

Advancing Development Goals by Investing in Women

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Why women and girls? Why now?

- Women's health and economic empowerment → well-being of families, and the development of communities and nations.
- Right thing to do; smart thing to do.
- Today's generation of girls is the largest in history.



Women in many parts of the world face persistent problems:

- Reproductive health
 - Around 345,000 women die each year in pregnancy or childbirth
 - 215 million women have an unmet need for contraception
- Education
 - Two-thirds of illiterate adults are women
 - 54% of children out of school are girls
- Economic Status
 - Women do most of the world's work, for the least compensation.
 - Lack of access to land, property, credit
- Safety and security
 - Between 20 and 50% of women experience partner violence at some point during their lives
 - There are more than 50 million child brides in the world today
- Leadership and Political Participation
 - Women occupy only 18% of elected parliamentary seats around the world

Improving women's status has a multiplier effect across households and communities.

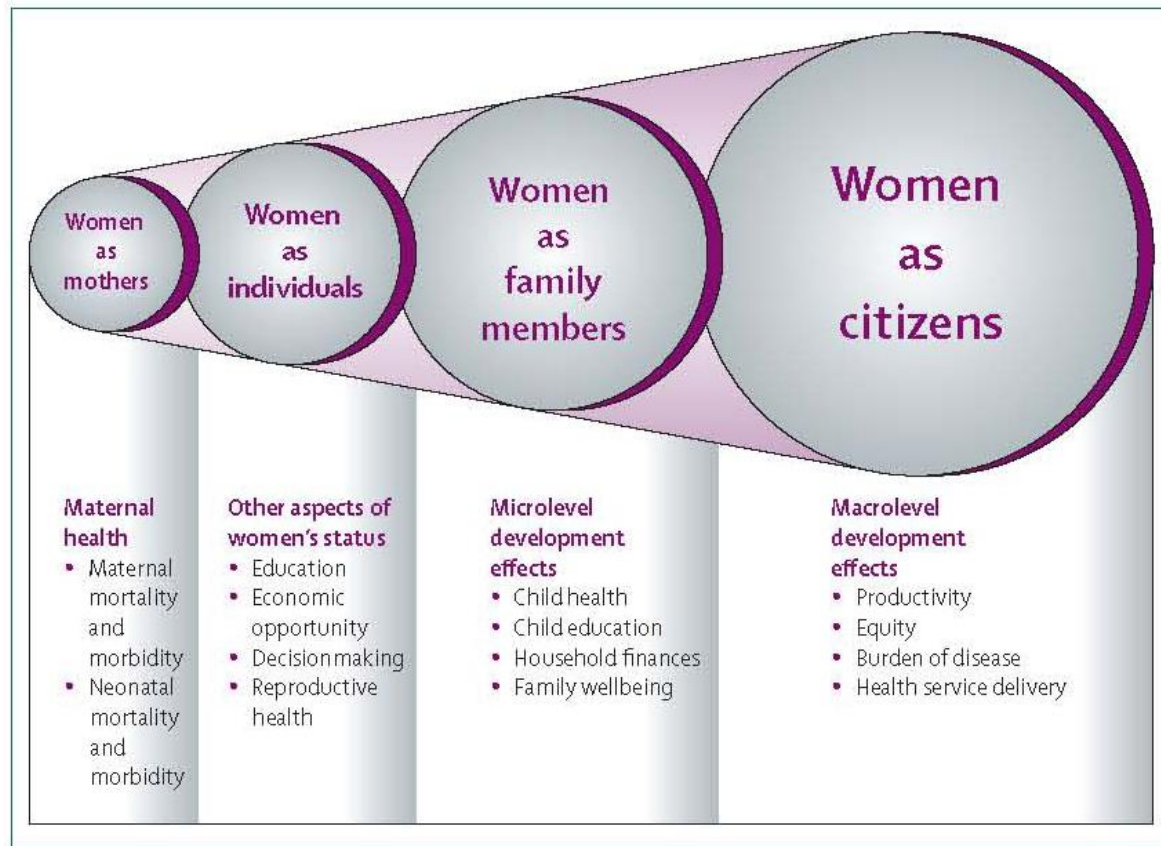
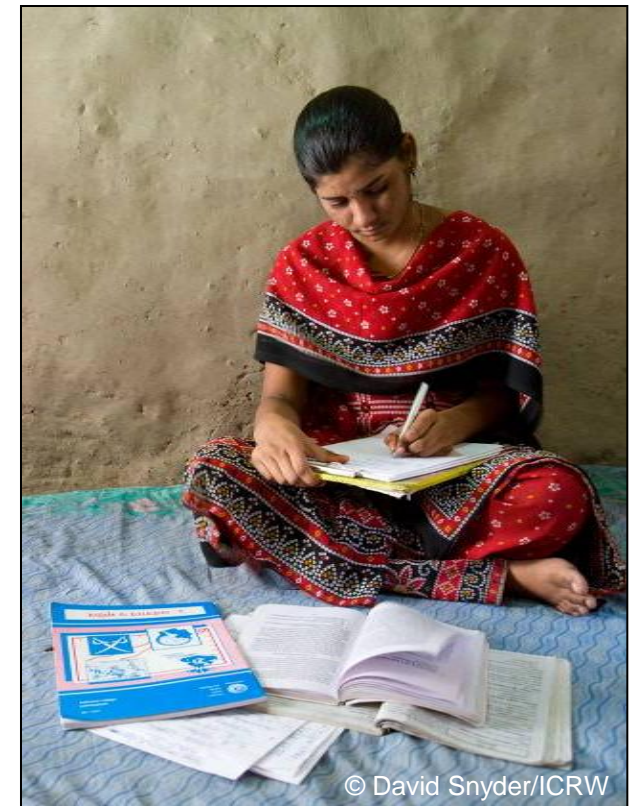


Figure 1: Key links of maternal health and development

Gill et al, *Lancet*, 2007

When girls are healthy and educated, their opportunities increase dramatically.

- Girls who are healthy can stay in school.
- Girls who attend school →
 - delay sexual debut
 - marry later
 - bear children later
 - have lower rates of HIV, and
 - have greater job opportunities and earning potential.
- Providing girls one extra year of education beyond the average boosts their eventual wages by 10-20%.



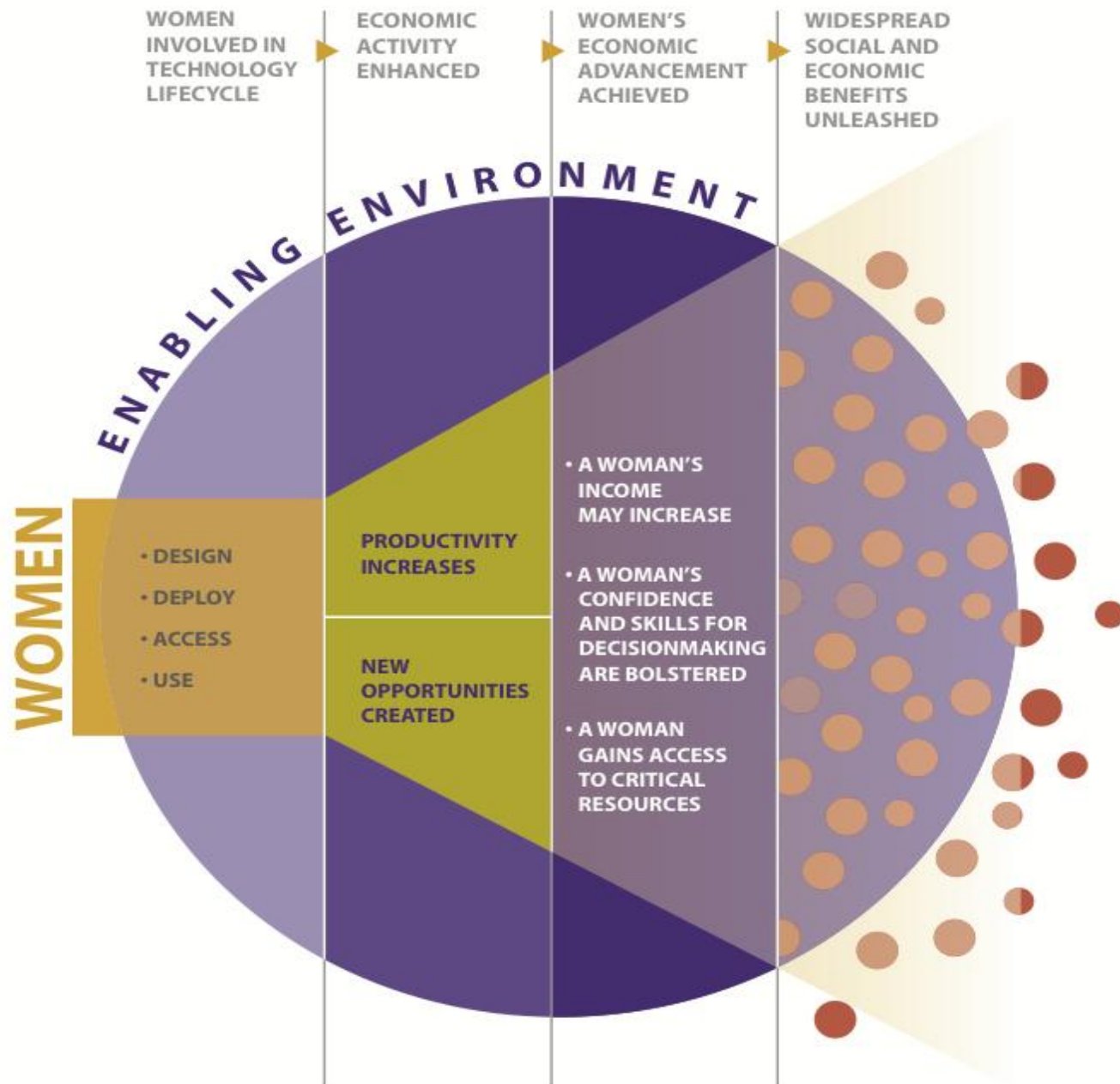
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Women's improved health, education and economic status benefits the entire family.

- **Educated women have smaller, healthier families.**
 - An extra year of girls' schooling can reduce infant mortality by 5-10 percent.
 - 65-country study finds that doubling the proportion of women with a secondary education would reduce average fertility rates from 5.3 to 3.9 children per woman.
- **Women who earn income spend more on their families.**
 - Women's borrowing increases household consumption almost twice as much as men's borrowing, and has greater benefits for children, such as improved nutrition and school enrollment.
 - A child's probability of survival is increased by 20 percent when household income is controlled by the mother rather than the father.

Empowered women benefit societies.

- Increasing the share of women with secondary education by 1% can boost national growth by 0.3%, on average.
- Women leaders promote transparency in governance and often increase investments in education, infrastructure and health.



More investment is needed.

- Increase investments in women's health, education, economic empowerment and political participation
- Continue to conduct research on gender and development issues
- Collect and report on sex-disaggregated data
- Conduct evidence-based advocacy supporting the empowerment of women and girls



US Policy Opportunities

- International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act (S 987 and HR 2103)
- International Violence against Women Act (S 2982 and HR 4594)
- Global Food Security Act (S 384 and HR 3077)
- Foreign Assistance Reform
- CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women)



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Thank you!

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