

# Understanding adolescent girls' empowerment

Fatima Zahra






April 24, 2024

# What does adolescent girls' empowerment mean?

**Aspirational goal:** to gather skills and resources, and to gain the agency necessary to be economically autonomous and prosperous during adulthood.

**Divergent paths:** navigate life transitions (e.g., dropping out of school, getting married, or having children), which impact the ability to gather skills, resources, and agency.

# What is adolescent girls' empowerment?

	Components	Indicators	Measures
	HC: Human Capital Fundamentals	Educational progress	Educational enrollment, attainment, attendance, grade progression, literacy skills, numeracy skills
		Health	Survival/mortality; sexual and reproductive health (SRH), subjective well-being, mental health, nutrition
	EN: Enabling Resources	Knowledge and skills	Life skills (including socio-emotional skills), financial literacy
		Financial capital	Access to economic resources: bank accounts, loans Economic assets: savings
		Physical & digital capital	Household assets, personal assets, access to digital spaces, cell phones
		Social capital	Peer networks, safe spaces
		Time	Time for doing productive activity
	AG: Agency	Goal setting	Aspirations for education, work, marriage, and childbearing
		Sense of agency	Self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, girls' gender attitudes
		Mobilization	Control over decision-making and time use
	CO: Context	Fragility, conflict, and violence	Prevalence and duration of conflict and violence
		Statutory laws / legal framework	Laws on gender, resources, work, age of marriage, minimum age for work, gender-based violence, access to identification documents
		Formal institutions	Presence and characteristics of other formal institutions: schools, health, vocational, legal, financial services (including banks and ROSCAs)
		Norms & religion	-Social pressures to conform to expectations on gender roles, resources access and use, work, age of marriage, gender-based violence -Religious beliefs
		Labor market opportunities	Sector-specific access to jobs, quality of available job opportunities
		Household context	-Parental and household members' gender attitudes -Parental aspirations for girls' education and work, -Relationship dynamics in the household (cooperation between household members, discussions between household members on various topics, etc.) -Household structure and composition
	EA: Economic Achievement	Labor market outcomes	Job quality, income, paid work, formal/self-employment, age-appropriate paid work

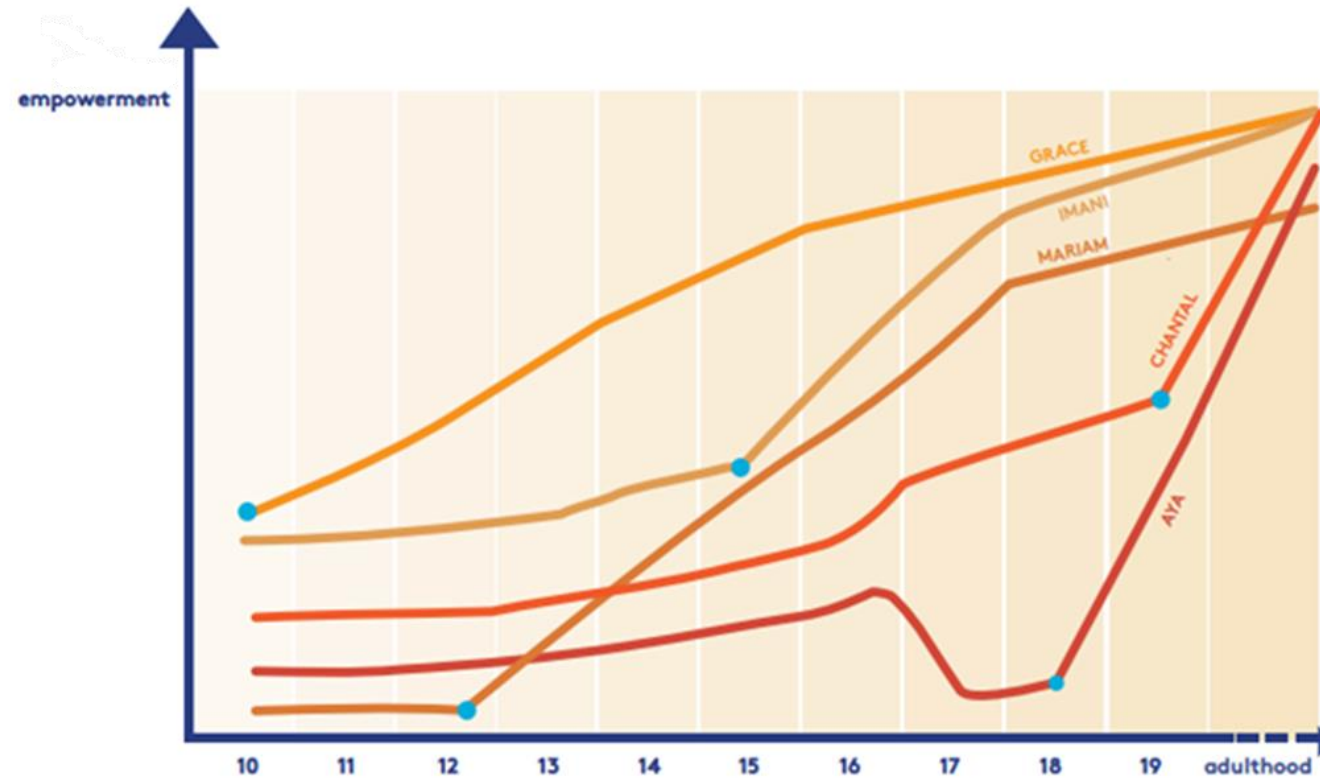
# Stylized profiles of five adolescent girls



Urban	Rural	Semi-urban	Rural	Rural
In primary school	Out of school	In secondary school	Out of school	Completed secondary
Not working for pay	Not working for pay	Helping mother's business	Seeking work	Contract worker on a farm
	Risk of early marriage		Married, parent	In a relationship



Appropriately designed interventions can boost adolescent girls' empowerment at any age, whether they're still in school or already out of school, married, or have children



 intervention

# How can this be adapted to South Asia?

## Differences in trends and norms

- Secondary school completion rates are higher in South Asia (SA) compared to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)
- The prevalence of child marriage in SA is lower than in SSA
- In many countries, premarital pregnancy is a sensitive subject and not accurately recorded
- Female labor force participation is much lower than in SSA
  - Norms around work vary by gender, class, marital, and parental status
- Laws targeting girls' and women's rights across all areas of life (Afghanistan)

## Examples of profile adaptations

Transition to higher education

Girls who are not in school, not married, and not working