



BACKGROUND

For many adolescent girls and young women around the world, the pathway from education to employment is interrupted, insecure and unpredictable. Girls often drop out of school to have children, care for siblings or get married.

The imperative to earn for their families may propel adolescent girls into the informal economy or low-wage fields. Childbearing and caregiving can keep them out of the labor market for years or indefinitely. Currently, 34 million adolescent girls remain out of school, and adolescent girls and young women aged 15-29 are 3 times more likely than their male peers to be both out of school and missing from the labor force.

When young women do earn an income, it may be by working long hours for low wages in vulnerable employment or in female-segmented sectors that offer few opportunities for advancement. These obstacles are compounded by employer discrimination, poorly implemented workforce development policies and a lack of access to resources, including sexual and reproductive health services and training opportunities.

The complexity of these issues requires multidisciplinary solutions. Yet donor investments and programmatic strategies tend to be segmented between the education sector and workplace readiness programs, resulting in approaches that often fail to address vulnerabilities that reoccur for girls and women throughout their lives.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

The School-to-Work Initiative leverages PCI and ICRW's Strategic Alliance to combine our research and implementation capabilities to foster greater, meaningful change, address intersecting challenges and reach scale.

The School-to-Work Initiative benefits from our collective country presence, program models, stakeholder convening power and expertise in advocacy, research and evaluation.

This includes programs such as Gender Equity Movement in Schools^[1] and Plan-It Girls^[2], and PCI's extensive community and school-based experience through projects such as the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program^[3].

[1] ICRW. Gender Equity Movement in Schools.
<https://www.icrw.org/research-programs/gender-equity-movement-in-schools-gems/>

[2] ICRW. Plan-it Girls.
<https://www.icrw.org/research-programs/plan-it-girls/>

[3] PCI. Food for Education Overview.
<https://www.pciglobal.org/food-for-education/>



PCI's mission is to empower people to enhance health, end hunger, overcome hardship and advance women & girls.

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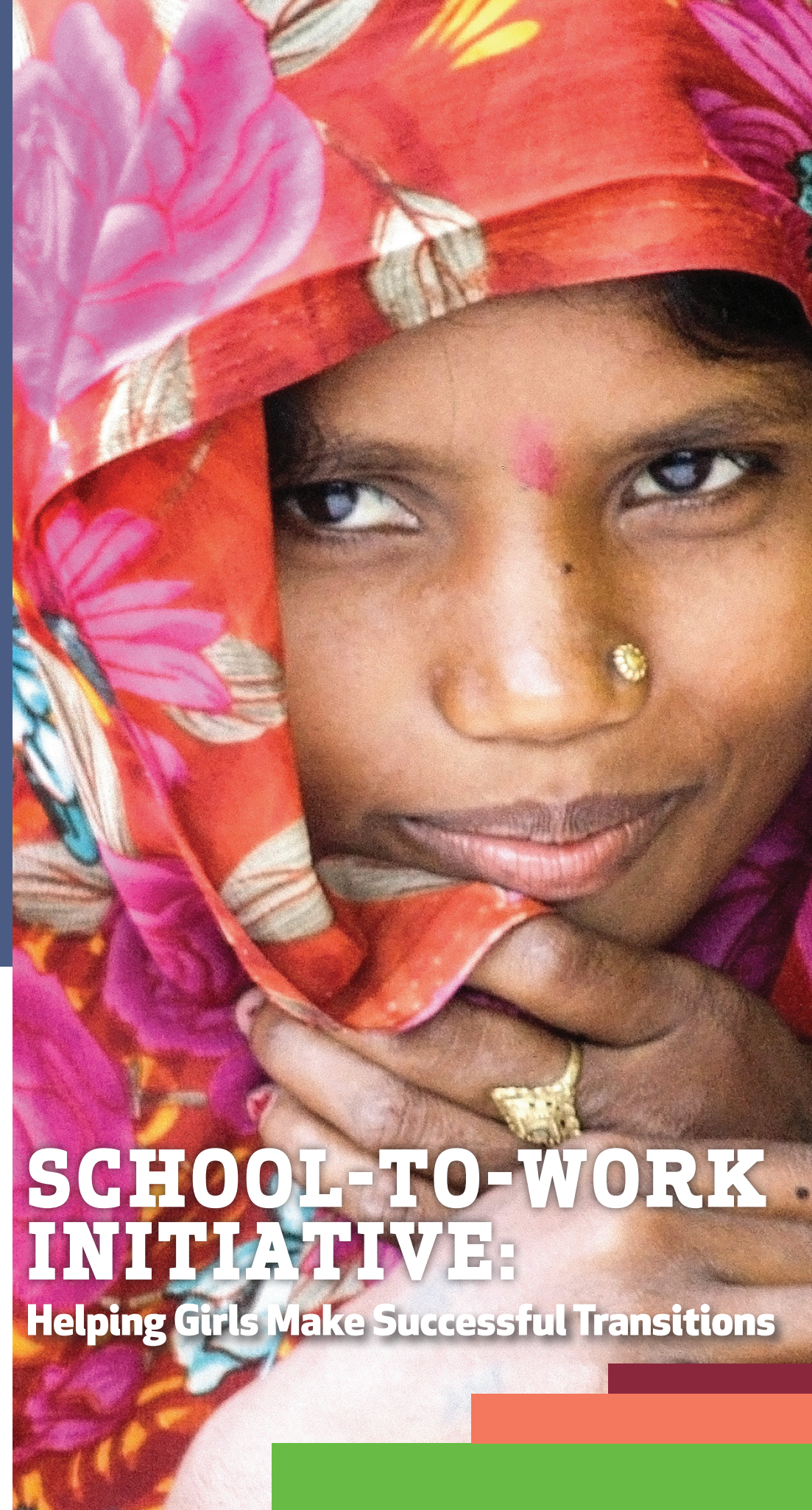
Anchored in the principle of human dignity, ICRW advances gender equity, inclusion and the alleviation of poverty worldwide.

Sarah Gammage
Director of Economic
Empowerment & Livelihoods and
Chief Research Officer

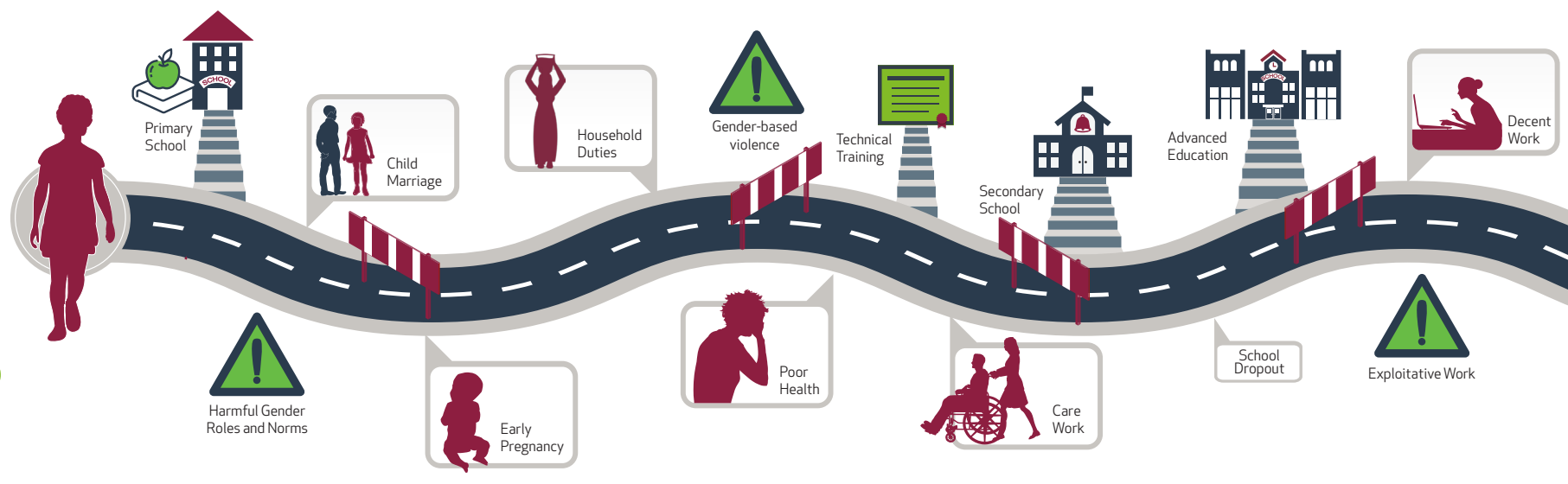
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SCHOOL-TO-WORK INITIATIVE:

Helping Girls Make Successful Transitions



WHAT WILL BE HER PATH?



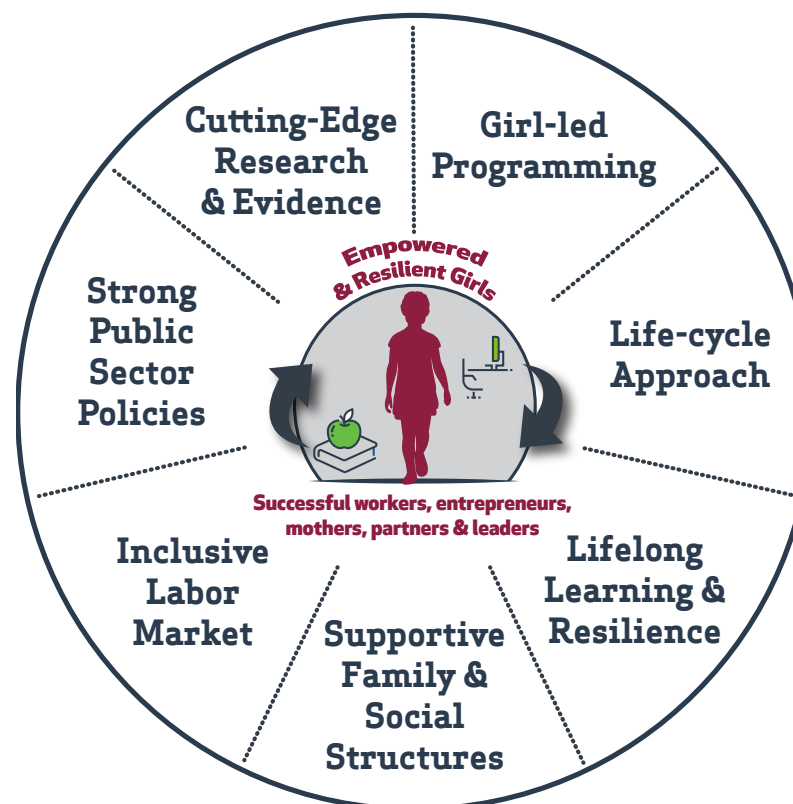
THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK INITIATIVE

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Project Concern International (PCI) have launched a new initiative offering systems-oriented, context-specific solutions to tackle this gap.

The School-to-Work model combines strategies to enable girls to acquire key skills, stimulate demand amongst employers, establish linkages with social protection mechanisms and foster supportive family and community structures.

Leveraging ICRW's world-class research expertise and PCI's community-based reach, School-to-Work engages stakeholders to develop and test custom approaches that keep girls in school, delay marriage and pregnancy, and enable those who have dropped out of school to continue learning.

THE APPROACH



The goal of School-to-Work is not just to transition girls from school into training opportunities and decent work, but to expand their options for healthy, productive futures. Guided by the principles of Positive Youth Development, School-to-Work embraces the following strategies:

Girl-led Programming → Integrates approaches that proactively and intentionally engage girls and build their confidence and ability to lead and identify barriers and solutions.

Life-cycle Approach → Works across sectors to ensure adolescent girls and young women have access to critical resources such as quality reproductive health services and care options for young mothers.

Lifelong Learning & Resilience → Offers multiple pathways to learning and emphasizes the acquisition of transferable skills and capabilities, such as critical thinking and communication to equip girls for life as employees, entrepreneurs, mothers, partners and leaders.

Supportive Family & Social Structures → Builds girls' social capital through safe spaces and mentorship, while working with families and communities to create an enabling environment in which girls can be safe from harm, are not held back by gender stereotypes and can pursue their dreams.

Inclusive Labor Markets → Partners with the private and public sectors to increase protections against sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and to tailor workforce development programs and apprenticeships to meet the requirements of new and emerging sectors, such as green jobs, agricultural extension, health and technology, finance and ICT.

Strong Public Sector Policies → Ensures local and national policy and decision-makers work with educators, girls and communities to influence and implement policies that enhance girls' learning and earning outcomes.

Cutting-Edge Research & Evidence → Advances research and global learning—from mapping the problem and surfacing best-practice solutions, to applied operations and intervention research that drives innovation and enables the design and refinement of program strategies.

THE OUTCOMES WE SEEK

Adolescent girls and young women:

- ▶ Have the necessary skills, assets and competencies to be resilient and excel at school, work, and in life;
- ▶ Are empowered to make decisions about their lives, set their own goals and act without fear of violence, retribution, or exploitation; and
- ▶ Have increased access to entry points and pathways to secure and retain, safe, quality education and satisfying economic opportunities.

