

The Adolescent Girls Initiative:

An Alliance for Economic Empowerment

Where We Are

The AGI at-a-Glance

October 2010

Objective. The Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) promotes the transition of adolescent girls from school to productive employment through interventions that are tested, and then scaled-up or replicated if successful. The initiative is currently being implemented in the following seven countries: Afghanistan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Jordan, Liberia, Nepal, Rwanda, and South Sudan.

Launch date. The AGI was launched on October 10, 2008 as part of the World Bank Group's Gender Action Plan—*Gender Equality as Smart Economics*—which helps to increase women's economic opportunities by improving their access to the labor market, agricultural land and technology, credit and infrastructure services.

Partners-to-date. The Bank's partners in the AGI are the Nike Foundation and the governments of Afghanistan, Australia, Denmark, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Nepal, Norway, Rwanda, Southern Sudan, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Bank is also developing partnerships with other public and private sector organizations interested in joining the AGI.

Financing. A total of U.S. \$20 million.

Some Features of the AGI Process

Leadership. The AGI was spearheaded by Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who signed for the Initiative's first pilot project in Liberia and by the Bank's leadership, President Robert Zoellick and Managing Director Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. The Nike Foundation first invested in the initiative and has been a critical partner, both in designing the Liberia project and in promoting the wider initiative.

Generating policy lessons through rigorous impact evaluation. Because the evidence base on adolescent girls' programming is limited, impact evaluations are an essential part of the AGI. Bank senior economists oversee the design of the impact evaluations in all countries, while an impact evaluation specialist works across all countries to ensure comparability among key indicators and policy relevance of evaluation results.

Strong country ownership. Country ownership is a central feature of all country pilots, and counterparts are involved and consulted at all stages, from planning to implementation and evaluation.

Cross-country learning and knowledge sharing. Country teams and in-country implementing partners came together in DC in July 2010 to discuss challenges and lessons learned from project preparation and early implementation. Experts from inside and outside the Bank provided the teams with input on critical issues related to programming for adolescent girls, including recruitment, asset building, access to credit and savings and financial literacy training, matching skills to market needs, and curricula development. Challenges in scaling up and institutionalizing pilots were also discussed. The emphasis on knowledge sharing across teams will continue throughout implementation.

From pilots to programs and policies: impact evaluation, a unique feature of the AGI¹

Why evaluate?

- Without a rigorous evaluation, we cannot unambiguously identify the effect of the pilot on the well-being of the participants and their families.
- Having randomly selected treatment and control groups allows us to attribute a causal effect to the pilot.
- Knowing that the pilot caused the measured effect matters—it matters to assess its cost-effectiveness.
- It matters for cross-country sharing and learning.
- It matters for scaling-up the pilot into programs and policies.

Why evaluate the AGI?

- Very few youth programs have rigorous evaluations—74% of 289 youth interventions reported no solid evaluation.²
- In the small sub-sample of youth interventions that have been rigorously evaluated, positive impacts are hard to find.
- We know that impacts are likely to be small and heterogeneous.
- We know that some things work, sometimes, but we still don't know which interventions are most effective, for whom, in what doses and under which circumstances.
- Equally important, we do not know if interventions are cost-effective.

How does the AGI evaluate itself?

- The objective is to measure the impact of the pilot interventions on the well-being of the adolescent girls participating in the pilot as well as their households.

- The methodology compares adolescent girls who participate in the pilot with a “control” group of similar adolescent girls who do not (or have not yet) participated in the pilot.
- How to construct the control group varies by country: a randomized pipeline (Liberia), lotteries among eligible girls (Jordan), random selection of villages (South Sudan), and selection around an eligibility threshold (Nepal).
- All countries have baseline and follow-up household surveys.
- A World Bank evaluation specialist works with all country teams to insure that the evaluation designs are rigorous and comparable.

What Will We Learn?

- What is the impact of the pilot on *economic outcomes* for adolescent girls and their households (employment, earnings, savings, etc.).
- On adolescent girls' *socioeconomic behaviors and outcomes* (fertility, time use, experience of gender-based violence, attitudes towards risk), their *empowerment* (self-confidence, physical mobility, control over resources), and their *knowledge* (financial literacy and HIV/AIDS).
- How do the pilot impacts vary according to the demographic and personal characteristics of the participating adolescent girls?
- How does the post-conflict setting affect the success of participating adolescent girls?

Country Updates

Afghanistan—Female Youth Employment Initiative (FYEI)

- 21 percent of girls complete primary school.
- 65 percent of young men (ages 15-24) work, compared to only 27 percent of young women.
- Teen motherhood: 120 births per 1,000 young women (ages 15-19).
- In 2008, an estimated 18,000 women died from pregnancy related causes.
- 52 percent of young women (20-24) marry before age 18.

- **Objective:** Provide job skills and training to an estimated 2,000 adolescent girls and young women (age 18-30) in Balkh Province, leading to increased access to wage employment.



- **Implementing Agency:** The Ministry of Education, building on synergies with the ongoing Bank project *Educational Quality Improvement Project* (EQUIP I and II)

- **Main Project Components:**

- Skills training in health care, specifically training of community midwives, and office skills for jobs in private sector and public sector.
- Life skills training (leadership, management of income and budgets, employee rights).
- Social mobilization and outreach to mobilize communities and young women.
- Social marketing to link trainees to labor demand in private and public sector offices.
- Institutional capacity building.

¹ From presentations by Shubha Chakravarty (World Bank) and Mattias Lundberg (World Bank) at AGI Technical Meeting, July 22-23, Washington, D.C.

² Betcherman et al., 2007. “Global Inventory of Interventions to Support Young Workers: Synthesis Report.” Washington, D.C.: World Bank

- **Timeline:** After delays caused by a deteriorating security situation, project implementation is set to begin in late 2010.

Proposed Sample Size	
Treatment	2000
Control	2000
Total	4000

- **Impact Evaluation:**
 - Proposed design: Randomized Controlled Trial
 - Selection method: Individual lotteries within communities among eligible girls

- **Next steps:** The Ministry of Education is finalizing an Operational Manual to guide implementation and a final appraisal of the project will be completed before the end of October 2010. The project will become effective in November 2010.

- **Task Team Leader:** Jennifer Solotaroff, Social Development Specialist (SASDS)

Jordan NOW—New work Opportunities for Women

- 100 percent of girls complete primary school.
- 32 percent of young men (ages 15-24) work, compared to only 7 percent of young women.
- 4 percent of young women (ages 15-19) are pregnant or have had children.
- In 2008, an estimated 92 women died from pregnancy related causes.
- 14 percent of young women (20-24) marry before age 18.



- **Objective:** Improve the employment prospects of 900 female community college graduates in Jordan, focusing on alleviating the barriers which prevent young women from finding jobs.

- **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

is also involved in design and implementation.

■ Main Project Components:

- Employability skills training: Interpersonal and other basic job skills that employers identify as constraints to hiring college graduates, females in particular.
- Job vouchers: a short-term subsidy to incentivize firms to hire new graduates with no experience, and to provide firms with an opportunity to overcome stereotypes through directly observing young women at work.
- **Timeline:** Training began in September 2010. Information sessions for business associations and private firms have also been completed.

	Sample Size
Treatment	900
Control	450
Total	1,350

■ Impact Evaluation:

- Design: Randomized Controlled Trial. One group of students will receive both the skills training and the wage subsidy in parallel, to measure the joint effect of the combined interventions.
- Selection method: Lottery among graduates from 8 colleges completed in July 2010
- Baseline data has been collected and combined with administrative records to create a unique dataset on female community college graduates.
- **Next Steps:** Vouchers will be made available to graduates in late October.
- **Task Team Leader:** Tara Vishwanath, Lead Economist (MNSPR)

Lao PDR—Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI)

- 71 percent of girls complete primary school.
- 57 percent of young men (ages 15-24) work, compared to 71 percent of young women work.
- Teen motherhood: 37 births per 1,000 young women (ages 15-19).
- In 2008, an estimated 980 women died from pregnancy related causes.
- 20 percent of young women (15-19) are married.



- **Objective:** Build the capacity of unemployed young women to engage successfully in small business activities by using a public-private partnership model to create more economic opportunities for Lao youth, females in particular.

- **Implementing Agency:** Young Entrepreneur Association of Lao PDR (YEAL)

■ Main Project Components:

- A 'development market-place' that will feature promising youth business projects in three provinces (Vientiane, Luangprabang and Champasak) with finalists receiving small start-up capital grants. Criteria that promote the participation of young women entrepreneurs are being established.
- Basic business skills training (development of a business plan, finance management, marketing, etc.) provided to mentors and youth participating in the development market place. At least half will be young women (ages 16-24).
- **Time line:** An assessment of opportunities and constraints for the economic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women in Lao PDR has been completed and informed project design. Lao PDR is the most recent addition to the initiative. The project will launch in 2010.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation with a strong focus on dissemination and knowledge management is an integral part of the project. Project indicators to monitor progress and outcomes related to youth entrepreneurship are being developed and will be disaggregated by gender.
- **Next Steps:** Project launch in November 2010, followed by a Development Marketplace to be held in December. Training and mentoring will start in January 2011.
- **Task Team Leader:** Helene Carlsson Rex, Senior Gender Specialist (EACLF).

Liberia—Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG)

- 53 percent of girls complete primary school.
- 62 percent of young men (ages 15-24) work, compared to only 51 percent of young women.
- 32 percent of young women (ages 15-19) are pregnant or have had children.
- In 2008, an estimated 1,400 women died from pregnancy related causes.
- 48 percent of young women (20-24) marry before age 18.



■ **Objective:** Promote entry into wage and self-employment for approximately 2,500 girls and young women (age 16-27) in nine communities in Greater Monrovia and Kakata City, via the provision of business development skills, job skills and life skills.

■ **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Gender and Development

- **Timeline:** Training is delivered in two rounds. In the first round (March 2010) approximately 1,250 girls received training. The second round is set to launch in the second quarter of 2011.
- **Main Project Components:**
 - Six-month training in either job skills targeted to sectors with high demand (e.g. hospitality, house painting, professional driving, office/computer skills and security guard services) or business development.
 - Six-month support for job placement or links to micro-credit, depending on the training received.
 - Other training and support: life skills training, small group learning, a business plan competition, mentorship, savings accounts, child care, and transportation.
 - Capacity building activities targeting implementers and service providers.

■ Impact Evaluation:

- Design: A pipeline design to compare young women who receive training to those who have not yet received training at the end of the first round.
- Selection method: All eligible girls entered lottery to receive training in Round 1 or 2.
- The baseline survey has been completed, covering every program participant and their households. Results of the survey will be released in late October 2010.

	Job Skills	Business Development	Total
Treatment (Round 1- 2010)	500	750	1250
Control (Round 2- 2011)	500	750	1250
Total sample size	1000	1500	2500

- **Next Steps:** Over the next six months, trainees will receive support to find jobs or start new businesses. By March 2011, the impact evaluation survey firm will do a mid-line survey with all adolescent girls and their households (treatment and control group). A *Lessons Learned* workshop and a Project Mid-Term Review will take place before the second round of training.
- **Task Team Leader:** Rui Manuel Benfica, Economist (PRMGE).

“I’m not going to let any obstacles stop me now. They say you can plant a seed, and then you get an oak tree, you watch it grow and grow, and that is just what we are doing”.

—Jamama Walker, AGI participant Liberia

Connecting trainees to market opportunities

In August 2010, job skills training providers held an EPAG Career Day to market the program to potential employers interested in placing EPAG girls in internships or jobs. The girls demonstrated different skills depending on the training, including hospitality, office skills, house painting and security guard services. A dozen private sector representatives, primarily human resource and career development specialists, met briefly with job skills trainees individually to impart their knowledge about the industry, coach the trainees about professionalism in the workplace, and to give constructive feedback on the skills demonstrated.

Following up on the success of the career day, an “Entrepreneur Day and Microfinance Fair” was held in September for the 800 girls enrolled in business development skills training. The event complements an on-going Business Plan Competition, also targeting trainees in this track.

Nepal—Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative (AGEI)

- 72 percent of girls complete primary school.
- 46 percent of both young men and women (ages 15-24) work.
- 19 percent of young women (ages 15-19) are pregnant or have had children.
- In 2008, an estimated 2,800 women died from pregnancy related causes.
- 56 percent of young women (20-24) marry before age 18.



■ **Objective:** promote access to employment and increased incomes for about 3,500 young women (age 16-24) by scaling up and modifying an existing skills training and placement program—the Employment Fund (EF)—that has shown strong results to date.

■ **Implementing Agency:** Helvetas

Nepal implements while the Ministry of Education chairs the EF Steering Committee

■ Main Project Components:

- Technical skills training for which there is a proven demand in the local labor market.
 - Life skills training that addresses age and gender specific challenges that girls and young women face in Nepal.
 - An outreach and communications campaign to ensure that poorer, less educated and more vulnerable girls access training and employment opportunities. Contracts with private training providers also include financial incentives to recruit and train youth from the more disadvantaged groups.
 - Capacity building for training providers.
- **Timeline:** To date, two batches of training have been launched (in May and September 2010). Geographical coverage is broad and training will be offered in close to 50 districts nationwide.

“One day I will be financially strong and be a light of hope to others who are living in similar conditions as I am now. I know that there are several constraints but I will go through it. In the years to come I will establish my own business where I can give my friends an opportunity to work.”

—Manju Subedi, AGI participant, Nepal

■ Impact Evaluation:

- IE Design: A Regression Discontinuity Design in which girls admitted into the program according to a set of numerically scored criteria are compared to girls who fell just below the minimum score required for entry.

- Selection method: Each training provider ranks applicants and accepts the top candidates for training.
- Participants from the AGI are also compared with other students, including young men and women 25-35, from similar training programs managed by the implementing agency for other donors.
- The baseline survey for the first batch of training has been completed, covering 11 districts and 1,500 respondents.

	AGI Sample	Non-AGI Sample	Total
Treatment (bottom 25% of applicants accepted for training)	1500	1500	3000
Control (top 25% of applicants rejected from training)	750	750	1500
Total sample size	2250	2250	4500

- **Next Steps:** Pilot the enhanced life skills curriculum and implement new outreach strategy for recruitment before the launch of the next batch of trainings in early 2011.
- **Task Team Leader:** Venkatesh Sundararaman, Senior Economist (SASED)

Rwanda—Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI)

- 56 percent of girls complete primary school.
- 62 percent of young men (ages 15-24) work compared to 66 percent of young women.
- 4 percent of young women (ages 15-19) are pregnant or have had children.
- In 2008, an estimated 2,200 women died from pregnancy related causes.
- 20 percent of young women (20-24) marry before age 18.



■ **Objective:** Improve employment and increase incomes for about 2,000 adolescent girls and young women (age 15-24) in two urban and two rural districts in Rwanda.

■ **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

■ **Timeline:** The project is due to start in the fourth quarter of 2010.

■ Main Project Components:

- Technical training for self-employment (in areas such as horticulture, agro-processing, tourism, arts and crafts, technical servicing and solar technology, ICT and secretarial services).
- Psychosocial support, life skills and business development training to enable them to establish profitable small enterprises.
- Support to form cooperatives which will be partnered with a local entrepreneur to receive hands-on coaching on how to manage a business. Cooperatives will also be linked to micro-finance institutions active in the project districts.

■ **Impact Evaluation:**

- Proposed design: Randomized Controlled Trial
- Selection method: Lotteries among eligible girls in each sector

Proposed Sample Size

Treatment	2,000
Control	2,000
Total	4,000

- **Next Steps:** A project launch work shop is planned for December. The workshop will bring together different stakeholders, including project staff and training providers as well as representatives from the Government of Rwanda and civil society organizations working on adolescent girls programming and/or vocational skills training for youth.
- **Task Team Leader:** Christopher Finch, Sr. Social Development Specialist (AFTCS)

South Sudan—Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI)

- 36 percent of those enrolled in primary school (in 2009) were girls.
- 17 percent of young women marry before age 15.
- 41 percent of young women marry before age 18.
- In 2006, the maternal mortality ratio was estimated at 2,327 deaths per 100,000 live births—one of the highest in the world.



- **Objective:** Improve employment and increase incomes of 3,000 adolescent girls and young women (age 15-24) through demand-driven training and linkages to market opportunities.
- **Implementing Agency:** BRAC South Sudan. The government counterpart is the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Development.

- **Timeline:** 50 Adolescent Community Clubs will have opened by the end of October 2010. Another 50 clubs will open in November 2010.

■ **Main Project Components:**

- 100 village-level Adolescent Community Clubs across four states (Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, and Lakes) provide safe spaces for girls and young women to receive training and to socialize.
- Interventions offered at the clubs include demand-driven skills training, financial literacy training, life skills training, and access to savings clubs and microcredit.
- 100 ‘Adolescent Leaders’ are being trained to help run the clubs. BRAC also involves parents and local authorities in the operations of the clubs, alongside the beneficiaries/club members.

■ **Impact Evaluation:**

- Design: Cluster Randomization. Villages where clubs are established have been selected randomly.
- Selection method: Within each village, girls self-select to participate in the club and trainings.
- The baseline survey will be completed by the end of October.

	Number of villages	Sample size
Treatment	60	2100
Control	60	2100
Total	120	4200

- **Next Steps:** (i) Form community committees for each of the Adolescent Girls Clubs; (ii) Launch life skills training programs in each of the clubs; and (iii) Carry out market assessments in each of the project locations to ensure livelihoods training programs offered through the clubs are market-driven.
- **Task Team Leader:** Yasmin Tayyab, Sr. Social Development Specialist (AFTCS)

AGI Steering Committee Members: Mayra Buvinic, Director (PRMGE), Chair; Wendy Cunningham, Coordinator and Lead Specialist (HDNCY), Monica Das Gupta, Senior Social Scientist (DECHD); Emmanuel Y. Jimenez, Sector Director (EASHD); Junaid Kamal Ahmad, Sector Manager (AFTUW); Leslie Lane, Vice President and Managing Director (Nike Foundation); Trine Lunde, AGI Coordinator (PRMGE); Andrew Morrison, Chief Gender and Diversity Unit (Inter-American Development Bank); Jorge Saba Arbache, Senior Economist (AFRCE); Emmanuel Skoufias, Lead Economist (PRMPR).

AGI Impact Evaluation Team: Shubha Chakravarty, Economist (AFTPM); Markus Goldstein, Senior Economist (AFTPM); Mattias Lundberg, Senior Economist (HDNCY).

For more information, go to: www.worldbank.org/gender/agi