

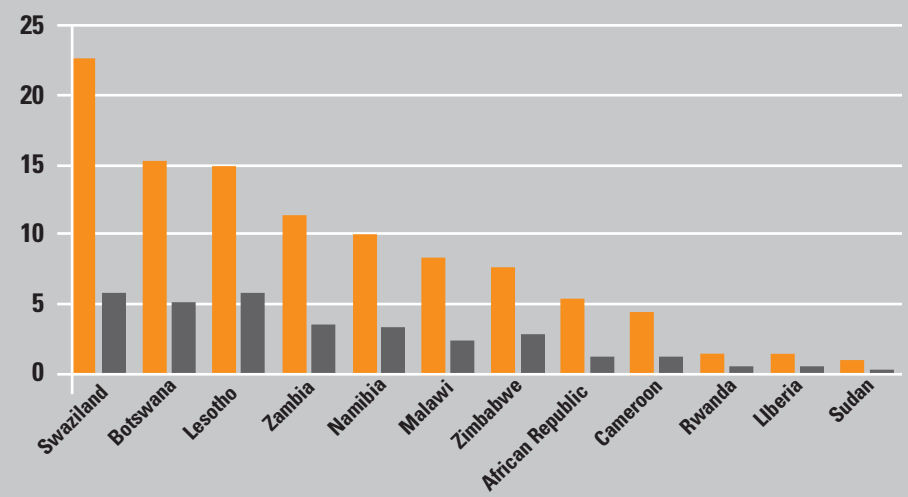
And what about the elevated risk of contracting HIV/AIDS in adolescence?

Globally, half of all people living with HIV are women, and in sub-Saharan Africa, women account for nearly 60 percent of those living with HIV. Young people are especially at risk, and those 15 to 24 account for almost one out of every two new HIV infections worldwide.

The risk of becoming infected is disproportionate for girls and young women. According to the latest UNAIDS statistics, the global HIV infection rate for young men ages 15 to 24 is 0.4 percent, and rises to 0.6 percent for young women. Moreover, in sub-Saharan Africa, this rate elevates to 3.2 percent for young women compared to 1.1 percent for young men. In Kenya, young women between 15 and 19 years

The risk of becoming infected by HIV/AIDS is disproportionate for young women in Sub-Saharan Africa

Prevalence of HOV (percent for ages 15-24), 2007



Source: World Development Indicators 2010.

are three times more likely to be infected than their male counterparts, while women between 20 and 24 years are 5.5 times more likely to be living with HIV than men in

their age cohort. Among people aged 15–24 in the United Republic of Tanzania, females are four times more likely than males to be living with HIV. In the nine countries

in southern Africa most affected by HIV, prevalence among young women aged 15–24 years was on average about three times higher than among men of the same age.



gender equality as smart economics

Ready for Work

Increasing adolescent girls' and young women's access to opportunities is the right thing to do—and the smart thing. Inequalities based solely on biology are not only unfair and unjust, but also inefficient. Equal opportunities for young women to enter productive work will raise their incomes, lift their families from poverty, delay marriage and childbirth, and increase investment in their children's health and education.

Increasing Economic Opportunity for Adolescent Girls and Young Women

What does this mean for public policy?

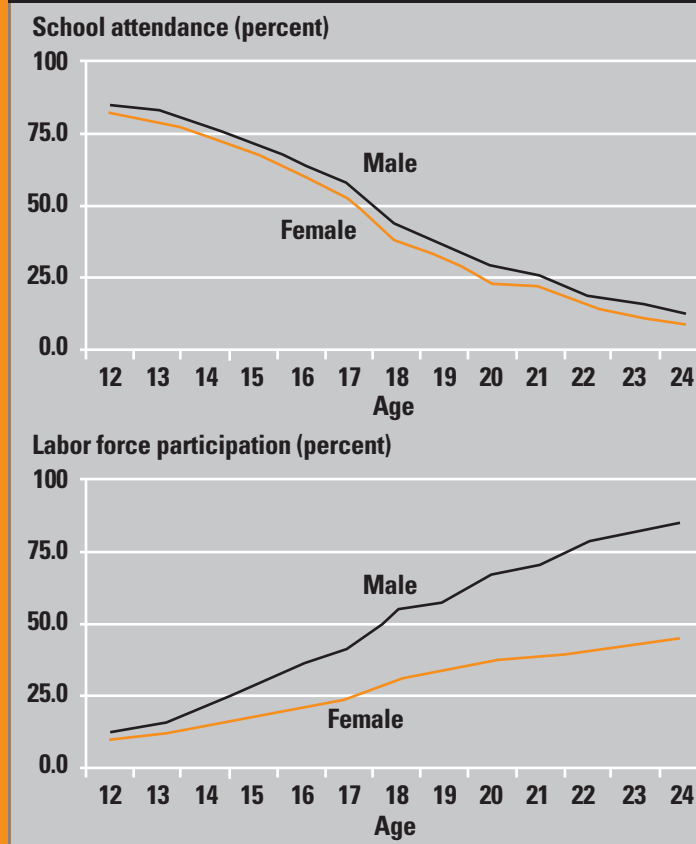
- Ensure that young women start the school-to work transition from an equitable position; trends toward gender equality in secondary school attendance and graduation must be reinforced and accelerated.
- Expand the focus of conditional and unconditional cash transfer programs to target and empower adolescent girls and address issues such as school-to-work transitions, early marriage and exposure to HIV/AIDS.
- Use training programs to facilitate the entry of young women into nontraditional and more highly paid occupations in high demand; outplacement and support services for training graduates are particularly important for young women with no previous labor market experience, as are childcare arrangements to facilitate both participation in training and entry into paid work.
- Promote autonomous saving by adolescent girls and young women; these savings can provide a valuable source of start-up or working capital for their businesses.
- Modify inheritance laws that discriminate against girls and women and limit their access to productive assets.

The world is moving quickly toward greater gender equality in education. Girls' enrollments are rising fast, both in absolute terms and relative to boys'. Of 157 countries for which data exists, 85 will have achieved the Millennium Development target of parity in primary and secondary education by 2015 if present trends continue¹. Even so, 72 countries are off track to meet this target, especially with respect to parity at the secondary level.

While girls' primary and secondary enrollments rose rapidly over the past decade, young women's labor force participation stagnated, and in some cases the gap between their participation in employment and that of young men widened. Unemployment also hits young women the hardest. In the past two years, the gap between female and male youth unemployment rates increased in most regions, as young women became even more likely to be unemployed than young men during the crisis.²

Too many girls are stalled between school and productive work: of girls 14 to 19 years old, 42% in South Asia and 26% in sub-Saharan Africa neither study nor work for pay. Too many adolescent girls become mothers, frequently forcing them to abandon school and face a lifetime of lower earnings. For the progress in education to bring its full benefits—for girls, women, families and societies—more policy attention must go to equality in economic opportunities, especially the transition from school to work.

The transition from school to work leaves many girls behind



Source: World Bank Living Standard Measurement Surveys (1998-2008), weighted by country population.

¹ Global Education Digest 2010: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

² Global Employment Trends for Youth, August 2010: Special Issue on the Impact of the Global Crisis on Youth, Geneva: ILO

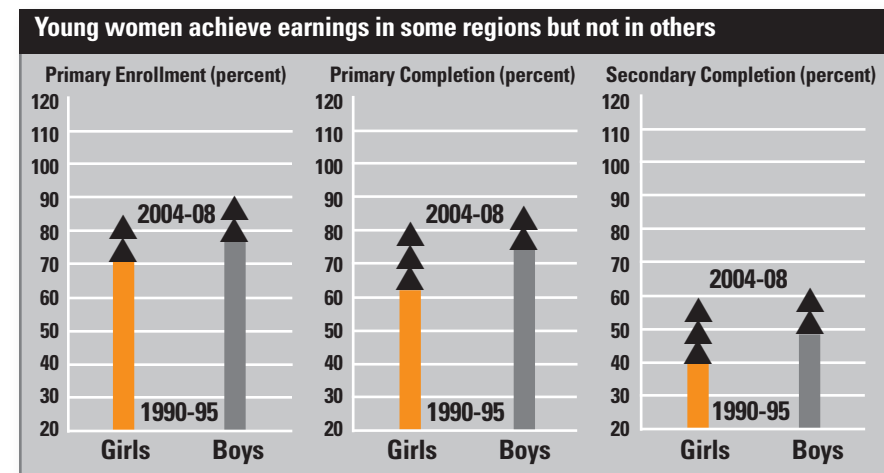
Are gains in enrollment translating into gains in completion?

The gains in primary education— particularly large in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia— brought parity in primary enrollment rates by 2008 everywhere except Sub-Saharan Africa. On sec-

ondary education, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa have made impressive strides in increasing girls' enrollment. South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have farther to go, despite

progress. Gains in enrollment translated into gains in completion in most regions, but not everywhere. In South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa, girls are much less likely than boys to complete school once enrolled. Education builds girls'

capabilities. The benefits include higher earnings, better health, greater ability to adopt new technologies, and lower fertility. But building on the progress means focusing on parity in education in the lagging regions. And it means ensuring women's economic opportunities—so that women's higher capabilities translate into better outcomes.



Source: World Development Indicators, 2010.

In Afghanistan, the primary completion rate for young women stands at 22%, compared to 55% for young men.

In Lao PDR, the secondary enrollment rate for young women stands at 39%, compared to 49% for young men.

Does better access to education mean more job opportunities for women?

Progress in education is not matched by higher labor force participation. By age 24, women lag behind men in labor force participation in all regions.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the gap is around 26 percentage points. The gap is even larger in South Asia, where 82% of men are active in

the labor market, against just 28% of women. More attention to the transition from school to work is imperative, and

critical, for building on the achievements in women's education and sustaining them in the later stages of life—for the benefit of all.



Source: Household survey data, various years between 1998-2008, weighted by country population.

In Jordan, 76 percent of young men are active in the labor market, compared to only 23 percent of young women.

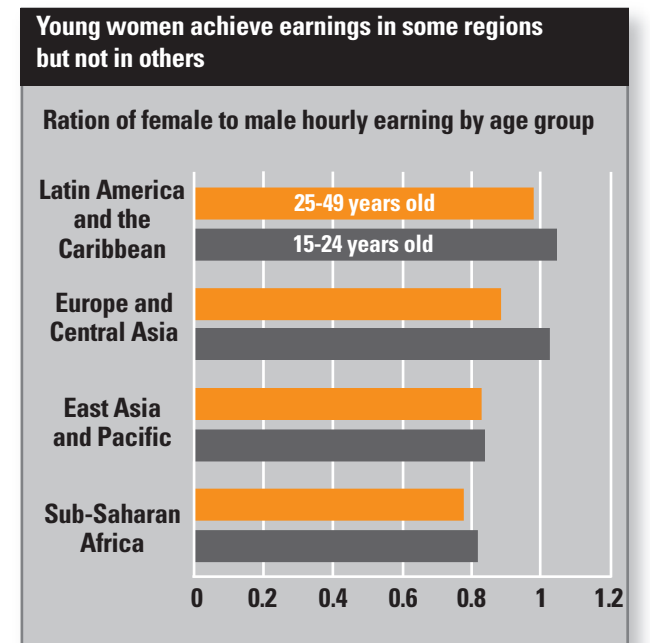
In Liberia 60 percent of young men are active in the labor market, compared to only 28 percent of young women.

In Afghanistan 77 percent of young men are active in the labor market, compared to only 21 percent of young women.

When young women work, how do their earnings compare with men's?

In some regions of the world, young women's hourly earnings significantly trail young men's: hourly earnings of young women aged 15-24 are only 82% and 84% of men's in sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia/Pacific, respectively. In Latin America/Caribbean and Europe/Central Asia, on the other hand, young women have achieved parity and even have slightly higher hourly earnings than men—four and two percent higher, to be exact. In all regions, younger women have higher earnings ratios than

older women. While older women aged 25-49 are close to achieving parity with men in Latin America and the Caribbean, in no other region does the female-to-male ratio of hourly earnings exceed 0.9 for older women. The fact that young women are closer to earnings parity with men than are older women could reflect progress in female education over the past decade, but it also may be due to wage and earnings losses suffered by older women as a result of time spent out of the labor force raising children.



Source: Household survey data, various years.

In Nepal, hourly earnings for young women (15-24) are 95 percent of men's. For older women (25-49) hourly earnings are 53 percent of men's.

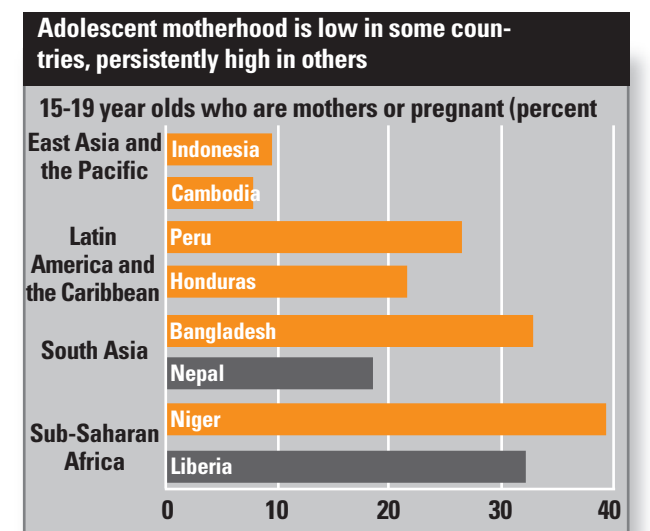
Is adolescent motherhood putting at risk the gains in education and opportunities?

Recent data show that more than 10 percent of 15- to 19-year-olds are mothers in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. In several countries, including Bangladesh, Mozambique and Liberia, more than 30 percent are mothers or pregnant.

to future generations, with benefits for children's health and education. But unintended pregnancies, especially for adolescents, can squander progress in education and labor markets.

Young girls either continue unintended pregnancies, giving up opportunities for education and employment, or seek unsafe abortions. Forty percent of abortions are performed on women younger than 25. Child-bearing among teenagers can bring disproportionate health risks to the mother and the baby—maternal mortality, delivery complications, premature delivery, and low birth weight.

Between the early 1990s and 2000, the percentage of adolescent mothers declined in many countries. But that trend is far from universal, with the share increasing in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mozambique, Peru, the Philippines, Turkey, and the Republic of Yemen. Motherhood is a key pathway for transmitting the gains in women's equality



Source: World Development Indicators 2010, 2003-2008

32% and 19% of adolescent girls are mothers in Liberia and Nepal, respectively.