

## Girls' Education Results in Ethiopia - part 2



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2017-2022



# Girls' Education Results in Ethiopia

ILink Education's UK Aid-funded Girls' Education Challenge project, STAGES (Supporting the Transition of Adolescent Girls Through Enhancing Systems) aims to break down the barriers girls in rural Ethiopia face to completing their education. In STAGES we collaborate with government, schools and communities to help girls stay in school, receive a quality education and escape the cycle of poverty. The project recognises that there is no individual reason why girls are being left behind, and therefore no singular quick fix. Instead, we work at every level of the education system to provide a network of support and shift community attitudes to empower girls in the long term. To learn more about the many actions Link is undertaking, [visit our website](#).



141 schools



61,345 girls

In 2021 and 2022, Link worked with an external evaluator to conduct two midline explorations on where we have been most effective. The evaluations were designed to be forward looking, answering questions which would inform planning and implementation in the final two years of the project. Through surveys and interviews with girls, teachers, school directors, community members and local government officials, the reports offer a deep and reliable snapshot of the project's progress. We have summarised the results of the studies [here](#).

# Girls' Learning



60% Improved learners

Literacy and numeracy results show that almost 60% of the girls enrolled are improved learners. This is an extraordinary achievement for two reasons: the COVID-19 pandemic which caused much disruption to education in 2020; and the complex language environment which can be described as 'hostile'.

Literacy scores across both grades also improved. Worthy of note is that Grade 6 girls who were tested in English and Wolaytatto performed significantly better in their mother tongue than in English.

## Numeracy Improvement



Grade 6 – 34.46% at baseline to 52.94% in 2022



Grade 8 – 37.47% at baseline to 57.32% in 2022

The project has added numeracy training for teachers to support foundational skills, and language competency training for English teachers as well as teachers who need to teach their own subject in English (from Grade 5 onwards). Additional reading resources in local language as well as English have also been provided.



# Attendance and Transition



90% of girls interviewed  
want to continue to senior  
secondary school

Factors cited by the girls as affecting attendance, retention, and transition include safety in and around the school, sanitation facilities, and low expectations of what girls can achieve, as well as pull factors such as the need to migrate for a source of income, or due to marriage or becoming pregnant.

Over 50% of girls stated that a lack of parental support was a reason they might drop out of school. This number increased by 32.7% from Grade 6 (58.7%) to Grade 10 (91.4%). One explanation for this is that, as girls get older, parents tend to encourage them to pursue more 'adult' activities, including wage-earning and marriage.



# Attendance and Transition

An unexpected finding was that girls associate the language of instruction with dropping out of school. The general profile of STAGES girls living in Wolaita Zone is that they have extremely limited exposure to English in their daily lives, meaning that the switch to English at Grade 5 could have a major impact on their attendance and learning.



We strengthened the language competency teacher trainings for both Wolaytatto and English teachers

What factors girls say keep them out of school:



63% said Language is a barrier to attend school



65% said Language is a barrier to transition between grades



47% said Language is a factor in the decision to drop out

# Sustainability



STAGES interventions have been scaled to :

456 additional schools

12,182 more teachers

460,070 more learners

STAGES's interventions have already been integrated into standard government practice:

- Zonal officials have extended pedagogical leadership and supervision training, Gender and Inclusive Responsive Pedagogy (GIRP), and child safeguarding into the remaining 18 woredas (districts) in Wolaita Zone.
- Woreda officials have incorporated some STAGES interventions into their multi-years sectoral and annual plans.
- Zone and woreda officials and school directors at primary and secondary schools have begun to institutionalise STAGES practices.



**“We are registering clear results in each and every intervention. Overall, schools have become more friendly to girls and to children with disabilities. Girls who are vulnerable are supported financially and they are achieving better. The school construction has helped many to attend secondary school being [able to live at home] with their families.”**

**Woreda official**

# Teachers and School Leadership



96.8% of teachers reported improvements in lesson planning, using teaching aids and assessing students learning

They also reported using techniques introduced during GIRP training such as calling on girls and boys more equally and identifying the different needs of girls and other students. Teachers also noted positive changes in attitudes toward students with disabilities and said they now feel empowered to help these students.

Link has provided significant support in coaching and mentoring techniques for school supervisors enabling more effective feedback that promotes motivation.

Government officers, school leaders and Girls' Education and Advisory Committees are also more responsive to girls' education needs enabling holistic support to girls in school.



“Previously, we were preoccupied with administrative tasks and were unable to give educational leadership and supervision the attention it deserved. Following this training, we are putting an emphasis on efficient teaching and learning techniques. We now realize that coaching and classroom observation [should be] given more weight.” School director



# Participatory Community Support



"After a reported bride abduction, the elders used to negotiate and try to settle the case, which helped the perpetrators get away without justice, and the elders approved the marriage just because the girl was already abducted. Now it is unacceptable in most areas in our district, [now] they report the case."  
District Education Officer

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and our research continues to show that community support is a crucial factor in keeping girls in school and helping them to succeed. We've worked with communities and established champions to drive an attitudinal shift that promotes education for all and keeps all children safe.



Training for Parent Teacher Associations, School Improvement Committees and Kebele Education and Training Boards on their roles and responsibilities was strengthened around gender, inclusion, and safeguarding.



Community Mother and Father Groups are instrumental in family liaison to bring married girls back to school. Government partners have expressed their intentions to establish Mother and Father Groups across all woredas of Wolaita Zone.



# Girls' Wellbeing

Project girls now believe they deserve equal access to education and have gained the life skills necessary to help them attain it. Overall, girls reported improved self-esteem more positive thoughts around gender and of school leadership, and greater comfort at school.

The older girls in 2022 demonstrated that high levels of socioemotional wellbeing, as well as a positive perception of gender equality, in and out of the classroom, helps them surmount the barriers that prevent them from continuing their education.

“One 20-year-old student said that the psychological support, advice and counselling she received from teachers and school leaders “considerably strengthened me to keep moving forward.” A married girl with children confided how she had persisted despite pressure from the community to drop out.”

Midline evaluator



Grade 7:

15.3% increase in self-esteem

7.9% increase in gender perception



Grade 9:

23.4% increase in self-esteem

5.8% increase in gender perception



# Project Adaptations


The evaluations show that STAGES has supported girls to stay in school and learn, with several interventions being embedded within government systems and taken to scale. To leverage further improvement STAGES has:





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 Strengthened the language competency teacher trainings for both Wolaytatto and English teachers.

 Improved existing teacher training materials for reading and introduced 'Reading Corners' in schools with a variety of reading materials to create a more conducive literacy environment. This supports the Government's campaign to improve reading nationally.

 To support change in policy, and with government partners, developed an induction programme in final years of secondary school, focusing on reducing the barriers in choosing STEM subjects and careers.

 Extended our Social and Emotional Learning programme to girls in secondary school.



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