



20.10.2016 – In developing countries, if every 10 year-old girl had the opportunity to complete her high school education, States could generate \$21 billion per year, according to the [State of the World Population report 2016](#)

(  
[#SWOP2016](#)  
) by the UN Population Fund (  
[UNFPA](#)  
).

Investing in girls' education and healthcare benefits everyone. According to the report, being 10 years old is a crucial stage because children that age start making choices that will have consequences for the rest of their education. Today, out of 125 million 10 year-old children, 60 million are girls who are often underprivileged. In some parts of the world, 10-year-old girls are treated like objects destined to a life of servitude. They are too often taken out of school, forced to marry and bear children too early.

Currently, in developing countries, one out of three girls is married before she reaches her 18th birthday. According to [UNESCO](#) , 31 million girls are not attending primary school and it is possible that 17 million of them will never have the opportunity to go.

Girls also have lesser chances than boys to complete secondary school or university as they are more vulnerable to physical and mental health issues and will have more difficulties getting a paid job.

In 2015, all of the 193 UN member-States adopted an ambitious development programme known as the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) . According to UNFPA, the obstacles young girls face are a significant burden on the probabilities of success for this programme.

Thus, fighting against the inequalities that girls at age 10 can encounter is essential to increase the odds of the SDGs being successful. To do so, there are a number of paths we can follow, such as banning child marriage, allocating financial help to parents with low incomes so that they can send their daughters to school, giving access to proper sexual education for all ages, and the list goes on.

“Preventing a girl from living a safe and healthy childhood in order to make her a reproductive and autonomous adult too soon is a violation of her rights”, claimed Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, UNFPA’s Executive Director. “But it also takes a toll on her community and her country. Every time a girl’s potential and talent are not nurtured and tapped, we are all diminished.”

### **Additional links:**

- [State of the World Population Report 2016](#)
- [UN Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)
- [UNESCO](#)

