

Ages: 11+

Form 8-10 groups (or pairs). Explain that a children's rights organisation has called a meeting to find out why girls are not getting an education.

Six groups will take on the following roles: girl, parents, teacher, government, an international children's rights organisation, and a local children's organisation. The remaining groups will act collectively as a panel of international leaders set up to decide whether girls should have the same opportunities to go to school as boys. Where possible try to ensure a gender balance within each group.

Allow the groups playing each of the roles five minutes to discuss their role. The remaining groups (the 'panel') should study the role cards and each identify a key question that they want to ask each of the five role-playing groups.

Ask for a volunteer to chair the discussion. Each of the five role-playing groups should present their case to the whole class as to whether the girl should have access to education. The groups that make up the panel then vote on whether they feel that girls should have equal access to education.

Discuss:

- What were the main barriers to the girl getting an education?
- Is this fair?
- Which / whose arguments did the class feel were the strongest?
- What are the likely impacts of the decision on the girl in terms of health and employment opportunities?
- What can be done to allow girls to go to school?

Adapted, with kind permission, from an activity in 'Chilled Out, Not Worn Out' (NYCI 2004).

72 million children are missing out on school

SEND MY FRIEND 08

Girls Allowed

Role Cards

<p>Girl I'm up at six every morning to light the fire and cook. Then I have to fetch water. I bring a meal at midday to my parents. My parents say that they can't afford to educate me. Anyway, they say I'll be getting married soon so my husband will provide for me. But I don't want that. My younger brother will start school soon. I dream of going to school and getting an education. Then I'd become a teacher and help other girls to realise their potential.</p>	<p>Government We are proud of our education record. Under this Government, we have built schools and made education free. However, many parents did not get an education so they don't send their daughters to school. There's very little we can do about it. Most people are living in poverty. Education for girls is not a priority to them. A major problem we face is that there aren't enough teachers. We've asked the international community for support, but while they are big on words, they don't back it up with money.</p>
<p>Parents It is a daily struggle just to put food on the table. We both have to work long hours so we need our daughter to stay at home and look after the younger children. Otherwise who will cook their meals and clean the house? Of course we'd like her to be educated, but it would be easier to do if she was a boy. They can earn far more money. She'll be getting married soon, so our investment in her education would only benefit her husband's family.</p>	<p>International Children's Rights Organisation We are a large international organisation that works throughout the world. We strongly believe that educating girls is essential if countries are to tackle poverty. Currently girls are less likely to receive an education than boys and we have the figures to prove it – 57% of the children missing out on education are girls. Educating girls reduces the incidence of HIV infection and deaths from AIDS, reduces malnutrition and increases food supply.</p>
<p>Teacher The Government says that education is free, but the parents have to pay for a uniform, for school books and for exams. I sympathise with the parents but I also need to be paid. There have been some incidents recently of girls being attacked on the long walk home from school. There should be more local schools. This will require more teachers, paid properly, to replace the ones who have to seek other work, and proper health care packages so that teachers who get ill can recover and come back to work.</p>	<p>Local Children's Organisation We are a children's organisation that works for children in our community. We strongly believe that educating girls is essential if we are to tackle poverty. Too many girls are dropping out of school before they can finish their education because they can't afford school fees and need to stay at home to look after their families.</p>

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