



**2008 Clinton Global Institute Annual Meeting:
Global Health Working Group: Healthy Transitions for Adolescent
Girls - Part 1
Clinton Global Initiative
September 24, 2008**

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TOM: Thank you. If I could ask everyone to please take your seat. So, this working group session will be on the health of adolescent girls. And to kick this off, we have a fantastic video that Maria Eitel and her team at Nike have put together to demonstrate the impact that investing in girls can have on the future of the planet. And if this video doesn't convince you of that, then nothing will.

[Video Playing]

MALE SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our moderator, Senior Economist and Director of the Health and Competitiveness Initiative, Fundacion Mexicana para la Salud, Felicia Marie Knaul. And our panelists today, President, Nike Foundation, Marie Eitel. Global Ambassador, YouthAIDS, Board Member, PSI, Ashley Judd. And Co-founder, Girls Power Initiative, Bene Madunagu.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Welcome. Thank you very much, all of you, for being here, for joining us for this session. Congratulations on a wonderful video, incredibly impactful.

I want to use our time directly to go to the topic of this session. Adolescent girls face barriers. Barriers because of what they are, but also barriers because of what they are not. They're young, but they're not children. They're female, but they're not yet adult women. The vast majority are poor and either lack rights or can't get access to those rights. So the danger is that they,

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and within their capacity to fuel development and reduce poverty will fall through the cracks.

So let's move on to do our work for the next hour and a half, which is to discuss, discover and deploy actions – three D's – discuss, discover and deploy. And we, as a collective community for also each and every one of us as individuals, have to ask ourselves what we can do to promote healthy transitions for adolescent girls. And so with that, I want to go straight to my first question for this afternoon and I suggest we start with Maria. Why is it necessary to have such a special focus in research, programs, policy on adolescent girls and in what sense are their needs different to other population groups?

MARIA EITEL: Well I guess the simple answer is the girl affect. If you invest in girl, of course you affect not just her life, but her family's life, her village's life and her country's. And so that ripple effect is what we believe is fundamentally powerful.

When we started the Nike Foundation, which was really only four year's ago, even though the company's been around for a long time, we searched for what we thought would be the best investment in poverty alleviation. And I kept hearing about the importance of women, but thought, well before they're women, they're girls and so if we don't invest at this critical inflection point, then we're probably missing out on a huge opportunity.

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It was way back in 2003 that Larry Sommers said that girls education was the single best investment we could make with a forty-fold return. Yet, the investments haven't necessarily followed that figure. Best we can see is that about a half a cent of every dollar in aid goes to girls. So there's this black hole that exists in terms of investment in adolescent girls. Yet there's this enormous upside if we do.

And we were really struck by the uniqueness of their situation because as they come through the trajectory and they hit that inflection point of adolescence, there's two directions she can go. One is the negative spiral of early pregnancy, child marriage, HIV infection, etcetera, which then ripples through her family. Or the positive spiral, which means she's healthy, she has healthy children, she's married at an appropriate age. As we know, the education level and health and wealth of her family follows that. So we really saw this as the best single investment that we could really make as a world community if we really want to solve issues and change, I just said, we like to say at Nike, we play by the rules, but let's change the game.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Ashley, would you like to comment on that?

ASHLEY JUDD: I would add something. I agree wholeheartedly with what Maria has said. And I would add quite simply that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of a cure. And that if we have the opportunity to do an appropriate

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intervention at this tender and liminal age for adolescent girls, we then prevent the need to have to try to rescue and empower women who have already fallen into extreme poverty and exploitation and sickness.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Bene?

BENE EDWIN MADUNAGU: I'd like to state that all of the reasons why we consider adolescent girls in particular as problems is because we are looking at the challenges that society puts on them. Without looking at the other side of the results from this, the generosity that these young women have and how they can bloom and become change agents. And we've seen this in 15 years of working with adolescent girls. That they can actually transform the norms, the [inaudible] values of society. They've actually done so in the experiences that we've had with these young women, age 10 to 18 years in Nigeria.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: I'm also going to suggest that each of you, now that we're on to the second question, can pass any questions that you have to your table moderators so that we can think about that over the course of this session as well. And going on to the second question, Bene, why don't we have it start off with you?

Why is investing in girls and young women an equitable efficient and cost effective strategy for promoting development goals, social protection and rights? And if it is, why aren't we doing it more?

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BENE EDWIN MADUNAGU: I actually believe it is. Because think of a girl, Edidium [misspelled?] by name. Fifteen years old, returning from school and the father says, "Oh, Asuto had come to ask for your hand in marriage." And she turns around. She said, "But my brother is doing that to me." And we've been told in girls by initiative that we need to focus on their education and our future has set goals for ourselves.

So I will first of all go to the university. The father said, "But I've already discussed the issue of your bride price." She said, "No, even when I made the choice to marry, there is nothing like bride price because I'm not a commodity. That's what we are told. We will be partners and so there will be mutual respect." I just give that as an example and there are millions of such examples in [inaudible] that young girls have shown as a result of comprehensive sexuality, education. That investment has actually worked for young people's development and changes.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Imagine such a simple message. It seemed obvious to so many of us that we are not commodities. Ashley?

ASHLEY JUDD: Well I'd like to give a hopefully brief example about a young woman named Lydia whom I met outside of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo this past March. And Lydia's situation is that her father, after having had five children with her mother, wanted to have more children. And the

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mother wasn't interested in bearing more. So he took on a second wife.

And the result was that, for some reason, Lydia ended up getting pushed out of the nest. The dad wasn't interested in her anymore and through a series, it's quite a soap opera of very complicated events which include her, on a riverboat journey entirely by herself, up and down the Congolese River. I don't know if you've ever seen the documentary that was made about the Congo. It's just a harrowing experience. But she saw one of her younger siblings die from malnutrition and she was really profoundly scarred by that.

And to cut through all of the drama, what ended up happening is that just a few streets over from where her dad and his second wife were living, Lydia ended up starting to work in sex at the age of 10. And she was doing this to support her younger siblings. Angel was the name of the brother who died and she was just unwilling to watch the rest of them die in the same fashion.

So PSI was able ultimately to reach Lydia. But it took a long time before we found her and before we rescued her from this type of really indescribable exploitation. She had several pregnancies, very unsafe pregnancy terminations, trying to use herbal concoctions and various other things. She had lots of internal scarring and whatnot. So you can hear what happens and the extent of the physical, the mental and psychic damage done to a child. And if it doesn't, just through that story, become

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abundantly clear that preventing that from happening to a girl is the way forward.

So what Lydia does now is hair, and she does mani-pedis [misspelled?] and she works a lot on brides and their bridal parties and she earns quite a high fee for all of that. And she ended up being found by her mother's aunt. Her mother had disappeared during all of this. And her mother's sister – actually, excuse me, her aunt – her mother's sister took her in.

And when we were finishing this conversation, which I thought, you know, in my first world, oh la de da, was going to have such a nice happy ending, what I discovered is that she is now supporting her aunt, her uncle and all of her cousins. And so she's still quite trapped in poverty and she's not reaping the benefit of what could be her financial independence.

So I was thinking a lot about how to particularize this information because, you know, we all have access to incredible stats and can go online and learn all manner of facts, but for me what really drives my ongoing passion for this work and my insistence of staying in it is the personal. And so Lydia was a story that I wanted to share with you today.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Maria?

MARIA EITEL: I'd like to pick up on the economic story, like Bene was talking about. If you think about it, the news 'It's a Girl' isn't necessarily a welcomed piece of news in much of the world. And that's because she's not seen as valuable in terms of

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economics of the household. So in the household economy, she's seen as a burden that then will be traded.

What is really interesting about the work that we found is if you look at this economic equation, instead of saying just girls education is the answer, which has been a very traditional response, you look at the economic role that the girl is currently playing in the family. She's responsible for carrying water, the plumbing. She's responsible for carrying firewood, the electrical system. She's responsible for taking care of the sick. She's the healthcare system. Someone falls ill in the family and she has to drop out of school. She's the insurance policy.

So if we don't see her as an economic actor at the beginning of this trajectory, it's very difficult to actually solve her issues. Because when we say the simple statement, girls should be in school, the fact is every other factor of her life is pulling her away from that experience. So we see that we really have to address the multiple factors that are influencing her ability to do what she should be doing, which is go through that trajectory of school.

And there is no economic reward in the mind of the family or in the community. But it is the least efficient use of her labor. Economists will tell you that that is not the most efficient use of that girl's labor. It's the short-term gain to have her provide those functions in the home. But the long-term

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gain is for her to become educated and healthy and to birth healthy children who become healthy and contribute to their own families.

So we really have looked at this not from the traditional lens, but to try to look at this from the economic lens. And how do we link the economic issues, the health issues and the education issues together so that we actually create a sustainable solution for that girl? We haven't set her up for what is just a time clock until one of those bombs goes off in her life and she's pulled back.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Ashley, why are girls and young women so missed? They're so often missed because they're behind closed doors. What can we do to break down that barrier of invisibility?

ASHLEY JUDD: They lack status. They just simply lack status and I think that it really starts within the family of origin that girls are invisible. And I think it really takes a complimentary and a balanced approach that's multi-generational in order to begin to reverse this sense that girls are either a burden or entirely without status. And that balanced approach includes the legal empowerment of girls and women. And I love the work of Equality Now, for example, in that area

And it really takes a mental shift and I was thinking when Marie was speaking that this phenomenon of cross-generational sex and younger girls having sugar daddies, that is often encouraged by the family because the girl is seen as another mouth to feed or in some sense a burden. Get her out of the house. Get her off our

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backs and this lack of status, I think is really the revolution that needs to be addressed. And that when girls and women are fully empowered with personhood and there is gender parity. For me, I really think that that's when we'll finally have peace.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Maria, what can we do to make girls count?

MARIA EITEL: Well, it's interesting because there's not a grand conspiracy to not invest in girls. I think there's a false assumption that girls are being addressed.

When we say there's a youth program, there's an assumption that means there's 50 – we just generally assume that's 50/50 girls and boys. The reality is on the ground, that that isn't the case. The majority of the youth that are in those programs are boys.

When we say a women's and girls' program, if you actually go and look, you'll find that it isn't girls who are in those programs. It's older women who are in those programs. So, again, the girl sits in this area where she doesn't get the services. And if you look for instance, in Bangladesh, a girl will spend six hours and 45 minutes doing chores and a boy will spend 45 minutes, so it's hard to reach her.

She's harder to find. It's harder to give her services because she isn't in the schools. She isn't in the health care center. She isn't receiving the services because she's doing other things, so it's really critical that we figure out unique ways to reach girls. The same approach doesn't necessarily work.

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If you look at the HIV new infection rates, girls are the greatest new infections, two-thirds to boys. And yet, since 2001, that number's gone from 60 to 75-percent. So, clearly what we're doing isn't addressing them, isn't reaching them, so one of the first things we think we need to do is count them. It's actually hard to find the data and the research around girls so that we can know what we need to be doing to address their issues.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Bene, what can we do to break down the barrier of invisibility?

BENE EDWIN MADUNAGU: I quite agree with what has been said, but then, there are changes happening and we are breaking down those barriers. We do have girls or parents of our girls that come to share when we have parents [inaudible] that things have changed in their homes. The girls have come back to ask that jobs in the house be shared. It's not just the girls doing it, it's both boys and girls, everything that has to be done and so both of them have time for recreation and to go to school. And the girls are doing very well in school and that has also shown in fact that in 15 years we moved from 15 girls in the program and we are now covering 700,00 girls in the country now, in the year.

And many of these have gone on to take leadership positions in their schools. I remember the case of Humar [misspelled?] two years ago. She was very shy when she came onto the program. After the first six months of personal empowerment training process, she started to change gradually. But, when she graduates and went on

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to the university, in her class a young man walked up to the podium and said he hurled a piece of paper and read off four names that those are the boys to represent their department in the students' congress and Humar got up. "How did you come about those names? We are both boys and girls in this class. We need to have an election," and she put herself up and she got elected into parliament [laughter].

And this is also happening with our girls moving on. We tell them you can't be vice. You have to be the real thing. So they are aspiring and many, about five of them in the last three years have become student union presidents in their various institutions. So, it's changing and it can change.

What we need is investment, to redirect the positive energies. The results will [inaudible] young girls and the world, our communities really will benefit from the contribution of these young women and their creativity if we are actually serious about positive human development.

MARIA EITEL: Can I add something?

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Please go ahead.

MARIA EITEL: First of all, Bene's website, if you need to get excited, is like drinking a strong cup of espresso. It is an extremely stimulating and fantastic website. I absolutely love it. And I just wanted to add that behavior change communication, I think, is really important for not only sensitizing girls as to their real value and worth, but helping to suggest to boys that

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there is a different way to regard and treat girls. And PSI's done a lot of infotainment and mid-major types of communications, paintings on the sides of buildings and billboards and radio-delivered soap operas, things of that nature.

And when women are objectified sexually, it sets girls up to be regarded as sexual commodities as well and I love that this focus is on health transition for adolescent girls and it needs also, of course, to be addressed that the more women are objectified, it's just setting girls up to go into that track as well. And it's, unfortunately, not uncommon in India, for example, for the father of a poor, large family to start wondering about how to raise a dowry for a daughter. And he'll decide to sell into a brothel another one of his children or perhaps a neighbor's child because he needs to raise the capital to have a dowry for his daughter. So, it's that really pervasive society-wide sexual objectification of women that I think really continues to contribute to the invisibility of girls.

They're just on that track. That's what we're here for. We are not the sum of our reproductive organs and that behavior change communication that reaches out to boys is important. And one I saw recently showed a very attractive, younger looking guy and it was addressing the hypocrisy of the sugar daddy phenomenon, where he's got young, sexual partners from other men's daughters, but how would he feel about his daughter having a sugar daddy? So, that type of cross-communication is really helpful.

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FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Our job here is really about action and to think of concrete steps. We have a very heterogeneous group and a very full room. We have business leaders, we have researchers, we have strategists, we have policy-makers. We have many who can do much. A very direct question, Bene, if you're sitting in front of a leader and they ask to develop a strategy because they want to invest \$100 million in a healthy transition for girls, what would you recommend to them?

BENE EDWIN MADUNAGU: I'd go back to what I just said. That with very little funding that we've had, we've been able to transform and make girls change agents and the impact as well on their families. Because we have their parents and school administrators coming to volunteer to have presentations on the weekly TV program we have on the types of the girl child. And this helps to reach out to many more young people out there.

The reason why we are having so many on the program now is as a result of the impact of not only what the girls themselves use the information and training to do, but what they hear and see the girls when they discuss on those TV programs. So, I would say it will be very useful and constructive to invest in education, comprehensive sexuality training, including life management skills and leadership skills, which is what we offer, to young women and of course, through them they reach out to those boys.

And I want to agree with you that because of the impact of girls from our program in the society, there is now a program for

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young men. And so that when girls go out on the street and a young man meets the girls from Girls Power Initiative, you know what? I am from the other organization, Conscientizing Nigeria Male Adolescents, so I like to talk with you. I like to be friends with, but when they start, it's very clear to the GPI girl that it is just one way of getting to them, but that they are not from that organization because they also stand out.

So, investing in young girls and helping them develop their potentials will be a great investment, so considering that in Nigeria there are, in fact, about 13 million adolescent girls. And when you add the boys to that it's close to 27 million. And when you are talking about 100 million, it really [inaudible] go a long way to do a lot, given what we have seen as an outcome of helping girls rediscover their potentials, their talents and their creativity. So, it will be a useful investment.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Maria, there are different ways and different levels of support. If you have the \$100 million donor in front of you, the \$1 million donor and the person who wants to give of their time, but doesn't have money, what do you recommend to them?

MARIA EITEL: Well, I have been asked the question before so, we like to say there's three things. You can count girls, invest in girls and advocate for girls and count girls is so essential. Just developing a consciousness, no matter what kind of organization. If you're a foundation, a government, a corporation,

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counting girls gives them the fundamental respect and value we need to give them to know what's happening with them as I said before.

Invest in them. If you aren't investing, find a way to invest in girls because there are ways that I am sure whatever your organization is is not happening. Or if you already are, double what you're doing and see what happens when you double that investment.

And then advocate for girls is so incredibly important. If very simply, everyone went out of this room – it's such an influential group of people – and just talked about girls and talked about this issue, it creates a dialogue that makes movement forward. Use the Girl Affect. It's non-branded, obviously. It's brand neutral. We created it because we want people to use it. There's a website that goes with it called girlaffect.org. If you want to give \$50 or you want to do something major, there's an ability to do something.

And then, I think, using your convening power, each of you has a community within which you live and work. Convene that community and see what that community can do to move the needle for girls.

And I guess this specific audience, I think has the ability – I think there needs to be a global health strategy for girls. I think there needs to be a strategy for adolescent girls and HIV. If they're the center of the epidemic, we need to have a strategy of how we're addressing it and how we're going to move the needle

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and what are the goals that we're going to reach to see real progress occur?

So, I think we could take care of \$100 million really fast. I'd like to see billions. If you look at the potential return, again, if you just do some really interesting modeling of numbers and you calculate, as many of you know, take a girl and if she gets married later, has less children, is healthy, they are educated. If you run those numbers, the economic return on that for growth is phenomenal.

So, if we just were to invest commensurate with that potential return, and on the other side, the cost that we bear if we don't do that, it seems to me that it's a pretty no-brainer investment, but it needs to be at a much greater scale. I think the issues of gender and women and girls so often are put aside to be a side issue that we'll deal with later or we'll deal with in a smaller scale.

I think the ambition around this needs to just skyrocket in terms of what kind and what level of investment needs to happen if we're really going to see the kind of progress that we need.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Ashley, money's important, but it's not everything. What's the best way to do advocacy for these young women?

ASHLEY JUDD: Well, the way I'd do the advocacy is by going to developing countries and sitting with girls and women. Whether it's in a slum or a brothel or a hospice or a youth drop-in center

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or on a random street corner. I abandon that contempt prior to investigation and open my ears, my mind and my heart and listen and try to compassionately bear witness to what it is they're so willing to share with me. And that's a very honoring and humbling process to really be a stranger, a very different-looking stranger and have people so openly share the details – some of them quite gory and lurid – of their lives and then come back and leverage my core competency. As we talked about at the poverty track dinner last night, which right or wrong, good or bad, is that I can go on the Today Show and The View and what not and tell those stories on behalf of the lovely and wonderful people I've met.

I recently had the opportunity to testify before the General Assembly of the United Nations about human trafficking and that was a fantastic experience. I'm really committed to telling the truth and that's, for me, the absolute guideline. Speak truth to power and to do that, I personally, have to be very empowered; because otherwise, I can allow myself to get pretty intimidated.

Three days before the U.N., I was going, how dare I? But, after a spiritual process of self-investigation and a lot of prayer and meditation, I got to how dare I not? And I went in there a total bad ass, thank you very much [laughter] and I was not going to let anybody intimidate me because I had the stories from Rajasthan and Cambodia and Thailand and Madagascar and Kenya and bla, bla, bla to share; and the two things that I would personally choose to emphasize for funding and – maybe these are just my

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little pigs, as my godmother says that everybody's got their pig, my pig – reproductive health and safe drinking water. And I think that those two make a very, very forceful and transformative change in the lives of adolescent girls.

FELICIA MARIE KNAUL: Well, there we go. How dare we not? That's what we're going to be working on, I think, together in the rest of this session. We'll go on, Tom, to have the tables work together and I think you have about 30 minutes. Correct?

[Applause]

TOM: Well, that was a terrific and inspiring panel. And now we're going to, as I said, call upon the collective IQ of the room to generate some specific ideas to respond to the challenges and opportunities that our moderator and our three panelists spoke so eloquently about. And your assignment now is to identify two specific actions that you think various organizations could take whether that's business, non-profit, the government, to invest in girls, to empower girls. And for each of those actions, I'd like you to try to identify number one, the goal, number two, what partnership you would need to be able to put together in order to make that goal happen, and third, what would be a concrete next step in order to get an initiative like that off the ground.

So, you'll have about 25 minutes, 30 minutes or so to come up with some, what I know will be, terrific ideas, given the leadership that we have here in the room. And then we're going to bring back the panel. They're also going to respond to some of the

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questions that you have and I'm going to give a very brief summary of some of the ideas that the room has generated. Thank you.

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