address gender norms that drive violence, or prevent adolescent boys and girls from accessing comprehensive health services and better education. In partnership with the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Education and the private sector, the Global Fund supports countries in providing holistic and coordinated services for adolescent girls and boys where this is needed most. The Global Fund is also expanding our investments to support malaria control efforts and strengthen access to antenatal care. A recent study found that Global Fund investments in malaria control campaigns had a significant impact on the reductions in schooling delay in 16 of the 22 countries studies.

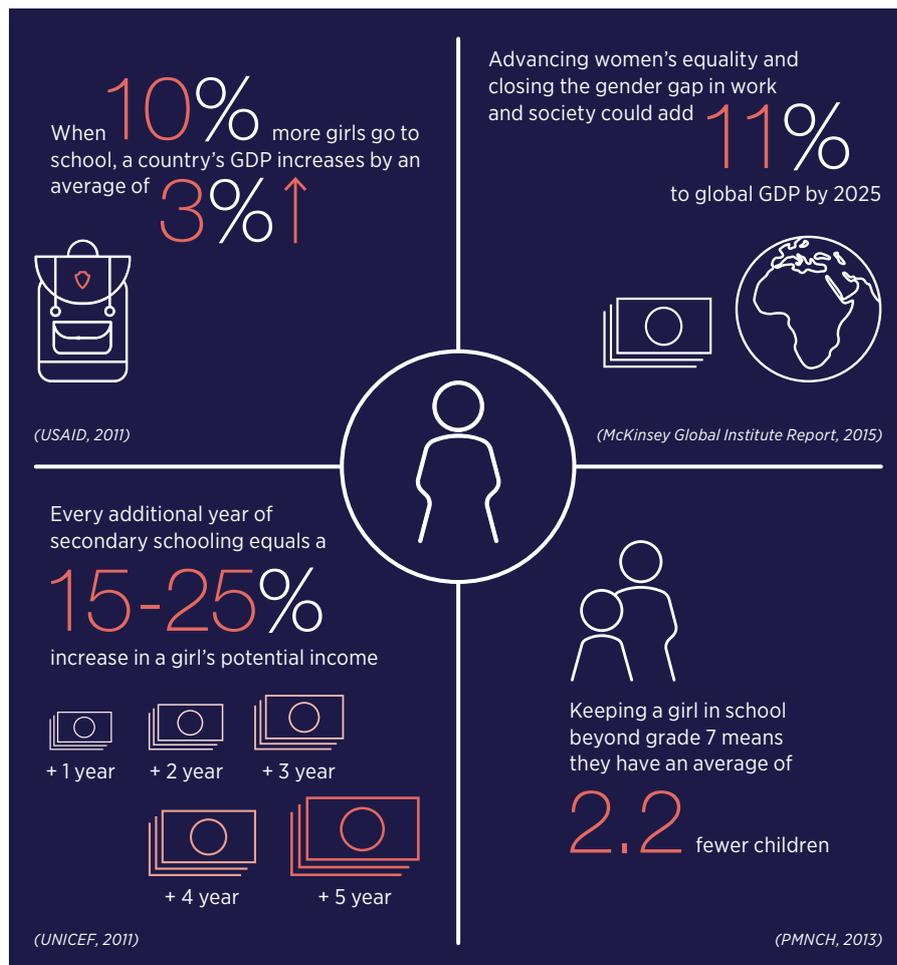
In South Africa, the Global Fund supports Keeping Girls In School programs to help adolescent girls stay healthy and stay in school. The program, run by young peer group trainers, provides counseling, HIV prevention education and academic support to more than 61,000 girls who are at greater risk of dropping out of school prematurely.

Incentive programs to keep girls in school have proven to be effective means to remove barriers to education for girls and reduce high-risk sexual behavior among both girls and boys.

Girls and young women who receive incentives report less frequent sex and are less likely to report having older partners. In Swaziland, the Global Fund partnership supports cash and care programs to reach girls and young women living in environments with high HIV rates. The approach blends economic support with psychosocial services to improve the well-being of girls and their families.

In Malawi, where adolescent girls now comprise almost a third of new HIV infections, global health partners are

supporting in-school and out-of-school clubs to help girls take charge of their lives, and support boys and young men to recognize their role in enabling gender equality. In the Koche primary school in Mangochi, Southern Malawi, the results are particularly impressive. Between 2016 and 2017, the number of girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancies went from 57 to three. Absenteeism is also plummeting. More than 6,000 girls and boys have been enrolled in these clubs.



## About the Global Fund

The Global Fund is a 21st-century organization designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics. As a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases, the Global Fund mobilizes and invests nearly US\$4 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in more than 100 countries. The Global Fund's operating costs are approximately 2 percent of grants under management, reflecting an exceptionally high degree of efficiency. By challenging barriers and embracing innovative approaches, we are working together to better serve people affected by the diseases.

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