

## Challenges girls face having access to education



Furthering my education was never a second thought. I got good grades throughout high school, received scholarships for college, and was inspired to pursue a career in journalism, something I've been passionate about for years.

I'm a News Writer for Northern Arizona University's (NAU) student-run newspaper, [The Lumberjack](#), where 80% of the news section writers are women. Not only are women dominating the writer's room, but they're dominating university demographics. NAU consists of 68% female and female-identifying students, with 42% male and male-identifying students. Women in the US workforce make up over half of all payroll jobs, as stated in an [NPR article](#). This isn't the reality for most women in other countries.

My education is a privilege to others. Women face discrimination in terms of education in many countries around the world, including Cambodia, Palestine, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa, and Kenya, just to name a few. In these countries, women are either not permitted to go to school; there is a poor tradition of women not attending school, or, worst of all, women feel threatened, causing a low literacy rate among women. In this day and age, it seems like this wouldn't be an issue, but access to education for women is still a controversial topic in the fight for equality.

To address these inequities, the United Nations (UN) created the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 to share a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet that would fully function by 2030. Two of them focus on gender equality for women:

**Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.** Quality Education enables upward socioeconomic mobility and is a key to escaping poverty. Education helps reduce inequalities and reach gender equality and is crucial to fostering tolerance and more peaceful societies. Over the past decade, major progress has been made towards increasing access to education and school enrollment rates, particularly for girls. Nevertheless, about 258 million children globally were still out of school in 2018 — 5.5 million more girls than boys. As for progress on this goal, the primary school completion rate reached 84% in 2018, up from 70% in 2000, and, under current trends, is expected to reach 89% globally by 2030.

**Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.** Gender Equality is a fundamental human right. Empowering women and girls is essential to expanding economic growth and promoting social development. Women and girls represent half of the world's

population and, therefore, half of its potential. But today, gender inequality persists everywhere and stagnates social progress. Women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of political leadership, although their representation in the political arena is higher than ever before.

kimberelements works towards creating equal opportunity for the next generation of inspiring women by dedicating 10% of each jewelry purchase to providing educational opportunities for artisans' daughters to study and pursue a career in wildlife conservation. This will support the next generation of environmental stewards. The financial, social, and physical barriers that deny education to girls are numerous and nearly impossible for all but the most determined to overcome.

Women are still fighting for equality in every aspect of life. From women in Iran protesting the strict hijab rules to women in America fighting to regain their reproductive rights, women all around the world are striving to simply be “at the table.” To be included in the discussion, education for all is the first step in the right direction.