© 2014 The Population Council. All rights reserved.

Use of these materials is permitted only for noncommercial purposes. The following full source citation must be included:


This presentation may contain materials owned by others. User is responsible for obtaining permissions for use from third parties as needed.
Making the Case for Adolescent Girls & the Neglected Rationales

- At this “moment” of shifting and declining resources (disruption, conflict, climate-based and other emergencies)...
- WE MUST CATALYZE ACTIONS TO:
  - Focus attention on the largest, most excluded vital population to the achievement of global compacts
  - Direct resources to those at the greatest risk of the most extreme human rights abuses at the youngest ages. In most cases, this will lead us directly to the poorest girls in the poorest communities.
Six reasons on which the world agrees

1) Reversing intergenerational poverty
2) Universal primary education
3) Gender equality
4) Reducing maternal mortality
5) Staunch the increasingly young and persistently female HIV epidemic
6) Rebalancing the resource/population equation
SIX REASONS ON WHICH THE WORLD AGREES

REASON 1:

- A strong economic base cannot be built—reversing intergenerational poverty—without building girls’ social and economic assets. Increased female access to and control of resources has far stronger returns to human capital, including intergenerational investment, than comparable income under male control. Crucially, a high and likely rising proportion of girls (30%-70%) will be single mothers and plausibly sole supports of themselves and their children. Investing in girls when it counts is not simply a question of economic justice, but economic effectiveness.

EDUCATING GIRLS WITH EQUAL ACCESS TO LABOR MARKETS TRANSLATES TO TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS ADDED TO GDP IN THE WORLD’S POOREST COUNTRIES

Source: World Bank Study
Giving girls assets & preparing them for decent livelihoods intercepts poverty where it begins

Girls and planners need to know that:

- $1 in female hands is worth $10 (and in some cases $20) in male hands as women tend to invest money directly back into the family, children, education, health care, etc. while men spend it elsewhere.

- The risk of being a single mother from either widowhood or divorce (a conservative, lower-bound estimate) in four African countries rests between 30-70%. This is greatest for girls who are married under 20.

THE NUMBERS ARE NOT SMALL AND THE CONSEQUENCES ARE NOT INSIGNIFICANT. FAILING TO INVEST IN THESE GIRLS IS, IN EFFECT, PLANNED POVERTY.

*Analysis by Shelley Clark, commissioned by the Population Council and Nike, who projected using suitable life event data from Malawi, Kenya, and Zimbabwe the proportion of women whose marriages will be disrupted by divorce or widowhood. This analysis excluded those who were never married, whether or not they had children, did not capture those in polygamous union or women who were economically abandoned by their husbands-this data is probably the lower boundary of a proportion of women who carry this responsibility.
PERCENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS WHO HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED SINGLE MOTHERHOOD

PROJECTIONS FOR FOUR AFRICAN COUNTRIES OF THE PROPORTION OF GIRLS WHO WILL EXPERIENCE SINGLE MOTHERHOOD THROUGH DIVORCE OR WIDOWHOOD (A LOWER BOUND ESTIMATE) IN THEIR REPRODUCTIVE LIFETIME


Failure to invest in the poorest 40% of girls is essentially PLANNED POVERTY
REASON 2:

• Universal primary school education is the minimum goal of most countries. The most deprived sector, in almost all countries globally, are rural girls. Though the male/female gap is narrowing, two-thirds of those who have never been to school or are currently out of school are female. Girls’ education, particularly levels of participation and schooling during adolescence, is the best ‘development’ investment in terms of human capital formation, economic return, and justice.

• Educated girls are more likely to marry later (at legal age—after 18), have better maternal and (closely related) child health outcomes, are more able and inclined to invest in the health and education of their children—both boys and girls, with especially high returns to the education of girls.

The returns to educating adolescent girls

- Immediate benefits:
  - Attendance in formal school during adolescence is correlated with delayed sexual initiation; later marriage and childbearing; lower rates of HIV/AIDS; enhanced social status; greater gender equality
  - School uniform marks girls as “sexually unavailable”

- Future benefits:
  - Educated mothers bring **benefits to their children**: safer health & hygiene practices; better nutrition; more time and resources for children’s health & education;
  - **Improved earning potential**: increases in household income; women have better bargaining power within households; greater ability to act on preferences for investment in children
  - **Civic participation** – girls make contributions to economic and social development of their communities/nations – leading to improvements in gender equality and a reduction in poverty

Female scores are similar to or better than males in 4 objective measures of learning...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of MSAS students who are literate and numerate at baseline (2007)</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chichewa</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve 8/10 of math test</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve money problems</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at 5%; * significant at 10%.

... but ...

Among those who learn, retention is poor, particularly for females.

The survival functions in each figure are statistically significantly different at 5% level.

*Please note that all respondents were in school in 2007 (R1), but some may have dropped out in recent years.

The survival functions in each figure are statistically significantly different at 5% level.

SIX REASONS ON WHICH THE WORLD AGREES

REASON 3:
- Dedicated efforts to reach girls early, ideally before puberty, are a crucial input into gender equality, providing preemptive protection to those girls at risk of the worst human rights abuses (trafficking, female genital mutilation, exploitative domestic work, child marriage, forced sexual relations), conditions that are often closely related to high and unwanted fertility, maternal mortality, and HIV.

Violence impedes girls’ access to entitlements, services, facilities, and ‘life’
Girls’ access to youth resources is generally poorer than males -- and younger, poorer girls are particularly excluded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of beneficiaries served (No. of contacts)</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>10-14 years</th>
<th>15-19 years</th>
<th>20+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>6216 (6860)</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>10866 (10873)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>7625 (8167)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>5452 (8115)</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>12866 (N/A)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a list of authors and review see Transitions to Adulthood Brief No. 28: Expanding safe spaces and developing skills for adolescent girls, prepared by Adam Weiner
SIX REASONS ON WHICH THE WORLD AGREES

REASON 4:

- **Investments in the poorest girls** in the poorest countries are likely **to reduce maternal mortality**. Half of all first births in the developing world are to adolescent girls. The same girls that are marginalized by their exclusion from school, residence in poor rural and ethnic minority communities, subject to child marriage, harmful traditional practices, with limited access to health services and social support, are the same girls who, as the **youngest first-time mothers**, bear the highest risks of maternal morbidity and mortality and closely related, child morbidity and mortality.

3 reasons to invest in youngest first time mothers

1) **Demographic rationale**: as fertility falls, a rising proportion of births will be first births

2) **Develop good habits early**: habits formed around the first birth, such as infant feeding choices and, crucially, spacing through contraception, tend to be carried forward across the life cycle.

3) **Improve the health system**: Focusing the health system on the social needs of first-time mothers will raise the quality of service-site interpersonal relations (Caring about the context of the mother, developing support and communication with the father). These habits, embedded in the system, also carry-over to ways in which all women are treated.

REASON 5:
- Staunch the increasingly young and persistently female HIV epidemic. Typical new incident case ratios for those aged 15-24 across Sub-Saharan Africa are 3 to 1 female to male, and some countries are reporting 5 to 1 (Malawi) and 8 to 1 (South Africa). Without dedicated prevention, mitigation and treatment efforts, marginalized and young females are likely to bear a disproportionate share of HIV infection.
Stepwise engagement process for improving girls’ lives and reducing their risk of HIV

- Use available data to identify geographic concentrations of girls at exceptional risk
- Develop social infrastructure for adolescent girls—a protective asset in and of itself and a vital program platform
- Reframe current investments to respond to girls’ needs and engage their talents:
  - Provide programs for girls in unsafe and underage work
  - Eliminate child marriage
  - Make schools safer
  - Reach girls in the critical puberty period with community-based health initiatives
  - Dedicate sessions for girls in youth programming
  - Increase access to services & opportunities through financial, social safety net, and health skills education

Bruce, Judith, Miriam Temin, and Kelly Hallman. 2012. “Evidence-based approaches to protecting adolescent girls at risk of HIV,” AIDSTAR-One Spotlight on Gender. USAID and PEPFAR.
SIX REASONS ON WHICH THE WORLD AGREES

REASON 6:

• The 7th billion person was born on October 31\textsuperscript{st}, 2011. Investment in girls is the most strategic tool we have to rebalance the resource/population equation. Investment in the poorest girls in the poorest communities could significantly increase their productive capacity, reshape and redistribute the dependency burden, increase the space between generations and foster reductions in the rate of population growth.

INVESTMENT IN GIRLS REDUCE POPULATION GROWTH IN FOUR WAYS:

1) Delays marriage and child-bearing
2) Decreases the need for large families as security
3) Increases girls’ ability to adopt health-seeking behaviors, including protection from HIV, contraception use, and safer maternity practices
4) Empowers vital intergenerational investment in children’s, especially girls’, education

Source: Tabulations by John Bongaarts, Population Council, estimates based on United Nations Projections

* The projection has now been increased to 174 million. A five year delay in childbearing would reduce the anticipated increase by 31.5 million or 35%
**RWANDA**: A projected reduction in future population growth of 34% if girls can delay childbearing by 5 years.
KENYA: A projected reduction in future population growth of 35% if girls can delay childbearing by 5 years.
NIGERIA: A projected reduction in future population growth of 40% if girls can delay childbearing by 5 years.

Population reduction if 5 year delay in childbirth (40% of projected population growth):
- 158.3 million
- 236.7 million
- 289.1 million

Standard projection
Investing in the poorest girls so they may hold onto their childhood and delay childbearing 5 years from present levels is a GOOD in and of itself and could reduce the projected population increase in the least developed countries by 37% or 300 million.

**Double Hotspots**

- There is a huge strategic bonus of co-locating investments in sub-national places where:
  - A high proportion of girls are married under 18 (and at least 10% under 15)
  - Girls 15-19 and young women 20-24 have a higher than regional/national average unmet need for family planning
Double Hotspots

- Central African Republic – rsi
- Chad – BET, centre est, ouaddai est,
- Dem Rep Congo – equateur
- Comoros – moheli
- Malawi – southern
- Uganda – Western
- Guinea – Nzekore
- Mali – Koulikoro
- Niger – Dosso, Tillaberi
- Senegal – Matam
- Atlantico Sur, Atlantico North
- Bangladesh – Chittangong, Dhaka
- India – Jharkhand, Bihar, Rajasthan
SUMMING UP: GIRLS UNIQUELY WORK BOTH SIDES OF THE RESOURCE POPULATION EQUATION

LARGER ECONOMIC PIE + MORE EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED

Increase productive capacity and expand economic participation and intergenerational investment

REDUCE THE DEPENDENCY BURDEN BY INCREASING AGE AT FIRST BIRTH AND REDUCING POVERTY-DRIVEN DEMAND FOR CHILDREN
A FINAL REASON TO INVEST IN GIRLS

• THE GIRLS KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THEM. PAIN IS INDIVISIBLE.

• THE PROTECTION OF 600 MILLION GIRLS’ HUMAN RIGHTS IS A MORAL IMPERATIVE