

# Strategies for Promoting Adolescent Girls' Empowerment and the path forward, a summary of recent evidence

April 24, 2024

Estelle Koussoubé

World Bank Africa Gender Innovation Lab



# Evidence review: Objectives

1. Comprehensive narrative review of rigorous evidence on interventions (programs and policies) designed to empower adolescent girls in Africa:
  - Highlights effective interventions with robust evidence
  - Examines promising either based on emerging evidence in Africa or in other contexts
  - Discusses interventions with mixed evidence but worthy of consideration, potentially with adaptations

# Evidence review: Methods (1)

- Studies identified through existing recent reviews, recommendations by researchers, forward and backward citation searches
- Inclusion criteria:
  - Evaluate interventions targeting adolescent girls or interventions with broader target groups with age- and sex-disaggregated results
  - Evaluate interventions implemented in Africa
  - Report results on at least one of the outcomes in the framework of adolescent girls' empowerment (human capitals fundamentals, enabling resources, agency, context, economic achievement outcomes)
  - Use experimental or rigorous quasi-experimental methods that enable causal identification
  - Studies published before March 2024

## Evidence review: Methods (2)

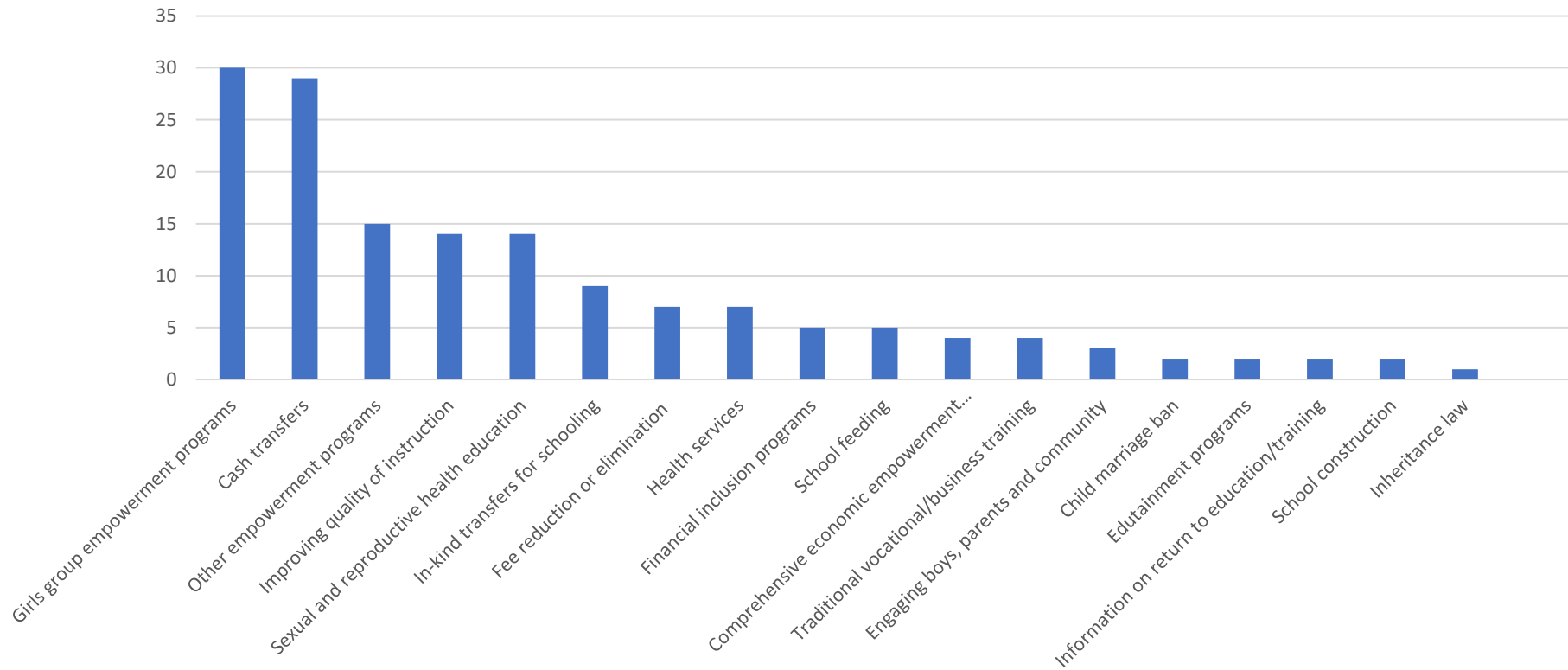
To provide a consistent rating of the strength of evidence for different intervention categories on specific indicators of adolescent girls' empowerment, we use the following criteria:

- **Effective:** 3+ rigorous studies with positive impacts, supported by most of the studies
- **Promising:** < 3 rigorous studies with positive, significant effects.
- **Mixed:** < three quarters of studies show effects in the same direction.
- **No effect:** 2+ studies with no significant effect.
- **Unknown/little evidence:** < 2 studies evaluating the intervention's effect.

# Evidence review: Interventions identified

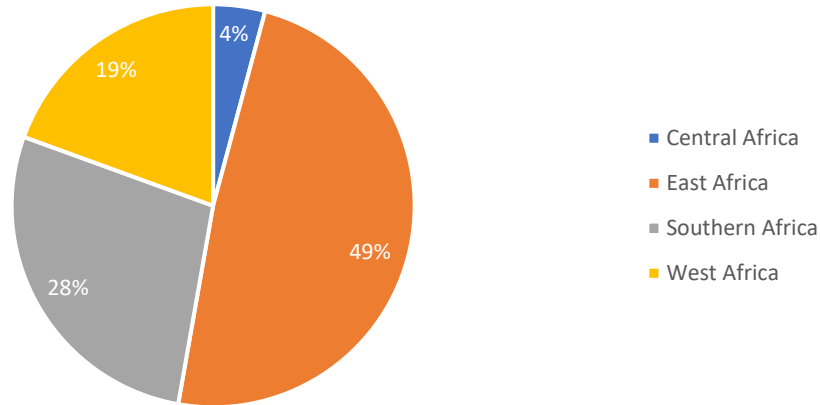
- 86 studies : 60 RCTs & 26 Quasi-experimental studies
- 19 categories of interventions

Categories of interventions (frequency)

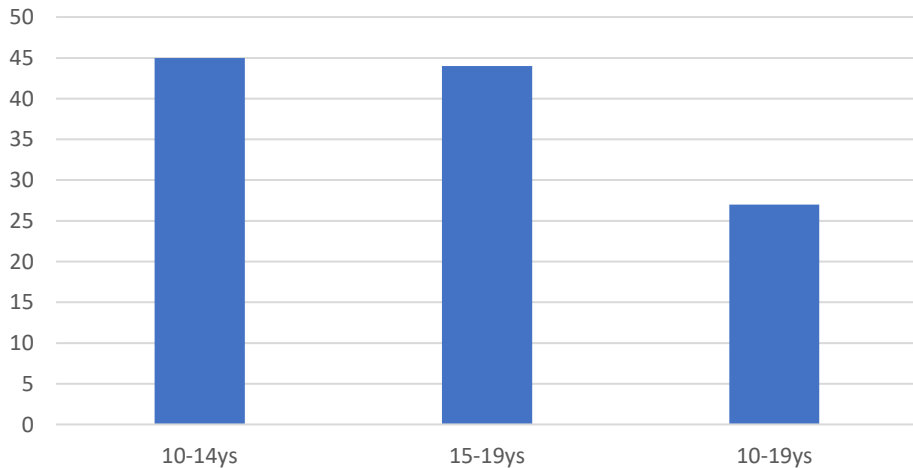


# Evidence review: Studies characteristics

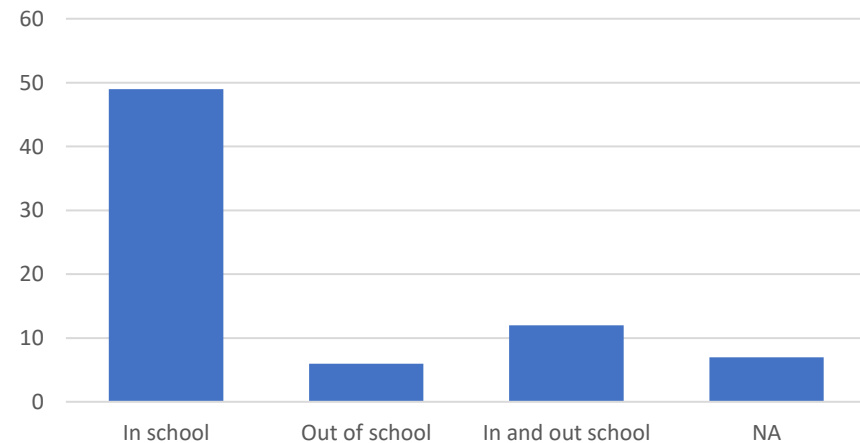
Distribution of studies per region (%)



Distribution of studies by girls age group (number)



Distribution of studies by girls school enrolment status (number)



# Summary of the evidence

Intervention category	Human capital fundamentals	Enhancing economic success
Comprehensive economic empowerment programs		Effective
In-kind transfers for schooling	Effective	Effective
Fee reduction or elimination		Promising
Cash transfers	Effective	Mixed
Improving quality of instruction	Effective	Unknown/Little evidence
School feeding		Unknown/Little evidence
Engaging boys, parents and community	Promising	Promising
Health services	Promising	Promising
Sexual and reproductive health education	Promising	Promising
Information on return to education/training	Promising	Promising
Employment opportunities for women	Promising	Promising
School construction	Promising	Unknown/Little evidence
Edutainment programs	Promising	Unknown/Little evidence
Child marriage ban	Promising	Unknown/Little evidence
Inheritance law reform	Promising	Unknown/Little evidence
Girls group empowerment programs	Mixed	Mixed
Other life skills training, mentoring, and empowerment programs	Mixed	Mixed
Financial inclusion programs	Unknown/Little evidence	Mixed
Traditional vocational and business skills training	Unknown/Little evidence	Mixed

Note: Green shading indicates that interventions are **EFFECTIVE**; Orange shading indicates that interventions are **PROMISING**; Gray shading indicates that evidence is **MIXED**; White shading indicates **unknown/little evidence**.

# Case studies: providing employment opportunities for women in South Asia

- **Business process outsourcing in rural India** (Jensen, 2012)
  - ↑ Labor force participation
  - ↑ School/training enrolment & BMI : investments in health and education
  - ↓ Marriage and childbearing
- **Garment factories in Bangladesh** (Heath and Mushfiq Mobarak, 2015)
  - ↑ Labor force participation
  - ↑ School enrolment, especially for younger girls
  - ↓ Marriage and childbearing



# Considerations for future research

- Addressing Data and Evidence Gaps:
  1. Develop and test measures in areas where measurement is lacking, such as :
    1. Aspects of context
    2. Digital capital
    3. Job quality
- Understanding Impact:
  1. Generate evidence to assess not only what works, but what works for whom.
  2. Prioritize research on married adolescents and girls with children who have often been overlooked
- Measuring Program Quality:
  1. Prioritize measuring program quality from the outset
  2. Utilize detailed indicators for assessing implementation effectiveness
- Exploring Cost-Effectiveness:
  1. Provide insights about cost-effectiveness to understand trade-offs between promising interventions
- Avenues for Scale-Up:
  1. Identify effective avenues for scale-up to expand the scope of proven approaches

# Foundations for Effective Interventions

- **Diagnose challenges:** Understanding girls diverse challenges is key for program and policies design
- **No one-size-fits-all solution:** Girls encounter diverse challenges, and there is no single solution that can address them all. A mixed of evidence-based solutions, tailored to the local context, is crucial
- **Cost-effectiveness is key for scale:** When selecting interventions, it is important to consider both intervention costs within the specific context and their cost-effectiveness. However, it is important to recognize that some social benefits may be difficult to quantify
- **Targeting for impact:** Effective targeting ensures that interventions reach the beneficiaries who are most likely to benefit from them
- **Quality implementation:** The success of interventions relies on the quality of their implementation. When scaling up interventions, it is important to prioritize implementation quality to achieve desired outcomes effectively
- **Mobilize key stakeholders and foster collaboration:** Rally support from a diverse range of stakeholders, including community, national, and regional leaders, governmental bodies, the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and other development partners

# Thank you!

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