Adolescent Girls in Ethiopia

Girls in Ethiopia face challenges such as lack of access to education and health risks including high rates of maternal death and HIV infection. In rural areas, girls spend hours fetching water each day as well as completing other household tasks, leaving little to no time for school. Refugee adolescent girls are some of the most marginalized girls in Ethiopia and in the world.

What is Girl Up doing in Ethiopia?

Girl Up currently supports adolescent girls in Ethiopia by funding United Nations programs that deliver a comprehensive package of services to displaced Somali refugee girls. In Ethiopia, UN programs are delivered through the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Providing educational support

Adolescent girls receive required backpacks and uniforms so they can attend school. Since girls must do household chores during the day, the program also supplies lanterns so girls can study after the sun goes down. High-achieving young women are offered scholarships to trade schools or universities.

Creating safe schools

In order to ensure that adolescent girls feel comfortable at school, the program has built girl-only washrooms and has constructed female dormitories for the older girls attending post-secondary vocational schools. In addition, teachers undergo trainings on the importance creating safe spaces in the classroom that are free of harassment.

Improving family economics

Families too poor to send their daughters to school are offered trainings in business development and provided microloans after the training is completed. With an increased income these families can afford to educate their daughters.

Facts

- 1 in 5 girls in Ethiopia is married before the age of 15.*
- Only 57% of girls and young women ages 15-24 are literate.
- 52% of females have received no education.
- Less than 50% of Somali refugee girls are enrolled in primary school, and only 15% are enrolled in secondary school.
- Ethiopian girls ages 15-19 are three times more likely to be HIV positive than their male peers.
- Only 23% of households in Ethiopia have electricity, making it difficult for girls to do their homework and complete household tasks.


About Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a vast and diverse East African country located in the Horn of Africa that is roughly twice the size of Texas. The country has the second largest population in Africa and is home to some of the oldest sites of human life in the world. Amharic is the official language and widely spoken, yet there are more than 80 additional ethnic groups with distinct languages. Ethiopians are proud of their independent, ancient heritage that can be traced back at least 2,000 years.

Despite its cultural and historical richness, Ethiopia remains one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Because of instability in the region, Ethiopia currently hosts about 370,000 refugees who have fled their homes to avoid war. More than half of these refugees are from Somalia and are often even more vulnerable than the rest of the population, because they often do not have stable access to food, water, and shelter.

Because adolescent girls in Ethiopia deserve to be educated, healthy, safe, counted and positioned to be the next generation of leaders.

You see a girl. We see the future.