Alternative approaches to delaying marriage and supporting married girls

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Child marriage in Ethiopia

• Ethiopia has among the highest rates of child marriage in Africa
  – 41 percent of girls are married by age 18
  – 14 percent of girls are married by age 15
• Among girls married before age 15:
  – 71 percent met their husbands on the wedding day
  – 32 percent experienced forced first sex with their husband
  – 61 percent had not started menstruating at the time of first sex

• Limited and scattered programmatic efforts to delay child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa

• Very limited evaluation data

‘Berhane Hewan’ : First generation program to address child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa

- From 2004-06, the Population Council and partners developed and tested ‘Berhane Hewan’ (‘Light for Eve’)
- Partners in the program were:
  - Ethiopia Ministry of Youth & Sports (now Women, Children and Youth Affairs)
  - Amhara Regional Bureau of Youth & Sports
  - UNFPA
  - Support from United Nations Fdn and Nike Fdn
- Objectives of ‘Berhane Hewan’ were:
  - To delay the age at marriage among unmarried girls at risk of an early marriage
  - To support girls who are already married
**‘Berhane Hewan’ model (2004-6): Pilot tested as a package of interventions**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRIVERS OF EARLY MARRIAGE</th>
<th>PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities value early marriage</td>
<td>‘Community conversations’ to collectively explore community values on early marriage</td>
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<td>Economic incentives to marry girls early</td>
<td>A conditional cash/asset transfer (goat) is offered to offset the economic benefit of marrying girls</td>
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<td>Out of school girls are particularly vulnerable to marriage</td>
<td>Girls are provided with school materials to address the economic barriers to schooling</td>
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<td>Girls are socially isolated and low status</td>
<td>Girls groups are formed led by adult female mentors</td>
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Evaluation of ‘Berhane Hewan’

• At endline, girls 10 to 14 in the pilot site were 1/10 as likely to be married compared to girls in the control site.
• They were 3 times more likely to be in school.
• Married girls were 3 times more likely to be using family planning.
• Results demonstrated it is possible to intervene to accelerate an increase in marriage age.
• As a package of interventions, it was difficult to tease out individual effects of components of the intervention.
• Lingering questions about cost.

Second generation work on child marriage

- Based on lessons from first generation of work, Population Council and partners started more in-depth work on child marriage
- Bifurcated the work into two streams:
  - Programs directed at delaying the age at marriage
  - Programs supporting married girls
- Explore questions raised in first generation work
Building an evidence base on how to delay marriage in Africa (2010 - 2015)

• With support from USAID/W, testing the relative impact of the strategies used to delay marriage
• Implemented in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Burkina Faso
• In different districts, strategies implemented separately:
  – Community education on early marriage
  – Support to remain in school by way of school supplies/uniforms
  – Conditional cash transfer (goat, chickens)
  – Full model where all components are offered
  – Control area

• Evaluative population based surveys will measure impact of strategies on age at marriage, marriage dynamics and reproductive health

• Tracking costs of all interventions
Tracking cost & coverage, Ethiopia

Cost of strategies to delay marriage, per girl per year (USD)

- Community awareness: $17
- Educational support: $20
- Conditional cash/asset transfer: $39
- Full model (all components): $46

Uptake of the models ranges from 95-99% of eligible girls in Ethiopia

• Baseline surveys undertaken in Ethiopia and Tanzania
• Burkina Faso baseline survey is underway
• Interventions in Ethiopia and Tanzania have completed one of two years
• Endline surveys planned for 2014, in two countries
‘Mesoret Hiwott’ Program for Married Girls in Rural Ethiopia

- Support from USAID-PEPFAR
- Population Council and Amhara Regional Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs
- “Mesoret Hiwott” (Base of Life) supports married adolescent girls in rural Amhara (2008-13)
- Female mentors are recruited from rural communities
- House to house recruitment of married girls aged 10 - 24
- Formation of girls groups that meet 3 to 5 times a week
- 32-hour curriculum covers communication, self-esteem, HIV/AIDS, STIs, VCT, ART, reproductive health, menstruation management, family planning, safe motherhood, gender and power dynamics, and financial literacy
‘Addis Birhan’ program for husbands

- “Addis Birhan” (New Light) started shortly after “Mesoret Hiwott” and mobilizes husbands in the same locations
- Mentorship model and house-to-house recruitment
- Curriculum includes partner communications, non-violent and respectful relations, caring for wives and children, alcohol, STIs, HIV/AIDS VCT, and family planning, among others
Indications of positive improvements associated with programs

Percent of married girls reporting that spouse accompanied them to the clinic, by program participation:
- No participation: 40
- Married girls group only: 43
- Married girls & husbands' group: 53

Percent of married girls reporting couples’ VCT, by program participation:
- No participation: 11
- Married girls group only: 46
- Married girls & husbands' group: 65
Final thoughts

- Interventions addressing child marriage are demonstrating acceptability in communities and suggesting positive results.
- Additional focus on locations where large proportions of girls are married during early adolescence, below age 15.
- More resources directed to communities and especially to girls themselves.
- Greater attention to family planning and married adolescents.