

**Improving Adolescent Reproductive Health and Nutrition through  
Structural Solutions in West Hararghe Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia  
(Abdiboru Project)**

**End-line Qualitative Assessment Report**

**Addis continental institute of public health**

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## Acronyms

ACIPH	Addis Continental Institute of Public Health
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CF	Community Facilitator (CARE's)
CSC	Community Score Card
FGD	Focus group Discussion
HEW	Health Extension Workers
HH	Household
IDI	Individual in-depth interview
KII	Key Informant interview
NGO	None governmental organizations
SAA	Social Analysis and Action
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHN	Sexual, Reproductive Health and Nutrition
STD	Sexually transmitted diseases
VSLA	Village savings and loan association
WCA	Women and Children's Affairs
Arm 1	Combining individual level agency (through girls group VSLA, life skills, SRH, and Nutrition education), and government level structures (through CSC) interventions
Arm 2	A third component—community level social norms (through SAA), in addition to combining individual level (girls group VSLA and life skills SRH-Nutrition education) and governmental level (CSC) interventions
Arm 3	A delayed intervention arm that served as control

## 1. Executive Summary

Abdiboru project intended to test the effectiveness of interventions that aimed to improve the sexual reproductive health, nutrition and wellbeing of young adolescent girls in the age group 10-14 years. The interventions to be tested were grouped into three arms - Arm 1 combining individual level agency (through girls group VSLA, life skills, SRH, and Nutrition education), and government level structures (through CSC) interventions; and Arm 2 A third component—community level social norms (through SAA), in addition to combining individual level (girls group VSLA and life skills SRH-Nutrition education) and governmental level (CSC) interventions; and Arm 3- a delayed intervention arm that served as control. The interventions have been implemented since October 2016 and intensive monitoring and evaluation activities have been implemented throughout the life of the project.

This end line qualitative assessment was conducted at the end of the project intervention period to understand the current contextual reality around girls lives and contemporary social norms related to the conditions through. It also aimed to capture the change after implementation of the project interventions. The end line assessment used focused group discussions (FGD), individual in-depth interviews (IDI) and key informant interviews (KII) with adolescent girls, adolescent boys, adult community members, government sector agencies and project implementers. The end-line qualitative assessment, similarly with the baseline, utilized purposely developed vignette stories to capture social norms around girls' education, marriage, food allocation and sexual and reproductive health. In addition, separately prepared semi-structured interview guides were used to gather data from individuals and groups that participated in the study. To capture interventions success, five progress monitoring indicators that including acceptability, intensity, conformity to design, efficiency and quality perception were used. The approach of this end-line assessment simulated most of the baseline assessment strategies plus additional intervention related to capture change. Comparisons, where applicable were made from the baseline findings, to shine light on changes made after the intervention period.

Adolescent girls commonly attended school until primary level. Parents, better than the baseline times, opted to keep adolescent girls in school. However, household's economic status majorly determined girl's education. Pursuing education after primary level was still a challenge for adolescent girls in poor households, since they could not afford the living expense in the town where high schools are available. Thus, girls were forced to alternative decisions such as early marriage and income generating activities. In addition, unemployment among high school and college graduates was a discouraging reality for both adolescent girls and parents to hope for a better future. *These limitations justify adolescent girl's early marriage decision as alternative to their independence.* Abdiboru interventions and other forums such as discussion on different government meeting and advice from school teachers were reported as facilitators of the observed change.

The ideal age of marriage for girls was 15 and above and the common age for most girls to marry was 13 to 14 years. Almost universally, '*Jala dema*'<sup>1</sup> marriage type was commonly practiced. In

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<sup>1</sup> marriage type where a boy and a girl 'who are in love with each other' elope without parent's knowledge.

this type of marriage, girls' decision making is demonstrated fully. However, the engagement of marriage brokers intensified and masked the girls' free decision-making ability. On the other hand, elders who claim to sustain tradition pressurized parents to give their girls for marriage at an early age through social influences and sanctioned parents if they refused. Other marriage types such as *Chebsa*<sup>2</sup> and Polygamy were also observed, though not prominent. Marriage practices were seen to closely be related to economic capacities, which drove girls to incline towards a 'secured' future. The quantitative component of the study also complements these finding. Early marriage and girls' education norms overlapped in many ways. As the opportunities for secondary and higher education were limited, it was likely that it reduced interest to stay long in school and marry instead. Currently, sanctioning adolescent girls for delaying marriage had reduced and insulting them saying things like '*Haftuu*' (meaning unattractive and unmarriageable) have become milder.

Engaging in pre-marital sex and contraceptive use before marriage were unacceptable in the study area. However, if a girl once engaged in premarital sex, community privately preferred she uses contraceptives than having unwanted pregnancy. The possibilities community approved of contraceptive use is if girls are married, and already have at least 1 child. The high held value of being married before engaging in sexual acts actually promoted early marriage practices through the marriage type locally known as *Jala dema*. Thus, the restriction to having premarital sexual relationship could lead to early marital engagement as the girl would be highly sanctioned unless she immediately marries the person, she had sexual intercourse with. Although the SRH interventions were implemented, community still mostly disapproved the use of contraception by unmarried girls. Still, unlike the situation 3-4 years back, slight changes were reported and presently married couples were allowed to use family planning immediately after their first birth. The duration of the SRH interventions being insufficient could be the reason to bring about the expected amount of change.

Almost all respondents (girls, parents and other community members) indicated the improvement of food allocation and nutrition norms in the community. Household food allocation practices have improved from baseline which strictly followed gender-based allocation favoring males in food quality, amount and eating order. Unlike the baseline findings, girls could eat what was available in the household equally as their boy counterparts without restriction. Pregnant women and children were given priority to eat first and the best quality food available. Food taboos that restricted girls from eating certain foods were no more dominant features of the household food allocation. The quality of food within the household varies rarely as everybody eats more or less the same available food. Husbands/fathers were the primary decision makers on the amount of food items that should be produced, stored and sold in a household and women and girls were expected to prepare food.

VSLA and SAA interventions were well identified and accepted by the community. Life skill, SRHN and CSC, while recognized, were not as much acknowledged as the previous two. Community members and implementors share the perception that VSLA and SAA were well

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<sup>2</sup> marriage type where the boy pursuing the marriage asks the girl's parents' blessing to take the girl

implemented intervention with good intensity and efficiently as compared to the other interventions. Therefore, majority of the overall project positive outcome could be attributed to VSLA and SAA. However, SRHN, life skill and CSC had also brought about significant changes. Generally, the three distinct intervention packages were implemented with different efficiency level.

Girls were determined to sustain their groups with whatever source and support that they could get. However, some girls reported that the absence of support, supervision and advice from CARE could affect their group commitment. They anticipated that teachers would support them in the future. School teachers were identified as the potential stakeholders for scaling up the intervention as they have close follow-up of the school girls, while HEWs seemed the potential stakeholders for the out of school and community intervention groups.

Adolescent friendly plan was deliberately made and enforced in the intervention woredas however, scale up to other woredas was reported as still not in place. The short implementation period on top of the repeated implementation interruption due to instability and drought plus government office turn overs were among the reasons that hindered the anticipated scaling of this project outcome. Promising collaboration between sector offices and working with task forces selected from the sector offices were reported by officials and that they were enthusiastic to collaborate towards adolescents' wellbeing. The project interventions were also highly accepted by the sector offices as well as the community, which paves the starting pathway to scalability.

Girls were able to meet in groups and discuss on different topics in addition to learning saving culture, which was one of the great opportunities for such young girls who were not familiar with such opportunities. Alternative supporting mechanisms are crucial for adolescent girls to continue their education. Girls could fail to access school education and head to marriage not only because of the existing social norms but also due to economic challenges. The SAA intervention component was the most effective in reducing early marriage in this project. The community coming together to tackle social norms as well as meet with the sector offices to identify problems and forward their concerns were creditable changes observed in the Abdiboru project. These changes were observed during the period of political instability. Thus, one can anticipate a greater impact if interventions were implemented in a more stable political environment and over a longer period of time. Furthermore, structural level interventions require a stable and functioning local governments to bring about meaningful impact.

## 2. Background

The *Improving Adolescent Reproductive Health and Nutrition through Structural Solutions in West Hararghe Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia* (Abdiboru) project was a five-year implementations research project that aimed to empower adolescent girls. The project focused on improving the sexual and reproductive health of adolescent girls aged 10-14 years as well as their education, nutrition and wellbeing through structural interventions. The Abdiboru interventions were implemented at three levels: individual, community and governmental levels. These interventions were combined in two different sets to test which intervention package is more effective. The first one was a double-combination of individual level agency and Government level structural interventions while the second one, the triple combination added community level social norms in addition to the individual and government sets. The project interventions were designed and implemented by CARE Ethiopia. The research and evaluation components were conducted by Addis Continental Institute of Public Health (ACIPH) and the project was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. The interventions implementation process had been monitored through periodic quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis since 2015. The various monitoring and evaluation components of the project are depicted in Figure 1.

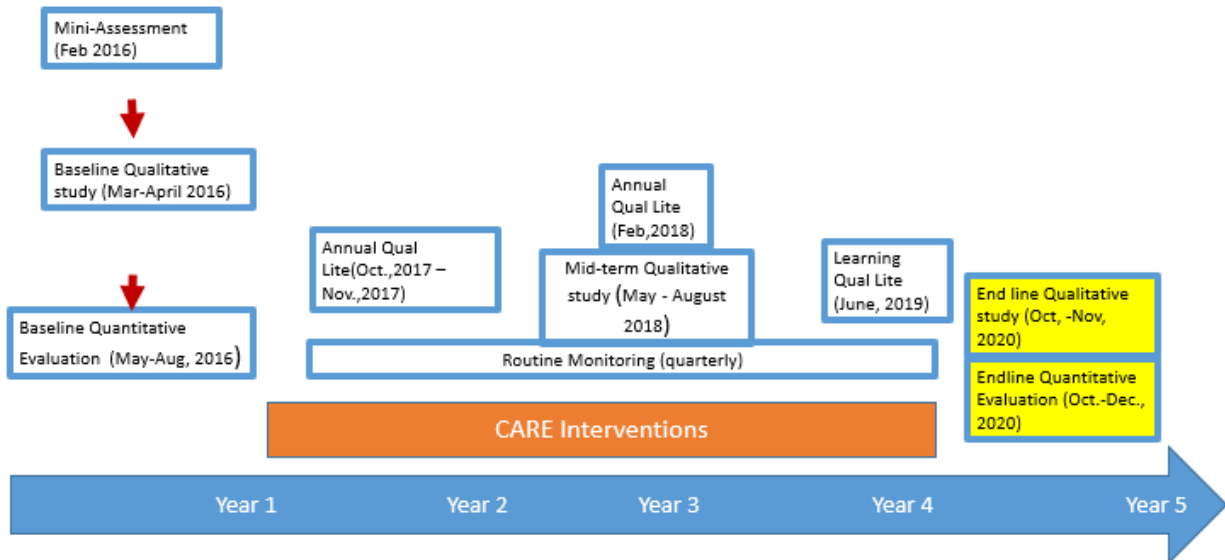


Figure 1: The Abdiboru Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Design

The project aimed to compare the effect of different set of interventions in the three comparison arms; Arm 1 (double-combination arm) combined individual and structural interventions implemented in one woreda-Mesela; Arm 2 (triple-combination arm) combined individual, community and structural level interventions implemented in two woredas-Chiro and Doba; and Arm 3 (delayed intervention arm) that served as control, involving one woreda-Boke. The interventions are briefly described below:

- **Individual level intervention:** This intervention mainly organized adolescent girls in the age group 10 to 14 years into village saving and loans association (VSLA), which also planned to discuss the SRH, life skills and nutrition issues. The individual level intervention aimed to promote adolescent girls' agency to control decisions that affect their own lives.
- **Structural level intervention:** The community score card (CSC) component was the government (structural) level intervention that facilitates identifying problems, prioritize and intervene through dialogue in a participatory forum that jointly engages both the community and service providers. The joint actions allowed sharing responsibilities among government stakeholders and the community.
- **Community level intervention:** The social analysis and action (SAA) component was an intervention which is designed to engage community members to challenging and changing unfavorable social norms that negatively influence adolescent girls' lives. SAA provides organized community member's opportunities to discuss alternative ways of thinking and behaving, and increase their understanding of how some beliefs, attitudes and norms may have a negative effect on health and wellbeing.

The project has an extensive monitoring and evaluation activities that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods, while the quantitative measures the effect of the intervention at baseline and end line the qualitative component mainly aims to capture the learning during the implementation of the project (see Figure 1). So far, the mini qualitative assessment, the baseline qualitative assessment, the baseline quantitative survey, three rounds of lite-qualitative assessments, and routine process monitoring have been conducted.

This end-line qualitative assessment, as of the original evaluation design, aims to generate evidence on the current context, the achievements and lessons learned at the end of the project implementation. The evidence gathered would help to capture the project learnings with focus on potential future scale up and the change brought to the community because of the interventions.



### 3. Objectives

The main objectives of the end-line qualitative assessment were:

- 1) To assess the contemporary social norms related to adolescent girls' agency on matters of:
  - Education
  - marriage
  - Sexual and reproductive health, and
  - nutrition
- 2) To assess the perception of beneficiaries and influential others about the implementation of Abdiboru interventions with emphasis on the:
  - Acceptability
  - Conformity to design
  - Efficiency of implementation
  - Intensity, and
  - Quality perceptions
- 3) To capture the project learnings with focus on potential future application
  - Document the barriers, facilitators and critical elements to scaling the Abdiboru various components.
  - Document beneficiaries and implementers suggestions and ideas for improving the Abdiboru approach.

### 4. Method

#### 4.1 Study Approach

The end line qualitative assessment was designed to describe current contextual situations around social norms related to girls lives and assess project interventions implementation and outcomes. The social norms under study were marriage, education nutrition and SRH matters, the same as baseline. Data were collected from all arms (four woredas) with the aim to portray what current situation look like. Comparisons of norms with baseline have been depicted from the vignette data and other contextual comparisons were also made where possible. In addition, five intervention outcome indicators were used to show intervention outcomes, and these were also compared with midline and lite qualitative assessments conducted periodically during the intervention period.

Data were gathered through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews. The FGDs were used to gather collective views and individual interviews were used to gather in-depth information from individual respondents about their experience and views on community norms, matters related to Abdiboru implementation, successes, challenges, and future application.

Vignettes, that portrayed short stories to reflect the real situations in the study settings, were used to assess social norms during focus group discussions. The vignettes that were used during the

baseline assessment and additional/were modified vignettes from the previous routine qualitative assessments were used to reflect our learning during the implementation of the project. Focus group discussions were conducted with adolescent girls and boys, and adult women and men; including direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Separate interview guides were prepared and used during the in-depth interview and key informant interview. The in-depth interviews were conducted with married adolescent girls and boys, mother in-law and unmarried adolescent girls. Key informant interviews were conducted with government officials of Education bureau, Women and child Affairs and Women Association. In addition, school teachers and health extension workers were part of the assessment. The final version of the qualitative assessment tools was translated to Afan Oromo. The local language, Afan Oromo, was used for FGDs and individual interviews with beneficiaries. For the key informant participants', language of interview was based on the participant's language preference, Afan Oromo or in Amharic.

For better efficiency and depth, each data collection session (whether FGD, IDI or KII) had focused on a specific issue. The number of individuals to be invited into the FGDs have ranged from 4 to 7 persons depending on how many people could be potentially available.

#### 4.2 Sampling Approach

For this qualitative assessment the initial list of participants was identified in consultation with knowledgeable kebele officials, HEWs, school directors, teachers and women development army members in the kebele. Subsequent participants/respondents were selected based on the recommendation of the preceding participants. Additional target respondents were invited from schools and health facilities. The key informants were recruited based on their official roles from the Abdiboru project Woreda and kebeles offices. The category of respondents is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. End-line qualitative assessment; respondents' profile — planned versus achieved

<b>Method</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Planned Number of groups/respondents per woreda</b>	<b>Achieved Number of groups/respondents per woreda</b>
FGD	Beneficiary Adult women and men mixed	2	2
	Adult women	4	4
	Adult men	4	4
	Adolescent boys	4	4
	Un-married Adolescent Girls Beneficiary and Non-beneficiary	7	8
	Married Adolescent girls Beneficiary and Non-beneficiary	7	6

In-depth Interview	Mother in-law	8	9
	Husband of adolescent girls	8	10
	Unmarried adolescent	8	11
	Married adolescent	8	12
Key informant Interview	School teachers	8	9
	Women & Children affair	4	4
	Woreda health office	4	4
	HEW	8	8
	CFs	2	2
	Total	86	97

### 4.3 Data Collection

The information required to address the end line qualitative assessment was collected by trained research assistants who can communicate both in Afan Oromo and Amharic languages. Research assistants who previously participated in consecutive Abdiboru qualitative works were given priority during recruitment. They were given training on the study tools and interview technique prior to the field work. The tools were extensively discussed and tested during the training.

The data collection for the FGDs were started by presenting vignettes stimulus story for the participants and ask question related to expectations (Empirical and Normative), sanction, severity to sanction and condition on particular scenario in the participants' context. The interviews were held privately in places free from disturbance.

All FGDs and interviews were audio recorder with the consent of participants/respondents. Two research assistants were assigned to facilitate focus group discussions; one served as moderator and the other person was responsible for taking notes and manage the audio recorder. Focus group discussions time ranged from 1 to 2 hours and individual interviews took 30 minutes to 2 hours. The in-depth interviews and key informant interviews were conducted by a research assistant.

### 4.4 Data Management and Analysis

Data analysis followed a thematic framework approach, considering both pre-defined and emerging themes. A qualitative data analysis ATLAS.ti software was used to assist the data sorting and coding. Then the data were coded to cover all the key themes, concepts and questions according to the study objective. Experienced research team members were engaged in the coding process. From the first few coded data the report outline was developed and build up on the contents as more data were coded. Comparison between Arms and target groups were done based on the completed dataset. The vignette data were analyzed with the SNAP<sup>3</sup> framework. Results

In this end-line assessment a total of 28 FGDS, 42 IDIs and 27 KIIs were conducted to generate a rich diversity of views. More than 70 adult community members (direct and indirect beneficiaries), 84 adolescent girls (married and unmarried), 34 male participants (adolescent boys and husbands

<sup>3</sup> The social norms analysis plot (SNAP) is a measurement tool developed by CARE based on Bicchieri's synthesis of social norms theory. SNAP framework identifies the key components of a norm and additional questions that will help develop vignettes and measure changes in norms over time.

of adolescent girls) have participated in assessment. In addition, 26 key informants including school teachers, WCA office officials, health officials, health extension workers and CARE community facilitators were interviewed. The report is arranged according to the objectives of the study, which are also the main themes of the analysis.

#### 4.5 Girls Education

##### Girls Education practice and girls' agency

Although the majority of the respondents said adolescent girls have equal chance as boys on school enrolment, the assessment revealed that education beyond primary level was not common for girls in all of the Arms. The maximum grade levels community suggests that girls should attend were grades 5-8 which indicates there is slight improvement from the baseline.

Adolescent girl's husband perceived (Arm 2) *"They (girls) do attend up to grade 6, 7 or 8. Then they go to marriage; family members also push them to marriage. For some of them, intermediaries facilitated their marriage."*

Adolescent girl's Mother (Arm 1) *"The maximum grade which girls mostly attain is to grade 8. They make it to 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and discontinue after these levels."*

Going to school after marriage was reported as challenging for adolescent girls as household chores, caring for a child and supporting their husband on farming activity took their majority of time. Some uneducated husbands also would not let their wives continue with their education after marriage due to fear of losing them to an educated man. Girls would get the chance of education after marriage if the husband is an educated man and if both the girl and boy attend their education together. These findings were not very different from baseline. This shows the longstanding challenge of education for married girls, which would have to be trapped with multiple responsibilities.

Adolescent girl's husband (Arm 1) *"Those girls who continued their education after marriage, those are girls whom husbands were government employees. Since they know the advantage of education, they allow them to continue their education. If their husbands were farmers, they would not allow them to continue their education after marriage. This is because they think girls prefer educated person to be their partner after they complete their education."*

Early marriage, economic problems, unavailability of secondary schools in a village, suppressive social norms that favor marriage than education which were highly supported by the elders and were the reasons for adolescent girls' school dropout. In addition, girls' engagement in income generating activities were mentioned to make them be less interested in education and spend their school time on small business. In resource scares families, priority would be given for boys to continue their education up to secondary school and above. This is because parents believed the, boys can return back the costs while girls could not, as boys are believed to have the chance to go higher in life and be successful more than girls. This is illustrated in the quotes below by different participants:

A father of an adolescent girl (Arm 2) *“A girl will wait her turn to attend higher education after completing secondary education, since her parent can’t afford sending her together with her brother at the same time.”*

A mother of adolescent girl (Arm 2) *“The most common reasons which result in school drop out for girls includes economic problem of the parents, marriage, seeing the existing unemployment, academic weakness; and I know 2 girls, for khat related business.”*

Currently, girls have role model those educated female and has better position. An adolescent boy (Arm 1) *“When we see the previous trend since there is no educated girls in the community girls haven’t get an example, but currently we have many educated girls as example also those educated girls can give an advice for others/their peers on education.”*

An adolescent boy (Arm 2) *“Those girls who have succeeded in education also have served as an example for this change.”*

Many of these views were similar to observations at baseline. However, unlike prior findings, in the current times, adolescent girls who were committed to continue their education were appreciated and respected. This also held true for parents. Parents who supported their adolescent girls on their education are respected and acknowledged among other community members.

A mother of adolescent girl (Arm 2) *“Those fathers who allow their daughters to learn will be respected and encouraged in the community. Adolescent girl who wants to continue education also seen as strong daughters. Peoples are saying they are strong.”*

**Compared to baseline findings, parents exhibited positive inclinations towards girls’ education.** However, poorer parents tended to consider the long-term benefits of schooling against direct expenses such as housing, ration and school materials cost and also immediate backing from girls such as helping with household chores, work on income generating activity or paid labor and looking after younger siblings. The choice of parents to educate girls often depended on the expected costs of education.

Adolescent girl’s mother participated in FGD (Arm 1) *“A father who can educate his daughter can allow to continue school. It depends on his economy; one person may have many daughters which costs him more to educate them. That matters about continuation of schools.”*

Adolescent girl’s father participated in FGD (Arm 1) *“I rather prefer to suffer (economically) instead of forcing them to discontinue their school. In a similar way, what the communities in this area are thinking at this time is, helping them reach a level where other successful people did rather than limiting them live in this village.”*

Unemployment among high school and college graduates was a discouraging reality for both adolescent girls and parents to hope for a better future. Respondents reported that they had not really seen many successful girls who finished school, got jobs and started giving back to their parents in the community. Children are expected to support their families once they are grown up, whether by getting employed, working as laborers or getting married to a better off husband who can support the girl and preferably her family too. A married adolescent girl reflected this in the following quote:

Married adolescent girl (Arm 1) *Common reasons (for not educating girls) are family economic problem and marriage but also rarely some of them withdraw during khat harvest they start trade then discontinue school.*”

Lower parental aspirations regarding their daughters’ education-because of the social expectation of girls to marry early than stay long in school-and high interest of parents on girls’ engagement in income generating activities were other facilitators for girls’ school dropout. While both girls and boys participate in the locally popular khat harvesting and vending business, in harvest times girls are the first choice by families to leave school and help out while boys have much higher opportunities to take examinations and complete the school year.

Adolescent girl’s husband (Arm 2) *“Especially when the school year approaches to the end, Khat harvesting season arrives, during month of June. At these times, girls have to travel for Khat harvesting due to their father’s poverty, leaving their school probably while other students instead take exams of grade eight and/or grade 10 national examinations. During the month of June, they usually stay harvesting Khat and miss many school days. The family also has no concern about their education other than relying on the money they are going to earn, as the family has economy concerns.*’

From girls’ perspective, the main reason for not continuing to high school after finishing the primary level was unavailability of schools beyond the primary education in the kebele. This finding is justified as it was observed that most adolescent girls needed to go to the nearest town to attend high school education which was not affordable by their parents in most cases unless there was special support from other sources. This limits girls’ option and explains girls’ early school dropout and marriage becoming the more appealing option.

## **Finding from Education Vignettes analysis of social norms around girls' education**

Below are the SNAP analysis summary findings from the vignette-based discussions as mentioned in the methodology section. The findings are presented to portray the social norms around girls' education in the community. Findings from baseline and end-line are depicted for comparison.

### **Vignette based FGD discussions presented in the SNAP Framework**

#### Education Vignettes

- i. The first vignette was targeted for unmarried adolescent boys and unmarried adolescent girls. It was a story about an adolescent girl who was forced to drop out of school by her father after she completed grade 8. The adolescent girl decided to continue school regardless of her family approval.
- ii. The second vignette was designed for married adolescent girls. It was a story about a 7th grade student named Muna who got married at age 15. After marriage, Muna decided to continue her education despite the expectation that her primary responsibility is household chores, and her husband's and his families' reaction.
- iii. The third vignette was prepared for fathers and mothers of adolescent girls. It was a story about an adolescent girl who was promoted to grade 9 and wished to continue her education. She registers to continue, but her father wants her to stay home and help the family with household activities and possibly generate additional income from small business.

**Empirical Expectations<sup>4</sup>:** Most girls perceived as girls would try to convince their parents and husbands to continue education. Peer parents, teachers and woreda education officials also perceived to convince parents to educate their daughters. Daughters were perceived to help in household chores if parents let them continue their education. However, few participants (particularly in Doba woreda) argued girls would discontinue their education following their parents order and help the family in household activities.

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<sup>4</sup> Empirical expectations: Descriptive norms that aim to assess what most others in the community are perceived to be, say or behave in a certain situation. They typically ask the question "What do most others do"?

Table 2: Summary of Empirical Expectations related to education norms: Baseline Vs End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls must stop their education if their parents tell them to do so (all woredas)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls convince their parents to continue education (all woredas)</li> <li>Girls stop their education if parents tell them to do so (Doba)</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls would likely stop going to school because of their huge responsibility in household chores.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls stop going to school due to household and farm activities</li> <li>Girls convince their husbands to let them go to school.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescent girls would stop going to school if their parents decide so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescents try to convince their parents to continue their education (except Boke)</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most fathers would get angry or yell at their adolescent girls if they don't accept their fathers' decision to stop going to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most fathers support adolescent girls' interest to continue their education.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most fathers may force them out of home if they don't accept their fathers' decision to stop going to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most fathers support their adolescents school continuation if the girls are interested to continue</li> </ul>

**Normative Expectations<sup>5</sup>:** Most adolescents perceived girls were expected to discontinue their education if their family needed their help in household chores, farms and income generating activities. Then they would be expected to get married. Peer parents played vital role in convincing parents to let their daughters to continue their education. On the other hand, parents responded that they are expected by other parents to send and support their adolescent girls in their education.

<sup>5</sup> Normative expectations: Injunctive norms that aim to assess what most others in the community are expected by others to be, say or behave in a certain situation. They typically ask the question "What do most others expect one to do"?



Table 3: Summary of Normative Expectations related to education norms: Baseline Vs End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents expect adolescent girls to stop going to school after primary school (4 to 8th grade)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents expect girls to stop going to school and help with household chores and get married</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Husbands do not want them to continue school and expect them to be fully engaged in household chores</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Husbands expect her to stop going to school and help in farm or business activity.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescent girls accept their parents' decision regarding their education and do what their parents tell them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents expect adolescent girls to stop going to school and engaged in income generating activities and help in household chore later they expect her to get married</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fathers would not let their daughters to go beyond 4th grade and expect them to get married or be economically independent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fathers expected to let daughters to go to school and fulfill her needs</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents would allow their daughters to continue their education up to certain level (the level varies by woreda).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most fathers expect fathers to support their daughters to continue education.</li> </ul>

**Sanctions<sup>6</sup>:** Most girls would not get any economical support to continue their education. They would be insulted, corporally punished and isolated for going against parent's/ husband's decision. Unmarried girls and boys perceived fathers as the primary decision makers on girl's education. On the contrary, parents responded they were sanctioned for not sending their daughter to school.

<sup>6</sup> Sanctions: in social norms are consequences which could be negative or positive, that occur as a result of not complying with community imposed social norms

Table 4: Summary of sanctions related to education norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most parents stop supporting their daughter’s education financially or force her to drop out of school if the girl decides to continue education against the parents’ will</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most parents would stop supporting their daughters if they go against their decision.</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most husbands will not support their wives to continue education and may verbally/physically insult her or even divorce her.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most husbands wouldn’t want their wives to continue education due to fear of losing them to a better man/educated man.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most parents would blame, insult or physically punish their daughters if she does not respect their decision-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most parents stop supporting girls to continue education, in some cases girls are insulted and corporally punished for going against their parent’s decision</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fathers would be isolated from social activities in the community and not efficient to manage his family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fathers will be penalized by influential community members if he refuses to help adolescent girls to continue her education</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most fathers would be considered as a person who is ruled by his wife and daughter, and a person who has no respect for the community norm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most fathers will be supported by other fathers for educating adolescent girl.</li> </ul>

**Sensitivity to sanctions<sup>7</sup>:** Most girls would try to convince their parent through teachers to let them continue their education. However, eventually the girls would be affected by the sanctions and decide to stop their education. In addition, they would mostly be forced to stop going to school due to lack of support to fulfil their educational material need.

<sup>7</sup> Sensitivity sanctions mean the subject’s reaction or how much they were affected by the sanctions imposed for defying norms. These show their inclination to continue to follow or defy the norms in the future

Table 5: Summary of sensitivity to sanctions related to education norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of girls would feel anxious if they are avoided by their parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most of the girls stop going to school due to lack of support</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of the girls would respect the husband's Decision to avoid physical and/or verbal abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most of the girls stop their education in fear of their husband and divorce</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls would lose interest of continuing education,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are forced to stop education if their families refuse to support them</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls would feel bad due to the punishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(No sanction)</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reaction from the community may lead him to change his decision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(No sanction)</li> </ul>

**Conditions/exceptions<sup>8</sup>:** Girls could continue education if they are academically good performers, if parents could afford and were willing to cover their expenses, had relatives who could support them or if they could earn money by participating in income generating activities. Married adolescents could continue their education if their husbands would be willing and capable to support them. Otherwise, they would go through a divorce to continue education. Fathers were primary decision makers in adolescent's education and Mothers supported adolescent's education, in some cases even by accepting their children after divorce.

<sup>8</sup> Conditions/exceptions: mean what things would make it more or less acceptable for the subject to not abide by the norms

Table 6: Summary of conditions/exceptions related to education norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls could be allowed to continue their education if parents are convinced by either the strong academic standing of the girl or by influential people such as school teachers and other respected individuals in the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls continue their education if teachers and her peers convince their parents, change city, have their own income</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Married girls can only continue their education if the husband allows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can continue their education if their husbands are willing to educate them, get help with household and farm activity, if she gets a divorce</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can only continue their education if they have family endorsement or financial independence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can continue education if they get support from relatives, if their parents are educated, get away to fulfill their education material need</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can only continue their education if they convince fathers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can only continue their education if they convince fathers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>

### Girls education since Abdiboru project

Currently, the community perceived girl’s ability to excel in education as comparable or, according to few respondents, even better than boys. Observations from baseline parents indicated that parents used to belittle adolescent girls and accused them that the reason girls insisted on going to school was just to have the freedom to be with boys. But currently many community members seem to have understood the benefits of girls’ education.

Adolescent girl’s Fathers FGD participant (Arm 2) “Earlier *she* (an adolescent girl) *would face problem if she goes to town after completion of primary school to attend grade 9. They also used to say as if she would bring shame on their parents if sent to the nearby town to be educated. But now since Abdiboru project, the community has begun to understand everything; sending their daughters to school.*”

Educating parents and adolescent girls on the benefits of education through Abdiboru project was a facilitator for the change on community's attitude towards girls' education. Adolescent girl's discussion on future girl's aspiration, benefit of education, negative consequence of early marriage through VSLA groups and SAA group discussions on girl's education and delaying early marriage has built understanding of benefits of education in the community.

Unmarried adolescent girls (Arm 2) *"Since the initiation of Abdiboru project in our kebele, people would say girls are even better than boys on their education; and so, sent to school better than before."*

Guidance given by school teachers and health extension workers in the kebele on different forums such as community meetings have added to the community understanding about girls' education.

Adolescent girl's Fathers FGD participant (Arm 2) *"there have been some improvements (in girls' education). This is because advices are being provided within the school and there is also a health extension worker in the village and she provides awareness and some supports. They have been observing also the advantages of education and there is an improvement to some extent."*

In addition, the emerging of successful and popular women role models in the community are perceived as confirmations and a witness that girls can be successful through education.

Adolescent girl's Fathers FGD participant (Arm 2) *"Girls do not assist their parents in doing some works unless they also attend school. They even confront their parents more than the boys do...The girls would attend their school with minimal support. Therefore, currently those who support girls' education are more in number than those who do not want to educate them."*

Adolescent girl's husband (Arm 1) *"But since the beginning of Abdiboru project both the parents and the girls are becoming changed for good; and they would even advise and change*

*the minds of those who have no positive attitude towards the girls' education so that they would be able to develop positive attitude towards the girls' education."*

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#### Girl's Education: key take away

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Overall, there have been some improvement in girls' education compared to the baseline. Educating girls have become a commended practice by community better than observed at baseline. Parents who educated their daughters were respected and applauded. Although the norm of not educating girls seems to be slightly shifting to favor girls, there still remain various constraints in the context, on top of the list economic challenges, far location of secondary schools, security and stability problems. Poverty was primarily the reason found for girls low schooling compared to boys, as they are expected to work in IGAs and chores or get married and lessen burden on family. The findings were similar across arms, except slight differences observed in some parts of Arm 1 and Arm 3 where girl's education norm still resemble baseline. This could be due to parents' involvement in SAA in Arm 2 that made them more supportive of girls' education.

#### 4.6 Girls' Marriage

##### Marriage practice and girls' agency

Among marriage types practiced in the study area, currently intermediary facilitated *Jala dema* was the most commonly practiced one. In this type of marriage, the girl decides on her own to go with the boy and there is no or minimal parental engagement.

Married adolescent girl (Arm 1) *"The common marriage practices in this community is Jala dema. Both (boy and girl) agree and go away from the community then elders in the community negotiate with both families."*

WCA\_key informant (Arm 2) *"Practically we are observing 'Jala dema' marriage type performed dominantly in the last 15 years."*

In 'Jala Dema' marriage type, girls could decide on who, when and how to marry without much parental influence. However, this may not be always true when marriage intermediaries are engaged. On the other hand, fathers' and community elders' influence girls' marriage decision indirectly. A father would refuse his girl's formal engagement process if she goes out of parents' guidance and use it as a means to control her agency. In addition to this, elders would pressurize parents to give their girls for marriage at an early age through traditional influences and sanction parents if their girls marry through *Jala dema*, where girl's agency is demonstrated partially or fully.

A school teacher\_Key informant (Arm 1) *“There are elders who are respected in the community. They negotiate to allow father his daughter for marriage. They chew khat and then confirm their acceptance of the marriage”*.

Adolescent girl’s husband (Arm 2) *“... those heads of the village, (elders) along with leaders of idir<sup>9</sup> (locally known as Afosha), They call the father about her (adolescent girl) and say to him: ‘she is ours; she is this village’s girl; she belongs to the Afosha and hence we have the mandate to give her for marriage.”*

Adolescent girl’s husband (Arm 2) ; *‘If her father don’t let her marry willingly, he can refuse to declare the engagement (nikah in Muslim communities) to happen. Who is responsible for signing the contract witness if she is Christian? Here if her father refuses the engagement, the ceremonies will not happen.’*

The other marriage type practiced in the area is *Chebsa*. In this type of marriage, the parental decision and persuasion were high in the previous time. But currently the girl’s consent would be asked before parents decide to give their daughter for the proposed marriage.

As adolescent girl’s mother revealed (Arm 1) *“...Yes, she (adolescent girl) will be asked before decision; and if she tells to her parents ‘I am not interested in him’ and don’t chew/receive their Khat, she is not forced”*.

The other marriage practice that came out boldly in the end-line assessment, was polygamy, although not practiced by many. Though culturally and religiously not condemned in the study area, polygamy not much practiced because of the high and stable economic capacity that it requires.

Adolescent girls husband explained (Arm 2) *“It (polygamy) is not very common now in our area. Economy is mandatory in polygamy and at present time, there is no one capable of affording that due to the economy concerns.*

In contrary, in Arm 1 practice of polygamy was revealed as common but not involving adolescent girls.

Married adolescent girl (Arm 1) *“Yes polygamy is common; but adolescent girls do not participate. Usually widowed and divorced women are involved in polygamy.”*

According to the majority of the respondents, the ideal age of marriage for girls is 15 and above and for boys 20 and above. The common age for girls to marry is 13 to 14. Furthermore, it is possible for girls to marry after divorce. However, the dowry and the man they are marrying are not the same as the first marriage. Divorced women usually marry a man who either has another

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<sup>9</sup> Idir/Afosha is a community social support groups where most people are members and help each other especially in times of important life events such as funerals and weddings.

wife, widowed or divorced. Accordingly, girls could get married the second time, even after having given birth in the first marriage. They would usually give the child to their family or her ex-husband's family.

Key informant\_HEW (Arm 3) *“Yes, she has the chance to marry after divorcing; a divorced girl in this area for example shall get married even within a week after divorcing.”*

### **Role of intermediaries on girl's marriage**

Peers adolescent girls, community elders and relatives were among the identified marriage intermediaries/brokers. Peers were the dominant marriage facilitators revealed in this assessment. The role of intermediaries or “*delala*” as they are locally known, although observed during baseline, was found to have intensified in facilitating and influencing girls' marriage

Married adolescent girl (Arm 1) *“These (marriage) brokers are usually friends/peers of the boy or the girl.”*

Mother-in-law\_IDI (Arm 3) *“They are the peers whom the girls are learning with; both married and unmarried ones would engage on the marriage brokering”*

Intermediaries took advantage of the norm that labeled girls as a *used* and divorced woman if they spent overnight out of parents' home. They also discouraged adolescent girls not to go to the legislations, by telling them that whether they penalize the boy or not they are already ‘*a divorced woman*’ and they are the ones who would be left unmarried if suitor was put in jail.

Adolescent girl's husband (Arm 2) *“There is a norm which dictates coming back home after she already went to his house as shameful... So, to escape that, though she might be cheated on that day, she then speaks as if she made a choice to go intentionally because she has no other option but to be with him”*

Early marriage and girls' education norms overlapped in many ways. As the opportunities for secondary and higher education were limited, it was likely that it reduced interest to stay long in school. On top of that, marriage intermediaries targeted girls on the way to and from school. They used the economically disadvantaged girls and unemployed graduate students to convince adolescent girls for early marriage. Family's economic problem to support adolescent girls to high school was also the major reason for girls to decide to early marriage than continuing education. This was a similar finding with the baseline assessment.

### **Finding from Marriage Vignettes**

Below are depicted the SNAP analysis findings from these vignette-based discussions. The findings are presented to portray the social norms around girls' marriage in the community.

#### Marriage Vignettes



- i. The first vignette was targeted for unmarried adolescent girls and boys. It revolved around an adolescent girl story. She was advised by her peer cousin, who is about to be married, that she too must marry soon. But the girl refused to marry.
- ii. The second vignette was designed for married adolescent girls. It was about an adolescent girl who was under intense pressure by her mother and cousin to marry her off. But the adolescent decides not to marry at the age of 16.
- iii. The third vignette was for Fathers and Mothers of adolescent girls. It was a story about neighbors and an intermediary advising a mother to marry her younger adolescent girl for a man in the village. But the mother respected her adolescent girl’s decision not to marry at this age and rejected the marriage proposal.

**Empirical Expectations:** Most adolescent girls would accept a marriage proposal if they are interested in the suitor. Influence of their peers would also play the main role in their decision. Most mothers would be supportive of their daughter’s decision without the involvement of intermediaries.

Table 7: Summary of Empirical Expectations related to marriage norms: Baseline Vs End-line

Respondent	Baseline	End-line
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls would marry even at an early age not to disappoint their friends/peers, waste their chance and avoid the prospect of not finding another husband/a second chance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls refuse to marry at early age but few would get married not to disappoint their peers.</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls would marry in compliance to their peers’ advice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls would marry if they want to</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls would be highly influenced by their peers and rush into marriage either due to fear of peer sanctions or fear of losing the opportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls wouldn’t accept the marriage proposal</li> <li>• Girls would be influenced and get married (Boke)</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most mothers would enforce girls’ marriage proposal at the age of 15 (except Mesela)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most other mothers would support their daughter’s marriage proposal refusal, if that is her wish</li> </ul>
Fathers of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most mothers would accept a marriage proposal from <i>delala</i> (intermediaries) if their daughter is 15 years of age or more (except Boke)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most fathers advise their daughters’ to not get involved with intermediaries. (Boke and chiro)</li> </ul>

**Normative Expectations:** Adolescents are expected to get married based on their choice but few mentioned peers would expect them to get married when they are proposed to. Most mothers expected other mothers to support their daughter’s decision but few mothers reflected mothers would be expected not to waste their daughter’s chance.

Table 8: Summary of Normative Expectations related to marriage norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

Respondent	Baseline	End-line
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescent girls are expected to get married even if it requires them to stop going to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescent girls are expected to reject the marriage proposal and continue their education</li> <li>Adolescent girls are expected to get married by those peers who drop out of school</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are expected to get married by age 15 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are expected to get married but it’s based on their interest</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By age 15 years, adolescent girls are expected to accept the marriage proposal and get married.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescent girls are expected to reject marriage proposals</li> <li>Adolescent girls are expected to get married when they are proposed (Boke)</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers are expected to support/advise the daughter to accept a marriage if she is 15 years of age.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most mothers are expected to reject marriage proposal if they are less than 15 years old</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers are expected to marry their daughter off when there is a marriage proposal if the suitor is capable of taking care of the family.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers are expected to give their daughters hand in marriage</li> <li>Most mothers are expected to reject the marriage proposal and let their daughters to continue education (Boke and chiro)</li> </ul>

**Sanctions:** After getting awareness about the advantage of education the community wouldn’t put any sanction on girls who refuse marriage proposal but in some cases the girls would get insulted “*haftuu*” (meaning unmarriageable, unattractive), ignored and isolated by their peers. When parents get in to a quarrel with other parents, they could be insulted due to their unmarried daughter as though they failed in parenting.

Table 9: Summary of sanctions related to marriage norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

Respondent	Baseline	End-line
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a girl refused to marry, she would be considered lazy, foolish and useless; and would be insulted and disgrace her mother who could not persuade her to accept the marriage proposal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If girls reject marriage proposal she would be just left alone.</li> <li>In some cases, she would be labeled as <i>haftuu</i>.</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most girls would be physically or verbally insulted if they refuse to marry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls wouldn't be insulted if they are in school but if they drop out of school, they would be insulted <i>haftuu</i></li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a girl refused marriage proposal, she could be forced into marriage by abduction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If girls refuse marriage proposal, there is no sanction nowadays.</li> <li>If a girl refused marriage proposal, she could be ignored and isolated by her peers in some cases abducted (Boke)</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers will be blamed or disgraced by friends, neighbors and community for not convincing their daughters to marry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers wouldn't be blamed or disgraced by the community, and friends support her for standing by her daughters' side.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers would be blamed for not convincing their daughters, for not conforming to the marriage norms and culture of the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers in some areas would be blamed for wasting daughters' chance.</li> </ul>

**Sensitivity to sanctions:** Boys and girls perceived some girls would change their decision of rejecting the marriage and consider marriage due to the pressure and insult of peers. They accept the marriage proposal even if the suitor is older and divorced. Other girls would not change their minds if they have interest to continue education. Most parents indicated other parents would not be affected by sanctions much so would not change their mind.

Table 10: Summary of sensitivity to sanctions related marriage norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

Respondent	Baseline	End-line
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most girls abandon their marriage refusal idea and get married due to prolonged insult, isolation or defame (Except Doba)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most girls would not change their mind and get married but some might due to the insult of their peers.</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most girls would be psychologically hurt from the criticism and insults from friends/peers and thus could change her decision and accept to marry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most girls would marry older and divorced men due to fear of the insult.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustained pressure from peers force the girl to abandon her refusal and get married.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to pressure of peers she changes her mind and get married (Boke)</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mothers of adolescent girls would regret their decision to refuse and allow the marriage to proceed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No effect</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers would stop supporting their daughters' refusal to early marriage when the insults continue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers sometimes would change their mind persuades her daughter to get married.</li> </ul>

**Conditions/exceptions:** Most girls would be expected to reject marriage proposals when they are good performing students, if they are not interested in the suitor, under the age of 15, have successful siblings especially sister and get support from teachers and kebele leaders and are able to fulfill their education materials.

Table 11: Summary of conditions/exceptions related to marriage norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

Respondent	Baseline	End-line
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can refuse marriage proposal if they are strong to continue their education and if they could mobilize support from school to convince their parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A girl can refuse marriage if she is under age, stayed in school, have siblings who are learning, if her parents reject the proposal and have educated family.</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can refuse marriage if they try to convince their family through their teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can refuse marriage if they are under the age of 16, if she has successful sister and if her parents are wealthy.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can continue their education after contesting the marriage proposal if she is talented and has great interest for education or if she changes her place of residence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can refuse marriage proposal if she is not interested in the suitor, if she is a student and inform the case to school and kebele leaders.</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can refuse the marriage and continue their education if they don't like the person who proposed the marriage; mothers are strong enough to stand sustained insults; teachers intervene; or the boy is much older than the girl.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can refuse the marriage if she is under the age of 15, have no interest to get married and aim to continue her education.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescent girls can refuse marriage and continue their education if she does not like the person who proposed; girls' family is supportive; and the boy is much older than the girl.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can refuse if they are under the age of 15, if her parents fulfill her education material and get her peers support to continue education.</li> </ul>

### Girls marriage since Abdiboru project

Currently, sanctioning adolescent girls for delaying marriage had reduced and insulting them as 'Haftuu' have become milder.

Married adolescent girl (Arm 2) *"It (Abdiboru project) has brought some improvements. Before its implementation, people did not know... people had no awareness and were practicing the known norms. But since Abdiboru implementation, people have started practicing with knowledge rather than doing from self-derived interests only. It brought a change. And you know in the past, they had been marrying at the age of 15/16 years; but since then, marriage have been taking place at the age of 18, 20 years old."*

The Abdiboru project awareness creation and advises from schools and health extension workers are the reasons mentioned for the changes observed regarding girls' marriage. Staying long in school delays early marriage. For girls to stay long in the school, it needs economical and moral support for the community at large.

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### Girl's marriage: key take away

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Marriage practices appeared similar across Arms. Jala dema—"eloping couple" marriage type was still dominant as in the baseline. Norms around girl's marriage indicate a positive shift where girls are not so strongly expected to marry young these days. The expectations to marry early have weakened and although some sanctions still linger, girls were not as sensitive to them as observed at baseline. However, influential community members desire to control the marriage decision making through pressurizing parents and marriage brokers intensified influence to persuade girls to marriage were major constraints to tackle early marriage in the area in addition to economic challenges that drive girls and parents to the decision of marriage.

Adolescent girl's Fathers\_ non-beneficiary FGD (Arm 2) *"The reason for the girl to continue with her stand on refusing the marriage is that the community has well understood the negative impact of early marriage of the girls."*

Economic empowerment may solve the problems of those girls who got involved in early marriage because of economic problems.

#### **4.7 Girls' Sexual and Reproductive Health: Premarital sex and contraceptive use**

In all the study areas the participants mentioned, premarital sex was not commonly practiced among both girls and boys in the community. Nevertheless, as compared to boys the community strongly forbade premarital sex for girls.

Married adolescent girls (Arm 1) *"It (premarital sex for girls) is considered as a great shame... it matters most towards girls; it will not pose that much matter for boys; it is considered to be more critical for girls."*

Adolescent girl's Fathers FGD (Arm 1) *"This is new in the context of our kebele. Because premarital sex for female would not be told openly and that it is secret. Moreover, we do not usually encounter such issues except among those who have already got married. No premarital sex would be talked about in the community.'*

Contraceptive use for unmarried adolescent girls was implausible thing in the study area. However, if a girl once engaged in premarital sex, community preferred she uses contraceptives than having unwanted pregnancy. Supporting family planning for unmarried girls was the last acceptable option for parents, if their daughter got engaged in premarital sex. The possibilities community approved of contraceptive use is if girls are married, and already have children.

Adolescent girl's Fathers FGD participant (Arm 2) *"If the parents know such things, they would not allow her to use contraception. Most parents would say she should not use contraception i.e. they do not allow".*

According to the community members, unlike the previous time slight changes were observed. Presently, married couples were allowed to use family planning immediately after their first birth.

Adolescent girl's husband (Arm 2) *"After marriage, they start using it (contraceptive) just immediately after giving a birth. After they have started using the method, they were able to assure the short pregnancy spacing and able to avoid occurrence of unintended pregnancies. And currently there are no such cases (unintended pregnancy) being happening...these girls also knew themselves many things; they knew it well."*

### **Finding from SRH Vignettes**

In this end-line assessment, vignettes were additionally designed for SRH norms around girls' sexual debut and contraception norms. Even though vignette-based comparisons will not be possible with baseline, it was found useful to understand the norms around the area better. Using the SNAP analysis framework, the findings from these vignette-based discussions are outlined below.

#### **SRH vignettes**

- i. The first vignette was targeted for unmarried girls and boys. It was about a 15-year-old girl who plans to marry the boy she was currently in a relationship with. When the couple decided to start sexual engagement, she wanted to use contraceptives and went to A health post. At the doorstep she is met by her mother.
- ii. The second vignette was about a newlywed couple whose parents were eager to have grandchildren. The girl 14 and a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student. She wanted to delay pregnancy as she was not ready and wanted to continue school. She started using contraceptives and her parents and in-laws find out about this.
- iii. The third vignette was for Fathers and Mothers of adolescent girls. It was a story about a girl who wanted to use contraceptives after deciding to have sexual engagement with her boyfriend. When she went to Health post for the service, she meets her mother and other women at the doorstep

**Empirical Expectations:** According to the respondents, neither engaging in premarital sex nor contraceptive use would be allowed for unmarried adolescent girls. Contraception would be common among married girls only after they have given birth to their first child. According to boy respondents’ unmarried girls would not have the awareness to use contraceptives but married girls would use contraceptives secretly.

Table 12: Summary of Empirical Expectations related to girls SRH: End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Contraceptive use EE</b>	<b>Premarital sex EE</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unmarried girls wouldn’t use contraceptives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls won’t engage in premarital sex; It is considered as a taboo</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls do not prefer to use contraceptives before their first child. In some cases, they might use secretly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls won’t engage in premarital sex; It is considered as a taboo</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls do not use contraceptives as they have no awareness about it.</li> <li>• Utilization of contraceptives is not common for unmarried girls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls do not involve in premarital sex as it is considered a sinful act</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls might use contraceptives hiding from their parents and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premarital sex is not allowed for girls</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls would use contraception to avoid unwanted pregnancy before marriage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls would ask their parents to marry them with the man they are interested with than performing Premarital sex, as it is against the norm and the sharia rules as well.</li> </ul>

**Normative Expectations:** Community would not expect girls to engage in premarital sex at all. If girls got engaged in premarital sex, they would be expected to marry the man they had sexual intercourse with. In some cases, girls would be considered to have STDs if it was found out that they were engaging in premarital sex.



Table 13: Summary of Normative Expectations related to girls SRH: End-line

Respondent	Contraceptive use EE	Premarital sex NE
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are not expected to use contraceptives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are not expected to engage in premarital sex</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are expected to give birth rather than using contraceptives before their first pregnancy/birth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community doesn't expect girls to engage in premarital sex</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>girls are not expected to use contraceptives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are not expected to engage in premarital sex as girls would be susceptible for STDs</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unmarried girls are not expected to use contraceptives as it is considered a very shameful act.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are expected to marry the person they have committed premarital sex with.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community least expects unmarried girls to use contraceptives even if they are in an expected situation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are expected to marry the man they had sexual intercourse with</li> </ul>

**Sanctions:** Girls' contraceptive utilization before marriage would be linked with prostitution. Community would insult girls for engaging in premarital sex as well as using contraceptives before marriage as *prostitutes* and *ill-mannered women*. Community would also gossip behind the girl's and her families back, calling her "*Korofe*" meaning a girl who has lost her virginity. Mothers would insult and corporally punish their daughters as they would be disgraced for raising such daughters. In severe cases, they might kick their daughter out of the house or force her to marry the man she was caught with. If a girl was married and not giving birth using contraceptives, her husband's parents might question her fertility and force him to get a divorce.

Table 14: Summary of sanctions related to girls' SRH: End-line

Respondent	Contraceptive use sanctions	Premarital sex sanctions
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers and other family members may beat girls for using contraceptives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls might not be allowed to go to school after wards</li> <li>Girls would be insulted, physically punished and forced to marry the man</li> <li>Community will gossip behind the girl's and family's back,</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community would insist married girls not to use contraceptives as it is perceived to cause infertility</li> <li>If a girl is married and not giving birth using contraceptives, her husband's parents may question her fertility and force him to get a divorce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community will gossip behind her back; she is considered as a rude girl.</li> <li>Parents may tell her to leave their house.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She would be isolated and called <i>prostitute</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People would insult her as <i>prostitute</i>.</li> <li>Her parents would also be insulted as a result she would be rejected from her family.</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using contraceptives to perform premarital sex is considered as prostitution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers will be insulted for raising an ill-mannered girl.</li> <li>Most mothers will insult and corporally punish their daughters.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using contraceptives is rude girls' behavior.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Premarital sex is not something to put in to consideration at all.</li> </ul>

**Sensitivity to sanctions:** Due to the insults and punishments, girls would tend to stop using contraceptives before their first child. The pressure from different reactions of the community around them would make girls either consider marriage or flee from their village.

Table 15: Summary of sensitivity to sanctions related to girls' SRH: End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Contraceptive use sensitivity to sanctions</b>	<b>Premarital sex sensitivity to sanctions</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a result of discrimination and insult from the community, girls might stop using contraceptives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls would be humiliated and ashamed, as a result they will decide to marry the man</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls would change their plan of using contraceptives in fear of the insult</li> <li>Girls might decide to give birth to their first child and consider using contraceptives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The insults will cause emotional and psychological effect on her.</li> <li>She would refrain from engaging in premarital sex as a result of humiliation</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls will tend to change their plans in fear of community's attitude.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a girl got pregnant, she would be forced to abort the baby</li> <li>Girls would feel ashamed and regret for disgracing their family</li> <li>Girls will decide to marry the man</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls might run away as a result of mother's corporal punishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothers will make their daughters flee in fear of the sanctions</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pressure from different reactions of the community around them would make girls either consider marriage or flee from their village</li> </ul>

**Conditions/exceptions:** There would be no conditions for premarital sex to be allowed in the community. Girls would be allowed to use contraception if they were married and have already had their first child. Being perceived by many as physically too small/immature to bear a child, being good at their studies and having educated parents might be some other conditions. In some cases, their husbands and mother in-law's permission matter the most. There were father respondents who put having many children as a prerequisite to use contraceptives as it is perceived to cause infertility once started.

Table 16: Summary of conditions/exceptions related to girls SRH: End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Contraceptive use conditions</b>	<b>Premarital sex conditions</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraception before their first child if the couple agree to use contraceptives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No circumstances or no acceptable condition for premarital sex for girls</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraceptives if a girl has already given birth to her first baby.</li> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraceptives if they are too small.</li> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraceptives If they are good at their studies.</li> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraceptives if they have educated parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No circumstances or no acceptable condition for premarital sex for girls</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraceptives if they are married only.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No circumstances or no acceptable condition for premarital sex for girls</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mostly it is not acceptable at all.</li> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraceptives if they already have given birth to their first baby.</li> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraceptives If their husbands and mother in laws permit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No circumstances or no acceptable condition for premarital sex for girls</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraceptives if they are married only.</li> <li>Girls are allowed to use contraceptives if they are married and have many children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No circumstances or no acceptable condition for premarital sex for girls</li> </ul>

#### 4.8 Girls' household food allocation

##### Household food allocation and girls' agency

Husbands/fathers were the primary decision makers on the amount of food items that should be produced, stored and sold in a household. Such discussions among family members were rare on household food items decision making. Couples may discuss on the issue but final decisions would be made by the husband. On the other hand, women decided on small purchases and what would be purchased for daily consumptions.

Adolescent girl's mother (Arm 1) *“Very few (couples) make decisions after having discussions; and then by the money obtained after selling some of their products, a husband will have the mandate to buy a domestic animal as a substitute.”*

Almost universally across the arms, women and girls were expected to prepare food and both sometimes children could support their mothers during food preparation.

Adolescent girl's husband (Arm 2) *“Preparing food is the responsibility of wife. Supporting each other is something expected unfortunately, this experience doesn't exist in our area. It is not the role of husband to prepare food; they know this way. All what they experienced about preparing and presenting food is the responsibility of wives.”*

Unlike the previous findings at baseline, girls can eat what is available in the household equally as their boy counterparts without restriction. According to the participants, gender-based allocation food order, amount and quality is a fading practice. If they are at home, every one eats together what is available. Commonly, male household members were favored with bigger portions, best quality and were served first. However, during the end-line assessment, it was observed that, few participants reported male household members were still favored to eat first and larger portions.

Adolescent girl's husband (Arm 1) *“All would eat together without any discrimination. Earlier the males would eat the best food, now not so much.”*

Mother in law\_IDI (Arm 1) *“Yes, a husband eats first. But if the husband is staying at home; they both eat together at the same time.”*

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 3) *“They would reserve their share first and would eat their own share. They do not necessarily wait for them.”*

The practice seems to loosely follow the tradition of fathers eating first, but it was not a strongly held norm followed by all. There were also rooms for exceptions, for example for women during pregnancy.

Adolescent girl's husband (Arm 1) *“She (wife) can get priority if she is pregnant. She is allowed to eat before her husband...”*

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 2) *“Father commonly eats first but all families can eat together too. Just it is for the respect that food will be given for the father first. Next mother eats. She deserves respect also. The mother prepares food and she give for father, then she eats with her children. There are exceptions for pregnant women, ill family members, and physically weak women who need special food.”*

In past times, there were certain food types, such as pepper, that were taboo for girls. The community believed that the girls engaged in premarital sex if they consume the mentioned foods. On the other hand, no food taboo for boys. However, those things had improved in present days.

Adolescent girl husband (Arm 2) *“If she (adolescent girls) eat pepper, there was a belief that she might perform some sexually ‘wrong’ practices. Not many believe like this anymore.”*

### **Finding from Nutrition Vignettes**

Based on the SNAP framework, findings from the vignette-based discussions are presented below. The findings are presented to portray the social norms around girls’ Household food allocation in the community.

#### **II. Nutrition vignettes**

- i. The first vignette, which was targeted for unmarried adolescent boys and unmarried adolescent girls, was about adolescent girls who prepare food for their parents and want to eat before them because they were hungry. Finally, their parents came into the house and saw them while they were eating before them.
- ii. The second vignette was intended for married adolescent girls. It was about married adolescent who prepare food and wants to eat before her husband because she is hungry. Finally, she decides to eat. While she was eating, her husband and his family came to home and see her.
- iii. The third vignette was for fathers and mothers of adolescent girls. It was a story about a mother and adolescent daughter prepare food for the family and want to eat before the male member of the family because they were hungry. Finally, the mother decides to eat. While they were eating, the male family members came back home and saw them.

**Empirical Expectations:** According to majority of the respondents, girls or women would not wait for their parents or husbands to eat if they are away. But fathers of the area indicated that women might serve their children but would wait for their husbands to arrive to eat for themselves. Women mostly keep their husband’s share and eat or wait while having only small portion.

Table 17: Summary of Empirical Expectations related to nutrition norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

Respondent	Baseline	End-line
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Females/women are not supposed to eat before males/men</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most girls/women can eat before their parents/men leaving out their shares. In some cases, they (girls) wait their parents/husbands having snacks</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Females do not eat before males as per the community culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls/wives wait their husbands to come home and eat together or take him food at his farming field.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls/women are not supposed to eat before males/men, even if they are hungry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls will keep meals for other family members and eat their share. There is a saying in the Oromo culture <i>“one might be certain about going somewhere but it is uncertain when he would be back”</i></li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women do not eat before serving their husbands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most women would eat their share till their husbands arrive in some cases, they will wait for them having snacks.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women do not eat before men as per the community norm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women serve their children but wait for their husbands to arrive to eat for themselves.</li> </ul>

**Normative Expectations:** Community members would expect husband and wife to have meals together. In situations where male partners are away girls/wives would be expected to eat and serve their children too.

Table 18: Summary of Normative Expectations related to nutrition norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most females think others expect them to eat after the male members of the family.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most others would expect girls to eat before their parents if they are away.</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most husbands expect their wives to serve them food first.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most husbands and mothers expect girls to have a meal with their husbands.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most parents expect females to prepare food and serve their husband before eating themselves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most families do not expect girls to wait for them especially when they are hungry.</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most husbands would expect males eat before females.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most Husbands expect their wives to eat and serve their children before them if they are not around but female should feed male first if both are at home.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most husbands expect their wives to eat after them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most husbands expect their wives to eat before them if they are not at home.</li> </ul>

**Sanctions:** No serious sanctions were reported for eating before men. Eating before husband or parents, in the context, was generally linked to selfishness of the girl/wife. Husbands also get disappointed and consider it as lack of respect. Girls might be expected to eat before their husbands/parents if the men are away but eating before serving them while they are at home is not appreciated.



Table 19: Summary of sanctions related to nutrition norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

Respondent	Baseline	End-line
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women/girls who do not respect the food culture could be physically or verbally insulted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No sanctions but people might insult her for eating before her parents.</li> <li>People would call her “<i>Intala warra dura faxartu</i>” meaning “<i>a girl who eat before parent</i>”</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most husbands would insult or disgrace wives who eat before them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In some places, girls are allowed to eat and there won’t be any sanction. While in few places girls could be insulted, as a result of their husband’s disappointment.</li> <li>People might just say “<i>Kan jaarsaa dura faxartuu</i>” meaning “a wife who eat before her husband”</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls/wives who eat before males would be blamed, insulted, considered as selfish, not worthy, stealers and norm breakers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no sanction for eating before their parents/husbands. Even in some places they will encourage them to eat before them. But there will be problem if they did not save their share.</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most husbands would blame and consider their wives as individuals with no shame, respect and non-caring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most husbands consider it as betrayal and start to doubt their wife’s loyalty.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most women who eat before men would be blamed by family, neighbors, friends and husbands for not respecting the norm and would be considered as women with no respect and discipline, and ignorant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most fathers would encourage their wives and children to eat before them if they are away but eating before them while they are at home is not considered good manners.</li> </ul>

**Sensitivity to sanctions:** Some girls may feel bad and ashamed and regret not awaiting the men family members to eat, but unlike previous times, sensitivity to sanctions have diminished along with the actual loosening of the sanctions.

Table 20: Summary of sensitivity to sanctions related to nutrition norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls would not eat before male members due to fear of insult.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls will feel ashamed and regret. They will not eat before male family members in the future.</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls would try to harm themselves or flee from home due to severe insults.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls will feel ashamed, they would decide not to eat before their husbands even if they are hungry afterwards.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most girls would not consider eating before males</li> <li>• Most girls may flee from home as they feel sad and ashamed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls might not like their brother's insult, so wait to eat next time.</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority reported that most women would decide not to eat before men as they are worried about the insults from husbands and neighbors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If her husband insults her, she wouldn't eat alone again.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Most women would feel ashamed and embarrassed when they hear about their food habits from other people and thus would decide not to eat before males.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Most women would refrain from eating as a result of the quarrel.</b></li> </ul>

**Conditions/exceptions:** Although girls/ women are not really forbidden to eat anytime, they would be expected to eat before their husbands if they are pregnant, breast feeding, sick or elderly. In conditions where fathers/husbands are chewing Khat or away from home they would be allowed to eat before their husbands/parents as well. According to unmarried boys, Girls/women would also be acceptable to eat before their husbands if they are traveling early in the morning, if leaving for work or school.

Table 21: Summary of conditions/exceptions related to nutrition norms: Baseline Vs. End-line

Respondent	Baseline	End-line
Unmarried adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls/women can eat before men if male members are known to be very late. Girls/ women can eat before men if they keep a good portion for him.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls/women can eat before men if they are hungry, going to school, sick, pregnant or if parents/husbands are away.</li> </ul>
Married adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can eat before males if the husband gives her permission or if he has gone to remote place.</li> <li>Situations such as pregnancy, child birth and illness may enable girls to eat before.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls/women are allowed to eat before their husbands If husbands are arriving late or girls are hungry, pregnant, sick or breast feeding.</li> </ul>
Unmarried adolescent boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can eat first only when they get permission from parents or told not to wait.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls/women are allowed to eat before their husbands If they are traveling early in the morning, if leaving for work or school.</li> </ul>
Mother of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls can eat before males if they go to school, or ill, pregnant or breastfeeding.</li> <li>Females can eat before males when the husband declared that he is coming home late or if he is not coming home.</li> <li>If a special food is prepared separately for the husband, then girls can eat before males.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children, elderly and pregnant women are excused to eat especially when they are hungry.</li> </ul>
Father of adolescent girl/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>females can eat before males in situations such as pregnancy, illness or breast feeding; or if the husband is known to come home late</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Girls/women are allowed to eat before their husbands if fathers/husbands are away and are staying late, if husbands are in khat chewing ceremony.</b></li> <li><b>If there is a woman who has given birth recently, she will also be excused to eat.</b></li> </ul>

### **Girls household food allocation since Abdiboru project**

At present time, there is no strong expectation on women and adolescent girls to wait for their husbands before having meal. They can eat any time if they get hungry and no sanction for that.

Adolescent girl's Fathers FGD participant (Arm 2) *"Earlier, no woman eats before her husband and his brothers but currently everyone eats before males if got hungry. The fact that the community is becoming changed in attitude because of education has brought this change. This is widely the common practice in the community as a whole."*

Abdiboru is one of the contributors mentioned by the participant for the current change. One of the discussion modules components for both the girls (VSLA) and adults (SAA) group is nutrition component which gave awareness on importance of food variety.

Adolescent girl's Fathers FGD participant (Arm 2) *"Since the initiation of this project, no one waits for the other but eats their share."*

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### **Girl's household food allocation: key take away**

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Male favoring household food allocation norms seem fading than at baseline. Women wait for their husbands to eat together out of respect and there are no real sanctions in place for eating before men. As food availability and quality is more or less the same for most households, no order or distinction in portion and type served was also observed. Food taboos that restricted girls from consuming certain foods such as animal parts and spices were not observed in the end-line as they were at baseline.

### **4.9 Beneficiaries' and other stakeholders' perception about the Abdiboru interventions**

Village saving and loan association (VSLA) and social analysis and action (SAA) were the most identified interventions by the community. The community perceived VSLA as the best intervention. to teach girls saving. The girls testified to covering their educational expense due to VSLA than waiting for their parents unlike in the previous times before Abdiboru VSLA intervention was introduced. They also reported learning the importance of delaying marriage and other sexual reproductive related issues such as early child birth complications and STIs. Life skill interventions were not identified much by the community, although girls revealed to feeling more confident to speak up their thoughts than they did before engaging in Abdiboru.

CARE\_KII “Abdiboru project has been educating to encourage the girls on saving plus to aware them not to get married at their early age. Among the intervention packages of Abdiboru, VSLA is the most popular intervention by the community.”

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 2) “I know about saving and loan program of adolescent girls (VSLA). Mothers and fathers also established groups (SAA). They have a saving program. Our group (VSLA) was guided by one teacher. But she was transferred to another school and then another teacher substituted her. Now we meet each other by ourselves no one comes to assist us.”

### Acceptability<sup>10</sup>

VSLA was the well-known and well accepted intervention in the community. Girls appreciated their involvement in saving activities and the discussion topics in their groups. Adolescent girls who participated in Abdiboru interventions were perceived top rankers and confident than girls who did not participate in the project.

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 2) “...Currently girls are top rankers. There is no fear, we have confidence to talk in front of others because of participation in this project. ‘The teachings of the project are well accepted by the community. For instance, the community supports our saving; and the teachers also encourage us on our saving so that it would not be interrupted. They all advise us to enhance our saving.’”

Girls were happy and benefited because the intervention kept them active in their education. Unlike beginning of intervention times, they were not often absent from their schools as they did not want to miss their saving meetings. This indicates stronger acceptability of intervention which led to improving the girls’ lives through the saving as well as discussion platform.

Unmarried Adolescent girl (Arm 1) “My engagement in Abdiboru project helped me to be active on my education that I would not be absent from the school because if I get absent from saving meetings I will be penalized and will be kicked out of the VSLA group. There is nothing that I do not like here (in Abdiboru project).”

Girl’s group members also felt shy and feared to openly discuss on SRH issues. even though they became a lot less scared to discuss as time went by. Family planning and premarital sexual practice related topics were not well accepted by most of the community members, especially in the beginning. It was perceived girls would engage in premarital sex if they are exposed to such information early. Some community members and some parents were reportedly unhappy about the SRH interventions. This reservation was reflected similarly during the baseline and in both intervention arms.

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 1) “Uneducated people do not accept family planning and premarital sexual practice. Parents don’t like the manual which talks about reproductive

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<sup>10</sup> Acceptability of the interventions were measured in this assessment as how well the interventions were received by the target population and the extent to which its components might meet the needs of the target population. To measure acceptability of the interventions by the target population, selected qualitative questions were used with the necessary probing.

*health when we read it. They believe that if adolescent girls read and know the concept, they will practice [sex] early. The other components of the project are accepted very well.”*

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 2) *“At first, it was seen as shame when we talk about sexual and reproductive health issues. Many families hate this topic. But most parents have started to not say anything now when we talk in front of them.”*

The SAA intervention was also well accepted by the community as it gave people a platform to come together and solve their community problems.

Adolescent girl’s Fathers FGD\_SAA member (Arm 2) *“The main thing that makes us happy is; coming together in a group. This itself is important because to discuss and solve any problem, first coming together as one is a benefit.”*

The CSC intervention was the less acknowledged intervention component by the community, compared with the VSLA and the SAA. During end-line, although it was not particularly rejected by community, its delivery in low dose have dimmed its recognition and acceptability, coupled with the socio-political instability and power struggles that lurked in the areas.

CARE project staff: *“But when we come to CSC it is a new concept on one hand and at the same time emphasis hadn’t been given in the beginning how it could play in unexpected circumstances. It (CSC) did not work as much (as the others).”*

Table 22: Acceptability-summary of comparison between process evaluation and end-line findings

Lite qual 1	Lite qual 2	End-line
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People were suspicious about the actual motive of the project and rumors were spread such as ‘the government is recruiting the young girls for military purpose’,</li> <li>• VSLA concept and kit were liked much by girls</li> <li>• Loan and interest concept were not acceptable as it was mostly Muslim community</li> <li>• Girls liked the opportunity of having group gathering with friends</li> <li>• SRH concepts like family planning were not liked by community</li> <li>• SAA was liked by most people</li> <li>• Perdiem payments were expected for engaging in meetings</li> <li>• Government offices were happy to provide seconded staff with woreda offices (good acceptability)</li> <li>• There was reservation on CSC as officials suspected they were being evaluated in the CSC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls actively engage in the saving activities and highly value the opportunity of buying some school materials by themselves</li> <li>• Community and government officials appreciated intervening on young girls</li> <li>• Community reflected engaging very young adolescents on sexual related issues was regarded as against the social and religious norms in the area</li> <li>• SAA was positively recognized for working with community to tackle harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and female genital mutilation. Non-SAA community members has also expressed their interest to be included in the project</li> <li>• The intervention helped the involved sector offices to identify the gaps, address issues raised by the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSLA was the well-known and well accepted intervention in the community</li> <li>• Girls were happy and benefited because the intervention kept them active in their education</li> <li>• Some components SRH interventions, such as contraception for girls, still were not accepted but better than before</li> <li>• The SAA intervention was also well accepted by the community as it gave people a platform to come together and solve their community problems</li> <li>• CSC intervention was the less acknowledged intervention component, as it was not fully implemented</li> </ul>

### Intensity<sup>11</sup>

In VSLA girls' groups, the girls met regularly on a weekly basis in the school compound at lunch or break time. Some groups conducted the discussion during break time and the saving at lunch time. According to the girls' groups, they met for about one and half hour each time; 15 minutes for discussion and about 45 minutes for saving. Sitting in circle, taking attendance, saving and listening to the discussion model while the group leader read the discussion manual were the main activities they conducted during each meeting.

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 1) *"Our group and saving are conducted once a week and during recess time discussing then during the lunch break, we also come together for saving."*

Married adolescent girl (Arm 2) *"Our regular meeting day is Wednesday. We start our meeting at three o'clock and would complete it at four. This is constant every pair week."*

However, some of the VSLA groups reported that they had stopped discussions since the group leaders were promoted to high school and no one was able to read the modules on their behalf. On the other hand, girls reported group some members dropped out due to marriage. Economic problems were also mentioned as a reason before the project provided chicken for members who were not able to come up with the contribution money for saving. Which was not part of the original design but based on the learning from the monitoring CARE mobilized resources and gave some inputs for the very poor girls who dropped group discussion as a result of inability to save money in VSLA group.

Unmarried adolescent girls\_VSLA girls FGD (Arm 1) *"Initially there was lack of money for saving, but in between CARE gave us chicken and money support."*

The girls also witnessed they got support from the community facilitators at least every two months. Some girls also reported that they got support from school teachers. They also mentioned that support from the SAA groups were rare.

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 1) *"Those people assigned from the project come every two months and advised us about saving and that we should continue."*

Married adolescent girls (Arm 2) *"The follow up and supervision from CARE is going well now, it would be best if it could continue and improve more for the future."*

The SAA groups met every month for discussion and every week for saving. One meeting could last from one to one and half hours. The main discussion points were personal and environmental hygiene, early marriage and adolescent education and gender equality and sharing household tasks equally for males and females. Unless due to interruptions by security and socio-political

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<sup>11</sup>Intensity was determined by how vigorous/frequent the interventions were in terms of quality and quantity (Dose and exposure) in a given period of time.



instability issues and drought, SAA discussions were running well and community members were actively engaged in the discussions.

Table 23: Intensity-summary of comparison between process evaluation and end-line findings

<b>Lite qual 1</b>	<b>Lite qual 2</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls met weekly, as per the recommended standard. SAA groups met monthly in the previous time and then after met weekly to compensate some wasted time as a result of multiple interruption and saving.</li> <li>• There were some challenges faced to harmoniously undertake the meetings in the past two months due to conflicts regarding political issues</li> <li>• Too much work load on community facilitators and insufficient resource that influenced the intensive implementation of the interventions.</li> <li>• While the girl’s groups were formed and VSLA activities were strongly operational, the rest of components (SRH and Life skill) trainings were still under preparation and have not progressed much</li> <li>• CARE spent much time advising and settling in-group arguments specially in VSLA.</li> <li>• CSC: officials were not often attending the regular meetings due to their positions as woreda cabinets and therefore assume multiple duties and responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most VSLA groups met regularly, some groups were not able to meet at the stipulated intensity due to school dropout, marriage, inability to save money, and conflict within the group members</li> <li>• Insufficient number of CFs to keep intensity of interventions</li> <li>• Migration of the VSLA members during drought, low economic status of the girls to save money, security problems, government officials/staff reshuffling and girls school dropout due to khat trading (economic reason) were intensity challenges.</li> <li>• During the social unrest, groups were not able to attend their regular meetings but after the reform, SAA groups have been continuously meeting CSC meetings were untimely and happened only few times, due to unrealistic plans, security and unavailability of government officials</li> <li>• Youth revolutionary groups who rose in the reform process have continued to interfere in government and all other local activities, which impacted the intervention implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intensity of individual level interventions (SRH, Nutrition, VSLA, life skill) groups discussions were mostly going well.</li> <li>• Additional support (e.g. chicken) and effort were helpful in intensifying the interventions by decreasing group members absenteeism.</li> <li>• SAA groups met more regularly to discuss, unless interrupted by security issues</li> </ul>

### Conformity to design<sup>12</sup>

The girl's groups, in both arms, revealed that they had their regular meeting in a weekly basis for saving and discussion. Most of the groups, regularly save 10-25 birr per week. The discussion topics mentioned by most of the girls' groups were, girls' education, nutrition, early marriage, and its consequences and family planning and its utilization. Some of the girls' groups mentioned they had different meeting time for saving and discussion. According to the majority of respondents, groups teamed up on September during the school opening time and shared out their money on June when schools closed.

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 1) *"We do not have a written plan but we conduct our activities by discussing together. When we meet once in a week there are members who save 10, 15, 20, and 25 birrs. We also discuss on the manual when we meet once every week, take the attendance and then penalize a member who is absent. We also advise each other. We conduct our activities as instructed on the Abdiboru manual. Our teachers, mothers and fathers, CARE people, health extension workers, and agricultural extension workers would also support our group. There is no much challenge that we faced in the process of our saving and our discussion. We have even solved the problem of the aforementioned material soon."*

The SAA groups revealed that they met once in a month regularly and discuss on early marriage, gender equality, sharing tasks in the household equally among male and female family members.

Adolescent girl's Mothers FGD\_SAA members (Arm 1) *"Our groups discuss on early marriage, gender equality, sharing tasks in the home equally for males and females."*

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<sup>12</sup> Conformity to protocol meant How strictly the project interventions were implemented as per the project implementation plan.

Table 24: Conformity to design-summary of comparison between process evaluation and end-line findings

<b>Lite qual 1</b>	<b>Lite qual 2</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intervention tools and materials, implementation guidelines were developed as per the protocol.</li> <li>• Life skills guideline was at draft stage and SRHN guideline was not yet prepared; which were planned to be delivered at the same time with VSLA</li> <li>• More married and out of school girls (about 70%) were targeted for intervention but when group formation started, number of out of school adolescents was much less while the in-school girls were much more than expected.</li> <li>• SAA core groups were formed modifying the SAA strategy, for better implementation</li> <li>• CSC started much later than the other two interventions.</li> <li>• Implementers revealed that CSC has been initiated at just one kebele</li> <li>• Resources constraint such as time, monetary, human and transportation, political, cultural and very young adolescent girl target was reported as main challenges to strictly follow protocol.</li> <li>• The assumptions made at the design phase were not feasible for implementation and needed revisiting to make them suitable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls participated in group activities, conduct meetings and perform savings according to the manuals</li> <li>• Girls spend most of their meeting time focusing on the saving component of the project than discussing on issues related with SRHN and Life skills.</li> <li>• Timing of implementation on some activities like SRHN and life skill were delayed. They were given on rotation bases, because of adolescent girls young age.</li> <li>• CSC implementation has not been strictly following the steps due to high work load in government offices, lack of transportation, expectation of incentives, topography and budget constraints</li> <li>• That SAA groups might not be visited on regular basis but sometimes CFs arrange sessions in which best performing groups share experiences for the other groups. In addition, due to budget shortage refreshment training was not provided as originally planned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls had their regular meeting in a weekly basis, for saving and discussions</li> <li>• Girls revealed to discussing on issues such as education, nutrition, early marriage, and its consequences and family planning and its utilization</li> <li>• SAA groups revealed that they met a monthly bases and discuss on early marriage, gender equality, sharing tasks in the household</li> </ul>

### Efficiency of implementation<sup>13</sup>

The interventions implementation had different efficiency levels in terms of time. The economic training aspect of the individual level intervention (VSLA) started to be implemented timely compared to the other interventions. The community SAA, life skill and SRHN interventions were initiated late by 8 months due to delay in completing the baseline survey because of security reason. As a result, material development for community level intervention was delayed. In addition, due to fear of overloading the young girls with too much information at once individual level interventions other than VSLA were implemented in rotation.

*CARE project staff “We have performed good on VSLA, despite girl’s low understanding and reading levels... But now it is only two years since we have started SAA. SAA started quite late. It would have been better if we have started both groups at the same time. In general, implementation time was too short. Practically Abdiboru interventions were implemented only for three years and through interruption. And for SAA it has worked only for two years. SRH and life skill trainings were not given from the very beginning. They were started very late. If they were implemented from the very beginning, they could contribute much to reducing early marriages.”*

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<sup>13</sup> Implementation of interventions with economical use of resources/inputs (time, funds, expertise, etc.) to yield desired results was aimed to be assessed under efficiency

Table 25: Efficiency-summary of comparison between process evaluation and end-line findings

Lite qual 1	Lite qual 2	End-line
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a general delay in the initiation of the interventions. SAA delayed because of the delay in baseline report and Individual level interventions Life skill, SRH and nutrition were delayed because of it decided to give them in rotation based not to overload the young adolescent girls at once.</li> <li>• VSLA in the girl’s groups was relatively introduced on scheduled time but CFs couldn’t keep up to cover all the kebeles on targeted time</li> <li>• Time allocated was not sufficient as it didn’t take into account the need for more frequent follow up of the young adolescent target groups</li> <li>• Planning process in SAA, particularly identification of relevant members to be included needed much time before actual implementation of the SAA intervention</li> <li>• SAA was much late when started because results from baseline were being awaited</li> <li>• CSC intervention lagged behind all other interventions due ambitious plan in the design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls felt time allocated for VSLA was sufficient</li> <li>• Both SAA and girls group members’ motivation and commitment to participate in meetings had increased after the reform</li> <li>• SRHN cascading training had not been completed yet and overall, the progress remained behind schedule</li> <li>• Allocated resources such as human (CF), material and financial affected efficiency</li> <li>• CSC- time allocated for implementation was not enough, there was no time and condition to mobilize resources necessary for recommended action</li> <li>• Community uprising and instability delayed almost all of Abdiboru activities in the zone for about 8 months. At the time when state of emergency was declared, it was impossible for VSLA and SAA groups to meet and discuss.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSLA started to be implemented timely compared to the other interventions</li> <li>• Girls understanding and literacy level was a challenge for a timely implementation</li> <li>• SAA, life skill and SRHN were initiated late which reduce the total implementation years of the interventions.</li> <li>• In general, implementation time was too short from implementer’s side, to accommodate the bulk of proposed interventions in the project</li> </ul>

### Quality perceptions about interventions<sup>14</sup>

Beneficiaries perceived the project's quality from its relevance and the change it brought to the community. In both Arms, girls perceived the quality of the interventions as good because of the supervision they got from CARE staff, teachers, parents, health extension workers, and the community.

Unmarried adolescent girl (Arm 2) *"Our teachers, our mothers, health extension workers, CARE staff and even the community advice and supervise us. CARE staff supervises and advises us not to get married at our early age."*

Married adolescent girl (Arm 1) *"The interventions of the project have brought great change in the community; for instance, we bought goats by saving money, there is a girl who has taken 1100 birr by saving 25 birr a month. By taking the money we have bought cloth, goat, chicken, educational materials such as books (supplementary books) which even I myself have bought it; and it assisted us and brought change in our education."*

Similarly, key informants reported the quality of the interventions as good reasoning Abdiboru commitment to work with junior community members and attempt to encourage girls' education was commendable.

Education office\_KII (Arm 1) *"I believe that activities in Abdiboru project had good quality. Because this project is operating at the bottom level, in community, it helps students whose parents are not educated and motivate them to continue school. So, it is of good quality."*

Community members also perceived the quality of the intervention was good because of the frequent visit and support from the community facilitators.

Adolescent girl's Fathers FGD\_SAA member (Arm 2) *"In my opinion, the interventions I was engaged in were very good. The supervision, advice, and visit from CARE were frequent. I am happy."*

SAA group members perceived that the quality of the intervention was reasonable. Yet, they indicated that it had a lot to achieve and cover which they attributed to the more time required to work in community and address prominent problems.

Adolescent girl's Father\_SAA member (Arm 2) *"I ranked the intervention plan achievement as rank "B". It is difficult to say the intervention all in all completely covered or achieved its goal."*

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<sup>14</sup> Quality perception: How well the interventions input & process are perceived by the beneficiaries to bring about the desired change (output).

According to key informants, the time shortage was the main problem of the project not to be labeled as it had the highest quality.

Administration office\_ key informant (Arm 2) *“Abdiboru is nice. It is not very strong but neither is it weak. It is medium. What makes it medium is not being able to accomplish all goals due insufficient time. While it is started getting high acceptance in the community, the time winded up and now it is going to phase out. Duration given was very short.”*

Table 26: Quality perception-summary of comparison between process evaluation and end-line findings

Lite qual 1	Lite qual 2	End-line
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• girls group participants expressed the trainings they received regarding money saving and planning were the best support. Being recognized and chosen for the project interventions was an important step for the girls as that made them feel visible and worthy society members</li> <li>• SAA: the strategic approach of the project working on young girls but closely engaging the community to ensure strong basis were admirable intervention features</li> <li>• discussions in their meetings helped them to see their wives as inherently equal to themselves</li> <li>• being equipped with specific training and intervention packages specifically molded to the different target groups was a good quality matter</li> <li>• political and security issues, presence of drought and food shortage were points of concern which may have affected the quality of the interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• girls have expressed the benefits of the project in relation to the lessons they acquired, economic skills and its support for their education</li> <li>• VSLA was the best delivered intervention in terms of quality</li> <li>• SRHN and life skill trainings were not delivered to the desired quality due to the non-enabling situations in the areas plus mismatch between the number of villages to be addressed and number of CFs</li> <li>• SAA members revealed that the project has helped them to get awareness on many issues like harmful traditions, household responsibilities and societal problems.</li> <li>• CSC- although not fully implemented some visible changes came through it like additional teachers hired, text books been distributed, class rooms been furnished, HEW strengthen support, school compounds becoming clean, spring waters protected, toilets, school fences and roads have been constructed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• girls perceived the quality of the interventions as good because of the supervision they got from CARE staff, teachers, parents, health extension workers, and the community.</li> <li>• interventions of the project have brought great change in the community</li> <li>• Abdiboru commitment to work with junior community members and attempt to encourage girls' education was commendable</li> <li>• indicated that it had a lot to achieve and cover which they attributed to the more time required to work in community and address prominent problems.</li> <li>• time shortage was the main problem of the project not to be labeled as it had the highest quality</li> </ul>



## 5. Implications and Future Considerations

### Sustainability and scale up

Girls asserted that they would sustain the saving and discussion in their groups. Yet, they revealed that absence of support, supervision and advice from CARE could affect their efforts to sustain their groups. They anticipated that their teachers would support them in the future.

Unmarried adolescent girls (Arm 1) *“We will be sharing knowledge to each other and should sustain both saving and group discussion. In between if disagreements happen between groups, we will ask support from teachers and solve the problems.”*

Girls also appeared determined to sustain their groups with whatever source and support that they could have.

Unmarried adolescent girls (Arm 2) *“There are teachers still following-up on us so whatever problem is happening in between, we will directly involve our teachers. Whether CARE support stops, we should continue saving by supporting and respecting each other and continue what we have already started.”*

School teachers were perceived as the potential stakeholders for scaling up the intervention as they maintain close interactions with school girls, while HEWs seemed the potential stakeholders for the out of school and community intervention groups.

Unmarried Adolescent Girls (Arm 1) *“Our VSLA has started its activity immediately after its establishment. The facilitators for our group include teachers, health extension workers, CARE, and our parents. But our teachers supported us above all.”*

Adolescent responsive multi sectoral plans and platforms were confirmed to exist in sector offices. These plans were reported to have existed before the Abdiboru project came to the zone, although have been much strengthened by the project’s support since the past 3 years, particularly in the intervention woredas. The adolescents’ needs were reported to be mostly taken into account when periodic sectoral-plans were designed. Sector offices had their own plans and the administration office coordinates all sector offices. In sector offices such as the women and child affairs office, the plans were claimed to address issues of under 18 adolescents such as early marriage, school dropout, girls school continuation, violence and small business group activity for unemployed adolescents. In other sector offices such as the education office, the plans definitely address adolescents’ needs, although it specifically revolves around educational concerns such as school enrolment, retention and returning drop outs back to school.

On the adolescent responsive platforms, SRH issues such as family planning, were discussed on peer-based discussions. The adolescents mostly discussed themselves, but there were also facilitators that moderated sessions. According to a zone health official, the discussion regularity and session varied by facility and woreda as did the specific plans.

The Abdiboru intervention woredas were reported strong in the planning as well as performance. Reports on indicators have been periodically shared with zone offices. Sector office representatives have reviewed the reports and met with implementers. The interventions were also perceived as “interesting” and “very scalable”. Interviewees reported the project ideas as simple and understandable to be replicated by other woredas.

Education office\_KII (Arm 2) *“We have shared the CARE documents to other woredas, I know, but not sure about their efforts in implementation.”*

In addition to CARE’s Abdiboru, other NGOs and UN agencies were acclaimed to have worked on needs of adolescents in the woredas. Some have directly worked in the communities for betterment of the adolescents’ needs while others supported the sector offices to strengthen adolescent responsive programs. Abdiboru was uniquely identified as the project that worked on both community and the government institutions, actually bring them together and closer to tackle issues around adolescents’ wellbeing.

The project was reported to be challenged in several ways. Among speculations for not having been diffused to other woredas, despite its acceptance and effectiveness reputation, was shortage of time and interruptions during implementation.

Health office\_KII (Arm 2) *“To scale up to other woredas, though it needs other methods and time. So, it is not actually scaled up by other woredas for now. The sector office bureaus needed a way to own up the project interventions as their own and push with it-that has not been done. Needs owner for scale up, for example the health office or women and children’s affairs.”*

As a standard procedure, there were multisectoral collaborations among the different sectors. These collaborations however were not consistent and clear. The administration office arranged quarterly meeting in which all sectors were expected to report their performance and share best experiences. They collaborated as the system also followed an up to bottom approach in a task force. Most had regular schedules for collaborating and they also met during emergencies on demand. But in terms of outcomes, not much was perceived to come out of the collaborations as could have been. The WCA was identified as the first line organization in terms of creating a sustainable collaboration with most of the sectors regarding adolescent’s issues.

Education office\_KII (Arm 2) *“There are collaborations, for example between WCA, workers’ associations and small-scale businesses and farmers’ associations are well known for collaborations, but they are not very productive like those strong projects like Abdiboru.”*

All sector offices in the KIIs reported that there is no separate budget allocated to address the needs of adolescents in their respective offices. The region sent gross budget to Woredas and the Woredas allocated to the sectors. The sectors which are responsible to allocate to various activities and they faced regular challenges as there was usually a budget shortage.

As adolescent issues are considered cross cutting, activities were mostly covered by other budgets like the HIV budget. Mainly activities were maintained out of the government budget line

supported by NGOs. Sometimes expenses were covered by collaborations such as use schools as venues and use supplies provided by NGOs and some health centers. Volunteers and health workers are among the vital supporters to implement the activities on the plan. Woredas supported by NGO interventions are best performing woredas.

Other woredas and even zones in the region were reported to show interest to uptake the intervention activities working on adolescents. For scale up to other kebeles and woredas, focused approach was suggested starting from the need to involved and orient these units.

WCA\_KII (Arm 21 *“Expansion of Abdiboru activities to other woredas may help a lot. We Suggest the project to scale-up its scope to adult women and children.”*)

Time extension was recommended for scale up as the project had faced immense challenges during the implementation period, mainly due to security issues in the country. Project handover involving sectors such as the education office, the health office and WCA which were going through the program and handing over as “this is your program” was advised to be important exit strategy for it to be scaled up.

## 6. Conclusions

In rural areas where economic challenges prevail and girls' education is given less emphasis, alternative supporting mechanisms are crucial for adolescent girls to continue their education. Girls could fail to access high school education and head to marriage not only because of the existing social norms but also due to economic challenges; they may not afford to pay for school materials, house rent, and food. Women's and child affairs office was recognized to be one potential stakeholder that can play a great role by opening girls' schools, covering female students fee (through giving scholarship) and encouraging female students.

In Abdiboru, adolescent girls who dropped out of school were supported to return back to school. The SAA intervention component was found to bring noticeable improvements the communities indicating the triple combination approach as the most effective in reducing early marriage in this project. Families that were economically better off and had the ability to support adolescent girls' education could avoid early marriage. These changes were observed during the period of political instability; thus, one can anticipate a greater impact if interventions were implemented in a more stable political environment and over a longer uninterrupted period of time. However, further reduction in early marriage practices seems to be curtailed by the flourishing marriage brokering practices. Thus, the observed increased brokering practices may have hindered greater achievement in reducing early marriage practices.

The involvement of very young adolescent girls (10-14 years of age) was reported to have increased the interest of and its acceptability by government officials and community. These group were identified by community and officials as not often targeted by either NGOs or government bodies. However, the low literacy level of girls was a critical hindrance—the girls' reading and comprehension ability was less than compatible to their grade level. Thus, the adolescent girls had difficulty to fully understand written instructions in the manuals and properly use registration books. Thus, additional support than originally anticipated was required by the project staff. This indicates that structural level interventions require a stable and functioning local governments to bring about meaningful impact.

Project scale-up was expressed as an important next step for Abdiboru. Government sector offices recognized the adolescent friendly multi sectoral plan was strengthened in the intervention woredas. Other woredas were also reportedly introduced to the Abdiboru project goals and plan. Although time was ultra-short for such comprehensive project working on three pillars simultaneously (individual, community and government levels), promising positive changes were observed in impacting girls' lives. Girls benefited directly from the VSLA saving and discussions platform and community was brought to support, identify problems and protect adolescent girls including aspiring better education for girls. This suggests the project has potential for scale-up given enough time and unforeseen circumstances accounted for.