

Boys & Education: What Does Gender-Transformative Education Look Like?

Key takeaways for educators, policymakers, and practitioners

Boys are falling behind girls on measures including school completion, graduation, and grade-level achievement in more than 90 countries, according to research reviews by [UNESCO](#) and the [World Bank](#). These patterns vary across contexts and are shaped by poverty, school quality, social norms, violence, and pressure on boys to enter paid work.

Supporting boys should accompany continued efforts to advance girls' education and gender equality. Evidence presented in the Global Boyhood Initiative webinar also challenges the idea that boys inherently learn differently from girls. High-quality teaching and supportive school environments benefit all students.

What does gender-transformative education look like in practice?

- **Challenge harmful gender norms.** Give young people opportunities to examine expectations around masculinity, femininity, power, violence, care, relationships, and emotional expression.
- **Engage the wider school community.** Teachers, school leaders, parents, caregivers, and communities all shape the norms children encounter.
- **Connect gender with practical skills.** Room to Read shared early learning from Cambodia combining gender transformative content with communication, relationships, and school success. Parents and schools reported changes including boys contributing more at home and fewer conflicts.
- **Create opportunities for boys and girls to learn together.** Mixed-gender sessions can help young people listen to one another and reconsider assumptions, while separate spaces can be useful for sensitive topics.
- **Address violence and inequality across the school environment.** Effective approaches include safe reporting systems and attention to how gender intersects with other forms of disadvantage.
- **Embed gender equality across the whole school.** Gender-transformative education works best when it is not confined to a single lesson or curriculum. It should be reflected in school policies, teacher training, classroom practices, leadership, safeguarding, extracurricular activities, and the ways schools respond to gendered behavior and violence. The goal is to create a school environment that consistently models the norms and relationships students are being encouraged to build.

Schools shape more than academic performance. Gender-transformative education can support boys to stay engaged in learning, build healthier relationships, and embrace more emotionally connected and nonviolent ways of being, while contributing to greater gender equality.

About the Global Boyhood Initiative

The [Global Boyhood Initiative](#) is coordinated by Equimundo. Co-founded in 2020 by Equimundo and the Kering Foundation, it supports boys ages 4 to 13 and the adults in their lives with resources to promote healthy masculinity and gender equality.