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Data Brief—Adolescent Economic Empowerment

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Girls Deliver

PRE-CONFERENCE ON ADOLESCENT GIRLS
KIGALI, RWANDA • 16 JULY 2023

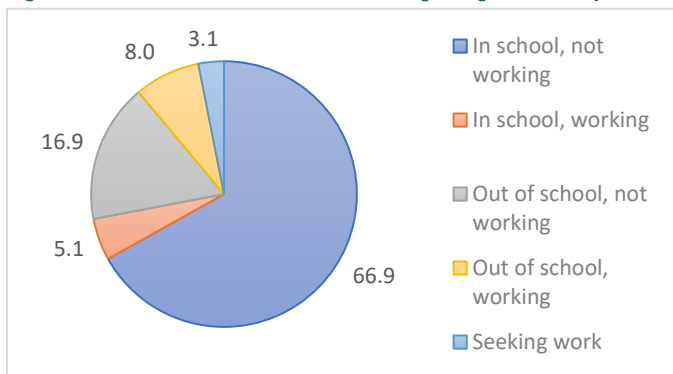
ROUNDTABLE SESSION DATA BRIEF

ADOLESCENT ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Girls' economic wellbeing is critical to their overall wellbeing. To achieve their fullest economic potential, girls must build the necessary skills, resources, and agency as adolescents, to pursue rewarding economic opportunities as adults. A big part of this process of nurturing future economic wellbeing is learning at school during adolescence. However, nearly 100 million girls of secondary school age are out of school globally.¹ For older girls aged 15-19 who are out of school, married, and have children, access to safe, age-appropriate work may be essential to their existing and future wellbeing. Here, we highlight some key facts about girls' schooling and work globally, and take a deeper look at work for different groups of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

The State of Girls' Work and Education Globally²

Figure 1. Global distribution of adolescent girls aged 15-19 by education and employment.²



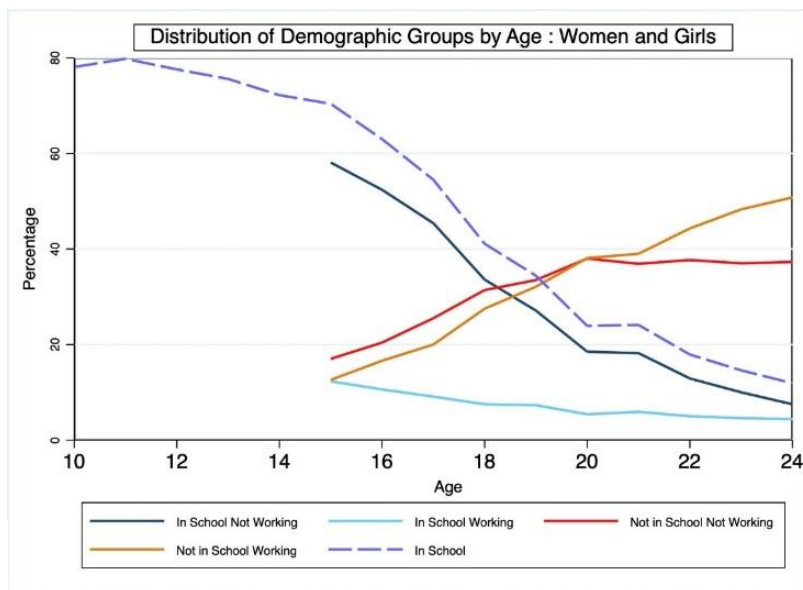
1. Globally, two-thirds of girls aged 15-19 are in school and not working, but the rest are on alternative paths to adulthood.
2. Young men aged 15-24 are 1.5 times more likely to be working than young women.
3. Compared to young women aged 15-24 in high-income countries, young women in low and middle-income countries are 3 times more likely to not be in school, employed, or in training.

Diverse Pathways to Work in Sub-Saharan Africa³

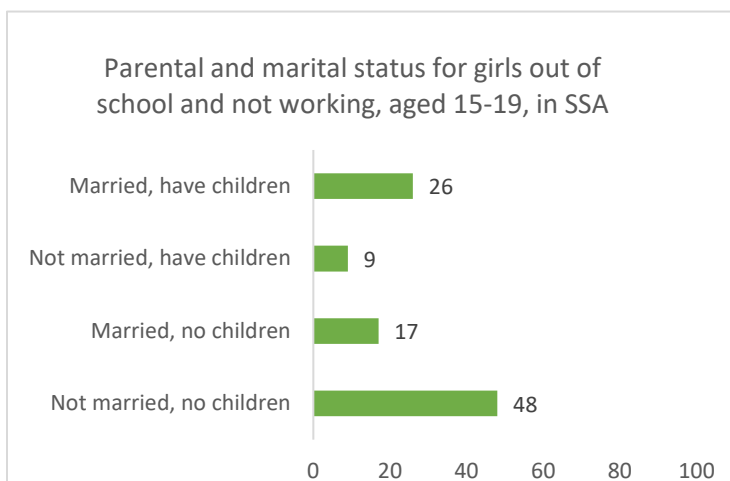
In SSA, 80% of adolescent girls aged 10-14 are in school, but this begins to shift for older adolescent girls: nearly 60% are out of school by age 18.

Girls' participation in work increases over time and the share of girls who are in school and working decreases as they begin to drop out. By age 20, almost 40% are neither in school nor working.

Figure 2. Distribution of education and work trajectories among girls and women in Sub-Saharan Africa



These trajectories also overlap with marriage and having children.



While 73% of girls aged 15-19 in SSA are not married and have no children, 8% are married with no child, 13% are married and have a child, and 5% are not married but have a child. This implies that the lives of girls who are working, and the support girls need in finding or continuing work, may be different depending on their circumstances.

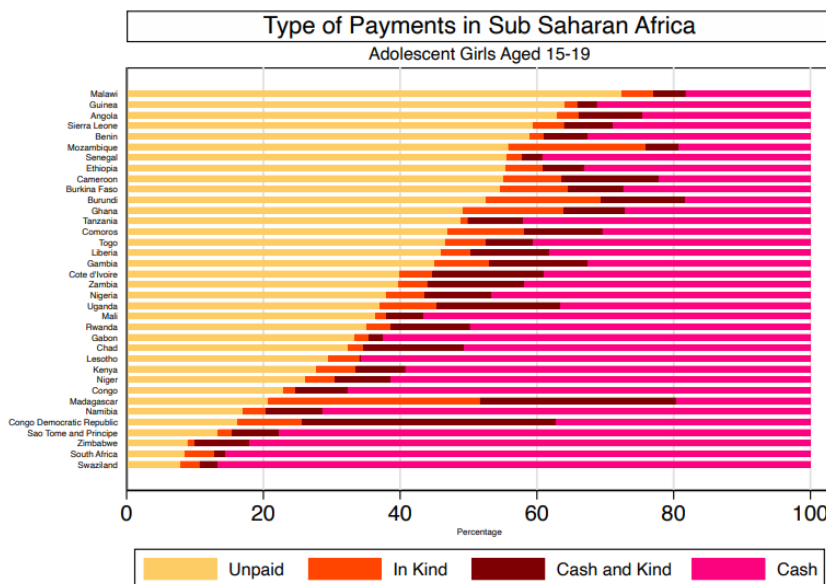
For instance, out of the 1 in 4 girls who are not in school but working, nearly half are not married and have no children, a quarter are married and have a child, 17% are married but do not have a child, and 9% are not married but do have a child.

The Nature of Girls' Work in Sub-Saharan Africa

Girls' participation in paid work varies by country, and most have informal jobs that may be of poor quality.

Summary

- While adolescence should be a time for girls to concentrate on acquiring skills and completing their education, many girls transition out of school and into adult roles early.
- In SSA, some girls work and remain in school, but a majority of those who work are out of school and are married or have children.
- The kind of support girls need to access existing and future economic opportunities may vary based on their demographic group and trajectory into participation in paid work.



REFERENCES

1. World Bank Girls' Education <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation>
2. Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people. Geneva: ILO, 2022
3. All data used in this section come from Demographic and Health Surveys

This data brief was created by the Population Council's GIRL Center in collaboration with the World Bank to inform the thematic roundtable discussion on Adolescent Economic Empowerment at the Girls Deliver Pre-Conference on Adolescent Girls held in Kigali, Rwanda ahead of the Women Deliver 2023 Conference.

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