

# [Finding women's equality](https://assignbuster.com/finding-womens-equality/)

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Project Proposal and Presentation Project FWE- Finding Women’s Equality “ It is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half of the human race. As study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.” – Kofi Annan, then UN Secretary-General, 2006 Problem The problem I want to tackle is the profound rates of women’s illiteracy in Mali. Young females, aged 15-24 years of age have a 31% literacy rate, compared to 57% literacy rate of men. About two-thirds of the illiterate people in the world are women, which provides a reason to the “ persistent disadvantages faced by women.

” “ The size of the illiterate population has increased in several countries in Africa. They added over 32 million illiterates, of which about 23 million or 72% were women.” Without the ability to read, women are limited to housework, childbearing, and being submissive towards the order of men. If education is not offered as an outlet for empowerment, women have little to no chance of discovering their individuality and taking leadership roles. “ Women hold up half the sky,” so it seems ridiculous to neglect half of our population and deny women education.

I believe education is every person’s right as a human being and should never be denied regardless of financial circumstance, learning disability, gender, age, or race. Background Information The lack of women’s education has affected throughout history. No matter which statistic you choose to look at, women have typically had a lower literacy rate compared to that of men. This rate grows to an extreme gap when you look at illiteracy in Africa, Arab States, and South and West Asia. My focus is on the overly significant percentages of those who are unable to read and write in Africa.

Even more specifically is my focus on women’s inability to read and write in Mali, with only 31% of the population being literate. It’s no hidden secret that women and girls there are often seen as second-class citizens in comparison to men, in large due to the traditionally strict society of Islam. Without education, women become submissive to men and get married at ages far before the years of maturity. This results in having many children before the development of the body is complete, which causes health care issues and struggles to feed the family. Various studies have shown that women who wait on marriage and having children are more successful and happy in life because they took time for themselves to get educated and learn to look after themselves. Often sons are fed and cared for before the daughters are because sons will one day grow up to be the dominant breadwinner and so therefore they must be more important.

Educating the women and girls in the city of Djenne in Mali will empower them to find their own individuality, follow their dreams, and stand up for what they believe in. Location Despite its vast cultural beauties, Mali is “ amongst the twenty five poorest countries” in the world, and is “ highly dependent on gold mining and agricultural exports such as cotton,” gold, and livestock. The Republic of Mali has a population of 15. 8 million (2011) and is 482, 077 square miles, “ roughly the size of California and Texas combined.” Its major languages are French, Bambara, Berber, and Arabic, and have been predominantly Sunni Muslim since the mid-seventeenth century. Nine months of the year there is generally a hot dry climate, with little to no rain.

Despite the little rain, 80% of the population earns a living by farming, raising livestock, or fishing. Mali’s currency is the CFA Franc because of its French colonization. Mali’s capital is Bamako, where the U. S. Embassy is located.

Until military seized power, Mali was “ regarded as a model of African democracy.” Djenne, Mali is the oldest known city of Sub-Saharan Africa. Situated in the flood lands of the Niger and Bani River, Djenne is considered an Islamic center for pilgrimage and religious learning. Its mosque, The Great Mosque of Djenne, happens to be the largest clay-built building in the world. Djenne has a direct correlation to its twin city, Timbuktu, which in large plays a great importance to Djenne’s success as a commercial trade center of agriculture. The center of Djenne is only accessible by ferry.

Schooling is rare unless children are getting educated about the Qur’an. “ Regular” schooling is often lass valued because of the traditional society that makes up Djenne. Up until the civil war in 2012, Mali was “ regarded as a model of African democracy until military seized power. Tuareg rebels declared the independence of Azawad state in the north, which was quickly taken over by al-Qaeda allies.” Northern Mali is currently struggling in a Civil War against Islamic militias such as those held by Ansar Dine, Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb(AQIM), the Tuareg, and The National Movement Liberation of Azawad (MNLA).

Proposal I am proposing an education reform for women in Djenne, Mali. I want to do this by creating an education program that would incorporate religious, historical and cultural aspects of their local life into their academic and vocational schooling. By including these aspects, a local grassroots feel will be created versus a treetops feel, and will eliminate a sense of my program being too “ western” or “ foreign.” I believe the best way to go about empowering these women is by showing them their past and giving them confidence of who they are and where they come from. By showing them texts from their own holy book I believe that they will feel encouraged to grow into unyielding young women activists.

For his time, Muhammad was a huge feminist and it’s disappointing to see that so many of those values have disappeared in a traditional Muslim society. These girls will be able to keep their religion, but be able to see it with new eyes when they learn that it can be accepting of them. To ensure that my school efficiently prepares its students for the “ real world,” I would initiate a vocation skills course into my curriculum beading, basket weaving, knitting, etc. This would provide the girls with the necessary business skills such as finance, responsibility, and accounting to care for themselves and their families. Girls will stay enrolled and intrigued with their learning through a number of different incentives implemented into the courses such as scholarships, awards, lunch programs, students councils, and allowances. Resources Djenne has a population of about 12, 000 people.

Assuming half of the population is women equates to 6, 000 women. Then a quarter of those 6, 000 women would be of schooling age (4-18), so 1500 girls. Hoping that a fifth of those girls enroll for school the first year averages to 300 girls. This would mean 15 classes consisting of 20 girls, divided by age groups, all provided that there are an equivalent number of girls in each age group. These numbers would mean a teaching staff of at least 20 women, one nurse, a superintendent, and any number of a volunteer staff.

Funding would come from willing donors who provide the school with important necessities, and grants from the US Embassy in Bamako, Mali and various UN Aid organizations and the World Bank Group. Funding will also come from personal fundraising of the girls enrolled at school. Maintenance will be kept up by the staff and students themselves. Solution The way to improve the overall well-being of our society starts by educating the other half of the world; the women and girls. Historically they have always been neglected and tossed aside, but I believe it’s completely unacceptable to still have disregarded women in today’s supposedly modern society.

It’s time to take steps toward educating everyone possible, and I want to start that process through my school in Djenne, Mali. My girls will have reason to stay in school through a number of incentives and objectives of my school. ? Scholarships— Each semester, the girl who shows the most proficiency and effort in her school work will be awarded a scholarship that will cover tuition. Scholarship nominees will be selected by a school board, including teachers, superintendent, elder locals, and local Imam. When the nominees are announced, students will then vote on who they feel most deserving of this award.

Involving the community and local Imam will help eliminate the “ treetops” feel of the program. ? Awards- Recognizing everyone’s unique contributions is an important part of ensuring that the girls grow up to be confident with themselves. Student of the Month Award will to rewarded to a girl each month for a variety of different reasons, whether it be their behavior, their academic improvement, or they newfound interest in a subject. I believe it’s good to see that everyone has something special about them and that they can all succeed in some way or another. ? Student Council—Each grade will have a student representative that will collaborate monthly with each grade to create a project.

This project can vary from fundraising, to community service, to a fun field trip. This will give students some sense of authority and teach them leadership skills. Student representative will be voted on at the end of each school year by the students, staff, and teachers. \*Great for girls in leadership ? Student/Parent Lunch Program—I want to initiate a lunch program that will both employ parents and feed the student. Parents will be able to enroll in a 4 week course teaching them basic agriculture and cooking skills that they will then be able to use for employment.

Those who complete the course will be paid to harvest and create lunches for all the students in the school. This benefits the community by employing the parents who will then be able to provide for their family, and by feeding the students they will be able to concentrate and learn more in school. (example) ? Parental Incentives—If a family is willing to keep their daughter in school, with good attendance, the family will be paid an allowance. In addition, if a family sends their daughter to an annual doctor appointment, a bonus will be added to their allowance. The longer the girl stays in school, the higher allowance a family can receive. Attendance allowances will be paid monthly, with the bonus paid once a year after proof of a doctor’s check-up is presented.

This incentive has been proven to be successful in a program called Opportunidades in Mexico. ? School Supplies Donation Bank—Clearly, schooling would not be possible without certain necessities such as pencils, papers and books. In America, I often see a pencil thrown to the side, or a book go unread, so I would like to put these wastes to use by creating a donation bank that would be used to provide my students with their school supplies. Educating women does far more than just teaching them to read and write and do their arithmetic. Educating one woman can go full circle if she decides to one day have a family; she then earns a higher paying job, which allows for her to pay for health care, food, shelter, and all other necessities needed to care for her family. In addition, she also encourages and supports her children’s education.

Her children will one day go on to continue the same cycle she started, which eventually benefits the economy in huge ways. “ Investments in female education can yield a “ growth premium” in GDP trends and that narrowing the gender gap in employment can boost per capita income.” Not only are their economic benefits, but social benefits too. “ Educated women are better at managing their own and their family’s health issues, thereby reducing infant and maternal mortality, as well as health-care costs, and improving demographic structures.”