



# The economic benefits of investing in women and girls

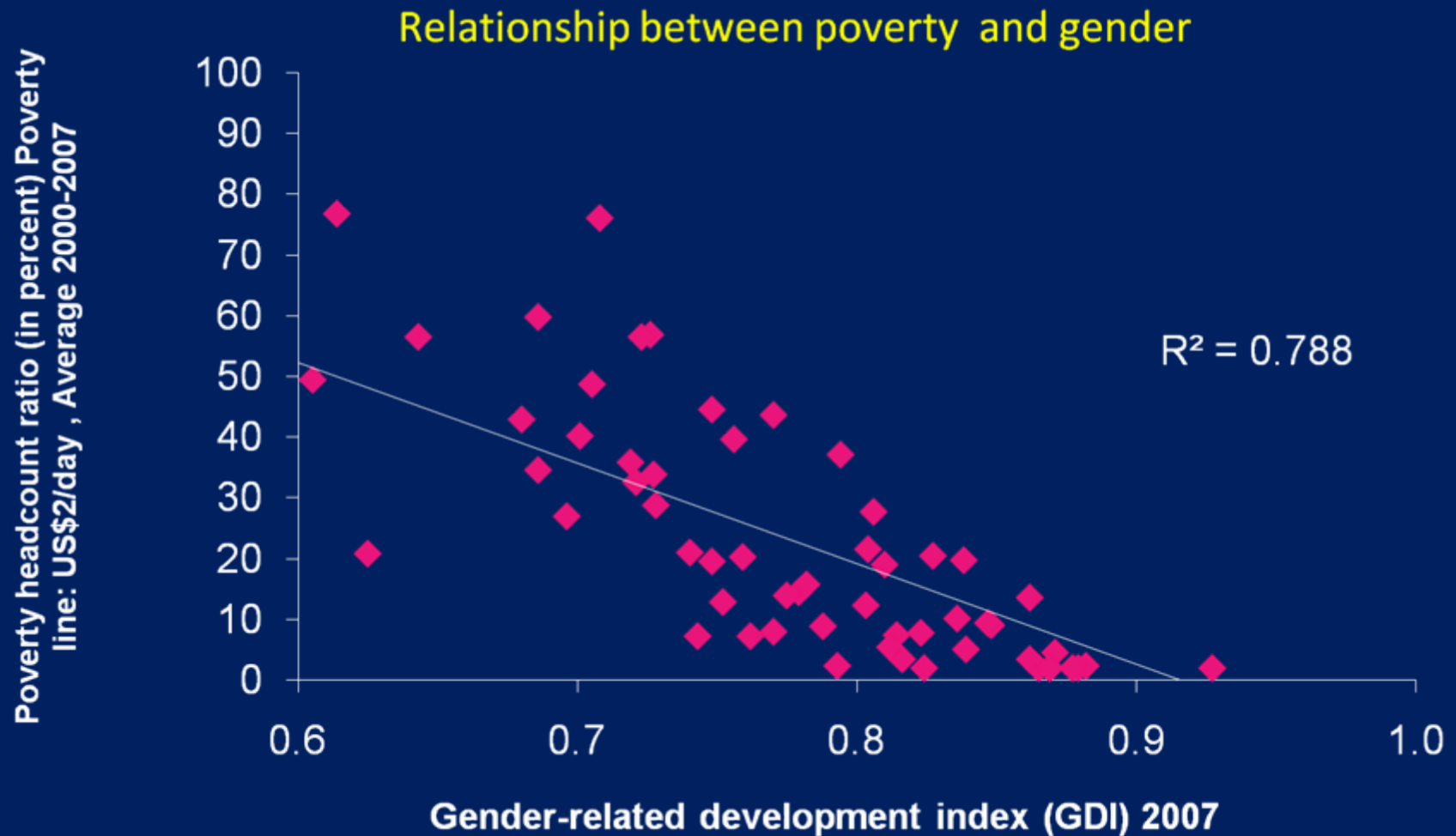
Mayra Buvinic  
*World Bank*

**Investing in women  
is the right thing to do and  
is smart economics**

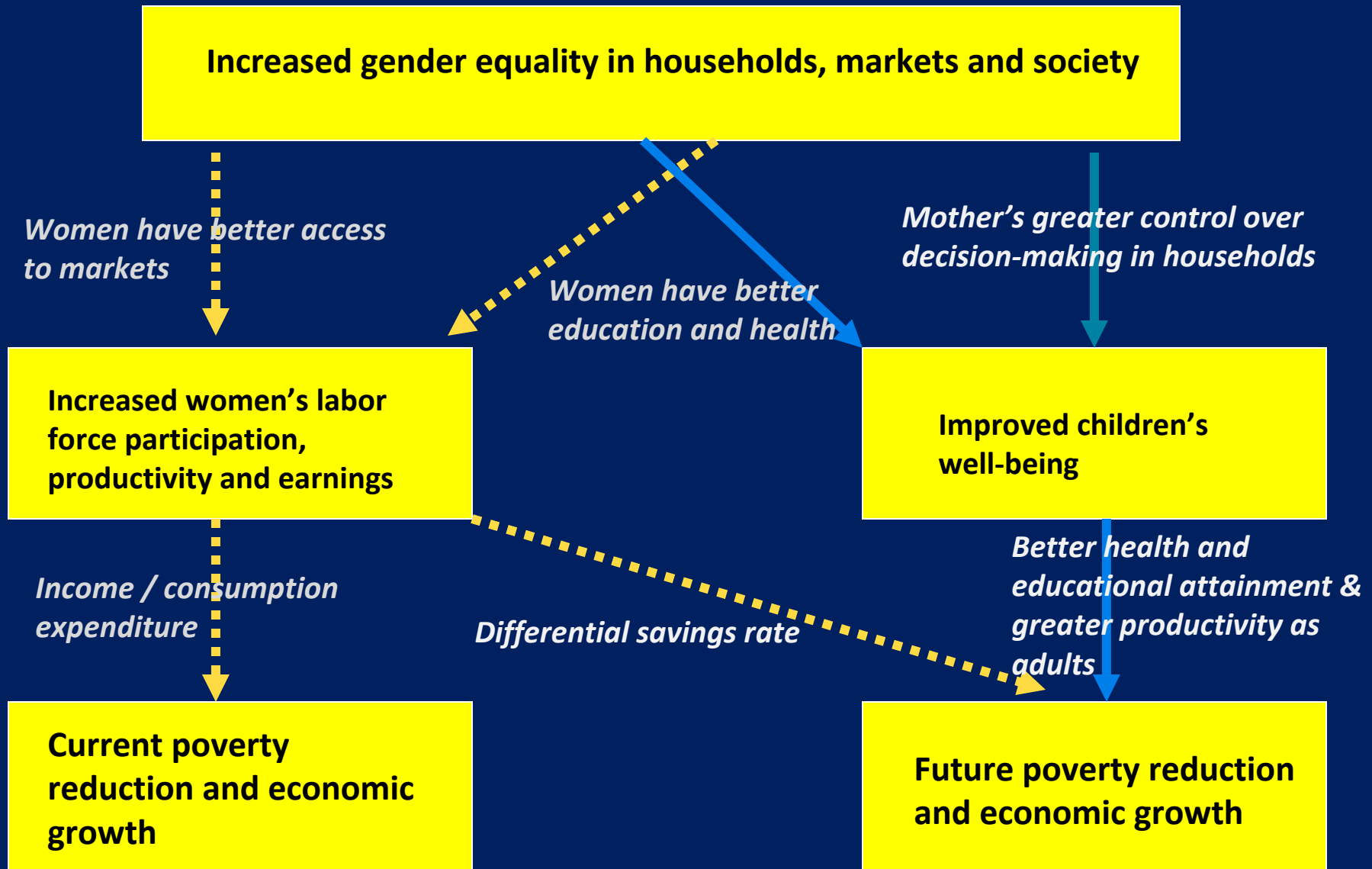
*“Forget China, India and the internet: economic growth is driven by women.”*

The Economist, April 2006.

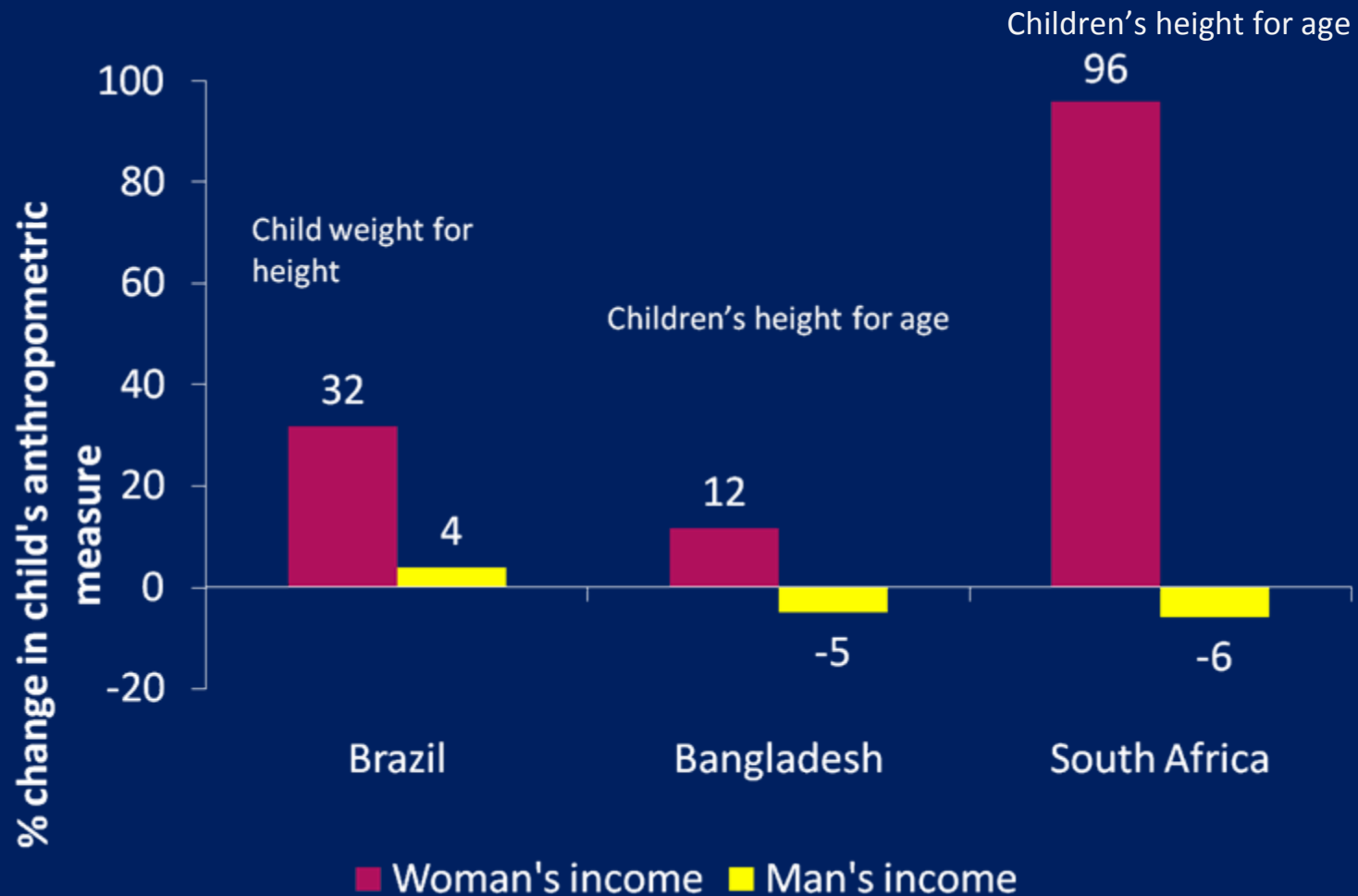
# Why is this important?



# Why is this important?: the pathways



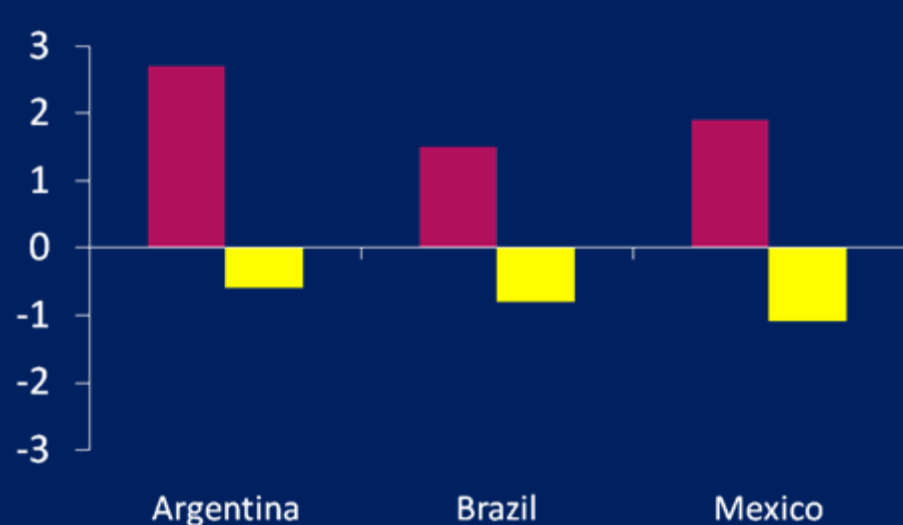
# Income transfers to women have larger effects on children's nutritional status than similar transfers to men



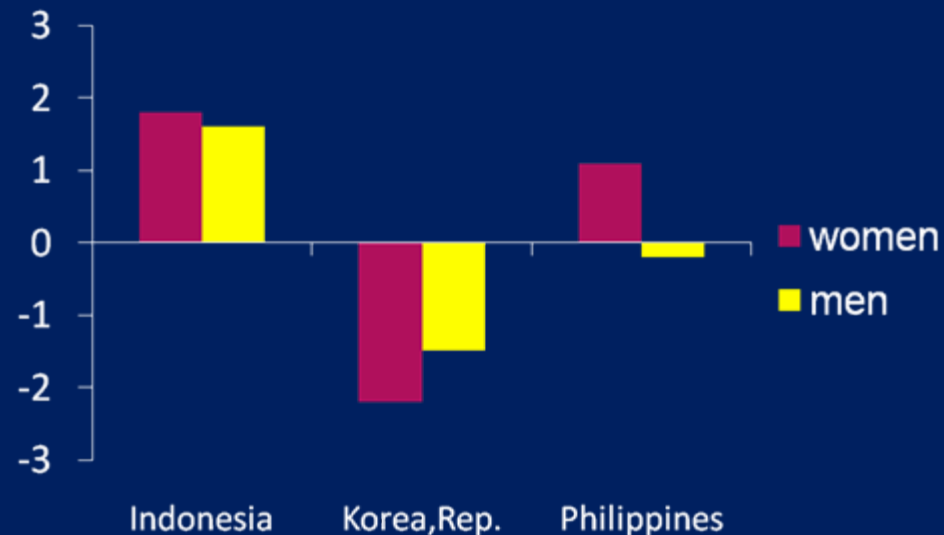
**Women help families weather  
economic crises**

# Households send women to work (% change in labor force participation)

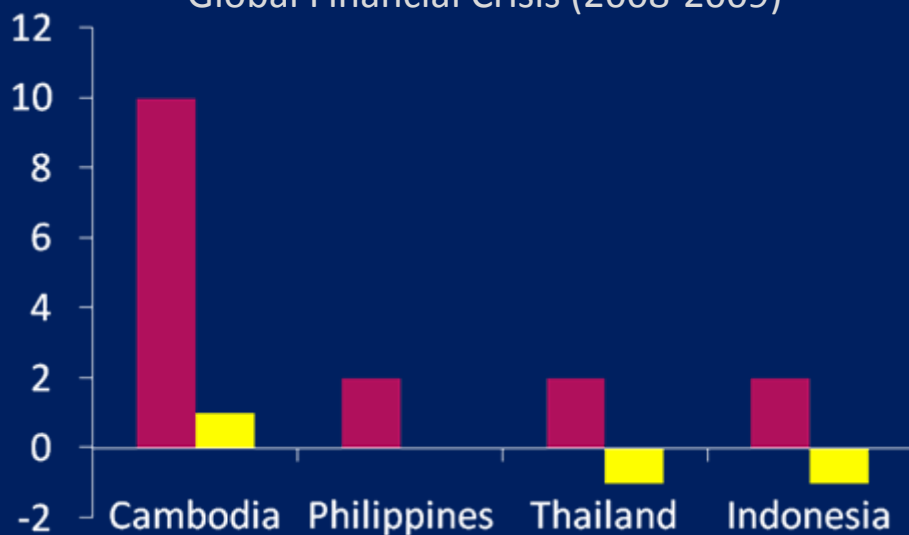
## Latin American Crisis (1993-95)



## East Asia Crisis (1997-99)

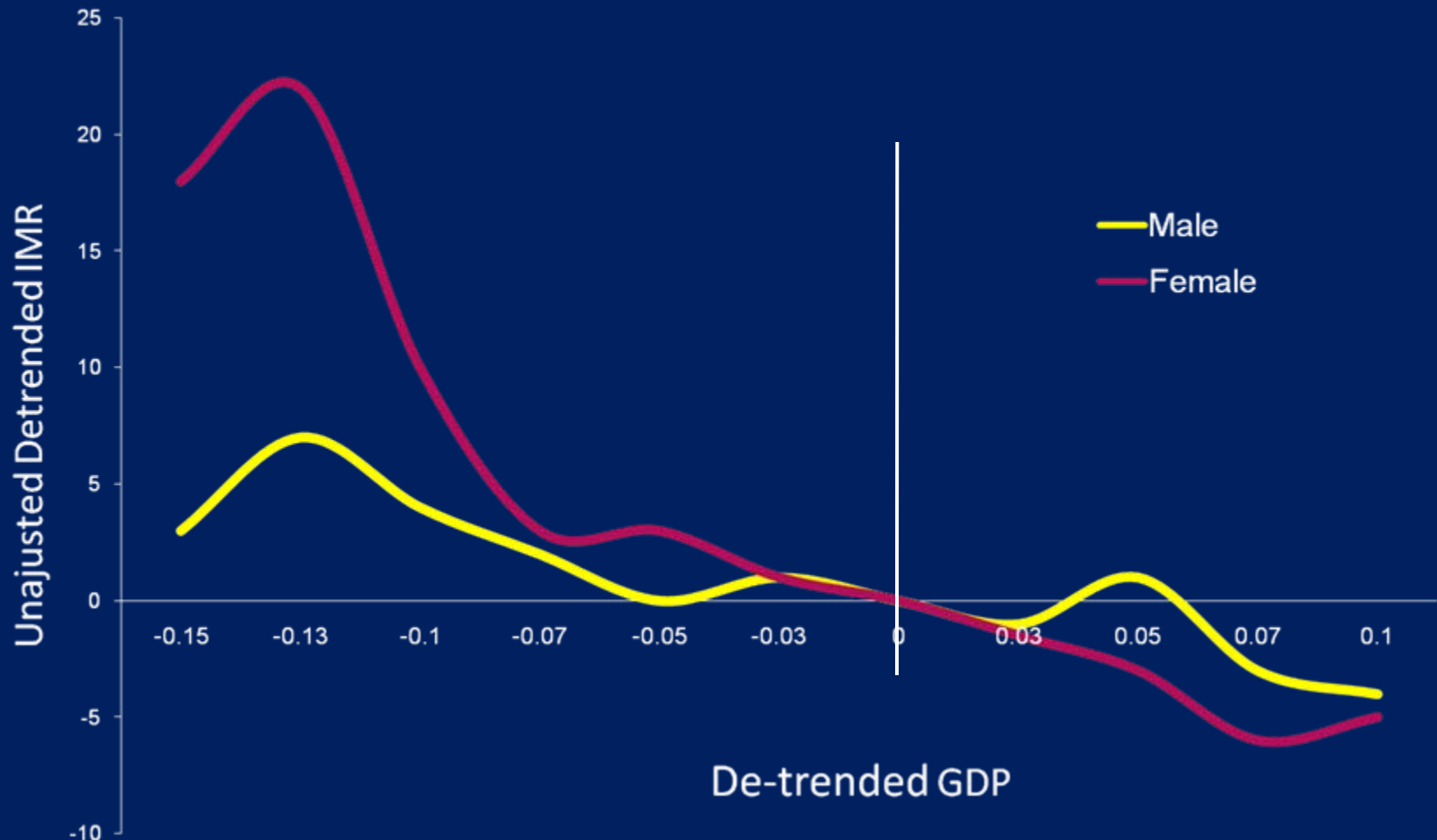


## Global Financial Crisis (2008-2009)



# Economic downturns are more detrimental to girls' health

Girls' Infant Mortality rate higher than boys' in economic downturns

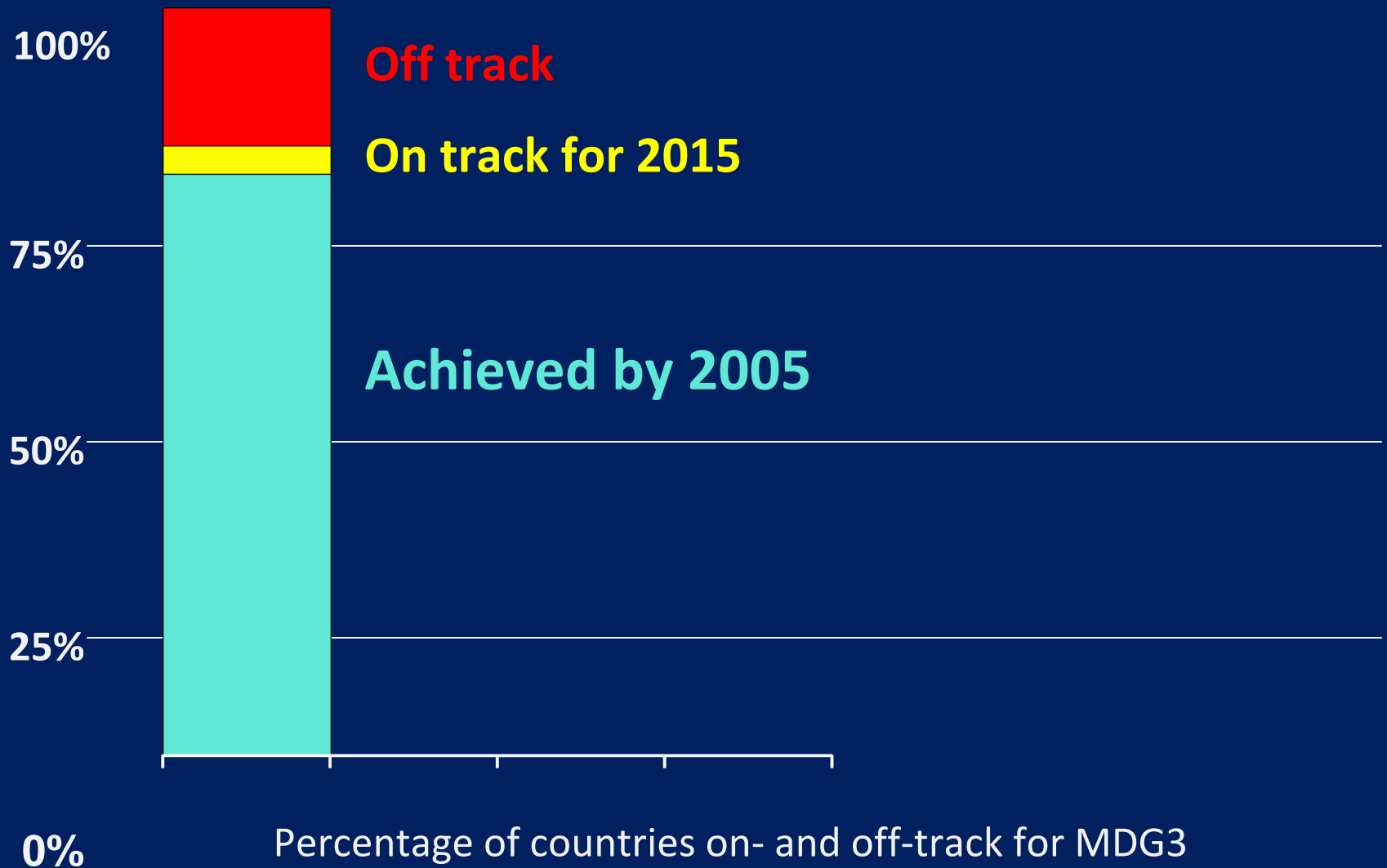


Source: Baird, Freedman and Schady, 1998 (59 countries).

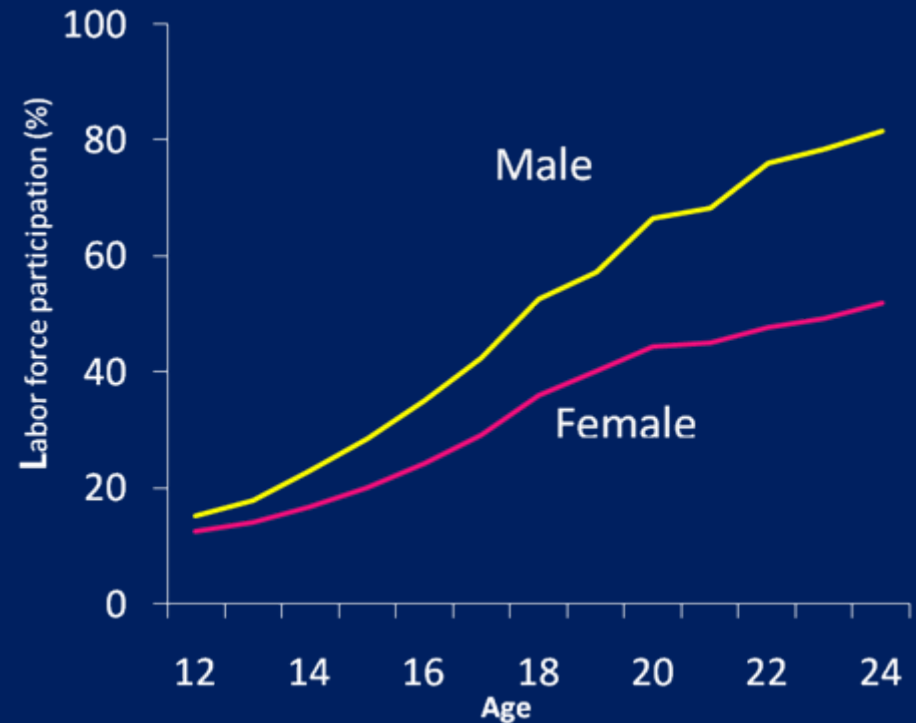
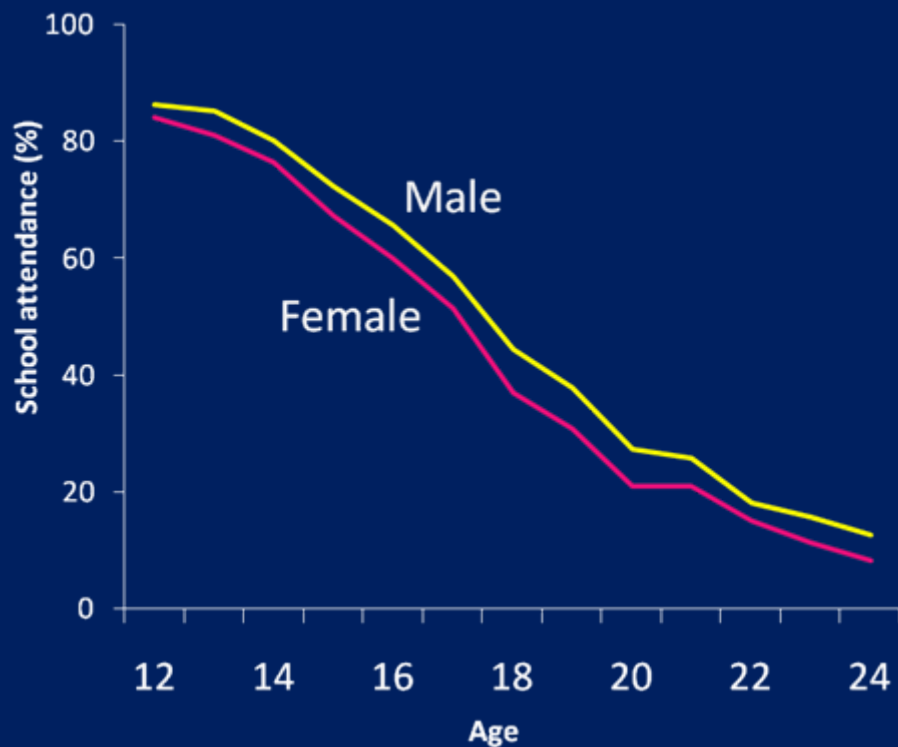


**But we have a long way to go to  
achieve gender equality.**

# There has been rapid progress towards gender equality in education

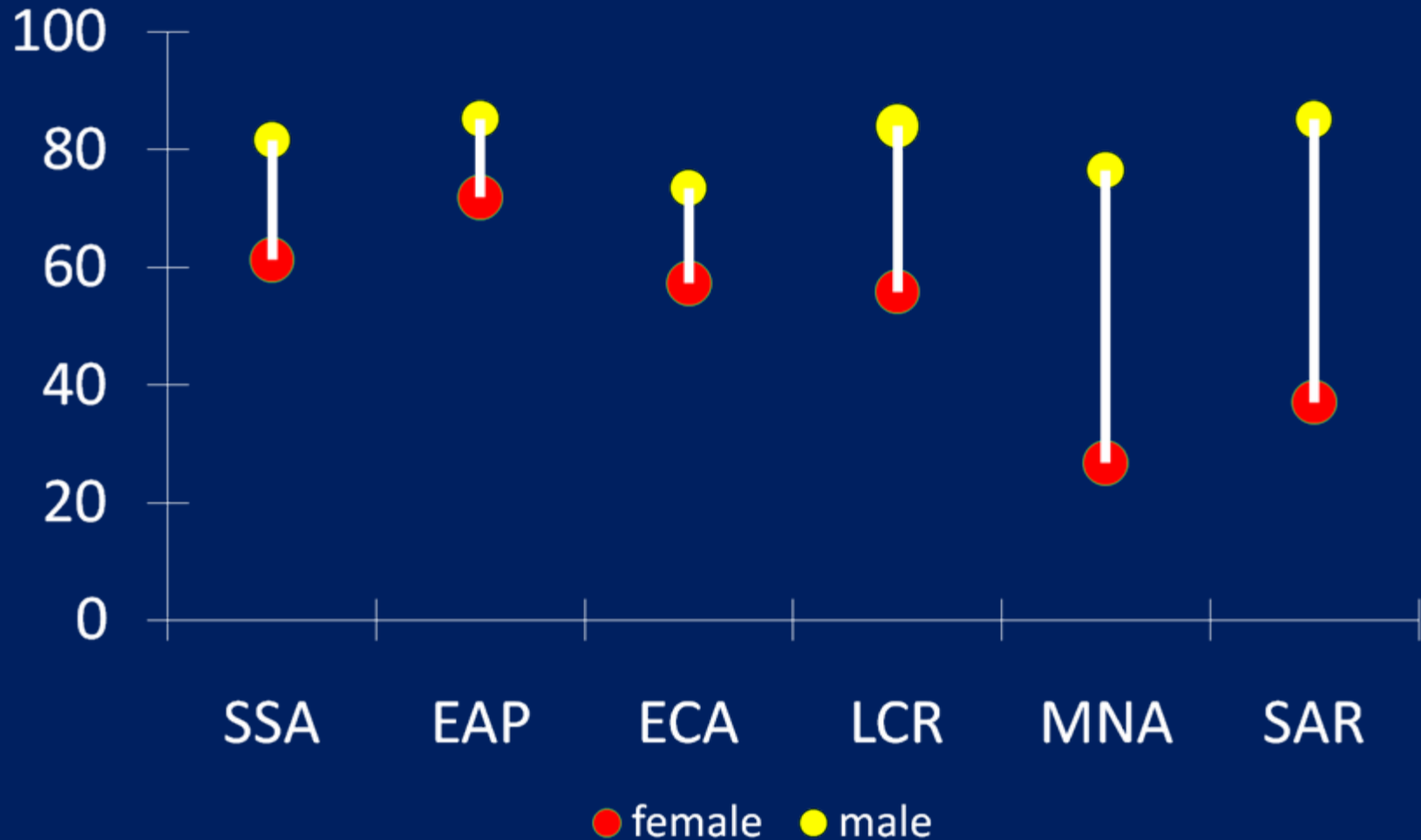


# Yet, the transition from school to work leaves many girls behind

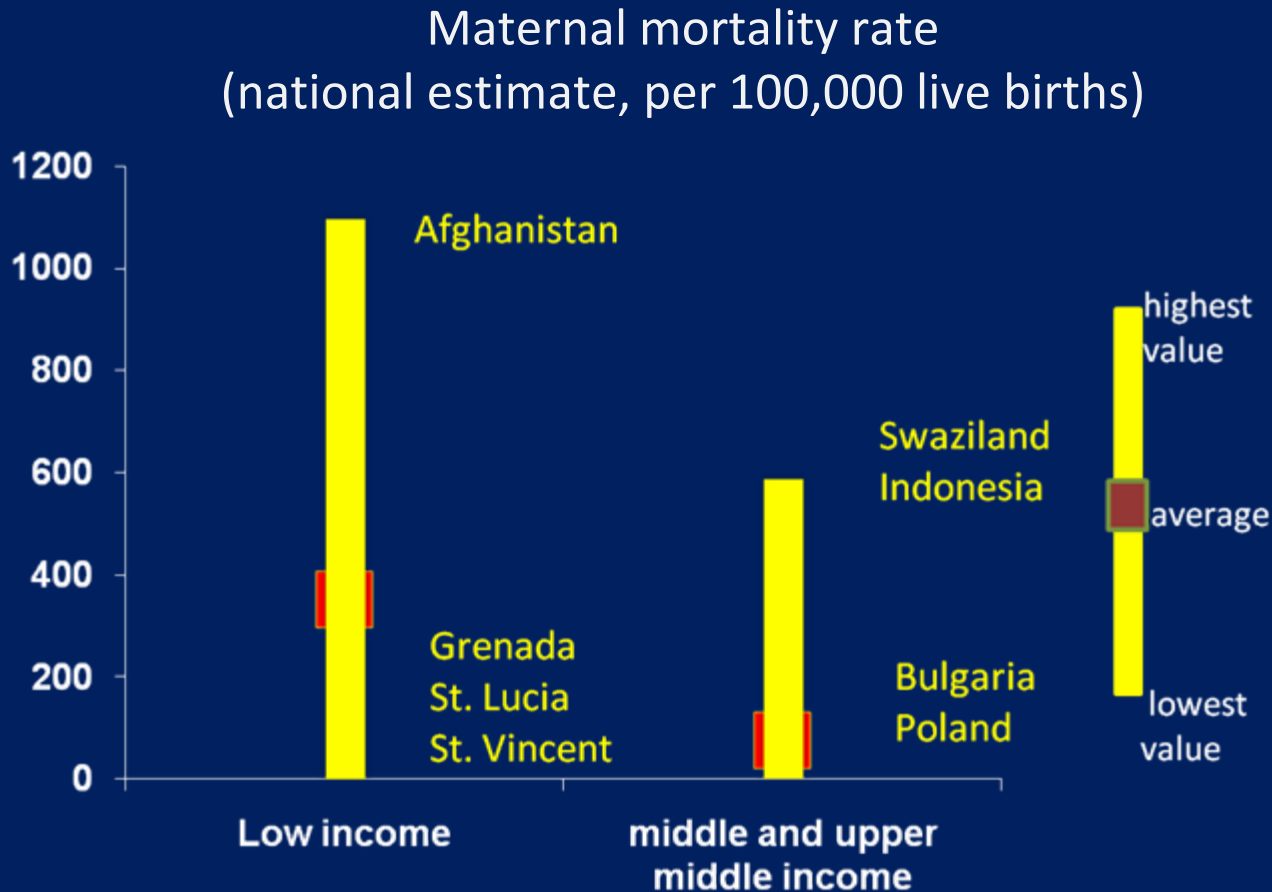


# And men's labor force participation far exceeds women's.

Labor force participation rate (% of population ages 15-64)

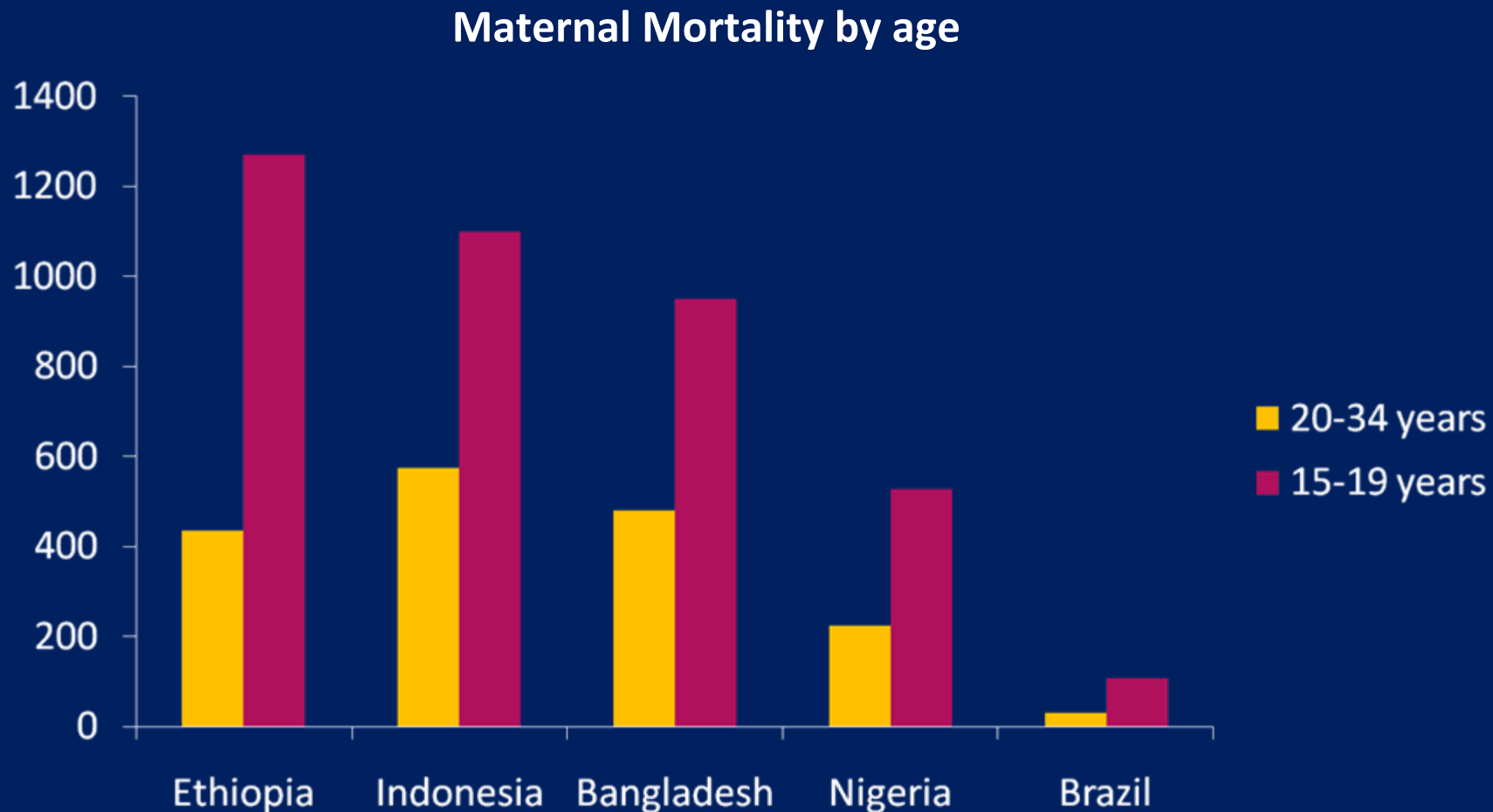


And, while there has been some progress, maternal mortality continues to be high and the gap in rates between rich and poor countries continues to be vast.



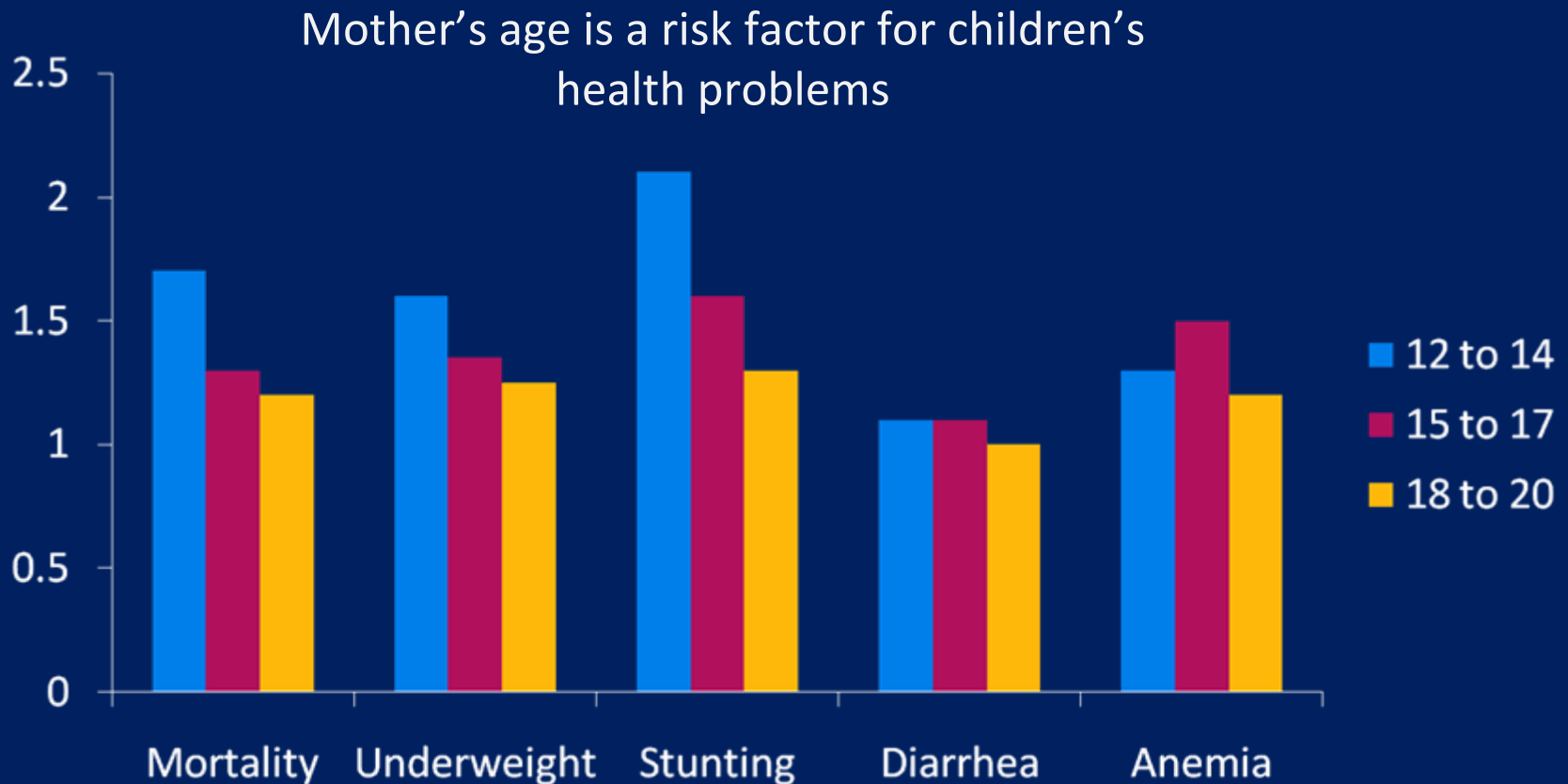
Source: World Development Indicators 2007 (population weights used).

# Adolescent fertility is a risk factor for maternal mortality



Source: Safe Motherhood Fact Sheet. *Adolescent sexuality and childbearing*. Prepared by Family Care International (FCI) and the Safe Motherhood Interagency Group (IAG). New York, 1998.

# ..and adolescent fertility is a risk factor for children's health



Source: Canning, D., J.E. Finlay, and E. Ozaltin, 2009. "Adolescent Girls Health Agenda: Study on Intergenerational Health Impacts", Harvard School of Public Health, unpublished.

\*The analysis also controlled for mothers 21 to 23 years old.

**Empowered women are healthier;  
healthier women are more productive**

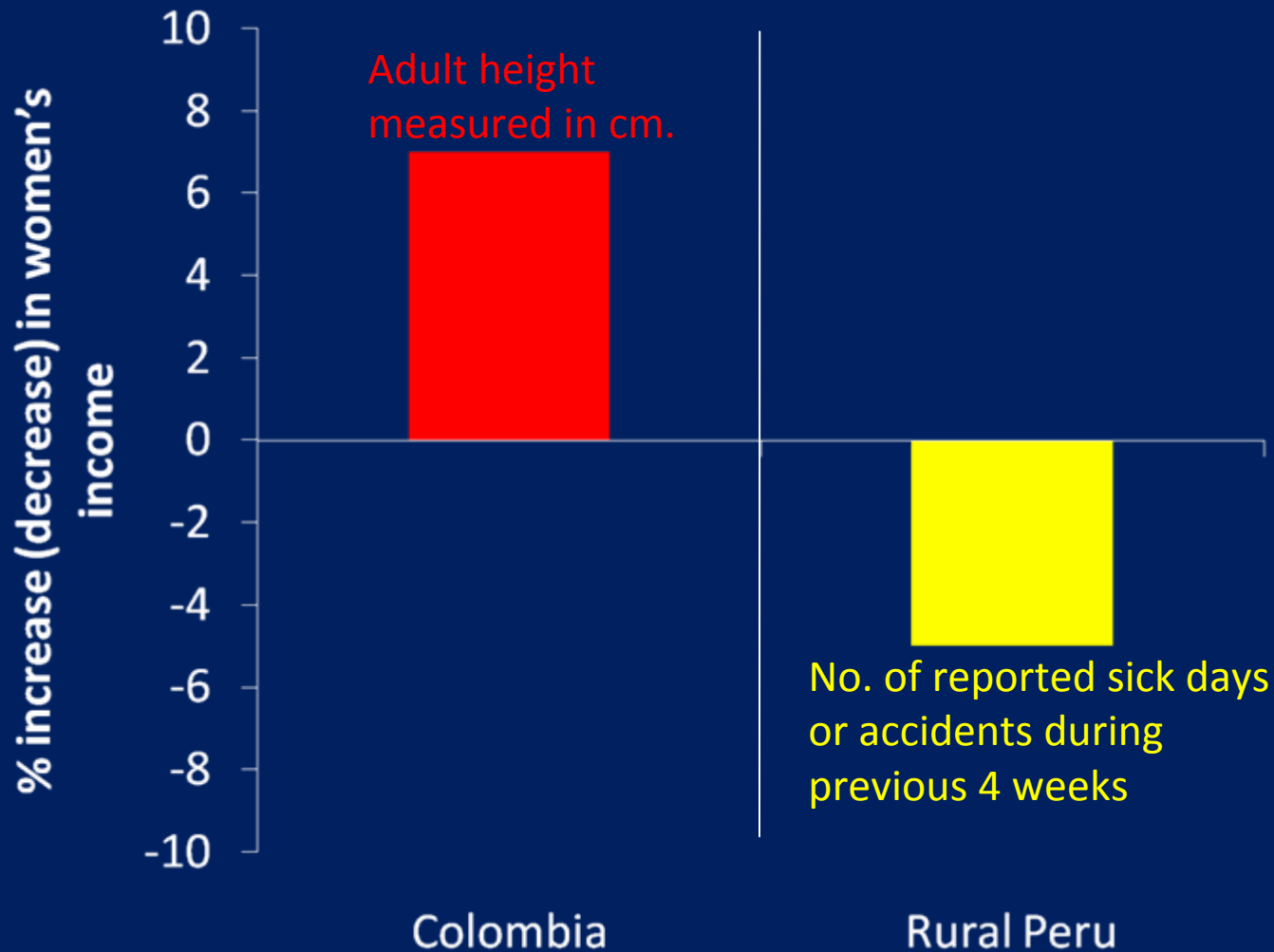
**Economic  
empowerment**



**Health**



# Health also affects income

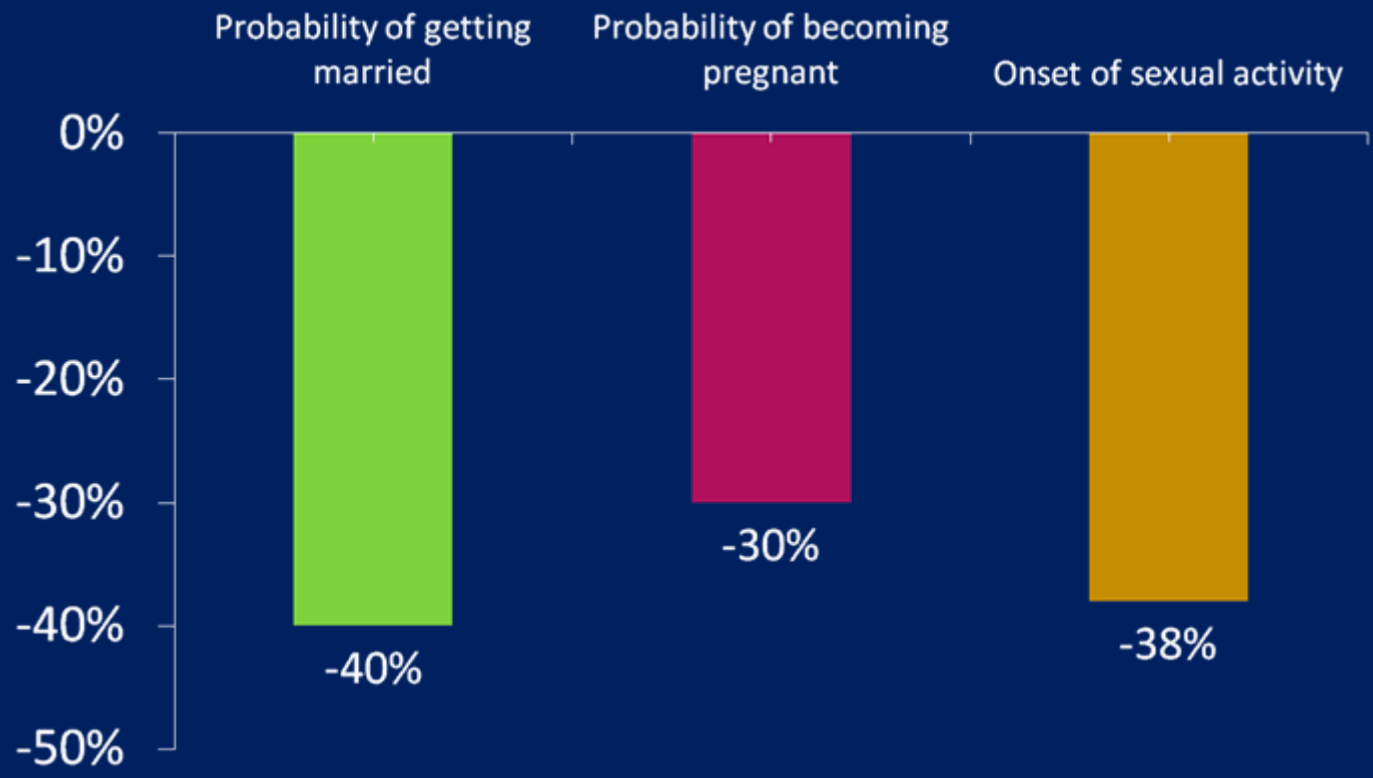




Evidence of programs that work

# e.g. CCT program in Malawi improves school attendance, reduces teen pregnancy and early marriage

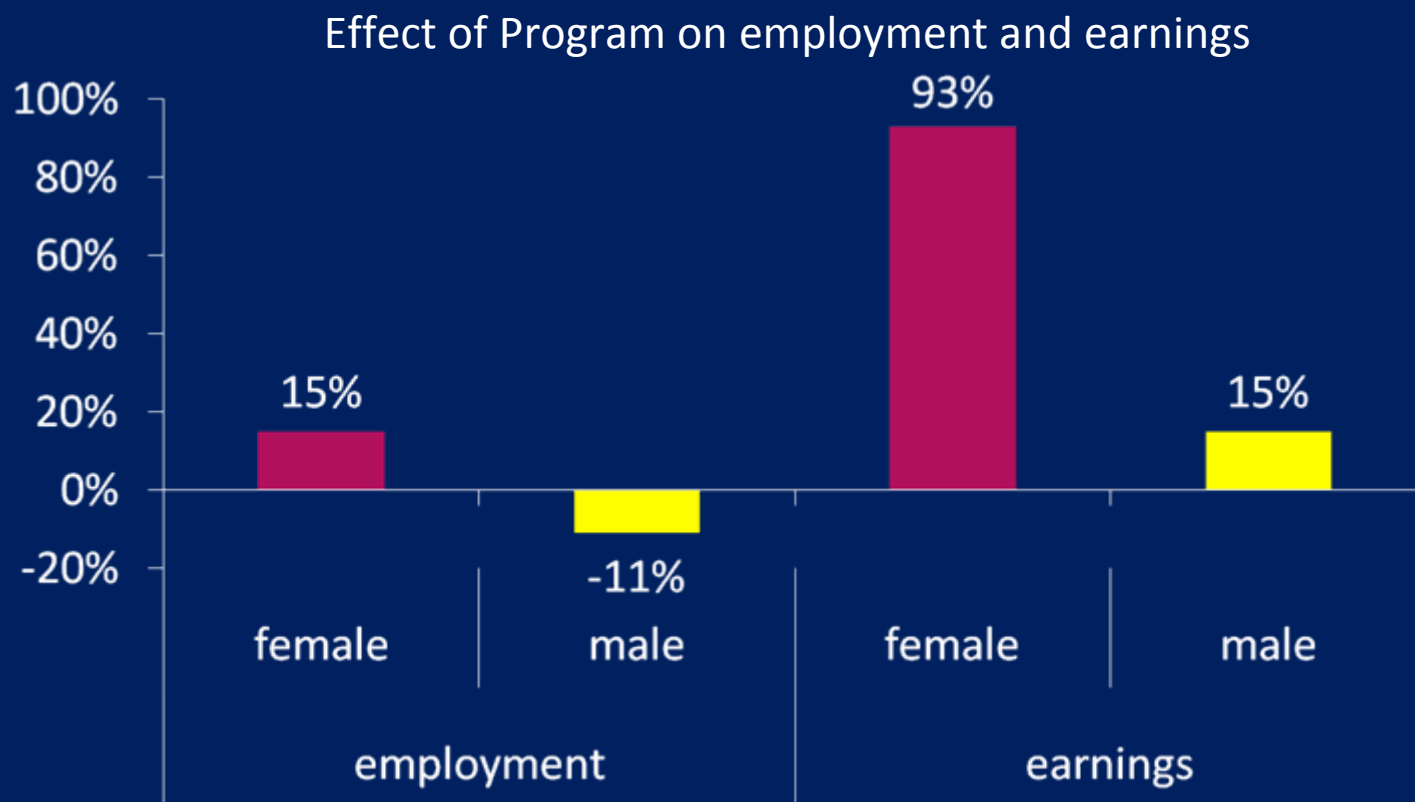
Effect of the CCT program on women beneficiaries (who were out of school at baseline)



Sources: Baird, Sarah, Ephrain Chirwa, Craig McIntosh, Berk Ozler, 2009, "The Short-term impacts of a schooling conditional cash transfer program on the sexual behavior of young women", The World Bank.

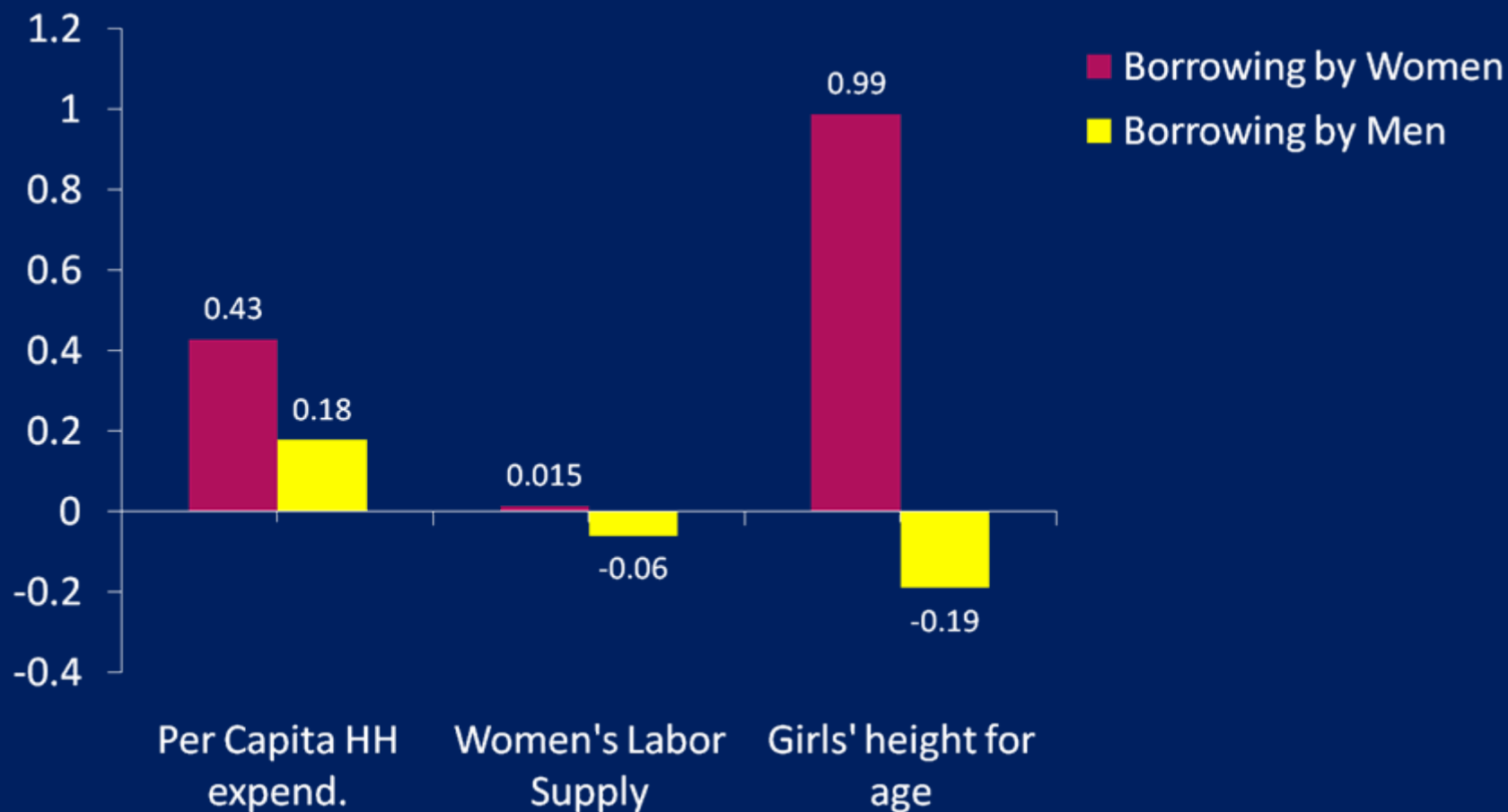
## e.g. Vocational training in Peru raised employment and income significantly more for young women than for young men

Labor training program for 20,000 poor urban youth provided classroom training, stipends, and internships lasting 3 months.



## e.g. The effects of female borrowing on household welfare were large (Grameen Bank- Bangladesh)

Impact of a 10% increase in borrowing from Grameen Bank



Source: Pitt, Mark and Shahidur R. Khandker (1998): "The Impact of Group-Based Credit Programs on Poor Households in Bangladesh: Does the Gender of Participants Matter?" *Journal of Political Economy* 106 (5): 958-996.

# e.g. Joint land titling increased land investment in rural Ethiopia

Large land certification program, joint ownership for spouses (6 million land use certificates issued)

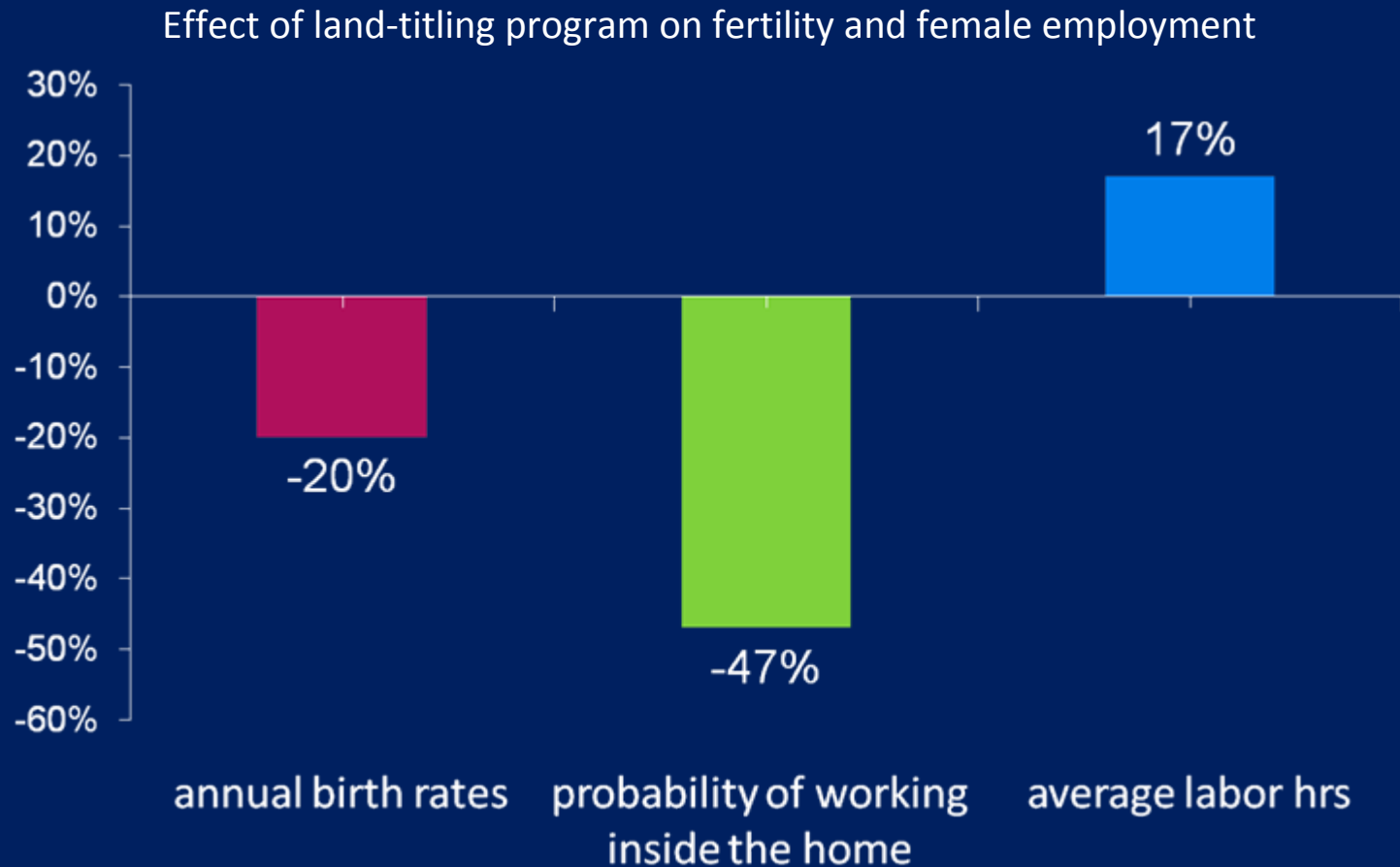


## IMPACTS:

- Reductions in perceived insecurity, big increases in land investment, and increased rental market activity
- Female-headed HHs with certificates were 20% more likely than male headed hh to make soil & water conservation investments in land & spent 72% more time on these investments
- Finding led to nation-wide scaling up of joint titling, supported by IDA funding (part of \$30 million project).

# e.g. joint land-titling decreased fertility and increased employment in urban Peru

The Peru urban land-titling program distributed 1.6m titles in 5 years.

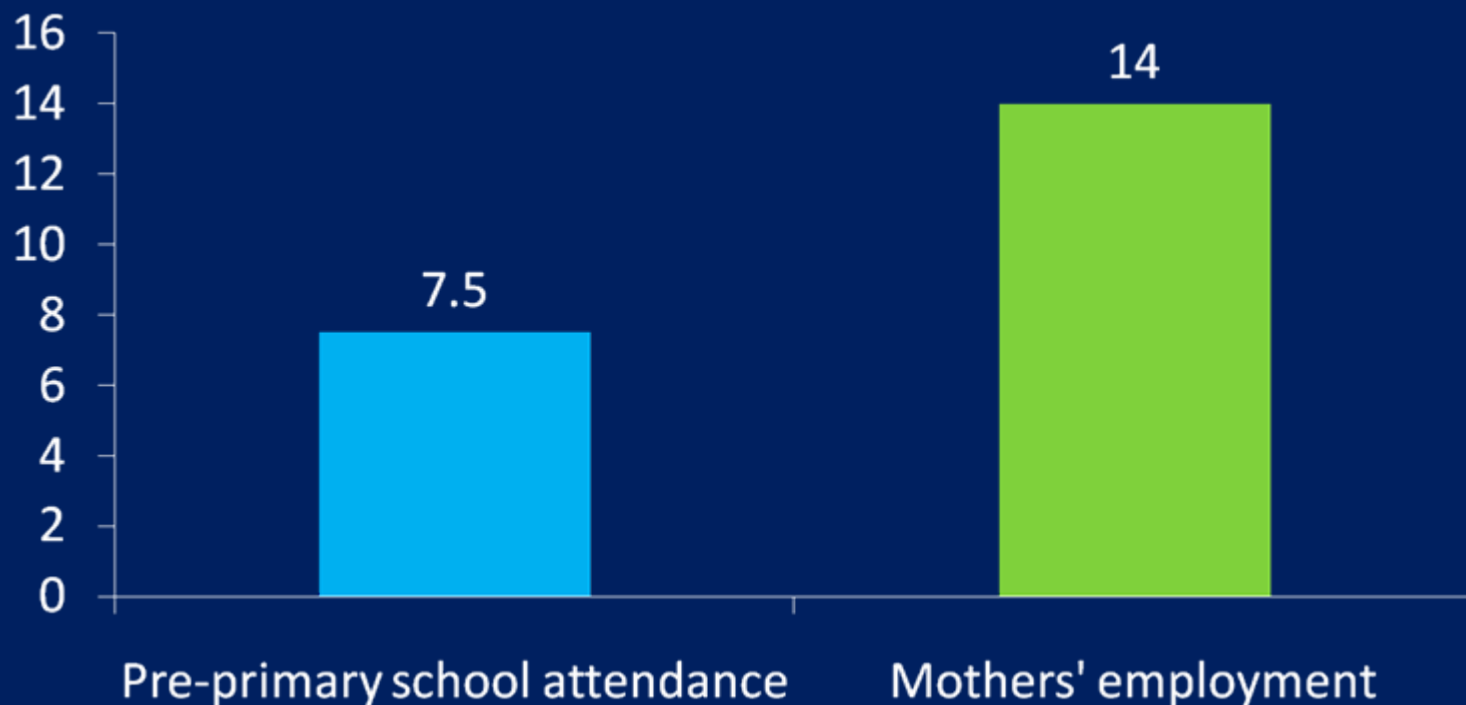


Source : Field, Erica (2003a): "Fertility Responses to Urban Land Titling Programs: The Roles of Ownership Security and the Distribution of Household Assets," working paper, Harvard University; Field, Erica (2003b): "Entitled to Work: Urban Property Rights and Labor Supply in Peru," manuscript, Harvard University.

# e.g. Child care program in Argentina increased maternal employment

Large pre-primary school building program: 175,000 places created.

Percentage point increase due to childcare expansion program in Argentina





# What does this mean for public policy?

1. Investing in human capital and fostering school-to-work transition
  - CCT programs to reduce girls disadvantage
  - Vocational training programs
2. Increasing entrepreneurship and access to credit
  - Micro-finance
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Land-titling programs
3. Lowering costs of paid work
  - Child-care
4. Increase poor women's access to public works and employment generation in times of crises.

# What does this mean for public policy?

5. Reduce supply and demand side constraints to young women's access to family planning and reproductive health services:
  - Supply: increase access to prenatal care, skilled care providers, transportation, contraceptive services
  - Demand: CCTs, information.

**Thank you**