

Do girls have to do more household chores?

Sahra is ten years old. Every morning, she wakes up early and bakes bread for her family's breakfast before she goes to school. Her 14-year-old sister Najma spends five hours a week washing the family's clothes.

Sahra and Najma live in Somalia, but they're typical of many girls around the world. According to a **report** by UNICEF*, girls around the world between the ages of five and 14 spend 40% more time helping at home than their brothers. In total, they do 550 million hours of housework a day – that's 160 million more hours than boys!

'Girls spend 160 million more hours doing housework every day than boys.'

Girls aged between five and nine spend an average of four hours a week on **housework**, while older girls spend about nine hours. In some countries, these numbers are even higher. In Somalia, for example, a girl between the ages of ten and 14 sometimes has to spend 26 hours a week helping at home.

The girls mainly help with cooking and cleaning. They also go shopping and take care of their younger brothers and sisters. In some countries, they also do heavy and dangerous chores such as collecting water and wood for making fires.

As a result, the report says, girls often don't have the same **opportunities** in life as boys. While their brothers are playing soccer outside, they have to sweep the floors. They don't have time to play, spend time with friends, or to study.

The report focuses on developing countries, but there is a similar **tendency** in other parts of the world. A study by the University of Maryland in the USA found that boys don't have to do as much housework as their sisters. On average, they spend about half an hour each day helping at home, compared to 45 minutes for girls.

The situation is **improving**: boys do more household chores now than they did in the past. But parents should make sure that children share housework equally. After all, doing housework can teach both boys and girls about responsibility, and this can help them at school and later at work.



5  **17** **Read and listen to the news story. Are the sentences true or false? Why?**

- 1 Girls around the world spend 160 million hours a day helping at home.
- 2 Between the ages of ten and 14, they help for four hours a week.
- 3 Some girls help for more than 20 hours a week.
- 4 The girls spend most time taking care of their brothers and sisters.
- 5 Girls often have less time for homework than boys.
- 6 In the USA, boys and girls spend the same number of hours helping at home.

8 **Word work** Match the definitions to the words in bold in the text.

- 1 making better _____
- 2 things that everyone should have (legally or morally) _____
- 3 household chores, e.g. cleaning _____
- 4 the possibility that something will happen in the same way _____
- 5 an official document produced after studying a problem or situation _____
- 6 the possibilities or chances to do something _____

9 Complete the sentences with words from exercise 8.

- 1 My parents both do _____. My dad cleans, and my mom does the laundry.
- 2 Good exam results give you better _____.
- 3 Many organizations are ____ the lives of children around the world.
- 4 They did a lot of research before they wrote the _____.
- 5 There is a _____ for parents to ask girls to help cook.
- 6 Most people agree that girls and boys have the same _____.