Chapter 3

Economic Empowerment in Sport, Gender and Development

with Payoshni Mitra

As a group, adolescent girls of the Global South face a number of challenges that are acknowledged by programming efforts such as the UN's Girl Up, Plan International's Girls Get Equal, and the Nike Foundation's Girl Effect (see Chapter 1 for more information on the Girl Effect). Many of these programs argue that changing girls' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors will ultimately help to change the world (Grosser & van der Gaag, 2013). Within these campaigns and accompanying media content, the typically stated aims are to address early marriage traditions, to increase access to education, to eliminate gender-based violence (GBV), or to educate on sexual and reproductive health. All of these issues limit girls' potential "power" in significant ways, and therefore "empowerment" is presented as the overarching goal. Thus, programming is offered that will help girls become empowered, often defined as "assertive, dynamic, and unbound from the constraints of passive femininity" (Gonick, 2006, p. 2). Depending on the vision of the program, this empowerment can take different shapes, but it is largely individualized.

Scholars – both within and outside of SGD – have expressed broad concerns with the move toward the individualization of girls' empowerment and the accompanying co-opting of feminist ideals, language, and values (see, for example, Banet-Weiser, 2018). We will not repeat these important arguments here. Instead, we will use this chapter to delve more deeply into the notion of *economic* empowerment for girls and women with SGD projects. In particular, we highlight the complexities of economic empowerment sessions and messages by exploring how adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) within the Goal-Delhi project made sense of economic progress and possibilities in their own lives. Through exploring these ideas as manifested in the lives of AGYW, we seek to demonstrate how critical feminist perspectives might offer new insights into the construct of economic empowerment as it is deployed within SGD scholarship,

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programming, and practice. This chapter will also add new considerations to the research on role models in SGD (Meier, 2015; Meier & Saavedra, 2009) and introduce how, why, and where gendered perspectives on urbanization come to matter. To help situate this analysis, the next section explores the rationales and logic underpinning economic empowerment and employability initiatives within SDP and SGD.

Economic Empowerment Initiatives within SDP and SGD

There are a range of projects within SGD and SDP that seek to work on issues of economic empowerment, employability, livelihoods, and social entrepreneurship.[1] Additionally, key transnational SDP stakeholders such as Laureus, streetfootballworld, and Women Win engage with these concepts in their aim to support SDP projects in a range of contexts. For instance, employability is one of the six social focus areas for the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation (2020). Their objective in this area is to help youth acquire "skills and create [-ing] pathways to employment" cognizant that "the global economic recession means that young people are going to find it much harder to transition into employment without vocational skills" (LSFG, Annual Review, n.p). Of note here is the focus on individual upskilling and less on alterations to the larger economic structures and systems that contributed to the global recession.

Other multilateral entities offer more targeted approaches to this type of work. For example, streetfootballworld has worked on issues of employability since 2015 and positions football as an innovative solution to the immediate and potential long-term challenges by youths who are NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). They suggest that being "stuck" with a NEET status can have short-term and long-term implications for a person's "career and well-being" (Schlenker & Braun, 2020, p. 10). They specifically seek to identify and support young people who are NEET by offering guidance to practitioners on teaching "17 key life skills for employability" through football (Schlenker & Braun, 2020, p. 20). Their "Scoring for the Future: Developing Life Skills for Employability" toolkit states that "life skills are those abilities that help to promote social and economic well-being, positive health and productive development," and the toolkit posits that these life skills can be taught through football (Schlenker & Braun, 2020, p. 20). The life skills include attributes such as goal setting, adaptability, and self-control. While a focus on individual change resembles the Laureus approach, of further interest for this chapter is that the toolkit does not identify unique employability challenges that AGYW might encounter. The toolkit's acknowledgment of gender consists of general statements about gender equality and inclusion within the activities designed to build life skills.

[1]Though these concepts can vary considerably, we group them together in this chapter. See McSweeney, Oxford, Spaaij, and Hayhurst (2020) for a more intentional discussion of the key differences.

Fortunately, Women Win and their related brand, Win-Win Strategies, does offer a vision and roadmap of economic empowerment for girls and SGD programs. Women Win works within a number of partnerships and frameworks to support sport and play-based life skills programming. This programming identifies and addresses a range of themes and issues pertinent to the lives of AGYW. Their desire to connect life skills, sport, and economic empowerment for AGYW is articulated through their "Girls in Motion" Playbook (Women Win Learning Lab, 2021). While similar to the premise in the streetfootballworld toolkit, this playbook more distinctly notes that sport can help address issues related to economic empowerment in girls because it "challenge[-s] gender roles within the community by giving opportunities to girls" and "accelerate[-s] leadership development by providing girls with the opportunity to build self-esteem, courage and self-efficacy" (p. 55). Additional documents on their website display a comprehensive understanding of economic empowerment for girls and women:

> Economic resilience and justice are not possible for a woman if she is unable to control her body, life, and future. This impacts not only her own health and rights, but also her job prospects, economic potential, and the prosperity of her family, community, and country. While an increasing number of companies understand the importance of economically empowering women across value chains, their focus is often narrowly on providing skills, training, or resources. Rarely are other key "*building blocks*" to sustainable economic empowerment and resilience are [*sic*] considered, such as control over reproductive health, freedom from sexual harassment and other gender-based violence, access and control over economic resources, or the burden of unpaid care work (Women Win, The Problem, italics added).

Importantly, this statement recognizes many of the unique barriers for girls and women in employment contexts. Further, it offers important nuance to the notion of girls' and women's economic empowerment, noting that interventions must occur across the lifespan and at appropriate times in an AGYW's life.

As presented by Women Win, equipping women and girls to productively engage in a workplace or with employment must be accompanied by attention to dimensions of her life that often make employment and employability a challenge or unsustainable. This can include gendered expectations around (unpaid) care work, gendered divisions of labor, sexual harassment, transportation/mobility difficulties, and GBV. Plan International's policy position paper on economic empowerment of girls and women reinforces the idea that a lifecycle approach must be taken when advocating for girls and women. Support must be provided at each phase of life, and interventions should (ideally) start by challenging gender stereotypes and discrimination early in a girl's life. When girls are denied opportunities for education and training early in life, they are "more likely to be forced into informal, insecure and low paid work that puts them at increased risk

of poverty and abuse" (Plan International, p. 5). Plan International's articulation of the employment barriers and challenges across the lifespan helps to locate employability issues within the broader context of an AGYW's life. The next section looks more closely at the ideas surrounding AGYW's economic empowerment and the concerns of feminist scholars.

Commercialized Feminism: Girls as Untapped (Economic) Potential

> Girls are the world's greatest untapped resource. Investments in girls have significant economic returns. These returns have the power to uplift entire economies.
>
> (Girleffect.org, 2012)

As referenced in Chapter 1, campaigns like the Girl Effect suggest that positive social change will begin once girls receive equal access to education, training, and opportunities. Until then, these campaigns warn us that girls are merely "untapped" economic resources for their families, communities, countries, and, indeed, the world. Many who make the case for investing in the economic empowerment of AGYW argue that it is "smarter economics" to do so because of the return girls can provide on invested (international) development dollars. Scholars have even coined the term "Girl Effect Dividend" to highlight the payout that occurs from targeted investment in AGYW; they have also calculated the opportunity costs of diverting resources away from girls (Chaaban & Cunningham, 2011).

While other chapters in this book will examine the links between girls, sport, and empowerment (broadly defined), this chapter seeks to look specifically at economic empowerment programming in SGD projects. The use of the term "empowerment" in international development has been critically interrogated by scholars such as Batliwala (2010) and Cornwall and Rivas (2015). Batliwala (2010) communicates our chief concern with this terminology: it has been instrumentalized and come to represent an individual "magic bullet for poverty alleviation and rapid economic development, rather than a multifaceted process of social transformation, especially in the arena of gender equality" (p. 116). We also suggest that the shift from understanding empowerment as a multifaceted and layered process to an individualized state of mind/being is reflected in many SGD projects (Heywood, 2007). For example, the Goal-Delhi project, which utilizes "sports and life skills to empower and equip young girls … to be integral economic leaders in their families, communities and societies," is one such project (Standard Chartered Bank, 2019, para. 1). The Goal-Delhi project combines sport training with sessions on financial literacy and employability with the stated goal to make girls "more active economic participants in their communities" (Manneh, cited in Standard Chartered Bank, 2019, para. 7). The quest to use sports to help AGYW develop into economic actors who will save their families invites critical reflection. Interrogating the idea of AGYW as savers (of money)

and "saviors" for their communities calls forward the application of commercialized feminism.

According to Goodkind (2009), "commercialized feminism emerges at the intersection of neoliberalism with feminist ideals; it is characterized by its focus on the individual, self-reliance, and personal responsibility for change" (p. 397). This approach differs from feminist theories and agendas that seek to transform or upend societal norms and customs to improve the lives of girls and women. Put differently, the solution to the current "problem" (in terms of AGYW's inability to succeed economically) is not to fix or modify the economic systems and structures in place. Instead, in campaigns such as the Girl Effect and many SGD programs that focus on economic empowerment, "what is packaged for women to use will also shape them into the kind of citizens needed for the successful functioning of the neoliberal state" (Goodkind, 2009, p. 400). Girls' studies scholars note similar concerns with how AGYW and empowerment is framed in the current moment. Harris's (2004) work on the "future girl" highlights that AGYW are seen to be "flush with the gains of feminism, embarking on new education and career paths" and are "perfect candidates for a subjectivity built around self-invention, dynamism and capacity for change" (p. 44). While Harris (2004) refers to girls of the Global North in these instances, it is clear that some of these sensibilities manifest in the girl-centered campaigns and SGD programming that extends to the Global South. Indeed, the imagery and media content associated with the Girl Effect campaign deliver a visible and tangible notion of the "the flexible, self-made worker [that] … young women are imagined and encouraged to be" (Harris, 2004, p. 44).

The primary concern of these framings of AGYW's lives and futures rests with the way in which the onus is put on (individual) girls to bear the responsibility for families, communities, and economic change. Even with additional education and training, most AGYW will likely not be positioned to succeed in their existing social, economic, and political structures. Moreover, when AGYW fail to succeed, these failures will be assigned to them as individuals and not cast as failures of the larger structural systems in which they must try to operate. To further compound the situation, the (commercialized) "feminist" values of individual responsibility and self-reliance will be used against them in complex ways. That is, they will likely take up the language and perspectives of commercialized feminism to recognize and describe their own experiences and explain their shortcomings.

Goal-Delhi and the Global Urban

The lives of the AGYW who participated in this research were/are shaped by the larger contexts of urbanization, industrialization, globalization, internal migration, environmental degradation, and the gendered dimensions of mobilities in India (Chawansky & Schlenker, 2016). While this chapter cannot adequately address all of these forces, it will signpost one in particular – urbanization – as it relates to AGYW's economic empowerment in Delhi.

Considerations of the global urban and the process of urbanization are important for SDP research; a 2018 UN report predicts that "two out of every

three people are likely to be living in cities or other urban centers" by 2050 (UN, para. 1). These changes are tied to population growth, shifting demographics, and political will. The report notes that most of these megacities will be located in the Global South, and that New Delhi is projected to become the most populous city on the planet by 2028 (UN, 2018). Of note is that these stressed and stretched urban centres will not be sites of material prosperity because most "extreme poverty is concentrated in urban spaces, and national and city governments alike are struggling to accommodate the rising population in these areas" (UN-Habitat, n.d, para. 6). Scholars have explained the larger political will and context of these shifts in Delhi which offers some insights into the lives and backstories of the AGYW who took part in the research (see Bhan, 2009; Das & Walton, 2015). To move beyond Delhi and study these impending changes more generally, explorations of urbanization should consider both the implications of the physical movement from (in this case study) villages to cities and also the inevitable shifts in lifestyle choices and attitudes that accompany these migrations. Nuanced explorations of the urban poor and their experiences – especially in light of expected global population shifts – have been mostly underexplored in the SDP academic literature (Gruneau, 2016).

Feminist scholars have also called for more attention to analyses of urbanization and the global urban in light of the aforementioned projections (Peake, 2016). Peake (2016) puts forth a spirited call for feminist scholars to move into complex terrain within this research, arguing that:

> A feminist intervention … requires moving beyond the problematic categories that modernist/developmentalist approaches to understanding the urban South and North have created, to engage more fully with the everyday struggles of living and working that animate urban dwellers and the complex scaffolding upon which the vast majority of the world's women living in cities, the working poor, pin their hopes and dreams.
>
> (p. 225)

Our analysis of the participants in the Goal-Delhi initiative attempts to pay particular attention to this understanding of urbanization. It moves beyond Phadke's (2013) observation that, for girls and women, "cities are often seen as spaces of noise, dust, speed and worse, as locations of vice and violence. The city [then] is the space of excitement rather than calmness, of risk rather than safety" (p. 52). Instead, our research draws much-needed attention to the multiple ways urban spaces create new considerations and negotiations for program participants whose families had migrated to Delhi from various states in India. The research takes seriously their hopes, dreams, fears, and observations of living in urban Delhi.

In our analysis, we attempted to both straddle the local urban (Delhi) context and provide commentary on new understandings of the global urban for AGYW around the world. Where and when relevant, we provide contextual information on the lives of the girls in Delhi to help readers understand and interpret their words as they were shared with us. For example, the participants' beliefs in the

potential danger that awaited them as (newer) residents of urban Delhi resonate not only with typical understandings of the urban for girls and women but also with the global attention on the December 2012 gang rape and murder of Nirbhaya in South Delhi. Nirbhaya was a female student who was attacked while simply riding a bus with a friend, and the proximity of this violence weighed heavily on the minds of the participants and their families during our data collection in 2013–2014 (What is Nirbhaya case, 2019).

Yet, for as much danger that (potentially) awaited these AGYW in their urban lives, they expressed a willingness and hopefulness to craft a life narrative that would be decidedly different from those previously available to girls and women in their families. In our analysis below, we highlight some of these complex understandings of what the AGYW involved in our research thought was possible, mindful that challenging stereotypical gendered conventions and expectations are often seen as a first step toward economic empowerment. Our analysis outlines the ways that AGYW experienced the lessons from the program, as well as the negotiations they made and anticipated as "empowered" young women in urban Delhi.

Introducing Goal-Delhi

At the time this research was conducted, the program under study was referred to as "Goal-Delhi."[2] During our research, the Goal program was an endeavor supported by Standard Chartered Bank and Women Win, and the content and sport training sessions were delivered through a partnership with the Naz Foundation Trust in India. The Goal-Delhi program combined the sport of netball with life skills activity guides on health and hygiene (title: Be Healthy), communication skills and confidence (title: Be Yourself), rights and freedom from violence (title: Be Empowered), and financial literacy (title: Be Money Savvy). The Goal program was piloted in India in 2006, and at the time of this research (2013–2014), it operated in many schools across three large cities in India: Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai. Delhi was selected as our research site because of its long-standing commitment to Goal programming. One school-based site within the Goal-Delhi program was selected as the research location because of the support of the school principal and the previous success of this particular location. At present, there is related SGD programming housed within the Young People's Initiatives area that blends life skills and netball, but these initiatives were not a part of this research.

This data collection and larger research project was co-led by Megan, who was based in the United Kingdom at the time, and Payoshni, who was based in India at the time (Chawansky & Mitra, 2015, 2018). For ease, we locate the research in Delhi, but in reality, the data collection and analysis took place in various cities in India and England, as well as in virtual spaces. Despite some inevitable challenges

[2]Currently, it is listed as a part of the Young People's Initiatives at the Naz Foundation (India) Trust, a Delhi-based NGO.

along the way, our research partnership allowed us to bring complementary demeanors, skills, and perspectives to the project. We designed a qualitative case study approach to explore how the AGYW participants experienced the program and its intended broad aim of empowerment. The larger research project sought to understand if and how the direct beneficiaries – the AGYW participants – experienced the program and its intended aim of empowerment. Put differently, the research aspired to better understand the impact and benefit of the program curriculum and the netball trainings from the perspectives of the AGYW involved. In this chapter, we turn our attention only to the themes/activities related to economic empowerment. Some might fairly argue that the notion of economic empowerment is difficult to parse out from the other modules. We would concur, but suggest that a focused look at the conversations of economic empowerment reveals important insights into how girls might understand their future lives and (economic) possibilities in urban Delhi.

We followed a purposeful sample of 14 AGYW (aged 12–16) who were active at one Goal-Delhi project site. Primary data collection occurred at the beginning (November 2013), middle (April 2014) and end (August 2014) of the project in an attempt to capture the changes that occurred for girls as they participated in the program. We must note that the sample of girls who participated in this research project all served as classroom monitors, which means that they had some additional responsibilities to assist with school-related tasks and were likely seen as leaders by their peers. As such, they could be perceived as more ambitious or engaged in school and school-related activities in light of their roles as monitors. This should be taken into consideration while reviewing the analysis.

The Goal-Delhi program typically follows a 10-month cycle, with Community Sport Coaches (CSCs) generally coming to a school (or community site) twice per week to deliver netball and life skills trainings to a select group of students. The CSCs were older (than the AGYW) and, in most instances, had gone through the Goal program themselves. This is important to note. The CSCs were visible role models for the AGYW; they were from India and many lived in the local communities that served the programs. That said, there was a mixed response when we inquired about if and how the CSCs helped to support and mentor the AGYW outside of the regular sessions, so we must point out that this is our use of the term role model here.

The research visits included the analysis of key program documents (document analysis), participation in and observation of sport trainings and events (participant observation), creative methodologies (artwork and small group work), focus group and semi-structured interviews with the AGYW. We also interviewed various stakeholders affiliated with the organization, met with others in the SDP/sport sector in India to discuss our initial findings and observations, and visited the Goal offices in Mumbai to get an understanding of how the project operated in different settings. All interviews with the Goal participants were conducted by Dr. Payoshni Mitra in Hindi, recorded, and then translated into English by Mitra. Parental/guardian consent to participate was received for all those who were interviewed.

It is important to provide guidance here on how the excerpts below should be read and understood. The objective of the research project was to gather insights

from girls on how they thought the Goal program inspired change in their own lives, but this question did not limit itself to program-specific information. The participants steered the conversations, and often this included discussions of larger changes at home, within their families, or in society. Their insights did not necessarily refer to program content, and we did not force the conversations to do so. Of note, we did not witness specific elements of the financial literacy portion of the program being taught to the girls of the study, so our questions on this topic were discussed in more circuitous ways. Additionally, it is important to state that the excerpts below do not necessarily represent key themes within the larger research project. Instead, they offer insights into the complexities of economic empowerment messages by exploring how the girls within this study understood and made sense of economic progress and possibilities in their own lives. The extended excerpts and dialogue try to provide insight into the mindset of the girls on these issues.

In the subsections that follow, we are able to highlight the short-term impacts of the Goal-Delhi project for the AGYW who participated in our research. We present findings from our third field visit, in August 2014, during a 5-day visit to the school. The insights from this field visit were chosen for a closer analysis because the AGYW appeared more comfortable and willing to share their thoughts and experiences with us; the rapport and connection that Payoshni had forged with the participants was evident. During this data collection phase, we interviewed 12 out of our original 14 participants. Of the two that were not available, one had transferred to another school and the other student had married and no longer attended school. During this field visit, the participants were specifically asked to reflect on the changes they noted in themselves as a result of their participation in the program. Any identified changes – positive or negative – should be understood as correlated to the Goal experience and not necessarily caused by it.

Urban Delhi: Imagining a Future

During our third site visit (August 2014), we began with a group interview, eager to check in with the participants about what they had learned and what they were thinking about when it came to their futures. This logically followed interviews during prior visits wherein the AGYW shared their future aspirations with us by drawing pictures of and discussing their career goals and future aspirations. With this line of questioning, we were interested in what goals and visions the AGYW had for themselves and how they understood the education and steps needed to meet these goals. By our third field visit, we were interested in talking through how their lives might be different from the women who had come before them. We wanted to better understand how family support came to matter in their lives (Chawansky & Mitra, 2015b).

As noted above, since our second field visit (April 2014), one of the AGYW participants had been married, which brought a range of feelings for us and for the other AGYW in the program. Though we were interested in continuing to learn about her life and her experiences, we could not easily reach her without her

school affiliation. But, some of the other participants kept in contact with her, and we were able to engage with them about larger issues related to marriage and their futures. Notably, we explored how living in Delhi might have allowed for new considerations about their future lives. In the excerpt featured below, Payoshni led our group interview with the AGYW by asking a number of engaging questions. Multiple participants share their opinions on marriage and their opportunities as urban AGYW.

Payoshni (P): A lot of you have had your parents come to Delhi and therefore things are changing for you. What would it be like if you were growing up in the villages? How would your lives be different? Would life be any different for you?

Padma: There is a lot of difference. Our parents see girls in our neighbors' families who are working or going to school. That impacts them so they think they should send their daughters to school. In villages, the moment a girl is in class 8, they think that she has studied enough. In any case, they always want the girl to know less than the boy. Discrimination is always there. The girl can only study until grade 8 so that she doesn't know as much as the boy does.

P: Why can't the girl and boy be equally educated?

Padma: They do this because when the couple goes out, they want them to think that the boy is more educated. But now that we are in the city, my father saw the didi [older female neighbor] working and had a job, and so he thought that even I could be like that.

P: Who else agrees with Padma?

Meena: I agree. When you see the changes in society, you also change. That is why her father's mindset has also changed. So her father saw the girl next door, saw that she could work, and then he changed his mind. [*pauses*] Didi [*uses this term to respectfully address P*], but what Padma just said, it has happened to our friend, Aparna [the peer who had been married]. Aparna's husband passed class 10, and she only just passed class 8.

Maya: I have spoken to her and her mother. I asked her [Aparna] why she wasn't studying. She said my husband's family doesn't want this, and if they don't want it, how can I keep studying? Now she is at home.

P:	She is not studying anymore?
Several of the group responds:	No.
P:	What did she want?
Maya:	She said, "If they would allow me to study more, I would. If they won't, then I wouldn't."
P:	What do you think? She should have studied more?
Group:	*Overwhelmingly*, *the girls say*, *yes*.
Maya:	And her husband should also say, "You should study more, and do well in life."

This exchange reveals some noteworthy perspectives on the topic of marriage – and arranged marriage in particular – which we then revisited in subsequent interviews. Most saw marriage as a part of their future life trajectories, although some had given more thought about what exactly this might look like and what kind of partner they deemed suitable. Most believed that arranged marriages made sense, especially if (as is often the case) there was some input from the girls on the ultimate choice of partner. Going against one's family and choosing a "love" marriage could bring unnecessary challenges and strife to the family. As one participant would later share, if your love marriage failed, you would lose both your partner and your family (who likely would not have approved in the first place), so the calculation proved risky. In this instance, the AGYW adopted a stance that most would carry throughout subsequent interviews; they understood why Aparna was married, and they did not fault or criticize her. The larger concern with their peer's marriage was the decision to stop her education. Access to an education was highly valued by the girls, and increasingly by their families, including brothers who became allies and advocates as the next exchange demonstrates.

Payoshni (P):	Where do you want to see your family in the future?
Sunita:	Now my father's mindset in relation to women and girls is not very good. I'll hope that his thinking changes … in a good way. My father was saying that they will marry me off in a few months. It is only because of my brother that this plan has been thwarted. I hope my father's thinking about girls will change. My mother is supportive of me.
P:	So there are talks about marriage now at home?

Sunita: Yes, so when I went to the village now, my uncles began to say, "This girl has become older [and should be married]." This and that. They were telling my father, so my brother got very angry and brought me back to Delhi.

P: What is your brother studying now?

Sunita: He is doing a teaching course in college.

P: BEd? [Bachelor's in Education]

Sunita: Yes

P: Is he much older to you?

Sunita: Yes, six years older than me….

P: What are your thoughts about marriage?

Sunita: [laughs] Didi, I think I don't need anyone. In every sphere of life, I can lead it on my own. And also, there is so much restriction on women after marriage … as in whatever the boy says, that is what you are forced to do. And also his family. Whatever they say, you have to follow. So after getting married, you can't do things that you want to do … like the way you can do what you want now. For example, if I want to study further after I get married I will have to ask permission from the boy and his family, and maybe they will not allow me to study. This is not right.

In another small group interview during this final field visit, Payoshni was engaging in small talk with the AGYW, and she asked where they had been and what had occurred since we had last visited them. Their responses indicate yet again the subtle ways the urbanization process impacted the lives of AGYW, this time as it related to mobility.

P: Do you go to the village, Sangita?

Sangita: Yes, to my grandmother's.

P: Is life different there?

Sangita: Life would have been different. Most things would be similar, but certain things would be different.

P: Such as?

Sangita: Like, in villages, the moment it is dark, they will ask you to come. They will ask the girls not to go out. This is something I don't like … that you have to come home the moment it is dark. There are many other things that I don't like. The situations there are a bit down [negative].

P: Madhu, do you think the same?

Madhu: Yes, because in villages they hardly allow girls to go out. We just get to go to school and then from school to home.

P: Do you go out in the evening here?

Madhu: Yes, didi.

P: Aren't you scared?

Madhu: No. Earlier we used to be scared, but now we are not.

P: Sangita? Are you afraid?

Sangita: We used to be scared earlier, but now we are not scared at all.

The excerpts above reveal a variety of interesting and complex sentiments about the lives and futures for the AGYW in urban Delhi. There were presumably more opportunities present in an urban context – for education, training, and work prospects – and the attitudes of family members were (in most instances) slowly adjusting to incorporate these realities into the expectations for the AGYW. Alongside this, most of the AGYW felt more comfortable in navigating and moving through these urban spaces for these opportunities. Their conversations with us did not always specify why this was the case, but it may be due to some of the features of the urban context that we noted. Foremost, more people were on the roads in and around the school, and this is likely different from life in many of the villages. The presence of others may have provided a sense of comfort and anonymity that allowed them to move through the streets to their various destinations with less fear. Additionally, infrastructure such as street lighting and the proximity of public transportation (the Delhi metro stopped near the school) helped create safer spaces for the AGYW to move around the schools and their homes.

Role Models: Imagining a Future

As noted above, the Goal curriculum aims to educate in the broad areas of health and hygiene, self-confidence, communication, and financial literacy. Several of the participants reported knowledge acquisition in these thematic areas, and most reported that they enjoyed learning about the sport of netball, although they noted that they would also like to learn other sports as well. When pressed to describe in more detail what they had learned, some shared that they now knew more about gender (expressed primarily in terms of the difference between boys and girls), forms of violence, HIV transmission, and the proper way to dispose of rubbish. Though financial literacy is advertised as a hallmark of the project, the participants did not report receiving any information on this topic. The fact that the participants reported no gains in terms of financial knowledge may be due to the timing of the third field visit as the AGYW had not yet completed their entire Goal program. While most participants noted knowledge gains in particular areas, some felt that the Goal life skills lectures merely repeated information that they already knew, either from school or other sources.

The learning occurred largely through lectures, activities, or written work that the AGYW completed. In addition, the participants also learned about themselves and their futures through the visible role models who led the Goal program. The young women who served as CSCs led the Goal programming and were important visible role models for the participants, both in terms of their physical presence and the informal conversations they were able to have with AGYW participants. As Meier and Saavedra (2009) note, "role models can be thought of as maps that indicate a distinct destination and a clear route to that destination" (p. 1168). For the AGYW in this program, the destination was "empowerment," and CSCs assisted them in understanding what that might look like in their lives. While research in SGD has focused on the significance of sporting and celebrity role models, here we highlight the importance of the more accessible role models. These CSCs (frequently referred to as "didis") often offered unique perspectives to the AGYW when it came to gender norms and expectations. These excerpts capture the significance of this role modeling when it comes to feeling safe outside of the home, on roads, and moving within the urban environment:

Payoshni (P):	Earlier you all were talking about feeling unsafe on the roads, learning self-defense.[3] What do you think about this now?
Pooja:	Now I don't feel scared. If a person doesn't go out, how will they know if it is scary or not? Now I am not scared. But it is still good to learn self-defense. If there is an emergency, you can use self-defense.
P:	And you [to Lakshimi]?
Lakshimi:	I agree with Pooja. Now we don't need all of that because we have gained a lot of strength and courage because of the netball sessions.
P:	Really?
Lakshimi/ Pooja:	Yes.
P:	What kind of strength?
Lakshimi:	We see these didis [CSCs], and we want to be like them. We feel that in the future, we will also teach younger kids netball. There are also other things that they teach us. We feel that there has been some strength inside us now. Some strength has entered our bodies.

In addition to serving as role models, some participants viewed the CSCs as trusted guides on navigating the fear and uncertainty of urban life as AGYW. An unanticipated and persistent theme of this research relates to girls'

[3]Many of the AGYW learned self-defense through a program at the school. It was not part of the Goal curriculum.

experiences of public spaces and how that relates to broader issues of economic empowerment, mobility, and safety for girls and women within Delhi (see Pilot and Prabhu (2014) for more context on GBV in public spaces). The AGYW of this project report that their understandings of safety and violence come from television shows, newspapers, their parents, and witnessing violence in/around school. CSCs offered additional perspectives for the AGYW to consider, as Zari shared below:

Payoshni: So, think about it … Through these netball programs, the way you used to see the world, see things around you, people around you … has that changed?

Zari: Yes. These didis told us that there are some differences between boys and girls. But then, not much difference as well. So, didis said that we can go out. There shouldn't be any problems. We can go out like boys. So now, I go [out] for shopping. Even if it is alone. I am not scared at all. I don't know why. They [CSCs] say that's probably that I have some sort of belief inside me, some sort of courage.

Payoshni: What have the didis said?

Zari: They have talked about the difference between boys and girls. I told them [didis/CSCs] that my parents said that I should be careful, that I need to be safe. They [CSCs] have told me that if you go out, you will know that it is not that unsafe. When you go out, only then will you know how things work outside. Then you will feel good. If you sit at home because of fear, then nothing will happen. So, I have started going out. I don't feel afraid. Nothing happens. I travel very peacefully.

An obvious concern with the exchange between Payoshni and Zari is that these comments place the responsibility on AGYW to know how to defend themselves and to take (individual responsibility) for their safety. This is something that Payoshni raised in subsequent interviews/interactions with the participants; many recognized that boys needed to be raised differently so that girls and women did not have to bear this responsibility. Additionally, though, a significant point here is that the AGYW were beginning to think through and reflect upon issues and cultural messages of mobility and safety, in part through conversations with CSCs. In other instances, the AGYW cited more famous role models as significant in their lives, but ultimately, they still returned to how all of these varied role models presented new opportunities for girls of their generation. Additionally, they witnessed themselves becoming role models for other (female) family members, and the girls were quite pleased with this newfound respect as the next two excerpts reveal.

Payoshni (P): Where do you see your families in a few years time? Maybe in a few years?

Trina: When we become something ourselves, we will want our families to be proud of us. So they can say, because we have educated our daughters, they have become someone. So other parents will see that and will educate their girls/ daughters. They will think that if their daughter could do something, then our daughters could also achieve something. So all the people who are in this world, they should be told that they should educate their daughters properly so that all girls can complete their education.

P: [To Sangita] Where would you like to see your family? You have your aunt, right? You are very close to her.

Sangita: I want to see that my family is good. That it has a good name. So that people can say, "For this girl … for this family has progressed." I want that my family will become very known.

Sunitra: I want to say something. Trina and Sangita are saying that if we do something, others will follow suit. We have women like [Indira] Gandhi, but then young girls in villages, they have never gotten inspired by these women.

Sangita: There is no influence?

Trina: It has an influence on me. Wherever they could reach and wherever their names could reach, there has been a positive influence. For instance, this tennis player [Sania Mirza] and we have a boxer, Mary Kom…there is an effect on girls' lives because of these women. So, if there are more girls doing well, then more people will know. And in villages, more people will send their daughters to school. From that, people should know how to perceive things.

Sangita: Didi, change has come.

Excerpt 2:

P: In the last four months, when we didn't meet, have there been any changes in your family?

Priya: Yes, there have been some changes. In fact, not in my own family. One of my distant uncles, he has changed by seeing my father.

P: How?

Priya: He has noticed that my father is allowing me to study further so he thought that he should also educate his daughter. Earlier he used to think that he will send his daughter to school until class 8. But now he has changed. He thinks that it is important for a girl to study further.

P: Really? Is that because he saw you doing well?

Priya: Yes.

P: So, did you like this?

Priya: Yes. I liked this very much. That someone is getting an opportunity to study more in life by seeing me. Perhaps the girl would not have gotten this chance otherwise.

In these exchanges, we witness an interesting turn of events from the AGYW highlighting and naming key role models in their lives to seeing themselves as role models for future girls that they have not yet met. In some ways, these excerpts allow us to see how AGYW envision themselves as agents of social change. But, there is also reason to reflect more thoroughly on this positive interpretation. The AGYW seem to feel a pressure to be a certain kind of role model/woman, one that will fulfill the expectations of "good" girls and make their families proud. They will become "something" and one might expect that to be economically secure and able to help provide for her family. They have to prove that they are worthy of being an inspiration and a role model, and this may still be tied closely to others' (family and community members) ideas of who they should be instead of their own ideas. This is an issue tangentially discussed in Meier and Saavedra (2009) when they explore how individual and communal visions for one's life play out in different contexts. That is, the notion of "each individual going alone" does not resonate across all cultures and contexts and therefore having a vision of one's future life that aligns with one's family and community may be a viable path forward for AGYW in this instance (Meier & Saavedra, 2009, p. 1170).

Enacting Empowerment: Negotiating with Parents and Family Members

During our final field visit, we concluded each small group interview by asking participants what they would change about the Goal-Delhi program. We wanted to offer them a chance to think critically about what they were being taught and to identify what unexpected gaps existed when it came to their abilities to apply the empowerment messages coming to them from both the CSCs and the sessions. In most instances, the AGYW had few suggestions. Some wanted a bit more variety (in terms of sport offerings) and one other wanted more opportunities to lead (as a peer leader) within the program. Unexpectedly, a few mentioned that they needed support and practical guidance on how to enact the empowerment lessons being taught to them. The AGYW had different ways of dealing with and challenging their family's concerns, fears, and limiting ideas. Many struggled with

how to deal with these tensions and the rules of their families. Below, Payoshni engages with one AGYW that aspires to "move forward" in her life, but does not have the support of her family members. She helps to explain how she works through these differences in opinion.

Aparna: If we listen to them [family] all the time, then when will I listen to myself? Ma'am, if I listen to all the things they tell me … my father, my mother and my brother … then how will I move forward?

Payoshni (P): Can you clarify?

Aparna: Ma'am, for example, they (family) ask me not to play netball. If I listen to them, then my friends and other kids will go ahead in their lives. But I will stay here.

P: So?

Aparna: This is why I listen to some of the things they tell me, but then [I] also don't listen to some of the things. For example, they keep telling me, "Don't go anywhere." But I tell them, "I will go."

P: So, you think there are some restrictions that are fine, but that there are some restrictions in life that they should not impose on you?

Aparna: Yes ma'am.

The issue comes up again, with another AGYW. Similarly, she wishes that there were some more specific discussions or strategies for how to deal with the real-life tensions she is encountering while trying to apply the empowerment lessons she is learning.

P: Are there any issues that they could have discussed [in the program] that they didn't? For example, they have talked HIV, your bodies, violence, sexual violence. Is there anything else you wanted them to talk about?

Trina: For example, psychological pressure. Those people who put a lot of pressure on girls, and tell them not to do this, do this, don't go there. They can teach all of that.

P: Teach what? How one can convince the parents?

Trina: Like parents put a lot of pressure. Grandparents put a lot of pressure. They belong to a different generation. They are not educated. They don't understand that in present times, things have changed. They don't know about all of that. How they used to think – years ago – they still think like that. But this cannot go on. Mindsets should change.

P: You think the didis can teach girls how to deal with this at home? That's what you need guidance on?

Trina: Yes

This is something that the participants noted with frequency; the AGYW had varying degrees of success in advocating for themselves within their families. As they pointed out, perhaps some form of engagement from the programs to the parents/families might have lessened the (perceived) distance to what the AGYW saw and wanted in their lives and the expectations of family. While some seemed able to adjust their expectations and desires (for more freedom and mobility), others pushed back consistently against the expectations they felt were unfair. Although this need for independence and "freedom" may be a common feature of adolescence, there is some uniqueness in the sense of the messaging that the girls are receiving from the Goal program as well as the shifting family structures and dynamics due to urbanization.

Conclusions

> What I know about my life is that I want to be self-reliant. I don't want to be dependent on anyone else. I used to think about this before as well, and even now, I think the same. I want to become an *independent girl* (says "independent girl" in English).
>
> –Sangita

As Sangita told us about her life, she spoke mainly in Hindi and to Payoshni. But, in the excerpt above, she sheepishly uttered the idea of becoming an "independent girl" in English, with a mix of pride and hesitancy. We presume the mixed emotions emerged from a concern about speaking English proficiently and also about what this utterance might actually mean in her life. What can, does, and should an independent girl do with her life? Who can she depend on? What changes will be needed by her family and community to help her realize this independence? How does urban Delhi support her aspirations? Our research suggests that this is an ever-evolving set of questions, one that was being actively negotiated by the AGYW, the families, and their communities during the time of this research in Delhi.

This chapter sought to help contextualize the transformations in the lives of AGYW by noting how and where urbanization shaped opportunities and expectations. We also highlighted moments wherein the AGYW recognized values attached to outdated notions of education, marriage, and mobilities. Peake (2016)

reminds us that this is the direction that feminist research on women (and by extension, girls) and the urban should take:

> The meanings attached to the term [woman] are mobile and move across historical and geographical terrains … these mobile meanings are often tethered to commonsensical notions of truth that can be taken for granted, obscuring the historical and geographical conditions that made and remake them.
>
> (p. 220)

This research captures these meanings of girlhood moving across different spaces and generations, shifting from rural to urban and manifesting in the lives of AGYW. The "truths" that underpin what girlhood looks like in India (in 2013–14) are also subject to the disruption and unmaking that is taking place through the lived experiences of the AGYW in this program.

The "truths" about girlhood that are actively being upended are being replaced by a new set of truths, those associated with the Girl Effect and other campaigns interested in girls' (economic) empowerment. The main concern with this is that these new truths access tenets of commercialized feminism throughout the life skills and training sessions. As such, an individual AGYW will learn the accepted discourse of female empowerment, but she will likely be left without adequate support to realize her aspirations. This concern is exemplified by the quotation that begins this section and the question that still remains for us at this point in time.

This chapter took a closer look at the Goal-Delhi project and attempted to consider the multiple layers of change that must occur for economic empowerment to be realized. The analysis examines, per Pereznieto and Taylor (2014), how "women and girls experience transformation in power and agency, as well as economic advancement" (p. 234). Economic empowerment programming that involves AGYW begins by challenging stereotypes and expanding ideas about what is possible for their lives. Ideally, it then helps to set up specific opportunities for education and skills training that allow AGYW to move into employment. While this research showed clear evidence of the first part, the second element was not visible to us during this research. Since we followed the AGYW for only one year, it is unclear how and where this research shaped their future lives. That said, the program did advertise some limited opportunities for job shadowing and internships, so there is some sense that girls who stayed involved would receive support for the next steps of their "professional" development. However, this part of the programming was neither readily visible nor offered to the AGYW we interviewed, so it is unclear how available these opportunities are.

Future research on this program or others that seek to economically empower AGYW are well positioned to engage with the key threads of this concept in SGD and SDP. Since a clear case is being made both within and outside of SDP for the economic empowerment of girls, it is important to examine and reflect upon the gendered underpinnings of discourses surrounding economic empowerment.

Researchers must carefully examine why these calls are so prevalent, what might be the costs for AGYW, and what understandings of employability and empowerment predominate. From these beginning questions, researchers will then be able to delve into the specific dimension about how a select program or participants actualize economic empowerment for AGYW within local contexts.