

# **Gender Equity in Education: Helping the Boys Catch Up**

By

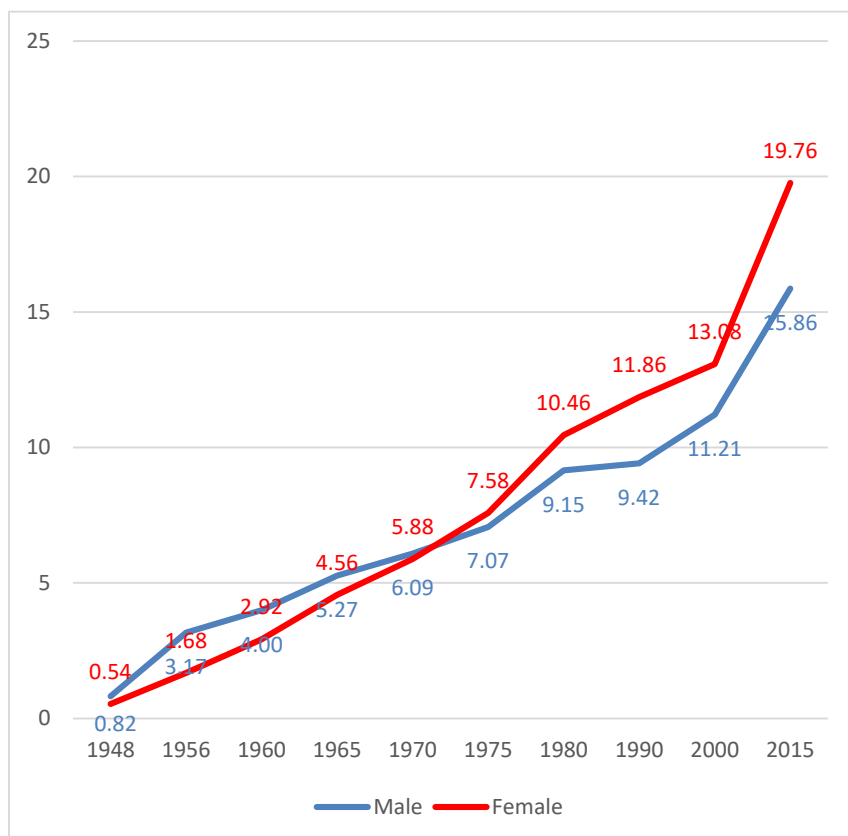
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# Introduction

- Conceptually, gender equality means that the status of human beings are equal in the eyes of the law and in practice regardless of their gender.
- Historically, the fight for gender equality has been focused on raising the status of females towards equality with males.
  - A sensible focus, given widespread discrimination, stereotyping and abuse of women and girls
  - Situations, however, can arise where males lag behind females in regard to education status and other aspects of well-being
  - Gender advocacy has benignly neglected boys in these situations
- Much remains to be done, but there has been enough progress in gender equality to the point where boys are now lagging behind girls in human capital development.
- In this presentation, we argue that the fight for gender equality should now pay more attention to the education of boys without slowing down girls' educational progress.

# Framing the Issue

**Proportion (%) of population 25 years and above who have finished college by sex, 1948-2015: cross-over and widening Gap**



**Shares of youth and young adults who have completed elementary and secondary schooling, APIS 2016: Boys lagging behind**

	Overall Completion		Girls' Completion		Boys' Completion	
	Elem	Secon	Elem	Secon	Elem	Secon
Mean (full sample)	92	71	95	79	89	64
Richest 30 percent	98	93	99	98	97	87
Poorest 30 percent	85	46	92	55	79	38

# Rate of Out of School Children (%) Higher for Boys

(Source: David et al. 2018)

Age (Years)	OOSC Rate		
	Boys	Girls	Both Sexes
5	9.1	8.9	9.0
6–11	5.4	3.4	4.5
12–15	8.0	3.1	5.6
16–17	22.3	11.6	17.4
Philippines (5–17)	10.7	5.7	8.3
Philippines (5–15) <sup>a</sup>	6.7	3.8	5.3

<sup>a</sup> Attention to 5–15 years old is provided for comparability with previous PIDS reports on OOSC.

Source: Authors' calculations based on 2017 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS) (PSA 2017)

# Boys lagging behind girls in test scores

Source: David et al. (2018)

Table 3. Performance in the national achievement test by urbanity and by sex: Philippines, 2016–2017

	Science				HEKASI/Araling Panlipunan				Overall			
	Grade 6*		Grade 10**		Grade 6*		Grade 10*		Grade 6*		Grade 10*	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Rural	31	29	37	34	43	35	51	43	41	36	46	41
Urban	34	33	37	35	47	39	52	45	46	40	47	42
Total	33	30	37	34	44	36	51	44	43	37	46	41
	Filipino				Mathematics				English			
	Grade 6*		Grade 10**		Grade 6*		Grade 10*		Grade 6*		Grade 10*	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Rural	56	48	54	48	35	37	39	36	42	34	48	42
Urban	59	52	55	50	39	37	38	36	49	42	50	43
Total	57	49	54	49	37	34	39	36	44	37	49	42

HEKASI = Heograpiya, Kasaysayan, at Sibika

\*Missing values = 31.48 percent; \*\*Missing values = 20.23 percent

Source: Authors' calculations from data provided by Department of Education (2017)

# The gender issue in Philippine education

- PH, including men, takes pride in the educational accomplishments of its women
- On the flip side, PH govt and its development partners are doing little to address the fact that boys are increasingly being left behind by girls in academic achievement.
- The PH experience raises three questions about gender advocacy:
  - Why are boys being left behind by girls in most indicators of education achievement?
  - How concern should PH be about boys lagging behind girls in education?
  - Should the local and international community promoting gender equality pay greater attention to boys being left behind in education?

# Hypotheses on why boys are lagging behind girls in education

- Boys mature later and are less disciplined than girls due to cultural and parenting practices (Amado Castro view, Fr. Lynch)
- Poverty pressures: males drop out of school earlier for work to augment household income (Orbeta and Sanchez 1995)
  - Boys of poor families appear to be uninterested in and unresponsive to learning (see Table of Albert et al. 2018 below)
  - They also have more work opportunities than girls (Bouis 1992)
- The rate of return to education is higher for women than men; thus, incentives to investment more in girls education are stronger (Tan et al. 2011)
- School environment is not gender-neutral – stereotypes/gender bias against boys. Examples
  - UNGI: boys seating at the back and smart girls in front
  - Terrier (2016): female teacher bias in grading (French experiment)
  - Mulji (2016): the effect of female teacher on boys TIMSS test scores

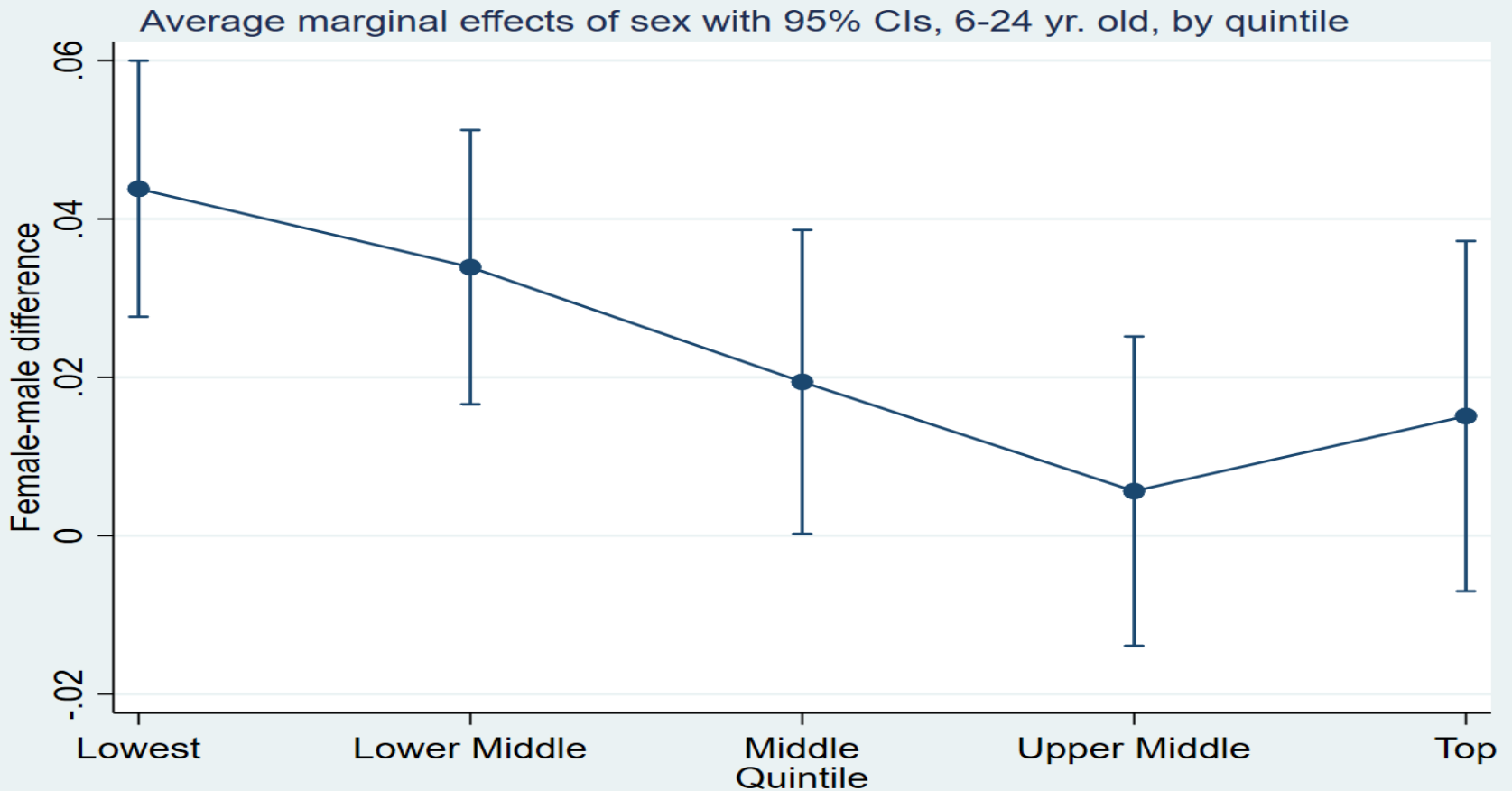
# Boys are less interested in attending school than girls: why?

## Secondary-School-Age Children

Reasons for Not Attending School	2008			2014			2017		
	Boys	Girls	Both Sexes	Boys	Girls	Both Sexes	Boys	Girls	Both Sexes
Lack of personal interest	54.7	33.9	47.2	51.2	29	44.1	60.6	41.8	53.2
High cost of education	21.9	30.3	24.9	25.2	38.3	29.4	22.4	18.9	21.0
Too young to go to school									
Illness/Disability	5	8.2	6.1	10.4	16.7	12.4	7.8	9.8	8.6
Lack of nearby schools	3.3	5.6	4.1	0.6	2.7	1.3	4.6	4.7	4.6
Employment	9.2	7.8	8.7	6.0	1.9	4.7	3.4	12.5	7.0
Other reasons (including school records, marriage, housekeeping)	5.9	14.2	8.9	6.6	11.3	8.1	1.2	12.4	5.6

Source: Authors' calculations based on 2008, 2014, and 2017 APIS (PSA 2008, 2014, 2017)

# Female-Male difference in enrollment rate by income quintile, 2017



# Conclusions and reflections

- Historically, Filipino males were somewhat more educated than females; now the males are lagging behind the females and the education gender gap is widening.
- Today, therefore, one can argue that gender equality advocacy should go beyond the stereo-typical focus on girls' education and pay more attention to issues that are hurting boys' education.
- On this point, greater clarity is needed about the meaning and application of the gender equality objective in education for situations where boys are lagging behind girls.
- There has been some concern about the need for a more nuanced view of gender equity and the possible emergence of reverse gender inequality before this was reflected in national statistics.
- This concern is now recognized but little is being done about it; the international development continues to treat the PH experience as “unique”.

# Conclusions and reflections 2

- Arguably, helping disadvantaged boys catch up with the girls in education is a fair application of the gender equality principle.
- This catch up should be anchored on win-win strategies
  - That raises the currently low education performance of both girls and boys, while helping the latter catch up with girls.
  - Failure to pursue strategies that addresses gender biases hurtful to boys (or girls) means reduced economic returns to human capital investment.
- For the adaptation of gender equality advocacy to be effective, however, more information and some experimentation are needed
  - to identify gender biases that hurt boys or girls and ways for effectively removing them

# Specific recommendations for future research

- Therefore, more studies on household, teacher and school attitudes, norms and practices should be pursued and experimentation undertaken to address possible gender biases.
  - E.g. Systematic study of the effects of female teacher dominance of Filipino classrooms and other aspects of the school and class environment on boys' education performance
- A pilot study to test the cost-effectiveness of giving a bigger conditional grant amount for the boys of CCT families.
  - Discuss Mexico's experience in regard to promotion of girls' education
- A systematic global review of gender equality advocacy and how current practices can be adapted to the changed education landscape
  - The Philippine experience is not unique
  - Males now apparently lag behind females on average in about 70 percent of countries, according to new World Bank 2018 human capital data