

In its most insidious form, gender inequality turns violent. Some 1 in 20 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 - around 15 million - have experienced forced sex. In times of both peace and conflict, adolescent girls face the highest risk of gender-based violence. A lot of girls worldwide are still subjected to child marriage and female genital mutilation - even though both have been internationally recognized as human rights violations. And violence can occur at birth, like in places where female infanticide is known to persist. Harmful gender norms are perpetuated at the highest levels. In some countries, they become entrenched in laws and policies that fail to uphold - or that even violate - girls' rights, like laws that restrict women from inheriting property in places like Nigeria.

Despite major hurdles that still deny them equal rights, girls refuse to limit their ambitions. More and more girls are attending and completing school, and the cases of FGM and child marriages have reduced drastically. To put a stop to gender inequality, girls and women need to strive more to have their voices heard. The government can also help to create more awareness and educate the public on the dangers of gender inequality and how to end it. Women should also be given a chance at work places to fully express themselves; you never can tell, in the midst of men, one woman can come up with a ground-breaking idea that can change the world. Also, at home, responsibilities should be shared equally among the children. All the burdens should not be placed on the female. We can all take a little action to eliminate gender inequality, so why not start today.

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### THE FEMALE CHILD AND HER SOCIETY

The topic above is a very vast one and it is rampant in our society and the world at large. We are basically talking about equality; seeing both the male child and female child as one. Both being exposed to the same opportunities and privileges. We know that gender equality and peace are so closely linked; peace is vital to promote gender equality because gender inequality can undermine peace and drive conflict and violence. It is clear that the constituency of women is a key resource for promoting peace and stability. Women can play a prominent leading role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in the restoration of the rule of law, governance and democracy. And yet, still women are missing from the centre of discussions. Where are the voices of women? The voices of those who have suffered and lost so much and yet remain so resilient?

Girls see gender inequality in their homes and communities every day - in the media and among the adults who care for them. Parents may assume unequal responsibility for household work, with mothers bearing the brunt of caregiving and chores. Yet, in early childhood, gender disparities start out small. According to UNICEF, girls have higher survival rates at birth, are more likely to be developmentally on track, and are just as likely to participate in preschool. This trend goes on to the onset of adolescence, where significant barriers to girl's well-being are brought up. Gender norms and discrimination heighten their risk of unwanted pregnancy, HIV and AIDs, and malnutrition. Especially in emergency situations and places where menstruation remains taboo, girls are cut off from the information and supplies they need to stay healthy and safe.