

Programs to Address Child Marriage: Framing the Problem

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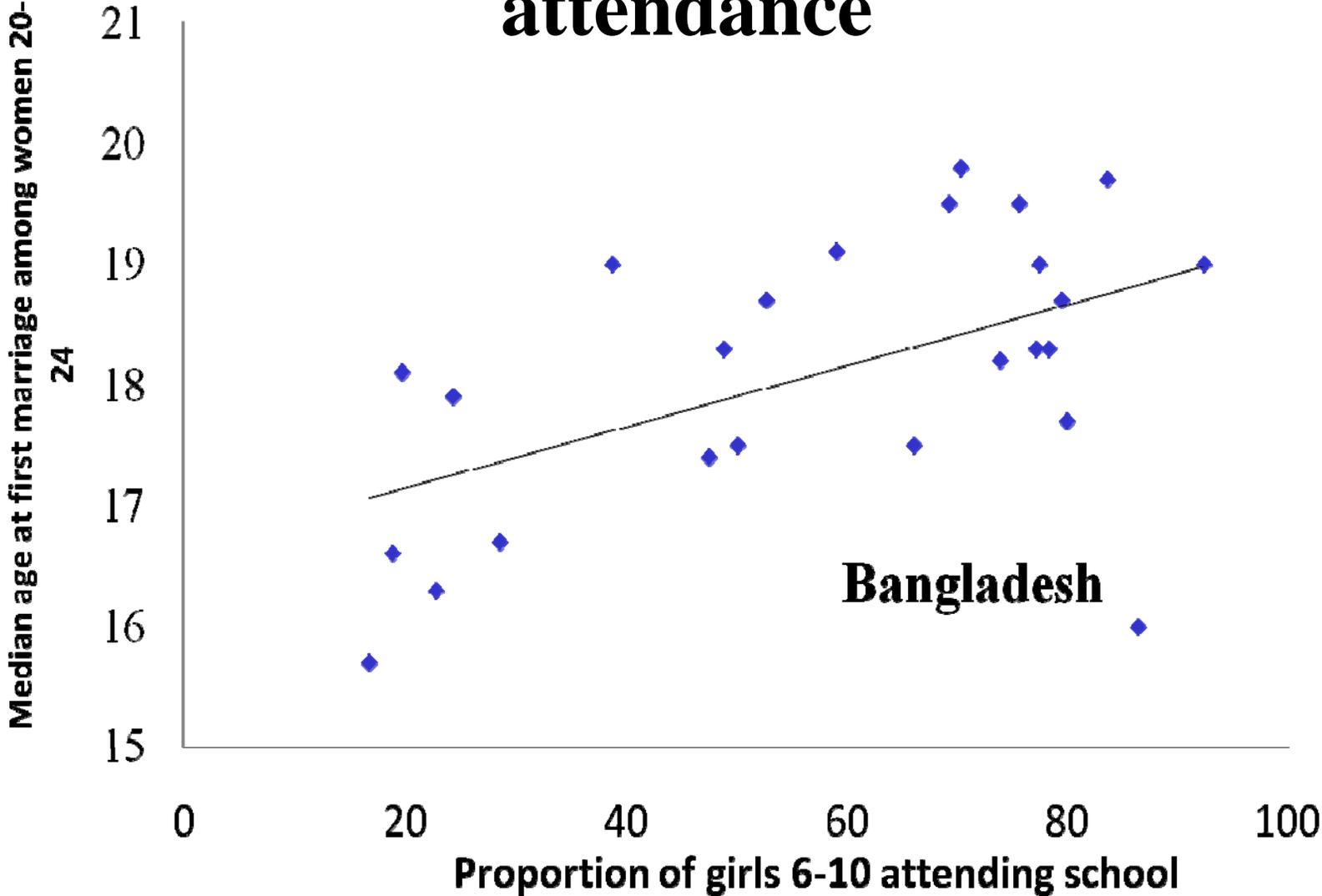
Early Marriage Hot-spots Remain

General trend towards later marriage for girls the world over but important variability by context

Marriage transactions: key contextual variable for early marriage in **South Asia**

Lack of opportunities and social isolation are important correlates of early marriage among disadvantaged **ethnic minorities in Asia and Latin America**

Female age at marriage and school attendance



Why does child marriage persist in Bangladesh?

The Context: legal age at marriage is 18,
girls' education is rising, declining fertility

Evidence

- Early marriage persists
- Dowry rises with age at marriage
- Dowry has negative welfare consequences

Definitions

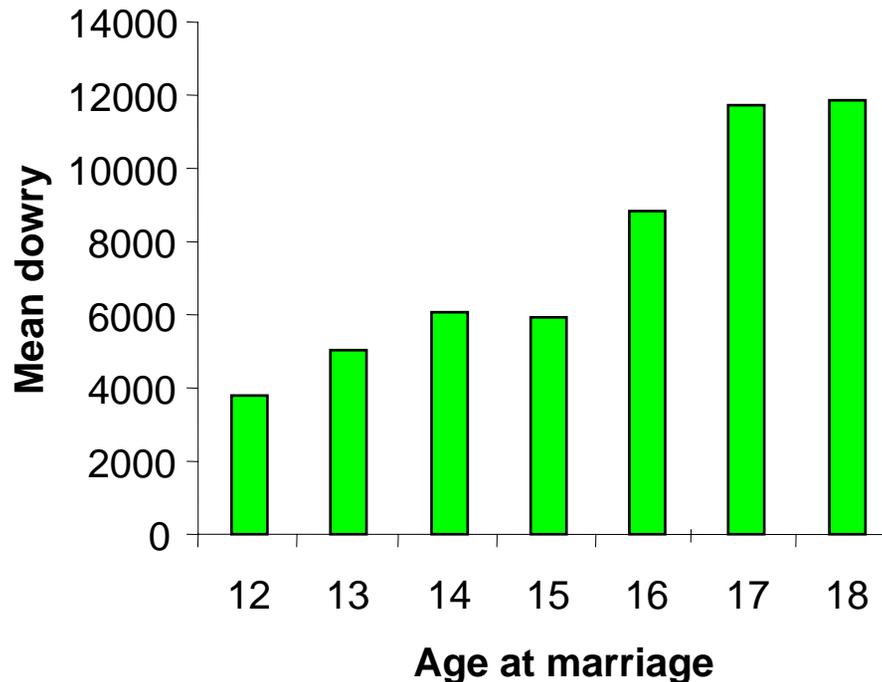
Child Brides– Girls married before age 18, the legal age at marriage. Marriage is a discrete event with cohabitation occurring soon after marriage

Dowry (“*joutuk*”) – demands made on bride’s family by groom as marriage negotiations. Usually paid in cash. Illegal.

Child marriage and dowry

- Mean dowry payments is approximately equal to annual per capital income

Table 1. Mean dowry by age at marriage (n=984)



Kishori Abhijan: A life-skills program for adolescent girls

- Girls enrolled in clubhouses and given life-skills lessons and skill training to earn money
- Two years later they earned more, had more specific and general knowledge about rights, health, freedom etc
- Married later (one objective of study)
- Those who married later paid more dowry

Implications of dowry

- On average those who marry early pay substantially less dowry
- Dowry payment has generally more negative implications than early marriage
- Poor pay less in amount of dowry but more of them pay dowry

Implications for child marriage prevention in Bangladesh

- Recognize that
 - early marriage is long-standing with attending legitimacy
 - Strategies to address early marriage need to
 - address costs of delaying marriage
 - Tie early marriage to dowry
 - Challenge the rise of dowry

Employment and Livelihoods for Adolescents in Bangladesh

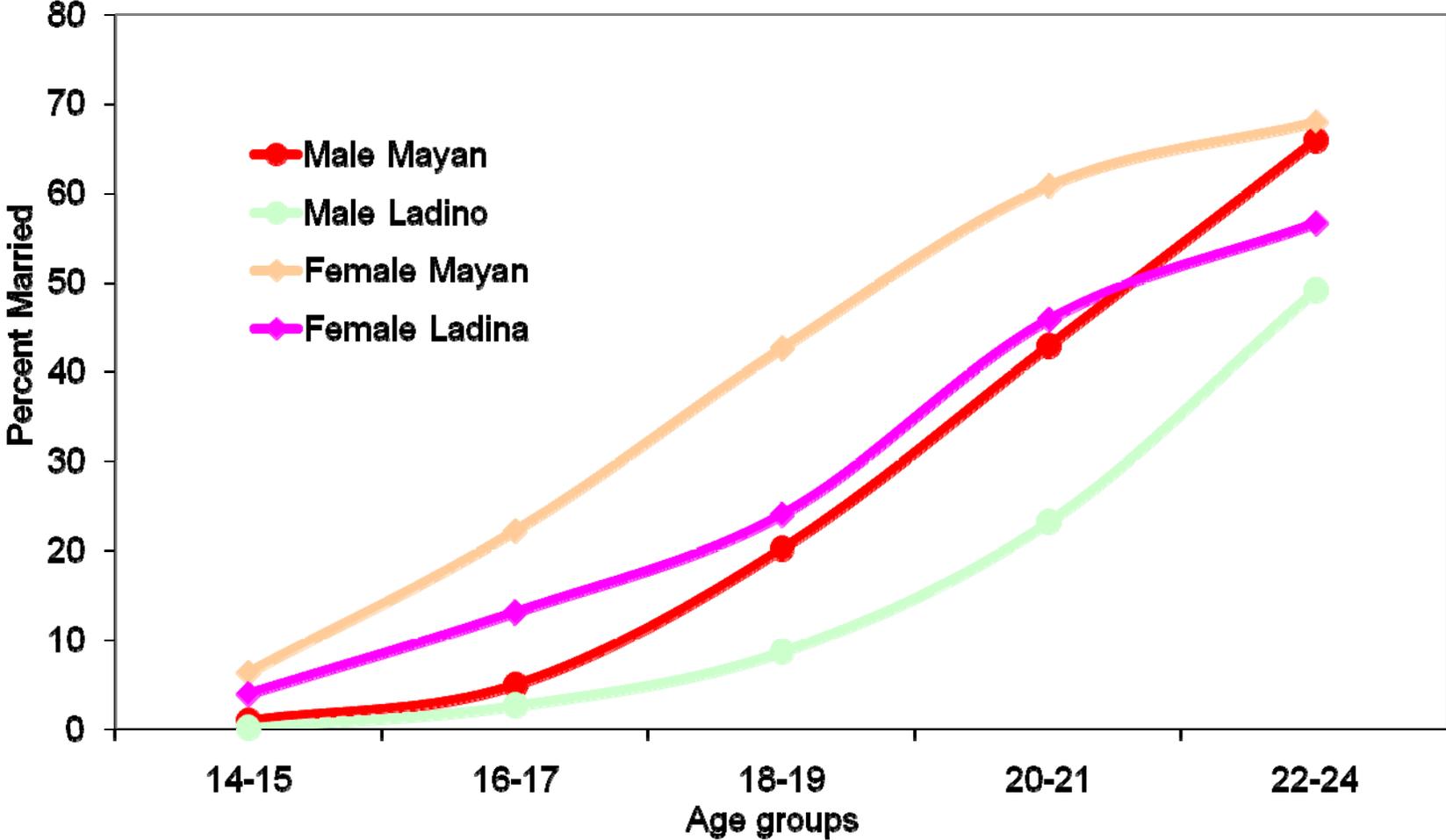
- Credit and savings groups for rural adolescent girls in and out of school
- Combined with social empowerment
- Including mentoring as a component

Early Marriage in Guatemala

- Mayan girls are disadvantaged in multiple ways
- Early school dropout, early marriage, illiteracy and limited life opportunities
- 40% of Mayan girls marry before age 18

Guatemala Marriage Differentials

Mayan girls marry earlier



Policy implications

- Reduce poverty and inequality
- Incentives for poor Mayan parents to start children's schooling on time
- Bilingual education in early grades
 - Higher completion and retention rates
- Increase access to secondary
 - Provides incentive to complete primary
- Programs to enable poor children to combine family work demands with schooling
 - More flexible school hours
 - Non-formal education

Girls have critical needs

- Safety and security
- Equal citizenship
- Connection to each other, their mothers, and other role models
- Leadership opportunities and social platforms
- Access to high-quality and relevant education
- Job skills and opportunities
- Healthy lives
- Economic Empowerment

Abriendo Oportunidades

- Helps girls make a successful transition to adulthood
- A safe spaces program for Mayan adolescents
- Encourage further education
- Enable young girls to generate income
- Motivate families and communities to educate girls

Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam

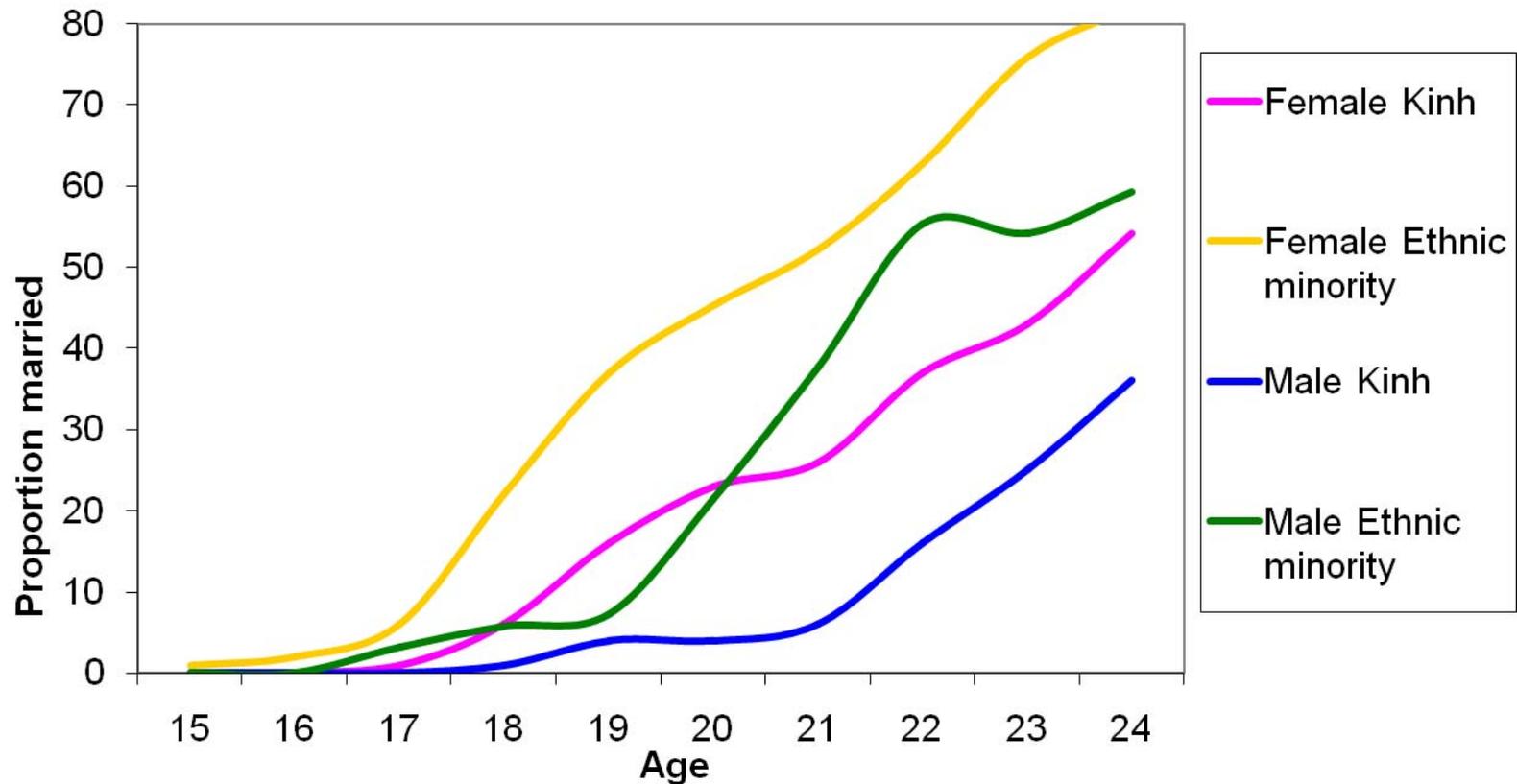
- Girls *and* boys marry early among Hmong and Dao in the Northern Uplands
- Early marriage is a way of gaining independence in the absence of positive livelihoods opportunities in the community
- Addressing community isolation and creating positive opportunities in school to work transition is key in remote areas

“I want my son to get married next year so he can learn to take responsibility. When he sets up his own family, he will learn to be more mature. He’s been out of school for a couple of years now but I don’t see him do any work seriously”.

Dao farmer from Village A5 speaking of his 20-year-old son....

Vietnam Marriage Differentials

Ethnic Minority girls and boys marry earlier



“Kinh girls get married later. Many of them wait until they turn 23-24 years. Hmong girls usually start families much earlier. When a girl is 20 and still single, they are considered “being left on the shelf”. In contrast, at age 20 for Kinh girls, they are still exploring their options”.

-Danh, Hmong, Female, Age 21, married with one child, Village B4

Programming for Delayed Marriage

- Contextual factors lead to different correlates of early marriage
- Social isolation and a lack of opportunities are strongly associated with early marriage
- Livelihoods and safe spaces are key programmatic approaches in varied contexts
- Enhancing social networks are an important part of the process