

# Scaling for Change

Strategic Investment in the Poorest Girls in  
the Poorest Communities



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### **Why Girls?**

Investing in girls is essential to achieving the MDGs and rebalancing the population resource equation



### **Which Girls?**

We have the data to target regional hotspots with the poorest girls and highest ROI



### **When to Intervene?**

AHEAD of the curve and EARLY enough to make a difference



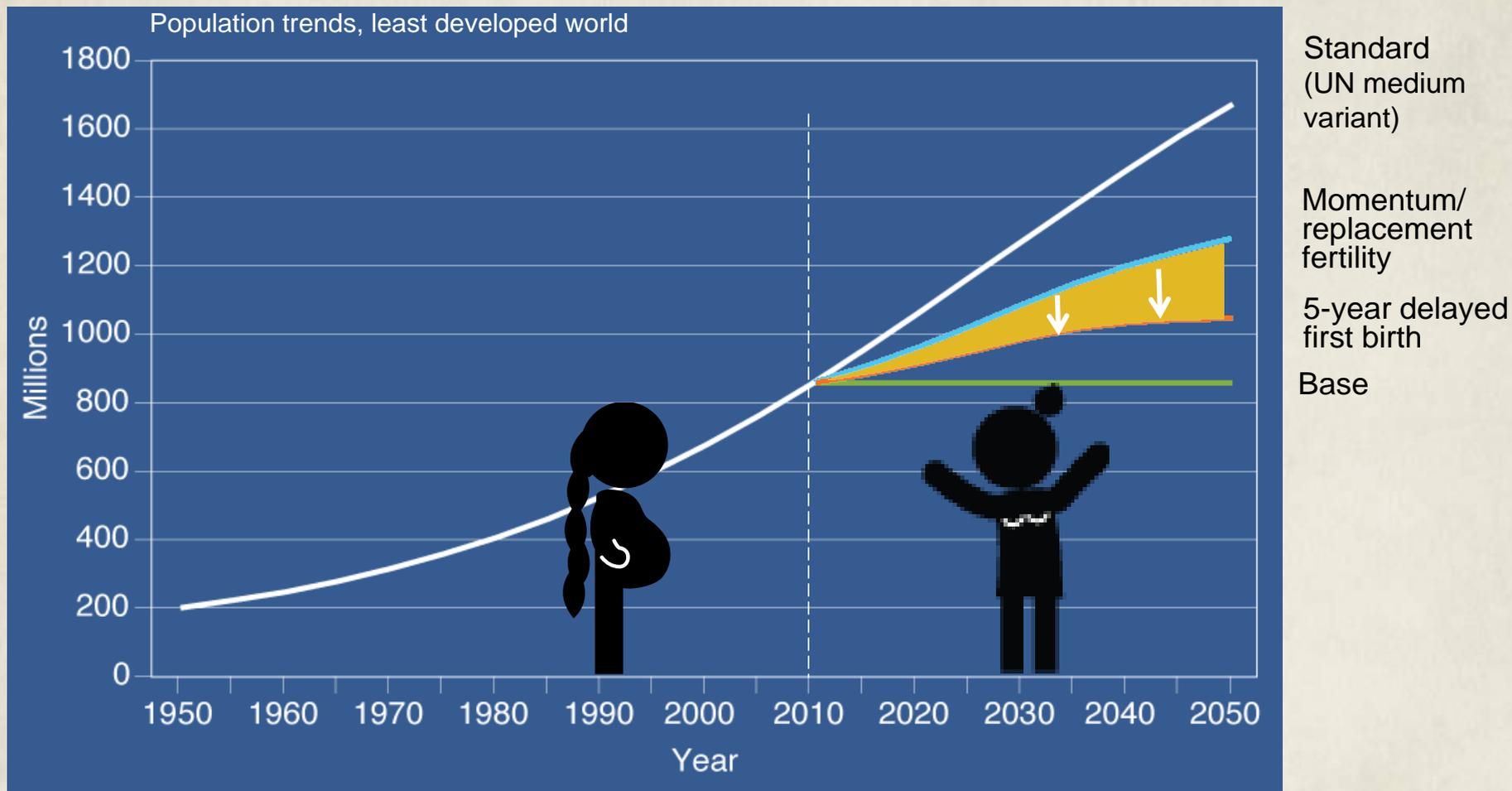
### **What Is Needed?**

Communities to fulfill their commitments to provide core social, health, and economic assets and social programs to ensure girls' ability to claim them



# Why Girls?

Investing in the poorest girls so they may hold on to their childhood and defer childbearing past adolescence is a **GOOD** in and of itself and could reduce population size by 18 percent, or 224 million, a full 39 percent of the anticipated increase



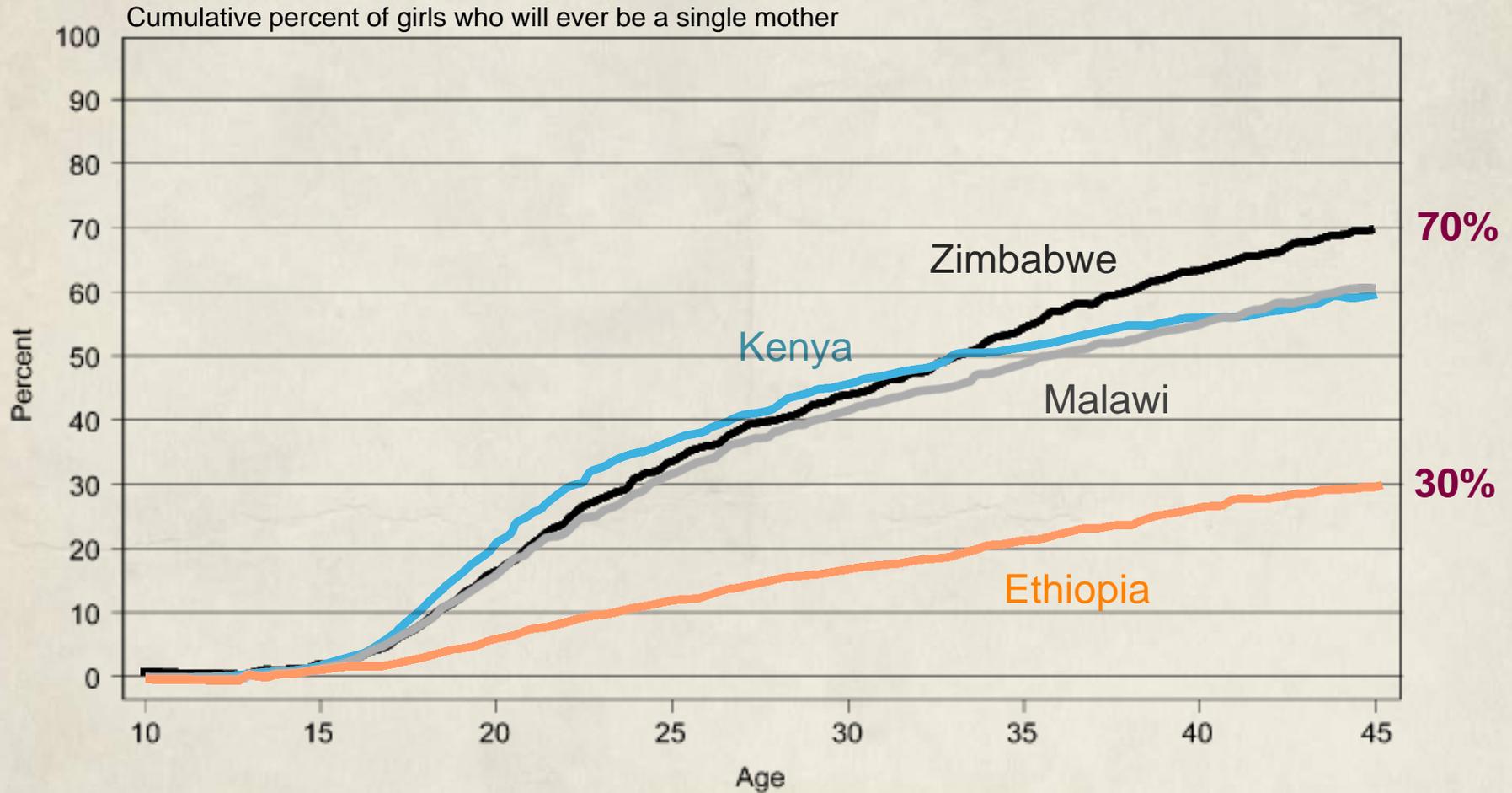
Sources: UN 2009; Bongaarts 2011 (analysis).

Also see Bruce, Judith and John Bongaarts. "The new population challenge." In Laurie Mazur (ed.), *A Pivotal Moment: Population, Justice, and the Environmental Challenge*. Washington, DC: Island Press.



## Why Girls?

A high proportion of girls will become **single mothers**  
Failure to invest in them is **planned poverty**



Source: Clark, Shelley and Dana Hamplova. 2011. "Single motherhood, poverty, and child mortality in sub-Saharan Africa: A life course perspective." Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, Washington, DC, 31 March.

With support from Population Council and Nike Foundation.



## Why Girls? Summing Up



Larger economic pie +  
More equitably distributed

Increase productive capacity  
and expand economic  
participation and  
intergenerational investment

N



Reduce the dependency  
burden by increasing age  
at first birth and reducing  
poverty-driven demand  
for children

D



# Which Girls?

We have the data to find at-risk girls who, with investment, provide our best bet for:



**Increasing the space between generations**



**Improving health**



**Fostering sustainable expansion**



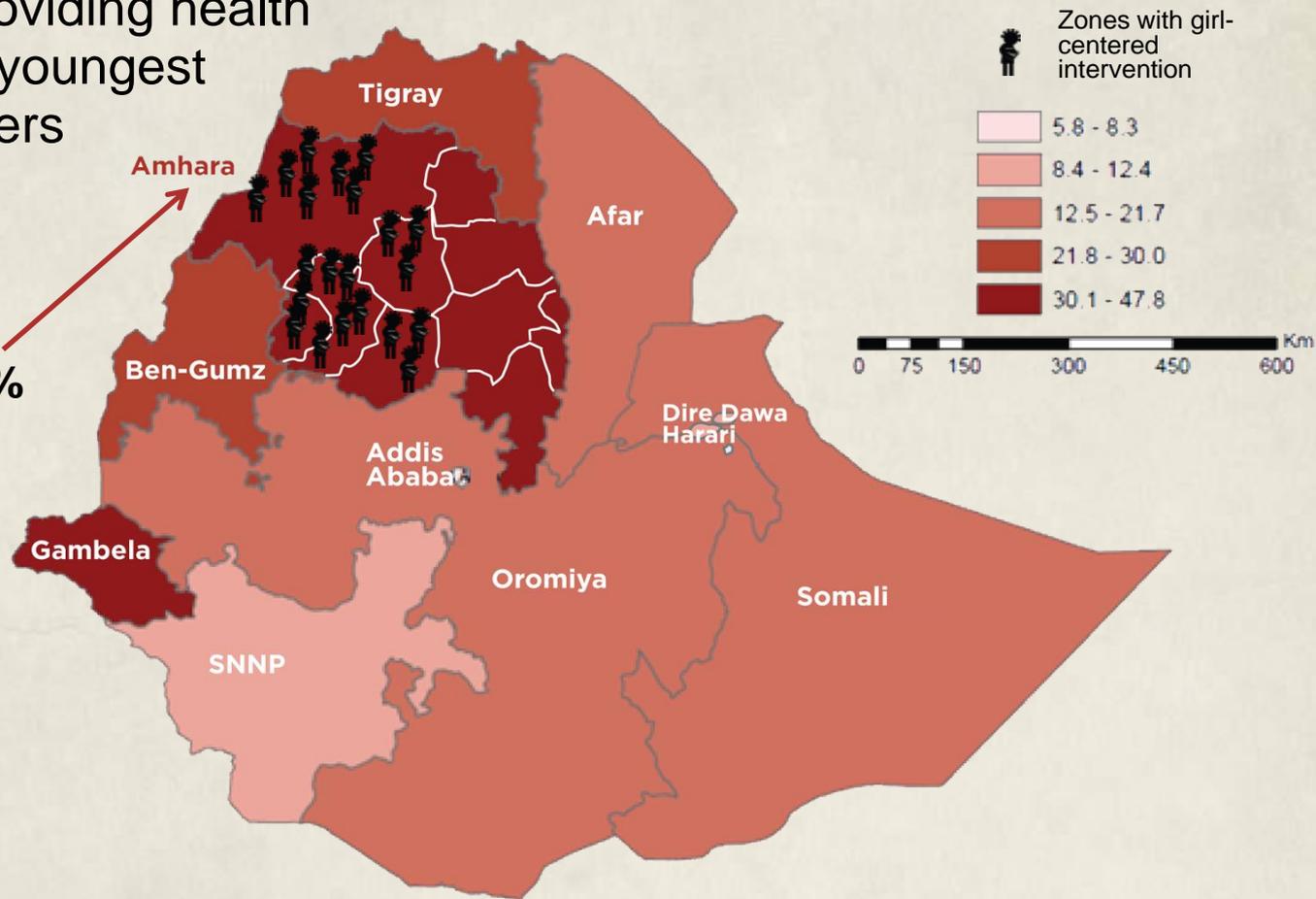
**More equitable sharing of income and increased intergenerational investment**



## Which Girls?

In Ethiopia, **girl-centered interventions** in high-risk regions have succeeded in increasing the age of marriage, keeping girls in school, and providing health support to the youngest first-time mothers

Girls married by age 15 reach **42%**



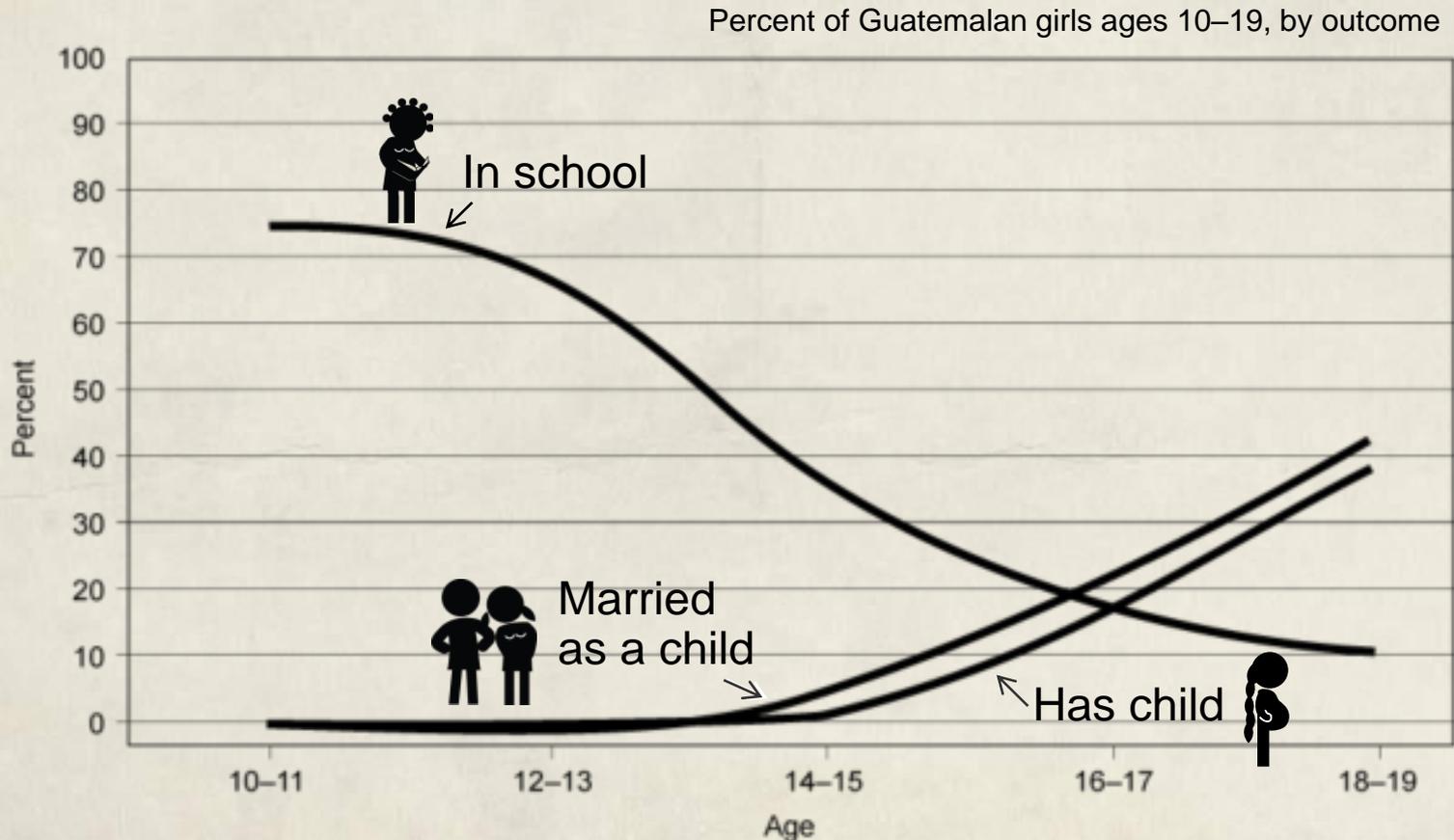
Sources: Erulkar, A. and E. Muthengi. 2009. "Evaluation of Berhane Hewan: A program to delay marriage in rural Ethiopia," *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 35(1) 6–14.

Erulkar, A. and E. Muthengi. forthcoming. "Building programs to address child marriage: The Berhane Hewan experience in Ethiopia," unpublished Population Council/UNFPA report. Addis Ababa.



# When to Intervene?

EARLY enough to keep girls in school and build their health, social, and economic assets



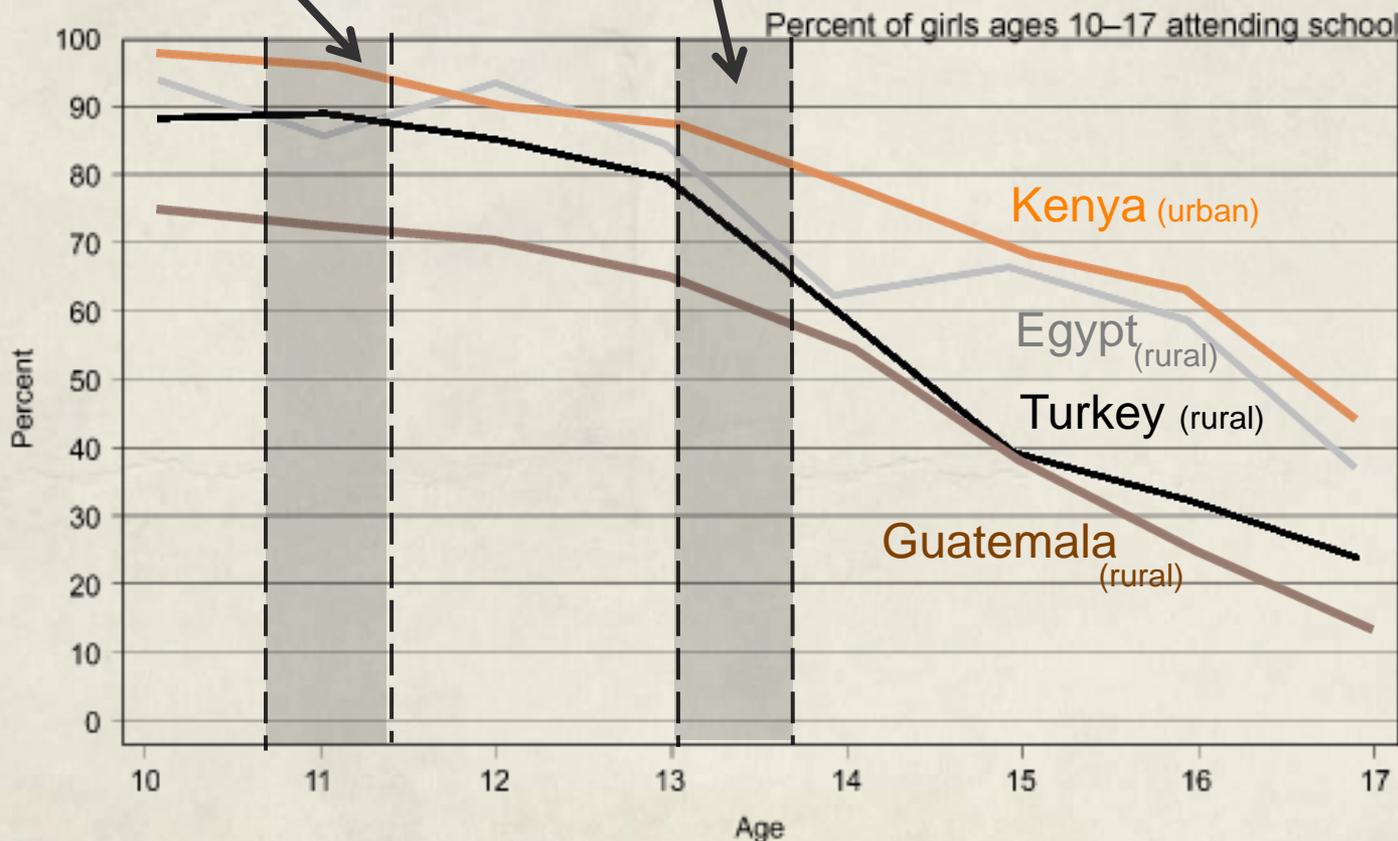


When to intervene?

# We need to invest AHEAD of the curve

Girls begin dropping out of school at the onset of puberty

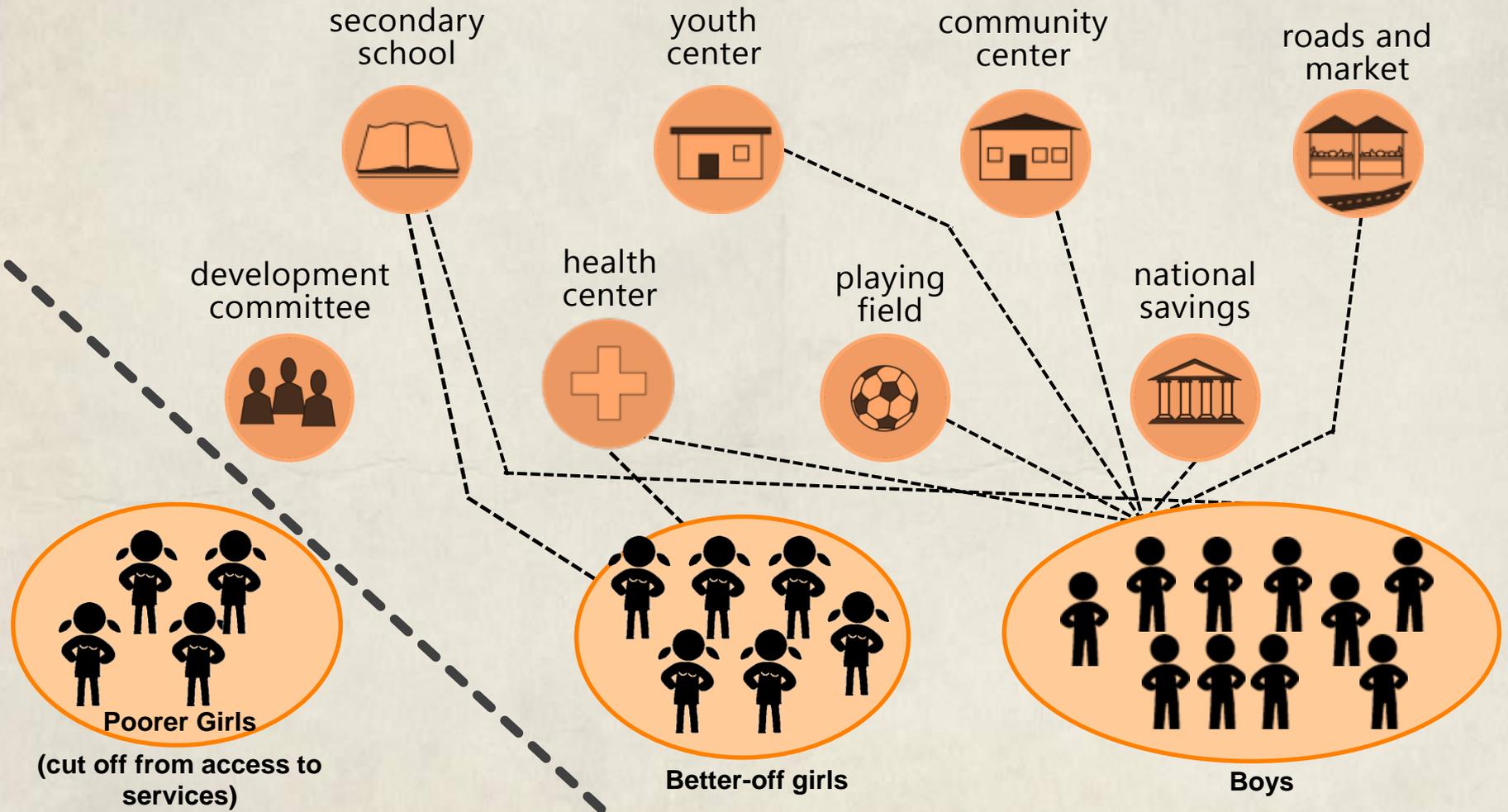
Intensify investment here      Drop out accelerates here





# What Is Needed?

Correct the current investment failure to reach the critical bottom 40% of girls.





What is Needed?

# What Girls Need by Age 12: A Basic Toolkit



At least five friends (her team)



Community girl-only place/space/platform to meet them



A nonfamily, slightly older female mentor



Personal documentation (for citizenship rights, health, and livelihoods)



Age-graded life skills such as health information and financial literacy



Incubator savings



# What is Needed? Public-private partnerships hand in hand with girls

+ To ensure basic entitlements, services, and facilities



secondary school



development committee



roads and market



youth center



playing field



community center



national savings



health center

+ To create community-based places/spaces/platforms in which girls thrive and through which they claim their rights.

