The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom. In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. The activity is structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Students are encouraged to further reflect on the issues.

Core Skill Sets: These icons identify the most relevant core skills students will develop using this resource. Learn more about the WE Learning Framework at www.WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/learning-framework/.

With the opening of Ngulot, a new all-boys secondary school, boys will soon be celebrating their academic achievements. Photo source: Ken Galloway.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap report looks at the state of equality between men and women in 144 countries around the world. According to the 2016 Global Gender Gap Report:
  - The world achieved 95 percent equality in education.
  - The gender gap in health was 96 percent closed. That means women and men are having their health needs met equally in most countries.
  - However, the gender gap in economic opportunity is still at only 59 percent closed.
  - And the gender gap when it comes to women’s participation in politics is still huge, with only 23 percent participation by women in politics across 144 countries.
- Promoting women’s equality and empowerment was the third of eight Millennium Development Goals created by the United Nations in 2000 to reduce extreme poverty in the world. The specific target of this goal was to eliminate the gap between boys and girls in both primary and secondary education. (United Nations)
- In 2015, the Millennium Development Goals expired and were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG Goal number five is “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” By the year 2030, the UN hopes to:
  - Eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls.
  - End violence against women and girls.
  - End harmful practices like child marriage.
  - Get countries to recognize the value of the unpaid domestic work that women do, through public services and social programs that support women.
  - Create equal participation for women in national and international politics.
  - Create universal access to female reproductive health services.
  - Promote political reforms that give women more access to economic opportunities and ownership of land and property.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS
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KEY TERMS
- **Equity**—Giving people what they need in order to succeed by creating a level playing field—compensating for disadvantages due to gender, race or other factors. This is different from equality, which simply means treating everyone the same.
- **Power dynamics**—The differing ability of groups within society to have influence and make their voices heard.
- **Social norms**—Unwritten rules and expectations for behaviour and roles in society.
THEMES AND COURSE CONNECTIONS

- **Themes:** Education, Values and Ethics, Global Issues, Women’s Rights
- **Course Connections:** Language, Social Studies

MATERIALS

- Front board
- Paper and writing utensils
- Computer/tablet with Internet access and video capability

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS AND LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Understand the difference of gender equity and gender equality
- Recognize the need for girls' education and empowerment as well as boys' education in developing countries

DISCUSS

1. What does International Women’s Day mean to you? Do you observe or celebrate the day?
2. What is the difference between equity and equality? What is the difference between gender equity and gender equality?
3. Why might overlooking boys and men when addressing gender inequalities make things worse?
4. The *Global Voices* article “Empower a girl, educate a boy” draws attention to the inequities in donations for schools, why do you think there was so much support for building all-girls schools and little support for building an all-boys school?
5. How can we promote and create gender equality at home and around the world?

DIVE DEEPER

Share with students the United Nations fifth Sustainable Development Goal: Gender Equality:

“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The great progress the world has made in becoming more prosperous and fair is worth celebrating. And yet, in just about every way, women and girls lag behind. There are still growing inequalities in work and wages, lots of unpaid “women’s work” such as child care and domestic work and discrimination in public decision-making. But there are grounds for hope. More girls are in school now compared to in 2000. Most regions have reached gender parity in primary education, The percentage of women getting paid for their work is on the rise. The Sustainable Development Goals aim to build on these achievements to ensure that there is an end to discrimination against women and girls everywhere. It’s a basic human right.”

Ask students, why is there a focus on girls and women empowerment in the gender equality Sustainable Development Goal?

Show students “A new mark of manhood—the high school diploma” [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Uw0sBkwjo&list=PL9seAzJtXcksa8j3CNEgpwl7YRHvyls&index=9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Uw0sBkwjo&list=PL9seAzJtXcksa8j3CNEgpwl7YRHvyls&index=9) (3:52). Follow the video by asking the following questions:

- How is the role of boys and men changing in the community shown in the video?
- Peter taught Francis an important lesson: “If you don’t step forward you will always remain in the same place.” How are Peter and Francis stepping forward?
- How might this focus on boys education create or contribute to gender equity?

Using information from the *Global Voices* article, the fifth Sustainable Development Goal and the video, create an awareness advertisement that promotes gender equality. The advertisement may focus on a specific gender but it must explain how gender equality is achieved through the promotion of that specific gender. Students may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Relevant statistical information (i.e., what the issues are)
- An attention grabber such as a compelling story (i.e., why the reader should care)
- Call to action (i.e., what can we do about it)

Alternatively, have students write a short paragraph explaining the connection between promoting either or both genders to achieving gender equality around the world.

Educator’s note: The World Health Organization uses the term gender to ensure that health policy, programmes, services and delivery models are responsive to the needs of women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity. Source: [www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/understanding/gender-definition/en/](http://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/understanding/gender-definition/en/)

RESOURCES

Plan International’s campaign for girls’ rights [plancanada.ca/because-i-am-a-girl](http://plancanada.ca/because-i-am-a-girl)