Child Brides & Child Domestic Workers in Ethiopia: Two Sides of the Same Coin

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About Ethiopia

- Second largest country in sub-Saharan Africa: population 84 million
- 84% of the population is rural
- Extremely thin infrastructure; many lack access to schools, clinics, roads
- 8.5 million girls aged 10-17\(^1\)
  - 6.9 million rural girls; 1.6 million urban girls
- 4.9 million girls married before age 18\(^2\)
- Est. 130,000 urban girls in domestic work\(^3\)

\(^1\) Source: Ethiopian Census, Preliminary Results, 2009
\(^2\) Estimated based on marriage rate from EDHS (2005) and census data
\(^3\) Estimates based on census data and rates from Ethiopia Young Adult Survey (2010)
Levels of early marriage in Ethiopia

Percent of Ethiopian girls married by age 15 and age 18, by region (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Married by age 15</th>
<th>Married by age 18</th>
<th>Median age at marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24.0+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amhara</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
<td><strong>56%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beneshangul-Gumz</strong></td>
<td><strong>22%</strong></td>
<td><strong>68%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gambella</strong></td>
<td><strong>20%</strong></td>
<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afar</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oromiya</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tigray</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNNP</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>24.0+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: PC tabulations of EDHS Individual survey (2011); Based on survival analysis of females 15-29, accounting for censored cases

Regions where more than 20% of girls are married by age 15 are presented in bold typeface

83% of marriages to girls under 18 are arranged; 94% in Amhara Region
Age at marriage & terms of the marriage

Percent of girls knowing about the marriage before the wedding day, by age at marriage

Percent of girls’ whose marital sexual initiation was forced, by age at marriage

I hate early marriage. I was married at an early age and my in-laws forced me to sleep with my husband and he made me suffer all night. After that, whenever it gets dark, I get worried thinking that it will be like that. This is what I hate the most. -Amhara girl, age 11, married at age 5, first sex at age 9

Source: Tabulations of Ethiopia Youth & Gender Survey, Addis Ababa: Population Council, 2010
‘Berhane Hewan’ (Light for Eve): Program to delay marriage & support married girls

Program of Ministry of Women Children & Youth (WCY) Affairs, Amhara Regional Bureau of WCY, & Population Council, funded by UNFPA

Group formation
• Girls mobilized door-to-door by an adult female mentor
• Separate groups of married & unmarried girls aged 10 to 19 are formed

Support to return to or remain in school
• Support to remain in school through provision of notebooks, pens and pencils (approx. 36 Birr/US$ 4 per girl, per year)
• Non-formal education, HIV/AIDS & RH education & referrals, financial literacy

Support to remain unmarried
• An economic incentive/conditional asset transfer to keep girls unmarried, provided after two years to girls and families who remained unmarried and in school (goat: 180 Birr/US $20)
• ‘Community conversations,’ a technique engaging the community in discussion on key issues, including early marriage, and problem-solving

Support for sexually active married girls
• Cost of clinic card at government facility supported by program (20 Birr/US $2.20)
Evaluation of Berhane Hewan

- Quasi-experiment research design, with pre- and post-intervention population-based surveys in experimental and control areas
- Strongest impact among younger girls 10 – 14
  - Girls 10-14 in the experimental area were 3 times more likely to be in school than girls in the control area
  - Girls 10-14 in the experimental area were 1/10 as likely to be married at endline compared to girls in the control area
  - Married girls in the experimental area were 3 times more likely to use family planning than control girls
- As a package of activities, evaluation could not determine which component was most effective in bringing about change
- Component parts of intervention are now being tested in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania using same study design as well as costing studies.

When poor girls need to work, they have few choices

- Female in-migrants (age 10-19) in slum areas of Addis Ababa outnumbered males by nearly 2 to 1
  - 45% of females were migrants, compared to 23% of males
  - 23% of migrant girls cited ‘escaping early marriage’ as reason for migration

- Fifteen percent of adolescent females were domestic workers, of whom 97% are migrants

- Among girls who are working, 77% are in domestic work

- Boys’ work is far more varied including manual labor (26%), trades (15%), shoe shine (11%), petty trade (8%)

- Domestic workers in Merkato work an average of 64 hrs per week

- Earn an average of 54 Birr (US$ 6.00) per month

- Domestic workers were nearly twice as likely to have experienced non-consensual first sex, compared to non-domestic workers

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Domestic workers experiences...

I escaped and came to Bahir Dar when my father was about to make me get married... When I was in rural area, I heard that there is a town called Bahir Dar where people do not fetch water and wood, and life is easy. .. A woman [I knew] brought me to her daughter’s house and negotiated to pay me 12 birr ($1) per month. I worked as a domestic worker for two years. Even if we agreed on 12 Birr, she never paid me but sometimes she gave me clothes... A broker found me another job for 15 Birr per month but a man living in the neighborhood cheated me - promising to buy me clothes and he made me sleep with him...  

-Bahir Dar girl, age 19, 3 years education, domestic worker
Domestic workers experiences...

Where I used to work, they [employers] never let me wash myself and they wouldn’t give me food... I used to starve. And because I was not able to wash, I had sores. I was carrying so much water on my back, I used to fall down...  -Female domestic worker, age 10, never been to school, migrated from Amhara at age 9, worked 91 hours in last week, earns 20 Birr/$2.30 per month

Most of the time, the child of the employers beats me without having a reason. When I ask him why he does that, he beats me again.  -Female domestic worker, age 14, migrated at age 5, 2 years education
‘Biruh Tesfa’ (Bright Future) Program for Domestic Workers and Rural-Urban Migrants in Urban Ethiopia

- Program of the Ethiopian Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (WCY) Affairs, Regional Bureaus of WCY and local ‘kebele’ administrations
- Local women leaders are recruited from slum areas and trained as mentors
- Eligibility for Biruh Tesfa is an out-of-school girl, aged 7-24
- Mentors mobilize girls house-to-house
- Negotiate directly with employers and other gatekeepers
- Participating girls formed into age-segmented groups and meet 3 to 5 times per week
- Meet in community halls donated by kebele /local administration, after modest renovation
‘Biruh Tesfa’: Reaching the poorest girls in the poorest areas

- Content includes basic literacy, financial literacy, savings groups, HIV/RH education, menstruation, gender-based violence, etc.
- Identity cards are provided
- Supplies to manage menstruation and underwear, as well as shoes/flip-flops
- “Wellness checkup” and subsidized medical services among 70+ clinics in public and private sector using coupon system
- Linkage with shelters, legal agencies, and other social services
- Program to increase participation of girls with disabilities (with Handicap International)
Over 55,000 beneficiaries in 18 cities (Apr’12)

- 200 + mentors
- Project advisory committees oversees the program, chaired by gov’t
- 300 girls in savings groups; 1,500 mainstreamed into formal schooling
- Over 4,000 girls received subsidized health services using voucher system
  - Over 80% accompanied to facilities by mentors
  - Large proportions of voucher users are domestic workers and disabled participants

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<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Under 14</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Never been to school</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-4 years education</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orphanhood</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Double orphan</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single orphan</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural-urban migrant</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation (top three)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic worker</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily laborer</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>23%</td>
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</tbody>
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| Disabled             | 2%          |
Programming principles:
Child poverty & protection

- Targeted programs in the poorest areas for the poorest children
- Program design based on formative research
- Majority of resources focused directed to the child
- Make maximal use of existing resources and keep inputs consistent with local realities
- Design for scale up in initial design stage
Over 220,000 girls in rural Amhara have participated in Population Council programs to delay marriage and support married girls.

Over 55,000 urban girls have participated in Biruh Tesfa