

Impact Report

Girls Education Challenge

"A person who is educated sees the light, not the darkness."

Stock image due to sensitive nature of content

Foreword

Welcome to ChildHope’s review of our Girls Education Challenge activities with CHADET in Ethiopia.

Phase 1: 2013-2017

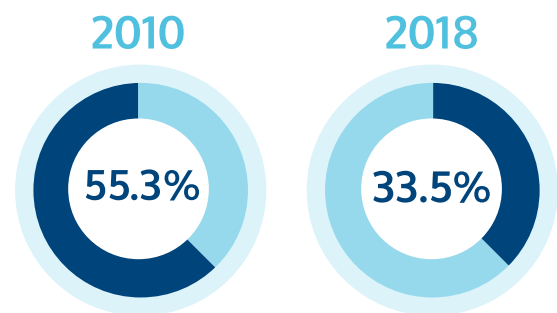
Launched in 2012 by [UKAID](#), the Girls Education Challenge (GEC) aims to help one million of the most marginalised girls in the world to improve their lives through quality education.

ChildHope is proud to be supporting GEC in Ethiopia’s two largest regions, Oromia and Amhara. We work with [CHADET](#) (Organisation for Child Development and Transformation), which has over 20 years’ experience of supporting vulnerable children. As a result, CHADET has established itself as a well-respected organisation among communities, partners, donors and the government.

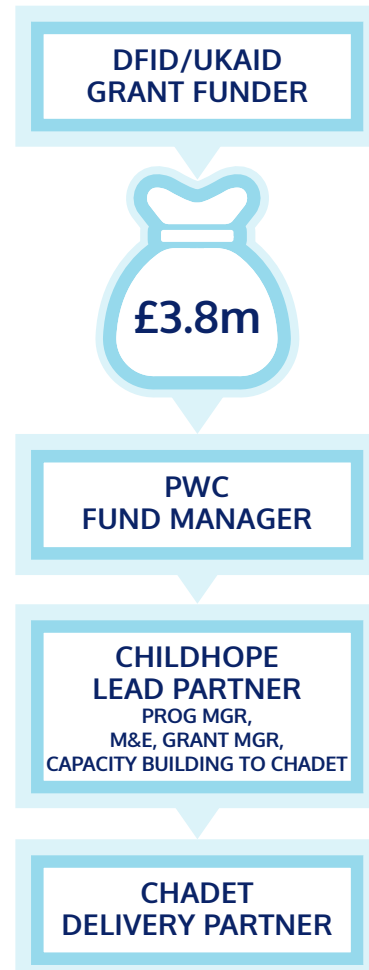
Ethiopia has the fastest growing economy in east Africa – and this economic development has seen falling rates of [poverty](#). According to the World Bank, in 2010 **55.3%** of Ethiopians lived in extreme poverty. Today, that figure is **33.5%**.

Primary school enrolment in Ethiopia has quadrupled since 2010. But girls still face huge barriers to education, particularly in remote areas. Many girls have very poor attendance at primary school, so they perform badly in their exams and are unable to progress to secondary school.

Poverty in Ethiopia



Relation between organizations





This country will improve so much when more girls of this generation are educated.

Why is girls' attendance so poor? The reasons are numerous and complex. Domestic labour is a significant one: girls bear the brunt of the household chores and childcare, which leaves little time for studying. Early marriage is still a big problem in parts of Ethiopia, particularly with the poorest families. Organising an [early marriage](#) is often done to ease the burden on household expenses: the girl becomes her husband's responsibility. [Trafficking](#) is another serious threat to girls. Parents worry about their daughters' safety when they're travelling to school, so they would rather keep them at home.

If girls do make it to school, they may well question its value. Teachers in remote areas often lack the subject knowledge and the active teaching skills needed to truly engage their students. A lack of toilets means girls particularly suffer during their periods. Bullying and harassment from teachers and boys can also be a problem. So it's unsurprising that girls often choose to stay away.

Working closely with CHADET, we are identifying girls at highest risk of missing out on school. We are working with them and their families to provide them with a quality education.

Yeshi, one of the mothers we're supporting and who you can read more about, understands the value of our work because her family has been directly impacted by it. She says: "This country will improve so much when more girls of this generation are educated."

From 2013-2017

- We have supported **17,034** marginalised girls.
- Attendance rates rose to **88.48%**.
- Over **800** teachers and **48** school principals were trained in literacy and numeracy pedagogy.
- We built **21** classrooms and **15** toilets.
- We set up **44** libraries.
- We formed **33** GEC committees to strengthen coordination between schools, leaders and government officials.

WATCH ME



These six stories bring the impact of our Girls' Education Challenge work to life. We hope you'll find the girls, their families, their teachers and communities as inspiring as we do.

Jill Healey,
*Executive Director
at ChildHope*





In their words

“Now that she trusts me, she tells me everything!”

Going back to school is life-changing for many students in the GEC programme, but for girls who've been through traumatic experiences like rape or escaping a marriage, sometimes it's not enough. Before they can focus on their education, they need professional support to help them process what has happened to them.

Fatuma is a professional psychologist and counsellor. She trains and supports focal teachers in 15 schools in Amhara to provide psychosocial support to girls who need it. In extreme cases, the teachers refer girls to Fatuma for professional counselling.

Hamelhal is one of those extreme cases. A very shy 11-year-old with learning difficulties and an unsupportive family, she was doing very badly in school, spending three years in grade one.

She was at her mother's market stall when a man lured her away, raped her and threatened her with a knife. He told her he would kill her if she told anyone, but her older sister found out about the rape and broadcast it around school a few days later. Hamelhal gave up on school and started wandering around town, too scared to go home because she now feared her mother would force her to work in the market.



It's the hardest case I've ever had to deal with.

All the schools we work with have a 'focal teacher' - a teacher who leads on safeguarding for girls. Seeing her pupil's distress, Hamelhal's focal teacher asked Fatuma for help. In their first meeting, Hamelhal didn't speak a word. But Fatuma wouldn't give up on her. During a year of regular counselling, usually at school, Fatuma provided Hamelhal with warm and consistent care. Crucially, she proved to Hamelhal that she was an adult she could trust.

"It's the hardest case I've ever had to deal with," says Fatuma. "Hamelhal didn't talk to me at first and she didn't even show the pain or tears I had expected. It was as if she was beyond pain. Now she trusts me, she tells me everything! All about the family, all about school, everything!"

Hamelhal is now blossoming under Fatuma's care. "Hamelhal is taking care of herself and she's expressing herself more," her focal teacher says. "Because of tutorials, she is also doing better in class. She is more confident. She can write quite well now, which is a big improvement, and one that makes her very happy."

Unfortunately Hamelhal still isn't getting the support she needs at home, so Fatuma plans to counsel and care for her for the long term, ensuring she does well in school and stays safe. She'll try to help Hamelhal's parents to recognise their daughter's potential. With specialised educational support and Fatuma firmly in her corner, we hope that Hamelhal will keep gaining confidence - and the resilience to overcome any challenges she might face in the future.

Number of teachers who have increased awareness of girls with disabilities





In their words

“The Girls’ Club has really helped me participate and speak up.”

When her parents separated, Maritu went to live with her grandparents – and discovered that their vision for her life did not involve her getting an education.

“When I started at school, I couldn’t really concentrate and I couldn’t study at home,” says Maritu. “I really had to work. I had to fetch water, I had to cook, I had to do everything. There was no room for study.”

The GEC committee saw that Maritu was struggling and referred her to CHADET. Maritu received textbooks, pens and a uniform and started attending

tutorials in maths, English and Amharic. Maritu is now one of her school’s brightest stars. “In the first semester last year I came second in the class, then in the second semester I came first. That has meant my family see the worth of my schooling.”

As well as coming top of her class, Maritu is a leading light in CHADET’s fortnightly Girls’ Club and twice-a-week Life Skills classes.

“The Girls’ Club has really helped me participate and speak up. We talk about lots of things that affect girls



It helped me to express myself and I'm helping others

in this area, like child marriage and domestic labour," says Maritu. "I'm a peer educator so I work with the teacher to share the messages. It helped me to express myself and I'm helping others do that too."

When she's not spreading Girls' Club messages, Maritu is busy reading her way through as many physics books as she can get her hands on. Her ambition? To be an engineer.

Number of Girls' Clubs set up to boost the confidence and self-esteem of girls like Maritu





Stock image due to sensitive nature of content

In their words

“The Good Brothers’ Club changed us – it made us see girls as sisters and respect their education.”

Boys play a vital role in changing attitudes towards girls’ education. The Good Brothers’ Clubs that have sprung up in schools and communities across Oromia are giving boys a chance to step up and show their support.

Mustefa is the secretary of a thriving Good Brothers’ Club in an elementary school in Oromia. The club’s 50 plus members have been taught about how the burdens placed on girls at home affect their performance and attendance at school.

“Our fathers used to accept these things – they thought they were normal,” says Mustefa. “Previously, lots of us boys would think about girls in not such a good way. We didn’t care about those problems they faced. The Good Brothers’ Club changed us. It made us see girls as sisters and respect their education. So we’re trying to support those girls by removing those risks.”

In collaboration with the school’s Girls’ Club, Mustefa’s Good Brothers’ Club raises funds and awareness to help keep girls in school. Through prize draws and

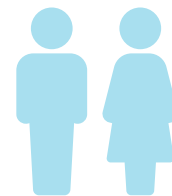


It's not just about changing our attitudes, it's about changing the attitudes of the community as well.

concerts, members raise money to cover education costs for girls whose families can't afford them. They perform dramas and puppet shows about the issues that girls face like early marriage, aiming to entertain their fellow students while getting serious messages across. They also perform for parents, because as Mustefa says, "It's not just about changing our attitudes, it's about changing the attitudes of the community as well."

But Mustefa and his friends' ambitions stretch beyond their local community. "The more we discuss this issue, the more we are aware that our forefathers used to be really bad with girls," he says. "But now the country is developing, and it's really changing. It's our country, and we will be part of that change."

Number of Good Brothers' Clubs set up to improve boys' behaviour towards girls





Stock image due to sensitive nature of content

In their words

“I knew I would be taken from school and leave a life of learning and friends”

As the oldest child in the family, Melesu was expected to look after her siblings and help her mother run the house. She might make it to school on Monday but by Tuesday her seat would be empty. Unsurprisingly, she struggled to keep up.

Melesu’s parents knew that the wealth gained from a potential marriage could transform the futures of the whole family. When Melesu found out about their plan to marry her, she was shocked. “I felt so afraid and unhappy,” she says. “I knew I would be taken from school and I would leave a life of learning and friends.”

Thanks to her school’s Girls’ Club, Melesu knew that the marriage of children was illegal – and that she had a chance to stop it. She wrote a letter and placed it in her school’s brightly painted Letter Link box. It was read by CHADET’s focal teacher Mastewal. Along with community volunteers, Mastewal visited Melesu’s parents and reminded them of the law, telling them that CHADET could help Melesu stay in school by covering the costs.

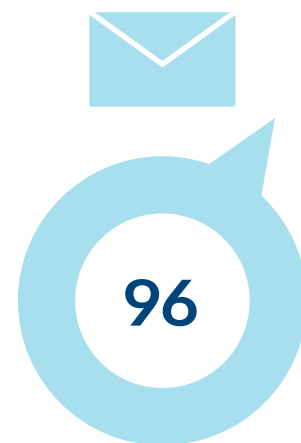


It was important for me that at least some of my children get a proper education.

Melesu’s mother Bezunesh does value education but felt that poverty had left her little choice. “The fact that I’m not educated really matters,” she says. “That’s why I decided to marry Melesu. With the bride wealth I could afford to buy the things her younger siblings needed for school. It was important for me that at least some of my children get a proper education.”

Melesu still helps at home, but she’s given time to study and attend tutorials on Saturdays. Both her confidence and her grades have gone up. She loves maths and, inspired by Mastewal, she wants to be a teacher in the future.

96 Letter Link boxes like Melesu’s are being used by both girls and boys, with approximately 400 cases of harm and abuse being reported every quarter





In their words

“I burn like this for her. I work hard every day to make sure she can be educated and have a better life.”

Many parents believe passionately in the value of education but having missed out on it themselves, they struggle to meet the costs of it for their children.

Yeshi is one such parent. She was married by 13 and divorced by 18. As a young single mother of three children, she found life so hard that she contemplated suicide. But so strong is her belief in the power of education – and so great is her regret that she missed out – that instead of taking her own life, she devoted it to earning enough money to keep her children in school.

Yeshi’s two grown up sons are both doing well thanks to the education she insisted on providing them with. Determined to keep her daughter Firegenet in school too, Yeshi took on very hard and poorly paid work to cover the costs.

Then Firegenet became part of the CHADET GEC programme and Yeshi was invited to join CHADET’s self-help and savings group. After a hard year of saving a few Birr a week to contribute to the group, Yeshi was able to take out a loan to bulk-buy cereals to sell in the market.



With God's will I have plans to change my life.

"Now I'm doing well," she says. "With God's will I have plans to change my life and make sure my daughter's life is safe too."

Yeshi was always ashamed of using her finger print as a signature. But now, Firegenet is teaching her how to write her name. She's sharing her confidence and her broadened horizons with her mother too. "Recently Firegenet wanted to go to the town where my oldest son lives," says Yeshi. "It is two days' travel and I was afraid to go, but my daughter was determined and insisted. I was afraid to stay in a hotel but she said we must, and we did. She is young but she knows what to do. She is teaching me."

Yeshi plans to keep working, keep saving, and keep Firegenet in school. Everything she does is for her daughter. "I work hard like this for her. I burn like this for her. I work hard every day to make sure she can be educated and have a better life. A person who is educated sees the light, not the darkness."

Yeshi's group is one of 102 self-help and savings groups helping 1,600 families improve their income so that they can keep their daughters in school





In their words

“The most important change was the attitude of my parents, especially my father.”

CHADET supports girls at risk of dropping out of school because their domestic workload is too high – girls like Zelalem, who shares her story below.

“I used to have a big burden of household activities. I was fetching water, cooking food, helping look after the crops and animals. I couldn’t attend school every day. I couldn’t study either. I did ok at school, but not that well. I was in place 35 out of about 60.

All my friends had the same work at home as I did. It is a normal thing here but it was frustrating. As I grew up,

so did the burden. It increased, because I was getting stronger and being given more to do. Then CHADET began to support me and my family. I started attending school every day, and also going to tutorial classes. Tutorial classes are very helpful because there are things you miss in regular classes, and in the tutorial classes they are clarified so that you really understand.

Since then things have really picked up – I was number 1 in grade 5, then number 2 in grade 6. I’m in grade 7 now, and I think I’ll get back to first place this year.



Today I am proud of my daughter, and I want her to continue with her education and have a better life

Uniform, books and tutorials were very helpful but the most important change was the attitude of my parents, especially my father. My father was part of CHADET's Community Conversations. The day he saw me receiving two awards from CHADET for my school achievement, he changed. Afterwards he gave a speech and he said, 'Today I am proud of my daughter, and I want her to continue with her education and have a better life'. He was happy and excited about my education. It made me happy too.

Now I want to be a doctor. If I can study medicine and become a doctor, I will live in a big city and live a good life there."

— 14,502 girls like Zelalem —
were supported with additional language and math tutorials. She is one of 16,889 girls provided with vital school materials - books, pens, pencils, maths sets and uniforms.



What's next for the Girls' Education Challenge in Ethiopia?

We are now in the second phase of the project. From now until March 2021 we will be focusing on preparing girls to transition through the education system, increasing their number of years in school.

We aim to:

- Reach **16,481** girls in **77** schools in Amhara and Oromia, including **30** secondary and **47** primary schools.
- Train **900** teachers in pedagogy so that girls can better perform in literacy and numeracy.
- Set up **47** sanitary corners and distribute **56,400** packs of sanitary pads so girls can continue to attend school during their period.
- Set up **60** more Letter Link boxes, two in each secondary school, so girls and boys can report safeguarding issues.
- Train **126** teachers in how to respond to the reporting of safeguarding issues.
- Support **1,241** girls to enrol in vocational training.
- Work with the Girls' and Boys' Clubs to continue to raise awareness on girls' education.
- Work with the girls to develop life skills so that they can be more confident in dealing with barriers to their education.

If you are interested in finding out how you can contribute to the ongoing support of this work in Ethiopia, please get in touch

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About ChildHope

ChildHope believes that children should enjoy a safe and secure childhood, but for those growing up in the toughest circumstances, these rights are denied. Born into extreme poverty and violence, they have no protection. We work with local partners to ensure these children's voices are heard, their rights are upheld, and they are able to access essential services.

You can read more stories from ChildHope [here](#).

WATCH ME



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