

STAGES

Endline Results

Girls' Education in Ethiopia



LINK
EDUCATION



The STAGES project

In 2017, Link began a new stage in our ongoing journey to break down the barriers girls in rural Ethiopia face to complete their education. We created the STAGES (Supporting the Transition of Adolescent Girls Through Enhancing Systems) project to work with government, schools and communities to help girls stay in school, receive a quality education and escape the cycle of poverty.

Working in Wolaita Zone in the South Ethiopia Regional state with funding from UK government's Girls' Education Challenge-Transition programme, the project targeted attendance, quality in teaching and school leadership, management and governance, improving community engagement and support for the well-being and self-esteem of marginalised girls.



146 schools



63,644 girls



2017-2024



£14.8M

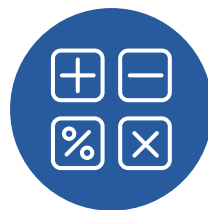
An external evaluator assessed the project using mixed methods, repeated measures, and a cross-sectional and non-experimental design. The final summary results from this eight-year project are presented here.

Improved learning



85.4%

of grade 8 girls
improved in
literacy



73.3%

of grade 8 girls
improved in
numeracy



Transition to secondary school



- 80% of grade 8 girls said they wanted to transition to secondary school
- 93% grade 10 girls said they wanted to transition to grade 11
- 91% of grade 10 girls transitioned to grade 11

The project successfully addressed the multiple barriers girls face in transitioning to secondary school, including early marriage, lack of parental support, early pregnancy and illness.

Findings suggest that now families are better equipped to support their children's educational needs. 79% of girls said their parents or caregivers pay for everything they need to go to school – up from 56% when asked three years earlier.



Girls' attendance and safety



Improved access to secondary schools in remote areas through the construction of four new secondary schools, as well as social and emotional learning, basic needs provision (such as learning materials and sanitary pads), life skills, hygiene inputs in school and provision of bursaries to vulnerable girls have encouraged girls to stay in school.



95% girls reported feeling safe travelling to and from school



91.5% of girls reported the school infrastructure was safe



Approx. 75% of girls reported they had not missed any days of school in the previous week



“I absolutely feel safe because the school has taken the right steps to make us feel that way”

Grade 12 student

Teaching Quality



We provided training to teachers to help them create lesson plans and classroom practices that give girls an equal chance.

Teachers reported that the gender and inclusive responsive pedagogy training had improved their teaching methodology and encouraged them to be more conscious of gender.



100% of teachers reported that gender inclusive and responsive pedagogy training was very useful



80% of teachers reported that classroom management training was very useful



“We have witnessed significant changes in teaching practices as a result of this intervention. Teachers are now more adept at employing learner-centred, gender-responsive and disability-inclusive teaching techniques”

Zonal official

Girls' confidence, wellbeing and lifeskills

“Many students show learning improvement after receiving the social emotional life skill training, for instance, among the students I trained in the third round, Tewabech is one of my outstanding students. Although she is good at studies, she was not participating in the classroom. She was not also aware of her strengths. However, after she received the training, she has made a good change both in her confidence and academic performance”

SEL life skills trainer

STAGES supported girls' social and emotional learning through two avenues: by incorporating this across all teacher training and by specifically targeting girls with additional support in schools through girls' clubs, mentoring, and other activities.

Girls, teachers and headteachers said they had noticed that improvement in self-esteem and wellbeing was due to improved gender-inclusive teaching practices, greater community acceptance of girls' education and a combination of project activities, such as the focus on menstrual health, hygiene, social and emotional learning and the creation of girls' clubs. Social emotional learning in particular helped girls to build confidence, improve interpersonal skills and manage emotions better.



Value for money

The evaluation found that the STAGES project offered excellent value for money, stating that:

- ✦ Resources were well-allocated to meet the needs of the target beneficiary populations, especially marginalised girls
- ✦ The project design was strongly relevant to the context, as shown by the improved outcomes of the girls who participated in the project

STAGES was “relevant, responsive and efficient”

Ethiopian government endline report



Project sustainability

“Our involvement with STAGES has been transformative, aligning seamlessly with the government's priorities and policies on gender equality, inclusive education and safeguarding children in educational settings. The project's interventions have become deeply embedded within our regular programs, reflecting our commitment to institutionalizing its successful models and practices”

Zonal official



The project was designed in close collaboration with government officials, who are now embedding project activities into all 22 woredas of Wolaita Zone's education system, particularly school improvement planning, gender and inclusion responsive pedagogy and safeguarding mechanisms.



“Generally, we are seen as a centre of excellence in the sector, in the region”

Zonal official

Recommendations



Focus on improving students' reading comprehension skills in both English and Wolayttatto in future literacy interventions in the Wolaita Zone, primarily by training teachers on classroom activities and instructional methodologies focusing on reading comprehension



Expand tutorials to focus on improving knowledge in English language



Investigate how the Zone can continue to scale up project interventions, not only the above-mentioned pedagogical leadership and supervision, gender inclusive and responsive pedagogy and safeguarding mechanisms but also effective teaching and learning materials that produced gains in numeracy



Connect Zonal and Woreda education officials to subject-based experts and other resources so they can update materials as needed after the project closes

Recommendations



Host Zone-wide Mother and Father Group meetings to validate their importance, promote best practices and encourage continued community involvement in education



Explore how the girls who have benefited from the project apply what they have learnt, by becoming mentors in their communities, to promote the success of social emotional learning interventions



Identify communities that most effectively implemented safeguarding mechanisms at school level so that education officials can promote these practices across the whole Wolaita Zone



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