

Gender Equity, Education, and Health

Lesson Plan 1

2017

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the concept of “health” as more than an absence of disease. By analyzing the social context in Malala’s case, students will learn to identify the determinants of health, or the environmental, social, and economic conditions outside the body, that may affect health. More specifically, students will describe barriers that children face when trying to attend school, and what these factors look like especially for girls.

Learner Level

- High School

Time

One 1-hour session

Required Materials

- Copies of the case, “[Malala Yousafzai: A Young Female Activist](#)” (included in teaching pack)
- Copies of “Exhibit A: Statistics Snapshot – Pakistan and United States” (included in teaching pack)
- Computer, projector
- Copies of the [17 Sustainable Development Goals infographic](#)

Lesson Summary

This short case describes the 2012 shooting of Malala Yousafzai, a 14-year-old girl in Pakistan, by members of the Taliban due to her educational activism. Students read about the shooting and reactions from the national and international community and Malala herself. The case examines Malala’s shooting within the context of Pakistan and her advocacy work.

Learning Goals

1. Describe how girls’ education is related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Compare and contrast cross-country data on gender equity and connect to a case study.
3. Understand how poverty, education, and gender equity are related to population health.

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Lesson Plan: Gender Equity, Education, and Health

Procedure

Read the case “[Malala Yousafzai: A Young Female Activist](#),” which shares the story of Pakistani girls’ education activist, Malala Yousafzai.

To warm up the class, elicit students’ ideas about the barriers Malala experienced while trying to go to school; write them on the board.

Now that students have identified barriers to education, have them reflect on the consequences of limited access to education with the person next to them: If a girl receives little or no schooling when she grows up, will it be harder or easier for her to have or do the things in the table below? Why?

Table 1 – Girl’s Life as a Grown-Up Activity

Girl’s Life as a Grown-Up	Easier	Harder	Why?
Extra savings			
A family			
Food to eat on a daily basis			
Safe Shelter			
Health			
Independence			
Type of job she has			
Write a letter			
Amount of money she may make			
Make decisions about her body			
Choices about the type of job she can look for			
Get news			
Use a smart phone (text, web, etc.)			
Other things you can think of:			

Lesson Plan: Gender Equity, Education, and Health

Debrief by asking students to share what surprised them, which items might have confused them, or if they believe the things they have selected affect a person's quality of life. Students may not agree on all of the answers, and these points of tension can facilitate interesting dialogue.

Watch "[Malala Introducing 'The World's Largest Lesson'](#)," a six-minute video about the United Nations' global goals for sustainable development, also known as the "Global Goals" or the "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." The 17 goals aim to help the global community end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.

Pass out a handout of [The Global Goals for Sustainable Development](#) and allow students time skim them briefly. Discuss why Malala is introducing the SDGs in the video. How might her story and her mission about girls' education relate the SDGs, if at all?

Why does education matter?

Education is the key that will allow many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved. When people are able to get quality education they can break from the cycle of poverty. Education therefore helps to reduce inequalities and to reach gender equality. It also empowers people everywhere to live more healthy and sustainable lives. Education is also crucial to fostering tolerance between people and contributes to more peaceful societies.

Source: [United Nations](#)

Why does gender equality matter?

Women and girls represent half of the world's population and therefore also half of its potential. But today gender inequality persists everywhere and stagnates social progress. Disadvantages in education translate into lack of access to skills and limited opportunities in the labor market. Women's and girls' empowerment is essential to expand economic growth and promote social development. The full participation of women in labor forces would add percentage points to most national growth rates—double digits in many cases.

Source: [United Nations](#)

Divide students into small groups and have them examine Exhibit A: Statistics Snapshot – Pakistan and United States (included in teaching pack), which provides an overview of specific data and indicators the global community is tracking in Pakistan and the United States.

Assign each group one set of statistics—extreme hunger and poverty, universal primary education, gender equality, maternal health, environmental sustainability—to discuss the inequities reflected in the data. Students should discuss the following questions in their groups:

How does Malala's situation—or girls' education more broadly—relate to the statistics you are looking at?

- e.g., Lack of a toilet might make it difficult for young girls to stay in school, especially during their menstrual cycle.

Jot down three observations that pique your interest about the data across countries (Pakistan vs. United States). Why do these comparisons intrigue you?

- e.g., There's surprisingly a similar percentage of women holding national parliament seats in the United States and Pakistan.
- e.g., Almost twice as many people have access to toilets in the United States than in Pakistan.

Lesson Plan: Gender Equity, Education, and Health

- e.g., Almost 16 times more mothers die per 100,000 infants born in Pakistan than in the United States.

Debrief as a class, selecting a few groups to present their rationale or share their observations.

Wrap up the first lesson with students journaling about their personal experience: What factors shape their own ability to go to school? How are they similar or different from Malala's experience?

Summary

Students have observed what barriers children may face when trying to attend school. Next, they thought about these factors within the context of being a girl (gender) and considered the possible negative long-term consequences that may result if a girl can't go to school. These factors that they've identified in the case and in their own context are social determinants. These are conditions that affect a person's health but don't necessarily have to do directly with disease—the circumstances of their life.