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Report

Exploring the School to Work Transition for Adolescent Girls

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
GAGE	Gender and Adolescence Global Evidence Project
ILO	International Labour Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STEP	The Skills Towards Employment and Productivity
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Introduction

If countries are to grow and prosper in a way that improves the lives of everyone, they need to make a special commitment to supporting one of the most vulnerable sections of the population: marginalised adolescent girls. Girls who experience extreme poverty, live in rural areas, live with disabilities, are affected by conflict or belong to disadvantaged ethnic groups face the greatest risk of being left behind. In terms of the world's development ambitions, they are the least likely to complete primary and secondary schooling, part of the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), and face the greatest barriers in making the transition from school to decent work (SDG 8).

Marginalised adolescent girls should be able to move to livelihood opportunities – not only formal jobs but also informal work and self-employment – that are secure, safe, fulfilling and productive. So that they can make that transition, it is vital to extend their education to 12 years of quality schooling. This will give them chances to acquire the kinds of skills they need, and to look beyond the education system to bring down barriers to their full participation in society.

Why is adolescence so important?

Adolescence, commonly defined as the years between 10 and 19, is increasingly seen as offering a crucial chance to put people on a path towards a better life (Gender and Adolescence Global Evidence Project (GAGE), 2017). Adolescents make up more than 1.2 billion people, or one sixth of the world's population (UNICEF, 2018). In this critical period, young people undergo significant physical, cognitive and emotional changes, and build their aspirations for the rest of life. It is a particularly vital time in a girl's development. In principle, girls would move into secondary education in early adolescence, and from school to work in late adolescence. In reality, the majority of marginalised girls in low- and lower-middle income countries do not have access to education beyond primary school so the transition to work, including domestic duties, happens earlier.

Adolescence is also the stage when a girl's position in her family and community may shift. In communities and regions where there are strict beliefs about female sexuality, girls may face stigma at the onset of puberty when their bodies change. They can also face a heavier set of expectations about how girls and women should behave (Jones, Presler-Marshall, and Samuels, 2018). Beginning during early adolescence (10-14 years), these changes become more pronounced in late adolescence (15-19 years) when social norms around marriage and motherhood are more likely to intensify. Particularly in low-income households and communities, a combination of low educational opportunities, economic insecurity, vulnerability and exposure to violence, alongside harmful social norms and practices, can hinder girls' transition into a healthy, safe, productive and fulfilling adulthood (Hallman, 2016; Stavropoulou, 2018).

Why the focus on marginalisation?

The transition to adulthood can be particularly difficult for girls experiencing intersecting forms of disadvantage. Extreme poverty, rural isolation, disability, conflict and ethnic discrimination combine to exclude adolescent girls from education and from livelihoods. For example, the most marginalised adolescent girls are also most at risk of early marriage and pregnancy, which can limit their ability to make the transition into work, restricting in turn their livelihood options and earning potential (Binkley, 2019; Chakravarty et. al., 2017). That is why it is vital, when crafting policies to support girls' transition from school to work, to consider whether and how these policies meet the needs of the most marginalised girls.

Why is education so crucial for work opportunities

A lack of schooling opportunities has resulted in 175 million young people in low- and lower-middle income countries starting their working lives unable to read. For the last 20 years, women have consistently made up around 63% of adults who are unable to read (UNESCO, 2019). There is a vast skills gap and a skills mismatch for young people, which limits their ability to access a large majority of work (Wilson-Clark and Saha, 2019).

Adolescent girls need three kinds of skills for secure and productive livelihoods: foundational, transferable, and technical and vocational. Foundational skills consist of basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy in the first instance, progressing to more advanced subject areas. Transferable skills, which can be used for different forms of livelihoods, are also referred to as life skills or soft skills. They include critical thinking, problem solving and communication, as well as self-esteem, self-control and self-confidence. Technical and vocational skills apply to the specific livelihood opportunities that adolescent girls are trying to obtain (UNESCO, 2012; International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, 2018).

There is no clear consensus on which skills are most relevant for work. One systematic review identified skills that could be most likely to increase workplace success as being transferable skills related to communication, problem solving and decision making, self-esteem and self-control (Lippman et al., 2015). Foundational and transferable skills are most likely to be developed through formal education, so access to education is crucial for adolescent girls. Education systems can also provide technical and vocational training. However, these skills can also be developed through informal routes such as catch-up education programmes or on-the-job training. Transferable skills, which may be developed through formal education, are also learned and practised in everyday life. They are often influenced by gender norms, which may make it harder for young women to develop these skills. There is growing evidence of the importance of school-based and community-based programmes that seek to develop transferable skills directly (Marcus et al., 2017).

The most marginalised adolescent girls are least likely to have had the opportunity to develop foundational and transferable skills due to barriers to education. It has been widely noted that investing in the early years and throughout formal education is the most important way to develop foundational skills (Arias, Evans and Santos, 2019). Despite this recognition, previous studies, including the first report for the Platform for Girls' Education, *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective* (Gordon et al., 2019), have

shown that the most marginalised girls are most likely to drop out of school before completing primary school and to have learned the least. Opportunities to develop technical and vocational skills often come towards the end of secondary education, but many marginalised girls drop out of school before this (UNESCO, 2012). It is therefore vital to maintain a focus on ensuring girls complete 12 years of quality education so they can develop the skills they need for work.

Why the focus on livelihoods?

The terms *jobs*, *work* and *employment* are usually interpreted as meaning formal employment, with contracts, salaries and defined work hours. Many people in low-income communities, however, particularly in rural areas, have little access to formal employment. In this report, we focus on secure, safe, fulfilling and productive *livelihood opportunities* to include both formal and informal sector work. In reality, there is a wide spectrum of livelihood opportunities, including within the informal sector. Our focus is on ensuring marginalised girls have access to work that is:

- *secure* – not vulnerable to short-term changes
- *safe* – free from exploitation and violence
- *fulfilling* – providing some choice in the type of work
- *productive* – paying a decent and fair wage.

Much of the work available to marginalised girls does not meet these criteria – it may be insecure, unsafe and pay a wage below the poverty line. In addition, they may have little choice over the type of paid work they can take, due to demands of unpaid household work and lack of childcare support, among other reasons (Kabeer, 2012; Bantebya et. al., 2014).

The focus on the term livelihoods in particular seeks to recognise the positive role that self-employment through entrepreneurship can have in the lives of young women. Although entrepreneurship can lead to insecure and unsafe work, if the correct structures and legislation are in place it can provide adolescent girls with opportunities to work where there are few formal forms of employment, or in the areas that interest them most. Population growth will give self-employment through entrepreneurship a key role in ensuring jobs for adolescent girls (World Bank, 2019). This role will be particularly significant in rural areas, where formal jobs are often scarce.

This report aims to highlight key barriers for adolescent girls in their transition to secure and productive livelihoods. It draws on a range of published research that has been identified through searches of conventional academic databases. These searches were conducted before the Covid-19 pandemic; updates have been incorporated based on a rapid review of relevant literature focused on the particular challenges related to the pandemic. The main purpose of the report is to identify key policy directions based on the identified literature, not to offer a rigorous or systematic review.

This report has three sections. Section I outlines current trends in education for marginalised girls and the types of livelihoods available to marginalised girls. It focuses in particular on low- and lower-middle income countries furthest from achieving the SDGs. Section II describes the barriers that marginalised girls face in accessing secure and productive livelihood

opportunities and the types of interventions that enhance marginalised adolescent girls' access to such opportunities.

The barriers to girls' access to livelihoods require long-term structural change at the systems level and changes to social norms. Section III therefore focuses on interventions that have transformed structures. Such change requires strong political leadership and sustained commitment to dismantling patriarchal institutions that deny girls access to secure and productive livelihoods. There is less evidence in this area, although the role of political leadership for girls' education is addressed in a paper for the Platform for Girls' Education (Rose et al., 2020). Therefore, the focus on short-term interventions to support girls' transition from school to work is presented solely as a short-term fix to the barriers that girls face, rather than as the solution.

Section I: Trends in Education and Livelihoods for Marginalised Adolescent Girls

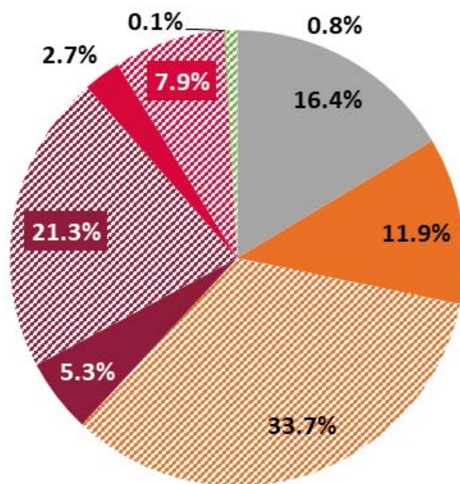
- Many marginalised adolescent girls in low- and lower-middle income countries have not completed primary education, and are very unlikely to complete lower secondary education.
- Even marginalised girls who remain in school are the most likely to leave education without learning the basics.
- Unpaid and domestic work can often hinder girls' schooling. Adolescent girls are more likely to have 'double work duty', combining household work and paid work.
- Their lower levels of education mean that marginalised girls are the least likely group to be in paid work and have longer and more unstable school to work transitions.
- When in work, marginalised girls are concentrated in vulnerable employment and the informal sector. They are most likely to be juggling several responsibilities and jobs and to face greater risk of exploitation and low earnings.
- Covid-19 is likely to exacerbate these risks, with adolescent girls most at risk of not returning to school due to domestic duties and early marriage.

Many marginalised adolescent girls do not complete 12 years of quality education

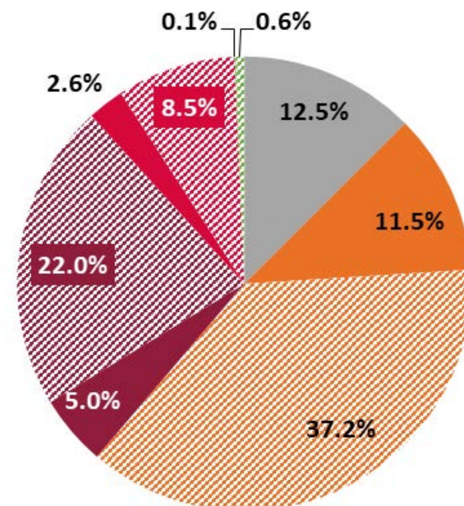
In many low- and lower-middle income countries, marginalised adolescent girls rarely complete primary education. While attention to adolescent girls' livelihood opportunities conventionally focuses on their transition from secondary school to work, many marginalised girls do not make it to the end of primary school. During adolescence, the proportion of girls who are out of school in sub-Saharan Africa is 36%, compared with 32% for boys (Ngware et al., 2018). Girls from poor households in sub-Saharan Africa are least likely to have reached secondary education, with around 16% never attending school compared with 13% of poor boys (Figure 1). In addition, one-third of the poorest 10 to 19 year olds in the region are still in primary school, and fewer of most marginalised girls complete primary school. In Nigeria, almost all of the richest boys in urban areas complete primary school, but only around 11 in every 100 poorest girls living in rural areas do so (Zubairi & Rose, 2019).

Figure 1: Distribution of disadvantaged (poorest quintile) 10-19 years old by education status, latest year available

A. Poorest Girls



B. Poorest Boys

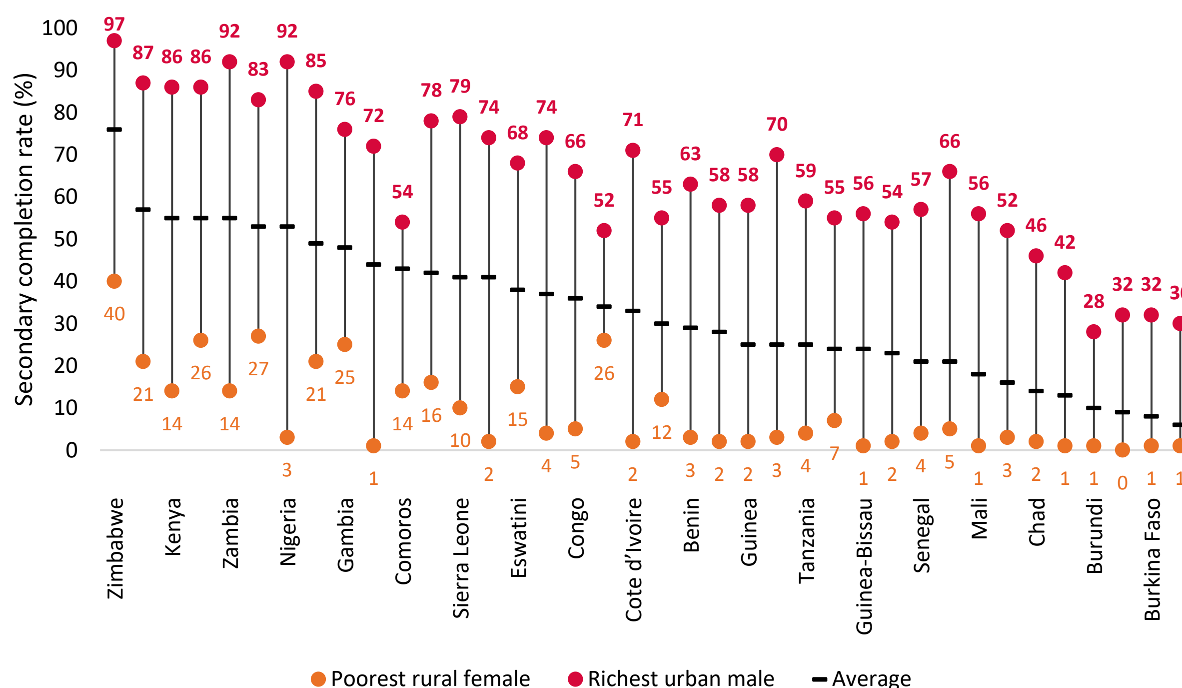


No schooling
Dropped out (primary school)
In school (primary school)
Dropped out (lower secondary school)
In school (lower secondary school)
Dropped out (upper secondary school)
In school (upper secondary school)
Dropped out (post-secondary school)
In (post-secondary school)

Source: UNICEF analysis, included in Zubairi and Rose, 2019

Girls from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are even less likely to complete lower secondary school than primary school. For 24 of the 38 sub-Saharan African countries with data, less than one in ten girls from poor households in rural areas complete lower secondary education (Figure 2). In some countries the gap in lower secondary completion between the poorest rural girls and richest urban boys is particularly stark; for example, in Nigeria only 3% of girls from poor households in rural areas complete secondary education, compared with 92% of rich urban boys. The proportion of poor rural girls completing lower secondary school has not significantly increased between 2006 and 2016 (Zubairi and Rose, 2019). Without a concerted effort to support these adolescent girls, they will remain left behind.

Figure 2: Lower secondary completion rates



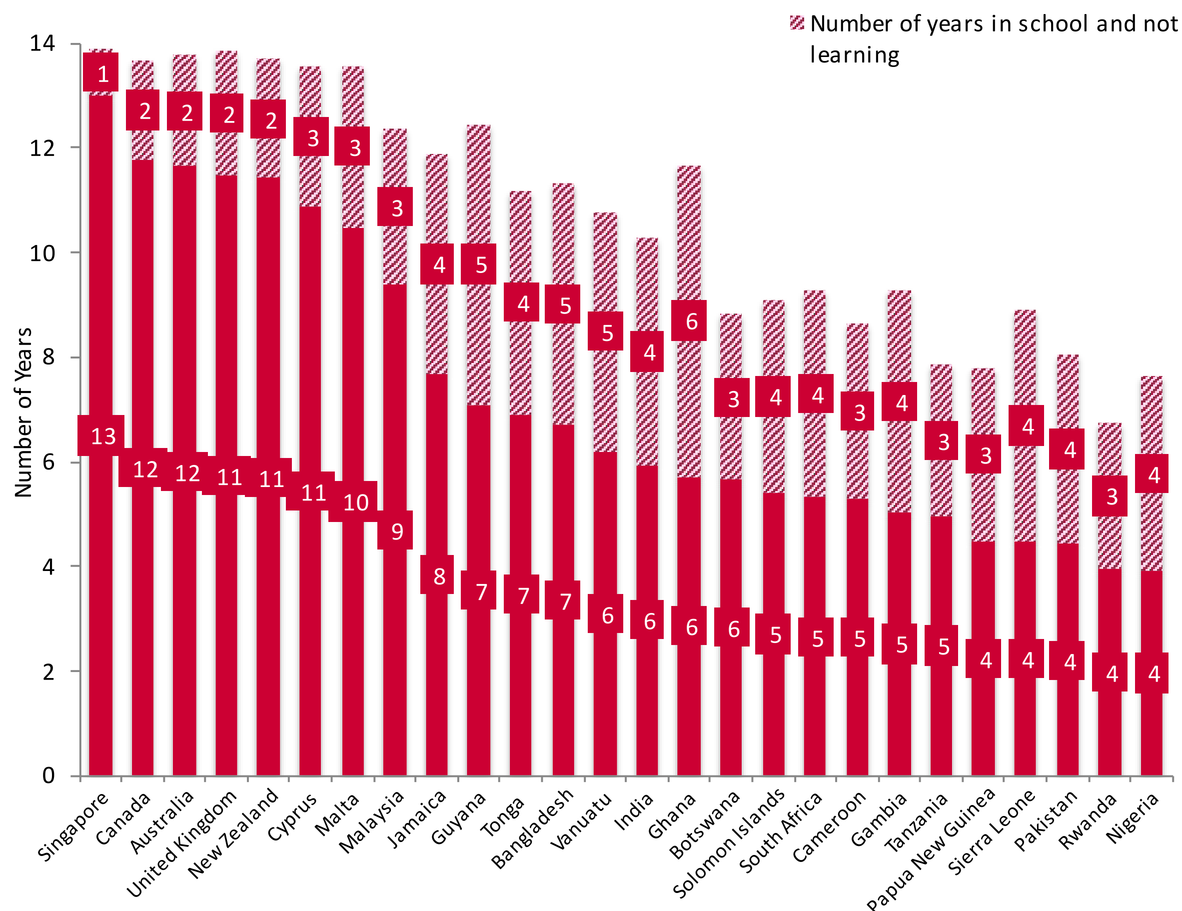
Source: UNESCO-WIDE, 2017, figure originally presented in Zubairi and Rose, 2019.

Marginalised girls are more likely to leave education early without learning the basic foundational skills needed to gain access to secure, safe, fulfilling and productive livelihoods. In 14 out of the 26 countries with data in the Commonwealth, girls who are in school are learning for the equivalent of six years or less. Girls in rural areas, and those facing other forms of disadvantage, are likely to be receiving even less schooling (Figure 3).

More generally, in countries where less than 50% of children complete primary school, learning gaps between boys and girls are wider, with poverty compounding these gaps (Rose et al., 2017). These gaps are likely to persist into secondary education or increase the likelihood of dropout. It is clear that marginalised girls are the group least likely to have the opportunity to develop foundational skills in literacy and numeracy in school.

Figure 3: Girls are far from the target of being in school for 12 years and learning

Learning adjusted years of schooling for girls, latest year



Source: World Bank (2018), figure originally presented in Gordon et al. (2019).

Marginalised girls are least likely to develop transferable skills, such as critical thinking, communication, problem solving, confidence or self-esteem that could support access to livelihood opportunities. Transferable skills can be developed through formal schooling. For example, the World Bank's STEP (The Skills towards Employment and Productivity) survey in Ghana found that adults who had more education scored higher in terms of socio-emotional skills. Those with higher socio-economic status also tend to have higher socio-emotional skill scores (World Bank, 2014). However, transferable skills are not sufficiently developed for all children and adolescents, whether in or out of school. Out of 152 surveyed countries, 117 include transferable skills within national policy documents, 71 include transferable skills within the curriculum, but only 18 define the learning standards to ensure that these skills are developed in school (UNICEF, 2019). UNICEF's Global Framework on Transferable Skills therefore also highlights the contribution of non-formal and community-based programmes to transferable skill development (UNICEF, 2019).

Marginalised adolescent girls are more likely than boys to have unpaid care and domestic responsibilities, which can curtail their schooling. Between the ages of 5 and 11, 45% of girls (compared with 38% of boys) undertake household chores for at least one hour per week. Between 12 and 14, this gap widens, with 69% of girls being involved in household chores for at least one hour a week compared with 56% of boys. Girls are also more likely to be working

longer hours inside the home, with 8.1% of girls working for 14-20 hours in comparison with 4.7% of boys, and 3.4% of girls working 21 to 27 hours, compared with 1.7% of boys (Stavropoulou, 2018).

Time-consuming unpaid domestic and care-related tasks can reduce girls' attendance at school. For example, girls who spent 28 hours or more per week in domestic and care work were found to spend 25% less time at school than those involved in less than ten hours per week (ILO, 2009 cited in UNESCO, 2019). Household responsibilities can also affect girls' ability to study outside of school hours. In Bangladesh, for example, girls with household responsibilities were found to spend on average at least half an hour per day less on studying than boys (Camfield et al., 2017). School closures as a result of Covid-19 have increased childcare and household responsibilities, which are more likely to disadvantage girls (UNESCO, 2020).

Marginalised girls are less likely than boys to have access to formal jobs

The transition to work can take longer for girls than boys and be less stable. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) conducted its school-to-work transition survey between 2012 and 2015 in more than 30 low- and middle-income countries. The survey found that it takes an average of 7.8 months for a young woman to find work after completing education, but only 6.9 months for young men. At the age of 25 to 29, young men were found to be 1.9 times more likely to have completed the school to work transition than young women (Elder and Kring, 2016).

Young women with higher levels of education are more likely to complete the transition to the labour market. The ILO survey demonstrated the advantage that a higher level of education brings in helping young people complete the transition to the labour market, and particularly to a secure job (opposed to a temporary or self-employed job). For example, a young woman educated at university is 1.9 times more likely to complete this transition than a young woman educated only to primary level. This is a stronger link than for males: tertiary-educated young men are only 1.5 times more likely to have completed the labour market transition than boys with only primary education (Elder and Kring, 2016).

Marginalised adolescent girls are the least likely to be in paid work. The ILO survey showed that the labour force participation rate was 16 percentage points higher for young men than for young women in 2014. Additionally, 76% of youth who were neither active in the labour market nor students were female (Elder and Kring, 2016). The rate of young people not in education, employment or training is twice as high for females (31%) as for males (16%) (ILO and UNICEF, 2018). Older adolescent girls in particular face greater disadvantage and exclusion than their male counterparts. The labour force participation rate was 37% for women aged 15 to 24 but 54% for men of the same age (Stavropoulou, 2018). The ILO survey showed that the urban unemployment rate was 18% for young men but 24% for young women. For rural men unemployment was 13% compared with 20% for rural women, demonstrating a slightly larger gender gap in unemployment for women in rural areas (Elder et al., 2015). This is not by choice: almost 70% of economically inactive females aged 15 to 29 who were not in education indicated that they wished to work in the future (ILO and UNICEF, 2018).

Gender and social norms act as barriers to paid work for the most marginalised adolescent girls. Analysis of the ILO survey demonstrated that 'being young and female can serve as a double strike for those seeking to find productive employment.' For example, having children was found to push young men towards employment, with 83.6% of young fathers in work, but had the opposite effect for young women, with less than one in two young mothers in work (Elder and Kring, 2016). This divide is likely to be exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis, given the concerns about increasing levels of early marriage during the pandemic (Jones et al., 2020a). Social norms also appeared to prevent adolescent girls with disabilities from finding paid work. In all 27 lower- and middle-income countries studied by UN Women, older adolescent girls and young women with disabilities were the least likely to have access to labour market opportunities (Jones, Presler-Marshall and Stavropoulou, 2018). In Kenya, 58% of youth with disabilities reported that this was due to stigma and discrimination (Kett, 2012).

Adolescent girls' work is often insecure, unproductive and unsafe

When marginalised young women are in paid work, it is more likely to be vulnerable and insecure (Table 1). Among Asian countries, nearly two in three young female workers in rural areas are in vulnerable employment,[i] compared with two in five in urban areas. In sub-Saharan Africa, 82% of female workers in rural areas were in vulnerable work, in comparison with 68% in urban areas (Elder and Kring, 2016).

Table 1: Are young women in vulnerable employment?

Region	Are women in secure livelihoods?
Asia and the Pacific	• Nearly six in ten young female workers are in vulnerable employment. • 91% are in informal employment. • Only one in three paid workers has a contract longer than 12 months.
Latin America and the Caribbean	• 68% of young female workers are in paid employment, 12% are contributing to family work. • 80% are in informal employment. • One in two paid workers has a contract longer than 12 months.
Sub-Saharan Africa	• Nearly eight in ten female workers are in vulnerable employment. • 93% are in informal employment. • Only 11% of paid workers have a contract longer than 12 months.

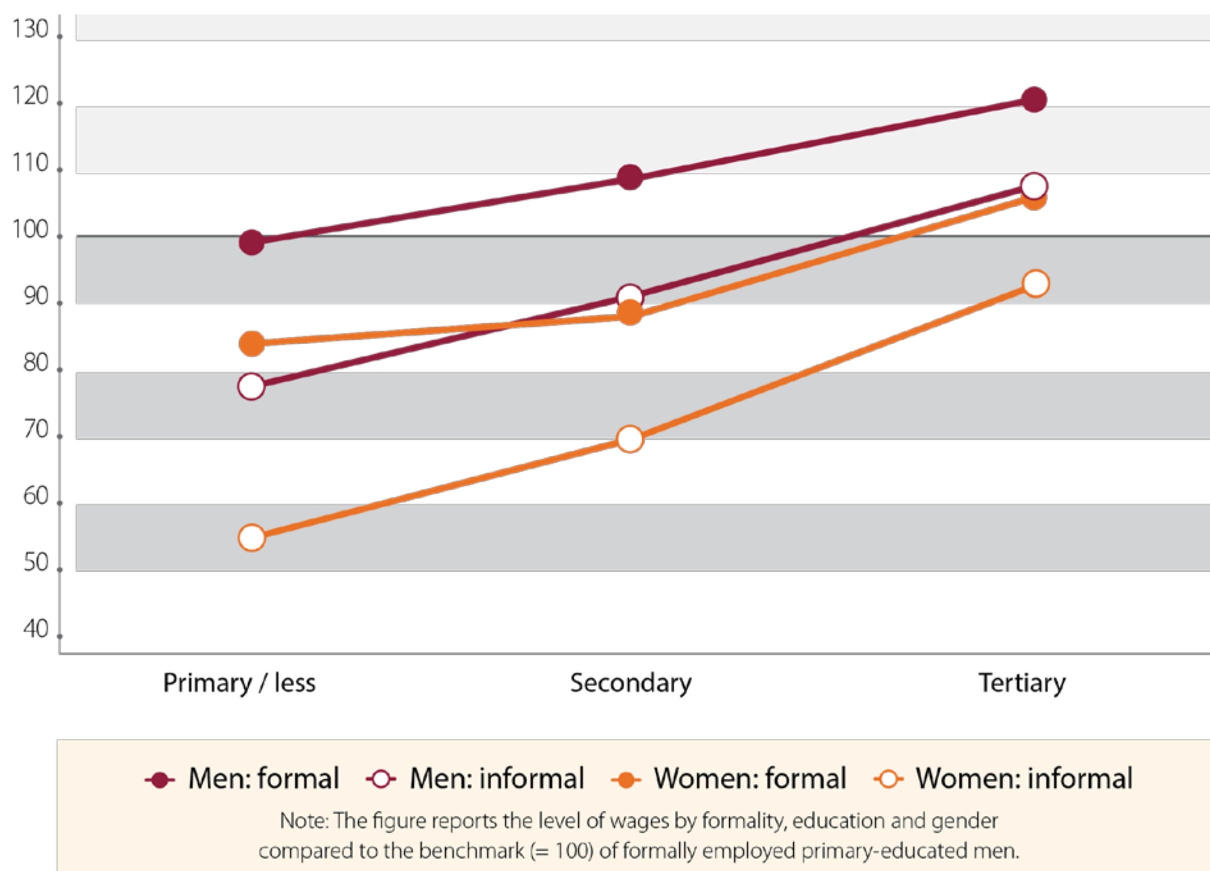
Source: Elder and Kring, 2016, from the ILO School to Work Transition Survey

Young women are often concentrated in informal employment with insecure contracts, low wages and poor conditions. Individuals are considered to have informal jobs if their employment relationship is, in law or in practice, not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits (advance notice of dismissal, severance pay, paid annual or sick leave, etc.) (OECD/ILO, 2019). Informal

sector workers normally face lower wages, as well as limited health and safety protection, and little access to social insurance (Cho et al., 2012). Over 90% of girls and boys aged 15 to 19 in the ILO survey countries were informally employed (Elder and Kring, 2016). However, girls are more likely to be employed in informal sectors with weak regulatory environments. For example, the most recent Demographic and Health Survey in Rwanda showed that 72% of girls aged 15 to 19 worked in agriculture, compared with 60% of boys (National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR), 2016). Many of these girls were employed without a contract, for very low salaries, with poor conditions and were not protected by labour laws (Abbott et al., 2014). The economic pressures resulting from Covid-19 are likely to reduce the number of livelihood opportunities and push more girls into insecure and unsafe employment. There is already evidence that working adolescents have been suffering from a loss of employment or exploitative work conditions with longer hours and lower salaries (Jones et al., 2020b).

Those with lower levels of education are more likely to be in vulnerable and informal work. In low- and middle-income countries, only 39% of 15- to 29-year-olds with no or primary education are in formal employment, compared with 59% of those with some secondary education and 84% of those with post-secondary education. The pattern is reversed for self-employment, with those with lower levels of education being most likely to be self-employed. While some chose informal self-employment because it gave them greater independence, many were self-employed because they could not find a formal waged or salaried job (Burchell and Coutts, 2019). The ILO survey further found that, for both men and women in the formal and informal sectors, wages are higher if levels of education are higher. However, across all levels of education, wages are lower for women than for men in the formal and informal sectors (Figure 4). In addition, those with no education or only primary education are likely to remain in informal employment, while those with secondary are able to escape from it – and those with higher education, even more so.

Figure 4: Estimated formal and informal wages by education and gender



Source: O'Higgins (2017)

Marginalised adolescent girls in work are more likely to be in unsafe jobs, at risk of exploitation and sexual violence. In younger adolescence, girls are more likely to be in hazardous work than boys. For example, girls account for 57% of all children aged 5 to 14 in hazardous work globally (Guarcello and Lyon, 2015). Young girls living in poverty are also like to be most at risk of trafficking. A study of sexually exploited girls aged 9 to 17 in major cities in Tanzania found that many had been trafficked to urban zones from their rural homes into domestic work and had been abused by their employers (ILO, 2011 cited in Chant et al., 2017). In other cases, girls in their early adolescence who migrated from rural to urban areas were trafficked directly into sex work (Mabala, 2006 cited in Chant et al., 2017). When livelihood opportunities are limited for refugee or migrant girls, they are more likely to engage in risky work. For example, Congolese girls in refugee camps in Rwanda were reliant on economic provisions from international organisations, which led them to transactional sex work in order to have money to spend on basic essentials, such as food, clothes and sanitary pads (Williams, Chopra and Chikanya, 2018).

Marginalised young women are more likely to be juggling several responsibilities and often several jobs. In Benin, Madagascar and Tanzania, women work at least ten hours longer than men every week, if work both inside and outside the household is included (FAO, 2010, cited in Elder and Kring, 2016). Similarly, in 32 low- and lower-middle-income countries, each day women spent one to three hours more on housework than men, two to ten times as much time caring for dependents, but one to four hours less in paid work (World Bank, 2012, cited

in Elder and Kring, 2016). Even when in work, adolescents are likely to have more than one job. For example, amongst those surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, nearly a third of adolescents are found to combine self-employment with employment for another person or company, and 45% of those surveyed juggled three or more income-generating activities (Barford and Coombes, 2019).

Section II: Marginalised Adolescent Girls Face Many Barriers to Secure, Productive Work

Many barriers prevent marginalised adolescent girls from gaining access to secure and productive livelihoods. Although these vary for different groups of girls in different places, low education levels tend to form the first and most important barrier, as they prevent girls from developing the foundational and transferable skills required for work. Gender discrimination and social norms take a heavy toll on marginalised girls' opportunities in both education and the labour market. Such norms lead to early marriage and drop out, as well as limiting the subjects girls take at school and the technical and vocational skills they are able to acquire. These barriers are likely to be exacerbated by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. To bring down these barriers, governments and their partners need to change the wider structures surrounding education and the labour market (see Section III).

Marginalised girls are least likely to develop foundational and transferable skills needed for secure and productive livelihoods

Barriers to educational access limit marginalised girls' opportunities to learn and develop skills, restricting their access to secure and productive livelihood opportunities of their choice. Marginalised adolescent girls are the least likely to have been provided the opportunity to develop foundational skills (such as literacy, numeracy and, increasingly, digital literacy), without which other skills are considerably more difficult to acquire (UNESCO, 2012). At least half of older adolescents in 59 countries studied lack foundation skills and around 200 million young people aged 15 to 24 lack the most basic foundational skills, 58% of whom are women (UNESCO, 2012). A lack of access to education or other training opportunities also means that the most marginalised girls are least likely to have transferable skills, such as critical thinking, strong communication, problem solving or self-esteem. Even if girls do have access to education, it is unlikely that they will consistently acquire transferable skills unless schools actively integrate the development of such skills,. Many curricula focus on theoretical knowledge. As a result, students often lack the capacity to make sense of their knowledge and use it to solve problems (UNESCO, 2012).

One in three unemployed adolescent girls in the Asia Pacific region, and one in five in sub-Saharan Africa, reported that entry requirements for their career path exceeded their education and training (ILO and UNICEF, 2018). Even when marginalised adolescent girls are in school, they still may not have the skills needed for the livelihood opportunities available.

Expectations and norms about what roles are appropriate for adolescent girls limit their educational opportunities as well as their ability to gain access to secure and productive livelihoods. While gender roles are present from birth, early adolescence (ages 10-14) is a critical period during which gender norms shape girls' possibilities and girls' responsibilities in the household increase. As noted in *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective,* girls and young women who marry early are highly likely to drop out of school. In sub-Saharan Africa, marrying at age 16 reduces the likelihood of completing secondary education by 7.8 percentage points (Wodon et al., 2017). This subsequently limits girls' ability to develop foundational and transferable skills. Furthermore, gender gaps in

parents' and childrens' aspirations for education and livelihoods start appearing between middle childhood and early adolescence, in many cases due to norms about the role of girls in later life (Winter, 2016). For example, in Ethiopia, girls are more likely to be directed to work that is 'typically female' such as cooking and caring, while boys are directed to 'male tasks' such as livestock herding and farming (Boyden et al., 2016).

Gender norms and expectations about the subjects that girls take at school can restrict their choice of livelihoods. In many societies, girls are less likely to study science, mathematics, engineering and technology (STEM), including due to gender norms and stereotypes which limit girls' motivation and engagement with these subjects (UNICEF ITU, 2020). This subsequently affects their ability to choose this area of employment. For example, only 7% of young women surveyed in 2012-2016 in ILO's School to Work Transition Surveys conducted in 34 countries had chosen career paths in STEM, in comparison with 18% of young men (ILO and UNICEF, 2018). In numerous countries, women faced restricted access to livelihoods that were deemed inappropriate for them. For example, in India, some communities considered work in call centres unsuitable for women (Muñoz Boudet et al, 2013).

Gender norms also curb access to vocational training opportunities. Marginalised adolescent girls are the group least likely to gain access to formal training opportunities and apprenticeships, and therefore to develop technical and vocational skills. For example, in rural Bangladesh only 3% of girls were enrolled in formal and non-formal vocational training institutions, in comparison with 6% of boys (Presler-Marshall and Stavropoulou, 2017). In Ghana, only 11% of the poorest one-fifth of young people had access to an apprenticeship, compared with 47% of the wealthiest fifth, and men are more likely than women to receive free training (UNESCO, 2012; Palmer 2007). Adolescent girls with disabilities are even less likely to obtain access to training. For example, in southern Africa nearly half of 15 to 29 year olds with disabilities who were surveyed reported that they needed but could not gain access to vocational training services (Eide, 2012). Vocational training and apprenticeships also often reinforce social norms by offering girls training in stereotypically female and low-paid trades such as arts and crafts, tailoring and beauty salons (Fox et al., 2011).

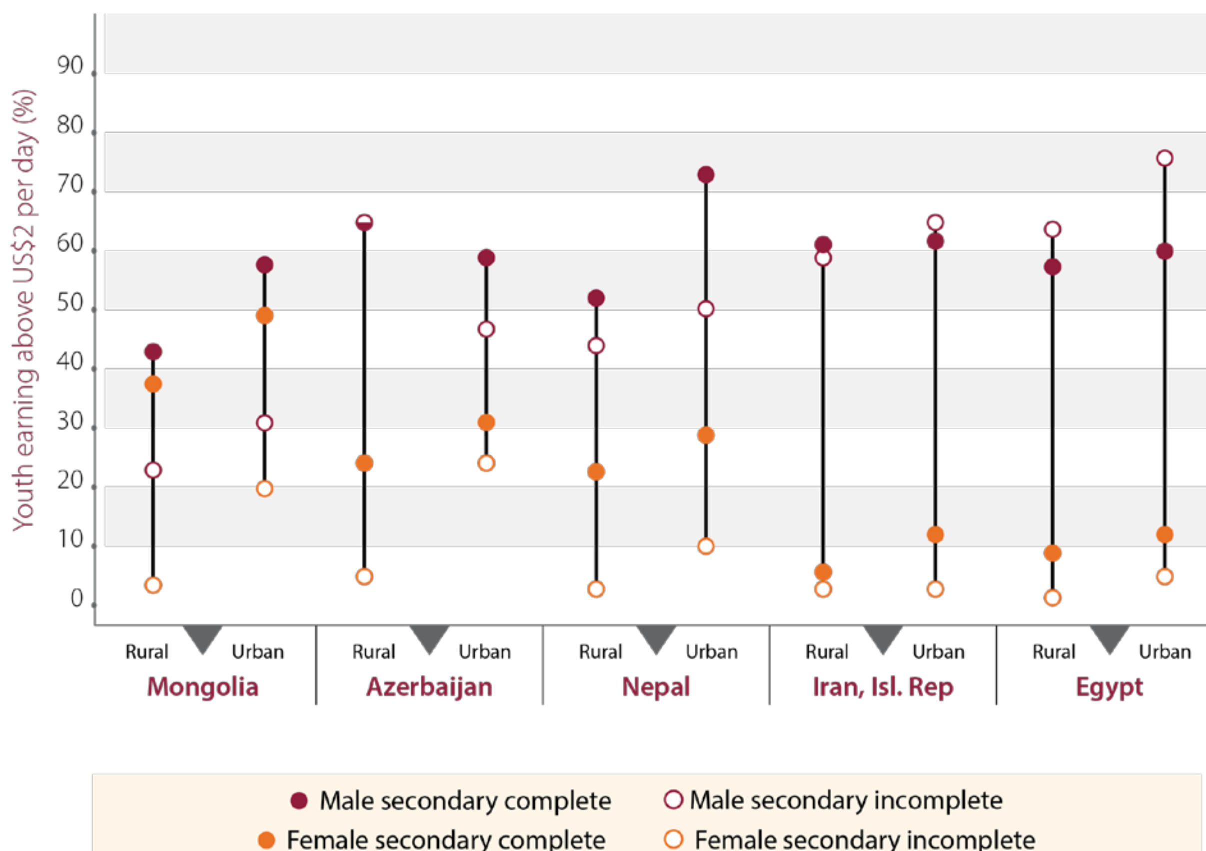
Marhinalised girls face gender discimination in the labour market

An overarching barrier facing adolescents in low and lower middle-income countries is a lack of work opportunities. Many countries have a burgeoning population of young people with low levels of education. At the same time, technology and automation are evolving quickly. As a result, adolescents do not always have the skill sets necessary for the types of jobs available (Arias, Evans and Santos, 2019). Gender discrimination in the labour market exacerbates this mismatch for marginalised adolescent girls. For example, in the United Republic of Tanzania, 68% of young women who were not actively looking for a job said it was because they did not think that they could find one (Kondylis and Manacorda, 2008 in UNESCO, 2012).

Marginalised adolescent girls are denied access to secure and productive livelihoods because of policies and structural support that are insufficent (e.g. discriminatory land laws and a lack of minimum wage legislation). Structural support such as minimum wage legislation can reduce young women's vulnerability to low-paid jobs. Without such support, it is clear that

young women – especially those who have not had the opportunity to complete education – are the group most likely to be in low paid work (Figure 5). The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) survey measures areas in which adolescent girls face restrictions as a result of discrimination in the family, restricted physical integrity, restricted access to productive and financial resources, and restricted civil liberties. Discriminatory inheritance laws, which deny access to assets such as land or property, limit girls' opportunities to earn a livelihood. These are widespread – 115 out of the 180 countries covered by the 2018 SIGI survey had evidence of such discriminatory laws or practices.

Figure 5: Percentage of youth working above the poverty line, by gender and educational attainment



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team calculations (2012) based on School to Work Transtion survery data (ILO. 2011c)

Early marriage and pregnancy, which marginalised adolescent girls are more likely to experience, restrict their access to livelihood opportunities. Evidence is also growing that if women are unable to start earning an income soon after leaving school, they are often pushed towards early marriage (Binkley, 2019; Population Council and Women Deliver, 2019). Therefore, being able to gain access to a livelihood is strongly linked to preventing early marriage and giving young women more control over their life choices, such as when and who they marry, and whether they can use family planning. Having children, which pushes young men towards employment, has the opposite effect for young women.

Gender-based violence can prevent marginalised adolescent girls from gaining access to safe and fulfilling livelihoods. Widespread gender-based violence means that women who work outside of their home can be at risk. Adolescent girls are vulnerable to harassment from authority figures in the workplace. For example, in Nigeria, two-thirds of young female apprentices who were surveyed reported experiencing physical violence, and 39% reported that their employer was the most recent perpetrator (Fawole et al., 2005). In Liberia, 20% of women said that they preferred self-employment because it had lower risk of sexual harassment (Ruiz Abril, 2008) However, in Malawi, 14% of female entrepreneurs have been subject to physical or emotional violence by their domestic partner and 32% say that their husband insists on knowing where they are at all times (World Bank, 2019). Violence can also influence adolescent girls' ability to gain access to livelihoods. For example, in India, a higher perceived level of crime against women is likely to significantly reduce the number of women who work (Chakraborty et al., 2018). A heightened risk of gender-based violence during the Covid-19 pandemic is also likely to further curb girls' access to safe livelihoods. Additionally, transport has emerged as a significant challenge, especially during the pandemic, with girls finding it harder to travel safely to work (Jones et al., 2020b; Wilson et. al., 2019).

Inadequate sanitation and hygiene facilities are a barrier to safe livelihoods for adolescent girls. Even when adolescent girls are self-employed or working in the home, a lack of sanitation facilities often diminishes their productivity, particularly during menstruation. Without access to toilets, women and girls develop coping strategies such as eating and drinking less, defecating in the open and hiding wherever they can. This puts them at risk of ill health, infection and violence. Women may also stop working due to menstruation (Sommer et al., 2016). The onset of menstruation, and inadequate sanitary facilities and supplies, also lead girls to drop out of school (Caruso et al., 2013). Social norms related to menstruation can prevent adolescent girls from completing education and making the transition to work. In Uganda, communities perceived the onset of menstruation as the end of a girl's childhood and the start of her womanhood, which leads to them needing to fulfil their responsibilities as a woman, subsequently affecting their ability to access livelihoods of their choice (Bantebya et al., 2014).

Adolescent girls face barriers to productive entrepreneurship and self-employment, due to a lack of access to financial services and credit, for example. Self-employment through entrepreneurship can be a pathway to secure and productive livelihoods, as it enables women to be more in control over their working environments (Mastercard Foundation, 2018). However, many marginalised adolescent girls are more likely to be self-employed because there are fewer formal jobs, or because these formal jobs require skills they have not been able to develop. Additionally, young women face discrimination when seeking access to finance, resources, assets and support services that are crucial in creating and expanding small enterprises. For example, in South Asia, 65% of young women and 63% of adolescent men have no access to financial services. In the Middle East and North Africa, 92% of adolescent girls and 87% of adolescent boys lack access to financial services (Skyes et al., 2016). Adolescent women in sub-Saharan Africa are 4.1 percentage points less likely than men to have savings to start a business and 1.3 percentage points less likely to borrow for business purposes (Demirguc-Kunt and Klapper, 2015). This issue is most likely to be a barrier to the poorest girls and girls living in rural areas. Denied access to formal financial services, they are more likely to rely on potentially more exploitative informal services.

A lack of family networks, peer networks and role models can restrict livelihood choices for marginalised adolescent girls. Connections through family and peer networks are the main way adolescents in low- and middle-income countries look for jobs (Barford and Coombes, 2019). Indeed, networks are critical to adolescents' decisions to join the labour force but may be more limited for girls. For example, fathers' networks in South Africa provide useful connections for sons looking for jobs but not for daughters (Magruder, 2010). In Malawi, men are systematically less likely to refer women for jobs – they refer women only 23% of the time – despite knowing qualified women in their networks (Beaman et al., 2016). In Uganda and Ethiopia, women mentioned that the presence and encouragement of role models early in their careers helped them to enter male-dominated trades. In Uganda, women were at least 12% more likely to move into male-dominated trades if they had a male role model (Campos et al., 2015). In Ethiopia, women who were able to change business to work in traditionally male-dominated sectors were likely to be supported by a husband within the business (Alibhai et al., 2015). These findings demonstrate that a lack of family networks, peer networks and role models may prevent young women from entering more fulfilling or more productive employment.

Section III: Programmes that Help Adolescent Girls Move from School to Work

Around the world, many programmes have shown that they can help marginalised adolescent girls move smoothly from school into work, despite the barriers identified in Section II, While these interventions have been successful, they may not adapt to other contexts. Programmes have aimed to enhance foundational, transferable, or technical and vocational skills – or a combination of these. There is no clear hierarchy of which skills should be prioritised. Where foundational skills in literacy and numeracy are lacking, however, it is more difficult for young people to acquire transferable or technical and vocational skills through training programmes (UNESCO, 2012).

To ensure that marginalised adolescent girls have access to secure and productive livelihoods, there is a need for broad systemic changes – from high-level political leaders to the grassroots level – to challenge the gender discrimination in the education system and the labour market, and especially to shift the social norms that restrict girls' access to both. Such change is likely to take time and there is less evidence about the kinds of long-term interventions needed to achieve it. As such, this section begins by showing how more immediate interventions that can be successful in the short-term have prevented insecure, unproductive livelihood opportunities.

Short-term interventions are needed ot help girls develop skills within and outside of scholl

Programmes offering a second chance for education can provide marginalised adolescent girls with the foundational skills they need to gain access to productive livelihoods. The Complementary Basic Education programme in the north of Ghana, for example, has supported children who missed opportunities to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills because they were unable to attend school. The programme focuses on helping girls, in particular, to acquire foundation skills and then provides a route back into primary school. Many of those in the programme are over-age for the primary system. Of those surveyed, the average age was 15 years, and 14% of those in the programme were also engaged in work. Of these participants, 90% said their experience in school helped with their work, particularly in mathematics, reading, writing, problem solving and English. When surveyed, the vast majority (90%) of those who had completed the programme had progressed to formal school. When asked about their aspirations, 82% said they wanted a job in the formal sector. The main barrier to achieving this was economic constraints (63%), with only 11% noting a lack of education and skills as a barrier (Carter, et. al., 2018).

Programmes that blend formal education with transferable skills development may help girls to stay in school while boosting the skills they need to obtain productive livelihoods. In Rwanda and Uganda, the Educate! Experience programme aims to resolve the mismatch between education and livelihood opportunities. The programme focuses on developing students' skills, training teachers and advising on national policy. Secondary school students are provided with skills training in leadership, entrepreneurship and workforce readiness, along with mentorship to start businesses, delivered by young entrepreneurs. Although adolescent

girls were not specifically targeted, they benefited the most. There was a 120% increase in income among the programme's female scholars and a 152% increase in business ownership. Female students also scored at least 5% higher than a control group on creativity and self-efficacy (belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations) (Educate! 2014 in Kwauk and Robinson, 2016). The Adolescent Girls' initiative in Rwanda provided scholarships for formal education and vocational training and entrepreneurship support for vulnerable girls and young women aged 16 to 24 who had been out of school for at least one year, with some primary education in both urban and rural areas. Those who had participated in the programme were 1.5 times more likely to have non-farm employment, driven mainly by higher self-employment. Average earnings and business profits doubled over the course of the project, while savings and livelihood ownership also increased (Botea et al., 2015).

The Learner Guide programme run by the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) also blends transferable skills development with formal education. Young female school graduates return to their local government secondary schools to deliver a self-development curriculum, My Better World, designed to build transferable skills (resilience, problem-solving, time management etc.) that will help young people succeed in the workplace. The programme in Tanzania was recognised in the 2017 WISE Awards and 2020 Yidan Prize, which recognise high-impact projects tackling education challenges. An evaluation of CAMFED's overall programme, which included the use of Learner Guides, found an increase in literacy and mathematics test scores among marginalised girls who had participated. CAMFED's programme in Tanzania overall is found to be highly cost-effective, equivalent to an additional two years in school (Sabates et al., 2020). The My Better World curriculum is now being aired through several broadcasters during the pandemic to try to reach a wider audience (Boost and Kwauk, 2020).

Foundational and transferable skills training outside of formal education can also help adolescent girls gain access to productive livelihoods. The Bangladeshi Association for Life Skills, Income and Knowledge for Adolescents programme provided educational support, gender rights awareness training and livelihood skills training. It also provided local young women as mentors for adolescent girls aged 12 to 18 in rural areas. Girls in the communities with livelihood training were about one-third more likely than others to earn an income and significantly more girls in all intervention areas reported working and having a higher income (Amin et al., 2016). In Rwanda, the Akazi Kanoze Youth Livelihood project provided vocational skills and entrepreneurship training to those aged 14 to 35 whose education levels were low. Trainees improved their employability and financial management: participants were 12% more likely to be employed than youth who did not participate. Women in the programme significantly increased their knowledge of how to find a job and improve their work position, while increases for male participants were not statistically significant (Alcid, 2014).

The programme Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises sought to reach marginalised girls aged 16 to 19 who were married, pregnant or had had a child before the age of 18, who were divorced or widowed, unmarried girls who were orphans or came from a single parent household, girls with a disability or living in a household with someone with a disability, and girls unable to pay school fees. The programme provided girls with safe spaces and tutoring in maths, English, financial management, leadership and life skills. Those who had participated in the programme were more likely than non-participants to run their own

business or manage a family business. More girls in the programme (65%) had access to a savings account than those not involved (37%). Participants had higher self-confidence and better knowledge of skills needed to run small businesses, including negotiation and financial management (Klugman et al, 2018). Transferable skills training that focuses on the psychosocial and social constraints on women entrepreneurs has proven promising for girls moving into adulthood (Siba, 2019). In Ethiopia, for example, a training programme emphasising self-esteem and entrepreneurship increased the business performance of female-owned firms (Alibhai, et. al., 2016).

Programmes that aimed to provide marginalised women with technical and vocational skills have been effective in enabling access to productive livelihoods. In New Delhi, the Social Awakening Through Youth Action Programme provided women aged 18 to 39 with a six-month stitching and tailoring course. The programme targeted the most marginalised women, including those with the least primary education, from low-income neighbourhoods and with low rates of employment. Those who had participated were more likely to be employed within six months of training, worked longer hours and earned more (Maitra and Mani, 2014). In Nepal, the Employment Fund, in partnership with the Adolescent Girls Initiative, provided vocational skills training and a six month employment placement to support girls, young women and men aged 16 to 24 with less than ten years of formal education. Those involved were more likely to move on to productive livelihoods. After three years, non-farm employment had increased by 15 to 16 percentage points. Participants were also more likely to find employment in the field for which they had received training, with the increase ranging from 18 to 19 percentage points. The benefits were significantly greater for young women than for men (Chakravarty et al., 2016).

In informal settlements in Nairobi, the Kenya Youth Empowerment Programme provided life skills and ICT training, alongside internships and job placement support, to women aged 18 to 35 who had completed high school but had been out of school and work for a year. Participants were 14% more likely than the control group to have a full-time job after the programme. They were also more likely to have a secure full-time position, while the control group were more likely to be in informal work (De Azevedo et al., 2013). In Bangladesh, a programme provided informal apprenticeships to out-of-school adolescent girls. Adolescents were placed in trades that challenged gender stereotypes and were supported by on-the-job training, and off-the-job trade theory and transferable skills classes. Almost all graduates found jobs in relevant trades within one month of completing the course, and monthly incomes increased by six times those of non-participants. The benefits were particularly high for girls, 77% of whom continued in relevant trades. Early marriage decreased by 62%. The programme also helped to challenge some of the social barriers and stigma that prevent women from gaining access to work that had previosuly not been considered appropriate for them (Wilson-Clark and Saha, 2019).

Life skills and informal learning support outside formal education can help reduce child marriage and teenage pregnancy, allowing girls to continue in school and avoid risky livelihood choices. Some successful programmes have focused on adolescent girls' vulnerability to exploitative relationships, early marriage and early pregnancy, which increase the likelihood that they will enter unsafe livelihoods. In Kenya, an intervention for secondary school girls tackled harmful social norms that lead to early marriage by providing "sugar-daddy-risk

education', which included a course on HIV and relationships that pose a risk to sexual health, particularly with older men. The course led to a 28% decrease in the likelihood that girls started childbearing within a year (Dupas, 2011).

Short-term interventions can tackle the multiple barriers girls face in obtaining secure and productive work

A gender-sensitive approach in the post-school period can enable marginalised young women to build secure and productive livelihoods through entrepreneurship and to save for further career development. CAMFED's livelihoods programme is targeted at highly marginalised women soon after they complete secondary education in rural sub-Saharan Africa. The programme has five main components:

1) training in core business skills, financial literacy and life skills, including leadership, sexual and reproductive health, and career planning;
2) business finance in the form of a non-repayable seed grant of around $50 and/or an interest-free loan of around $500;
3) mentoring and peer support from other experienced female entrepreneurs through the CAMFED alumnae network CAMA;
4) a gender-sensitive approach that includes family and community orientation events to build support and recognition for women's business leadership; and
5) links to business development services, assets and market access through CAMFED's partnerships with government agencies, traditional authorities, business and financial service providers.

An external evaluation of CAMFED's programme in Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe found that – in a context where rural young women are typically unemployed or unpaid and most people live in extreme poverty – it enabled most participants to create a job for themselves. Women's businesses substantially increased their incomes. Participants also built up personal savings for several purposes, including improved household resiliency in the face of 'shocks' (such as a family health crisis), business investment and career development. Around half of the participants from Malawi and Zambia that closed their businesses progressed to further education. Women reported that their role in financial decision-making increased after they had participated in the programme. Participants had higher median ages at first marriage and childbirth than demographically similar women who did not benefit from education and business support – indicating that the programme had enabled them to build a productive livelihood and avoid early marriage. (Binkley, 2019).

Multifaceted programmes that target multiple barriers are likely to boost girls' access to secure and productive livelihoods. Recognising barriers such as teenage pregnancy, early childbearing and a lack of access to credit and skills, the government of Sierra Leone partnered with UNICEF and BRAC to implement the Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescents programme, which had three components: health education (including sexual and reproductive health), vocational training (covering the skills required to engage in income generating activities) and microcredit. In spite of high levels of Ebola, adolescent girls in the programme were more likely to be in school and have improved levels of numeracy and

literacy; they also spent on average 1.3 hours less per week with men than girls in non-targeted communities. Girls in non-targeted communities were also twice as likely to be pregnant out of marriage than girls who were in the programme. As a result, they were unlikely to re-enrol in school and likely to leave school earlier than girls who participated in the programme (Bandiera et al., 2019). In Uganda, adolescent girls in the same programme were 48% more likely to engage in income generating activities, almost entirely self-employment. Teenage pregnancy fell by 34% and early entry into marriage and cohabitation fell by 62%, reducing their likelihood of engaging in risky and insecure livelihoods (Bandiera et al., 2017). However, an evaluation of this programme in Tanzania found no economic, health or social benefits, which raises some caution about whether the programme can be replicated in different contexts. The quality of implementation was influenced by resource constraints and contextual factors. For example, delays in rolling out the project meant that the programme was not implemented according to the original design, and club meetings had to take place in public spaces, with reduced materials. There was also less training for mentors, which led to high levels of turnover (Buehren et al, 2017).

The Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme in Zambia, another multi-sectoral intervention, targets vulnerable, rural and urban girls aged 10 to 19. At the core of this intervention were mentor-led, weekly meetings of 20 to 30 adolescent girls covering three curricula – sexual and reproductive health and life skills, financial literacy, and nutrition. There were two additional elements, a health voucher and a bank account. Early results have shown some benefits, although the programme was not broadly beneficial for the majority of girls. Girls did show increased self-efficacy, financial savings behaviour and sexual and reproductive health knowledge. The changes were greatest for girls who received all three programme components: group meetings, health vouchers and girl-friendly individual savings accounts. However, a more recent study cautioned that this intervention only led to sustained change for a small number of girls (Austrian et al., 2020).

Interventions that promote financial inclusion and women's economic empowerment – including by providing savings and microfinance, alongside demand-oriented skills and on-the-job training and placements – have enabled young people to improve their access to secure livelihoods. Interventions that have financial education and/or financial assets to adolescent girls increased girls' financial literacy, savings and involvement in income-generating activities (Stavropoulou, 2018; Erulkar et. al., 2006). In rural Bangladesh, for example, the Social and Financial Empowerment of Adolescents programme for young women aged 11 to 21 provided girls' clubs, financial literacy, livelihood and life skills training alongside microfinance and community sensitisation. Participants reported increased financial literacy, ownership of poultry and small livestock, and involvement in economic activities (Kamruzzaman et al., 2012). However, a plethora of literature demonstrates that interventions focusing solely on financial inclusion and economic empowerment may not lead to secure livelihoods and may do little to improve well-being (Duvendack et al., 2011). Therefore, interventions must be carefully designed to consider social and gender norms from the outset.

Interventions that provide adolescent girls with information about livelihood opportunities can support both educational and work-related aspirations and skills development. In India, a programme provided recruiting services to young women aged 15 to 21 in randomly selected rural villages, with the intention of increasing awareness of the growing business processing

outsourcing industry. This industry was chosen because it offered new high-paying job opportunities, particularly for women, but it was made clear that the job opportunities were primarily for women with a secondary school degree, some English language ability and experience with computers. Women in the villages exposed to the recruiting intervention were 4.6 percentage points more likely to work in the industry than women in control villages and 2.4 percentage points more likely to work at all for pay outside the home. The higher educational requirements in the sector, and awareness of these, also led to increased investments in skills training and education for women. Three years later, women were 2.8 percentage points more likely to have enrolled in vocational or training institutes to develop these skills, and girls aged 6 to 17 were 5 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in school in villages with the intervention (Jensen, 2012). These findings show that when secure girl-friendly livelihood opportunities arise, and adolescents are informed of these opportunities, families invest more in the skills girls need to gain access to them.

Short-term intervetions need to protect marginalised adolescent girls from unsafe work

Some promising programmes reduce adolescent girls' vulnerability to violence while in paid work and help them to leave unsafe livelihoods. The TAMSHA project in Tanzania supports vulnerable young women working in bars who are particularly at risk of sexual harassment. TAMSHA has created a network to increase social support for these young women. Under Tanzanian law, the network could include a union of bar workers to protect their rights and negotiate appropriate working conditions and protection. Biweekly meetings give the girls and young women a chance to speak about their experiences in a safe and supportive environment (Bruce, 2012). Several projects implemented by ChildHope have targeted adolescent girls most at risk of violence in the workplace. For example, the programme From Sexual Exploitation to Education for Ugandan Children helped girls in sex work to find alternative livelihoods where they were less vulnerable to violence. The programme provided intensive counselling and rehabilitation support, family reunification, livelihood support, and educational and livelihood training. After their involvement in the programme, the girls said they were not at risk of returning to unsafe work (ChildHope, n.d).

Programmes have reduced women's vulnerability to violence in work by engaging family members. The programme Sierra Leone Opportunities for Business Action helped businesses to reduce the risk of female employees experiencing violence from their husbands and partners. With the consent of employees, partners were included in the staff inductions to counter any misconceptions about the jobs that women were undertaking. The organisation also encouraged peer support among women and providing professional counselling for survivors of violence. Both women and men were reported to have responded well to these initiatives (Garbino et al, 2017).

Such interventions can succeed in meeting short-term goals. However, they are insufficient to deal with the gender discrimination in education and in the labour market that prevents marginalised girls from gaining access to secure and productive livelihoods. Long-term structural reform must therefore be given a high priority.

Long-term intervetions are needed to transform education systems

Deep structural changes are needed to develop transformative education systems that empower girls and help them to develop the foundational and transferable skills necessary for secure and productive livelihoods. Several strategies and interventions have succeeded in helping marginalised adolescent girls to complete 12 years of quality education (Gordon et al., 2019). However, deeper structural change and political leadership are needed to prioritise quality education for the most marginalised girls. In particular, governments should prioritise education sector planning that responds to girls' needs, supported by gender-sensitive budgeting and accountability. In addition, everyone from high-level political leaders to grassroots groups needs to join forces to shift social and gender norms (Rose et al., 2020).

Reforms in formal schooling to ensure that teaching methods are sensitive to girls' needs have a key role to play in shifting gender norms, which can improve girls' livelihood opportunities. Girl-friendly schools, such as the BRIGHT programme in Burkina Faso, have been found to improve learning outcomes for all children, while reducing the number of children engaged in household work. The intervention included information campaigns, adult literacy programmes, an increase in female teachers within schools and separate boys' and girls' toilets (Kazianga et al, 2013). Teachers who have higher qualifications and have trained in participatory learning tend to empower girls (Unterhalter and Heslop, 2012). Having female teachers has also led to improved test scores for girls (Muralidharan and Sheth, 2013; Ahiakpor et. al., 2014). Use of gender-sensitive teaching methods by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) changed the gender dynamics of the school and the attitudes and aspirations of girls and boys in the classroom (Bissoonauth, 2016). Gender-sensitive classroom dynamics also tend to favour the development of foundational and transferable skills (Gordon et al., 2019). Promoting gender equality in education will roll back some discrimination in the world of work by supporting girls' aspirations.

Schools also need to adopt curricula that support the development of foundational and transferable skills. Effective skills development requires the careful selection and alignment of curriculum and content, appropriate teaching practices and an environment in which all learners feel safe (UNICEF, 2019). School-based clubs have also been found to boost transferable skills, such as self-confidence and self-efficacy. In India, for example, the school-based gender-integrated skills programme PAGES developed a curriculum to build girls' self-efficacy and ability to identify, plan and realise their personal and professional goals that was taught using a participatory approach. Self-efficacy increased significantly among girls who participated, and attitudes towards gender equality improved (Nanda et al., 2017). In Tanzania, the TUSEME approach, adopted by the Ministry of Education, used gender-responsive teaching and clubs that include boys and girls aged 10 to 17. TUSEME encourages girls to speak out, express their problems and find solutions. A study found that TUSEME clubs significantly boosted pupils' confidence and self-esteem (Mhando et. al., 2015).

Long-term interventions need to provide gender-sensitive vocational training and work-based training

Gender sensitivity embedded within vocational training and work-based learning could boost the skills girls need to gain access to secure and productive livelihoods of their choice. The Botswana Training Authority, in collaboration with the Women's Affairs Department, drafted the National Policy for Mainstreaming Gender into Vocational Training and Work-based Learning in 2000 to increase the number of women in vocational training, to create more awareness of sexual harassment and how to report it, and to implement regular monitoring of the training needs of men and women (ILO, 2009). More recently, Bangladesh launched the National Strategy for *the Promotion of Gender Equality in Technical and Vocational Training*. This policy aimed to increase women's employment and improve attitudes towards female trades and employment (ILO, 2012).

Long-term interventions need to challenge gender discrimination in the labour market

Government programmes to help those who are unemployed to find work have increased secure livelihood options for girls and young women, particularly in formal employment. In India, for example, the 2015 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act offers at least 100 days paid work per year to all households who do manual labour. The act, intended to improve income security for those mostly involved in insecure work, has also narrowed the gender pay gap in rural India (Barford and Coombes, 2019). This demonstrates the key role that government policies can play for marginalised adolescent girls in diversifying rural livelihood opportunities and income security.

However, such overarching interventions can have adverse side effects, specifically on girls. For example, evidence from this programme found that adolescent girls were also more likely to substitute for mothers in domestic work while boys were more likely to engage in paid external work. For every 20 women induced into the labour force by the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, between 1.2 and 4 adolescent girls may have dropped out of school, nearly all of them to go into full-time domestic work in their parents' homes (Shah and Steinberg, 2015). Interventions therefore need to be sensitive to the impact of cultural and social norms that may interact with programmes. One critical policy issue is that domestic responsibilities are more often placed on girls and women. Investing in community infrastructure such as piped water, sewerage and garbage collection could relieve this domestic burden, providing girls and women with more time to take up educational and livelihood opportunities (Aslam et al. , 2020). Water infrastructure can reduce women's time in unpaid work and increase children's education, although further research is needed (Koolwal and van de Walle, 2013).

Governments can help girls to gain access to secure and productive livelihoods by providing social protection measures. When families do not have an adequate safety net that could support them in case of emergency, they may adopt low-risk, low-return livelihood choices that can perpetuate poverty and risks (Barford and Coombes, 2019). Investing in social protection could give households more choice of livelihoods, including for adolescent girls. For example, the Productive Social Safety Net programme implemented by the Tanzania

Social Action Fund provided unconditional cash transfers (and an additional amount conditional on health check-ups and children's school attendance), as well as a Public Works Programme component to supplement household incomes during the lean season and a livelihoods enhancement component for young people aged 14 to 28. In villages where the programme was implemented, household ownership of livestock increased by about 47%. The programme also improved well-being and aspirations by increasing autonomy and, particularly for women, self-assessed wealth and household decision making (Camilletti, 2018).

Social protection programmes can be designed to tackle adolescent girls' socio-economic exclusion and vulnerabilities (Lahiri, 2020). Girls seek the path most appropriate for their skill sets and vision, so social protection programmes need to offer multi-faceted support that tackles different types of marginalisation. These programmes need to emphasise fulfilling rights, breaking structural constraints and providing adolescent girls with the tools to prevent long-term socio-economic exclusion.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, social protection programmes have taken on even greater importance in helping to meet the basic needs of families facing the economic effects of the crisis (Jones et al., 2020b).

Legislation needs to tackle discrimination in the labour market, protect women within the labour market and ensure women are compensated adequately for their work. Minimum wage legislation, for example, can benefit women in particular. In South Africa, minimum wage legislation introduced in 2002 significantly increased domestic workers' wages and led to them receiving written contracts as well as employer contributions to social insurance and pensions – all without reducing employment opportunities. As women make up 80% of domestic workers, they benefited most (Dinkelman & Ranchhod, 2012).

Alongside measures that tackle wider structural gender-based discrimination, focussed attention needs to be paid to interventions that consider the demand side of livelihoods – increasing and improving livelihood opportunities that the market is able to provide for workers (Elder and Kone, 2014). Boosting labour demand is more difficult than implementing supply-side measures such as skills development as it requires more systematic, longer-term approaches. This may explain why there is more evidence on short-term supply-side interventions that promise quicker results at a lower cost (Flynn, et. al., 2017). It is vital that recommendations reflect the need not only for short-term preventive measures but also for a stronger focus on long-term transformational approaches. Further research on such approaches is crucial to identify the policy measures most likely to ensure a supportive safety net that enables marginalised adolescent girls to move into secure and productive livelihoods.

Recommendations

The barriers to girls' access to livelihoods require long-term structural change at the systems level and changes to social norms. Such change needs strong political leadership and sustained commitment to dismantling patriarchal institutions that prevent adolescent girls transitioning from education to secure and productive livelihoods. In the light of the reforms that are needed, we propose recommendations for political leaders and policy makers:

Reinforce and extend data and evidence
• Ensure all data and analyses are disaggregated by age and sex, and other forms of disadvantage
• Promote further research on interventions that tackle social norms holding back opportunities in transition from school to work
Prioritise marginalised adolescent girls in policy design
• Consult with youth networks and girls' communities
• Provide information about sexual and reproductive health services
• Develop transformative education systems that develop skills needed for secure and productive livelihood opportunities
Use alternative ways of boosting skills
• Provide catch-up initiatives that give girls a second chance to learn
• Blend formal education with transferable skills to help girls access appropriate livelihood opportunties
Adopt cross-sectoral approaches
• Develop multifaceted programmes that target multiple barriers to girls' participation in safe and secure livelihoods
• Provide counselling and rehabilitation programmes as well as educational and livelihood training for girls involved in unsafe work
• Provide interventions that promote financial inclusion and women's economic empowerment
Challenge gender discrimination in the labour market
• Consult with youth networks and girls' communities
• Provide information about sexual and reproductive health services
• Develop transformative education systems that promote skills needed for secure and productive livelihood opportunities
Policy makers

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[i] Vulnerable employment defined in the ILO School to Work Transition Survey as engagement in jobs where remuneration is directly dependent upon the goods or services produced (self-employment), or those employed in a family business (paid or unpaid).

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