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# Mapping Social Protection Intervention Pathways to Address Barriers to Girls' Education

A Visual Guide





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## Acknowledgements.

This mapping of social protection intervention pathways to address barriers to girls' education was prepared by a team led by Nicola Jones (ODI), in collaboration with Ruth Graham Goulder and Takudzwa Kanyangarara (UNICEF) and Roopa Hinton (FCDO) as part of a wider UK-aid funded project on gender-responsive social protection.

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**MAPPING SOCIAL  
PROTECTION INTERVENTION  
PATHWAYS TO ADDRESS  
BARRIERS TO GIRLS'  
EDUCATION**  
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# Introduction

In the 30 years since girls' education was first raised as an international policy priority through the launching of the Education for All movement in 1990, tremendous progress has been made in getting girls into school.<sup>1</sup> UNESCO (2020) reports that since 1995, an additional 180 million girls have been enrolled in school and that, on a global basis, gender parity in primary and secondary education has been reached. Indeed, in many developing countries, of children who enrol in school, girls are now more likely to complete primary school and transition into secondary school than boys.<sup>2</sup> That said, this aggregate picture hides not only regional, national and sub-national diversity (including disparities across income groups), but girls' continuing disadvantage – which has almost certainly been amplified by covid-19.<sup>3</sup> Of the children who are completely denied their right to an education, three-quarters are girls.<sup>4</sup> The 129 million girls who are denied access to school are disproportionately located in the world's poorest and most conflict-affected countries.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, improvements in enrolment have not always been accompanied by improvements in gender parity.

While gender gaps are closing in many countries (e.g. Nepal) – they are static (e.g. Ethiopia), or even growing in others (e.g. Burkina Faso) – as boys' enrolment is climbing faster than girls'.<sup>6</sup> In addition to participation barriers, girls also face barriers to learning.<sup>7</sup> Psaki et al. (2021) observe that while the learning crisis impacts girls and boys, in many LMICs girls' learning levels tend to be lower than boys', most often because girls are afforded less time to study due to care and domestic work burdens.<sup>8</sup>

Driving recent progress in girls' education has been a multitude of actors and initiatives, working in tandem to identify – and overcome – the barriers that stand between girls and learning.<sup>9</sup> An array of barrier mappings, most of which focus on a similar set of factors (e.g. poverty, child marriage, conflict) but none of which appear to have been undertaken with the specific goal of identifying social protection intervention pathways, are available online. There is also an ever-growing body of evidence that addresses what works to support girls' education and learning.<sup>10</sup> That evidence overwhelmingly concurs that social protection (see Box 1) is

## Box 1: Social protection

Social protection consists of a broad array of policies and programmes aimed at reducing poverty and vulnerability across the life course.<sup>a</sup> It includes not only 'pro-poor' instruments such as cash and asset transfers (aimed at supporting household consumption more broadly as well as at supporting access to education and other outcomes), public works programmes, school feeding, and subsidies and fee waivers for accessing services – but also various instruments aimed at supporting life-course transitions, such as maternity, paternity, and parental leave, childcare and early childhood education, schemes aimed at helping young people transition into work, and old-age pensions.<sup>b</sup> Although enshrined as a right in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), social protection has sometimes been misconceptualised only as a 'safety net' of last resort, aimed only at protecting individuals and households from extreme deprivation. However, as was recognised by UNICEF in its 2012 Social Protection Strategic Framework<sup>c</sup>, there is increasing consensus that well designed and comprehensive social protection programming can go beyond protection and promote resilience, support human capital development and empowerment, and even transform the structural inequalities that are the root causes of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>d</sup> To move towards those more transformative ends, core poverty-targeted programming is increasingly coupled with 'plus' programming that is aimed at addressing socio-cultural – including gender – barriers. Examples include life-skills education for children and adolescents, sexual and reproductive health education, 'empowerment' classes for girls and women that seek to raise awareness of rights and gender norms and support the development of agency, and courses addressing masculinities for boys and men so that they can become champions of gender equality.<sup>e</sup>

a. Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004

b. UNICEF, 2019

c. UNICEF, 2012

d. UNICEF, Innocenti, 2020; Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004; Molyneux et al., 2016; Holmes and Jones, 2013

e. Cluver et al., 2014; Chakrabarti et al., 2020; UNICEF, 2021; Promundo, 2021; Powell-Williams, 2020; UNICEF, 2019

a valuable tool. It supports girls' participation (enrolment, attendance, and progression) in basic and secondary education in low- and middle-income country (LMIC) contexts around the globe and often also supports their learning.<sup>11</sup> With the caveat that most research has focused on cash transfers (conditional and unconditional and including subsidies for school fees) and school feeding, rather than other forms of social protection, which shapes the evidence base, the primary impact pathway identified by evaluations is reduced household poverty, which results in an improved ability to invest in education. A smaller body of evidence, however, has pinpointed myriad other ways in which social protection can support girls' education. These include freeing girls' time for learning (by providing health insurance that keeps mothers healthy)<sup>12</sup>, delaying their sexual debut (and preventing the pregnancies that drive drop out)<sup>13</sup> and shifting social norms about girls' mobility (e.g. by providing them with bicycles)<sup>14</sup>. Critically, research repeatedly underscores that to address the myriad and intersecting economic and social barriers that stand between girls and learning it is necessary to take a multi-sectoral approach.

Recognising the potential for enhancing education outcomes with stronger and more systematic links between social protection and education systems, in this guide we present a thought exercise that builds on existing research with the aim of examining barriers to girls' education (enrolment, attendance and progression) and learning so as to identify potential intervention pathways for social protection and education linkages across the course of childhood and adolescence. The guide includes a set of maps that seek to visually represent, in an accessible way, different types of barriers and how social protection could contribute to tackling these.

### **We have delineated two interwoven educational outcomes:**

- 1) Participation in education, which encompasses enrolment, attendance and progression
- 2) Learning.

This relationship is bidirectional. Girls must participate in school to learn and girls who are not learning often have their participation in education truncated.

### **We have delineated 12 barriers to girls' participation in education:**

#### **At the macro level (national/sub-national):**

- 1) Laws, policies, systems and finance that disadvantage girls, especially those from marginalised groups (including girls with disabilities or girls who are refugees, or from ethnic or religious groups that face discrimination, or are pregnant or mothers).

#### **Spanning the macro and meso levels:**

- 2) National and local labour market realities-- such as few, highly segregated, and inequitably paid job options-- that limit girls' ability to translate education into employment and economic empowerment (and thus reduce demand for girls' education).

#### **At the meso level (community and school):**

- 3) Barriers that limit girls' physical access to schooling, including inadequate educational infrastructure (especially in remote areas and for those with disabilities) and transportation as well as violence in the community.
- 4) Gender norms at the community level, including those that limit support for girls' education, stigmatise menstruation, lead to child marriage, and more broadly prioritise girls' reproductive potential over their productive potential and broader human rights (including social and economic sanctions for girls and families who transgress).
- 5) Peer pressure, which while shaped by broader community norms can evolve quickly and in surprising ways.
- 6) Discriminatory beliefs and behaviours that leave girls with disabilities or those from marginalised groups excluded from school.
- 7) Poor school environments, where infrastructure (including for menstrual hygiene management) and human resources are inadequate and teacher and peer violence are common.

#### **At the micro level (household and girl):**

- 8) Poverty and financial barriers, which include real and opportunity costs that can limit girls' enrolment, attendance, and progression as girls are truant for days, weeks and months.
- 9) Physical health barriers, including malnutrition, illness and disability (much



of which in LMICs is the result of poor nutrition and inadequate healthcare).

- 10) Mental ill health, which often manifests as a spill-over effect of household and community violence (and limits girls' interest in and engagement with education).
- 11) Barriers linked to reproductive biology (and the limited services and supports that help girls deal with these), including menstruation, pregnancy and motherhood.
- 12) Limited aspirations for education on the part of caregivers, girls and marital families, which are shaped by poverty and limited opportunities – including for quality education, gainful employment and adult marriage – available in the community.

**We have identified 10 barriers to girls' learning – which overlap with barriers to participation, may prevent boys from learning as well, but are also often gendered:**

**At the school level:**

- 1) Low number of contact/instructional hours, resulting from the school calendar, daily school schedule and teacher absenteeism.
- 2) Poor-quality 'soft' resources, including teachers who are poorly trained or violent; pedagogies, curricula, and learning materials that are not child-friendly, sensitive to multicultural contexts, gender-responsive or disability-inclusive; and disciplinary practices that condone violence.
- 3) Inadequate school infrastructure and equipment, including school buildings that are poorly adapted, insufficient books and desks, and lack of school water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities (including menstrual hygiene facilities).
- 4) Violence and discrimination at school, perpetrated by both teachers and peers and including gender-based violence as well as discrimination and stigma directed at those with disabilities and those from marginalised groups.

**At the household and girl level:**

- 5) Limited capacity and/or school readiness (e.g. cognition damaged by malnutrition or malaria and inadequate stimulation in early childhood).

- 6) Irregular/distracted attendance (i.e. the barriers to participation above).
- 7) Physical illness, malnutrition or hunger—which even when not severe enough to keep girls at home can prevent them from learning.
- 8) Poor mental health, which can limit attention and retention.
- 9) Limited (natal and marital) family support for education (both in terms of provision of learning materials and light to study, and attitudes towards education).
- 10) Limited personal aspirations for education, shaped by other barriers at the household and community level.

**For this visual guide, we have created eight maps aimed at supporting both 'wide angle' and 'micro' perspectives:**

These maps aim to delineate areas where existing evidence suggests that social protection does play an impactful role in supporting girls' access to education and learning as well as areas where social protection might be leveraged for impact.

**'Wide angle' maps (which focus on girls' participation and learning):**

- A bird's eye view of the above barriers to participation and learning that includes sub-barriers (but not social protection intervention pathways). This is Map 1 in the guide.
- A pair of maps that detail barriers to girls' learning (and social protection intervention pathways), because learning first requires participation. This is Map 8 in the guide and has been laid out on two pages to improve readability.

**Micro maps (which focus on girls' participation in education):**

- Poverty and financial barriers – including sub-barriers as well as social protection intervention pathways. This is Map 2 in the guide.
- Barriers that limit girls' physical access to schooling– including sub-barriers as well as social protection intervention pathways. This is Map 3 in the guide.
- Physical and mental health barriers – including sub-barriers as well as social protection intervention pathways. This is Map 4 in the guide.

- Community gender norms and peer pressure – including sub-barriers as well as social protection intervention pathways. This is Map 5 in the guide.
- Barriers linked to girls' reproductive biology and the limited resources that girls have to deal with these --including sub-barriers as well as social protection intervention pathways. This is Map 6 in the guide.
- Aspirations for education – including sub-barriers as well as social protection intervention pathways. This is Map 7 in the guide, because it is important to first understand the factors and barriers that shape and limit aspirations.

Note that while these micro maps capture barriers that are in real life deeply interwoven, we have attempted to avoid as much interweaving as possible, in order to better focus the readers' attention on each map's core framing.

### We have taken account of three 'age brackets'<sup>1</sup> in conceptualising these barriers:

- 1) Barriers that potentially impact girls' enrolment and attendance from the earliest days of formal education, which may or may not (depending on context) include pre-primary school (e.g. disability or school accessibility). In the maps, these are marked with a blue dot. ●
- 2) Barriers that tend to become more important as girls grow up and move through primary school (e.g. school quality and poverty). In the maps, these are marked with a red dot. ●
- 3) Barriers that become more important as girls experience the physical and social transitions related to adolescence (e.g. menstruation, concerns about girls' 'honour', child marriage and laws that exclude pregnant girls from education). While contexts and girls' own development vary, this typically coincides with the transition from primary to secondary education. In the maps, these are marked with an orange dot. ●

Many barriers are important to girls' initial engagement with formal education (and drive their lower enrolment rates) but become ever more important the older girls get (and drive their higher drop-out rates). For example, the cost of education

keeps some girls from ever enrolling but is more likely to lead girls to drop out over time, as the real and opportunity costs of education grow.<sup>15</sup> Costs can be especially high for adolescent girls, given that secondary schools in many countries are fee based or require expensive transport/boarding (because schools are not local). These barriers have three dots: blue, red and orange.

- Cost of education
- e.g. fees, uniforms, books

Note that dots are applied differently across maps. Some barriers have sub-barriers that share age-brackets. For example, barriers that limit girls' physical access to school (educational infrastructure, transportation, and community violence) are all important from the earliest days of enrolment, tend to become more important over time, and are particularly important in adolescence. Because the age brackets are the same across sub-barriers, the dots are placed on the main barrier rather than on the sub-barriers. Other barriers have sub-barriers that have different age brackets. For example, poverty and financial barriers include both the real cost of education (which is important from the earliest days of enrolment) and opportunity costs due to forgone child marriage (which does not typically become important until adolescence). Because of these age bracket differences, the dots are placed not on the main barrier, but on sub-barriers.

### We have considered three intervention pathways:

- 1) Core social protection mechanisms such as cash transfers, public works programmes, educational stipends, social health insurance/subsidies for healthcare, free/subsidised childcare, nutrition support, and maternity/paternity/parental leave. Case management for girls with complex needs (e.g. in humanitarian contexts or those with disabilities) is also included here.
- 2) 'Plus' programming that is (or could be) linked to core mechanisms<sup>16</sup> aimed at addressing a range of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours – e.g. parents' (or caregivers')<sup>2</sup> parenting practices, adolescents' life skills and SRH

1 'Age brackets' are necessarily broad and variable because of the way school systems are organised (with formal education beginning at age four in some countries and age seven in others), because children progress through grades at different paces (with over-age enrolment common in many countries due to grade repetition), and because children experience puberty at different ages

2 We have used parents rather than parents/caregivers on maps to save space.



knowledge, community social cohesion, and beliefs about gender equality and disability. 'Plus' programming can be either included as part of a broader social protection package or implemented independently with linkages then made to complementary services.

- 3) Policy advocacy and supply-side investments aimed at improving the national, regional and local environments in which girls live and

learn. As these are varied and vast, and do not fall under the rubric of social protection, we provide illustrative examples only.

We have also included a short, recommended reading list on the barriers that limit girls' access to education and learning and how social protection might help.

# Map 1: Bird's eye view of barriers to girls' participation in education and learning

This map sets the scene and captures the 12 main barriers to girls' participation in education – spanning the micro, meso and macro levels – and also the two-way relationship between girls' participation in education and learning.

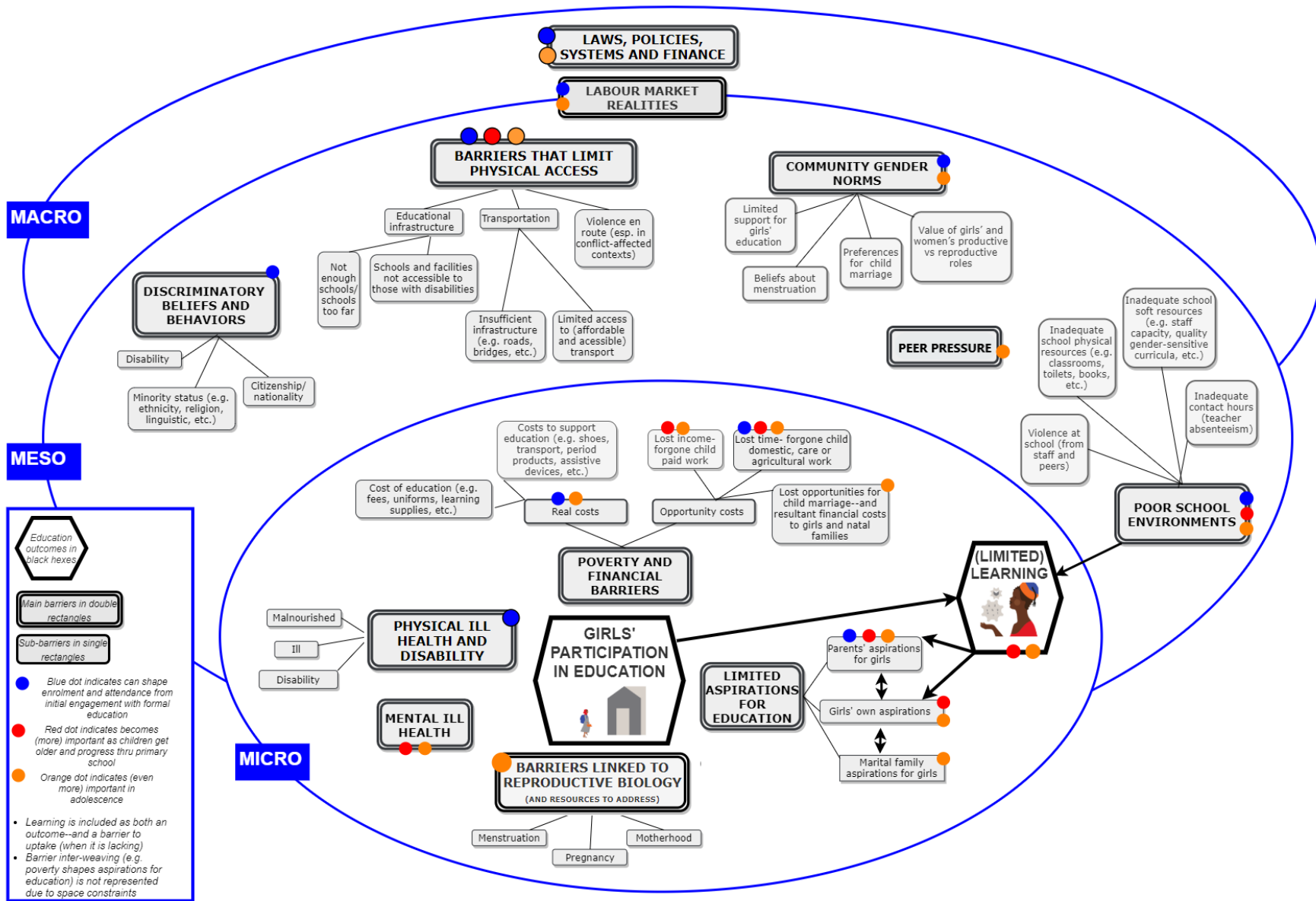
**Micro-level barriers** are those that operate at the girl and household level. These include poverty and financial barriers, physical health barriers (including the disabilities that in LMICs are often related to poverty and are preventable), mental ill health (including that caused by household and community violence and amplified by social exclusion), barriers linked to reproductive biology (and the limited resources that girls have to deal with these), and limited aspirations for education (which are shaped by a complex interplay between household and community factors).

**Meso-level barriers** are those that operate at the community and school level. These include barriers that prevent girls from physically accessing schooling, poor school environments (e.g. schools that are disproportionately staffed by men or lack menstrual health management facilities), discriminatory beliefs and behaviours (especially towards those with disabilities or from marginalised groups), peer pressure and community-level gender norms (that deprioritise girls' need for education).

**Macro-level barriers** are those that operate at the sub-national and national levels. These include laws, policies and systems, some of which deliberately exclude some girls (e.g. those that prohibit pregnant girls from attending school or limit enrolment to those with citizenship) and others of which fail to be inclusive (e.g. curricula that are not gender-responsive or data management tools that do not disaggregate by sex), as well as the (gender-responsive) financing required for implementation. They also include labour market realities that limit girls' access to employment and economic independence, such as occupational segregation born of a need for flexible work hours (to accommodate domestic responsibilities including child care), unequal pay for equal work, and females' poorer access to credit and extension services.

Where main barriers lend themselves to disparate social protection intervention pathways, they are broken down into sub-barriers that will be explored in detail on micro-level maps. For example, 'barriers that limit girls' physical access to schooling' is broken into three sub-barriers (educational infrastructure, transportation and violence en route to and from school), two of which are further disaggregated (educational infrastructure into insufficient schools and inaccessible facilities, and transportation into insufficient infrastructure and limited access to affordable and accessible transport).

**Birds' eye view of barriers to girls' participation in education and learning**





## Map 2: Poverty and financial barriers to girls' participation in education

This map, which is broken down into two main barriers and five sub-barriers, lays out myriad intervention pathways for social protection, most of which are for 'core' social protection mechanisms such as cash and assets transfers, public works programmes, health insurance and parental leave. Although these interventions are generally not targeted to girls specifically, they are sometimes found to be particularly effective at improving girls' access to education, because girls' education can be more sensitive to costs than boys'.<sup>17</sup>

In terms of real costs, it is important to distinguish between the costs of education itself (e.g. fees, uniforms, school supplies) and the costs that are required to support education (e.g. transportation, period products, boarding). In many LMICs, preschool and kindergarten are not provided by the government and are consequently expensive, which means that girls from the poorest families are disproportionately likely to be shut-out and to arrive in first grade without the school readiness skills that support learning.<sup>18</sup> In addition, although primary school is ostensibly free in most contexts, it may entail significant hidden costs (e.g. school maintenance fees).<sup>19</sup> Eliminating the costs associated with schooling itself may be insufficient. Girls may require support for items/services that enable participation in school but are not education-specific--such as shoes, sanitary pads or bus fare.<sup>20</sup>

It is important to note that the real costs of education usually increase as children get older, which is the primary reason that evaluations tend to find larger programme impacts on adolescents versus younger children.<sup>21</sup> Some costs are associated with grade level. Although primary education is free in most LMICs, secondary (let alone post-secondary) education is not and even when it does not entail tuition it may still require expensive transport or boarding (as schools are clustered in more urban areas) or necessitate exam fees. In some LMICs, quality deficits resulting from poor-quality schooling also require families to invest in tutorial support if their children are to succeed in exams.<sup>22</sup> Some costs are associated not with grade level, but with age. Adolescents are especially sensitive to fitting in with their peers and

may require not only toiletries and new (rather than second-hand) uniforms but the 'right' sports shoes.<sup>23</sup>

Opportunity costs for girls, which also tend to grow as girls get older and are larger in conflict-affected contexts and when parents (or caregivers) have a disability or are ill,<sup>24</sup> can be disaggregated into three categories. The first opportunity cost is lost income, because pursuing education takes time that could be spent on paid work. This is relatively rare, especially prior to middle-adolescence, because boys and not girls are generally tasked with paid work due to social norms that position them as breadwinners.<sup>25</sup> (The major exception is girls' paid work as domestic workers which becomes markedly more common in early adolescence.) The second opportunity cost is lost time, because girls who are attending school and doing homework have more limited availability to fetch water and fuel, herd livestock or care for younger siblings. Research suggests that across LMIC contexts this is the primary perceived opportunity cost of girls' education and impacts their enrolment, attendance, and progression as girls miss hours of school (e.g. when they are late collecting water), days of school (e.g. when they are caring for ill family members), and weeks of school (e.g. when they are assisting with farming tasks).<sup>26</sup> This cost is likely to be higher for girls from marginalised groups, who are disproportionately likely to be poor and to have more limited access to services--and speaks to the continued need for programming specifically aimed at marginalised girls.<sup>27</sup> Finally, where households use child marriage as a negative coping strategy, to reduce daily expenses or optimise bride wealth, forgoing child marriage may result in financial costs to households and to girls themselves.<sup>28</sup>

Some poverty-related sub-barriers have specific social protection intervention pathways. For example, supporting schools to offer grants to students reduces the real costs of education.<sup>29</sup> Alternatively, measures such as providing households with bed nets to prevent malaria or improving access to early childhood education can reduce demands on girls' time for care work.<sup>30</sup> Other intervention pathways work to mitigate both real and opportunity costs. For example, health insurance helps households cover the real costs of

educating daughters, by protecting adults' health and earning capacity as well as by reducing out-of-pocket health expenses.<sup>31</sup> It can also address opportunity costs – by keeping family members from needing the care that girls quite often provide.<sup>32</sup>

Case management should be used to ensure that girls with the most complex cases, including those with disabilities and in humanitarian contexts, are linked with the broader services and support they need in order to pursue education.<sup>33</sup>

Social protection significantly reduces the real and opportunity costs of girls' participation in education. To further enhance these impacts (and sustain them over time) it is important to simultaneously invest in enhanced supply-side linkages to community

infrastructure and services. Investments might include education, health, early childhood care and education (ECCE), WASH, and power – each of which are critical to girls' ability to participate in education. Expanded social protection should also be paired with policy advocacy at sub-national and national levels aimed at ensuring that education is affordable for all (including refugees and those without citizenship, who are often required to pay fees even when citizens are not). This should include improved access to quality ECCE, stepped up and gender-responsive educational finance that eliminates fees (including for tuition, books, exams and transport) through the end of secondary school, and need-based scholarships to encourage continuity through to tertiary education.

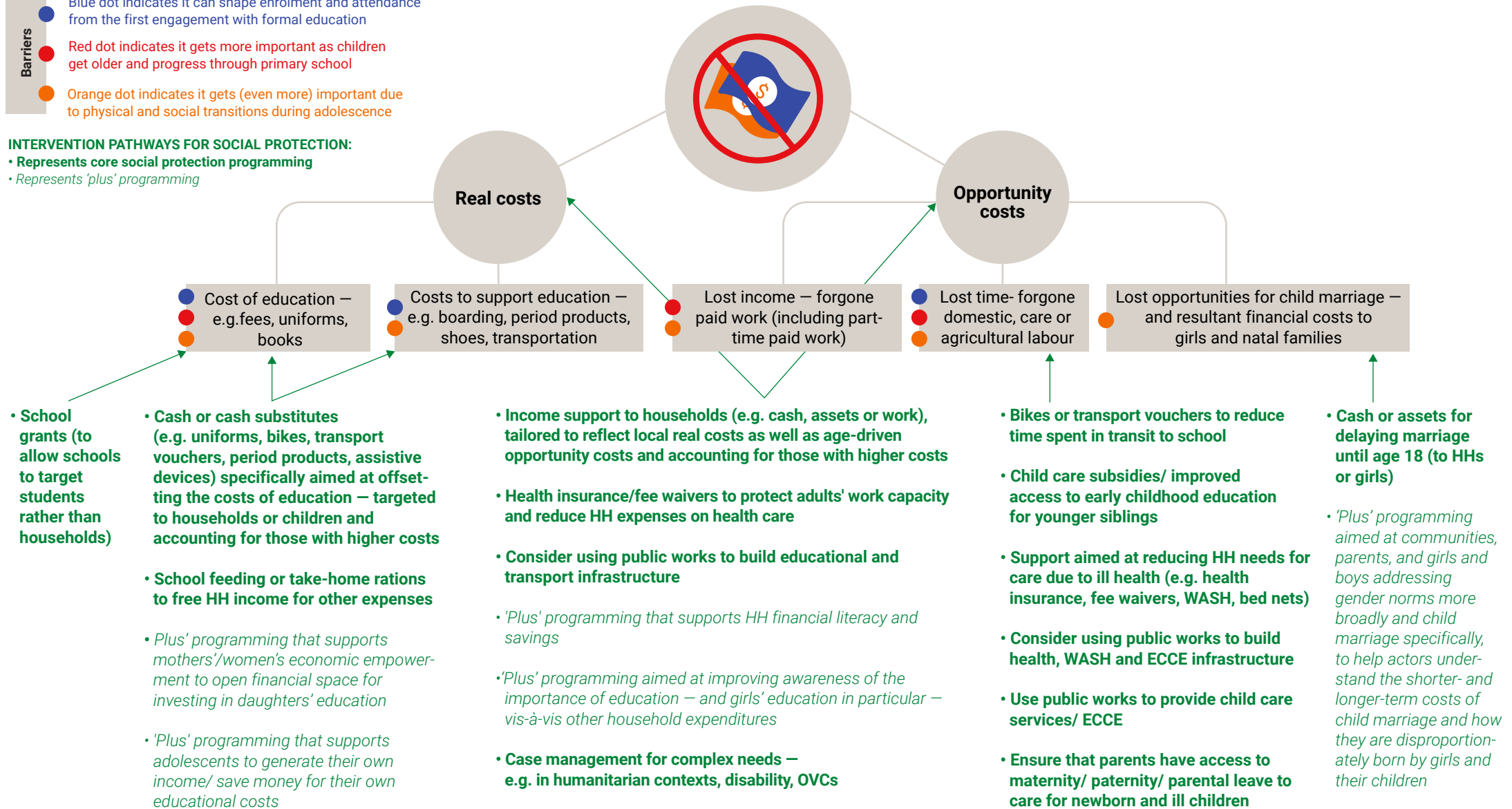
# POVERTY AND FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

- Barriers**
- Blue dot indicates it can shape enrolment and attendance from the first engagement with formal education
  - Red dot indicates it gets more important as children get older and progress through primary school
  - Orange dot indicates it gets (even more) important due to physical and social transitions during adolescence

## INTERVENTION PATHWAYS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION:

• Represents core social protection programming

• Represents 'plus' programming



## Social protection programming should be supported by:

**Supply side investments** in educational (including ECCE), health, transport, WASH, and power infrastructure and services.

**Policy advocacy** aimed broadly at reducing the cost of education for all (including refugees and those without citizenship) – including expanding the availability and quality of ECCE, eliminating tuition and fees through secondary school, and providing need-based scholarships for tertiary education. Stepped up financing should be evaluated in terms of its gender-responsiveness.



## Map 3: Barriers that limit girls' physical access to schooling

Barriers that limit girls' physical access to education can be pulled apart into three sub-barriers: those relating to educational infrastructure, those related to transport, and those related to community violence en route to (and from) school. The first two—which are closely related—can share similar social protection intervention pathways. The last, which can be significantly exacerbated in conflict-affected contexts, requires a different approach.

The lack of educational infrastructure acts as a barrier to girls' education in two ways. In many contexts, there are too few schools.<sup>34</sup> This particularly impacts girls living in the most remote areas (who are disproportionately likely to be those from marginalised populations), and at the secondary (and post-secondary) level, given that in many LMICs post-primary educational infrastructure<sup>3</sup> has not been scaled as rapidly as primary infrastructure—and has knock-on implications for girls' safety.<sup>35</sup> In addition, in nearly all LMICs, school facilities are not well adapted for those with certain disabilities.<sup>36</sup> Some school buildings are not accessible; others have classrooms, labs or toilets that are not accessible.

Transportation as a barrier to girls' participation in education must also be disentangled into two threads: lack of transport infrastructure and lack of affordable and accessible transport.<sup>37</sup> The former is particularly acute for girls in remote communities, which are underserved both by roads and bridges, while the latter impacts even girls in urban areas – when transport is expensive or not door-to-door for girls with disabilities. Both sub-barriers tend to be higher for adolescent girls, particularly those studying at the secondary and post-secondary levels.<sup>38</sup>

Harassment and violence on the way to and from school, the potential for which often rules out girls walking to school even when schools are relatively close, also limits girls'

participation in education.<sup>39</sup> This is particularly true for adolescent girls, girls from marginalised groups, and in conflict-affected contexts.<sup>40</sup>

Intervention pathways through which social protection might contribute to addressing deficits in educational infrastructure and transportation are concrete and range from using public works to build and improve roads and schools,<sup>4</sup> to providing girls with disabilities with the assistive devices that make schools accessible (e.g. wheelchairs), to cash or vouchers to allow enrolment in (closer) private school or offset the costs of transportation.<sup>41</sup> Addressing the community violence that prevents girls from accessing education, on the other hand, is better tackled through 'plus' programming aimed at empowering girls, addressing violent masculinities and disability-related stigma, and fostering social cohesion.<sup>42</sup> It also requires working with parents (or caregivers) and communities to shift beliefs about the sanctity of girls' honour to their future marriage prospects and family reputation.<sup>43</sup>

To better address accessibility challenges, efforts to expand access to social protection should be paired with supply-side investments in schools within walkable distance (or safe and affordable boarding facilities where walkability is not possible); safe, affordable and accessible transport that includes attention to girl-friendly details such as better community lighting; and justice services that can help improve girls' safety en route to and from school. They should also be paired with policy advocacy at sub-national and national levels aimed at reducing exclusion (for those with disabilities as well as those from minority groups), national investment in community projects that empower girls and address violent masculinities, and fostering the rule of law, especially regarding strengthening reporting and prosecution of perpetrators of age- and gender-based violence.

3 There is also a deficit of pre-primary educational infrastructure, but in most LMIC contexts this primarily due to the invisibility of ECCE at the policy level

4 We acknowledge that there is little evidence regarding the efficacy of using public works programmes to build infrastructure—and that there is concern that such an approach is not cost effective. This is in part because the impact of 'public goods' has not been included in evaluations of public works programmes (which have primarily focussed on food security). We note that many authors have highlighted the potential for this approach to create multiplier effects—perhaps especially for women and girls—and that a few have found evidence of efficacy (albeit in regard to agricultural infrastructure) (del Ninno et al., 2009; Tanzarn and Gutierrez, 2015; Ismail, 2018; Gehrke, 2018).

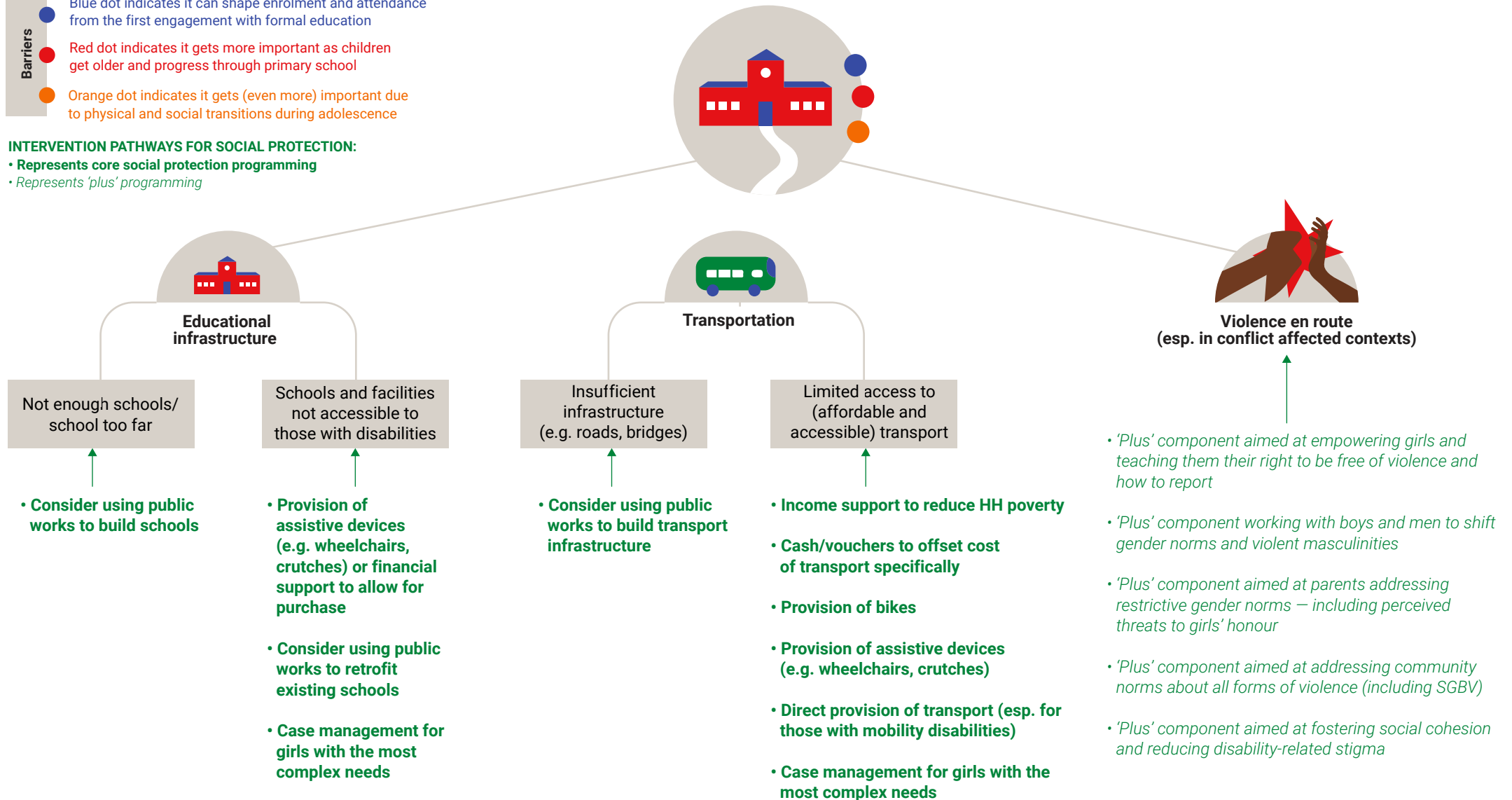
# BARRIERS THAT LIMIT GIRLS' PHYSICAL ACCESS TO SCHOOLING

Barriers

- Blue dot indicates it can shape enrolment and attendance from the first engagement with formal education
- Red dot indicates it gets more important as children get older and progress through primary school
- Orange dot indicates it gets (even more) important due to physical and social transitions during adolescence


## INTERVENTION PATHWAYS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION:

- Represents core social protection programming
- Represents 'plus' programming



## Social protection programming should be supported by:

 **Supply side investments** in walkable and inclusive educational infrastructure (or safe and affordable boarding options as needed); safe, affordable, and accessible transport (including improved community lighting as well as services); and policing and justice.

 **Policy advocacy** aimed at improving educational inclusivity, reducing social and geographic exclusion, shifting the gender norms that disempower girls and lead to violent masculinities, and fostering the rule of law in regard to age- and gender-based violence.

## Map 4: Physical and mental health barriers to girls' participation in education

Physical health barriers – which include malnutrition, physical illness and disability – and mental ill health share broadly similar social protection intervention pathways. This is because all are shaped by poverty and social exclusion. Although understandings of disability have evolved in recent decades and now focus on the ways in which physical and social environments, rather than disability itself, are barriers to participation (including in education), disability is included on this map for two reasons, both of which are especially relevant in LMICs.<sup>44</sup> First, many childhood disabilities in these contexts are the result of malnutrition and inadequate healthcare and as such are preventable with tools already in our toolboxes.<sup>45</sup> Second, where countries and communities are still scaling up access to education, resources have not been made available to meet average learners' needs, much less those requiring accommodations or adaptations on account of specific needs.<sup>46</sup> This makes functional limitations all the more relevant.

Malnutrition in LMICs is the result of interactions between household food insecurity, poor quality care (e.g. feeding and hygiene practices as well as health-seeking behaviour) and unhealthy environments (e.g. access to shelter, healthcare, and WASH facilities).<sup>47</sup> Physical illness reflects this same trinity, with infectious disease and environmental risks more common in poverty-stricken environments; healthcare that is geographically, economically or socially out of reach; and caregivers sometimes unaware of the importance of timely – and modern – care seeking. Better maternal and child nutrition (e.g. folic acid and vitamin A) and more timely and appropriate treatment for illnesses and accidents (e.g. river blindness and broken bones) would do much to prevent childhood disability.<sup>48</sup>

Mental ill health in children is often related to violence--in the household, at school, or in the community.<sup>49</sup> Household violence is often related to poverty-related stress, with both mothers and fathers experiencing stress over resource allocation.<sup>50</sup> Poor social cohesion—and

disability related stigma-- has also been linked to child and adolescent mental ill-health.<sup>51</sup>

Intervention pathways through which social protection might contribute to addressing the physical health barriers that limit girls' participation in education include income support, asset transfers of 'health supplies' (e.g. bed nets and water filters) aimed at reducing environmental risks, and 'plus' parent-education courses that promote good practices in feeding, sanitation and care seeking—all especially critical in the first 1,000 days.<sup>52</sup> These serve to reduce all three sub-barriers. Intervention pathways also include approaches such as parental leave (especially maternity leave to support breastfeeding); nutrition support for children (e.g. food vouchers or in-kind support for households, school feeding and take-home rations); and health insurance that attends to the cost of care (including maternity care), medication and transport.<sup>53</sup>





While mental ill health is also addressed by relieving poverty (and stress and violence) and improving access to parental leave and healthcare, the 'plus' components best suited to improving girls' psychosocial outcomes are distinct. These include supportive positive parenting courses aimed at expanding parents' (and other caregivers') repertoires for non-violent discipline strategies and fostering parent-child communication and connection.<sup>54</sup> They also include support services and safe spaces for girls (and boys) – including those with disabilities and from marginalised populations – that offer opportunities to interact with caring adults and peers as well as programming designed to support social cohesion and reduce violence in schools and communities.<sup>55</sup> Programming meant for adolescents, parents, and communities must directly address

restrictive gender norms if it is to open the wider opportunities that support girls to thrive.<sup>56</sup>

Case management should be used to link especially vulnerable girls– including those with chronic illness or disability or exposure to violence– to the broader services and support they need to pursue education (and to optimise their overall well-being).<sup>57</sup>

To better address girls' physical and mental health needs, efforts to expand access to social protection should be paired with supply-side investments in community services (especially health, WASH, and community- and school-based counselling services). Policy advocacy at sub-national and national levels-- aimed at improving public health (physical and mental) and reducing the stigma that surrounds mental illness and experiences of violence—is also required.

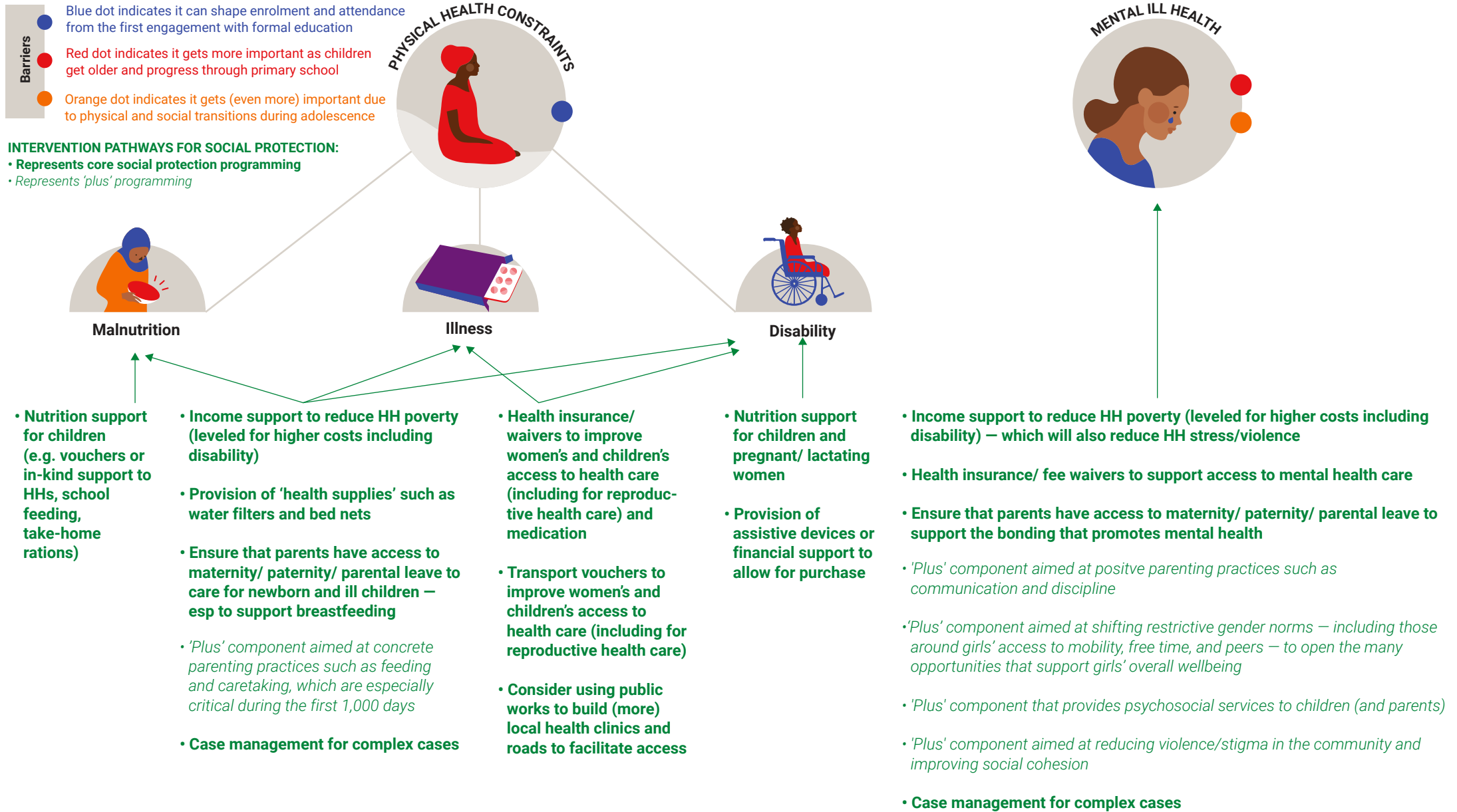
# PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH BARRIERS TO GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

Barriers

- Blue dot indicates it can shape enrolment and attendance from the first engagement with formal education
- Red dot indicates it gets more important as children get older and progress through primary school
- Orange dot indicates it gets (even more) important due to physical and social transitions during adolescence

## INTERVENTION PATHWAYS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION:

- Represents core social protection programming
- Represents 'plus' programming



**Social protection programming should be supported by supply side investments and policy advocacy** aimed at improving access to and quality of health services (including for reproductive health), WASH, and public health outreach – including for marginalised communities.



**Social protection programming should be supported by supply side investments and policy advocacy** aimed at improving access to and quality of mental health services, including through school- and community-based counselling, and reducing the stigma that surround mental illness.

## Map 5: Social norms as barriers to girls' participation in education

Our barrier mapping includes two types of norms: community gender norms and peer pressure. The first, which intersects with poverty and myriad forms of social exclusion, shapes girls' access to education from early childhood but becomes increasingly important as girls approach and move through adolescence.<sup>58</sup> The latter is almost exclusively an issue in adolescence. Social protection intervention pathways overlap and target both behaviours and beliefs.

Community gender norms include four sub-barriers. The first centres directly on support for girls' education and whether and how it is valued vis-à-vis boys'.<sup>59</sup> The second centres on beliefs about menstruation and how in some contexts it is stigmatised and limits girls' opportunities, including for schooling.<sup>60</sup> The third focuses on preferences for and norms surrounding child marriage, which—depending on context—can be driven by fathers, mothers, husbands, extended family members or girls themselves.<sup>61</sup> In many contexts, norms surrounding child marriage are accompanied by social and economic sanctions that may significantly limit girls' future options (e.g. they may be forced to marry a much older man or become a second wife if they do not marry in their most 'desirable' years).<sup>62</sup> The fourth sub-barrier more broadly focuses on how girls' and women's reproductive roles are valued vis-à-vis their productive potential and broader human rights. In LMICs where girls do not have access to independent livelihoods, and marriage and motherhood provide girls with both a roof over their heads and a place in the community, social pressures to ensure that girls remain marriageable (even if they are to marry as adults) limit many adolescent girls' access to schooling.<sup>63</sup> This is especially true in conflict-affected contexts where there are added threats to girls' bodies and reputations.<sup>64</sup>

Some of the intervention pathways through which social protection might contribute to shifting community gender norms and peer pressure target behaviours. These include cash and assets conditioned on or labelled for girls' education (rather than children's education) or avoiding child marriage (because married girls' access to education

is extremely limited).<sup>65</sup> Though contexts is key, targeting girls themselves, rather than households, may improve impacts – especially in adolescence, because it ensures that education is prioritised vis-à-vis other household needs and may facilitate girls' broader empowerment.<sup>66</sup> Although highly context dependent, several studies have found that providing girls with bicycles may be particularly effective and cost-effective in supporting their access to secondary school, because it reduces transport time and improves safety.<sup>67</sup> There is evidence that social protection programmes that are aimed at improving girls' participation in education can, over time and depending on context, trigger changes in beliefs about the value of girls' education, as communities reach and pass the tipping point where behaviours are normalised.<sup>68</sup> The same is true of 'plus' interventions that support older girls' and women's employment and economic empowerment. By providing them with courses that teach hard, soft, and financial skills and opportunities to save and borrow, these programmes may improve access to education by demonstrating to the community that marriage is not the only form of security.<sup>69</sup>

Other intervention pathways aimed at shifting community gender norms and peer pressure directly target beliefs. Indeed, there is evidence that without this it is difficult to create longer-term change in the broader gender norms that limit girls' lives. Girls' access to education may improve but come to be seen as a way to make them more marriageable or support them to become better mothers.<sup>70</sup> Interventions in this genre include 'plus' empowerment programming for girls, masculinities programming for boys and young men, and gender-sensitivity or empowerment programming for parents/caregivers and communities.<sup>71</sup>

Where peer pressure diverges from community gender norms, either in terms of what young people do that may limit girls' opportunities for education or what young people believe about girls' versus boys' roles, it is vital that programming respond accordingly. For example, in Ethiopia's East Hararghe zone (in Oromia), recent research has found that girls as young as ten and boys as young as 15 are



increasingly defying their parents and 'choosing' of their own accord to marry-- in part because they wish to demonstrate their 'adulthood' to their peers. Unsurprisingly, messages aimed at encouraging girls to resist arranged child marriages have fallen flat.<sup>72</sup>

To shift the community and peer gender norms that limit girls' participation in education, efforts to expand access to social protection should be paired with policy advocacy at sub-national and national levels. This should include attention to developing gender equitable curricula and comprehensive sexuality education, scaling up

adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, ensuring that pregnant girls and young mothers have access to education, changing the inheritance laws and labour market policies that disadvantage girls and women by depriving them of the assets and opportunities that support their financial independence, and stepped up and gender responsive budgeting. Supply-side investments in community implementation of these are also key. Actors should also consider engaging with media partners to develop mass and social media approaches to addressing gender norms, especially for young people.<sup>73</sup>

# GENDER NORMS AND PEER PRESSURE

- Barriers**
- Blue dot indicates it can shape enrolment and attendance from the first engagement with formal education
  - Red dot indicates it gets more important as children get older and progress through primary school
  - Orange dot indicates it gets (even more) important due to physical and social transitions during adolescence

## INTERVENTION PATHWAYS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION:

- Represents core social protection programming
- Represents 'plus' programming

### COMMUNITY GENDER NORMS



### PEER PRESSURE



Limited support for girls' education



Beliefs about menstruation



Preferences for child marriage



Value of girls' and women's productive vs reproductive roles

- **Cash/ assets/ stipends (perhaps esp. bikes) to natal/marital HHs or girls for girls' education (vis-a-vis boys')**

• 'Plus' programming aimed at communities encouraging girls' education – tailoring messaging to contexts and using local role models where possible

- *School- and community- based 'plus' puberty education programming for girls and boys*

• *Fold menstruation/ MHM into existing community-based programming for women (including health care)*

• *'Plus' parent education programming for mothers (and fathers) that includes attn to menstruation and how to support daughters*

• *'Plus' programming aimed at communities and de-stigmatising menstruation*

- **Cash/ assets to girls or HHs for eschewing child marriage**

• *School- and community-based 'plus' programming directly targeting child marriage – using community and religious leaders as possible – for girls and boys, parents, and the broader community, to raise awareness about the shorter- and longer-term costs of child marriage and the advantages (to girls, their children, and communities) of adult marriage*

- **Programming for older girls and women that supports employment and financial independence – including hard, soft and financial skills; stepped up access to savings and credit opportunities, etc.**

• *'Plus' gender empowerment programming for girls and women aimed at teaching rights and life skills and providing mentors and role models*

• *'Plus' programming for boys and men that addresses masculinities and violence specifically and gender norms more broadly*

• *'Plus' community programming aimed at shifting beliefs about girls' and women's sexual purity, VAWG, and girls' and women's 'value' beyond their roles as wives and mothers – working with community and religious leaders as needed*

- **Cash/ assets to girls themselves for education**

• *Highly contextualized 'plus' school- and community-based programming for adolescents that addresses peer pressure, supports adolescent girls to value themselves beyond marriage and motherhood, encourages boys to find other ways to demonstrate masculine prowess, and raises both girls' and boys' awareness about the importance of education and adult marriage, the risks of early and unprotected sex and child marriage, how to protect self and peers from violence, etc.*

## Social protection programming should be supported by:



**Policy advocacy** that contributes to shifting gender norms, including developing gender equitable curricula inclusive of comprehensive sexuality education, eliminating policies that prevent pregnant girls and young mothers from accessing education, changing the inheritance laws and labour market policies that exclude girls and women from equitable access to assets and economic opportunities, and stepped up and gender-responsive budgeting.



**Supply side investments** that deliver on policy objectives, including prioritising the hiring of female teachers and administrators, scaling up adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, and making financial services and community leadership roles more available to women.



**Engagement with media partners**, attending carefully to generational differences in mass and social media messaging.

## Map 6: Participation barriers linked to reproductive biology—and the limited supports and services girls have to deal with these

This map focuses on the barriers born of girls' reproductive biology and the limited resources that girls have to deal with these-- which become salient after the physical transitions of adolescence. It includes three sub-barriers: menstruation, pregnancy and motherhood. Social protection intervention pathways overlap considerably with those on other maps but are pulled out in order to highlight the unique disadvantages that girls face by dint of the fact that they are female. These intervention pathways are diverse where they address the practical needs delineated as sub-barriers and more shared (between the three sub-barriers) where they involve 'plus' interventions aimed at shifting the social norms that surround biological differences.

Adolescent girls need practical support to care for their developing bodies. Because girls can lose access to school for days each month in contexts where schools lack toilets, running water, and rubbish bins, and even reusable period products are uncommon (due to custom or cost), practical support should include supplies and spaces to manage menstruation.<sup>74</sup> Menstrual pain can also limit girls' attendance, which has heightened implications for girls who live in remote communities or poorer households—who are less likely to have access to medication.<sup>75</sup> Girls also need access to contraceptives and reproductive health care, given that adolescent pregnancy is associated with school drop-out.<sup>76</sup> This is especially the case in countries (e.g. Tanzania) where pregnant girls are prohibited from attending school.<sup>77</sup> Social protection could play a role in meeting these practical needs by providing period products, building school and community WASH infrastructure (again with caveats on the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of public works programmes), and supporting girls' access to health services, contraceptives, and medication through the provision of cash or assets or with health insurance/waivers.

Young mothers need practical support in order to combine education and parenthood.<sup>78</sup> This includes not only income support, so that girls can afford to stay in school, but also improved access to nutrition

and health care (especially during the months of pregnancy and lactation), programming aimed at keeping their children healthy (to reduce demands on girls' time), and childcare.<sup>79</sup> Social protection could contribute to childcare in several ways. For example, although there is evidence that mothers are often reluctant to leave their young children with non-family members, as well as legitimate safeguarding concerns,<sup>80</sup> expanding the rubric of 'public work' to include ECCE services—as has been done in South Africa—could simultaneously deliver on young mothers' need for childcare and women's need for work.<sup>81</sup> Alternatively, and modelled on Mexico's Estancias, young mothers (and fathers) could be provided with vouchers/fee waivers/subsidies to access existent community childcare services, which research has found families are generally willing to use if quality is acceptable.<sup>82</sup>

Socially, girls – and boys – need to know how their bodies work and how to avoid (and manage) pregnancy. Comprehensive sexuality education, which could be delivered as part of 'plus' programming provided in schools and communities, could help meet this need.<sup>83</sup> Adolescents, as well as parents/caregivers and communities, also need exposure to programming that addresses gender norms, especially those related to girls' reproductive biology but also broader aspects including the importance of fathers to children's development.<sup>84</sup>

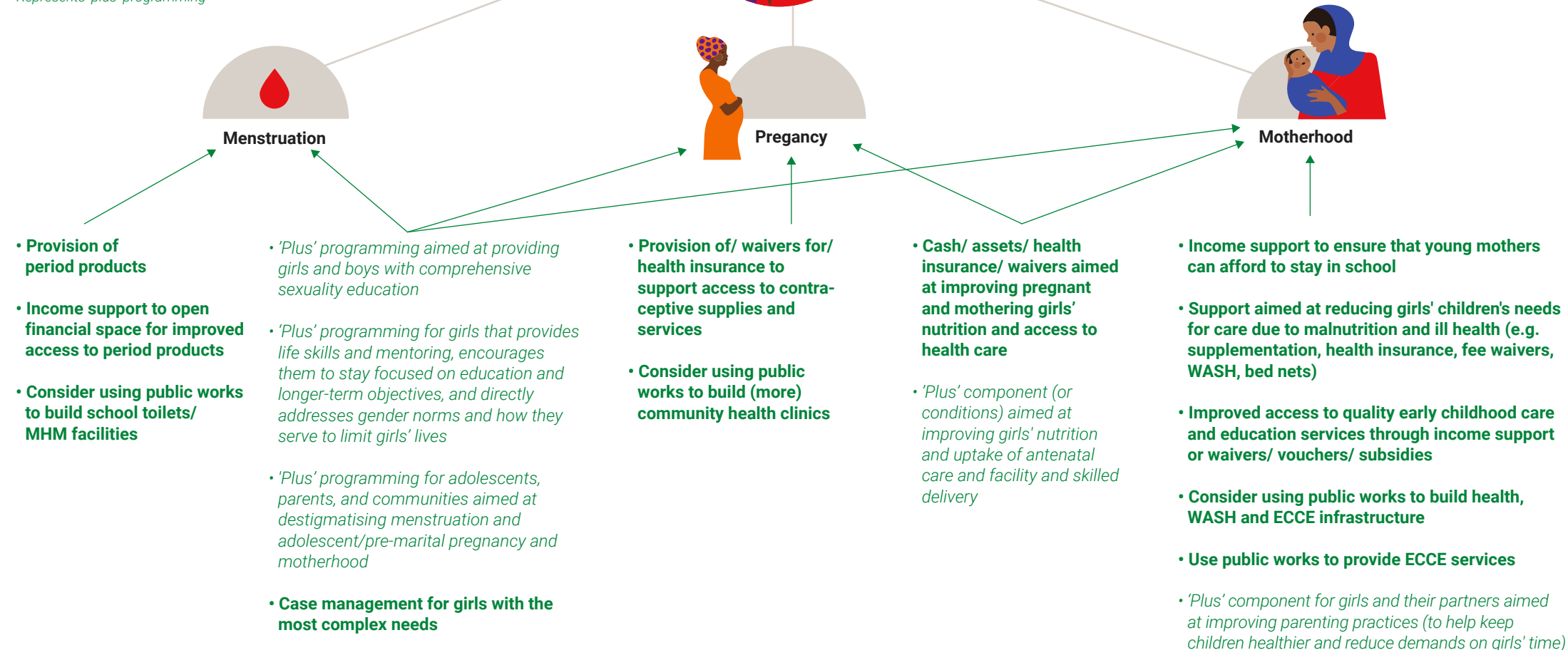
Given that barriers linked to girls' reproductive biology are primarily a result of the limited resources available to adolescent girls, it is vital to pair social protection with supply side investments in community infrastructure and services as well as policy advocacy at national and subnational levels. The former should centre on improving WASH (including school toilets and MHM facilities), SRH information and care, and ECCE. The latter should include efforts to scale up comprehensive sexuality education, expand the types of work seen as 'public works', and address the myriad legal, policy, financial, and normative barriers that prevent girls from attending school while menstruating, pregnant, or mothering.

# BARRIERS LINKED TO REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY – AND LIMITED SERVICES AND SUPPORT TO ADDRESS THESE

- Barriers**
- Blue dot indicates it can shape enrolment and attendance from the first engagement with formal education
  - Red dot indicates it gets more important as children get older and progress through primary school
  - Orange dot indicates it gets (even more) important due to physical and social transitions during adolescence

## INTERVENTION PATHWAYS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION:

- Represents core social protection programming
- Represents 'plus' programming



## Social protection programming should be supported by:



**Supply side investments** in community infrastructure and services, especially WASH (including school toilets and MHM facilities), SRH information and care, and ECCE.



**Policy advocacy** aimed at scaling up comprehensive sexuality education, expanding the types of work seen as 'public works', and addressing the myriad legal, policy, financial, and normative barriers that prevent girls from attending school while menstruating, pregnant, or mothering.



## Map 7: Participation barriers born of limited aspirations for education

Aspirations for girls' education – whether they be girls' own, caregivers' or those of their marital families – are shaped by a combination of personal, household, community and national/market level factors. These include not only poverty and social exclusion (which are particularly amplified for those with disabilities and make education feel unobtainable), gender norms (which limit the perceived value of education), and labour and marriage market realities (which can limit actual returns on investment), but also individual and household preferences vis-à-vis other opportunities.<sup>85</sup> The latter is especially important when girls and families are deeply invested in maintaining cultural lineages.<sup>86</sup>

Parents'/caregivers' aspirations for girls' education limit girls' participation from early childhood. Girls' own aspirations for education begin to be important in late childhood, when girls have more agency over where and how they spend their time. Given that most girls who marry before adulthood marry in adolescence, not in early or middle childhood, marital families' aspirations (including husbands and parents-in-law) generally become important only in adolescence.

Intervention pathways through which social protection might contribute to shifting aspirations for girls' education are myriad and varied and reflect the factors that shape aspirations. Where aspirations are limited by poverty, income support (including cash and asset transfers as well as public works) to households allows girls and their caregivers to reimagine what is possible.<sup>87</sup> With the caveats that conditions are not feasible in many contexts and are not desirable in others, there is a not insubstantial body of evidence<sup>5</sup> that conditioning or labelling this support as for education tends to improve impacts, because it helps shift the priority of education vis-à-vis other household needs.<sup>88</sup> Where aspirations are limited by gender norms that deprioritise girls' education (vis-à-vis boys'), cash or assets to households – or to adolescent girls themselves – contingent upon girls' regular attendance (and

sometimes exam scores) can play a role in shifting the value placed on girls' schooling.<sup>89</sup> Interventions of this ilk are varied and include stipends for girls that are higher than those for boys (e.g. Mexico and Turkey), take home rations for girls (e.g. Ghana and South Sudan), bicycles for girls (e.g. India and Zambia), and cash paid into bank accounts for girls (e.g. Bangladesh and various Indian states). While supporting girls to stay in school has been found the best way to prevent child marriage, there is evidence from Bangladesh that the reverse pathway may also be effective—and that supporting girls to remain unmarried (in this case by incentivising them with cooking oil) may help them stay in school.<sup>90</sup>

'Plus' programming aimed at raising awareness of the importance of girls' education – for parents/caregivers (including fathers, given that in most LMICs they are the primary decision-makers), girls, marital families and communities – is also important to raising aspirations for education and has been found by numerous studies to be one of the more cost-effective ways of improving girls' access to education.<sup>6,91</sup> Depending on context, effects of awareness-raising can be amplified when girls (or their mothers) are also provided with empowerment programming that directly addresses gender relations and expands real and perceived opportunities, including for employment (including part-time after school in order to cover educational costs).<sup>92</sup> Given that girls' and parents'/caregivers' aspirations for education tend to decline over time where learning outcomes are poor, a critical intervention pathway through which social protection might improve aspirations is 'plus' programming that provides tutorial support for girls who are struggling academically.<sup>93</sup> Programming that reduces social exclusion – of girls with disabilities and girls belonging to marginalised groups – is important to ensuring that all girls have opportunities to aspire.<sup>94</sup> For girls with the most complex cases, case management may also be important.<sup>95</sup>

Given the feedback loop between educational aspirations and learning,<sup>96</sup> efforts to use social

5 This body of evidence is not only from Latin America, but also countries in Asia and North Africa. Similar evidence from Eastern and Southern Africa shows that unconditional cash transfers also address economic barriers to education.

6 Building schools and providing cash transfers/stipends tends to deliver larger results, but at higher cost (J-Pal, 2017; Snilstveit et al, 2016)

protection to raise aspirations for girls' education should be paired with the supply-side investments in inclusive and quality education that are necessary to support learning. These include ensuring that schools have the physical (e.g. desks, books, toilets) and 'soft' (e.g. trained—and female-- teachers, gender-responsive curricula and pedagogies, anti-violence policies) resources that support learning for all. They should also include investments in community-level infrastructure and services that reduce demands on girls' and women's time, especially WASH (given water collection responsibilities) and health and childcare (given care responsibilities). Social protection interventions should also be paired with

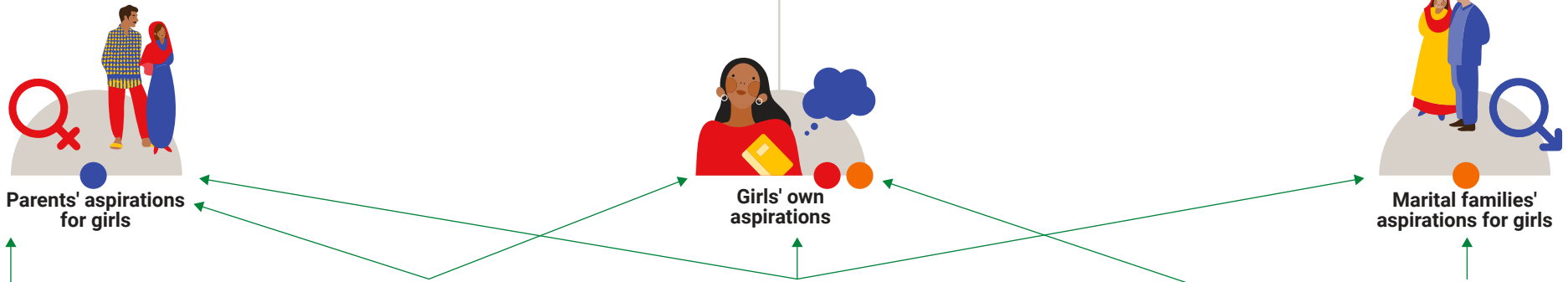
policy advocacy at the national and subnational levels. In addition to efforts (including improved financing) to deliver on community-level provisions, this should include direct attention to ensuring that all girls – including those who have disabilities, are married or mothers, or are minorities or lack citizenship – have access to not only education but the eventual employment that justifies investments in schooling. This will require broad efforts to address labour market failures as well as discriminatory laws and policies, which work in tandem to deprive girls and women of the assets and opportunities that support longer-term aspirations.

# LIMITED ASPIRATIONS FOR EDUCATION

- Barriers**
- Blue dot indicates it can shape enrolment and attendance from the first engagement with formal education
  - Red dot indicates it gets more important as children get older and progress through primary school
  - Orange dot indicates it gets (even more) important due to physical and social transitions during adolescence

## INTERVENTION PATHWAYS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION:

- Represents core social protection programming
- Represents 'plus' programming



• 'Plus' programming aimed at raising parents' awareness of the importance of girls' education- including for girls with disabilities and esp. vis-a-vis child marriage

• Economic empowerment and 'plus' programming aimed at meeting mothers' own gendered needs as women – to raise aspirations for their daughters

• **Cash or assets to HHs or girls to support reconceptualisation of what is possible – leveled for the most excluded, including those with disabilities**

• **Labelled or conditioned cash or assets to HHs or girls to ensure that education is prioritised vis-a-vis other household needs**

• **Labelled or conditioned cash or assets to HHs or girls to shift the priority of girls' education compared to boys'**

• **Labelled or conditioned cash or assets to HHs or girls to disincentivise child marriage**

• **Practical support for girls with particular needs – including assistive devices, childcare, etc.**

• 'Plus' programming that provides tutorial support for struggling students

• 'Plus' programming aimed at generating jobs/ supporting employment for educated girls and young women

• 'Plus' programming aimed at growing community awareness about the importance of girls' education – including for those with disabilities and esp vis-a-vis child marriage

• 'Plus' programming aimed at improving social cohesion/ reducing exclusion – working with community/ religious leaders

• **Case management for girls with the most complex needs**

• 'Plus' programming aimed at raising girls' educational aspirations (esp. vis-a-vis child marriage) by providing girls and their male and female peers with lifeskills/ role models/ mentoring/ socialisation/ opportunities for participatory learning, etc.

• **Labelled or conditioned cash or assets to girls or marital HHs to support girls' education**

• 'Plus' programming aimed at married girls, husbands and in-laws raising awareness of the importance of education – including for married girls

## Social protection programming should be supported by:

**Supply side investments** in the inclusive and quality education necessary for learning as well in the WASH, health, and ECCE infrastructure and services that reduce demands on girls' and women's time.

**Policy advocacy** aimed at ensuring that all girls – including those with disabilities or who are minorities, refugees, pregnant or mothering – have access to quality education as well as the eventual employment that justifies HH's investment in girls' schooling. This must include direct attention to labour market failures as well as discriminatory laws and policies.

## Map 8: Barriers to girls' learning

Barriers to girls' learning—while far more dependent on the quality of schooling available than barriers to girls' participation-- generally overlap with barriers to participation. This is true for both barriers at the school level and those faced by individual girls. Social protection intervention pathways reflect these overlaps.

At the school level, girls' learning is hindered by supply-side deficits that are largely beyond the reach of core social protection mechanisms, outside of grants to schools (to facilitate the purchase of educational materials or assistive devices or hire support staff) and potentially using public works to build and retrofit educational infrastructure. School level barriers to girls' learning include low contact/instructional hours, which reflect annual school calendars, the length of the school day and the teacher absenteeism that plagues many LMIC contexts. These also include insufficient and poorly adapted physical resources (e.g. too few schools, under-resourced classrooms, and a deficit of school toilets) and poor-quality 'soft' resources (e.g. poorly trained teachers who rely on violent discipline strategies to control classrooms and curriculum and pedagogies that are not child friendly, gender responsive or disability inclusive). Supply-side investments in teachers and schools and policy advocacy at the sub-national and national levels are better suited to addressing these barriers.<sup>97</sup>

School-level barriers to girls' learning also include discrimination, stigma and violence (including GBV)—from teachers as well as peers—that is often amplified for those with disabilities or who are marginalised on account of minority status.<sup>98</sup> The school- and community-based 'plus' programming highlighted on other maps could be important to addressing these barriers. Programming should target teachers' and students' beliefs and behaviours in regard to violence, working to build young people's communication and conflict-resolution skills (including how to report predatory teachers and bullying), and also the gender norms, disability-related stigma and social exclusion that limit girls' learning.<sup>99</sup>

Girl-level barriers to learning, of which there are seven on the map, represent three pathways through which social protection might improve girls' learning. The first pathway involves tackling girls' limited capacity and school readiness so that girls matriculate at school ready to learn. Recent evidence, from longer-term studies of Latin American cash transfers and public works programmes in Ethiopia and India, suggest that social protection is sometimes associated with improved learning outcomes for school-aged children because it can improve children's cognitive capacity. Impacts are through improved nutrition in the first 1,000 days, more stimulation and less violence at home, better access to ECCE, reduced chances/mitigation of disability, etc.<sup>100</sup>

The second pathway through which social protection can contribute to girls' learning addresses their irregular attendance. Here an array of social protection mechanisms supports girls' learning by assisting them to attend school on a regular basis across days, weeks, and seasons; reducing their odds of repetition; and improving their likelihood of transitioning to the next grade. Myriad and diverse individual intervention pathways are laid out in Maps 2–7.

The remaining girl-level barriers to learning highlight what schoolgirls need on an ongoing basis if they are to optimise their time in the classroom. They need to be physically and mentally healthy and well-nourished, because girls who do not feel well, are hungry or are anxious and/or depressed cannot pay attention or retain what they have learned.<sup>101</sup> They also need to be invested not only in attending school, but in acquiring knowledge and skills.<sup>102</sup> Finally, learning depends on practical and emotional family support. Caregivers (and siblings) must allow girls to prioritise education (stepping in to take over their chores as needed), ensure that they are appropriately provisioned with learning supplies (including not only books and pens but also light at home for after-dark homework and all necessary assistive devices—which can be as simple as eyeglasses) and encourage them to work hard.<sup>103</sup>

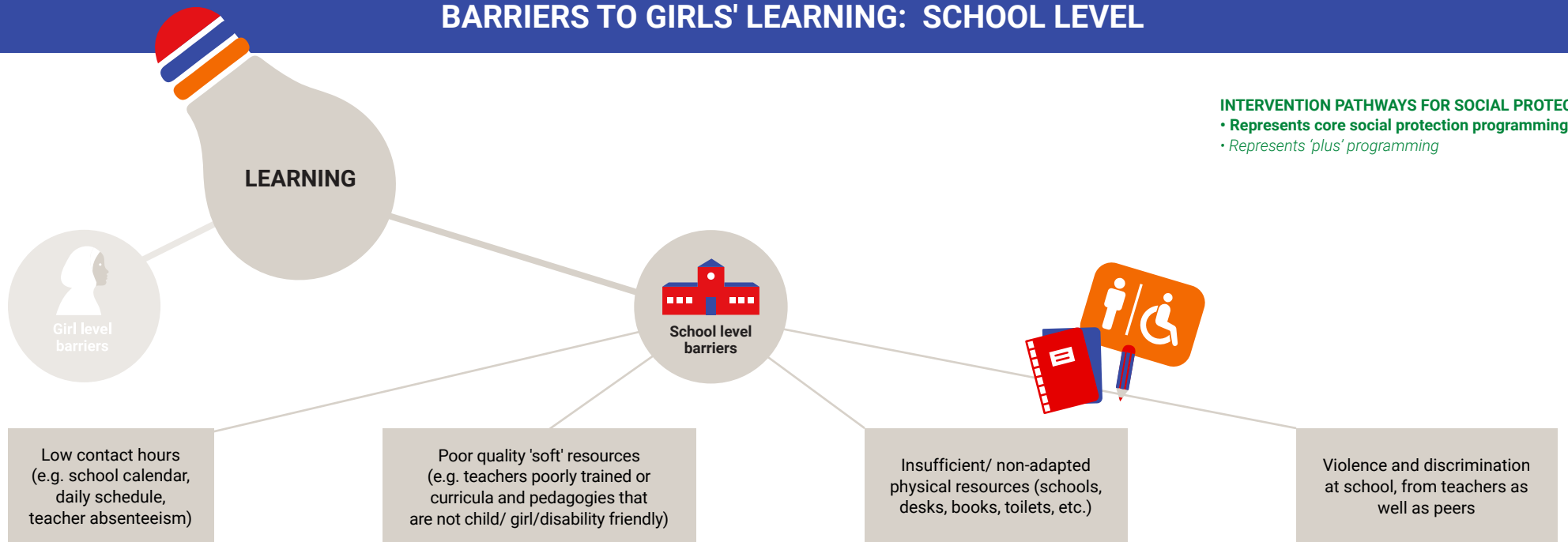


With caveats, the intervention pathways through which social protection might contribute to schoolgirls' learning again largely mirror those that impact their participation in education (see Maps 2-7). As noted above, the first caveat is that learning is far more dependent on quality services than is participation.<sup>104</sup> This means that effects of social protection on learning tend to be less commonly reported and generally smaller.<sup>105</sup> The second caveat is that where social protection contributes to improved access to education, it can negatively impact learning in contexts where overcrowding becomes an issue.<sup>106</sup> Caveats aside, however, there is some evidence that cash, school feeding, and take-home rations can improve girls' test scores, perhaps even through improved nutrition (rather than merely reduced hunger).<sup>107</sup> There is also some evidence that making girls—rather than households—primary beneficiaries of cash

or assets results in improved learning (perhaps because this increases girls' buy-in).<sup>108</sup> There is substantial evidence, albeit largely from relatively small pilots and NGO-run programming (e.g. Camfed's work in Tanzania and Zimbabwe), that a cash-plus approach that provides girls with financial, academic and social support can result in very large learning gains.<sup>109</sup> Depending on context and needs, to better support girls' learning social protection interventions might consider providing 'top-up' transfers to girls or households to recognise learning accomplishments. While these could take the form of merit scholarships, to recognise the girls who are the most able students, there is some evidence that this type of reward disincentives less able students-- making rewarding girls for successfully completing grade levels and matriculating to the next year a potentially better approach.<sup>110</sup>

# BARRIERS TO GIRLS' LEARNING: SCHOOL LEVEL

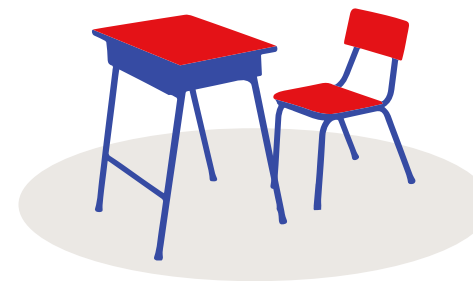
**INTERVENTION PATHWAYS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION:**  
 • Represents core social protection programming  
 • Represents 'plus' programming




• Grants to schools to facilitate the purchase of learning materials, including assistive devices, and the hiring of support staff


• Consider using public works to retrofit existing schools to improve accessibility and construct toilets

• School and community-based 'plus' components aimed at shifting beliefs and behaviours in regard to violence (including supporting students to understand their rights and how to report) and gender norms and reducing stigma/ improving social cohesion (e.g. re disability, ethnicity/ nationality, LGBTQ+)

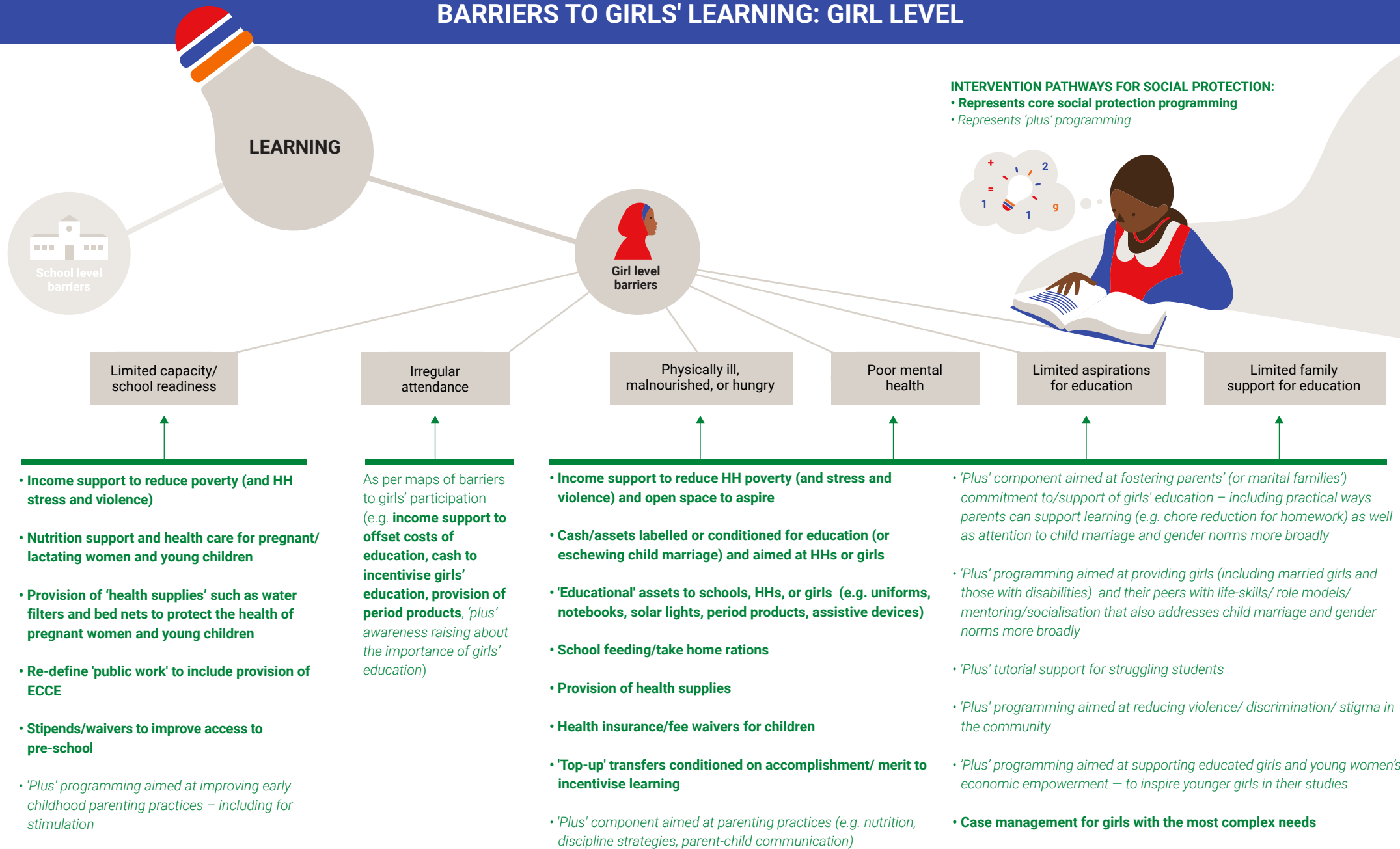


Social protection programming should be supported by:

 **Supply side investments** in inclusive and well-resourced schools – prioritising the hiring of female teachers.

 **Policy advocacy** aimed at increasing contact hours; improving the quality of teaching staff; ensuring that pedagogies and curricula are child-friendly, gender-responsive, and disability-inclusive; and that laws and policies meant to deliver on objectives are uniformly enforced.

# BARRIERS TO GIRLS' LEARNING: GIRL LEVEL



## Social protection programming should be supported by:

- Supply side investments** in the community-level infrastructure and services that improve the time that girls have for school and study – including WASH, health care, childcare, transport, and electricity.
- Policy advocacy** aimed broadly at delivering on community-level goals, including through improved financing, and addressing the laws and policies and labour market failures that prevent all girls – including those with disabilities, or are minorities, displaced, or are pregnant or mothers – from accessing the assets and opportunities they need to transform their lives.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF et al., 2020; Psaki et al., 2021
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 UNESCO, 2021; Malala Fund, 2021
- 4 UNESCO, 2020; Antoninis, 2018
- 5 UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF et al., 2020; GPE, 2021
- 6 Psaki et al., 2021. Note that the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (2021) reports that gender parity has been dropping in recent years.
- 7 Outhred et al., 2020
- 8 see also World Bank, 2018; UNICEF, 2020; UNESCO, 2020; UNGEI, 2018
- 9 EGER, 2021
- 10 e.g. Sperling and Winthrop, 2016; Evans and Yuan, 2021; Psaki et al., 2021; Gordon et al., 2019; Haberland et al., 2018
- 11 Molina Millán et al., 2019; Mishra and Battistin, 2018; J-Pal, 2017; García and Saavedra, 2017; Glewwe and Muralidharan, 2016; Bastagli et al., 2016; Snilstveit et al., 2015, 2016; de Hoop et al., 2020; Davis et al., 2016
- 12 Woode, 2017
- 13 Barham et al., 2018; Olson et al., 2018; Baird et al., 2011; Pereira and Peterman, 2015
- 14 Fiala et al., 2020; Muralidharan and Prakesh, 2017
- 15 Gordon, 2019; Psaki et al., 2021
- 16 Roelen et al., 2017; McLean et al., 2020
- 17 Bastagli et al., 2016; Snilstveit et al., 2016; Sperling and Winthrop, 2016; García and Saavedra, 2017; Evans and Yuan, 2021; de Hoop et al., 2020
- 18 Gordon et al., 2019
- 19 *ibid.*
- 20 *ibid.*
- 21 García and Saavedra, 2017
- 22 Joshi, 2020; Bray, 2013
- 23 Adato et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2021b
- 24 Gordon et al., 2019; Perezniето et al. 2017; Woode et al., 2017; Presler-Marshall et al., 2020a
- 25 Dayioğlu, 2013
- 26 Gordon et al., 2019; Putnick et al., 2015; Presler-Marshall et al., 2021; Marcus, 2018
- 27 Rose and Yorke, 2019
- 28 Girls not Brides, 2021; Adekoya et al., 2021; Presler-Marshall et al., 2020b
- 29 J-Pal, 2017; World Bank, 2018
- 30 Jakiela et al., 2020; Kaul and Sankar, 2009; Jain 2013
- 31 Strobl, 2017; Nkurunziza et al., 2017; Li and Mora, 2016; Erlangga et al., 2019,
- 32 Woode et al., 2017
- 33 Evans et al., 2020; Iritani and Cho, 2016; Jones et al., 2021b; Guglielmi et al., 2019
- 34 Evans and Yuan, 2021; Snilstveit et al., 2016; Sperling and Winthrop, 2016; World Bank, 2020; Damon et al., 2019; J-Pal, 2017
- 35 Graetz, 2020; Burde and Linden, 2013; Jones et al., 2016; Gordon, 2019; Jones et al., 2019



- 36 Jones and Stavropoulou, 2018; UNGEI et al., 2021; Gordon et al., 2019; UNGEI and Leonard Cheshire, 2021;
- 37 Aggarwal, 2018; Sperling and Winthrop, 2016; Rothman et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2021b
- 38 Gordon et al., 2019
- 39 UNESCO, 2020; Gordon et al., 2019;
- 40 Perezniето et al., 2017; Presler-Marshall et al., 2020a; Stark et al., 2021b
- 41 Evans and Yuan, 2021; Barrera-Osorio et al., 2017; Baum and Cilliers, 2018; Lahiri, 2020; Uteng and Turner, 2019; Jones et al., 2021b
- 42 Smythe et al., 2020; Özler et al., 2020; Ranganathan et al., 2019; Powell-Williams et al., 2020; UNICEF, 2018; Rohwerder, 2018; Marcus et al., 2018; Marcus et al., 2019
- 43 Marcus et al., 2020; Watson and Harper, 2016
- 44 WHO, 2011
- 45 ibid.
- 46 UNGEI et al., 2021; Leonard Cheshire et al., 2017
- 47 De Groot et al., 2017; de Groot et al., 2020
- 48 Simkiss et al., 2011; Banks et al., 2017; Wrottesley et al., 2015; Tasker and Harman, 2020
- 49 Levendosky et al., 2002; Fong et al., 2019; Ranganathan et al., 2021
- 50 Haushofer and Fehr, 2014; Lund et al. 2011
- 51 Kingsbury et al., 2020; Donnelly et al., 2016; Fone et al., 2014; WHO, 2008; Mushtaq et al., 2020; Kuper, 2021
- 52 Rawlings et al., 2020; Gutierrez et al., 2019; Molina Millán et al., 2019; Jackson et al., 2019; Mishra and Battistin, 2018; Arriagada et al., 2018; Boo and Creamer, 2018; Favara et al., 2019; Aurino et al., 2020a; Lemma, 2018; Mendola and Negasi,
- 53 Sperling and Winthrop, 2016; Drake et al., 2017; Devereux et al., 2018; Verguet et al., 2020; Strobl, 2017; Aurino et al., 2019, 2020a; Azomahou et al., 2019; Nikiema, 2019; Bommer et al., 2020; Bird et al., 2020; Debnath et al., 2021; Govil et al., 2016; Mukhopadhyay et al., 2016; Sidney et al., 2016; Thongkong et al., 2017; Sen et al., 2020; Nandi et al., 2016
- 54 Ganimian and Murnane, 2016; Cluver et al., 2019; Marcus et al., 2019
- 55 Dupuy et al., 2018; Haberland et al., 2018; Devonald et al., 2021; Stark et al., 2021a; Marcus et al., 2019; Marcus et al., 2018; Sonnenfeld et al., 2021; Reimer et al., 2021; Devonald et al., 2021
- 56 Harper et al., 2020
- 57 Evans et al., 2020; Iritani and Cho, 2016; Jones et al., 2021b; Guglielmi et al., 2019
- 58 Blum et al., 2017
- 59 UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF et al., 2020; Gordon et al., 2019
- 60 Khanna, 2019; Sivakami et al., 2019
- 61 Gordon et al., 2019; Harper et al., 2018; Presler-Marshall et al., 2020b; Greene and Stiefvater, 2019
- 62 Harper et al., 2018; Presler-Marshall et al., 2020b
- 63 Miedema et al., 2021; Wodon et al., 2017; Marcus, 2018
- 64 Presler-Marshall et al., 2020a; CARE, 2015
- 65 Malhotra and Elnakib, 2021
- 66 Sen and Dutta, 2018; De Walque and Valente, 2018; Muralidharan and Prakash, 2017; Khandker et al., 2021
- 67 Fiala et al., 2020; Muralidharan and Prakash 2017
- 68 Muralidharan and Prakash 2017; Chhabra et al., 2019; Sen and Dutta, 2018

- 69 Blattman et al., 2016; Laszlo, 2019; Malhotra and Elnakib, 2021; Marcus et al., 2019; Kesanta and Andre, 2015; Roelen et al., 2018
- 70 Harper et al., 2018, 2020; Nanda et al., 2016
- 71 Plank et al., 2018; Marcus et al., 2018, 2019, 2020; Harper et al., 2020; Yekaterina et al., 2021; Lahiri, 2020; Cunningham, 2015; Watson and Harper, 2016; Baird et al., 2021a,b
- 72 Jones et al., 2020; Presler-Marshall et al., 2020b
- 73 Mitra et al., 2019
- 74 Kumbeni et al., 2021; Vashisht et al., 2018; Sivakami et al., 2019; Miiro et al., 2018; Arafa et al., 2019
- 75 Vashisht et al., 2018; Sivakami et al., 2019; Miiro et al., 2018; Mohammed et al., 2020; Arafa et al., 2019
- 76 Psaki, 2016; Stoner et al, 2019; Birchall, 2018
- 77 Evans and Acosta, 2020; HRW, 2019
- 78 Gordon et al., 2019; Kennedy, 2017; Mwansa, 2011
- 79 Grant and Hallman, 2008; Gyan, 2017; Dzotsi et al., 2020; Ikonen, 2019; Jochim et al. 2020
- 80 e.g. Holmes and Jones, 2013
- 81 Antonopoulos, 2008; Grantham, 2021; Parenzee and Budlender, 2015
- 82 Padilla-Romo & Cabrera-Hernández, 2018; Perezniето & Campos, 2010; Marcus, 2018
- 83 UNFPA, 2015; UNFPA, 2020; de Castro, 2018
- 84 Roelen et al., 2017; Marcus et al., 2020; Haberland et al., 2018; Harper et al., 2020; Marcus, 2020; Baird et al., 2021a,b; Doyle et al., 2018
- 85 Jakob & Combet, 2020; Assaad, 2018; Presler-Marshall et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2007; DeJaeghere, 2018; Bernard et al., 2019; Sultan et al., 2021; Serneels and Dercon, 2021; Ramanaik et al., 2018
- 86 Sarkar et al., 2014; Raj, 2019
- 87 Garcia et al., 2019; Rajasekaran and Reyes, 2019; Cirillo, 2019; Whetten et al., 2019; Gebremariam et al., 2017
- 88 Baird et al. 2014, 2019; Abramo et al. 2019; Artuc et al., 2020; Dammert et al. 2018; García and Savaadra 2017; Mishra and Battistin, 2018; Pega, 2017; Akresh et al., 2016; Fenton et al., 2016; Paiva et all, 2021; Garcia et al., 2019
- 89 Sen and Dutta, 2018; De Walque and Valente, 2018; Muralidharan and Prakash, 2017; Schurmann, 2008; Ahmed, 2014; Hahn, 2018
- 90 Malhotra and Elnakib, 2021; Buchmann et al., 2021
- 91 J-Pal, 2017; Angrist et al, 2020; Ganimian and Murnane 2016; Snilstveit et al, 2016; Sperling and Withrop, 2016; World Bank, 2020; Whetten et al., 2019
- 92 Ashraf et al, 2020; Dupuy et al., 2018; Acevedo et al., 2016; Morris, 2017; Ozler et al, 2020; Austrian et al., 2020; Glass, 2020; Marcus, 2020; Roelen et al., 2017; Remme et al., 2020
- 93 Presler-Marshall et al., 2021; Jones, 2021a
- 94 Casey et al., 2013; Irvin et al., 2011; Presler-Marshall et al., 2019a; Devonald et al., 2021
- 95 Evans et al., 2020; Iritani and Cho, 2016
- 96 Kaffenberger et al., 2021
- 97 UNICEF, 2020; Gordon et al., 2019; Glewwe and Muralidharan, 2016; World Bank, 2018; Snilstveit et al., 2015, 2016
- 98 UNICEF, 2020; UNGEI, 2021; Beyene, 2019; UNESCO and UN Women, 2016
- 99 Marcus et al., 2018;2020; Roelen et al., 2017; Marcus et al., 2020; WHO, 2019; Lester et al., 2017; UNESCO and UN Women, 2016

- 100 Boyden et al., 2018; Molina Millán et al., 2019; Jackson et al., 2019; Mishra and Battistin, 2018; Boo and Creamer, 2018; Wong et al., 2013; Chico et al., 2018; Molina Millán et al., 2020; Favara et al., 2019; Aurino et al. 2020a; Carneiro et al., 2019; Shah and Steinberg, 2019
- 101 Weinreb et al., 2002; Mazzone et al., 2007; Pires de Souza et al., 2020
- 102 Winter, 2016; Tafere, 2014
- 103 JPAL, 2017; Damon et al., 2019; Snilstveit et al., 2016; Gorard et al, 2012; Acharya and Joshi, 2011
- 104 Damon et al., 2019; Cross et al., 2018; Das and Sarkhel, 2019
- 105 Bastagli et al., 2016
- 106 Vasey, 2019; Das and Sarkhel, 2019, 2020
- 107 Adelman et al., 2019; Wang and Fawzi, 2020; Chakraborty and Jayaraman, 2016; Azomahou et al., 2019; Poppe et al., 2019; Aurino et al., 2020b; Hadna and Kartika, 2017; Mostert and Castello, 2020
- 108 Muralidharan and Prakash, 2017; De Walque and Valente, 2018
- 109 Morris et al., 2017; Duflo et al., 2019, 2020
- 110 Damon et al., 2019; Corona and Gammage, 2017; World Bank, 2020; Barrera-Osorio et al., 2018; 2019; Glewwe and Muralidharan, 2016

## Selected recommended readings

Here we provide a list of recommended readings with a very brief explanation as to why the listed sources are recommended (in blue bullets).

Arriagada, A.-M., Perry, J., Rawlings, L., Trias, J., Zumaeta Aurazo, M. & Zumaeta, M. (2018) Promoting Early Childhood Development through Combining Cash Transfers and Parenting Programs. Policy Research Working Paper 8670. Washington DC: World Bank

- *For an overview of how social protection can promote school readiness for girls and boys.*

Asselberg, K. & Stecher-Rasmussen, S. (2018) How can social protection systems, interlinked with the access to public services and sustainable infrastructure, contribute to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls? Report. Kessel – Lo: Advisory Council on Gender and Development

- *For a look at how social protection, improved access to services (including education and health) and improved access to infrastructure (including for water and transport) can support gender equality.*

Camilletti, E. (2020) Social Protection and Its Effects on Gender Equality: A Literature Review. Innocenti Working Paper 2020-06. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti

- *For an overview on how social protection can support gender equality, including impacts on girls' education.*

Cross, A., Canales, A. & Shaleva, E. (2018) Cash Transfer Programming in the Education and Child Protection Sectors: Literature review and evidence maps. London and Oxford: LSE and CaLP

- *For a review of how cash transfer programming supports girls' and boys' education in emergencies.*

Damon, A., Glewwe, P., Wisniewski, S. & Sun, B. (2019) 'What education policies and programmes affect learning and time in school in developing countries? A review of evaluations from 1990 to 2014.' Review of Education 7(2): 295–387

- *For a review of evaluations of programmes aimed at improving girls' and boys' access to education and learning.*

EGER (2021) Data visualization. Webpage. Available at: <https://egeresource.org/data-visualization/>

- *For a database that allows custom visualisations to explore girls' educational outcomes and actors/programmes working to improve them.*

Evans, D. & Yuan, F. (2021) What We Learn about Girls' Education from Interventions that Do Not Focus on Girls. World Bank Economic Review, 0(0): 1-24

- *For an explanation of why focusing on girl-centered educational programmes is not necessarily the best way to help girls overcome barriers to education.*

Evans, D.K., Akmal, M. & Jakiela, P. (2019) Gender Gaps in Education: The Long View. Washington DC: Center for Global Development

- *For a detailed look at the patterning of educational gender parity across countries and over time, and an explanation of why focusing too closely on parity may be counterproductive.*

Glewwe, P. & Muralidharan, K. (2016) 'Improving education outcomes in developing countries: Evidence, knowledge gaps, and policy implications.' In Machin, S., Woessmann, L. & Hanushek, E.A. (eds.) Handbook of the Economics of Education, Vol. 5. Amsterdam: Elsevier

- *For a detailed review of evidence that addresses what works to help get girls and boys in school and learning in LMICs – and how social protection fits in.*

Gordon, R. Marston, L., Rose, P. and Zubairi, A. 2019. 12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective. REAL Centre. University of Cambridge.

- *For a detailed look at trends and gaps in girls' access and learning in the LMICs of the Commonwealth– and how it might be improved.*

GPE Secretariat (2016) Breaking down the barriers to girls' education. Blog. 10 March. Available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/breaking-down-barriers-girls-education>

- *For an easy-to-read piece offering a different take on the barriers to girls' education.*



Haberland, N.A., McCarthy, K.J. & Brady, M. (2018) 'A systematic review of adolescent girl program implementation in low-and middle-income countries: evidence gaps and insights.' *Journal of Adolescent Health* 63(1): 18–31

- *For a brief review of girls' programming that includes impacts on girls' education.*

Jackson, J., Ahmed, S.K., Carslake, T. & Lietz, P. (2019) Improving young children's learning in economically developing countries: What works, why, and where? Scoping review. Camberwell, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research

- *For a review of what works in LMICs to help ensure that young girls and boys are ready for school.*

J-PAL (2017) 'Roll Call: Getting Children into School.' J-PAL Policy Bulletin. Cambridge, MA: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab

- *For an easy-to-read review of what works to support girls' and boys' access to education and how social protection fits in.*

Krishnaratne, S., White, H. & Carpenter, E. Quality education for all children? What works in education in developing countries. 3ie Working Paper 20. London: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

- *For a review of interventions – including social protection – aimed at improving girls' and boys' access and learning in LMICs.*

Lahiri, A. (2020) 'Flying with both wings: empowering adolescent girls through transformative social protection.' *Policy Design and Practice* 3(4): 414–428

- *For a look at how social protection could be used to transform girls' lives – including through education.*

Malhotra, A. & Elnakib, S. (2021) '20 Years of the Evidence Base on What Works to Prevent Child Marriage: A Systematic Review.' *Journal of Adolescent Health* 68: 847–862. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.11.017>)

- *For a review of how to prevent child marriage—and keep girls in school.*

Molina Millán, T.M., Barham, T., Macours, K., Maluccio, J.A. & Stampini, M. (2019) 'Long-term impacts of conditional cash transfers: Review of the evidence.' *World Bank Research Observer* 34(1): 119–159

- *For a review of the longer-term evidence that speaks to whether and how social protection delivered in two stages of life (early childhood and primary school) can improve longer-term outcomes – including education and learning – for girls and boys.*

Özler, B. (2020) 'How Should We Design Cash Transfer Programs?' In Erhan, A, Cull, R., Dasgupta, S., Fattal, R., Filmer, D., Gine, X., ... & Woolcock, M. *Toward Successful Development Policies: Insights from Research in Development Economics*. Policy Research Working Paper No. 9133. Washington DC: World Bank

- *For an exploration of social protection design features that matter – such as conditions, 'plus' components and a focus on quality.*

Psaki, S.R., McCarthy, K.J. & Mensch, B.S. (2018) 'Measuring gender equality in education: Lessons from trends in 43 countries.' *Population and Development Review* 44(1): 117–142

- *For an explanation of why it is important to understand the patterning of girls' educational exclusion.*

Psaki, S., Haberland, N., Kozak, M. & Woyczynski, L. (2021) *Girls' Education Roadmap: 2021 Report*. EGER Reports. New York: Population Council

- *For a review of barriers to girls' education, what works to help girls overcome barriers and what actors are delivering what programming where.*

Roelen, K., Devereux, S., Abdul-Gafaru, A., Martorano, B., Palermo, T. & Ragno, L. (2017) *How to Make 'Cash Plus' Work: Linking Cash Transfers to Services and Sectors*. Working Paper 2017-10. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research

- *For an exploration of how 'plus' interventions can improve the impact of mainstream social protection interventions – including education.*
- Rose, P. & Yorke, L. (2019) *General versus Girl-Targeted Interventions: A False Dichotomy? A response to Evans and Yuan*. Note. Cambridge: REAL Centre. (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3249882>)
- *For a response to Evans and Yuan (above)—and an explanation of why girl-targeted interventions remain critical to reach the most marginalised.*

Snilstveit, B., Stevenson, J., Phillips, D., Vojtkova, M., Gallagher, E., Schmidt, T., J. ... & Eyers, J. (2015).

Interventions for improving learning outcomes and access to education in low- and middle- income countries: a systematic review. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

- *For a review of interventions aimed at improving girls' and boys' access to education and learning in LMICs.*

Sperling, G.B. & Winthrop, R. (2016) What works in girls' education: Evidence for the world's best investment. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press

- *For a review of why girls' education is the world's best investment and what works to support it.*

UNESCO (2020) Global Education Monitoring Report – Gender Report: A new generation: 25 years of efforts for gender equality in education. Paris: UNESCO

- *For an exploration of how educational inclusion of the most marginalised girls supports broader gender equality objectives.*

United Nations Children's Fund (2020) Addressing the learning crisis; An urgent need to better finance education for the poorest children. New York: UNICEF

- *For an exploration of how the poorest children are being left further behind in terms of both access and learning.*

United Nations Children's Fund, UN Women and Plan International (2020) A New Era for Girls: Taking Stock of 25 Years of Progress. New York: UNICEF

- *For an exploration of the progress girls have made over the last 25 years – and the hurdles they still face.*

UNGEI and Leonard Cheshire (2021) Leave no girl with disabilities behind: Ensuring efforts to advance gender equality in education are disability-inclusive. NY: UNGEI

- *For an exploration of how gender and disability interact to leave girls with disabilities particularly excluded from education.*

Wodon, Q., Montenegro, C., Nguyen, H., Onagoruwa & A. (2018) Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls. The Cost of Not Educating Girls Notes Series. Washington, DC: World Bank

- *For an analysis of why girls' education is the world's best investment.*

World Bank (2018) World development report 2018: Learning to realize education's promise. Washington DC: World Bank

- *For a review of how girls' and boys' learning can be supported, including with social protection.*

# References

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- Acevedo, P., Cruces, G., Gertler, P. & Martínez, S. (2016) *Soft skills and hard skills in youth training programs long term experimental evidence from the Dominican Republic*. (<https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/soft-skills-and-hard-skills-youth-training-programs-long-term-experimental>)
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- Adato, Michelle Stephen Devereux & Rachel Sabates-Wheeler (2016) 'Accessing the 'Right' Kinds of Material and Symbolic Capital: the Role of Cash Transfers in Reducing Adolescent School Absence and Risky Behaviour in South Africa' *The Journal of Development Studies*, 52:8, 1132-1146 (DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2015.1134776)
- Adekoya, et al. (2021) 'Early Marriage as a Determinant of Poverty in Nigeria' *Izvestiya Journal of Varna University of Economics* 65(1) 102-119 (DOI:10.36997/IJUEV2021.65.1.102)
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- Alan Sanchez (2018) *Early-life Exposure to Weather Shocks and Human Capital Accumulation Evidence from the Peruvian Highlands*. Young Lives: Working Paper 178 (<https://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP178-Sanchez.pdf>)
- Angrist, Noam; Evans, David K.; Filmer, Deon; Glennerster, Rachel; Rogers, F. Halsey; Sabarwal, Shwetlena (2020) *How to Improve Education Outcomes Most Efficiently? A Comparison of 150 Interventions Using the New Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling Metric*. Policy Research Working Paper No. 9450. World Bank, Washington, (<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34658>)
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