

## Paying Girls to Go to School

Thirteen year-old Askin lives in Diyarbakir, a city in southeast Turkey.

Her family is desperately poor. They considered sending Askin to school an absurd luxury when she could work to help her family earn money.

But Askin threatened to commit suicide in a letter to her principal if her parents pulled her out of school.

The school's principal Oya Senvic has received several such letters from female students.

"Parents don't see the point in sending their girls to school. They want the girls to stay home and do housework and get married. The families see schooling as a waste of time," says Oya.

But Oya gave Askin's parents an incentive to keep her in school. They now receive a \$10 monthly child support stipend for allowing Askin to continue with her studies.

Similar stipend programs are helping to keep children, especially poor girls, in school in many countries in the world.

## Stipends Double the Percentage of Girls in Bangladeshi Schools

In Bangladesh such stipends have been helping families pay for secondary education since 1982. Girls' enrollment rates rose from 27 to 44 percent over five years.

Thirteen-year-old Musammad Akhtar is one of almost one million girls who is receiving a stipend this year.

Musammad's father, Alaur Rahman, a one time rickshaw puller, is partially paralyzed—the result of a severe fall two years ago.

Her mother, Zohra Khatun, provides for the family by working as a cook in a roadside restaurant, earning less than \$20 a month.

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## AUDIO

*"I know what life is like for people who did not go to school ..."*



### **Stories from Bangladesh**

She's illiterate, but she has high hopes for her daughter.

"An illiterate person is like a person without eyes or limbs," she says.

The headmaster of Musammad's school, Mohammad Ashraf-ul-Islam, says in the past three years, the number of female students at the school has doubled from 200 to 400.

"Fifty percent of our population are females. If you deprive them of education, the nation cannot progress. An uneducated mother cannot guide her child. I am glad we now will have more educated

mothers thanks to the stipend program," says Jan Manzoor, a teacher at the Kaliakoir Pilot Girls High School in Gazipur, northwest of Dhaka.

### **Stipends Helping Scores of Girls Around the World**

More than 150,000 poor girls in grades six to eight in Punjab, Pakistan now receive a stipend to encourage them to stay in school. These stipends are part of an education reform to curb high illiteracy, low primary school enrollment and high dropout rates.

Through the Bolsa Familia Project, poor Brazilian families get money to help educate their children. But there is a catch. The families only get the money if all their children between 7 and 15 attend school regularly.

Poor Mexican families receive stipend money only if they ensure their children go to school and visit health clinics.

Similar programs are underway in Yemen and Chad, and Africa.