Report

# ‘Now I can propose ideas that can solve any problem’

## The role of community awareness interventions in tackling child marriage in Ethiopia

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Key messages

- Community awareness interventions need to be tailored to match the local drivers of child marriage and take advantage of the local factors already working to discourage it.
- Community dialogues are an effective intervention, but genuinely transformatory impacts require targeting both girls and their social norm gatekeepers. Accordingly, programming needs to be aimed simultaneously at adolescents (girls and boys) and adults (parents and community and religious leaders)-— preferably in an age-segmented manner.
- Opportunities for face-to-face discussion improve uptake of messages delivered via media sources.
- NGO programming can help government structures remain focused on gender issues so that they are not lost in broader modernisation themes.
- Where communication interventions are bundled with other programming (such as economic empowerment activities), rigorous monitoring and evaluation is needed in order to disentangle impact pathways and maximise lesson learning.

# Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank Ato Ahmed Wasse Jemal, Programme Director of Hiwot Ethiopia for support during the fieldwork, to Chanyalew Gebeyehu, ADA South Wollo Coordinator for his unreserved support in sending documents and giving helpful information, and Georgia Plank, and Nabeela Ahmed for research assistance.

We give special thanks to all the beneficiaries and community leaders who gave their time to answer our questions.

# Table of contents

**Acknowledgements** ii

**Abbreviations** iii

**Executive summary** 4
Overview and report aims 4
Study sample and methodology 4
Key findings 5
Conclusions and policy and programming implications 6

**1 Introduction** 11
1.1 Report aims and key research questions 12

**2 Research framework and approach** 14
2.1 Study objectives, design and methodology 17
2.2 Case study selection in Ethiopia 17
2.3 Ethical considerations 18

**3 Situating our findings: the patterning and prevalence of child marriage in Amhara** 19

**4 Policy and programming landscape overview** 22
4.1 Overview of laws and policies that shape child marriage 22
4.2 Overview of programming targeting child marriage 23

**5 Hiwot Ethiopia: Community dialogue and peer-to-peer education** 25
5.1 Programme site overview 25
5.2 Programme overview 25
5.3 Project goals and modalities 26
5.4 Internal evaluation/secondary materials 27
5.5 Primary research findings 27
5.6 Conclusions and lessons learned 34

**6 Amhara Development Association: Girls Club Initiative** 35
6.1 Project goals and modalities 35
6.2 ICRW evaluation 37
6.3 Primary research findings 38
6.4 Conclusions 46

**7 Yegna: A social communication platform** 47
7.1 Programme site overview 47
7.2 Programme overview 48
7.3 Project goals and modalities 48

7.4 Internal evaluation/secondary materials 49
7.5 Primary research findings 50
7.6 Conclusions and lessons learned 59

**8 Conclusions and policy/ programming recommendations 60**
8.1 Conclusions 60
8.2 Policy and programming recommendations 62

**References 67**

**Appendix 70**

**Annex 2: Research instruments 71**

**Annex 3: Policy review of the inclusion of social norms in Ethiopian policies and strategies relevant to child marriage 80**

**Annex 4: Amhara Child Marriage Programme Mapping 84**

**Annex 5: Overview of Merhabete *Woreda*/North Shao Zone, Amhara Region 87**

**Annex 6: Overview of Dire Roka *Kebele*, Habru *Woreda*, North Wollo Administrative Zone, Amhara Region 88**

**Annex 7: Overview of Segno Gebeya *Kebele*, Woreilu *Woreda*, South Wollo Zone, Amhara Region 90**

**Figures**

Figure 1: Percentage of women 20-24 who were married by age 18 11
Figure 2: Conceptual framework for gender norm change through communications 16
Figure 3: Map of Amhara, Ethiopia showing our study sites 18
Figure 4: Age at first marriage, by region, for women 20-49 19
Figure 5: Hiwot goals and modalities (Hiwot Ethiopia, 2013) 26
Figure 6: ADA project theory of change 36
Figure 7: Yenga project objectives 49

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AWA | Amhara Women's Association |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| DHS | Demographic and Health Survey |
| FGD | Focus group discussion |
| FGM | Female genital mutilation/cutting |
| GHE | Girl Hub Ethiopia |
| GII | Gender Inequality Index |
| HTP | Harmful traditional practice |
| IDI | In-depth interview |
| IEC | Information, education and communication |
| ICRW | International Center for Research on Women |
| KI | Key informant |
| M&E | Monitoring and evaluation |
| MMR | Menstruation management room |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| SIGI | Social Institutions and Gender Index |
| SRH | Sexual and reproductive health |
| WASH | Water, sanitation and hygiene |
| WCYA | Women, Children and Youth Affairs |

# Executive summary

## Overview and report aims

Ethiopia has seen strong economic growth over the past decade and it was one of the top-performers in terms of the Millennium Development Goals (IMF, 2013). Nevertheless, it remains one of the world's poorest countries with almost the entire population reliant on subsistence agriculture (Rahmato, 2013; Moges, 2013), while it ranks 173rd out of 186 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2013).

While there have been recent improvements in terms of reproductive health and education, due to the concerted efforts of both the government and NGOs, Ethiopian women and girls remain particularly disadvantaged. The Gender Inequality Index (GII)[1] ranks Ethiopia 121st out of 151 countries[2] and the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) rates it 'high' in terms of gender discriminatory institutions, largely due to pervasive violence against women and women's lack of access to assets.[3] Notwithstanding recent and accelerating progress towards eliminating child marriage, which is outlawed under the Ethiopian Criminal Code, with significant penalties in place since 2005, the country continues to have one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. The median age at which Ethiopian women aged 15-49 marry is only 16.5 years and 40% of all women in their early 20s were married before they turned 18 (CSA and ICF International, 2012). Given the array of consequences that stem from child marriage and early childbearing, ranging from interrupted schooling to maternal death to intergenerational poverty, the Ethiopian government and development partners are directing considerable programming investments to eliminating the practice by 2025.

This report is the final product of a three-year programme of work on adolescent girls and the social norms that preclude gender justice in developing country contexts. Working in Amhara regional state, in year one we began by mapping adolescent girls' intersecting capabilities, capturing the complex interplay between gender and poverty on girls' educational, physical, and psycho-emotional well-being. We identified the cultural premium accorded to female 'purity' and 'virginity', along with daughters' filial piety, as key to understanding adolescent girls' vulnerabilities (Tefera et al., 2013). In the second year we focused on the social norms shaping girls' educational opportunities and vulnerability to child marriage (Jones et al., 2014a). Our research identified the ways in which social norms that see girls as little more than symbols of family honour and a critical source of domestic labour too often preclude investment in their broader capabilities. For the third round of research, in 2014, we focused on community-based communication initiatives aimed at shifting the entrenched social norms that constrain girls' futures. We sought to identify examples of good practice and to ascertain the external and internal programming factors contributing to programme success. After presenting our three primary research case studies, we conclude the report by offering overarching policy and programming recommendations.

## Study sample and methodology

Our work was conducted in Amhara Regional State, which has the country's lowest median age at first marriage – 15.1 years (CSA and ICF International, 2012) – and, with 56% of all women in their early 20s having been married before their 18th birthdays, its second highest rate of child marriage (UNFPA, 2012). In order to complement ongoing work the research team is undertaking for UNICEF and the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C),[4] we selected programmes not already included in that project (Jones et al., forthcoming a,b). Of the three programmes we assessed, two were broadly aimed at improving

1 The GII is a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market.
2 http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-4-gender-inequality-index
3 See http://genderindex.org/country/ethiopia
4 A governmental/donor/NGO initiative to end both practices by 2025.

girls' sexual and reproductive health (SRH) practices. The first, by the NGO Hiwot Ethiopia, includes a community dialogue initiative designed to sensitise communities to the risks of child marriage. The second, by the NGO Amhara Development Association, relies primarily on girls' clubs and a menstrual management scheme, both of which aim to keep girls in school and thereby delay marriage and motherhood. For our third assessment we chose the DFID/Girl Hub-funded social marketing initiative Yegna and its community radio component.

## Key findings

Overall our findings suggested that communication initiatives involving school- and community-based opportunities for dialogue and reflection constituted important avenues to start shifting discriminatory gender norms, but that more strategic, multi-pronged approaches would be required to achieve more transformatory change.

### Hiwot Ethiopia: Community dialogue and peer-to-peer education

Since 2009, Hiwot Ethiopia has been implementing a project funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to address the SRH needs of young people in North Shoa Zone of Amhara Region. Hiwot Ethiopia's approach has three key distinctive elements. First, while its goals are to eliminate child marriage and delay first pregnancies, it recognises the centrality of gender norms and includes boys and men in all programming elements. Second, it builds on Ethiopia's Development Army structure and works through 1-to-5 groups. Third, community members are allocated to groups on the basis of their age and stage in life and are targeted for either peer-to peer, mother-to-mother or house-to-house education.

Overall, our research in Yesamamba *kebele* found that Hiwot Ethiopia's various modalities are functioning well because they have been carefully tailored to meet the needs of the community. For example, both girls and parents reported an increased awareness of the harmful effects of child marriage, an improved commitment to girls' education and a better understanding of the child marriage law. Adolescent girls also reported an increased awareness of SRH services. This said, Hiwot Ethiopia faces a number of sustainability hurdles. These include meeting fatigue, internal management challenges, and a need to include elders and local leaders more effectively. Key lessons learnt from Hiwot Ethiopia are:

- Strong coordination between government structures and NGOs is crucial for success, especially now that NGOs are unable to work directly at community level following the Ethiopian Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2009.
- Peer-to-peer, age-segmented communication can be powerful provided facilitators are provided with adequate training.
- Awareness raising about the law against child marriage is a necessary but insufficient condition for combating child marriage.
- Improving incentives (e.g., T-shirts or refreshments) to engage in community dialogue initiatives may motivate more community members to attend, but there are questions around sustainability.
- Local elders, especially the men who generally uphold social norms, should be included more systematically in community conversations and awareness-raising efforts.

### Amhara Development Association: Girls Club Initiative

Amhara Development Association (ADA), with support from the Packard Foundation, has invested nearly five years in a project entitled '*Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health Practices of Young Girls in Amhara Region through Retention of Girls and Mainstreaming SRH Activities in the School System*'. The ADA project, which is primarily aimed at improving girls' educational outcomes but ultimately also at delaying both marriage and motherhood, was launched as a pilot in 2010 and taken to scale in 2012. According to the ADA, by 2013 it was working in over 180 schools, directly reaching nearly 100,000 adolescents and had prevented nearly 650 child marriages (ADA, 2013). Past evaluations of the programme have found that ADA's work, which is based on a conceptually grounded theory of change, is largely positive.

Our assessment, in Woreilu *woreda*, found slightly more mixed results, with both strong positive outcomes and missed opportunities. On the one hand, ADA's chosen modalities, especially girls' clubs and menstrual management, are helping to keep girls in school, bolstering their self-esteem and confidence, improving their

understanding of reproductive biology, as well as promoting more gender-equitable relationships with male classmates. Furthermore, trainings for parents and close work with local government structures (such as the Women's Development Army) have improved community awareness about child marriage. On the other hand, ADA is not sufficiently targeting adults – particularly parents and religious officials – with enough direct education, meaning that even when girls' aspirations are transformed they are often not given the opportunity to pursue different trajectories. Key lessons learnt from the Amhara Development Association programme are:

- Well-managed girls' clubs can provide emotional support and role models for girls, both crucial ingredients in empowerment.
- Continuous programme monitoring and evaluation can build strong and responsive programming.
- Menstrual management schemes can improve both girls' school attendance and their academic performance. It can also reduce the risk of school dropout.
- Parents and communities need to be directly targeted through programming efforts rather than relying solely on the spill-over effects of school-based programming if social norm change is to be a reality.

### Yegna: A social communication platform

Our third case study focused on Yegna. Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and part of Girl Hub's broader international effort to improve the lives of girls in developing countries, Yegna was started in 2013 and is a branded social communications platform developed as an initiative to encourage behavioural change among girls and the wider community. In its current form, it is Girl Hub Ethiopia's flagship radio programme and includes dramas, a talk show and music, all of which champion girls and aim to create a national conversation about their potential. The radio drama and talk show address issues such as violence against girls, forced marriage, teenage pregnancy and school attendance.

While Yegna has shown positive impacts overall, our Amharan fieldwork found a mixed picture. On the one hand, in *kebeles* with electricity, and where girls' listening groups allow girls to listen together and discuss what they've heard, Yegna has not only introduced girls to new ideas but has strengthened the Women's Development Army's role in tackling gender discriminatory social norms. On the other hand, in *kebeles* without electricity and where girls are left to listen alone, the impact has been more muted. Furthermore, Yenga does not sufficiently target boys and men. Key lessons learnt regarding Yegna are:

- Strong coordination with the Amhara Women's Association has improved grassroots uptake.
- Creative and innovative mediums, such as drama, are generating community dialogues around the value of girls, often for the first time.
- Good monitoring and evaluation (M&E) between programme implementers and coordinators has promoted positive impacts in sites where there is a face-to-face programming component.
- Yegna's use of Women's Development Armies is an effective way to transmit messages, although care needs to be taken to avoid meeting fatigue by applying innovative media tools.
- Programming should proactively target boys and men and encourage them to support the emergence of more equitable gender norms.

## Conclusions and policy and programming implications

### Conclusions

Drawing on the extensive primary research evidence base that we have developed over the past three years, we now have an in-depth understanding of the complexities of Amharan adolescent girls' lives and the ways in which the gendered social norms that influence their life trajectories are evolving unevenly over time—allowing some girls to effectively substitute education for child marriage but restricting most to some combination of the two.

With regard to child marriage, we note that:

- **Social norms that focus on girls' sexual purity push both parents and girls towards child marriage,** with marriage considered prestigious for girls' parents and unmarried girls facing stigma.

- **Local elders and religious leaders are often gatekeepers** of these norms, in some communities holding them in place and in others encouraging change.

- **Overall, girls' education helps delay marriage,** in part because schooling locates girls as children and in part because it empowers them to make better decisions about their own lives.

- With tailored education, **fathers and brothers can be critical allies,** helping girls stay in school and unmarried.

- **Marriage is often merely a default option.** In many cases girls marry solely because they have left school, do not have access to either land or their own paid employment and are resented by their parents for their 'idleness'.

- **While in most communities 'good' girls are those who listen to their parents,** there are nascent shifts in decision-making with parents allowing girls to choose their own partners and time their own marriages.

- **Health extension programming – and the 1-to-5 community groups that have ultimately grown out of it –have been vital** to expanding community awareness about the risks of child marriage because of their effective grassroots penetration.

- **Both legal awareness (about the age of marriage) and legal enforcement are patchy.** In many communities the marriage of 15 year olds is not considered child marriage. In others, an increasing reliance on 'hidden' marriages means that child marriage continues unabated.

With regard to education, we note that:

- **Uptake of primary education is increasing rapidly,** however, due to both costs and parents' concerns about girls' sexual purity, **access to secondary school remains very limited.**

- **Parents' reliance on girls' domestic labour limits their schooling.** Girls are made to miss school more than boys and are not given sufficient time for studying school lessons or doing homework.

- **Girls' interest in education and employment is expanding.** While migration and marriage continue to attract many girls, especially in communities without strong role models, most girls now aspire to high school.

- **Parents' and men's interest in girls' education is expanding,** with parents wanting to foster their daughters' self-reliance and men preferring to marry educated girls and women.

- **School clubs can transform girls' lives.** They build confidence and voice and can radically alter girls' aspirations, especially when they are combined with programming that reaches parents and other social norms gatekeepers – and does not exclude boys.

- **Adolescent girls need more educational options.** Those who do not attend high school, or who fail their grade 10 exams, need training opportunities that would help them achieve the independence that would allow them to delay marriage.

### Policy recommendations

As resourcing is scaled up to meet the government's 2025 deadline for the elimination of child marriage, we offer a number of policy and programming recommendations. Some of our suggestions grow directly out of our programme case studies and are aimed explicitly at communication approaches. Others flow more organically out of local realities and are accordingly broader.

*In regard to child marriage*

- Given how quickly the patterning of child marriage is shifting, with rapid declines seen in some regions and increases in others, it is important to **collect better data** about how many girls are married and at what age they marry. Moreover, in light of the diversity of marital forms, even within Amhara, it is also important to track what those marriages actually entail.

- Develop **more effective systems for enforcing the laws on child marriage**. This should include attention to developing consistent reporting chains, so that girls know where to turn for help, and providing *kebele* level officials with the support they need in order to consistently enforce the law.

*In regard to girls' education and employment*

- Given that girls who become pregnant, whether within or outside of marriage, are shamed into leaving school, **schools need to ensure that students have access to comprehensive SRH information and contraceptives.**

- **Compulsory schooling should be enforced** for all children through the end of 8$^{th}$ grade—even if they are married. Thereafter there is a need for systems to **ensure that rural children are better prepared for national exams**.

- A**ll schools need gender segregated toilets--**which provide girls with adequate privacy, especially for menstrual management given related cultural taboos.

- **Families need support in order to send their children to secondary school**. The government and donors should strongly consider cash transfers that incentivise girls' education as these would simultaneously address the need for better poverty programming and restrictive gender norms. Girls would especially benefit from dormitories at secondary and tertiary levels as onsite living arrangements would help allay parents' fears about sexual violence.

- **Adolescent girls need employment options** if they are to remain unmarried and in control of their own lives. To this end, there is a critical need for vocational training programmes and non-migratory employment for adolescent girls. Globally the evidence base on good practice remains relatively limited in this area and thus we suggest an investment in pilot initiatives to test what sorts of approaches are more effective in which local contexts.

*In regard to fostering cooperation between NGOs and the government*

- Because drama can be a powerful teacher, we suggest that the government (which controls the media) and NGOs (who have media expertise) work together to **develop national level media programming for TV and radio** that addresses child marriage specifically and gender inequality more generally.

- Because in the long run government programming is both the broadest and the most sustainable at scale, we suggest the development of systems to **ensure that community-based programming is integrated into and complements government programmes**.

- In order to support learning, it is important to **develop robust monitoring and evaluation systems** that link indigenous NGOs such as the Amhara Development Association and Hiwott Ethiopia to funding and ministerial level support.

**Programming recommendations**

*Design for better communications-focused interventions*

- **Participatory design builds stronger programmes.** Where communities are involved in selecting messages and modalities, they tend to select the ones they will be most likely to hear.

- **Community dialogues can be an effective intervention**, but work best when they target both adolescents and adults in an age-segmented manner.

- **Community and religious elders** need to be prioritised for child marriage and gender equality messages as they are often the ultimate gatekeepers of social norms.

- **Boys and men** need to be targeted for programming aimed at encouraging new masculinities that support their sisters and daughters to reach adulthood before they become wives.

- **Face-to-face discussion encourages local ownership** and should be combined with top-down or media approaches for best effect.

- **Girls' clubs can bring transformatory change** to girls, helping to build their confidence and voice whilst learning about their rights (and serving as critical venues for reporting planned marriages).

- **Peer-to-peer education** can be effective, but requires that facilitators be carefully trained.

- While the 1-to-5 groups and other government structures can ensure grassroots penetration and facilitate bottom-up ownership of messages, complementary **NGO programming is often required to keep groups focused** on gender-related themes. This will require not only content support, but also financial resources—as in most communities WDA leaders are already stretched too thin.

- **Preventing meeting fatigue** is a challenge that should be planned for from inception.

- A reliance on **volunteer labour** risks burn-out and encourages high turnover. Adequate provisioning for programme coordinators and creative approaches to incentive structures need to be prioritised.

- **Programming should build on local role models where possible—**and afford them public recognition. Educated women, including teachers, should be recognised for their accomplishments. Similarly, parents who have supported their daughters to stay in school, and marry as adults, should be encouraged to share their experiences – both through girls' clubs and in the broader community.

- **Because known faces tell powerful stories,** it is also important for programmes to work with local girls and women to help teach the risks of child marriage.

*Messages for better communications-focused interventions*

- Messages need to help communities understand that **girls are children until they are 18** and that the marriage of any child under that age is a child marriage.

- **Messages regarding the health risks of child marriage** are pervasive and well understood. Accordingly, such messaging should be continued.

- Especially in areas where child marriage has become a hidden practice**, it is necessary to balance presenting the *risks* of child marriage** (such as fistula) **with the *benefits* of adult marriage** (such as a lower risk of poverty)**.**

- It is important that messages **directly address gender inequality** in order to shift the broader norms that drive child marriage.

- **Invest in messaging aimed at balancing domestic workloads between girls and boys** and men and women.

*Complementary programming*

- As school enrolments climb, **schools should be supported to become the key agents in keeping girls in school and preventing child marriage.** Each should have a professional counsellor who is paid for monitoring and guiding students.

- **Married girls need programming** aimed at helping them return to school, delay their first births and negotiate with their husbands for more equitable relationships.

- Given that girls' school attendance and homework time is compromised by their parents' demands on their time, further efforts to **provide girls with additional tutorial support** in schools should be considered.

- **Menstrual management programming should be offered in all schools** as a way of improving girls' attendance and reducing their risk of school dropout.

- **Safe houses** can provide girls with a safe place to live while they are attending secondary school or avoiding an unwanted marriage.

*Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning*

- Programme design and implementation should be informed by a **theory of change** and have an **iterative design** and **rigorous M&E** in order to encourage continuous improvement and disentangle impact pathways.

- Given variation in the incidence and patterning of child marriage, individual **programmes need local baseline data** in order to **tailor programming**. It is not enough to collect data solely for donor tick-boxes, it must be used. If programmes are to be sustainable, regular, longer-term data needs to be evaluated with an eye towards **ascertaining impact and proving cost-effectiveness.**

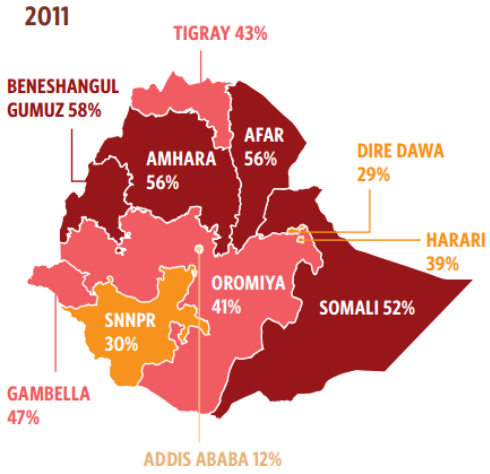
- **Opportunities for shared learning are vital**. Some programmes create enormous change. Others create change very cost-effectively. Most do neither. In order to maximise impact, itis important that NGOs have opportunities to share what works, for whom and why.

- Quality M and E is critical to **supporting government agencies to become better consumers of evidence**—and ultimately take the strongest programme approaches into existing ministries. The Tigrayan government's child marriage programming provides a case in point for how successful government programming can be.

# 1 Introduction

Ethiopia has seen strong economic growth over the past decade – averaging nearly 11% a year, more than twice the regional average[5] – and was one of the top-performers in terms of the Millennium Development Goals (IMF, 2013). Nevertheless, the country remains one of the world's poorest with almost the entire population reliant on subsistence agriculture (Rahmato, 2013; Moges, 2013) and a ranking of 173rd out of 186 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2013).

### Figure 1: Percentage of women 20-24 who were married by age 18




*Source: UNFPA (2012)*

Ethiopian women and girls remain particularly disadvantaged: the Gender Inequality Index (GII)[6] ranks Ethiopia 121st out of 151 countries[7] and the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) rates it 'high' in terms of gender discriminatory institutions, largely due to pervasive violence against women and women's lack of access to assets.[8] Notwithstanding recent and accelerating progress towards eliminating child marriage, the country continues to have one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. The median age at which Ethiopian women aged 25-49 marry is only 16.5 years and 41% of all women in their early 20s were married before they turned 18, albeit with significant regional variation (see  and Section 4) (CSA and ICF International, 2012). Men of the same age, on the other hand, were very unlikely to marry as children. Indeed, women are more likely to be married by the age of 18 than men are by the age of 25 (CSA and ICF International, 2012). Given the array of consequences that stem from child marriage and childbearing, ranging from interrupted schooling to maternal death to intergenerational poverty, the Ethiopian government, development partners and NGOs are directing considerable programming investments to eliminating the practice by 2025.

### Box 1: Who marries in childhood?

Girls who are uneducated, rural and poor tend to marry significantly earlier than their peers who are urban, educated and well-off (CSA and ICF International, 2012; see also Erulkar et al., 2010a). Women with no education married at a median age of 15.9 years, compared to nearly two years later for those with a primary education (17.5 years) and nearly seven years later for those with secondary education (22.8 years). Women aged 25-49 who live in urban areas married at a median age of 18.1 years—compared to 16.3 years for rural women. Interestingly, wealth quintile has no significant impact on marriage age until the top quintile. Women in the bottom 80% married at approximately the same age: slightly after age 16. The wealthiest women, on the other hand, married at a median age of 17.9 years. This may reflect Ethiopia's extremely flat income structure (Jones et al., 2014b) but may also reflect the fact that national-level statistics tend to hide local differences in the social drivers of child marriage, effectively cancelling them out via geographic aggregation.

5 http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview
6 The GII is a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market.
7 http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-4-gender-inequality-index
8 http://genderindex.org/country/ethiopia

Ethiopian girls marry much younger than their male counterparts. Indeed, boys in Ethiopia are rarely married in adolescence. While on average girls marry men who are seven years their senior, the age difference between partners is the largest for the youngest girls (Erulkar, 2013). Nearly 15% of all married girls – and 22% of rural married girls – are more than 10 years younger than their husbands (Ibid.).

Outside of the threat of child marriage, girls face a number of other threats as well. Amongst the largest is the fact that on a national level they remain less likely than boys to have ever been sent to school. Among youths aged 12-24, Erulkar et al. (2010b) found that 80% of boys but only 73% of girls had ever been to school. Of schooled girls, those in rural areas started school at an average age of 9.6 years and left at an average age of 14.6 years, meaning the majority do not complete primary school (comparable figures for rural boys are 10.4 years and 15.4 years respectively). Indeed, in no region does the average rural girl complete primary school. The mean years of completed schooling ranges from only 0.9 years in Afar to 4.2 years in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) (compared to 1.7 years and 5.6 years respectively for boys) (ibid.).

There are a variety of reasons for girls' low educational attainment. Outside of the reality that many communities have only recently acquired access to schools, reflected in the higher rates of enrolment for girls 12-14 versus those over the age of 20 (Erulkar et al, 2010b), parents are also especially disinclined to send girls to school once they have entered puberty because of the threat of sexual violence and rape (Camfield and Tafere, 2011; Jones et al., 2014b). Coupled with a national exam schedule that disadvantages rural children, who are generally ill prepared in over-crowded classrooms to pass the tenth grade and university entrance tests (Jones et al., 2014b), and the reality that the Ethiopian economy cannot accommodate the number of more educated children that schools are producing, parents also question the value of 'wasting' money on girls' education (Erulkar and Muthengi-Karei, 2012).

Also evidencing girls' disadvantaged social position are the facts that they are responsible for more domestic labour, are more likely to be restricted in terms of physical mobility and are twice as likely as boys to report being socially isolated (Erulkar et al., 2010b). Indeed, nearly one in five reported having no friends at all (ibid.). Girls are also more likely than boys to be living away from their parents. Of children aged 12-14, for example, 12.5% of boys but 17.2% of girls are living with neither parent, reflecting not only the greater likelihood of girls' marriage, but also their higher migration rates (ibid.). Reflecting their lack of access to assets and rural employment, girls with no education are especially likely to migrate. Of those aged 12-24, 30% had migrated, compared to less than 11% of boys (ibid.).

## 1.1 Report aims and key research questions

This report is the final product of a three-year programme of work on adolescent girls and the social norms that preclude gender justice in developing country contexts. Working in Amhara regional state, in year one we began by mapping adolescent girls' intersecting capabilities, capturing the complex interplay between gender and poverty on girls' educational, physical and psycho-emotional well-being. We identified the cultural premium accorded to female 'purity' and 'virginity', along with daughters' filial piety, as key to understanding adolescent girls' vulnerabilities (Tefera et al., 2013). In the second year we focused on the social norms shaping girls' educational opportunities and vulnerability to child marriage (Jones et al., 2014a). Our research identified the ways in which social norms that see girls as little more than symbols of family honour and a critical source of domestic labour too often preclude investment in their broader capabilities.

Highlighting the messy, non-linear ways in which norms change, our year two research also found signs of progress (Jones et al., 2014a). Specifically, because of concerted efforts on the part of government and development partners to promote universal primary education in line with the Millennium Development Goals, there has been a rapid recent increase in girls' educational uptake. This, along with the even more recent efforts that culminated in the creation of the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM/C, has led to a sharp accompanying drop in child marriage. While it is not uncommon for girls to marry as early as 12 or 13, the overall consensus is that in the space of only a few years increasing numbers of girls in Amhara are now completing 8th grade and even if married are increasingly likely to be able to stay in school.

This report, which draws on our third round of primary research, builds on what we have learned about the patterning and drivers of child marriage and under-investment in girls' education and focuses on communication initiatives aimed at shifting entrenched social norms. It seeks to identify examples of good practice and to ascertain the external and internal programming factors that contribute to programme success.

After presenting our three primary research case studies, we conclude the report by offering overarching policy and programming recommendations aimed at achieving gender justice for adolescent girls.

# 2 Research framework and approach

Recent advances in understanding the processes that drive changes in social norms in general, and gender norms in particular, indicate that both large-scale social and economic trends and smaller-scale programmatic activity can lead to change in social norms (Bicchieri, 2006; Boudet et al., 2012; Mackie and LeJeune, 2009). However, there is limited synthesised evidence of how different policies and programmes lead to changes in social norms affecting adolescent girls' capability development as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. In particular, there is little known about the effectiveness of different communication approaches to promoting more egalitarian gender norms (Marcus and Page, 2014). In order to address this gap, as part of the UK Department for International Development-funded flagship programme on Transforming the Lives of Girls and Young Women, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) conducted a review, based on systematic review principles, of evidence on the effectiveness of communications programmes for changing norms affecting adolescent girls in low- and middle-income countries. Communications initiatives have been classified across a broad spectrum of different types (see Box 2).

### Box 2: Typology of communications interventions used in ODI systematic review

- Mass media and social media programming/engagement
- Information, education and communication (IEC) provision through dissemination of materials, billboards, stickers, educational videos, or events such as street theatre
- Community dialogue and reflection
- Non-formal education approaches, including life-skills training
- One-to-one programming, including mentoring, peer education
- Public ceremonies, including alternative rites of passage and public declaration activities
- Training, capacity building, most commonly for professional personnel (e.g. health workers)
- Hybrid approaches of the interventions listed above
- Communications integrated with other approaches (particularly economic empowerment plus communication or other ideational component).

In all, 61 programmes were examined in the review: half from sub-Saharan Africa, around a third in South Asia, and the rest from other regions of the developing world. Around a quarter were embedded within diverse adolescent development programmes; around a third each were linked to either sexual and reproductive health promotion initiatives or programmes focusing on gender equality; and the others were part of broad-based community development efforts.

*Source: Marcus and Page (2014)*

The evidence from the review showed that communication programmes are an effective way to challenge gender-discriminatory attitudes and practices and have reached a variety of stakeholders with both broad pro-gender equality messages and messages on specific discriminatory norms. While no single approach was found to be clearly more effective than others, programmes with more than one communication component have achieved a higher proportion of positive outcomes. Moreover, integrated programmes with non-communication activities have also been slightly more effective. The highest proportion of positive changes was in programmes addressing

child marriage, education, FGM/C and intra-household relationships. These programmes often involved community-level dialogue and reflection (Marcus and Page, 2014).

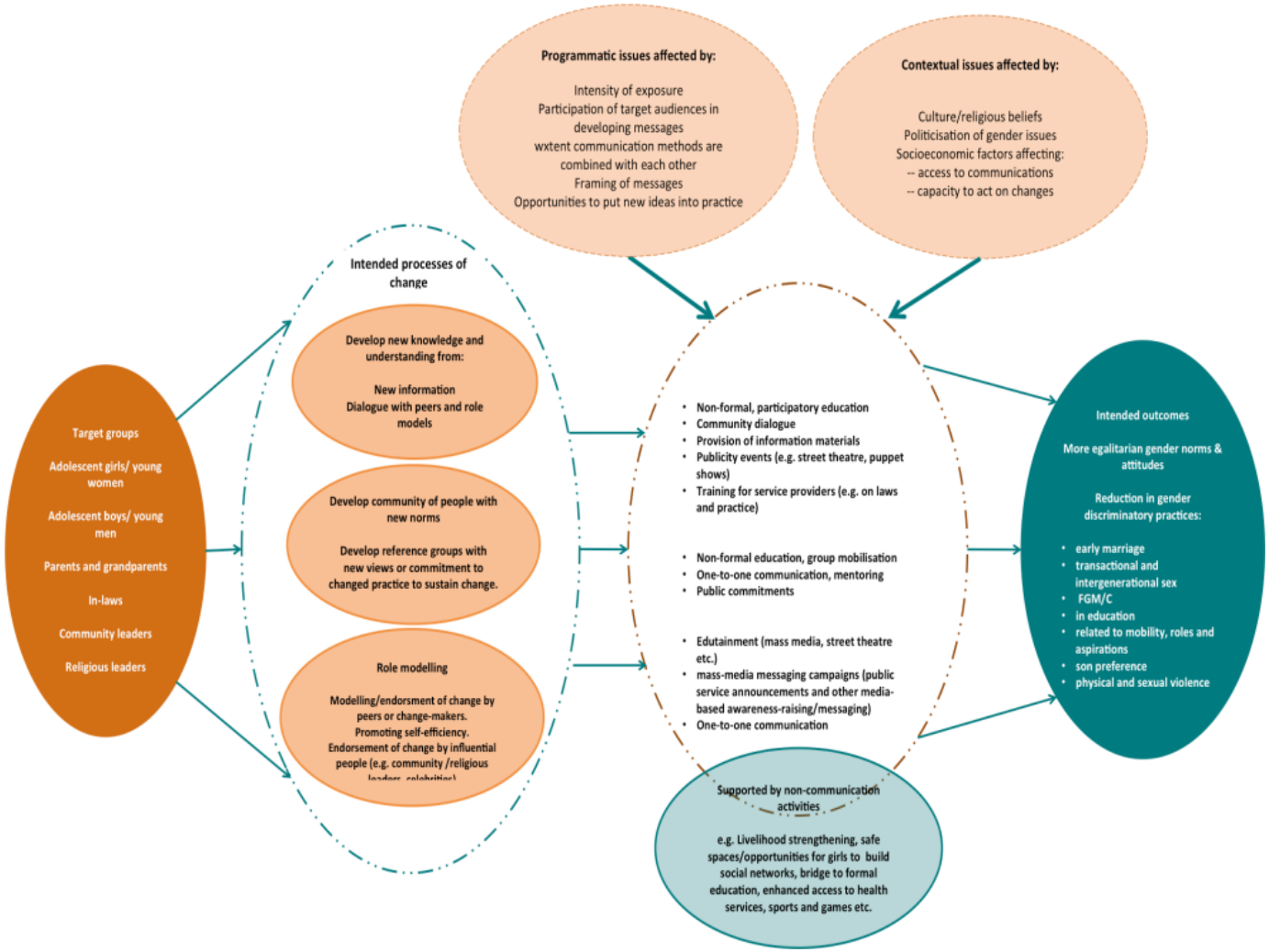
The review found that communications initiatives lead to change through the following impact pathways:

- Dialogue-based approaches are often important in creating opportunities for reflection and helping people shift both attitudes and practices.
- More intensive activities involving direct communication with target groups and providing space for dialogue seems to have greater impact than mass communication alone.
- Combined non-formal education and community dialogue showed positive impacts on attitudes towards girls' education held by parents and – in some cases – brothers.
- Appealing TV and radio characters can act as role models, while villainous characters can also stimulate behaviour change. This seemed to be particularly important in initiatives around child marriage.
- IEC activities play a helpful role in supporting and extending changes initiated by other types of programme.
- Communications can address issues of concern directly and provide enough factual information so audiences can contemplate change or reframe issues so people can see it in a new way.
- Working with multiple stakeholders, combined approaches can identify or address barriers to turning knowledge into action. For example, poverty is in some contexts an important barrier to changing practices and attitudes towards girls' education and needs to be addressed appropriately (Marcus, 2014).

Figure 1 summarises diagrammatically the working theory of change guiding the review. It draws (1) on analysis of processes leading to change in gender norms that informed year two research and (2) insights from the communication for development literature as well as the wider literature on effective communication. It shows the stylised pathways by which communications of different types can lead to changes in norms that the programmes discussed in this report aimed to set in motion.

However, no social change is linear or mechanistic: providing information or encouraging people to think about an issue in a different way does not necessarily lead to change in attitudes or behaviour. The diagram, therefore, outlines expected or 'hoped-for' relationships and outcomes, acknowledging that, in any situation, a number of other factors will affect outcomes (Marcus and Page, 2014). (A more detailed, 'logframe' type diagram can be found in Annex 1).

## Figure 1: Conceptual framework for gender norm change through communications




*Source: Marcus and Page (2014)*

A number of knowledge gaps were also identified in the review. These included key programme design issues such as: the kinds of messages that most motivate change; the relative effectiveness of different communications initiatives; differences between stand-alone communications and more integrated approaches; the definition of 'thresholds' for the optimum number of communications activities to achieve maximum effect; the role of informal peer communications; and the role of social media and new technologies in promoting gender-equalitarian norms (Marcus and Page, 2014; Marcus, 2014a). It is here that the project's round of qualitative primary research aimed to make a contribution, as we detail below.

## 2.1 Study objectives, design and methodology

Building on findings from years one and two, and drawing on insights from the review of communications initiatives, the primary research underpinning this report explores how selected communications initiatives translate policy commitments to address discriminatory gender norms, attitudes and practices around child marriage, teen pregnancy and girls' education. The assessment adopts a social norms lens to explore the ways in which selected programmes are working with adolescent girls to tackle child marriage, teenage pregnancy and under-investment in girls' education through communication interventions, as broadly defined above.

Key research objectives are:

- to highlight examples of good practice
- to identify external and internal programming factors contributing to good practice
- to make recommendations – based on our understanding of capability deprivations adolescents girls face (year one) and drivers of social norm change processes (year two) – as to how these programmes and broader programming and policy efforts could be enhanced.

Key research questions the report addresses are as follows:

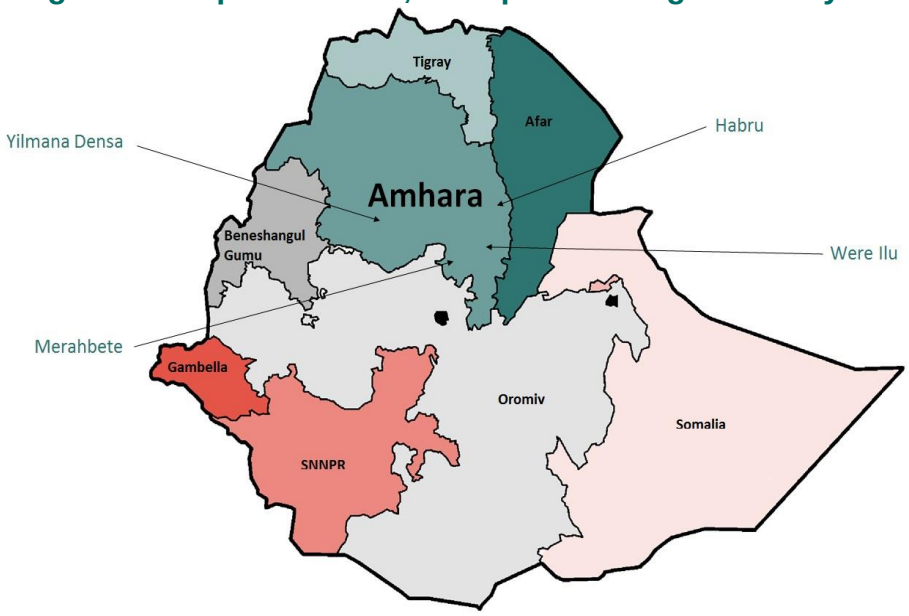
- To what extent do core policy frameworks (both government and NGO) with relevance to child marriage, teen pregnancy and education consider the role of social norms? If they do, how are social norms framed? What sort of approaches are proposed to tackle or harness social norms? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these policy commitments vis-à-vis what we collectively know on social norm change processes?
- How are policy commitments pertaining to social norm change processes in turn reflected in programme design? To what extent do programme design features adequately take into account the diversity of norm drivers / forces for stasis?
- How closely is programme design translated at implementation level? What factors facilitate implementation? Which factors constrain effective implementation?
    - Implementing personnel's understanding of social norm dynamics
    - Buy-in from external stakeholders
    - Political economy dynamics at sub-national level
    - Resource availability –financial, time, human resources
    - Context variables – e.g. shifts in policies or laws
- How are (intended) beneficiaries and their families perceiving and experiencing change? To what extent have community norms and their views on these shifted? Do they think this approach is optimal or are there alternative entry points?

## 2.2 Case study selection in Ethiopia

Our work was conducted in Amhara Regional State, which has the country's lowest median age at first marriage at 15.1 years (CSA and ICF International, 2012) and, with 56% of all women in their early 20s having been married before their 18th birthdays, its second highest rate of child marriage (UNFPA, 2012). In order to complement ongoing work the research team is undertaking for UNICEF and the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM/C (a governmental/donor/NGO initiative to end both practices by 2025), we selected programmes not already included in that project (Jones et al., forthcoming b). Of the three programmes we assessed, two were broadly aimed at improving girls' SRH practices. The first, by Hiwot Ethiopia, includes a community dialogue

initiative designed to sensitise communities to the risks of child marriage. The second, by the Amhara Development Association, relies primarily on girls' clubs and a menstrual management scheme, both of which aim to keep girls in school and thereby delay marriage and motherhood. For our third assessment we chose the DFID/Girl Hub-funded social marketing initiative Yegna and its community radio component (see Figure 2 below).

**Figure 1: Map of Amhara, Ethiopia showing our study sites**




Our assessment of these programmes included a review of internal documents, including prior evaluations where possible, and stakeholder interviews (see Table 1). Specifically, we consulted with key informants (KIIs) at national and subnational levels and, in each location, programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with adolescent girls, adolescent boys, mothers, father, and teachers, and also included community mappings. We also interviewed individual adolescents (IDIs), primarily girl beneficiaries, local officials who worked for the *woreda* and *kebele*, the Women's Association and the Youth Union, and programme implementers (see Annex 2 for research instruments and purpose).

## Table 1: Completed interviews, by site

| Programme site | No. of FGDs | No. of community timeline | No. of IDIs with adolescents | No. of intergenerational interviews | No. of KIIs | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Hiwot Ethiopia* | | | | | | |
| Merhabete *Woreda* | 8 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 6 | 28 |
| *Amhara Development Association* | | | | | | |
| Woreilu *Woreda* | 6 | 1 | 8 | -- | 9 | 24 |
| *Yegna Programme* | | | | | | |
| Habru & Yilmana Densa *Woreda* | 8 | -- | 2 | -- | 10 | 20 |
| Total | | | | | | 72 |

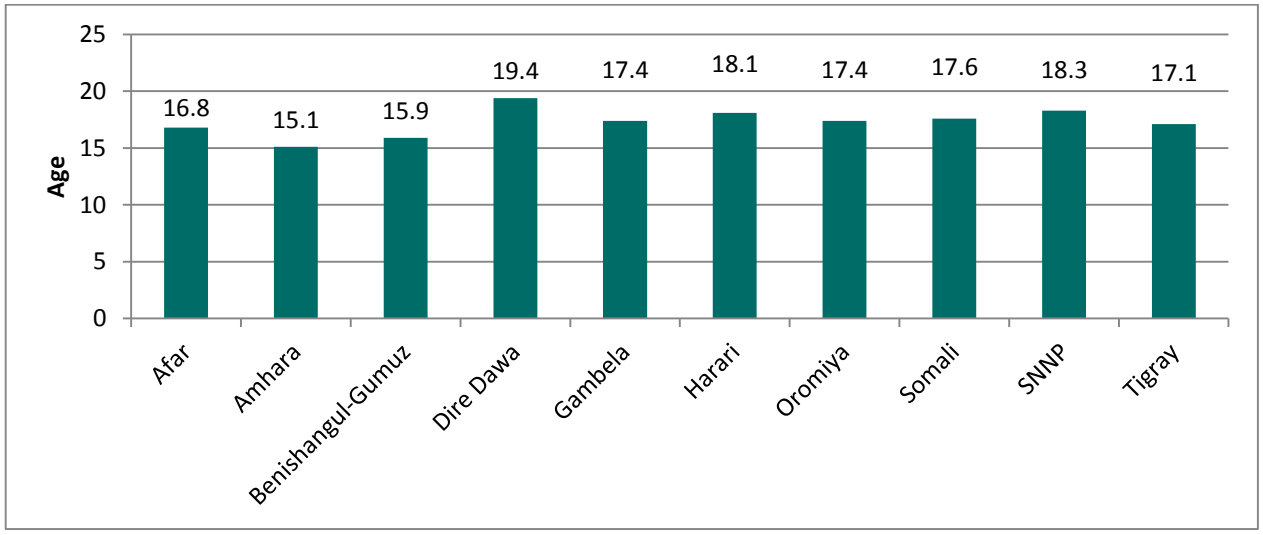
## 2.3 Ethical considerations

The study was conducted following national and international ethical standards for research on children, given our focus on adolescent girls and the sensitivity of the topic under study. The basic ethical framework was built on principles of respect for the rights and needs of children and doing no harm. Key ethical considerations included measures to enhance participation and inclusion of excluded groups in the research, to ensure informed consent, to protect children and to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

# 3 Situating our findings: the patterning and prevalence of child marriage in Amhara

As noted above, according to the 2011 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), Amhara Regional State has Ethiopia's lowest median age of first marriage (15.1 years for women aged 20-49) and its second highest rate of child marriage (56% for women aged 20-24) (CSA and ICF International, 2012) (see **Error! Reference source ot found.** below and Figure 1 above). It also has its second highest rate of early adolescent sexual debut (20% of girls between the ages of 15 and 24 had had sex before the age of 15, almost exclusively within the confines of marriage) (ibid.). Indeed, while acknowledging that available statistics are all somewhat dated, and therefore blind to the most recent progress, numbers related to child marriage in Amhara tend to be uniformly gloomy.

### Figure 2: Age at first marriage, by region, for women 20-49




*Source: CSA and ICF International (2012)*

For instance, Erulkar et al. (2010b), in their 2009 survey of nearly 700[9] Amharan girls and young women, found child marriage rates even higher than the DHS. For example, of young women between the ages of 18 and 24, 39% had been married by the age of 15 and over 63% by the age of 18. Indeed, the Amharan rate of early adolescent marriage was approaching twice that of the next highest region (Benishangul Gumuz with 23.9%). The same survey also found that Amhara had the country's highest rates of arranged marriage (over 94%) and child divorce. Over 8% of girls aged 12-24 were already divorced. Erulkar et al. (201b) identified a number of other vulnerabilities linked to child marriage facing Amharan girls. For example, less than 2% had their births officially registered (compared to a national average of 6.2%) and schooling rates were very low. Rural Amharan girls aged 12-24 had an average of only 2.3 years of school, compared to 3.3 years for their male peers and lower than the average for rural girls in any other region other than Afar (where it was 0.9 years).

9 The full survey included over 5,000 girls and young women between the ages of 12 and 24 and included seven of the country's nine regions.

The 2007 census, which is the latest data available which allows for zonal- and district-level disaggregation also finds Amharan girls at particular risk of child marriage. Nearly 10% of those between the ages of 10 and 14 were married at the time of data collection – as were over 27% of those between the ages of 15 and 17.[10] Regional statistics hide considerable variation (see Jones et al., forthcoming a). For girls aged 10-14, the percent married ranged from a low of 5% in North Shewa to a high of 14.2% in West Gojam. Similarly, among girls aged 15-17, only 14.4% in North Shewa were married, compared to over 37% in East Gojam. Variation at the *woreda* level was higher yet. Nearly one in four girls between the ages of 10 and 14 in Alefa were married and nearly three in five 15-17-year-old girls in Jawi were married.

Amhara Regional State is divided into eleven zones, which are further divided into *woredas* (or districts). *Woredas* are split into *kebeles*, the smallest level of administration in Ethiopia.

Amhara is the second largest of Ethiopia's regions and is approximately 4/5 Ethiopian Orthodox Christian and 1/5 Muslim.

While Amharan child marriage statistics tend to be gloomy, in part because they do not adequately capture recent progress, newer qualitative evidence points to signs that child marriage is declining. The 'hotspots' analysis which the research team recently undertook for UNICEF and the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM/C, found that progress towards the abandonment of child marriage in Amhara was significant and likely accelerating (Jones et al., forthcoming a). Indeed, perhaps because the gloomy statistics have led to a wealth of programming, Amhara looks to be outperforming many other regions in terms of reducing child marriage. Respondents in all three of the *woredas* in which we worked (Alefa, Aneded and Quarit) told us that commitment to girls' education was growing and that girls who were in school were largely protected from marriage. Given that the most recent enrolment statistics, in contrast to those at a national level, indicate that girls are more likely than their male peers to transition to both second cycle primary school and secondary school (still very rare), an increasing proportion of marriages are now delayed at least until girls are older adolescents. This is particularly the case in areas with severe land fragmentation, as families understand that the only sure route out of poverty is education, and in areas where there are educated and successful women to inspire girls and their parents.

We also found that there are a variety of mechanisms working to protect girls who are married as children. Traditionally, many Amharan girls were married as infants or toddlers. These marriages were elaborate affairs designed to demonstrate parental wealth and solidify their social status. In some communities these weddings continue unabated. However, we found that these marriages are considered purely ceremonial and in most cases result in a divorce only a few weeks later. While girls who were married in this fashion are now considered married, in their own eyes as well as those of their parents and the broader community, their brief marriages involved no harm and are often remembered by girls solely in terms of the party involved. Similarly, even girls who are currently married are increasingly left to live with their parents and complete their educations – as long as they are making progress in school. This often protects girls who are married to priests and deacons (who are prohibited from divorce by religious law) from the many demands of married life.

We also found that a small but growing number of girls are beginning to choose their own partners. This too is working to delay marriage as girls choose school over marriage.

That said, both our longer-term work on the Adolescent Girls and Gender Norms project and our broader work for UNICEF and the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM/C found that child and forced marriage are still very common in Amhara. Some girls, especially those in more rural areas, remain at risk of being married against their will when they are very young, in large part for the prestige that it will bring their parents. Furthermore, nearly all girls are expected to marry as soon as they leave school, even if they are still children and despite the fact that their school leaving is typically driven by high parental demands on their time. Given that despite improvements it remains rare for girls to transition to 9th grade, and even rarer for them to pass the 10th

10 DHS and census data are not directly comparable. The DHS looks only at women over the age of 15 and reports most thoroughly by median age at marriage. It also asks married women whether they were married by the exact age of 15 – or the exact age of 18. It reports these statistics not by actual age but by five-year age categories. The census data available to us, on the other hand, provides a snapshot of girls aged 10-17 and identifies only whether they have ever married. It reports across one five-year age grouping, 10-14 years old, and one three-year age grouping, 15-17 years old. It allows us to identify the percentage of each age category ever married (as of 2007). This is not, however, the same as knowing the percentage of women married by the age of 18. According to the 2011 DHS, on a national level 41% of all women aged 20-24 had been married by the age of 18. According the 2007 census, on the other hand, only 20% of all girls aged 15-17 had ever been married. This difference can be best explained by imagining the following simplified scenario. If a population includes 100 girls aged 15, 100 girls aged 16 and 100 girls aged 17 – and all 17-year-old girls get married immediately before their 18th birthday – then 100% of girls will have been married by the time they turned 18, but only one-third of all girls aged 15-17 will be married.

grade exams that would enable them to continue on to 11th grade, the risk of child marriage is still significant for most. Out-of-school adolescents are seen at high risk of sexual promiscuity and parents prefer for them to marry rather than potentially sully their futures. Girls are also sensitive to this concern and often 'choose' marriage in order to prevent community speculation about their virginity and being taunted as 'unmarriageable'.

# 4 Policy and programming landscape overview

## 4.1 Overview of laws and policies that shape child marriage

The government of Ethiopia outlawed child marriage with the revised Federal Family Code (2000), which set the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for both girls and boys (Article 7) and outlawed alliance-creating betrothals. The law was further strengthened with the passage of the 2005 Criminal Code,[11] which criminalised harmful traditional practices (HTPs) including early and forced marriage (art. 648), abduction of women (art. 587) and FGM/C (art. 565, 566, 567, 568) and stipulated both financial penalties and jail terms for violators. In October 2013, the Government of Ethiopia launched the National Alliance to End Child Marriage[12] and set a target date of 2025 for elimination. Our work for the Alliance and UNICEF found that adolescents and adults are increasingly aware that child marriage is illegal, although they often believe that the minimum age for marriage is 15 or 16 rather than 18 (Jones et al., forthcoming a,b).

Broader gender-related laws and policies also shape child marriage, as they have opened space for women's access to assets and decision-making and fostered dialog about gender equality. For example, the 1994 Constitution provides women with rights and protections equal to those of men, specifically stipulating their right to equality within marriage. Similarly, the 2000 Land Use Rights Proclamation was revised to ensure that both men and women have equal access to land (Economic Commission for Africa, 2009) and the most recent Growth and Transformation Plan[13] includes a pillar on women's empowerment. Our work for UNICEF and the Alliance found that these high level policies are indeed having local impact, with women in many communities not only more aware of their rights, especially to land, but willing to actively pursue them – in court if necessary (Jones et al., forthcoming a,b).

On the other hand, the 2009 Proclamation to Provide for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies,[14] while in no way aimed at child marriage, has narrowed programming space considerably. The law restricts fundraising activities and operations, and imposes stricter requirements for registration, including stipulating that charities and civil society organisations must secure a letter of recommendation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which can slow work down by years (Amnesty International, 2012). The law further requires that NGOs that receive more than 10% of their financing from foreign sources refrain from engaging in essentially all human rights and advocacy activities, including those related to child marriage specifically and gender in general (ibid.). Those activities are instead required to rely on government channels.

Furthermore, while the legal framework supporting the elimination of child marriage is advanced, there is considerable concern in Ethiopia that because the law has moved faster than norms, in part because of the CSO law which slows NGO activity, it is working to encourage underreporting and drive child marriage underground rather than towards elimination (Gaffney-Rhys, 2011; Pankhurst, 2014; Boyden et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2014a, forthcoming a,b; Muthengi-Karei and Erulkar, 2010). Gage's (2013a) Amharan research, for example, which found that only 5% of girls between the ages of 10 and 17 were married, suggests significant under-reporting. Similarly, Camfield and Tafere (2011) found that parents referred to child marriages as engagements rather than marriages, Muthengi-Karei and Erulkar (2010) found that marriages have begun to be secret or take place at night and Jones et al. (2014a, forthcoming a,b) found that child marriages are increasingly disguised as religious

11 http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=248268
12 Later amended to include FGM/C as well.
13 http://www.ethiopians.com/Ethiopia_GTP_2015.pdf
14 See: www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/ethiopian-parliament-adopts-repressive-new-ngo-law-20090108

festivals. Finally, in *woredas* which require age checks to ensure that girls are old enough for marriage before a wedding can be planned, our recent work found that parents often lie to authorities about the age of their daughters and force their daughters to lie as well (Jones et al., forthcoming a,b).

There is also concern that the law does not adequately recognise the potential protection afforded by child marriage (Boyden et al., 2013) or, by encouraging teachers and schools to report child marriages, places educational players in non-educational positions that foster distrust (Mekonnen and Aspen, 2009). Punitive laws also fail to provide girls and their families with positive options, leaving many to simply replace the dangers of child marriage with the dangers of early work. Jones et al. (2014a), for example, found that when girls are not forced into child marriage many are forced into domestic service, which carries its own significant risks for their well-being.

Our recent research suggests that while hidden marriages are common in many communities – and naked hostility towards the law is evident in some – overall the law is working to reduce child marriage where it is enforced (Jones et al., forthcoming a,b). In *kebeles* where officials are willing to cancel illegal marriages, even at the last minute, parents are increasingly unwilling to risk the financial loss entailed in abandoning an already arranged feast—or having to return bridewealth. Similarly, where girls and their champions know that they can report with effect, they are more inclined to do so. Indeed, in *kebeles* and *woredas* where local leaders are committed enough to unflinchingly enforce the law, our research found that child marriage had been genuinely abandoned (Jones et al., forthcoming b).

## 4.2 Overview of programming targeting child marriage

A plethora of targeted programmes aimed at eliminating child marriage has been unrolled by the government, NGOs and donors. This programming has primarily centered on empowering girls through the expansion of schooling and school-based girls' clubs and community awareness-raising. As a result of this diverse programming, girls and some parents are increasingly interested in delaying marriage in favor of education (Boyden et al., 2013; Jones, forthcoming a,b).

The expansion of schooling and school-based girls' clubs has been critical to reductions in child marriage (Pathfinder, 2006; Pankhurst, 2014; Jones et al., 2014a; Jones et al.,forthcoming a,b). Most girls who previously had no opportunity to attend school now have access through 8th grade, which situates them as children and effectively removes them from the 'marriage market'. Furthermore, most schools offer girls' clubs to girls in 5th-8th grades. Sometimes in tandem with NGOs running particular programming, such as Plan's *Girl Power Program* or Action Aid's *Women's Watch Groups*, but more regularly run by teacher-volunteers, the best of these clubs are genuinely transformatory and educate girls about their rights, teach them about the law, and inspire them with role models (Jones et al., 2014a, forthcoming b). They also provide girls with social support, critical to helping them resist an unwanted marriage, and teach them about sexual and reproductive health, which is rarely discussed at home but is crucial to minimising the health risks of adolescent pregnancy (Jones et al., 2014a, Jones et al. forthcoming a,b). Clubs are particularly critical venues of support for those girls being forced into marriage because they serve as critical venues for children to report planned child marriages (Jones et al., forthcoming a,b). Gage (2009, 2013b) found that among female adolescents surveyed, club members had the highest prevalence of stopped marriages. In fact, after religious leaders, girls reported that peer educators and girls' clubs were the most important tools for stopping unwanted marriages, with 53% of club members reporting having talked to someone about stopping a planned marriage.

Programming aimed at shifting the gender norms of parents, (potential) husbands and community members has also been widely distributed and broadly successful, particularly when it is led by 'trend-setting' religious and community leaders (Edmeades et al., 2013; Jones et al., forthcoming b; Gage, 2009, 2013b; Jones et al., 2014a; Boyden et al., 2013; Pankhurst, 2014). CARE's TESFA, for example, relied on Social Action and Analyses groups (SAAs), which included both religious leaders and parents guilty of perpetrating child marriage. Even though the programme was aimed at supporting child brides, rather than preventing child marriage, the SAAs were so effective at shifting community gender norms that hundreds of child marriages were called off in programme areas (Edmeades et al., 2013; Jones et al., forthcoming a,b ). Similarly, ActionAid's Women's Watch Groups, which empowered poor women by providing them with loans and then organising them to educate the community about gender issues ranging from domestic violence to child marriage, moved gender to the forefront of community conversation and have effectively eliminated child marriage in local areas (Jones et al., forthcoming a ,b). Critical

to the success of programming aimed at parents and broader communities is that all acknowledge that empowering girls is only half the equation. As marriages in Ethiopia, especially in Amhara[15], are almost exclusively arranged by parents – often under pressure from community elders, religious leaders and future bridegrooms – targeting girls' social gatekeepers is a necessity.

The government-run Women's Development Army[16] has emerged in many *woredas* as a critical venue for awareness raising, especially since the NGO law was passed in 2009 (Jones et al., forthcoming b). Organising women first into groups of 30, to have bi-monthly educational sessions – usually taught by health extension workers – that cover topics ranging from sanitation to family planning to child marriage, the Development Armies are further subdivided into cells including five members and one leader (1-to-5 groups). When functioning well, these groups meet several times a week, over coffee or tea, and provide women not only with a safe space to discuss their new learning, but a venue for checking up on one another. In some *kebeles*, for example, the women in 1-to-5 groups monitor each other's children's school attendance and make sure that daughters remain unmarried (Jones et al., forthcoming a,b). Our work for UNICEF and the National Alliance found that Women's Development Armies (and their nested 1-to-5 groups) are particularly effective when NGO programming is able to help them focus on broader concepts of gender equality, which can shift the background against which child marriage is situated (Jones et al., forthcoming b). It also found that in some areas the 1-to-5 groups are mobilising not only women, but students.

Ethiopia is also home to a variety of media campaigns aimed at introducing the law and educating parents and community members, including the young men most likely to marry adolescent girls, about the risks associated with child marriage and the benefits of waiting. Communication interventions have included radio serial dramas, public plays and printed literature. In Amhara, Gage (2009; 2013b) found that 65% of caretakers and over 75% of adolescents and youth had been exposed to at least one early-marriage prevention message via non-print media (more successful given low literacy rates). Young men were particularly likely to have been exposed to messages (83%, ibid.) and were more likely than women to have heard those messages on the radio (Jones et al., 2014a).

However, while child-marriage related programming in Ethiopia reflects a diversity of approaches and while statistical evidence indicates that the incidence of child marriage is dropping in tandem with the advent of programming, with very few exceptions it is all but impossible to attribute change directly to any given intervention. Indeed, even in the case of Berhane Hewan[17], by far the country's most rigorously evaluated programme, there remains confusion over which elements are ultimately critical to reductions in child marriage (Mekbib and Molla, 2011; Rushdy, 2010). Most other programmes lack not only evaluation but quite often any way to even ascertain scope. In the case of girls' clubs, for example, it is unclear how many girls are regularly served. Given that some are drop-in clubs and that girls' school enrolment does not accurately reflect regular attendance, it is unclear how accurate head-counts would even be calculated. Similarly, because programmes have tended to grow organically to meet the needs of the girls they serve, it is often impossible to ascertain what programmes are doing at any point in time. In the end, the success or failure of most interventions is captured only anecdotally – often on out-of-date websites.

15 Erulkar et al. (2010b) found that Amhara has the highest rate of arranged marriages in the country—94.4%., compared to a national average of 70.4% and a low of 21.6% in SNNPR.
16 Also called Women's Development Groups and Developmental Teams.
17 See Presler-Marshall and Lyytikainen, 2015.

# 5 Hiwot Ethiopia: Community dialogue and peer-to-peer education

## 5.1 Programme site overview

Hiwot Ethiopia is implementing a multi-pronged project funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to address the SRH needs of young people in North Shoa Zone of Amhara Region, with special emphasis on adolescent girls and young women. Although its central focus is not on combatting child marriage, it is one important area of concern given the close links between SRH risks and child marriage. The project is currently operational in the five *woredas* – Ensaro, Moretnajiru, Anewari, Lemi and Merhabete. Our research was carried out in the last.

### Box 3: Programme Site Overview

Merhabete *woreda* in North Shoa Zone has a total population of nearly 130,000. While many areas are sparsely populated, a new road, which crosses through the *woreda* linking Addis Ababa to northern Amhara, has opened transportation possibilities.

Within this *woreda*, our fieldwork focused on Yesasamba *kebele*, which has a population of just over 4,200 and is almost entirely Ethiopian Orthodox Christian. Yesasamba is considered as a self-sufficient and food secure *kebele* primarily producing teff and sorghum. Located 12km from Alem Ketema, the capital of Merhabete *woreda*, this *kebele* was identified as a hotspot for child marriage despite recent improvements.

## 5.2 Programme overview

Hiwot Ethiopia is a local NGO that was started in 1995 and focuses on SRH in general and HIV and AIDS in particular (Hiwot Ethiopia, 2015). Targeting children, adolescents and young adults with SRH information, it currently works in Amhara and Addis Ababa. With support from the Packard Foundation and modelled on a successful programme from Bihar, India, Hiwot Ethiopia's Amharan work is specifically targeting child marriage and adolescent childbearing (Hiwot Ethiopia, 2015). In the study site, as per the health extension representative, '*the broad objective of Hiwot Ethiopia is to foster community attitudinal change about health related issues and family planning*'. The project began in 2009, entered its third phase in early 2015, and has received total funding of approximately 5,902,061 Birr (approximately £180,000). To date it has served '*110,000 youngsters, 65,000 parents, relatives, community leaders, teachers, member of the church/religious leaders; and 1,760 government officials'* (Hiwott Ethiopia, 2015).

**Hiwot Ethiopia's Mission**

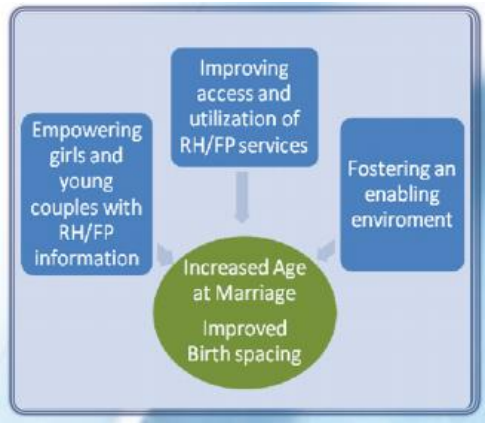
- Raising awareness of issues affecting children and youth and working to change attitudes and practices that are harmful to them
- Building the capacity and skills of youth and children, partner organisations and its own capacity and expertise
- Providing practical support and services to children and youth

*Source: https://hiwotethiopia.wordpress.com/about-hiwot-ethiopia*

## 5.3 Project goals and modalities

In Amhara, Hiwot Ethiopia is working to delay both marriage and childbearing. To meet this goal it is taking a three-pronged approach, which can be seen in **Error! Reference source not found.**. Specifically, the programme s working to empower girls and young couples by providing them with SRH information to improve their access to and utilisation of SRH services. It is partnering with providers to deliver youth-friendly services and establish referral linkages, and it is fostering an enabling environment by reaching out to community leaders and conducting community sensitisation activities in order to build support for delayed marriage and continuing education (Hiwot Ethiopia, 2013). According to a female teacher in the Yesamamba *kebele*, '*Hiwot Ethiopia works together with every sector within the society (students, community members, religious organisations, etc). They organise and undertake community discussions and trainings that encompass every member of the society*'.

### Figure 3: Hiwot goals and modalities (Hiwot Ethiopia, 2013)




In order to achieve messaging saturation, Hiwot Ethiopia uses a diverse set of strategies.

- Building on lessons learned in its first two phases, phase three activities in each *woreda* are organised by a social worker and then channelled through paid faciliators (usually five per *woreda*) and volunteeers. Hiwot Ethiopia's approach has two key distinctive elements. First, while its goals are to delay girls' marriages and early pregnancy, it recognises the centrality of gender norms and includes boys and men in all programming elements. Second, it builds on Ethiopia's Development Army structure and works through '1-to-5 groups' (see Section 5). Community members are allocated to groups on the basis of their age and stage in life and are targeted for either peer-to peer, mother-to-mother or house-to-house education. Health supplies including contraception are provided to health offices.
- Adolescents are divided into younger teens (10-14) and older teens (15-19) and girls and boys are taught seperately. Groups run for three months, meet weekly and are available for both in-school and out-of-school young people.
- Mother-to-mother groups were formed after the end of phase one, when it became clear that mothers often play a central role in mediating girls' marriages. These groups are tightly linked to the Women's Development Army.
- House-to-house groups are run seperately for married, pregnant and parenting young adults to ensure that they receive the information most relevant to them. They meet every other week for three months. Usually co-led by two facilitators, groups average eight participants.

In addition, Hiwot Ethiopia has also been leading community conversations. These conversations, which are not being continued into phase three solely because another provider has picked them up, have tended to average 40-50 participants, meet every other week for six months and are run by the health extension worker. At the end of the conversation, participants are encouraged to pledge not to marry their daughters but to allow them to finish their education.

Hiwot Ethiopia works closely with local leadership to build awareness about the risks of child marriage and pregnancy and the benefits of girls' education. In phase one, these activities were run by 'community action teams' comprised of religious leaders, government stakeholders and school representatives. However, since phase two, and based on internal evaluation, these activities have been merged into *kebele*- and *woreda*- level Harmful Traditional Practices Eradication Committees (Hiwot Ethiopia, 2013).[18]

[18] Within the *Kebele* there is a Development Committee which has 25 members. The Harmful Traditional practices Eradication Committee comprises people selected from members of Development Committee.

Hiwot Ethiopia also runs safe houses for girls. These houses give adolescent girls a safe place to live while they attend high school, which can be a long way from their homes. In Merhabete *Woreda*, there are two safe houses and in 2015 66 girls were residing in these homes. The programme is also working to build a youth centre to help young people generate income.

## 5.4 Internal evaluation/secondary materials

As phase one ended in 2011, Hiwot Ethiopia undertook an evaluation to document results for different groups of beneficiaries, evaluate programme strengths and weaknesses and distil lessons learned, and to make recommendations for phase 2. In addition to a document review, the evaluation paired field observation with structured questionnaires and interviews with a variety of stakeholders, including girls and boys, parents, community leaders, local officials and health care providers (Hiwot Ethiopia, 2013).

The evaluation concluded that the programme was widely seen as appropriate and effective. For example, girls' awareness of and knowledge about child marriage and pregnancy was significantly improved by their participation in peer-to-peer and house-to-house education programming (Hiwot Ethiopia, 2013). Additionally, by establishing referral links between health care providers, youth clubs and peer educators, and by training health extension workers to provide youth-friendly services, over 14,000 young people gained access to SRH services including contraception and abortion (ibid.). Finally, the evaluation found that over 120,000 community members had been reached through community conversations, youth dialogue forums and mass 'edutainment' (e.g., performing skits, dance and play music to simultaneously entertain and educate local audiences about different SRH issues like HIV, GBV and child marriage activities). This had resulted in the cancelation of over 600 child marriages, the establishment of safe houses for girls and, in three *woredas*, the establishment of 'green income generating activities' where young people could gather to generate income, protect the environment and access SHR information (ibid.). It had also resulted, according to beneficiary girls, in an overall '*friendlier environment at home, at school and in the community for young girls to openly talk about their [reproductive health] concerns and seek services*' (Hiwot Ethiopia, 2013: 2)

## 5.5 Primary research findings

Our primary research found that Hiwot Ethiopia's work in Yesamamba *kebele* has contributed to reducing child marriage, increasing awareness of harmful traditional practices in general, and in improving knowledge about sexual and reproductive health. All respondents – mothers and fathers, boys and girls, direct beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries – were aware of the importance of education and girls expressed strong aspirations for their future. Parents increasingly support girl children to pursue educational opportunities and see themselves to be responsible for finding a way to finance this. Many girls expressed a desire to become a 'teacher or doctor' and stated that they were keen to get a 'degree'. There was also a broad consensus that while in the past '*female children married at the age of 10-12, now they marry at the age of 18. We [mothers] marry our daughters at the age 18* (focus group discussion with mothers of adolescent girls)'. Moreover, an awareness of the negative effects of child marriage functions as a powerful blocker, with interviewees referencing health (including psychological) and social effects most often.

Overall, the interviews also revealed that the various modalities of the programme (i.e., peer-to-peer discussions, 1-to-5 groups, community conversations, and safe houses for girls) are functioning well. Respondents were generally aware of the work being done by Hiwot Ethiopia, and even where they were unaware of its name, it later emerged that they had participated in some element of programming. Below we discuss strengths of the programme as well as some missed opportunities as identified in our fieldwork.

### 5.5.1 Programme strengths

**Strong coordination between government structures**

One of the reasons identified as being key for the success of Hiwot Ethiopia's work in Yesasamba is its strategy of working with and through multiple *kebele*- and *woreda*-level structures. Hiwot Ethiopia '*works with different government offices including the education office, HIV/AIDS office, health office, women and children office, and the woreda administration' (woreda level informant)*. According to a *kebele* level informant, '*the health bureau serves as a bridge to the activities of Hiwot Ethiopia. Hiwot Ethiopia follows the government health structures (minister of health-village level). The lower health government structure i.e. health extension agents are implementers. They also connect Hiwot Ethiopia officers with the community*'.

> *We work very closely with other stakeholders. One of these stakeholders is Hiwot Ethiopia. We have programmes on child marriage and family planning issues in a selected kebeles. We carry out discussions and awareness raising with the community members. In the discussion we divide the community members into different age groups. These activities have helped us to increase girls' school enrolment and school performance.*
>
> *(Key informant interview with education office head)*

Hiwot Ethiopia and the health extension office '*follow an integrated approach*'. What this means is that the 'awareness creation service includes everything such as HIV, other diseases, environmental sanitation, and child marriage' (*woreda* level informant). These topics are identified through '*weekly, bi-monthly and monthly monitoring and evaluation plans that include checklists on what the major problems facing the community are'*. Moreover, the regional health bureau and Hiwot Ethiopia work together such that the '*role and responsibility of Hiwot Ethiopia is to supply health materials to the community through the health centre'*.

Strong health programming stems from strong coordination between the various government structures and NGOs, including Hiwot Ethiopia.[19] For instance, the *woreda* Women, Children and Youth Affairs office (WCYA) is working jointly with the health intervention programme and Hiwot Ethiopia's team. According to an informant at the health extension office, '*their role is to mobilise the women and youth, organise health intervention activities and identify health problems through discussion with the community*'. A '*woreda* task force' consisting of members from Hiwot Ethiopia, the health office, WCYA and the administration office conducts field visits and meets every 15 days. According to the *woreda* level informant, '*every command post member (education, health, and other sectors) reflects on health-related issues, e.g. clean water supply. The responsible sector office takes the assignment to solve the specific problem'*.

Additionally, the Women's Development Association helps to inform community dialogues and peer-to-peer discussions such that '*the Hiwot Ethiopia volunteers, peer-to-peer discussion leaders and our health extension officers teach the community about the three HIV prevention principles of abstaining from sex, having one partner and using condoms during sexual intercourse*'. Hiwot Ethiopia also supplies condoms and did so in this community both '*this year and last year. Hiwot Ethiopia also provides short- and long-term family planning injections. Hiwot Ethiopia is also arranging one to three days' refreshment training to health extension officers on child marriage and reproductive health*'.

**Effective peer-to-peer discussions**

According to an informant, one of Hiwot Ethiopia's more 'effective' forms of communication and awareness raising is peer-to-peer discussion. Discussions take place at school every Sunday (though some participants reported meetings on Fridays) and include a variety of topics such as '*the impact of child marriage, HIV and AIDS*

19 At the time of the fieldwork, note that no other NGO was operating in the *kebele*.

*prevention and condom utilisation and distribution'*. Both boys and girls participate in these youth-led sessions, which typically include 30-75 young people from different sub-*kebeles* who are then clustered in categories of 10-14 years, 15-19 years and 20-24 years. These small groups then discuss points '*like child marriage in girls below 18 years is not allowed'* and '*it is not allowed for girls to drop out because of marriage*'. They then report back to the larger groups and present what they have discussed.

*All the issues raised in the module [training] were very good as they are about the day-to-day lives of the people. The education was important to change the attitude of the people in the area about child marriage, venereal diseases, rape and HIV/AIDS. I loved to read the module. All the participants were happy to attend the sessions. We have to read and discuss all the issues raised in the module including harmful traditional practices, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, etc.*

*(In depth interview with participant of peer-to-peer discussions)*

Key informant interviews at both the *kebele* and *woreda* levels indicate that Hiwot Ethiopia provides training to the health office, which then in turn helps to shape the discussion of the peer-to-peer forums. Though the youth decide on the topic of discussion themselves, the discussions are facilitated by experts: '*Nurse and health officers are assigned in each peer-to-peer discussion to facilitate and answer any questions. The discussants decide on the topics to be discussed. The members are provided with materials such as pen, exercises book, posters and leaflets to help them to develop discussion points*'.

*The divorced girls discussed that they had to focus on their education in order to move out of the problems they faced in the hands of their husbands. They encouraged other participants to study hard in order to improve their educational performance. We encouraged each other. We also met outside the school time, and we shared information and ideas about our education. The teachers urged us not to drop out from our school. She told us that not to accept the marriage proposals.*

*(19-year-old divorced participant of peer-to-peer discussions)*

Not only do peer-to-peer discussions involve girls vulnerable to child marriage, they also involve girls who were married as children and are now divorced[20]. According to one 19-year-old girl divorcee, '*the facilitators registered divorced young women and they mixed us with those girls who have been in the process of marriage. These are girls who have reported to the school that their parent wants to marry them. The facilitator educates us that marriage at this age is not good*.'

One of the goals of peer-to-peer discussion is to develop the capacity of participants to share their knowledge with the broader community. Facilitators '*tell participants to advise/consult other girls who are not participating in the discussion about the side effects of child marriage up on their health'*. They are also told '*to report those girls who plan to marry child to the teachers'*. As one beneficiary participant explained, '*I had heard that one of my friends is going to get married in her child age and so I told her about the side effects of child marriage on her health'*. One of the ways in which participants are incentivised to be part of the discussions is that they are given T-shirts advertising their membership: '*all who have involved in the discussion and completed the discussion without interruption are given the T-shirts indicating that we have aware of the harmful traditional practices*' (20 year old man).

**Wide reach of community conversations**

Another strength of Hiwot Ethiopia's programming in Yesamamba *kebele* is community conversations, which – aside from insufficient targeting of religious and community leaders (see below) – appear to be very inclusive. Key informants noted that '*the community discussion participants are selected by the direct involvement of the Women's Development Army, Women's Affairs and the Youth League and the community discussion is organised by health experts'*. Indeed, even respondents who were unfamiliar with the name Hiwot Ethiopia had participated in community conversations and were aware of messages aimed at HTPs. For instance, fathers who reported having not heard of Hiwot Ethiopia stated that '*we discuss HIV/AIDS, child marriage and use of contraceptives. We have learnt that having large number of children makes us poor. We are also talking with young boys and girls about HIV/AIDS and abstinence. We all are participating in the community discussion group*'. Similarly, girls who are not participating in any of Hiwot Ethiopia's activities commented in a focus group that their '*parents participate in the meetings on Sunday every week. They told us that they have learned about harmful traditional*

20 Not only is divorce very common in Amhara, but for children who are married especially young—it is expected. The ceremonial marriages common for preschool child are effectively always followed by divorce. There is no stigma attached to divorced girls.

*practices. We have not participated in the meetings but we know that our parents participate in the meetings and discussions'.*

#### The Development Army and its nested 1-to-5 groups

Yesamamba's Women's Development Army is also being well utilised by Hiwot Ethiopia, which is working to ensure that messages about HTPs, including child marriage, do not get lost in the Development Army's broader programming platform, which ranges from cook stove ventilation to vaccination. Those who lead the group explained that they '*meet once in 15 days for the discussion on harmful traditional practices, female genital mutilation, child marriage, milk teeth extraction, and things like large expenses for wedding ceremonies'*. Respondents indicated that the Women's Development Army's nested 1-to-5 groups are especially effective. According to a key informant in the *kebele* health office, '*currently we are using Women's Development Armies for integrated health services interventions. One woman leads five other women. In such a way women are organised up to village level. The 1-to-5 women's group helps to identify health and health related issues such as information on child marriage, pregnancy, and child vaccination*.' It reports to a 'command post' which identifies good practice for scale-up and suggests solutions to problems. Another responsibility of the 1-to-5 members is to '*evaluate the maturity of the couples before marriage and to take standardised measures against those who violate the guidelines'*.

The schools (both primary and secondary) in Yesamamba has organised students into one-to-five groups as well. An informant in the *woreda* education office explained that '*as a member of this structure, students are responsible for the educational activities of each other. When one student is absent for many days, others investigate and report the case to the school*'. If child marriage is involved then the '*school administration and teachers go to the home of that girl and try to convince the parents to stop marrying the girl*'. A teacher who praised Hiwot Ethiopia's work in helping raise legal awareness, added, '*We also teach the community that it is legally and morally wrong to participate in child marriage arrangements. If I happen to come across certain incidents such as child abuse, rape and child marriages taking place, I can report that to the concerned government bodies and take the wrongdoers to the court'*.

#### Recognising needs of the community

Hiwot Ethiopia's programming is based on the needs of individual communities. As a *woreda* level informant noted, local literacy rates are low, so 'leaflets are not distributed in the community'. Furthermore, few members of the community have access to radios, making media approaches a poor fit. Therefore, she explained, Hiwot Ethiopia uses both community meetings and a house-to-house approach in Yesamamba. Both rely on face-to face communication initiated by friendly local faces, primarily health extension agents and nurses.

> *Using posters and fliers may not be effective in this area. As the majority of the people of the area are not educated, they may not be able to read such kinds of documents. They just put them in their pocket. The important way of creating awareness is through meetings and discussions at big conferences.*
>
> *(Focus group discussion with non-beneficiary girls)*

Additionally, recognising that mothers play an especially important role in mediating girls' marriages in Yesesmaba, Hiwot Ethiopia created a platform called 'Mother-to-Mother'. Similar to the peer-to-peer education aimed at young people, Mother-to-Mother is led by trained volunteers who lead groups of mothers in weekly discussions about family planning, child marriage and the education of female children. As a focus group with mothers explained, 'all the mothers and women in this *kebele* participate in such kinds of discussions.'

### Box 4: Intensive training in small group formats reaps high dividends

Hiwot Ethiopia has forever changed the lives of Tsige and her daughters by helping them to understand the value of educating girls and eliminating child marriage in their community.

Tsige is 30, has been divorced for 15 years, and was married young enough that her oldest daughter is in late adolescence. Afraid to remarry, she supports her family by selling *areke* (an alcoholic beverage). Once a week Tsige meets with dozens of other women to learn about topics ranging from HTPs to sanitation. She explained that they have come to understand not only that girls should not marry as children, but also that they should only marry men they choose. '*We learned that child marriage is not good for the lives of the female children, they should be married after the age of 20. They have to show interest to marry a person whom they want to marry*,' she said. '*Child marriage is greatly reduced in all the communities, due to the efforts made by Hiwot*

*Ethiopia*.' The intensive trainings take time, she concluded, but they lead to '*changes in the attitude of the people'*.

Another way in which Hiwot Ethiopia has changed lives is through the focus it puts on girls' education. Tsige never had the opportunity to go to school. She is, however, determined, because of the '*discussion held at the kebele level'*, that her daughters will complete their educations. When her elder daughter failed to pass to grade 11 in the national exam, Tsige decided to enable her to continue to learn in private college. Now she is taking technical and vocational training in Alem Ketema [the *woreda*/district town].

Tsige's daughter attends Hiwot Ethiopia's girls' club, which has helped her put schooling first. '*After she started to engage in the discussions…she has focused on her education. She does not want to miss classes*.' She also '*tells me that she does not want to marry before she completes her education and gets a job*.'

Tsige especially likes the way that Hiwot Ethiopia has helped the community integrate the new trainings into the 1-to-5 governmental structure, which brings neighbours together in small groups so that they can discuss what they have learned. She says that while some people cannot come to the larger meetings, or do not understand in so large a group, '*people can well understand things in small group such as 1-to-5 structure'*.

When asked how she might improve the programme, Tsige said that Hiwot Ethiopia was working well the way it was. However, thinking of her own daughter, who '*felt so sad'* when she failed her exams, she added, '*Most of the time, our children do not pass to grade 11 preparatory class. It is good if the government can revisit its policy on this*.'

(All names have been changed to protect the privacy of our respondents.)

### 5.5.2 Outcomes of the programme

#### Increased awareness of harmful traditional practices

Our fieldwork in Yesamamba *kebele* identified a number of recent changes in the community, many of which are at least in part attributable to Hiwot Ethiopia. The most noteworthy shift was an increased awareness of the harmful effects of child marriage and the importance of girls' education, which our respondents told us have resulted in significant generational improvements. For instance, a teacher said that though in her time, '*80% of the girls left school due to marriage and other reasons, the younger generation are far better compared to us'*.

> *The discussions are so good. The practice of child marriage has reduced in our community. Previously, the communities had no value towards educating girls. But now most girls enrol in school and child marriage is minimised. The programme in Hiwot Ethiopia has changed the attitude of the young in our community. The girls became aware of the side effects of child marriage (fistula and others), hence they began to resist the attempt of their parents to practice child marriage.*
>
> *(20-year-old boy in Yesesamba kebele)*

While parents are increasingly committed to the *idea* of girls' education, many girls are still unable to regularly attend school or complete their homework because of the number of domestic chores for which they – and not their brothers – are responsible. As one girl noted, '*in rural areas boys are not responsible to work on household activities*'. Recognising this, Hiwot Ethiopia has adjusted its messaging and is specifically targeting parents with messages aimed at helping them balance girls' workloads. A teacher explained, '*since most of the female children are engaged in domestic work…Hiwot Ethiopia has worked on awareness-raising activities. They have discussion with mothers on how to help female children attend school*.' A mother in a discussion group reported that she had heard this message. She said, '*my daughter helps me in baking injera while I go to fetch water … but I never force or ask my daughter to be absent from school. I always give her adequate time to work on homework and study whenever she tells me that she needs to work on school tasks*.'

#### Increased awareness of legal consequences

Hiwot Ethiopia is also raising awareness about the law prohibiting child marriage. There is mixed evidence as to whether this is effective. On the one hand, several respondents told us that they were willing to report planned marriages to the officials and have them called off – and were not afraid to do so. A mother, for example, explained that '*when I observe that my neighbours are making preparations for wedding I will go to the Gote and report*

*their plan for child marriage. I know I have legal protection if I halt the practice of child marriage. There is no quarrel or dispute among the community members because the law is there for our protection as we are working according to the rules and regulations of the government on the practice of child marriage'*. On the other hand, other respondents told us that with no anonymous reporting mechanisms, they were afraid to report because '*there is no protection for girls who report child marriage among their neighbours'* (adolescent girl).

As they increasingly understand the child marriage law, parents in Yesamamba often resort to hiding their daughters' weddings. Community members told us that child marriage in the *kebele* is often clandestine and takes place during the evening/night with no accompanying feast so that officials do not know that a wedding is occurring. One adult reported, '*They marry their daughters the middle of the night (at 1 or 2 am) in order not to be imprisoned. They are cruel to their female children. Marrying female children at night is becoming a culture in the community. They cannot marry them in the daytime as the police officers force them to cancel the marriage*.' On the other hand, where weddings are reported, '*the police consequently take action and stop the arranged marriage and the parents are punished for violating rule of law and the right of the girl'* (see Box 5).

### Box 5: Escaping child marriage as a result of coordinated efforts

*'When the organisation started its work here, I was 14 or 15 years old. My parents decided to marry me to someone in the community. The school director informally heard about this. Then the teachers and the director came to our home to campaign to return me to school. The director called me alone outside and asked me why I was absent from the school. I told him that my parents were going to marry me off and the wedding day was approaching. Then he called my parents and warned them that that if they continued they would be imprisoned. Then my parents feared they would face imprisonment and they cancelled the marriage and decided to return me back to school. The school director saved me from child marriage. I continued my education with the efforts of my school director. Now, he has changed from this school to another. It is true that I escaped child marriage because of my participation in the training and discussions. I have obtained good knowledge about harmful traditional practices (child marriage, child childbirth, rape, venereal diseases, HIV/AIDS). If I had not participated in the training and discussions, I would not have completed my secondary education or I would have married as a child and had my own baby when I was still a child myself. I remembered that my friends urged me to refuse the marriage proposal of my parents. My education together with the warning of my school principal to my parents helped me to escape child marriage.'*

(In-depth interview with 19-year-old girl)

#### Improved SRH services

In line with Hiwot Ethiopia's focus on improving SRH knowledge for the community, our fieldwork findings revealed an increased awareness of and access to SRH services. Adolescent girls, for example, reported that '*Hiwot Ethiopia educates the people about HIV/AIDS, its transmission, and methods of protection. It educates people that HIV/AIDS is mainly transmitted through unsafe sex outside the marriage system. Based on the education, the people started to use condoms. Young people have started to use condoms when they are engaged in premarital sex'*.

Hiwot Ethiopia is also improving access to contraceptives. For instance, a mother explained that there is now '*easy access to the contraceptives in our area'*. She went on to explain that in the past, giving birth to 12 children was common but '*now with the intervention of the programme, the mothers' lives are much improved with the use of contraceptives like Norplant that they receive for three or five years*'.

#### Building confidence and improving time management skills

Adolescents also reported that as a result of their participation in the peer-to-peer discussions they are more confident and have better public-speaking skills. One girl explained that she can now '*lead meetings and discussions and feel the self-confidence to speak in front of other people'*. This confidence has translated into helping girls communicate with those in their day-to-day lives – '*other community members and family members whom we used to fear to talk to in the past*'. Overcoming this fear has been crucial for creating change. One boy said that after he had participated in Hiwot Ethiopia's programming he could now 'argue on some issues without hesitation' with his parents, friends and siblings and help them understand things like child marriage, HIV and AIDS.

Hiwot Ethiopia has also worked with girls to improve their time management skills, so that they can better juggle both school and chores. An adolescent girl explained, '*Earlier, I was using my time haphazardly without allocating proper time for all my duties. But now I have started to allocate proper time for all my duties and I have started to study with a schedule. I have really improved my time management skills after I participated at Hiwot Ethiopia*'.

### 5.5.3 Missed Opportunities and weaknesses of the programme

While Hiwot Ethiopia's programming has led to a variety positive impacts in Yesamamba, our research points to a number of ways in which it could be improved for even greater effect.

#### Need to involve elders and local leaders more effectively

Our fieldwork suggests that Hiwot Ethiopia is not sufficiently targeting local elders and religious leaders with anti-child marriage messaging. Although the *woreda* health office provides a short training on HTPs for community and religious leaders, our interviews indicated that in some instances child marriage is still being driven by local elders' support for traditional gender norms. One father explained, '*it is too difficult to resist the words of elders. Although we want to educate our daughters, we agree to marry off our daughters before the age of 18 because we are expected to be submissive to the idea of the respected elders in our community*.' An adolescent girl added that even when '*teachers go home to home to campaign for school enrolment and for those who drop out of school, the community members does not give ear to their campaign.*' She continued, '*Particularly if the parents decide to marry the girl, it is very difficult for the teachers to convince the parents*', as teachers do not have the same pull as local elders.

> *I recommend Hiwot Ethiopia extends its support to include the poor, the weak and the elders in our area.*
>
> *(Development Army leader)*

#### Meeting fatigue

Our research also found that meeting fatigue is an issue in Yesamamba, because '*people are not interested in participating in the community discussion and other kinds of initiatives anymore'*. This was attributed to the fact that people are bored with repetitive messages. As an adolescent girl asked, '*why we are learning always about HIV/AIDS? Why they are nagging us every day about HIV/AIDS?*' Other respondents felt that shifting the timing of meetings could help, since agricultural activities are time intensive and seasonally dependent but necessary for most community members' livelihoods.

While noting that incentives are a double-edged sword that can foster dependency and may in the long run reduce buy-in for messages, a key informant felt that Hiwot Ethiopia should incentivise attendance because '*people need something to compensate their time'*. Similarly, a Development Army leader explained that '*if Hiwot Ethiopia includes financial incentives you will be surprised at the large number of participants*'. However, an adolescent boy, who admitted that he was disappointed that he did not receive a T-shirt for his participation in the peer-to-peer discussions, seemed to understand that budgets are limited. He said, '*I would rather that the budget allocated for the T-shirt be used for supporting poor families. Whether we wear the T-shirt or not doesn't have any value'*.

#### Management challenges

High staff turnover and burn-out at both the NGO and the AWA are also issues for Hiwot Ethiopia in Yesamamba. In particular, the 2009 NGO law, which prohibits NGOs from direct community mobilisation, has meant that programming is heavily reliant on the Women's Development Army. While this has fostered cooperative relationships and improved grassroots uptake of messages, it has also overly burdened members of the Women's Development Army. They are responsible for a vast array of themed interventions and are faced with an unsustainable meeting schedule.

#### Need for educational and employment opportunities for adolescents

While beyond the purview of Hiwot Ethiopia, our research found that a critical need in Yesamamba, like other rural communities, is for educational and employment opportunities for school-leaving adolescents. Very few students are able to pass the grade 10 exams that would allow them to continue on to preparatory school. As noted by a key informant, with only '*three students who were promoted to grade 11 from this kebele, it is very important to strengthen vocational training centres and establish job opportunities for graduates'*.

Adolescents reiterated this point. For instance, a 19-year-old girl said that since her parents are poor, she is unable to continue her higher education. She explained that what she needs most '*is technical and vocational training*

*and education since I want to continue my education in the future'*. Similarly, a young boy indicated that '*the provision of vocational training for the uneducated people in our community is also important to make them productive in economic activities'*.

## 5.6 Conclusions and lessons learned

Hiwot Ethiopia is improving the lives of Yesamamba's girls. Programming is fostering dialogue about child marriage and education, building the capacity of local government structures, and improving access to contraceptives. Community members are increasingly aware of the risks of child marriage, the ways in which girls' workloads are impacting their educations, and the consequences of violating the child marriage law. While norm change is far from complete, as a result of innovative, age-segmented programming Hiwot Ethiopia is helping adolescents become formidable agents for change in their own right.

#### Lessons learned and ways forward from Yesasamba *kebele*

- **Strong coordination between government structures and NGOs is crucial for success.** While government structures ensure grassroots penetration of messages, they are often overburdened and need support in order to stay focused.
- **Short-term incentives may help re-energise participants**, but care should be taken to ensure that they do not over-burden already thin budgets or become more important to participants than content.
- **Programming that is segmented by age and life-stage allows messages to be carefully tailored.** This can be critical given the different roles of mothers and fathers in perpetuating child marriage and the different developmental needs of adolescents of different ages.
- **Programming should proactively target boys,** helping support the development of the new masculinities that will open more equitable spaces for girls. Boys also need to be supported to advocate for their sisters with their parents.
- **Legal awareness-raising in regard to child marriage is necessary but insufficient.** It can empower girls and community members to report planned marriages, but can also drive them underground.
- **It is vital to target local elders and religious leaders** with awareness-raising message, as they tend to be the keystones of social norms. Where they are supporting traditional norms such as chid marriage it can be difficult for programming to gain traction, but where they are supporting change it can be especially rapid.
- **Community drama is an underutilised technique.** Where literacy rates are low, dramas can reach large crowds and ward off meeting fatigue.

# 6 Amhara Development Association: Girls Club Initiative

The Amhara Development Association, a non-profit organisation, was founded in 1992 and has a membership of over three million people.

Recognising that in comparison with other regions, girls in Amhara are especially likely to marry as children and especially unlikely to have completed primary school, the Amhara Development Association (ADA), with support from the Packard Foundation, has invested nearly five years in a project entitled '*Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health Practices of Young Girls in Amhara Region through Retention of Girls and Mainstreaming SRH Activities in the School System*' (ADA project). The ADA project, which is primarily aimed at improving girls' educational outcomes, but also at ultimately delaying both marriage and motherhood, was launched as a pilot in 2010 and taken to scale in 2012.

### Box 6: Programme site overview

Woreilu *woreda*, which has a population of nearly 135,000 and is located in the South Wollo Zone of Amhara Regional State, is primarily dependent on rain-fed agriculture and animal husbandry and is food secure. However, as it located approximately 500 kilometres from both Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar, and has a gravel road that connects only the larger towns to the outside world, rural areas of the *woreda* remain largely isolated.

The *woreda* has schools that run through 12th grade and is, over the last six years, making progress towards gender parity as '*a big number of girls have started coming to school'* (*kebele*-level KI). Last year, for example, there were 12,679 boys enrolled in full-cycle primary schools, compared to 12,139 girls. While few children make it past 8th grade, in part because secondary schools are located in *woreda*'s more urban centres and therefore entail costly boarding fees, girls' enrolment is slowly catching up with boys'. Last year, of the 471 students enrolled at the preparatory level (11th and 12th grades), 39% were girls.

Segno Gebeya *kebele*, which recently had its status upgraded to a town, has a population of 8,000 and its own full-cycle primary school (through 8th grade). In addition to agriculture, many people in the *kebele* depend on petty trading and some on remittances.

Child marriage is said to be widely practised in Woreilu (*woreda*-level KI), which, unlike the region more generally, is three-quarters Muslim and one-quarter Ethiopian Orthodox, and legal implementation is facing significant resistance from local elders.

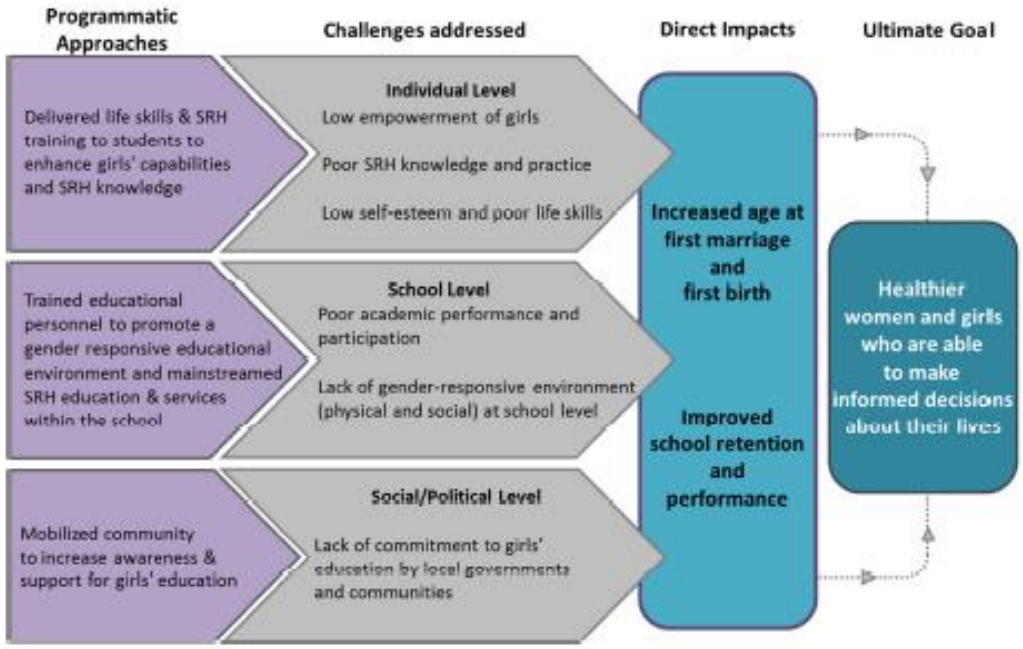
Until last year, when the Ethiopian government banned migration to the Middle East, it was common for girls to migrate to Saudi Arabia to become maids as soon as they completed 8th grade. Many girls married immediately before they left, because it is seen as safer for the married to migrate as they do not risk losing their virginity to rape. Some girls immediately divorced—so that they could send their wages home to their parents. Others sent their wages home to their husbands (Jones et al., 2014b).

## 6.1 Project goals and modalities

The ADA project is aimed directly at school children in the 5th-12th grades and indirectly at their parents and the broader community. It is based on an understanding that there are three clusters of reasons that girls drop out of school: 1) factors related to girls themselves, such as a low self-confidence and poor resistance to peer pressure; 2) school-level factors, such as unsafe and unresponsive environments; and 3) family and community factors, such

as the over-burdening of girls with domestic work and norms that favour girls' marriage over education. Ultimately aimed at building healthier girls and women who are able to make their own informed decisions, the project intervenes at all three levels (see Figure 2).

## Figure 2: ADA project theory of change




*Source: Namy et al., 2014: 6*

ADA's first level of intervention targets girls themselves. It aims to '*empower them through life skills trainings, SRH education, and reproductive health-focused counselling and referral services'* (Namy, et al., 2014: 21). Trained teachers, who are volunteers, initially work with a select group of students who then work with their peers through a variety of clubs and social networks, including girls' clubs and 1-to-5 student networks which are modelled on the Development Army.[21] As part of this education, girls are provided with instruction on how to make their own sanitary pads.

The second level of intervention targets the school environment and aims to help schools better identity and meet the needs of girl students. In addition to 'practical' support, such as helping schools construct separate toilets for girls and allocate space for 'menstruation management rooms' (MMRs), the ADA project works with schools to integrate SRH education and services into school and to adopt a model of gender-responsive pedagogy.

The third level of intervention targets the broader community and aims '*to solicit social and political support for girls' education and ultimately create an enabling environment to proactively promote girls' education*' (Namy et al., 2014: 22). While primarily focused on establishing and supporting Girls' Education Forums (GEFs) in schools and at the *kebele* level to complement those already existent at higher levels, the ADA project also works through other institutions, such as *iddirs*[22] and churches.

Given that the ADA project was taken quickly to scale, with the goal of growing it into a flagship programme that would attract new partners, ADA supplements its targeted interventions with two tools designed to ensure that project activities stay aligned with local needs. These tools are a community scorecard, aimed at helping the community identify and solve local challenges that impact girls' education and action research, which is situated in target schools and aimed at helping teachers identify and address problems facing girl students.

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21 In this model, which is also used for other forms of community education, one more knowledgeable person is grouped with five less knowledgeable people. The idea is that through small group discussions, information can be effectively and efficiently cascaded throughout the community.
22 'Iddirs are traditional burial associations, generally considered among the most important community based organizations in Ethiopia (and frequently engaged in social development programs as a key stakeholder). Iddir leaders are highly influential and respected members of society' (ICRW, 2014: 22).

## 6.2 ICRW evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is important to the ADA project and has been planned and included since inception. To that end, a baseline survey was undertaken before intervention. Carried out in 40 schools in 20 *woredas* in three administrative zones of Amhara, and including nearly 3,000 respondents, the survey found very low levels of SRH knowledge among students. For example, only 14% could identify at which point in a girl's menstrual cycle she is most vulnerable to pregnancy (ADA, 2012). It also found that girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school.

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) conducted its evaluation of the ADA project in 2014, two years after it went to scale, and included three *woredas* (two part of the project and one control). Its nearly 130 respondents included beneficiaries, implementers and observers. The evaluation, which included the implementation process, project influence and outcomes and M&E practices, found evidence of powerful impacts, especially at the level of individual girls.

In terms of the implementation process, while noting some confusion amongst respondents about which interventions were part of the ADA project and which were part of other initiatives, the ICRW evaluation found that ADA project participants understood programme objectives and found them both relevant and valuable. This was especially true at the girl level, where menstruation management was uniformly lauded, but was also the case at the school and the community levels.

High levels of local ownership, fostered by both ADA's structure and participatory approach and a widely felt sense that the project was creating meaningful change for girls and the broader community, apparently staved off the local resistance that so often accompanies gendered projects (Namy et al., 2014: 27). Finally, the evaluation found that although beneficiaries were relatively unaware of the ADA project's multi-level, multi-sectoral approach, ADA staff not only understood the project's design, but were able to explain the cultural logic behind it, which is important for locating and maximising synergies across interventions.

In terms of project influence and outcomes, the evaluation was almost uniformly positive although it noted some variation in the content and frequency of the training provided to girls at different sites. Specifically, it found that the ADA project had '*helped to foster positive changes in girls' overall confidence, SRH knowledge and practices, and awareness of gender rights'*, with one school also emphasising how to resist negative peer pressure (Namy et al., 2014: 35).

Similarly, at the school level, the ADA project had not only met its goals but was exceeding them, at girls' behest. By providing 'girl-friendly' services, such as separate toilets and menstruation management rooms, respondents reported that the ADA project had improved both girls' attendance and their participation in the classroom. By allowing those spaces to evolve, with girls' claiming MMRs as 'their' rooms and furnishing them with tables and mattresses, for example, the project facilitated spaces that met girls' needs not only for hygiene, but for socialisation as well. One of the three schools had also set up a 'secret club' that helped girls anonymously report teachers' sexual harassment.

Finally, at the community level, the evaluation found that the ADA project was contributing '*to greater awareness of the importance of girls' education and harms of early marriage*', primarily though establishing and supporting school- and *kebele*-based Girls' Education Forums (Namy et al., 2014: 35). The GEFs, which '*mobilise support for the challenges to girls' education existing at the local level*', had previously only reached the *woreda* level but are now positioned to better support messages about education, equality and child marriage, to enforce girls' attendance and directly prevent child marriage (ibid.: 33).

In regard to the evaluation's third objective, assessing M&E systems, results were again largely laudatory. While noting a lack of M&E training, a tendency to over-report and an over-reliance on unstructured reports, the evaluation concluded that ADA is '*actively documenting project activities at all levels*' and is storing reports in an accessible manner (Namy et al., 2014: 49).

Overall, the ICRW evaluation concluded that the ADA project's theory of change was strongly supported by the evaluation's evidence. Specifically, it noted that by shifting menstruation-related norms and fostering girl-friendly spaces at school, the project is reducing girls' absenteeism; by increasing community awareness of child marriage

it is helping to prevent it; and by empowering girls it is encouraging them to access their rights to an education and a marriage of their choosing. The evaluation also notes that ADA's '*unique positioning in the government/non-government space'* has been critical to the programme's success (Namy et al., 2014: 53).

## 6.3 Primary research findings

Our primary research, which found a community in flux, was more mixed. On the one hand, educational trajectories and marriage patterns are rapidly shifting, with nearly all girls now attending primary school and child marriage much reduced. On the other hand, while behaviours clearly evidence change, beliefs appear far more static, with some parents admitting that they still see housework as girls' work, even though they understand the implications for girls' schoolwork, and some religious elders fervently defending child marriage as the only way to prevent girls' sexual immorality. We found the ADA project to be supporting change on both fronts but, as it almost exclusively works through schools and with girls, to be far less engaged with shifting community beliefs. While acknowledging that this ADA project is targeting girls' education and SRH knowledge and practices and is not specifically aimed at child marriage, we observe that there are limits to what practical support or girls' empowerment can accomplish, and that genuinely transformatory impacts require targeting both girls and their social norm gatekeepers. Given the level of respect that ADA commands, from both officials and community members, they are well placed to expand their purview.

### 6.3.1 A community in flux

In the past, girls in Segno Gebeya were often married by arrangement while they were still infants. While most spent their childhood years living with their parents, by the age of 12 many were seen as old enough to begin living with their husbands and leading relatively independent lives. This practice appears to be abandoned. As noted by a *kebele*-level key informant, '*The modern day marriage is quite different. The young generation doesn't want to get married before they finish their studies. Before they get married, they spend times together knowing one another.*' While there are some hidden practices, with families 'secretly' marrying their children without following the '*formal way of doing things'* (*kebele*-level KI), all of our respondents noted that *child* marriage is effectively a thing of the past.

That said, what constitutes child marriage in Amhara does not match international definitions: few community respondents appear to understand that older adolescents are also children and are legally prohibited from marriage. A *woreda*-level informant, for example, noted that '*The minimum age for marriage here is 15-18 years*'. An adolescent boy in a focus group concurred. He said, '*It is common for girls to marry at 15-17 and sometimes their husbands are as old as their fathers*.'

Indeed, in addition to not necessarily identifying the marriage of a 15 year old as child marriage, our respondents also held varying opinions about whether child marriage was undesirable. Some parents clearly understood the physical and psychological risks of marrying too early. One, an adult participant in our community timeline exercise, explained:

> *We realise a lot of problems with child marriage. The first is the economic problem. It would be difficult to manage their life (because they are poor). The second is the social problem. Because she married at an younger age, she could be highly dependent on the family of her husband. This could create dissatisfaction and inferiority rather than happiness. She will find it difficult to participate in diverse social issues. She lacks satisfaction in life. This will cause a psychological harm on her. As a result, she starts hating to live. Because she is not matured, she finds everything difficult to manage. Managing the family life would be a very difficult task to her. She is not capable of managing the revenues and costs of life. Bringing up children is another burden. As a result of all this, the girl would be exposed to face serious moral failure and psychological harm.*

Other respondents, on the other hand, were clear that child marriage '*is considered prestigious to the parents as they obtain in-laws*' (girls' FGD) and that by delaying marriage parents run the risk of either their daughter's premarital pregnancy, which is '*absolutely sinful*' (timeline exercise), or a freely chosen partner (rather than arranged by parents), which is '*less desirable*' (*kebele*-level informant). A *woreda*-level informant noted that despite years of community '*education about the side effects of early marriage*', the '*community is not willing to accept it…because there is wide understanding that no one who married at an earlier age has faced any*

*challenges*'. Furthermore, a boy in the girls' club noted that to some extent it hardly matters whether girls' parents prefer to prioritise education over marriage. He explained,

> *They say 'kememot mesenbet' – 'it is better to live rather than dying for nothing'. …There are people who are killed by gun when they refuse to give their daughters to those people. Last time, there was bomb thrown at a woman who refused to marry the man.'*

There is also a great deal of disagreement over who drives child marriage in Segno Gebeya. On the one hand, many respondents – adolescents, parents and key informants – note that parents arrange marriage and girls accede '*only so as not to enter into conflict with their parents'* (girls' FGD). Parents, noted one mother, 'cheat' their daughters and tell them '*they will be disappointed because the community could alienate them so they couldn't participate in any social affairs*'. On the other hand, a great many other respondents also note that it is common for adolescent girls to choose to marry of their own accord – with the significant caveat that '*girls are often cheated by boys for marriage' (*girls' FGD) because they are poor and young men are not above using money, clothes and jewellery to entice them into marriage (boys' FGD).

> *Schoolgirls and schoolboys are also engaging in marriage at an earlier age based on their own willingness. The major issue in line with such a marriage is that once they marry each other in their own will, most of the husbands want their wives to go to Arab nation and send back money.*
>
> *(Mothers' FGD)*

### 6.3.2 The difficulty delineating impacts

While community members are nearly uniformly positive about ADA's programming, it is difficult to delineate the impacts of ADA's project given that it is set against a broader background of government interventions and primarily uses existing channels to deliver programming. For example, ADA's work with girls' clubs appears to be significantly altering girls' aspirations, helping them to choose education over marriage. The club in Segno Gebeya is functioning so well that it has become a model for other less functional clubs across the *woreda*. However, a *woreda*-level informant was quick to point out that '*girls' clubs exist in 'every government school'* and '*are not there because of ADA'*.

Similarly, while a *kebele*-level informant noted that when ADA first came to Segno Gebeya it had to '*nominate the focal persons, organise the community, and design the strategies for the intervention'*, because the community was suspicious and had few government structures that could help it deliver programming, community respondents spoke almost exclusively of what they had learned *from ADA* but from their 1-to-5 groups and from health extension workers (likely in large part because ADA, like other NGOs, is limited in its direct interaction with the community).

### 6.3.3 Programme strengths

ADA's programming for adolescents in Segno Gebeya is strong. Their chosen modalities – especially girls' clubs and menstrual management – are helping to keep girls in school, expand their horizons and improve their relationships with male classmates. Respondents also appreciated ADA's institutional practices. They felt ADA was providing solid training, adequately monitoring programme impacts and fostering cooperation between sectors and levels.

#### Modalities that work

Our respondents were uniformly positive about ADA's girls' clubs and menstrual management scheme. They felt that the clubs had helped girls find their voices, commit to education and resist child marriage and that the provision of feminine hygiene products had improved girls' school attendance and performance. Adolescents were particularly positive about the way in which club participation had improved interactions between male and female classmates, especially in terms of menstruation. Some parents also felt that ADA training had helped them allocate domestic chores more evenly, allowing their daughters more time to study.

##### *Girls' clubs*

Segno Gebeya's girls' club, which is five years old, has two leaders, one of whom is a woman who has been a teacher for more than two decades, including six years in the *kebele*. The club serves 110 students, including 30 boys, in the 5th-8th grades. Every Tuesday and Saturday there are trainings for the leaders of the club's 1-to-5 groups. Lasting several hours, they cover '*early marriage and its consequences, rape, how to handle menstruation*

*period, personal hygiene, and sanitation issues*,' noted the senior leader. On Wednesdays, the trained group leaders run discussions for all the other children in the club. '*I want the students to lead the club by themselves, I only provide some support*,' the lead teacher explained. While these discussion groups begin with formal lessons, to ensure that students understand topics deeply they typically lead to the creation of dramas, poetry and game-show style Q&A sessions that are both participatory and fun.

*Impact: Increasing confidence and voice*

Girls' club members reported that club participation has improved their self-confidence and sense of self tremendously. One explained, '*We are trained to feel confident, be active … we are trained that we have the right to express our ideas freely*.' Another added, '*I am so happy in my participation at the girls' club. It has brought about change in developing myself. Before I had no skill to solve any problems. Now I can propose ideas that solve any problem*.'

*Previously girls couldn't even tell their feelings and their problems. Now, they freely talk.*

*(female kebele-level informant)*

Girls' increasing confidence has led to improvements in their voice in the family, in the classroom and in the community. One said, '*The participation helped me to develop self-confidence to speak out on my views before my parents*'. Another added that she feels more confident speaking to her father in particular: since she joined the club she has '*dared to communicate with him openly'*. This has, according to the boys in the club, helped some girls convince their parents '*about what they have decided to do about their life'* – which usually involves continued education (boys' FGD). Girls are also learning to speak up in the classroom, which has not only helped them get chairs for the first time (previously boys got chairs and girls sat on the floor), but also helped with academic performance because they can ask for clarification (IDI adolescent girl). They are also learning to '*make speeches before other people'* and to '*report problems to the concerned body'* (IDI adolescent girl).

*Impact: Commitment to excellence in education*

*Girls have also improved their academic performance. Last time, it was a girl who scored the highest result in civic and ethical education and went for training with her teacher. I am proud of this academically competent girl; I feel as if she is my daughter. All the changes in the lives of our girls become a reality due the programme intervention of Amhara Development Association.*

*(Mothers' FGD)*

The girls' club has '*played a tremendous role in encouraging and supporting girls to improve their academic performance*,' according to the mother of a beneficiary. One girl, for example, noted, '*Now we know why we go to school. We want to reach a certain high level in education'*. Another added, '*Previously, people in our community would tell us that education for girls doesn't go beyond grade 8 or 10; I would get married soon. Now because of the club, I have changed my mind and started to study hard*'. Armed with the knowledge that '*educating women means educating the community*' (IDI adolescent girl), some girls are '*no longer willing to be burdened with household duties'* and are using their growing voices to give their mothers '*schedules allocating the time for school activities'* (mothers' FGD). Others are '*highly committed to sharing their knowledge with the entire community*' (IDI adolescent girl). Indeed, the emphasis on girls' education is so strong that some married girls have defied tradition and gone back to school. '*Before, it was too difficult*,' explained an adolescent girl, '*but now, with the intervention of awareness creation by the girls' club, such problems are now solved*' (unmarried adolescent girl beneficiary).

*Impact: Resistance to child marriage*

*Before I joined the club, there was a boy who was asking me to be his girlfriend; fortunately, when I heard about the girls' club, the teacher told us we should prioritise our education. I refused him.*

*(Adolescent girl)*

Girls' club participation has also improved girls' resistance to child marriage both in terms of parentally arranged marriage and 'free choice' love matches. '*We know that we should not get married before we reach our destiny*,' explained one young participant. Mothers reported that some girls, having learned that they are '*supported by the legal regulations of the government on early marriage … even try to sue their parents who are attempting to marry them off at an early age by interrupting their education*'. Girls added that they also learn a lot about peer pressure in the club. One, for

example, said they learn not to '*waste our time in doing silly things and to protect ourselves from peer pressure'*. Another added, '*We shall never be cheated by boys because we now know many things and can plan for the future'*.

*Impact: Better SRH knowledge and practices*

Girls' clubs have also improved girls' understanding of reproductive biology and their uptake of contraception. The club leader noted that previously '*females were so shy to talk about their reproductive organs*', but '*now 'you hear them talking openly*'. She added that girls also go to the clinic and demand contraceptives because they '*want to keep themselves safe'* in case they are raped. Indeed, a health informant noted that uptake of contraception among adolescents is improving more generally. She explained that even if husbands refuse it, married girls tend to use family planning and that few girls give birth to their first child before the age of 20.

*Impact: Building boys into allies*

As noted above, Segno Gebeya's girls' club has 30 male members who are increasingly allying themselves with their female classmates to lobby for change. One boy explained,

> *We are members of the girls clubs because it is important to involve males for best protection of the females from any gender-based violence. We discuss about what a male has to do, to protect the rights of girls, not to violate girls' rights. A woman means a sister, a mother and a wife. It is so important for us that she shouldn't suffer from such harmful traditional practices.*

Most boys agreed that in terms of shifting their beliefs, the key impact of their participation has been on their attitudes about menstruation. One said that boys used to insult any girl who was having her period. They would '*laugh and tell her that she smelled bad'*. Some girls went home and never came back to school, but now that boys understand that menstruation is a '*natural'*, they have '*stopped despising us'*, explained a girl club member.

Some boys pointed to changes not only in their beliefs but also in their actions. For example, one noted that '*we help our sisters at home'* because '*club intervention taught us that we should help our sisters rather than just siting and looking at them working alone*'. Several other boys added that they had either reported planned child marriages so that they could be cancelled or '*contacted the police and the school teacher*' to help a girl escape a marriage that she did not want.

### Box 7: School clubs as a vehicle for transformative change

Kidist is a 14-year-old 8th grade student who is an active participant in a girl's club run by ADA. Club participation, she says, has fostered her ambition and capacity to be the first in her family to pass 10th grade exams. She wants to be a doctor.

Kidist joined the girls' club in 6th grade. '*That was the time that I started to menstruate for the first time*,' she explained, adding, '*I felt shame as if it was my personal problem*.' The club not only taught her about personal hygiene, it has made her '*feel free*' about being a girl.

In addition, she explained, the club '*helped me to improve my speaking skills*'. She is no longer afraid '*to raise questions and give answers in the classroom lesson*'. Having learned the importance of '*choosing our friends with great care*', Kidist is also a mentor for other girls, '*encouraging them to be self-confident to speak out their view*'.

Recognising that boys are a key part of the solution, Kidist's club has worked hard to foster a feeling between boys and girls that they are '*as brothers and sisters*'. Kidist explained, '*The male students who are members of girls' club have been educated about the appropriate relationship between male and female students*.' Now, she added, there is 'no problem based on differences in sex.'

The girls' club also works closely with parents, helping them to recognise that '*females are equal with males in all aspects of life*.' Because girls in Ethiopia tend to be responsible for a far greater share of domestic labour, which impacts their ability to complete their schoolwork, the club emphasises to parents the '*equal distribution of household chores among girls and boys at home*.'

Kidist says that because of the Amhara Development Association's interventions, her community is a much better place to be a girl. '*The practice of early marriage has reduced*,' she said, and '*the community realised the value of girls' education*.'

Asked whether anything could be done to improve programming, Kidist had two suggestions. First, noting that in rural areas people are often unwilling to attend training, '*I recommend the use of house-to-house visits*.' Second, because '*there is a shortage of trained teachers, I recommend that the number of teachers be increased'*.

She ended enthusiastically, '*Let female harassment be halted*!'

*Menstrual management*

Respondents – adolescents, parents and key informants – are overwhelmingly agreed that ADA's support for menstrual management has been vital to a wide variety of outcomes, ranging from improving girls' confidence to keeping them in school. The ADA coordinator explained that the intervention grew out of concrete observations at the local level. '*We came to know that girls drop out of school or are often absent because of challenges they face during menstrual cycle. Every month, the girls are absent from school for 4-6 days because of this. That means about 18 days per semester*,' he said. A girl beneficiary added, '*In the past, I had an attitude that when a girl is having her menstruation period, she should not go to class. I thought that it was not appropriate to go to school during the menstruation period*'. Now, she continued, '*I have learnt about the benefits of sanitary pads and how to use them'*.

ADA's support for menstrual management in Segno Gebeya has been multi-faceted. They have, for example, made a toilet only for girls (mothers' FGD). They have also worked with the school to build a separate room where girls can go to wash, change their pads and rest if necessary. The room was previously stocked with pads and girls were allowed to take what they needed when they needed it. However, to make sure that the project is sustainable, ADA is now primarily training girls to use different local materials to make their own pads (IDI adolescent girl). While most girls indicated that they still felt served in this regard, a few girls felt there had been a shortage of supplies over the past year and one observed that '*the room is locked'* (IDI adolescent girl).

As part of ADA's menstrual management scheme, the school has also provided girls with counsellors who explain to them '*that we all are females and that we have the same issues to discuss and we have to feel free when interacting with each other and be open to express our ideas and share our problems'* (IDI adolescent girl). The counsellor, who also leads the girls' club, said that many girls appreciate her open ears. '*They consult me and discuss their personal issues…and tell me anything they want to tell me,*' she explained.

*Parent education*

ADA provides parents with some direct education, both in the school and in the broader community. Primarily adapting Women's Coalition Forums, and relying on school directors and teachers in the school context and *kebele* chairpersons, the police and religious leaders in the community context, the Forums '*are important for mobilising people'* (ADA coordinator). Beneficiary mothers told us that they took different lessons '*once a month*' and that they were encouraged to make sure their children were regularly attending school. The girls' club leader added that most parent groups are largely composed of mothers and that they average around 20 participants.

Beneficiary parents, like beneficiary adolescents, reported that their commitment to girls' education and their understanding of the risks of child marriage were much improved as a result of the ADA project. One mother explained, '*We have learnt at the meetings in the Amhara Development Association programme about adequate time allotment for our children; we cannot negatively affect our children's education*'. Another added, '*there is a gradual change in the attitude of parents. We are now equally allotting task to girls and boys. We and our husbands as well are better aware about the role of girls' education*'. Many parents also agreed that '*the discussion has also brought a change*

> *In one of my cousins' families there is one girl and two boys. When the girl is washing household utensils; the boys are engaged in cleaning their home and its compound. Before, much of the household burden was put on the girls, while boys were free to play in the field. But, now such discrimination among boys and girls has been greatly reduced.*
>
> *(14-year-old beneficiary girl)*

*regarding early marriage'* (fathers' FGD), with a handful of parents now so committed to their daughters' education that one mother stridently exclaimed, '*I don't want even to hear about the agenda of marriage from my daughters. I wish my daughters to get married at the age of 30 and above*'.

Several respondents noted that ADA programming had been especially important for fathers, helping them to become their daughters' allies. One girl beneficiary said that because most mothers had married young and had never had the opportunity to go to school, they tended to believe that girls' education '*has no good end result'* and want to instead marry off their daughters in their early age. Fathers, on the other hand, were changing more easily, she added. Indeed, a beneficiary mother observed that when she and other mothers attempt to '*load girls with domestic activities…our husbands warn us'*.

**ADA's supportive practices**

As noted in the ICRW evaluation, ADA enjoys the respect of both officials and community members. Our respondents spoke positively of the training ADA provides, the coordination it fosters between sectors and levels and its solid M&E, which includes sharing best practices.

*Good training*

Key informants noted that ADA has provided 'training on different issues for the all stakeholders', not, like other interventions, 'targeting a single sector for specific training', but instead providing it 'together, for all concerned sectors' (kebele-level informant). Once every three months there is a 'hierarchical…highly participatory' training, where the 'the focal persons trained at zonal level communicate with those who are at woreda level and so on and lastly until it reaches each community' (kebele-level informant).

*Good coordination*

Respondents also felt that ADA had built collaborative relationships with both officials and community members. A *woreda*-level informant said, '*the Amhara Development Association is working together with sector offices – WCYA, Education, Health, Justice, the Women's Association, Finance and Economy*'. The girls' club leader noted strong coordination at the *kebele* level too, with ADA '*strengthening the integration of activities'* between various sectors. A beneficiary mother noted that ADA's '*coordination with schools and health centres*' is especially strong and that this has really helped '*mothers not to suffer more'* during delivery. Indeed, while a *kebele*-level informant admitted that most community members only engage with other programming '*to collect cash incentives and get certain benefits'*, a girls' club member told us that ADA is so widely respected in Segno Gebeya that '*no one is found to be unwilling to contribute money for the association'*.

*Strong M&E*

ADA is committed to continual monitoring of its impacts. The ADA coordinator noted that '*data is always generated from schools and different forums'* and that ADA '*improved the tools based on experiences from phase one*'. Similarly, the girls' club leader observed that in addition to her monthly reports, which are based on a template, ADA closely monitors the activities of the club through regular phones calls, meeting with students and, occasionally, surprise visits.

Respondents were particularly pleased with the way the ADA uses evaluations to inform and encourage the sharing of best practices, '*inviting all coordinators in all districts so that people share experiences'* (ADA coordinator). A *woreda*-level informant, for example, noted that '*at the time of quarterly or monthly evaluation representatives from each school come together and participate in a discussion forum'*. She added, '*the experience sharing is not only through discussion, but also through visiting*.'

### 6.3.4 Missed opportunities

ADA's project is meeting its own goals, working through schools to improve girls' educational and SRH outcomes. However, given girls' marginal positions in both the family and the community, ADA's impacts could be larger were they to expand their purview and more directly tackle the broader social norms that limit girls' options.

**Insufficient engagement with adults**

While ADA does offer some programming for adults, it is '*very short and done after three months*' (*woreda*-level informant) and primarily targets them indirectly, usually through messages delivered by their children. Many adults, even beneficiary parents, wish that adult-oriented programming was more direct, more frequent and available in the community rather than in the school. Especially for more rural families, who do not often participate in school-based activities, respondents felt that girls would benefit from parental education because given the strength of community gender norms and the limits those norms place on girls' agency: transforming girls alone can only go so far.

*The rural community in particular is not participating in the community discussion.*

*(Fathers' FGD)*

One beneficiary mother, for example, said that '*school clubs should not only focus on teaching children about the different issues; rather, the parents should be also the target of the clubs*'. While many parents agreed with the ADA coordinator, that '*teachers are key individuals in local communities'*, several non-beneficiary mothers expressed dismay that '*information about girls' rights is communicated around the schools only*' and that '*there are no such discussions at the neighbourhoods'*. A beneficiary mother agreed that '*Amhara Development Association is not doing well on community discussion'*. Indeed, while respondents told us that ADA had briefly sponsored a Community Conversation dedicated, at least in part, to notions of gender equality and the issue of child marriage, they said that it was disbanded after only four meetings – perhaps, according to a former participant, because the *kebele* became a town, or possibly, according to a *kebele*-level official, because members did not feel the incentive (refreshments) was sufficient.

The need for more adult-focused work is clear from the slow pace of norm shift in Segno Gebeya. For example, while a few parents are clearly genuinely committed to their daughters' educations, several respondents admitted there is still '*a perception among the community that girls' education has no value'* (beneficiary mother). Indeed, they noted that even when parents talked about educational equality in practice they continued to set girls up to fail at school so that they would have a reason to force them to marry. A beneficiary mother, for example, said that '*the reason for girls' failure in their education is not because they are not competent but rather they are burdened by domestic and agricultural work. They don't have any time to study so fail in their education and then parents force their girls to marry'*. A *woreda*-level informant added that even when girls are allowed to attend high school, their educations are not supported like those of boys. She said, '*when they send their sons to high school, the parents prepare and give them food and other necessities. But when it is a daughter, she has to prepare her own food*'. She continued, '*Even those girls who have best scores tend to join the skills trainings (such as nursing or computers) because parents want them to graduate quickly and get a job*.'

*Even in domestic tasks if boys make any mistake we take it easy and we consider it is because he is unable to do the task; however, if a girl makes a mistake we exaggerate it and claim as she is doing it deliberately.*

*(Mothers' FGD)*

Similarly, while it appears that the age of first marriage has increased significantly in recent years, a *woreda*-level official reported that local support for child marriage was still so high that the only realistic way to prevent illegal marriages was to '*drop the law to meet community norms'* and allow 16 year olds to marry. This is because, explained a beneficiary girl, the community still '*considers delay in marriage time as something shameful or as if the girls has a certain defects'* (beneficiary girl). Furthermore, while most parents were clear that recent marriages are free-choice, rather than by traditional arrangement, several respondents noted that many marriages that appear to be consensual are in fact the result of girls who have been browbeaten into acquiescence '*because they are afraid of their parents and feel guilty when they refuse the interest of their parents'* (beneficiary girl). Indeed, several parents and informants explained that when girls tried to stand up for themselves – either at home or by reporting their parents to the authorities – parents '*disrespect their girls and mistreat them at home'* (mothers' FGD).

While our respondents were clear that girls' adult gatekeepers needed more programme attention, they felt strongly that adolescent girls should not be responsible for educating their parents. While one beneficiary mother implied that girls were unreliable educators, with some girls simply '*not communicating to their parents'*, most mothers felt that expecting girls to teach

*It would be good if our teachers go to the community in person and address the issues in public gatherings. People accept and listen to our teachers.*

*(Girls' FGD)*

their parents violated community standards. One beneficiary mother, for example, said, '*while the girls' tried to teach their parents' about early marriage and girls' education, their parents might not be willing to hear them*'. Another explained that Amharan culture demands that children be '*totally submissive'* to their parents, adding that '*we become offended when girls say "I have a democratic right and I am not responsible for household chores until I reach 18 years old".'*

#### Insufficient engagement with boys and men

While Segno Gebeya's girls' club allows boys to participate, several respondents noted that ADA's programming would be stronger if boys and men were more deliberately targeted. Noting an overall consensus that girls and women are prioritised for a great deal of programming in the school and the community, one boy felt that this could '*evoke a strike by the boys'*. He added that if all boys got the opportunity to participate in clubs '*as equal to the girls, boys will tend to be supportive instead of resistant or trouble makers'*.

A man in our timeline exercise concurred. He said, '*ADA is not involving males in the training it organises…and both males and females should participate in training if we need a real change to come across our society*'. While he felt the largest issue was that '*females are not effective in disseminating the training further*', which could be expected given the pervasive nature of gender discrimination in the community, there is also evidence that fathers could be especially powerful allies for adolescent girls. Conversely, a beneficiary mother felt that mothers, not fathers, needed more programming. She observed that men were bad at communicating '*to their wives what they have been told in the discussion as they assume that if they told us, we may strive for our rights and not respect them'*.

Key informants noted a particular need for more work with religious and community elders and observed that both ADA and the government need to '*collaborate with them continuously'* (*woreda*-level informant). While they were targeted intensively several years ago, as child marriage has become less common it appears that efforts to strengthen support within the religious community have been moved to the back burner. Given the highly traditional views on child marriage and girls' sexuality that elders in our focus groups appeared to hold, and the reality that '*they are more accepted in the community than by government officials'*, relegating them in importance is short-sighted (*woreda*-level informant).

#### Tighter focus

While we acknowledge that the ADA project is *not* aimed at preventing child marriage per se, several respondents commented that its child marriage messages would be stronger if they were not '*addressed together with the other traditional harmful practices such as abduction, rape and female circumcision'* (*woreda*-level informant). They noted that community programming in general tends to cover a wide variety of topics – including everything from vaccinations to sanitation in the case of the 1-to-5 groups – and that individual topics would likely be better heard if they were addressed independently.

However, several other *kebele* and *woreda*-level informants suggested that there is a good reason that child marriage messages are primarily packaged with other topics. First, in Segno Gebeya, child marriage and abduction are often closely related, with abduction used as a way to evade the legal measures that are meant to prevent child marriage (like age checks) or to reduce wedding expenses. Sometimes, they reported, girls agree to be 'abducted'. Other times, '*the parents communicate with the prospective husband and arrange the marriage to be undertaken through abduction and the girl has no idea*'. Second, addressing child marriage head-on can be dangerous. One informant, for example, said that '*there are people who try to terrify us if we interfere in their personal matters as if it is none of our business'*. Indeed, boys in a focus group discussion reported that local parents have been known to beat teachers for their '*interference'*.

#### Broader geographical focus

Respondents also noted that in order to maximise impact, ADA needs to expand the number of locations in which it is working. A *woreda*-level informant, for example, noted that it is working with only 11 schools in the district, which makes it '*difficult to think of bringing change within the community*'. A *kebele*-level informant, acknowledging the concerns of others regarding the needs of rural communities, added that '*once it (ADA) has brought change in an area…it should shift to those areas which have not been addressed'*. While many respondents seemed to feel as if their *kebele*, with its new urban status, had seen so much recent progress towards

girls' education and the reduction of child marriage that perhaps ADA's focus should move outward, our research suggests that such a move would be premature.

The ADA coordinator, who reported that '*remoteness is one of the criteria for choosing the schools under this project'*, added that transportation to more remote communities made work there '*very costly'*.

## 6.4 Conclusions

ADA's project in Segno Gebeya, which is nearly unique among the programmes we have assessed in terms of its clear theory of change, its collection of baseline data and its commitment to continual M&E, is creating clear change in girls. It is helping improve girls' commitment to education, their school attendance and their academic performance. It is helping them learn that they need not be ashamed of their changing bodies, should be allowed time at home to study and can consider broader futures than marriage alone. It is teaching them how to speak up for themselves. However, because its broader community programming is primarily indirect – and very much secondary to its work with girls – and given that traditional gender norms give girls little access to voice and decision-making, short- and medium-term impacts are likely to be far from transformatory.

- **Girls clubs are effective.** They provide girls with emotional support and role models and offer them spaces to develop voice and leadership skills. For girls who have been told since early childhood that their futures hold only marriage and motherhood, girls' clubs can help keep girls in school, give them the tools to resist suitors and steer them towards more independent futures. As noted by a key informant, it would be advisable to alter programming with children's ages, as 10 year olds have very different needs than 15 year olds.

- **Menstrual management schemes can improve girls' schooling.** In an environment where menstruation is deeply shameful, teaching girls about their bodies and providing them with basic hygiene supplies can improve both their school attendance and their academic performance.

- **ADA's M&E should be used as a best-practice model by other NGOs**. Its careful attention to change processes and built-in mechanisms for evaluation are exemplary.

- **Programming should also proactively target boys.** If girls are to have time to study then their brothers must help them with domestic chores. If school environments are to be hospitable for girls then boys must stop harassing them. Including boys in girls' clubs and helping them see the world from girls' perspectives appears to be a powerful technique and should be expanded.

- **Parents and communities need direct programming.** There is limited space for girls to claim new futures if traditional boundaries are not first eroded. Adult-oriented programming needs to be regular, continuous, taught by respected adults rather than disseminated through children, focused specifically on gender norms and the ways in which they constrain girls' futures, and it should pay particular attention to the religious and community elders who largely shape community responses.

# 7 Yegna: A social communication platform

## 7.1 Programme site overview

The Yegna programme, a social communications platform aimed at behavioural change among adolescent girls and the wider community, is currently being implemented by the Amhara Women's Association (AWA) in 56 *woredas* in six zones of the Amhara region: West Gojjam, East Gojjam, North Gondar, South Wollo, Awi, and North Shoa. A collaboration funded by DFID and the Nike Foundation, the general objective of this programme is to inspire girls to reach their potential across a variety of domains. For this study, we focused on one *woreda* in the North Wollo zone and one *woreda* in the West Gojjam zone (see Box 8).

### Box 8: Programme sites overview

**North Wollo Zone**

According to the 2007 census, Habru *woreda* has a total population of nearly 210,000, three-quarters of whom are Muslim. Historically, this *woreda* has been considered food insecure but has improved in recent years. Today it is a mixed farming *woreda* combining cereal cultivation and livestock rearing with some production of fruits and vegetables. Sorghum and maize are the main food crops and teff is the big cash crop. A new groundwater-based drip irrigation scheme has boosted the production of tomatoes and onions. Moderate land holdings, fertile soils and good rainfall contribute to make this *woreda* generally food secure. Remittances from migrants in the Middle East are also important sources of income for the residents of this *woreda*.

Within this *woreda*, our fieldwork focused on the Dire Roke *kebele*. Located on the new high way linking Afar and Djibouti with Bahir Dar and Mekele, this *kebele* was identified as a hotspot for child marriage by several key informants. This *kebele* has a total population of 4,258 and is nearly entirely Muslim. It is a chronically prone to drought and as a result is a food insecure *kebele*. There is only one full-cycle (grades 1-8) primary school in this *kebele*. In 2014-2015, it enrolled 636 children, slightly more than half of whom were girls (296 boys and 342 girls).

**West Gojjam Zone**

Yilmana Densa *woreda* is found in the South West Woyna Dega (midland) Teff livelihood zone of Amhara Region. According to the 2007 census, it has a total population of nearly 215,000, nearly all of whom are Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. This *woreda* has 33 *kebeles* (2 urban and 31 rural) plus one administrative town (Addet). Yilmana Densa *Woreda* depends on rain-fed crop production (mainly producing teff, wheat, and maize) and livestock rearing (mainly cattle, sheep, and horses). The midland zone is one of the historically food secure areas in Amhara Region and Yilmana Densa *Woreda* is one of the surplus producing areas in West Gojjam Zone of Amhara Region. In a typical year, better-off and middle wealth groups rely on crop and livestock sales as the means of generating nearly all cash income, whereas poorer households must engage in paid work and migration.

According to *woreda*-level key informants, child marriage is a major problem. There have however been some positive changes in girls' educational participation through the expansion of schools in rural communities and a reduction in the prevalence of child marriage through government and non-governmental interventions, including the DFID-funded Yegna programme and Finote Hiwot community conversations in some *kebeles*.

For our fieldwork, we studied two *kebeles*: Dembashi and Kudad. Dembashi *kebele* has a total population of 3,578 (M=1,939 and F=1,639), with the majority of the population stating that they are followers of Orthodox Christianity. The livelihood of Dembashi community depends on rain-fed crop production (mainly *teff)* and livestock raising (mainly cattle). There are four schools in this *kebele* (three schools serving grades 1-8 and one school serving grades 9-10) and one farmer's training centre. Kudad *kebele* has a total population of 4,759 (M=2,370 and F=2,389). The community depends on rain-fed crop production (mainly teff and maize) and livestock raising. There is one primary school serving grades 1-8 in this *kebele* and one farming training centre.

## 7.2 Programme overview

Girl Effect Ethiopia (GEE), formerly Girl Hub Ethiopia, is a collaboration between DFID and the Nike Foundation which engages with a range of stakeholders and partners in government, development, the private sector and civil society to embed girl-centred approaches in the implementation of existing policy, legislation and regulations. 'Yegna' (meaning 'ours' in Amharic), started in 2013, is a branded social communications platform that delivers messages through the radio and was developed as part of the Girl Hub initiative's drive for behavioural change among girls and the wider community (DFID, 2013). Drawing from global examples of effective social communications approaches and marketing expertise from the private sector, Yegna has been designed to engage with commercial media in a sustainable way, addressing cultural barriers, building capacity to attract audiences and to develop sustainable funding of programmes through donor and commercial funds (Crawford, 2013). Yegna is Girl Hub Ethiopia's flagship radio drama, talk show and music platform that champions girls and aims to create a national conversation about their potential. The radio drama and talk show address issues such as violence against girls, forced marriage, teenage pregnancy and school attendance.

The overall GHE programme design is rooted in behavioral change theory, which posits that empowering girls to fulfill their potential will not only have a positive effect on girls' education and social capital but will also create positive social and economic knock-on effects for their families, local communities and eventually on a national scale (AWIB, 2015).

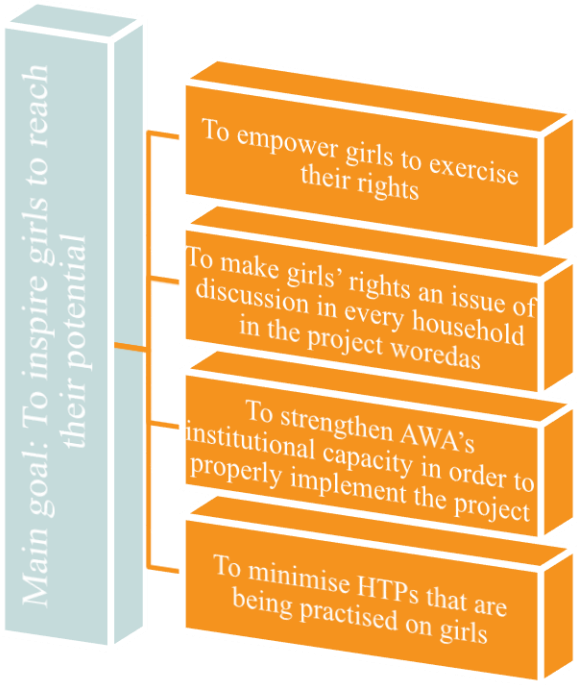
The programme design was also informed by evidence from highly attended screenings of BBC World Service Trust Heroes films in rural Ethiopia by Girl Hub which revealed significant appetite for social communications (DFID, 2013). This evidence of audience demand suggested that working with the private sector to develop programmes and market them to new audiences could make Yegna attractive to a range of donor funders and or private sponsors (DFID, 2013; Crawford, 2013).

## 7.3 Project goals and modalities

With a total grant of 2,646,328 birr (approximately £80,000), the Yegna platform is an initiative designed to achieve the broader objectives of GHE as set out above. Specifically, the goal of Yegna is to produce a social communications *platform* based on radio drama and other branded products (Crawford, 2013). Their goals can be described as follows:

- For Girl Hub to work with the Ethiopian private sector and media industry to produce a long-running radio drama using role models to which girls can relate.
- To produce adjacent and complementary radio talk shows to create the opportunity to debate the issues raised by the drama. The radio drama and talk show would be part of a single brand which could be expanded to incorporate development interventions such as school clubs.
- To ensure the brand will be rooted in Ethiopian culture and reflect aspirations of young women and girls and to build evidence of the effectiveness of taking a branding approach to social media and communications.

## Figure 4: Figure 3: Yenga project objectives




The expected outputs specified at the time of design are set out below:

- Establishing listener groups across the country, gathering insights around economic empowerment and research work on effectiveness of programmes using social communication platforms
- Research on social marketing and girl journalists that can feed into Yegna project implementation.

**Programme modalities**

The modalities of the programme are as follows:

- A sustainable radio drama and talk and music shows serve as the vehicle to explore key issues that affect girls and young women in Ethiopia.
- School clubs are responsible for ensuring that dramas are heard by school-going children.
- Girls designated as 'Girl Ambassadors' together with caregivers conduct listening groups and safe spaces to facilitate open discussion and support and work together with local organisations to reach vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- The advocacy work operates under the Yegna brand banner in a bid to build up a support base and loyalty around Girl Hub objectives and principles.
- The programme is implemented through a phased and targeted regional launch.

The radio drama has been designed to create role models and highlight relevant social issues for girls in order to stimulate discussion in communities and create a safe, informed and inspiring conversation about the value of girls (DFID, 2013). In the study sites this is done via broadcasting the Yegna radio programme twice a week through Bahir Dar FM, Dessie FM, and Debre Berhan FM, but due to the limited FM coverage it is necessary to use Amhara Radio to address more distant *woredas* that are out of the reach of FM. The project therefore intends to add two radio programmes per week that will be broadcasted by Amhara Radio. The preferred transmission dates and time for both FM and Amhara radio are Sunday from 1-2 pm and Thursday 5-6 pm so that children can listen to the programme when they return home from school. Those who are unable to listen to the programme on Thursday can do so on Sunday when it is repeated.

A phased, targeted, regional launch of Yegna has been conducted, with Amhara and Addis Ababa representing a quarter of the country's population, and enabling a dual approach to both rural and urban audiences with context-specific programming. In Yilmana Densa for instance, the first phase (from February 2013 to August 2013) only introduced the projects to the programme implementers. The second phase (May 2014 to May 2015) included the actual implementation of the programme components. In terms of context-specific programming, child marriage and violence against women and girls are high in Amhara and are addressed both through the communications programme and advocacy work with local partners such as the Amhara Women's Association. Potential partner organisations were also identified to enable targeting of the poorest and most marginalised communities (Crawford, 2013).

## 7.4 Internal evaluation/secondary materials

The following evaluation findings are drawn from a 2013 DFID Review, based on performance against specific indicators set against the following four output objectives:

1. Branded social communications and outreach which are activated and inspiring
2. Girl Hub Ethiopia's convening and catalysing role
3. Research and girl-centered participatory monitoring and evaluation generate real-time, robust evidence and insight for use by communications, systems, investments and policies
4. Girl Hub Ethiopia organisational development achieved, effective and sustainable.

Feedback on this output was obtained through a variety of mechanisms: listening groups, voice messages, short message services, social media and a network of young ambassadors educated at university level trained to promote and represent Yegna. Girl Hub Ethiopia records 157 girl Yegna Ambassadors (girls aged 18-19 years out of 494 Ambassadors in total) and 260 girl members of weekly listening groups, with 35 groups in total.

The overall feedback was mixed. While the quality of the Yegna brand and products and the programme's clear engagement with its audience were positively reviewed, the reach of the products and number of listeners was lower than expected. At the time of review, it was too early to sufficiently measure impact on behavioural change. The review attributes low listenership to three key factors: delayed implementation due to changes in DFID approval procedures regarding logframe and financial planning; the target milestones for listenership were based on flawed data on radio ownership, thus leading to miscalculations. Interview feedback with staff and other stakeholders suggest that infrastructural support, internal relations and communication and cultural gaps also contributed to challenges. A lack of cohesion between the creative, research and operation elements of the programme was also identified (AWIB, 2015). Finally, information on poor coverage and broadcast blackouts in certain areas was picked up in the feedback sessions in certain communities, which adversely affected listener habits.

### Box 9: Performance against indicators related to Yegna

Performance against indicators for Objective 1:

- Number of citizens reached through radio show – ***not met***
- Number of girls participating in Yegna group activities – ***not met***
- Quality of social communications products: relevance, audience engagement and brand loyalty, level of grounding in girls insights and co-design processes and sustainability – ***met***
- Percentage of exposed population retaining behavior change messaging from social media platform – ***exceeded***. Findings from listenership surveys found that 50% of respondents had retained messages, double the targeted amount.

*Source: DFID, 2013*

Overall a mixed performance was observed in the DFID review. The key achievements include the launch of Yegna; GHE's social communications platform; progress on developing key influencing and catalysing partnerships; contributions to the evidence base; and the development and testing of girl-centered research methodologies. However, in terms of progress against milestones and expected results, the programme's performance has been mixed, with many milestones not yet reached.

## 7.5 Primary research findings

Similarly to the review conducted by DFID, overall the findings from our primary research as to the contribution of the Yegna programme to reducing child marriage in the two focus *woredas* was mixed. Despite the programme's efforts, child marriage continues to be rampant in Habru *woreda*. The head of the education office in Habru explained for instance that '*the figure we have indicates that every year more than 200 girls experience child marriage at the woreda level. Sometimes, the number of child marriages is even above 200, which is discouraging. We can say that all girls are married before the age of 18. This is a serious problem'*. On the other hand there is evidence that child marriage is reducing in the Yilmana Densa *woreda*. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions show that there is a strong consensus that parents are preferring that their daughters be educated over being married, although the extent to which this can be attributed to Yegna's intervention is more difficult to detect. Below we investigate the contributions of the Yegna programme in both *woredas* and the role they play in

influencing the state of child marriage through interviews with key informants, focus group discussions with community members, and in-depth interviews with adolescents.

### 7.5.1 Programme strengths

Participants pointed to a number of strengths as to the significance of the Yegna programme, particularly in the Yilmana Densa *woreda*. While in Habru *woreda* the findings indicate that Yegna's presence is limited, findings from Yilmana Densa point to greater programme effectiveness in transforming girls' lives. One distinguishing factor of Yilmana Densa is that in addition to Yegna, other programmes including Finote Hiwot[23] have been working on eradicating child marriage as well. As a result, it is possible that the combination effect of both programmes is contributing to better outcomes. Nevertheless, when asked whether one programme has had a stronger impact on child marriage, boys in Dembashi reported that '*the Yegna programme is more impressive and recommendable because drama is more entertaining and educational than discussions*'. This was reiterated across multiple participants in both Dembashi and Kudad. Additionally key informants in this *woreda* recognised that the objective of Yegna is to '*empower females by minimising problems girls are facing; building their confidence in challenging and solving their own problems; enhancing their academic achievement; and improving their overall life*'. This matches the objectives outlined in Yegna and Girl Hub's plan indicating that there is good communication between programme design and programme implementation.

Fieldwork in both Habru and Yilmana Densa suggested that using radios, CDs, and drama as a medium to distribute information to the community is one of strengths of the programme.

#### Radio programme

Though there is mixed evidence in Habru about the extent to which households have access to radios, it appears that there is access to at least one radio in a community setting. In Habru for instance, a key informant with the leader of the anti-Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) club explained that '*the local community has the access to radio. At least if one household has no access to the media, the next dweller would have it. And hence they use it by coming together at common meeting places'*. In the Dembashi *kebele* of Yilmana Densa *woreda*, on the other hand, focus group discussions with girls indicated that they all have radio at home and '*listen to the radio drama on Sunday*'. Moreover, in Yilmana Densa, radios are the medium through which women listen to the Yegna programme in their development army meetings. As the key informant interview with the chair of the Amhara Women's Association (AWA) said, '*we coordinate such that the Women's Development Army listens to radio programmes every Thursday (5 pm) and Sunday (1 pm and 5 pm). The radio programme is transmitted in Amhara FM Radio and is presented in different forms. It has a play, drama and educational programmes*'. Yegna played an important role in creating this environment for the Women's Development Army because '*they have bought about 2,030 radios along with the dry cell batteries for that purpose'*. Programme facilitators or focal persons were also given some money for coordinating the programmes and discussions, according to the vice chairperson of the AWA in Yilmana Densa. However, a *kebele* AWA representative clarified that not all development armies have one radio. Instead, '*the kebele has been given only one radio but the developmental armies are using their own personal radio to listen to the radio programmes'*.

The positive effects of communicating information via the radio were also noted, though they were stronger in Yilmana Densa compared to Habru. In Yilmana Densa, there is evidence that listening to the Yegna programme through radios has had a positive effect. Girls in a focus group confirmed that '*we are very eager to listen to the drama on the radio. We wait for it by forming groups. Our mothers also listen to the drama together with us and ask us for clarification when they don't understand something*'. This was reinforced by boys in focus group suggesting that as a result of this radio programme, there is an initiation of discussion around harmful traditional practices. Indeed, key informants at the *woreda* level in Yilmana Densa noted that '*it is a must to have a discussion after the radio drama. Listeners are asked about the lesson they get after attending the drama. They explain the lesson they learned from the programme by mentioning the roles of each actors of the drama*'. Central to the philosophy of listening to the radio in the group therefore, is '*peer teaching and peer discussion*'. In Habru, fathers in a focus group setting explained that they get information through radio: one explained that '*through the radio, I have learned a lot about child marriage – such as she would be exposed to fistula. The society now knows that fistula is too awful. For instance, I have seen four women who were victims of fistula. It is really painful to think*

23 Finote Hiwot is a DFID-funded programme, working to end child marriage in East and West Gojjam zones, in Amhara since 2012.

*of even. So if people know about this, they would take care of their children*'. Similarly, unmarried girls report that their '*father always listens to the radio in the morning'*.

At school level, a Yegna coordinator explained that the '*programme is transmitted through educational radio programmes. Almost all schools have radio and the students gather every Sunday in their homes to listen to the radio drama*'. According to the education office in Yilmana Densa, the radio programme was given in '*flash drives a month ago when we participated in a regional education office meeting (we received 21 flash discs). We distributed the flash discs to the schools. Then the radio experts came here and checked that the flash discs have been distributed to the schools*'. In Habru, similarly, there were reports that CDs and flash disks were distributed to schools – though '*CDs were only distributed last year in 2014'*.

#### Interactive drama

Interactive drama is another component of the Yegna programme which many community members enjoy. According to the Yegna coordinator's interview, the philosophy behind drama is that students enact '*the behaviour of the five actors in the Yegna radio drama. They perform the drama in the school representing Melat, Mimi, Lemlem, Sara and Senait'*. These five stories represent different lessons that the community learns through the radio programmes. For instance '*these actors face diverse problems in their life and they are capable of devising solutions to their problems. They sacrifice everything for their education. This gives a good lesson to female children of our kebele'*.

### Box 10: Yegna Five Characters – Different girls, different lives

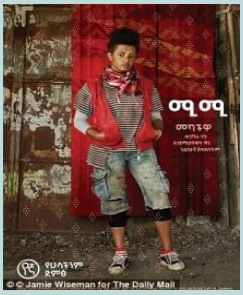
Yegna follows the story of five very different girls whose shared love of music creates an unlikely friendship that each character draws on as she faces different challenges. As well as tackling some of the challenges facing many girls in Ethiopia – including child marriage, violence and the lack of access to education – Yegna also aims to encourage friendship. These girls are portrayed as on a mission to change their country. As Girl Hub puts it 'Yegna knows that girls are Ethiopia's biggest untapped resource'.

**Mimi** (Lemlem Haile Michael)**, Emuye (**Zebiba Girma)**, Lemlem (**Rahel Getu), **Sara (**Eyerusalem Kelemework**)** and **Melat (**Teref Kassahun) are a group of fictional friends from very different backgrounds whose lives are traced in a weekly radio drama series. They are part of a five-member band which aims to reach out to empower young women of Ethiopia in ways that are accessible and relevant. The characters of each girl are described briefly below:

Lemlem Haile Micheal (26 years old) plays 'Mimi', a girl born in rural area who is forced to marry at age 13. She leaves her husband to seek a better life, only to end up destitute on the streets. Mimi is the streetwise girl, surviving on her wits. Mimi is 'tough but caring'. Mimi's behaviour change and goals are directed towards economic empowerment.

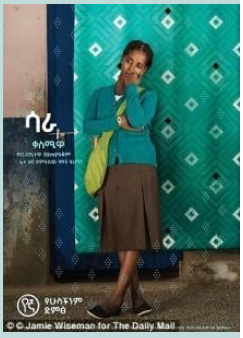
Zebiba Girma (22 years old) plays 'Emuye', a girl whose father drinks all day and abuses her and other members of the family physically. The effervescent Emuye has to cope with a physically abusive father. Emuye's behaviour change and goals are directed towards gender-based violence.

Rahel Getu (22 years old) plays 'Lemlem', the only girl in her family who takes care of her ill mother. The responsibility of caring for the family makes Lemlem late for school every day. Lemlem's character is described as 'patient, caring and kind'. Lemlem, a caring country-girl, is struggling to balance duties at home and her life in the band. Lemlem's behaviour change and goals are directed towards education.




Eyerusalem Kelemework (27 years old) plays 'Sara', a girl who comes from a well-educated family who believe 'all that matters is a good education. Yet singing is not a profession.' Studious Sara is stifled by her overprotective family. Sara, the 'quiet, studious one', comes from a well-educated family. Sara is described as 'the smartest girl in class' and 'always getting the highest grades.' Sara's behaviour change and goals are directed towards delaying age at first birth.

Teref Kassahun (26 years old) plays 'Melat', a girl born into a wealthy family. As the family business expands, they moved to another town. Melat, Melat, the 'city-girl princess', dreams of becoming a singer but her wealthy family leaves her no space for her ambitions in their busy life. Melat is a sophisticated socialite with an attitude to match. Melat's behaviour change and goals are directed towards developing friendships and trust.




*Source: http://www.matermea.com/blog/yegna-ethiopian-girl-band*

Other interviewees also noted that the content of the drama has been beneficial to them. For instance, girls in a focus group discussion told us about the content of one story where '*a student who was married at 12 was exposed to fistula. Fistula is a health problem which comes due to the age imbalance between the bride and bridegroom. We didn't know about fistula before the Yegna drama. It is after the drama that we clearly know about the causes and consequences of fistula. We also tell our parents what we know about fistula and other problems of child marriage'*.

**Strong coordination with Amhara Women's Association**

One of the factors for the success of the programme in the Yilmana Densa *woreda* can be attributed to Yegna's strategy of coordinating with the Amhara Women's Association (AWA). By assigning the implementation aspect of the programme to AWA, Yegna '*sponsors the work of the AWA'*. Moreover, as the *woreda* AWA key informant noted, the major activity of AWA is focused on '*preparing projects, discussing with officials, and introducing the objectives of the Yegna programme and distributing the materials such as radios given to them'*.

There is also heavy emphasis on providing training to coordinators both at *woreda* level and *kebele* level. According to the *woreda* AWA key informant, AWA has given training and hired female coordinators for the six zones by 'pr*eparing written exams that test their written local language (Amharic) capacity. In addition, the 56 woredas also chose a focal person to coordinate this programme'*. This was confirmed by the *kebele*-level representative of the Amhara Women's Association who stated that they '*were called in the woreda and participated in the orientations and trainings given at the beginning stage of the project. We had taken five days training about the implementation of the project and a one-day training called strengthening training'*.

*The Amhara Women's Association is an organised institution working to alleviate the problem of early marriage from the very beginning. It has been working efficiently, even before the coming into being of the Yegna project. However, the Yegna project develops our capacity of addressing the issue in a more in-depth way. What the Yegna project does for us is in supporting our programmes in materials and finance. Their contribution in scaling up our efficiency was fundamental. When we get human resources and budget, the quality and breadth of our activities are enhanced. We are also capable of reaching the grass-root community, thanks to the intervention of Yegna project in our programmes.*

*(KII with Vice Chairperson of Amhara Women's Association in Bahir Dar)*

**Good awareness raising through the Women's Development Army**

Across the interviews, it was found that in Habru, Yegna's awareness-raising efforts have fallen short of achieving their targets. For instance, a key informant at the Bureau of Women, Youth and Children's Association explained, '*regarding people's awareness, trainings were given via drama and songs. Especially, appropriate education was given about female circumcision and child marriage through films. Teachers, in addition to giving awareness using school clubs, were also pointing us to girls who were going to marry at an earlier age. As a result, there was a change. But changes couldn't continue as many NGO's work was short lived'*. A school supervisor also believed that awareness raising through any medium has not really helped because girls themselves '*are very much interested in getting married'*.

The efforts of awareness raising in Yilmana Densa have yielded more positive outcomes and are considered a strength of the programme. Through the '*Women's Developmental Army, the programme is implemented within each kebele and village. Within one developmental army, there could be 25-30 women working in team. They participate in group discussions and play a big role in coordinating and leading the team. They also listen to radio programmes as a group*'. To reach other community members, 'after the meetings are dispersed, every member of the developmental army has a responsibility for sharing their ideas with their neighbours, relatives or friends within the community'.

*The Yegna programme exceedingly helps us in bringing awareness change among our community. First, the Yegna programme serves as a means to gather members of the developmental army together. Then, it is easy to transmit any type of information to the group easily.*

*(Key informant interview with Kudad kebele administrator)*

Clearly, the Women's Development Army is crucial for the implementation of the programme in Yilmana Densa *woreda*. In Dembashi *kebele*, the AWA Chairperson commented that '*leaders of the developmental armies and executive members of the Women's Association are key for us to monitor the implementation of the Yegna programme'*. Utilising the structure of the Women's Development Army is efficient given the high number of women involved in these structures. According to Chairperson of Yilmana Densa *Woreda* Women's Association, '*in Yilmana Densa alone, there are 1,492 women developmental armies. The number of members of the developmental army varies from one group to the other. But, the maximum number of a developmental army is 30 and the minimum number is 20. Overall, 39,377 women are members of the 1,492 women developmental armies in this woreda'*.

Yegna also strengthens the '*connection among members of the developmental army. In previous times, women were called for meetings by the association once a month. After being part of the Yegna programme, women meet once every week'*. In these meetings, women first listen to the radio programme within their specific developmental army and then they raise questions and discuss the issues with each other: '*They discuss the practice of harmful traditions and their associated risks. They also discuss the protection of women's rights and the occurrence of gender-based violence in their respective households*'. Once they complete these meetings, a '*report of the discussion is sent to the kebele representative of the Women's Association. The kebele representative, in turn, sends the organised report of the kebeles to the woreda Women's Association'*.

*We have been evaluating the programme in different ways. In general, members of the Developmental Army have been explaining in their own words that they have gained better awareness due to the radio programmes. They understand the value of educating girls. They also told us that early marriage is harmful to their children and they promised not to try to arrange early marriage for their daughters. They have also understood that having a discussion time with their children is very important. Everyone is explaining to what extent they benefited from the radio programme. That is a big change we have achieved due to the radio programme. We have been also giving rewards to those families who were seriously listening to the radio programme and in turn implement it to better their family life. Rewards were especially given to those who were seen to change their life based on the lesson transmitted through the radio. The reward was given to three households within each kebele. In total, there were about 137 kebeles in the 56 target woredas.*

*(Key informant, Chairperson of Amhara Women's Association in Bahir Dar)*

**Strengthening school clubs**

At school level, Yegna is involved in providing media access to radios through school clubs. This was only found to be true in Yilmana Densa, with no evidence of Yegna work in schools in Habru. In Dembashi *kebele*, however, one school director explained that the girls' club and the HIV/AIDS club work with the Yegna programme. In fact this school was awarded a '*speaker for being among the first in the woreda to integrate school clubs successfully with the programme. Using this speaker, we play the Yegna music and dramas to students in the morning. This takes place before they get into class. For this reason, students come early to listen to the music and watch the drama*'.

Since the drama is played in the morning during the flag ceremony, '*everyone, including me [kebele school director] and the teachers, listens to the drama. The drama is on air while students are on queue for flag ceremony and everyone wants to attend it'*. One of the reasons the school director chooses to play it in the morning is because he believes that the break time is too short to transmit the programme. He said that once the '*students listen to the radio drama, they receive suggestions about the contents of the drama. Students need to understand the message transmitted in the music and drama. For that reason, students give their opinions about the content in relation to their personal experience'*.

While the Yegna programme is strongly integrated into the day-to-day activities of the school in Dembashi *kebele*, the Kudad *kebele* school representative stated that '*mainly, the task of transmitting and managing the Yegna programme is given to the Mini-media club of the school. We don't actively participate in the programme. I do not also listen to the programme. The programme is not transmitted in the morning or break times. It is coordinated by the mini-media club on Saturdays and Sundays'*.

**Continuous M&E**

According to key informants, there is continuous monitoring and evaluation that strengthens the impact of the programme in Yilmana Densa. A *woreda* level representative of the AWA said '*we call upon the focal persons of each kebele once in every three months and discuss the strengths and bottlenecks of the programmes. The meeting encompasses 56 focal persons from the selected woredas and six coordinators of the selected zones. It is in this meeting that we evaluate the overall activity of the project and the efficiency of the individuals in coordinating the programmes. Moreover, the positive impacts of the radio programme are also assessed within the meeting. In addition to coordinating this meeting, we also go directly to the field and inspect the overall activities'*.

M&E is also taking place in schools. For instance, in Dembashi, the school director has prepared a suggestion box which students can put their concerns in. According to the key informant, girls who may be at risk of dropping

out can put their information in the box and teachers will help them through counselling during girls' club meetings.

Evaluations of the effectiveness of the programme are not conducted formally, but according to the Kudad *kebele* health extension worker, '*relying on the attendance and participation of those in the development army discussions, we give them grades like A, B and C and based on this, we also arrange rewards. Thus, evaluations are made at an individual level'*. Similarly, in Dembashi, the AWA chairperson shared that evaluations for effectiveness are noted as a result of interactions with women '*in different developmental activities, social festivals and meetings. They come and tell us each and every change seen among themselves and other members of the developmental army. For instance, they told us to what extent they become autonomous to make decisions over the use of birth controlling mechanisms, regardless of the interest of their husbands'*. In other words, the programme relies on self-reporting from the beneficiaries to assess the level of impact.

### 7.5.2 Outcomes of the Yegna programme

#### Reducing child marriage and increasing girls' participation in education

Reducing child marriage is one major objective of the programme. In Yilmana Densa there is evidence that Yegna has helped to reduce child marriage. According to the AWA representative at the regional level, '*within the past nine months alone, we were successful in canceling a total of around 11,000 child marriage arrangements. In fact, this figure is inclusive and summative. It includes child marriage arrangements in areas where we are working and in others where we are not. However, many reports are seen in areas where our programmes are functioning'*. This is confirmed by the Yegna project coordinator of the Amhara Women's Association.

In Kudad, we noted that the *kebele* administrator also shared similar views. He explained that '*in the past, there was a wide problem of child marriage in our kebele. However, after we came to office and started the Yegna programme, a significant reduction in the practice of child marriage has been observed. The Yegna programme, especially, plays a great role in our move of avoiding the incidence of child marriage. Not only child marriage, but also female circumcision is also totally avoided due to the influence of the Yegna programme'*.

One of the reasons why child marriage is reduced by the Yegna programme is due to the attitudinal change the programme helps to create towards harmful traditional practices. Key informants at both the *kebele* and *woreda* levels believe that the '*radio drama has brought about significant changes in the awareness and attitude of the community. The drama is educational and informative. It gives a big lesson to the community on why educating females is important and how it is important to have continuous family discussions with children. As a result, the community is happy with the radio drama'*.

> *The story of Lemlem was amazing to me. It gives me a lesson about how to challenge my family and the community not to get married before completing my education.*
>
> *(Focus group discussion with girls in Dembashi)*

Though the content of the radio drama and the interactive drama are similar, it is interesting to note that interviewees specifically found that interactive drama led to more positive attitudinal and behavioural changes in the community. For instance, girls commented that '*our parents are changed in their behaviour due to the influence of the drama. They understand how child marriage is harmful due to the drama*'. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that drama is one medium which reaches male members of the community which is otherwise a missed opportunity of the programme (more on this discussed below). Male members – i.e., fathers, brothers, and male students – '*attend the drama actively*'. In Kudad *kebele*, girls explained that '*we imitated and performed Yegna drama during parents' day. Our drama was regarding the harmfulness of child marriage and the importance of female education. Both my mother and father attended the performance*'.

Similarly, increased participation in education was also noted as an outcome of the Yegna programming. In Kudad *kebele* (in Yilmana Densa) for instance, girls attributed Yegna with being able to attend school easily: '*nowadays, thanks to Yegna, our parents are encouraging us to keep to our education rather than to think of marriage. In addition, the Yegna radio programme influences our parents to treat male and female children equally. For instance, both are working, both at home and in the field, equally'*.

Child marriage is further reduced because adolescent girls are learning not to '*engage in love affairs at a young age*'. According to the school director, '*before the radio transmission, students were highly exposed to*

*harassment, even if the girl did not want a relationship. Nowadays, girls start informing their teachers and me when they have questions about love. They also inform the guidance counsellor and home room teacher. Then we will call the males and punish them appropriately'.*

In Habru, while there is no mention of Yegna directly working on reducing child marriage, the education office representative shared that '*the school mini-media clubs have worked on increasing female students' participation in schools, on HIV/AIDS, and harmful traditional practices.'*

One other positive consequence of the Yegna programme according to the health extension office has been that when women development armies meet to listen to the drama, '*it makes it easy to deliver health extension packages. Thus, the Yegna programme has been helpful for us to bring change in the minds of the community as well as to implement other valuable projects within the kebele'.*

#### Fostering discussion among community members

Yenga has also created spaces for community dicussion about child marriage and other HTPs. In particular, it has opened channels of communication between family members. As girls in Kudad *kebele* stated, '*solving problems through discussion is also one major lesson we have got from Yegna'*. Believing that Yegna has helped to '*develop a culture of discussion'*, women feel able to discuss their social and economic challenges and solve them without an external mediator. Moreover, family level discussion has been introduced as a result of listening to the radio at home. Development army members stated that '*the programme helps the community to develop a family discussion and it also enhances the connection between family members'.*

Despite not including men in the discussions, according to development army members 'the change involves the men as well'. This takes place because '*children and women inform the men about the overall contents and lessons of the Yegna radio programme. Secondly, education is given to men in the church and other social festivals. As a result, men are also changed in their awareness and behaviour. That is why men are respecting their wives in every decision of the family*'.

#### Learning to save money and manage time effectively

*Yegna is also helping its beneficiaries to 'build the habit of saving money every developmental army has a saving and credit association and it fundamentally eases the financial problems of members of the developmental army'. According to the Kudad kebele administrator, these saving schemes serve 'as a good means of boosting their capital, through the saving and credit association organised by the developmental army'. Moreover, in Yilmana Densa, there was evidence that listening to the techniques taught in the drama had helped participants manage their time more effectively. In-depth interviewees stated that 'the programme has a tremendous impact on our time management. Now, we are doing things based on a programme'.*

### 7.5.3 Missed opportunities and weaknesses of the programme

#### Need to include male members of the community

The implementers of the programme recognise that one of the weaknesses lies in not adequately including male members in the programme design. As the Yilmana Densa's chairperson of AWA stated, '*we didn't select men to attend the programme. If there is any male who is interested to listen and attend discussions they can, but our emphasis is on females. We are hoping to change this in the future, since males should also be involved with the radio programme. It could bring complete change within the household. The women will also be relieved from the challenge they face from their husbands'.*

Not surprisingly then, while as mentioned above men are hearing some of the messaging around the risks of child marriage and importance of child marriage through their offspring and in some cases through the church, fathers in Hanru continue to endorse traditional norms and beliefs. In focus group discussion with fathers, it was noted that they believed that '*the area is very hot and girls drink milk endlessly. As a result, we feel that they need males before they turn 18 years old. So, because we are followers of Islam, we choose to marry our female children at an earlier age rather than seeing them form an informal relation with somebody and give birth without marriage. This would make us feel ashamed and guilty in the face of the community'*. Given that fathers are often central in making decisions at the household level, it is important to include them in awareness-raising activities.

**Budget constraints**

Budget constraints constitute another weakness in the Yenga programme that AWA has faced over the last year. For instance, the AWA vice-chairperson shared that '*the number of developmental armies and the radios we get were not balanced. As a result, we gave one radio to two or three developmental army groups'*. There are 36 Women's Development Armies in Kudad but the *kebele* '*only received seven radios'*.

To circumvent this problem, '*women are buying batteries by themselves. Women do this by establishing Eqqub (saving and credit associations) among themselves'*. According to a development army leader in Dembashi, '*the radio is mine. I also bought the battery by myself. I coordinate the group members to listen to the radio. We didn't stop listening to the drama due to the shortage of radio and battery because we really like to listen to it'*.

Similarly in Habru, budget constraints lead to members of school clubs having no access access to media. The leader of the anti-Harmful Traditional Practices club believed that '*if we want to show a drama or play to the school community including the students, we do not have the necessary materials to accomplish the task. For instance, we have no muntarbo (loud speaker), television and other essential materials to properly transmit the message'*. Such economic problems make the effectiveness of the programme challenging.

*Challenges with sustainability due to budget constraints*

Given these budget constraints, key informants raised questions about the future of the programme and its sustainability in this region. For instance, the *woreda*-level AWA representative shared that the '*major problem the community is facing is the shortage of radios and dry cell batteries. They need us to support them in fulfilling radio and battery needs. Most of the developmental army has tried to buy batteries by sharing money when they gather for discussion. However, this might not be sustainable for long*'.

In fact, the AWA representative continued that though the programme has been 'indispensable', the Amhara Women's Association office felt that they '*lost a lot when the programme stopped functioning in 2015. The facilitators and focal persons have stopped communicating and coordinating the groups. Moreover, the communication between the army and us (kebele and woreda Women Association Leaders) is terminated*'. Though the radio programme continues to be broadcast, the implementation phase was completed in March 2015. Moreover, as noted above, formal independent evaluations have not been conducted that describe the degree to which this programme has played a role in reducing child marriage. Relying on self-report to obtain information from the community members which can be biased, the AWA implementers noted that there is a need for better evaluation strategies to ensure the sustainability of the programme in the future.

Nonetheless, the Yegna coordinator at AWA believed that despite these setbacks, the programme's effects are sustainable given that '*the developmental army was not organised only for the sake of the Yegna programme. The structure will continue as it is. The only thing we will face difficulty with would be transmitting the radio drama. However, if the radio drams transmission continues, it is not difficult to us to run the programme as it was. The issue of avoiding child marriage and other harmful traditions was the agenda of the Women's Association from the very beginning. The association tries to tackle these problems beginning from its inception. Thus, even with constraints in the budget and human resources, the programme will be able to continue. It has been our regular task and we will continue in that way.*'

**Mixed views on radio as an effective means of communication**

*Infrastructure constraints*

Although radios are widespread in Yilmana Densa, participants in Habru *woreda* indicated that due to infrastructure issues, radio may not be an effective means of communication. For instance, focus group discussion with boys revealed that they believed that since there is an '*absence of electric power it is difficult to use the mini media. Even though many people buy a generator here, no one will listen to the radio, preferring to watch TV instead'*. Boys attribute the cost of the dry cell as a reason why community members do not want to use the radio: '*if someone wants to use the radio in order to follow up information, he/she must buy at least four dry cells which costs around 24 birr and that will be used for 8 days. So no one can afford to pay 24 birr every week*'. Similarly, though children can receive the same information on their cell phones boys report that '*we can follow up FM radio by using mobile phones with earphones but to do that I have to pay 5 birr to charge my battery which I cannot'*.

*Need for more creative mediums*

There is also a need for the programme to incorporate innovative technologies as one key informant at the BoWYCA explained that since '*households do not have radios, radio cannot be a solution. Moreover, in an era of mobile technologies, people are unwilling to use radios.'* The need for more creative mediums was also reiterated by a representative in the *woreda* health office who stated that since '*people do not have the habit of listening to radios, the best methods for transmitting information to the community are through educational videos, documentary films, and using cultural bands. It is better if people learn through visual media'.*

However, even if the programme attempted to try different mediums (such as television) to transmit information, without basic infrastructure, the impacts will be limited. As mothers in Habru said, with 'no electricity in the Dire Roke *kebele,* there is no access to education programmes transmitted via television. The 'shortage' of electric power in the community is a major hindrance to the effectiveness of this programme.

**Content mismatch**

One major weakness identified in the fieldwork by the key informants was in the design component of the programme. According to *woreda* AWA representatives, those living in the urban *kebeles* '*do not value drama and radio unlike the rural community*' suggesting that perhaps urban populations may not benefit as much from this design as much as rural populations. This is further complicated by the fact that the content '*of the radio programme does not represent the realities of the rural community. It does not touch the lives and problems of the rural community*'. For instance, the story of Melat, '*the way she is designed as an actor and everything about her, including her story, is particularly urban. The way they train for the music contest is also a reflection of urban life rather than the rural one'.*

According to key informants at the *woreda* level, this content mismatch could be attributed to the fact that AWA are only part of implementing the programme and not part of programme design. According to the key informant at AWA, '*our agreement was to implement the programmes. We were not consulted while they were designing the programme. Before they contacted us, they started transmitting their programmes in Addis Ababa and so now keep on transmitting the same programme. Once the annual drama is prepared, it is not possible to change it' even though the woreda-level AWA 'were giving frequent feedback*'. Given that it is *'difficult for the rural women to understand what was said in the drama if the communication style is very urban*', the key informants stated that they '*hope Yegna will incorporate our comments and adjust the content and communication style of the drama so that it would be a reflection of our rural community which is 85% of the Amharan population'.*

## 7.6 Conclusions and lessons learned

From our fieldwork, we can conclude that theYegna programme has had mixed success in Amhara. While it showed strong impacts in Yilmana Densa, the programme's effectiveness is significantly constrained in Habru. In Yilmana Densa, the qualitative findings suggest that the programme has helped to reduce child marriage, improved attitudes around girls' education, created spaces for community members to critically discuss harmful traditional practices, and taught participants to manage their time more effectively. Reflecting on the interviews in both *woredas*, we put forth lessons learnt and ways forward for the programme.

### 7.6.1 Lessons learned and ways forward from Habru and Yilmana Densa

- **Creative mediums that involve the entire community, such as drama, are beneficial.** There is a need for creative and innovative methods to raise awareness and community information about child marriage. Interactive drama was thought to be particularly interesting because of the novel way in which it involved various members of the community.

- **Using innovative technologies may be a way forward to expand the impacts of the programme.** Given that meeting fatigue is a common programming challenge, sustained effectiveness of the Yegna programme depends on its ability to incorporate novel technologies (e.g. mobile phones) to achieve their targets.

- **Strong coordination with Amhara Women's Association has proven to be effective, given their strong grassroots reach.** The AWA has integrated Yegna's programming goals and modalities into

their day-to-day activities that have proven to be fundamental to the success of the programme in Yilmana Densa. This collaboration could be fruitfully built on going forward.

- **Good M&E between programme implementers and Yegna coordinators has been crucial for positive impacts.** As noted in the interviews, until recently, there was continuous reporting of daily activities between the development armies, the *kebele*, the *woreda*, and the programme coordinators. This may have contributed to the positive outcomes and the strong level of coordination between AWA and Yegna, suggesting that good M&E is needed for the future, but at the current level of resourcing does not appear sustainable beyond the life of the programme. Accordingly issues of sustainability need to be addressed. Formal evaluations must also be conducted in order to empirically test impacts of the programme.

- **Using existing structures, especially the development army, to transmit messages has been effective.** Building on existing structures has been both economical and has helped strengthen the Women's Development Armies, but again sustainability challenges need to be addressed after the life of the programme.

- **It is important to recognise infrastructure constraints of a community before programme implementation.** In Habru, given the lack of electrification, programmes such as Yegna that depend heavily on electric sources need to address infrastructure problems before implementing their design. Introducing solar batteries may circumvent problems around dry cell batteries that limit the use of radios.

- **It is critical to include men in community conversations so that change can be more effective at a macro level.** Men need programming directed at improving their understanding of their own role in perpetuating and ending child marriage. It would be helpful to have settings where they are also given a chance to listen to the radio programme in a systematic manner.

- **Programme design should be modified after feedback from programme implementers.** The content of the radio programme needs to be assessed and modified to fit the needs of the community it is trying to reach.

- **Expanding the programme design to include girls who are out of school should also be considered.** With a current focus on providing radio and media access to children in school, the programme needs to consider ways to reach out to school girls in the future, given they are often particularly at risk of child marriage.

# 8 Conclusions and policy/ programming recommendations

## 8.1 Conclusions

### 8.1.1 Social norms as reflected in girls' lives

Drawing on the extensive primary research evidence base that we have developed over the past three years, we now have an in-depth understanding of the complexities of Amharan adolescent girls' lives and the ways in which

the gendered social norms that influence their life trajectories are evolving unevenly over time—allowing some girls to effectively substitute education for child marriage but restricting most to some combination of the two.

With regard to child marriage, we note that:

- **Social norms that focus on girls' sexual purity push both parents and girls towards child marriage,** with marriage considered prestigious for girls' parents and unmarried girls facing stigma.
- **Local elders and religious leaders are often gatekeepers** of these norms, in some communities holding them in place and in others encouraging change.
- **Overall, girls' education helps delay marriage,** in part because schooling locates girls as children and in part because it empowers them to make better decisions about their own lives.
- With tailored education, **fathers and brothers can be critical allies**, helping girls stay in school and unmarried.
- **Marriage is often merely a default option**. In many cases girls marry solely because they have left school, do not have access to either land or their own paid employment and are resented by their parents for their 'idleness'.
- **While in most communities 'good' girls are those who listen to their parents,** there are nascent shifts in decision-making with parents allowing girls to choose their own partners and time their own marriages.
- **Health extension programming – and the 1-to-5 community groups that have ultimately grown out of it –have been vital** to expanding community awareness about the risks of child marriage because of their effective grassroots penetration.
- **Both legal awareness (about the age of marriage) and legal enforcement are patchy**. In many communities the marriage of 15 year olds is not considered child marriage. In others, an increasing reliance on 'hidden' marriages means that child marriage continues unabated.

With regard to education, we note that:

- **Uptake of primary education is increasing rapidly**, however, due to both costs and parents' concerns about girls' sexual purity, **access to secondary school remains very limited**.
- **Parents' reliance on girls' domestic labour limits their schooling.** Girls are made to miss school more than boys and are not given sufficient time for studying school lessons or doing homework.
- **Girls' interest in education and employment is expanding.** While migration and marriage continue to attract many girls, especially in communities without strong role models, most girls now aspire to high school.
- **Parents' and men's interest in girls' education is expanding,** with parents wanting to foster their daughters' self-reliance and men preferring to marry educated girls and women.
- **School clubs can transform girls' lives.** They build confidence and voice and can radically alter girls' aspirations, especially when they are combined with programming that reaches parents and other social norms gatekeepers – and does not exclude boys.
- **Adolescent girls need more educational options.** Those who do not attend high school, or who fail their grade 10 exams, need training opportunities that would help them achieve the independence that would allow them to delay marriage.

### 8.1.2 Social norms as reflected in policy and programming

Having summarised our three years of findings as they relate to girls' lived experiences with child marriage and education, we return to the four questions around which this year's research was organised. Overall, we conclude that programmes are addressing social norms more comprehensively than policies—but that concrete programming outcomes are mixed.

1. To what extent do core policy frameworks with relevance to child marriage, teen pregnancy and education consider the role of social norms?

a. Overall, our research has found that core policies pay little attention to social norms. While there is a general commitment to tackling harmful traditional practices, including child marriage, there is little translation into either budgets or human resourcing. The end result is that those on the front-line of elimination are over-worked, under-paid and often left without the resources (such as transportation) and capacities (especially monitoring and evaluating skills) that they need in order to do their jobs effectively.

2. How are policy commitments pertaining to social norm change processes in turn reflected in programme design?

   a. On average, social norms are far better reflected in programme design than in policy statements. Theories of change, for example, tend to be rooted in the notion that expanding girls' options depends on creating change in both their parents and the broader community. However, because norm change is complex, there remain many missed opportunities.

3. How closely is programme design translated at implementation level?

   a. With caveats, programme design is well translated into implementation. Programmes are working closely with the Women's Development Armies and girls' clubs to ensure that women and girls are hearing regular messages in grass-roots forums, using community conversations to foster broader discussion, paying at least some attention to norm gatekeepers such as community and religious leaders and fostering better cross-sectoral collaboration. However, robust monitoring and evaluation systems tend to be significantly lacking, which is limiting opportunities for learning.

4. How are (intended) beneficiaries and their families perceiving and experiencing change?

   a. Evidence of concrete impact is mixed. On the one hand, child marriage is rapidly declining and girls' education is rapidly increasing. On the other hand, few respondents see the marriage of fifteen year old girls as problematic and most girls struggle to do well in school because their parents are unwilling to reduce their domestic workloads. Key is that while tackling specific discriminatory social norms, including norms around child marriage, is necessary to altering girls' trajectories, it is not sufficient. Genuinely transformatory change will require addressing the broader system of gender inequality, as well as investment in a plethora of non-communication measures such as properly resourcing local government structures and mitigating economic poverty.

## 8.2 Policy and programming recommendations

As resourcing is scaled up to meet the government's 2025 deadline for the elimination of child marriage, we offer a number of policy and programming recommendations. Some of our suggestions grow directly out of our programme case studies and are aimed explicitly at communication approaches. Others flow more organically out of local realities and are accordingly broader. Where possible we point to good practice examples of each—bringing in our recent work for UNICEF and the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM/C if necessary.

### 8.2.1 Policy recommendations

*In regard to child marriage*

- Given how quickly the patterning of child marriage is shifting, with rapid declines seen in some regions and increases in others, it is important to **collect better data** about how many girls are married

and at what age they marry. Moreover, in light of the diversity of marital forms, even within Amhara, it is also important to track what those marriages actually entail.

- Develop **more effective systems for enforcing the laws on child marriage**. This should include attention to developing consistent reporting chains, so that girls know where to turn for help, and providing *kebele* level officials with the support they need in order to consistently enforce the law.

*In regard to girls' education and employment*

- Given that girls who become pregnant, whether within or outside of marriage, are shamed into leaving school, **schools need to ensure that students have access to comprehensive SRH information and contraceptives.**
- **Compulsory schooling should be enforced** for all children through the end of 8th grade—even if they are married. Thereafter there is a need for systems to **ensure that rural children are better prepared for national exams**.
- A**ll schools need gender segregated toilets--**which provide girls with adequate privacy, especially for menstrual management given related cultural taboos.
- **Families need support in order to send their children to secondary school**. The government and donors should strongly consider cash transfers that incentivise girls' education as these would simultaneously address the need for better poverty programming and restrictive gender norms. Girls would especially benefit from dormitories at secondary and tertiary levels as onsite living arrangements would help allay parents' fears about sexual violence.
- **Adolescent girls need employment options** if they are to remain unmarried and in control of their own lives. To this end, there is a critical need for vocational training programmes and non-migratory employment for adolescent girls. Globally the evidence base on good practice remains relatively limited in this area and thus we suggest an investment in pilot initiatives to test what sorts of approaches are more effective in which local contexts.

*In regard to fostering cooperation between NGOs and the government*

- drama can be a powerful teacher, we suggest that the government (which controls the media) and NGOs (who have media expertise) work together to **develop national level media programming for TV and radio** that addresses child marriage specifically and gender inequality more generally.
- Because in the long run government programming is both the broadest and the most sustainable at scale, we suggest the development of systems to **ensure that community-based programming is integrated into and complements government programmes**.
- In order to support learni Because ng, it is important to **develop robust monitoring and evaluation systems** that link indigenous NGOs such as the Amhara Development Association and Hiwott Ethiopia to funding and ministerial level support.

### 8.2.2 **Programming recommendations**

*Design for better communications-focused interventions*

- **Participatory design builds stronger programmes.** Where communities are involved in selecting messages and modalities, they tend to select the ones they will be most likely to hear. Care's TESFA is a good practice example (Jones et al., forthcoming b).

- **Community dialogues can be an effective intervention**, but work best when they target both adolescents and adults in an age-segmented manner. Hiwot Ethiopia has done this well.

- **Community and religious elders** need to be prioritised for child marriage and gender equality messages as they are often the ultimate gatekeepers of social norms. Care's TESFA and Action Aid's Women's Watch groups have both done this well (Jones et al., forthcoming b).

- **Boys and men** need to be targeted for programming aimed at encouraging new masculinities that support their sisters and daughters to reach adulthood before they become wives. Hiwot Ethiopia is an example of good practice—though we note that male-centred programmes, such as MenEngage[24], could be usefully adapted to the Ethiopian context as well.

- **Face-to-face discussion encourages local ownership** and should be combined with top-down or media approaches for best effect. Where Yenga has run discussion groups, radio programming has been far more powerful.

- **Girls' clubs can bring transformatory change** to girls, helping to build their confidence and voice whilst learning about their rights (and serving as critical venues for reporting planned marriages). ADA's girls' clubs are working well.

- **Peer-to-peer education** can be effective, but requires that facilitators be carefully trained. Hiwot Ethiopia is using this technique well.

- While the 1-to-5 groups and other government structures can ensure grassroots penetration and facilitate bottom-up ownership of messages, complementary **NGO programming is often required to keep groups focused** on gender-related themes. This will require not only content support, but also financial resources—as in most communities WDA leaders are already stretched too thin. Yenga and Hiwot Ethiopia are doing this to a degree—though Action Aid's Women's Watch groups in Ofla appears to be a genuinely best practice (Jones et al., forthcoming b).

- **Preventing meeting fatigue** is a challenge that should be planned for from inception. One of the few programmes which has not struggled with meeting fatigue is Action Aid's Women's Watch Groups (Jones, et al. forthcoming b).

- A reliance on **volunteer labour** risks burn-out and encourages high turnover. Adequate provisioning for programme coordinators and creative approaches to incentive structures need to be prioritised. CARE's TESFA handled this well.

- **Programming should build on local role models where possible—**and afford them public recognition. Educated women, including teachers, should be recognised for their accomplishments. Similarly, parents who have supported their daughters to stay in school, and marry as adults, should be encouraged to share their experiences – both through girls' clubs and in the broader community.

- **Because known faces tell powerful stories,** it is also important for programmes to work with local girls and women to help teach the risks of child marriage. Hiwot Ethiopia's inclusion of divorced girls is a good practice example—as is CARE's TESFA.

*Messages for better communications-focused interventions*

- Messages need to help communities understand that **girls are children until they are 18** and that the marriage of any child under that age is a child marriage.

- **Messages regarding the health risks of child marriage** are pervasive and well understood. Accordingly, such messaging should be continued. Yenga is doing this well.

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24 http://menengage.org/

- Especially in areas where child marriage has become a hidden practice**, it is necessary to balance presenting the *risks* of child marriage** (such as fistula) **with the *benefits* of adult marriage** (such as a lower risk of poverty)**.**

- It is important that messages **directly address gender inequality** in order to shift the broader norms that drive child marriage. CARE's TESFA is a best practice example.

- **Invest in messaging aimed at balancing domestic workloads between girls and boys** and men and women. ADA has begun to include these messages in programming and Action Aid's Women's Watch Groups have integrated them well.

*Complementary programming*

- As school enrolments climb, **schools should be supported to become the key agents in keeping girls in school and preventing child marriage.** Each should have a professional counsellor who is paid for monitoring and guiding students.

- **Married girls need programming** aimed at helping them return to school, delay their first births and negotiate with their husbands for more equitable relationships. CARE's TESFA should be used as an example.

- Given that girls' school attendance and homework time is compromised by their parents' demands on their time, further efforts to **provide girls with additional tutorial support** in schools should be considered. Government programming in Kilteawlalo, which also provides poor girls with stipends, is doing this well.

- **Menstrual management programming should be offered in all schools** as a way of improving girls' attendance and reducing their risk of school dropout. ADA is doing this well as is Finote Hiwot.

- **Safe houses** can provide girls with a safe place to live while they are attending secondary school or avoiding an unwanted marriage. Hiwot Ethiopia is providing safe houses.

*Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning*

- Programme design and implementation should be informed by a **theory of change** and have an **iterative design** and **rigorous M&E** in order to encourage continuous improvement and disentangle impact pathways. ADA's project has better M and E than most programmes—though CARE's TESFA is genuinely a best practice example.

- Given variation in the incidence and patterning of child marriage, individual **programmes need local baseline data** in order to **tailor programming**. It is not enough to collect data solely for donor tick-boxes, it must be used. If programmes are to be sustainable, regular, longer-term data needs to be evaluated with an eye towards **ascertaining impact and proving cost-effectiveness.**

- **Opportunities for shared learning are vital**. Some programmes create enormous change. Others create change very cost-effectively. Most do neither. In order to maximise impact, itis important that NGOs have opportunities to share what works, for whom and why.

- Quality M and E is critical to **supporting government agencies to become better consumers of evidence**—and ultimately take the strongest programme approaches into existing ministries. The Tigrayan government's child marriage programming provides a case in point for how successful government programming can be.

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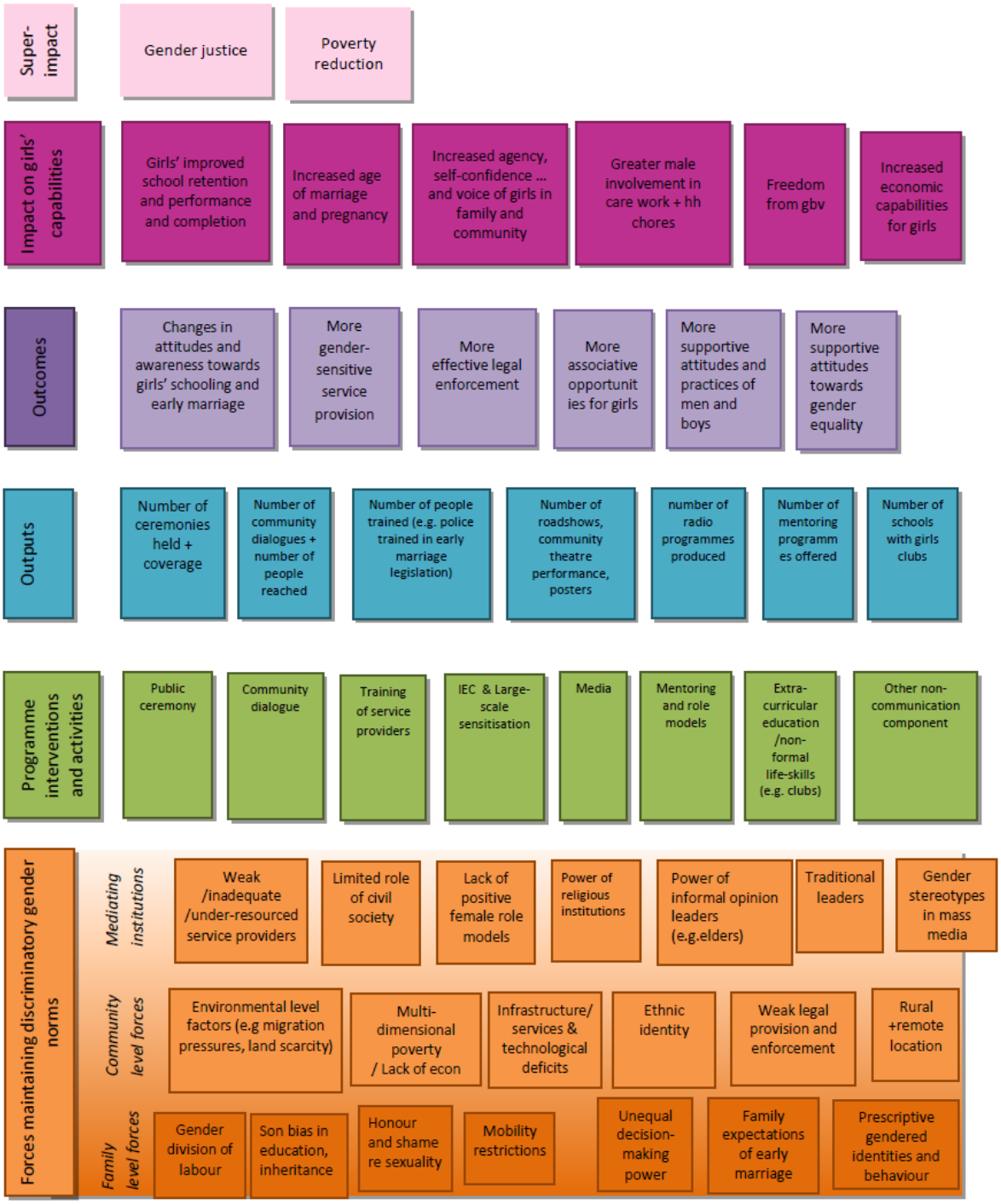
# Appendix

## Annex 1: Logframe theory of change model, ODI



# Annex 2: Research instruments

## 1. Key informant interviews (KII): National level

### 1.1 Government ministries/ development partners

**Targets:** Ministries of Gender, Education and Health; DPs supporting programmes

Introduction

We are exploring how people in this community are affected by early marriage and efforts to increase girls' schooling and your perceptions and experiences of XX programme/ programme. We are talking with men, women, boys and girls to understand how current programme support in Ethiopia is functioning and ways in which it could be strengthened. We think your views are very important and should inform discussions around policies and programmes that aim to improve individual and community wellbeing. We'll be writing a report – there won't be any immediate effects but longer-term we would hope that your views will be included

**Background information to collect**

| | |
|---|---|
| ID [to be decided per country – but could be name or initials] | |
| Ministry or Agency | |
| Function | |
| Gender | |

**Key questions (to be adapted as needed)**

1. Key developments in terms of addressing early marriage, teen pregnancy and under-investment in girls' education, including through communication interventions
2. Key challenges remaining
3. Programming landscape – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
   a. including coordination across actors; sustainability of interventions; funding; grappling with social norms ; exit strategies
4. Examples of successful programmes. Ingredients of success? M and E quality/quantity?
5. Examples of communications approaches. Ingredients of success? M and E quality/quantity?
6. Knowledge sharing mechanisms in the field of early marriage, teen pregnancy and girls' education? How could these be strengthened?

### 1.2 Programme managers

**Target:** Managers of case study programmes

Introduction

We are exploring how people in this community are affected by early marriage and efforts to increase girls' schooling and your perceptions and experiences of XX programme/ programme. We are talking with men, women, boys and girls to understand how current programme support in Ethiopia ] is functioning and ways in which it could be strengthened. We think your views are very important and should inform discussions around policies and programmes that aim to improve individual and community wellbeing. We'll be writing a report – there won't be any immediate effects but longer-term we would hope that your views will be included.

**Basic information to collect**

| | |
|---|---|
| ID [to be decided per country – but could be name or initials] | |
| Agency | |
| Function | |
| Time in function | |
| Gender | |

Key questions (to be adapted as needed): A focus on the communications component (s) – linked to other programme components if multi-pronged programmes.

1. Basics? (aims; duration, budget, staffing levels, capacities, partners)
2. How long have you been involved in the programme? What is your role in the programme?
3. How did you get involved?
4. What were the origins of the programme? (national hq, international good practice, scaled up from a project)
5. Relevance to national policy? Which one is it trying to contribute to?
6. What was the programme design process? Were you involved and if so, how? Were local beneficiaries involved in the design and if so how?
7. Does the programme design consider social norms, if so, how?
8. Have the objectives of the programme been met? Have there been unexpected results/impacts? Overall, what have been the key achievements or what do you think they will be? How do you measure this?
    a. Do you have a logframe/ TOC? Did you do a baseline? What indicators do you use? How were they developed (by you, your partners, your beneficiaries)? What M&E have you undertaken? How are the results of monitoring fed back into the on-going programme to improve it?
9. Do you think the relative effectiveness of the communications component is due to its strength alone or because it is part of a broader package of interventions?
10. What sort of support do you get from other staff or agencies, if any? Strengths/ weaknesses of that support?
11. Coordination with other relevant interventions in the sector ; issues of decentralisation
12. Opportunities for strengthening going forward
13. Barriers to full achievement of original goal / ongoing challenges
14. Exit strategy/sustainability strategy
15. If you had an opportunity to scale up, what would you keep, what would you do differently?

## 2. Key informant interviews (KII): Subnational level

### 2.1 KIIs with local government and development partners

**Target:** Local government at district and sub-county level; relevant sector officials, traditional authorities, women's civil society organizations / CBOs) – also to secure entry/approval to communities

Introduction

We are exploring how people in this community are affected by early marriage and efforts to increase girls' schooling and your perceptions and experiences of XX programme/ programme. We are talking with men, women,

boys and girls to understand how current programme support in Ethiopia ] is functioning and ways in which it could be strengthened. We think your views are very important and should inform discussions around policies and programmes that aim to improve individual and community wellbeing. We'll be writing a report – there won't be any immediate effects but longer-term we would hope that your views will be included.

**Background information to collect**

| | |
|---|---|
| ID [to be decided per country – but could be name or initials] | Eg CM 1 Iganga |
| Department/agency | |
| Role/function | |
| Link to programme | |
| Gender | |

1. Key questions (to adapt as appropriate)
2. Background on socio-economic conditions, social services and key development trends and challenges in the district/locality
3. what are the key concerns relating to child marriage, teenage pregnancy and under-investment in girls' education
4. What are Key developments in terms of addressing child marriage, teenage pregnancy and under-investment in girls' education
5. Key challenges remaining
6. Programming landscape – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
   a. Extent to which programmes are adequately tailored to local context or one-size-fits all model adopted?
   b. What communication strategies are being used by the programmes and effective are they
   c. including coordination across actors
   d. sustainability of interventions
7. source funding , adequacy
   a. what social norms are they addressing and how ( how effective communications strategies in addressing social norms around child marriage and education
   b. what exit strategies and sustainability plans have the programmes adopted
8. Examples of successful programmes. Ingredients of success? M and E systems and indicators ?
9. What sort of knowledge sharing mechanisms exist in the field of early marriage and girls' education? How could this be strengthened?

## 2.2 KIIs with programme implementers

**Targets:** Those connected to case study programmes

Introduction

We are exploring how people in this community are affected by early marriage and efforts to increase girls' schooling and your perceptions and experiences of XX programme/ programme. We are talking with men, women, boys and girls to understand how current programme support in Ethiopia ] is functioning and ways in which it could be strengthened. We think your views are very important and should inform discussions around policies and programmes that aim to improve individual and community wellbeing. We'll be writing a report – there won't be any immediate effects but longer-term we would hope that your views will be included.

**Basic information to collect**

| | |
|---|---|
| ID [to be decided per country – but could be name or initials] | Eg CM 1 Iganga |

| | |
|---|---|
| Role/function within programme | |
| How long involved in programme | |
| Previous experience | |
| Gender | |

**Key questions**

1. What do you think are the key issues facing adolescent girls in this community?
2. How did you get involved in the programme? How long have you been involved? What is your role?
3. Did you receive training for this role? What did you do before you started this job?
4. What were the origins of the programme? Did it originate in this region or suggested from capital of the country or was it suggested from an international agency?
5. What are the main programme objectives?
6. What was the process for programme design? Were local stakeholders involved in the design? If so how? To what extent do you think it is effectively tailored for adolescent girls?
7. To what extent was the role of social norms taken into consideration? Probe for the specific social norms around child marriage and education that are being addressed?
8. What communication strategies / approached are being used? How effective are they in addressing social norms around child marriage and education
9. What have been the key achievements or what do you think they will be?
10. Have the objectives of the program been met, have there been unexpected results /impact?
11. Can you comment on the relative merits of the different programme components in achieving impact (communication vs others).
12. How do you measure this? To what extent do you think social norms are changing as a result?
13. Did you do a baseline? What indicators do you use? What sorts of M&E have you undertaken? How were findings utilised?
14. To whom do you have to report and according to what format? (What are your reporting mechanisms/requirements?)
15. What are the challenges in implementing the programme?
16. Is the funding adequate to meet your objectives?
17. What sort of support do you get from the national level (donors, ministries, regional/national offices, etc.) if any? Strengths/ weaknesses of that support?
18. Coordination with other relevant interventions in the sector
19. Opportunities for strengthening going forward
20. Challenges to full achievement of original goal
21. Exit strategy/sustainability strategy

## 3. Focus group discussions (FGDS) community level

## 3.1 Beneficiaries (direct or indirect) Women and men / girls and boys

**Targets**: People directly or indirectly involved in/affected by the programme/ representative of the target population that the programme is aiming at – either the girls themselves and their relatives, or fathers as target group and their daughters

Introduction

We are exploring how people in this community are affected by early marriage and efforts to increase girls' schooling and your perceptions and experiences of XX programme/ programme. We are talking with men, women, boys and girls to understand how current programme support in Ethiopia ] is functioning and ways in which it could be strengthened. We think your views are very important and should inform discussions around policies and programmes that aim to improve individual and community wellbeing. We'll be writing a report – there won't be any immediate effects but longer-term we would hope that your views will be included

**Background information to collect**

| | |
|---|---|
| Location | |
| Type of group (women/men; boys/girls, beneficiaries/non-beneficiaries, etc) | |
| Numbers of participants | |
| Ethnicity/religion | |
| Age ranges | |
| Marital status | |
| Livelihoods/employment | |
| Education levels (in school or out-of school for adolescents) | |

**Key questions**

1. What are your perceptions about early marriage and girls' education in this community? Is it a problem? How significant? Is everyone affected? What are the causes and consequences?
2. What role do social norms play in perpetuating these problems?
3. Are there activities/programmes going on to address the problem of early marriage and girls' limited educational opportunities?
4. How effective are these in your view? Why?
5. You are participants in X programme – can you please describe your involvement, activities, experiences, reasons for involvement, why, when?
6. List activities participants have been involved in and then use most significant change tool below.

7. What was your life like before the programme? What has changed in your life (reference to private and public) after programme X?
   a **For adolescent girls and boys only**
   Time use
   Economic worries
   Labour engagement (chores and economic activities)
   Relations within the family – with parents and siblings and other relatives
   Self-confidence
   Better psycho-social wellbeing /less pressure/stress
   Friends and social networks
   Mobility
   Choice/ agency /decision-making/voice
   School attendance
   Less stigma
   Perceptions about marriage / marriage relations /including desired age of marriage

Freedom from violence
Expanded sense of opportunities/ aspirations/ vision for future
Other?

2. Were there any negative effects?
3. Where there any unexpected effects? 'what surprised you most from this programme?'
4. What else do you think is necessary to improve the/your situation regarding girls' education and early marriage?
5. What is needed to ensure that the positive effects of the programme you described last beyond the end of the programme?
6. What would you recommend to improve the programme?
7. How can programmes help you play a more supportive role in your daughters/sisters life?
8. What other programmes or interventions do you think would be useful to address these problems?
9. What other communications programmes do you think would be useful?

**At the end of the interview, note down how the process went**: Was it participatory; did everyone take part in the discussion; did anyone dominate? did anyone walk out, why: was it difficult / easy to manage, why; were people comfortable / uncomfortable, why?; etc.

## 3.2 FGD with community mapping

**Target:** Adult community members: elders, religious leaders, teachers, nurses/health extension workers, etc. (non-govt)

Introduction

We are exploring how people in this community are affected by early marriage and efforts to increase girls' schooling and your perceptions and experiences of XX programme/ programme. We are talking with men, women, boys and girls to understand how current programme support in Ethiopia ] is functioning and ways in which it could be strengthened. We think your views are very important and should inform discussions around policies and programmes that aim to improve individual and community wellbeing. We'll be writing a report – there won't be any immediate effects but longer-term we would hope that your views will be included.

**Background information to collect**

| | |
|---|---|
| Location | |
| Type of group (women/men; elders; religious leaders | |
| Numbers of participants | |
| Ethnicity/religion | |
| Age ranges | |
| Marital status | |
| Livelihoods/employment | |

**Questions**

1. Community context and history, power relations, donor /NGO programme interventions
2. Understanding of gender division of labour, gender relations teen pregnancy and education ( problems causes , consequences )
3. What are the key issues affecting around child marriage
4. Most significant gendered change in terms of early marriage and girls' education (timeline)

5. Do focused timeline on early marriage and girls' education (add programme in as appropriate) and discuss reasons for these changes over time with them.
6. What do you know about the programme? What communication methods were used? What was most powerful to you
7. To what extent has XX programme contributed to change? How? Evidence? What do you think about the programme?
8. Has there been any negative effects/backlash/ practice being driven underground etc?
9. Perceived differences between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (where beneficiaries are clearly identifiable).
10. To what extent have you been involved or linked to the programme? Quality of interaction

**At the end of the interview, note down how the process went**: Was it participatory; did everyone take part in the discussion; did anyone dominate? did anyone walk out, why: was it difficult / easy to manage, why; were people comfortable / uncomfortable, why?; etc.

## 4. In-depth individual interviews (IDIs)/Case studies

**Target:** Programme beneficiaries (boys or girls – direct or indirect beneficiaries)

Introduction

We are exploring how people in this community are affected by early marriage and efforts to increase girls' schooling and your perceptions and experiences of XX programme/ programme. We are talking with men, women, boys and girls to understand how current programme support in Ethiopia ] is functioning and ways in which it could be strengthened. We think your views are very important and should inform discussions around policies and programmes that aim to improve individual and community wellbeing. We'll be writing a report – there won't be any immediate effects but longer-term we would hope that your views will be included.

**Basic information to include**

| | |
|---|---|
| ID [to be decided per country – but could be name or initials] | Eg CM 1 Iganga |
| Age | |
| Gender | |
| Ethnicity and religion | |
| Place of birth/residence | |
| Marital status (if children, how many) | |
| Education status (in school/out-of school/level) | |
| Household livelihood | |
| Occupation | |

**Ice-breaker** – Aspirations and hindrances and what could make it better? If they are not forthcoming, then can ask them to rank from the following – e.g. 3 most important in their life and why?

- School – subject choice, up to what level
- Marriage and family – age at marriage; choice of partners, number of children, relationship with husband, in-laws
- Work opportunities

- Move residence – e.g. go to town
- Greater mobility
- Better house / land
- Other…

**Questions**

1. When and why did you decide to become involved in the programme? How did it come about? How were you selected? Are you still involved in the programme?
2. Were you involved in programme design?
3. What do you think the programme's key aims are? How important do you think these aims are? Why do you think this programme is needed?
4. How did your family react to your participation in the programme? Did anyone object and if so, why?
5. What activities have you undertaken as part of the programme? What do you like best? What do you least enjoy? (probe for communication and none communication)
6. How have you interacted with the programme implementers?
7. Changes after the intervention?

**Individual Level:** How has it affected you? (prompt as per the below) Which components were most important?

- Time use
- Economic worries
- Labour engagement
- Self-confidence
- Better psycho-social wellbeing /less pressure/stress
- Mobility
- Choice/ agency /decision-making/voice
- School attendance
- Less stigma
- Perceptions about marriage / marriage relations /including desired age of marriage
- Freedom from violence
- Expanded sense of opportunities/ aspirations/ vision for future
- Other?

**Family level**

- shifts in relationships with parents, siblings, other relatives
- changes in household division of labour
- less pressure to get married
- more encouragement and support for school going and educational attainment
- Increased voice in family decision making and discussions
- Increased permission for mobility
- Parents aspirations for your future

**Community level**

- Friends and social networks
- Increased participation in group, associations, clubs and other activities

- Enhanced confidence for and exercise of leadership roles
- Increased mobility
- Increased voice and assertiveness vis a vis the community and community members
- Increased access to community resources
- Vis a vis community leaders and service providers:
- greater respect for girls, and esp interest in tackling early marriage and promoting girls education, ensuring better protection for girls ;
- more gender and age sensitive and supportive teachers/ police officers/ healthworkers/ council workers/ district workers …etc.

1. What sorts of things do you think could have been done differently in the context of the programme? [depending on programme history]
2. Is the impact of the programme ongoing – are you still using the service/ skills etc.? why/why not?
3. To what extent do you see the programme contributing to your educational experience and aspirations? (include discussion of vocational training)
4. Would you recommend programme participation to others?
5. What other kinds of support do you think would be important to you? (ask participants to rank 3 they like and 3 they don't think would be feasible)
   a. Education based
   b. Economic and livelihoods
   c. Legal
   d. Sports and leisure
   e. Psycho-social/ emotional
   f. Health
   g. Out of school and vocational training
6. What other kinds of communication programme would be important to you?
   a. Radio broadcasts
   b. SMS messages
   c. TV programmes
   d. Street theatre and community events
   e. Community dialogues
   f. Posters

# Annex 3: Policy review of the inclusion of social norms in Ethiopian policies and strategies relevant to child marriage

| Laws and policies | Social norms addressed? Give text and page number | Comment on quantity and quality of consideration of social norms (e.g. one line vs. multi-page discussion) | Gaps/ silences | Linkages to other sectors/issues |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1994** | The right to protection by the state from harmful customs laws and practices that oppress women or cause bodily or mental harm to them are prohibited (Constitution of FDRE,1994 Article 35) | The right to protection against harmful traditional practices is given one article out of the 106 articles of the Constitution. | Low awareness of constitutional rights | Elimination of harmful practices are highlighted in sector policies such as health, education, population (see below) |
| **Revised Family Code 2000** | The Family code 2000 addresses social norms associated with early marriage, abduction, rape, bigamy/polygamy, divorce, etc.<br>**Marriage:**<br>1. *Forms of marriage (Art. 1)*<br>*There are 3 forms of marriage*<br>*Civil marriage (Art. 2) concluded before an officer of civil status . It is concluded when the officer of civil status accepts their consent.*<br>*Religious marriage (Art.3): takes place when a man and woman have performed such acts or rites as deemed to constitute a valid marriage by their religion or the religion of one them.*<br>***Marriage according to custom** (Art.4) takes place when a man and woman have performed such rites as deemed to constitute a valid marriage by the custom of the community to which they belong or to which one of them belongs.*<br>***Consent**(Art.6) a valid marriage shall take place only when the spouses have given their free will and full consent.* | The Code has included the commonly prevailing social norms | 1. Only four regions: Oromiya, Amhara, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region and Tigray have adopted it.<br>2.Polygamy is accepted on condition of religion | Implemented through the penal code<br>Effects of early marriage and rape are addressed through the reproductive health strategy and programme<br>Programmes for the elimination of FGM and early marriage by NGOs<br>Campaigns to cascade the law down to the grassroots through women affairs, education, justice continues since 2001 (conversations with community members) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ***Age*** *(Art 7/1) Neither a man nor a woman who has not attained the full age of eighteen years shall conclude marriage*<br>*(Article7/2) …the Ministry of Justice may, on the application of the future spouses, or the parents or guardian of one of them, for serious cause, grant dispensation of not more than two years.*<br>***Bigamy*** *(Article 11) A person shall not conclude marriage as long as he is bound by bonds of a proceeding marriage as long he is not legally established.*<br>***Consent Extorted by Violence*** *(Article 14/1) Marriage concluded as a result of consent which is extorted by violence shall not valid.*<br>***Opposition*** *(Article 17) opposition may be made when marriage is to be concluded in violation of the essential conditions of marriage.*<br>*Opposition by whom made (Article 18)*<br>*Opposition to the conclusion of marriage shall be made only by the following persons:*<br>*a. In case of age, by the consanguinity or affinity, by the ascendants of the future spouses, or the ascendants of one of them, or by the brothers or sisters of the future spouses, who have attained the age of eighteen years or by the public prosecutor;*<br>*b. In case of bigamy, by the person alleging to have had a prior marital relationship with the bigamous spouse or by the public prosecutor.*<br>*Form and Type of opposition(Article 19)*<br>*19/1 opposition to the marriage shall be made in writing and submitted to the officer of civil status within fifteen days from the notification of the marriage.*<br>*19/2 the officer of civil status shall receive the opinion of the future spouses before deciding on the opposition.*<br>*Effects violations of Essential Conditions of marriage:*<br>*Article 31 - age*<br>*---------- marriage concluded by a man and a woman under the age of eighteen years shall dissolve on the application of any interested persons or the public prosecutor.* | | | |
| **Ethiopian Penal Code 2004** | The following are stated as criminal acts and punishable by law: Abduction (Article 587), early marriage (Article 648), by-gamy Article (650) | In its preface the Revised Penal 2004, has cautioned against ‘ failure to acknowledge the grave injuries and sufferings caused to women and children by | Low capacity to implement coupled by low awareness of the law; | Education, Women Affairs<br>Women’s rights advocates such as EWLA provide free legal services, although these services are on the decline due to the civil society registry law.<br>Justice office uses existing provision to provide free services for poor women, e.g. lawyers are obliged to provide 50 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | reasons of harmful traditional practices. It also highlights that 'it is futile to issue a law that does not have the trust and support of the peoplefor it usually remains impracticable' (para.3) | | hours of free legal services per year (i.e 6 days per year) for the public (personal communication, Alefa, North Gonder). |
| **Population Policy (1993)** | Seeks to remove all legal customary practices militating against the full enjoyment of economic and social rights by women including the full enjoyment of property rights and access to gainful employment<br>The strategies to be used include:<br>Raise the minimum age at marriage for girls from the current lower age limit of 15 years to at least, 18 years.<br>Provide counselling services in the education system with a view to reducing the current high attrition rate of female students.<br>Planning and implementing counselling services in second and third level and third level institution to enable students especially girls to make appropriate career choice | | Lacks the clout - intended to be implemented through different sectors, e.g. education | Link to sector such health, education, welfare, women affairs, etc. |
| **Health Policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1993** | **Article 4.**<br>Health education shall be strengthened ---- for specific target population through the mass media, community leaders, religious leaders, professional associations, schools, and other civil organisations for: ----- identifying and discouraging harmful traditional practices, while encouraging their beneficial aspects<br>**Article 10.**<br>Addressing the special health problems and related needs of adolescents<br>Encourage paternal participation in family health | Significant emphasis given to the 2 articles:<br>A separate reproductive health strategy has been developed and implemented | Gap exists between the traditional older population and the younger and enlightened population in understanding the negative effects of social norms. The same is true between the government laws and the social norms older and the rural populations. | Calls for multi-sectoral approach and community participation |
| **Reproductive Health Strategy (2006)** | Issues that affect a woman's health including HTPs, FGC, early marriage low socioeconomic status and low literacy levels | Modalities of implementation:<br>**Respond to diverse social context:**<br>Understanding better the unique needs of local populations; designing and implementing appropriate health services systems to address them; establish multisectoral initiatives to open dialogue or this issue among HSDP partners | Low awareness and poor implementation of the strategy | Most comprehensive and analytical strategy |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Human Resource Development and Capacity Building**<br>Increase the output of health professionals through public sector training institutes and through collaboration between public and private training institutions<br>Develop incentive packages including opportunities for professional advancement<br>**Health Managemnet Information System (HMIS), Monitoring and Evaluation and Research**<br>Establish efficient, integrated Health Management Information System(HMIS)/M&E package at all levels of health system | | |
| **Education and Training Policy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1994** | Education enables man to identify harmful traditional practices and replace them by useful ones (page 4)<br>*To gear education to reorient society's attitude and value pertaining to the role and contribution of women in development (para 2.2.13, p.14)*<br>*In regard to teachers recruitment the policy states that 'special attention will be given to the participation of women in the recruitment, training and assignment of teachers' (p.25 para 3.4.10)* | Many of the harmful traditional practices are being addressed through extracurricular an curricular activities,<br>Gender mainstreaming included in the Education sector strategic planning looking at gender specific issues affecting girls education | | There is linkage with the health sector as harmful traditional practices that hamper girls education are also health problems |
| **National Girls' Education strategy (MoE 2010)** | The strategy seeks to deal with the following to maintain gender equity in education.<br>Gender equality<br>Gender insensitiveness<br>Sexual harassment<br>Gender discrimination<br>Verbal insult, rape, abduction | | | This strategy is likened with the Education Sector Planning<br>Aims to: to celebrate national girls education day at least once in a years<br>Aims to: Provide early childhood Gender awareness and knowledge |

# Annex 4: Amhara Child Marriage Programme Mapping

| Programme name | Start date and end date/ if applicable/ | Implementing agency | Funding agency | Location/ zone, wereda, *kebele*/ | Coverage/how many girls /people /school/ etc.. | Programming approach/e.g. girls club, community monitoring group etc.. | Evaluation to date | Impact to date changes brought by the programme | Who would you recommend we contact re this program? /name, phone number, email.. | Would you be happy to a key informant for our interview? if so please give name and contact detail thanks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mahibere Hiwot Civil Society Supporting Programme** | February 2014-February 2016 | Amhara Women Association | British Council | North Gonder Zone Dabate *Woreda* | Direct Beneficiaries /313 girls/ | Community Conversation, peer to peer education, girls club, school community conversation | *External evaluation by local consultant, mid-term and terminal qualitative and quantitative assesment* | | *Titikinashe Alemu 0918006591 Titk9135@gmail.com* | *Yayesh Mamo 0918730661* |
| ***Safe motherhood campaign and early marraige*** | *September 2014—May 2015* | Amhara Women Association | *Global Fund and UNICEF* | *West Gojjam zone Mecha and South Achefer woreda* | *566 kebele* | *Kebele development army leaders, Women Association Leaders, community leaders, with community conversation* | *External evalution by local consultant,mid-term and terminal qoualitative and quantitative assessment* | | *Titikinashe Alemu 0918006591 Titk9135@gmail.com* | |
| ***Every one*** | *July 2014 – December 2014* | Amhara Women Association | *Save the Children* | *Direct 3876 kebeles* | *With this kebele community members-* | *Kebele development army leaders, Women Association Leaders, community leaders, with community conversation* | *Qualitative assessment* | | *Titikinashe Alemu 0918006591 Titk9135@gmail.com* | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| ***Finote Hiwot end child*** | *February 2012-* | Amhara national regional sate | *DFID* | *East Gojjam and West* | *38 woredas* | *Girls club, school community, community, religion leaders training.* | *Independent evaluator* | | *tassefaefinotehiwot.org 0911054684* | *Tesfa* |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***marriage programme*** | *september 2016* | women, children and youth affairs | | *Gojjam at 38 woredas* | | | | | | |
| ***Prevention of Gunder Based violence project*** | *January2012 - December 2015* | Amhara Development Association | *UNFPA* | *East Gojjam 2 woredas/Enarjina enawuga and Basoliben South Gonder 1 woreda/ Dera/ North Wollo 1 woreda/Kobo/ South wollo 1 woreda /Kalu/* | *25000 students and 30000 community* | *In school girls club,kebele community leaders,helath extension worker,community police officer,Women,childiren and Youth affairs representativies training and peer to peer discusion* | *External evaluater,assessment based* | | *Alemu Alebachew 0918095889 Alalex770@gmail.com* | |
| ***Youth to Youth project*** | *01/6/2012—30/06/2015* | DSW- Ethiopia | *Dutch Government /FLOW/* | *Bahi Dare 3 kifle ketema* | *96 youth club members* | *Club based approach /Peer to Peer/* | *Independent evaluator quantitative assessment* | *Improved youth's SRH issues with awareness raising activities* | *Dires Alene 0918701264 Dsw-bdprog1@ethionet.ed* | |
| ***Fight Fistula project*** | *01/6/2012—30/06/2015* | DSW - Ethiopia | *Dutch Government /FLOW* | East Gojjom 4 *woredas/ Enebisie sar midir,Shebel berenta,Debay tilatgin/* West GOjam 6 *woredas /Mecha,Sekela, Womberma,Jabitehinan,Quarit and Dembecha* Awi zone 1 *woreda/Anksha/* | *302 young club members* | *Club based approach/Peer to Peer/* | *Independent evaluator quantitative assessment* | *Improved girls and community awareness on fistula prevention and fistula diagnosis and treatment* | *Dires Alene 0918701264 Dsw-bdprog1@ethionet.et* | |
| ***Protection of children from violence*** | *January 2012 – December 2014* | *Woreda* women, children and youth affairs office | *Finland Embassy* | Awi zone | *6 kebeles/fagita lekoma woreda/* | *Community representatives, school girls club/* | *Independent evaluator quantitative assessment* | | *Tesfaye - 0912997962* | |
| ***Integrated Family Health Programme/IFHP/*** | *2008-- 2014* | Pathfinder International and John Snow Inc./JSI/ | *USAID* | All *woredas* of North Gonder, South Gonder, East Gojjam, North Wollo and Waghimira zones except Gonder and | *Community, schools* | *Community mobilisation and behavioral change, capacity building of professionals , leaders and legal bodies , Girls scholarship support, System strengthening* | *Mid-term programme evaluation and ongoing annual evaluation using randomize d follow ups at* | *Not assessed* | *Tilahun Yimaledu,regional program Manager 0918764763* | *Seid Ali Regional FP/RH/ and Gender Program officer* |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | D/Markos towns | | | *community level* | | | |

# Annex 5: Overview of Merhabete *Woreda*/North Shao Zone, Amhara Region

| | Population | Main Sources of Livelihoods | Food Insecure or surplus producing | Number of primary and High schools | Attendance by boys and girls and school When are most dropping out? What percentage continues on to high school? | Proximity to main road/market (distance walking/availability of transportation? | Religion by percentage of population | Presence of NGOs | Presence of NGOs working on early marriage | Do officials recognize the *woreda*/*Kebele* as a hotspot for early marriage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Merhabete *Woreda* | Total = 127938 (sparsely populated areas) M= 64,997 and F= 62,941 | Rain fed Agriculture, migration, soil is moderately fertile. It is surplus producer. Sorghum, teff and beans are the most important crops grown in the area. Teff is the main crop sold to earn cash income to cover household expenses. | The *woreda* is food secure. It is considered as a surplus producing *woreda*. | First Cycle primary school= 12 Full Cycle Primary school =33 High School = 2 Preparatory( pre-university) - 1 Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) = 1 | First Cycle Primary school= 23127 (F=10214; M=12913) Students Full Cycle Primary: Enroll=8670(M=4293;F=4377 High School = 2866 students (M=1279, F=1587) Preparatory School= 757(F=319; M=438) Technical Vocational Training College 2421(F=1354;M=1177 | A new road crosses through the *woreda* linking Addis Ababa to northern Amhara - Lalibella and Sekota. It passes along a number of *woreda* towns. Topography is hilly with many gorges. | Predominantly Orthodox Christian (99.98%) | Hiwot Ethiopia and the Amharic Development Association are currently operational. Menschen for Menschen has had a significant operational presence in the *woreda* for a long time. Has built roads, schools, health centres and a hospital | Hiwot Ethiopia is working with government partners to implement Reproductive Health Services and girls education | The officials do consider the *woreda* as a hotspot area for early marriage. |
| Yesasamba *kebele* | F = 1767 M= 2491 T= 4258 | Mainly Rain fed agriculture and irrigation around the lowland areas / teff and sorghum production / | Self sufficient/ food secure | 1 full cycle primary school | Number of students 1-4 grades, T=832 / M=445; F =387/ 1-8 grades, T=262 /M=105; F=157/ | 12km far from Alem Ketema/the *woreda*'s capital town/ and it is assessable | 99.9 of the population are followers of Orthodox Christianity | Nurture /education and employment creation/opportunities/ and Hiwot Ethiopia | Hiwot Ethiopia | It is identified as hotspot for early marriage though early marriage has been declining |

# Annex 6: Overview of Dire Roka *Kebele*, Habru *Woreda*, North Wollo Administrative Zone, Amhara Region

| | Population | Main sources of livelihoods | Food insecure or surplus producing | Number of primary and high schools | Attendance by boys and schools – when are most dropping out? What percentage continues on to high school? | Proximity to main road/ market (distance walking) / availability of transportation | Religion by percentage of population | Presence of NGOs | Presence of NGOs working on early marriage | Do official recognise the *woreda* /*kebele* as a hotspot for early marriage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Habru *Woreda* | Total = 208, 291<br>M = 104,149<br>F = 104,142 | This is a mixed farming *Woreda* combining cereal cultivation and livestock rearing and with some production of fruits and vegetables. Sorghum and Maize are the main food crops. Teff is the big cash crop, whilst a new groundwater-based drip irrigation scheme has boosted the production of tomatoes and onions Remittances from migrants in the Middle East are also important (10 of the 34 rural *kebeles* are affected by migration) | Historically food insecure but has improved in recent years. Moderate land holdings, fertile soils and good rainfall contribute to make this *Woreda* generally food secure. In bad years when rains are erratic there are production deficits. | Number of schools<br><br>1-4=41<br><br>5-8=55<br><br>9-10=42<br><br>11-12=2<br><br>TVET =1 | Number of students 1-4 grades = 23395 (M=12,262, F=11,133)<br>5-8 grades = 16480 (M = 7920, F=8560)<br>9-10 grades = 3600 (M=2127, F=1473)<br>11-12 grades = 855 (M=510, F=345) | The main Addis Dessie and Dessie to Mekele road pass through the *Woreda* town. | The majority of the inhabitants were Muslims / 76.85%/ while 22.95% practiced Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity | Wofa Dev & Islamic Relief Association, PADet, and ANPPCAN/only in Mersa Town/ Most of the NGOs that used to be operational are not seen now. | There are no NGOs working on early marriage | Habru *Woreda* is recognised as hotspot for early marriage |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dire Roka *Kebele* | 4258 | Mixed farming and remittance from labour migrants in the Middle East | Chronic *drought prone Kebele*; so mostly food insecure | There is one full cycle /1-8 grades/ primary school in the *Kebele* | In the 2014/15 Total= 636 (male= 296; Female=342) have been registered in September | Located on the new high way linking Afar and Djibouti with Bahir Dar and Mekele | More than 99.9% of the population of the *Kebele* is Muslim | There is no NGO working in the *Kebele*. Girls Hub has distributed flash disks containing stories for the school Mini-media. But the schools didn't get information about how to use the technology | Only Women Affairs works on early marriage. There is no NGO working on early marriage. | It is recognised as hotspot *Kebele* for early marriage |

# Annex 7: Overview of Segno Gebeya *Kebele*, Woreilu *Woreda*, South Wollo Zone, Amhara Region

| | Population | Main sources of livelihoods | Food insecure or surplus producing | Number of primary and high schools | Attendance by boys and schools – when are most dropping out? What percentage continue on to highschool? | Proximity to main road/ market (distance walking) / availability of transportation | Religion by percentage of population | Presence of NGOs | Presence of NGOs working on early marriage | Do official recognise the *woreda /kebele* as a hotspot for early marriage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Woreilu *Woreda* | Total = 134,177 M= 66,190 F= 67,987 with an average family size of 4.4. | The farming system of the *Woreda* is mixed farming. 83% of the population depend on rain fed agriculture. The remaining population generate income from petty trade (15%), and handicrafts and remittance (2%) | Food secure *woreda* | First cycle primary grade 1-4 =51 schools<br>Full Cycle primary School -grades 1-8 =29 schools<br>High School = 2 school<br>Preparatory (pre-university) = 1<br>TVET =1 | First cycle: M=8737; F=7810<br><br>Full Cycle Primary: M=12679; F=12139<br><br>High School: M=1322; F=1213<br><br>Preparatory school (grade 9-12):M=1608; F=1269<br><br>Preparatory (grade **11=12)** =286;F=185 | All weather gravel road connects the *woreda* to Addis Ababa in the South and Dessie in the North. Transportation to rural towns is limited. Woreilu *Woreda* is 492 km from Addis Ababa, capital city of Ethiopia, 571 km from Bahir Dar, capital of Amhara Regional state, as well as 91 km from Zonal Town, Dessie. | 73.96% were Muslims and 25.77% were Ethiopian Orthodox Christians | World Learning, Women Support Association and Amhara Development Association and the Carter Center - Ethiopia (TCCE) were operational in the area | Amhara Development Association (ADA) and Women Support Association | Early marriage is officially recognised as a problem but the law is facing resistance from the people |
| Segno Gebeya *Kebele* | Total = 7,905 | Rain-fed agriculture/ crop-livestock mixed farming system In addition many people depend on petty trading and remittance | Productive area | 1 full cycle primary school /1-8/ | | Segno Gebeya is located about 60 km from Dessie at the main road to Woreilu town and 30 km from Woreilu *Woreda*. Currently the *kebele* is considered as one of the towns in the *woreda* | | Women Support Association and Amhara Development Association | Women Support Association and Amhara Development Association | Girls are very resistant to early marriage but old people in the *kebele* are challenging the legal age of marriage to be lowered |

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ISSN: 2052-7209

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