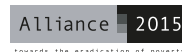




CHANGE

**Improving Access to Education
to Most Marginalised Girls in Ethiopia,
People In Need (PIN) Ethiopia**

**Girls'
Education
Challenge**



CHANGE –

Improving Access to Education to Most Marginalised Girls in Ethiopia,
People In Need (PIN) Ethiopia

Final reflections – Success Stories

What did the project do?

Between 2018 and 2023 the CHANGE project was implemented under the Girls' Education Challenge in four regions across Ethiopia (Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Afar) to improve the life chances of 24,968 out-of-school girls. The consortium led by People in Need (PIN) Ethiopia implemented the project with partners including Concern Worldwide, Welthungerhilfe, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation and Amref Health Africa.

The project focused on improving learning outcomes and life skills for highly marginalised girls, increasing transition rates at key points in their pathway, and improving community and government support, acceptance, and commitment to sustain girls' education. The project implemented the following activities:

- enrolled 24,968 out-of-school and highly marginalised girls in alternative basic education (10,646) and integrated functional adult literacy (14,322) programmes
- Provided short-term technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to facilitate the transition to employment opportunities and income-generating activities for 1,800 girls.
- Trained 577 teachers and facilitators in gender-responsive pedagogy, multi-level/grade, child-centred and inclusive teaching methods.
- Established 565 self-help groups (SHGs) to provide 10,098 girls with life skills, psychosocial care, training on how to develop entrepreneurship and business plans and connecting with credit institutions and cooperatives.
- Provided safe and inclusive infrastructure facilities for accelerated learning programmes including construction of latrines for girls, water system for clean and drinking water, learning supplies and sanitary pads.
- Working with communities (parents/caregivers) through 223 structured community action groups (CAGs) to drive positive attitudinal change towards girls' education and their progression in life.
- Provided direct cash support to 4,776 girls and provided seed funding for SHGs.
- Provided sanitary kits and school feeding, particularly during emergencies, such as drought and floods.
- Provided targeted support to 430 girls with disabilities through provision of education, medical support and assistive devices

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24,968 out-of school highly marginalised girls rolled in

14,322 integrated functional adult literacy IFAL (15–18 years)

10,646 alternative basic education ABE (9–14 years)

10,098 girls transitioned to SHG

1,800 girls transitioned to TVET

8,343 girls transitioned to primary school

Ethiopia has made significant progress in girls' education, with a rapid expansion in primary school enrolment. During 2021/22, female primary school students had an enrolment rate of 85% for girls and 92.3% for boys. Educational inequity, particularly in remote rural areas, remains a pressing concern due to cultural, social, and economic barriers, and high dropout rates even after enrolment.

Rural regions in Ethiopia, particularly Afar and Somali, have the highest proportion of out-of-school children, posing a significant challenge to the country's education system. Rural girls do not have the support from home to pursue education and are prioritised for household chores. There is lack of school facilities in reasonable walking distance, lack of latrines, and water are not available in most schools. In pastoral regions, a high proportion of girls need to walk for over an hour to nearby primary schools due to their pastoralist community. There are heightened safeguarding concerns on the way to and back from school, such as kidnappings and forced marriages due to long school commutes as well. Unsatisfactory hygiene conditions constitute a major barrier in regular school attendance. In addition, adolescent

The courses, housekeeping and hygiene management, the benefits of saving, home gardening, bee keeping and poultry production are among major skill we developed.

Girl

I personally believe what we have learned is very nice. We learned how to subtract and add numbers. We were not aware of this when we were staying at home. So, we learned a lot after enrolling in ABE.

Girl

girls face several challenges relating to menstruation and its proper management. Families living in severe poverty are unable to afford both direct and indirect costs of schooling.

How was the project perceived by its beneficiaries?

8,343 9–14 year old girls transited to primary school

1800 15–18 year old girls transited to TVETs

10 098 girls transited to Self Help Groups; 84% of SHG members (90% for members doing IGA) demonstrate self-confidence in their economic decision-making, which is a significant increase from 30% in BL

84.1% of the girls' parents who participated in the project demonstrated a positive attitude towards girls' education. Parents agreeing to education for girls with disabilities increased from 70.1% to 89.7%.

In the past girls did not have access to education, girls worked only in the kitchen but now girls can learn and get employed and have their own salary. Therefore, now we are learning and able to know a lot of things. Girls used to get married early in previous times but now we are allowed to get an education and gain knowledge. When we were staying at home, we were not able to write our names, or list the day of the week, or months of the year. But after entering the school we know everything, and I am also trying to learn to sign my own signature.

Girl

Story #1

Romanesh is a 18-year-old leader of a self-help group based in the SNNP region. 'Two years ago, members of the community action group from my village told me about an opportunity for girls like me to access basic education and business skills training. I grabbed the opportunity immediately and started my education. Apart from the material assistance I received moral support from my teachers and members from the community action groups that energized me to stand firmly and finish the two years of education.' She can now read and write. Romanesh joined the self-help group in her village and thanks to her drive, she was elected chief of the group. Group members learned how to start a business after two weeks of business skills training. 'I started my business with local bread. Thanks to group savings, I purchased flour and baking powder. I am now baking local bread and selling it on the market during the week and after church on Sunday. I've already paid back my loan several



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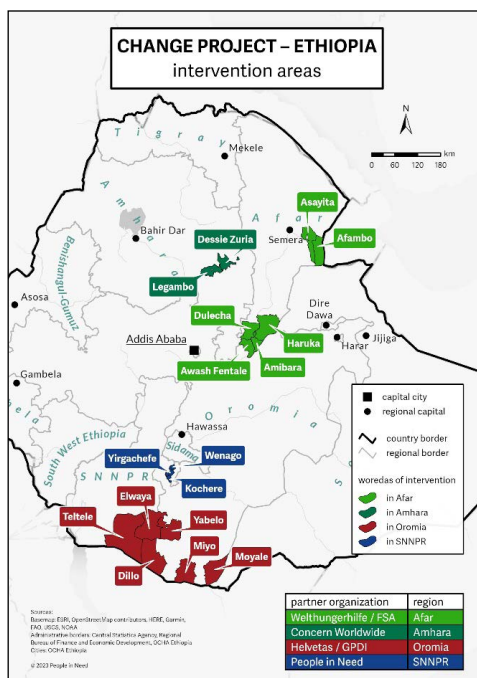
times and I earn several hundred birr a week. I want to continue the group meetings after the project is over. We support each other and it's great to see the success of many of us. And I definitely want my daughters to go to school one day'.

Story #2

15-year-old Mimi lives in Gedio Zone in Beloya Kebele. Mimi is the youngest child in her family. She was unable to attend school because of her disability. After she was born, she became paralysed and is unable to walk. She spent her first 15 years in her home while her friends were playing and attending school. Her family keep her at home because of cultural beliefs in their rural community. To protect Mimi from discrimination, they chose to keep her at home. In rural areas, people with disabilities tend to face more challenges than their counterparts in urban areas. They are less likely to attend school, be employed or get better health services.



Mimi's disability doesn't keep her from dreaming of her future: 'I was always curious about the outside world. The only friends I had were my family. My peers didn't want me to be their friend. Yet, all these things hadn't kept me from dreaming about school. I daydreamed about going to school and becoming a successful, educated businesswoman. However, the problem was I can't walk a single step and I need a crutch.' Mimi says. Her father, Mulugeta, says: 'I was not lucky to see and applaud my child's first step. I carried her for nine years, looking for a good treatment, but I could only afford the traditional healing treatments. After many attempts, we just gave up and were forced to keep her in the house.'



The CHANGE project arranged for a qualified teacher to teach and provide psychological support for girls with the same condition as Mimi. Community action groups also worked to alter the community's attitude toward girls' education, including towards those who live with a disability. In order to be able to bring those marginalised girls back to school, the project donated eyeglasses, crutches and orthopaedic shoes for girls with disabilities. Girls with hearing impairments, elephantiasis and epilepsy received medical treatment in local hospitals.

Mimi continued: 'Now, I have received a crutch and solar lamps from the CHANGE project. So, in the coming year, I'll join the level one alternative basic education programme. I'm so excited to make friends and attend my education in the classroom like any other girl.' Mulugeta is happy for his daughter, saying: 'Now my child can walk by herself. She doesn't need my support. Moreover, the community has started accepting her.'

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