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**“Does Gender Inequality in Education
have an Impact on Economic
Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa?”**

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Problem statement, research method and results:

The aim of this article is to analyse the impact of gender inequality in education on economic growth. The differences between boys' and girls' schooling are greatest in regions with the lowest primary school completion rates and lowest average incomes. In Sub-Saharan Africa the ratio of girls' to boys' enrolled in primary and secondary school has barely changed since 1990. In South Asia the progress has been greater. We tackle this problem using cross-country regressions (similar approach to Barro 1991 and Klasen 1999). The explanatory variables that we use are the ones typically used in economic growth literature (logarithm of income, investment, openness, population growth, labour force growth,...) and in addition to that we use specific gender inequality variables (female-male ratio in years of schooling, the female-male ratio of growth in the years of schooling,...). The results that we get show that gender inequality hinders economic growth. We compare the different regions' growth rate and we simulate how much bigger could have been the economic growth of Sub-Saharan Africa if they had the same schooling ratio of East Asia and Pacific. One of the millennium development goals consists in empowering women and it requires to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015. In Sub-Saharan Africa the gender inequality in terms of years of schooling is still very high (it has barely changed since 1990); it will be hard to achieve equality by 2015.

We conclude our paper stating that reducing gender inequality in education is not only an equity issue but it also has the capability to enhance economic growth.

Abstract

Education is a powerful lever for poverty reduction and economic growth. Many countries continue to face enormous access constraints to education. Two-thirds of out-of-school children are girls, who are particularly affected by poor families' inability to pay school charges, tuition, books and uniform. In our paper, using cross-country regressions, we investigate to what extent gender gaps in education reduce economic growth. We update the results of previous studies on education gaps on growth where now data stretches until 2000. We calculate the magnitude of the effects of gender inequality on economic growth by comparing actual growth in the Sub-Saharan Africa with growth that would have taken place had they had the much smaller gender gaps in education of East Asia and the Pacific. Our point estimates suggest that the growth 'costs' of gender gaps in education, when considered alone, amount to about 0.5 percentage points per capita per year.