



# Alternative approaches to delaying marriage and supporting married girls

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# Child marriage in Ethiopia

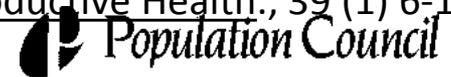
- Ethiopia has among the highest rates of child marriage in Africa
  - 41 percent of girls are married by age 18
  - 14 percent of girls are married by age 15
- Among girls married before age 15:
  - 71 percent met their husbands on the wedding day
  - 32 percent experienced forced first sex with their husband
  - 61 percent had not started menstruating at the time of first sex
- Limited and scattered programmatic efforts to delay child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa
- Very limited evaluation data



Sources: Population Council tabulations of the EDHS (2011). Among girls aged 20-24.

Erulkar A. 2013 "Very early marriage, marital relations and intimate partner

violence in Ethiopia," *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health.*, 39 (1) 6-13.





## ***'Berhane Hewan'* : First generation program to address child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa**



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



# 'Berhane Hewan' model (2004-6): Pilot tested as a package of interventions



## DRIVERS OF EARLY MARRIAGE

## PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTION

Communities value early marriage



'Community conversations' to collectively explore community values on early marriage

Economic incentives to marry girls early



A conditional cash/asset transfer (goat) is offered to offset the economic benefit of marrying girls

Out of school girls are particularly vulnerable to marriage



Girls are provided with school materials to address the economic barriers to schooling

Girls are socially isolated and low status



Girls groups are formed led by adult female mentors



# Evaluation of 'Berhane Hewan'



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

Source: Erulkar A, Muthengi E. 2009. "Evaluation of Berhane Hewan: A program to delay marriage in rural Ethiopia," Int'l Pers. on Sexual & Reproductive Health, 35 (1) 6-14.





# Second generation work on child marriage

- Based on lessons from first generation of work, Population Council and partners started more in-depth work on child marriage
- Bifurcated the work into two streams:
  - Programs directed at delaying the age at marriage
  - Programs supporting married girls
- Explore questions raised in first generation work





# Building an evidence base on how to delay marriage in Africa (2010 – 2015)



- With support from USAID/W, testing the relative impact of the strategies used to delay marriage
- Implemented in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Burkina Faso
- In different districts, strategies implemented separately:
  - Community education on early marriage
  - Support to remain in school by way of school supplies/uniforms
  - Conditional cash transfer (goat, chickens)
  - Full model where all components are offered
  - Control area
- Evaluative population based surveys will measure impact of strategies on age at marriage, marriage dynamics and reproductive health
- Tracking costs of all interventions

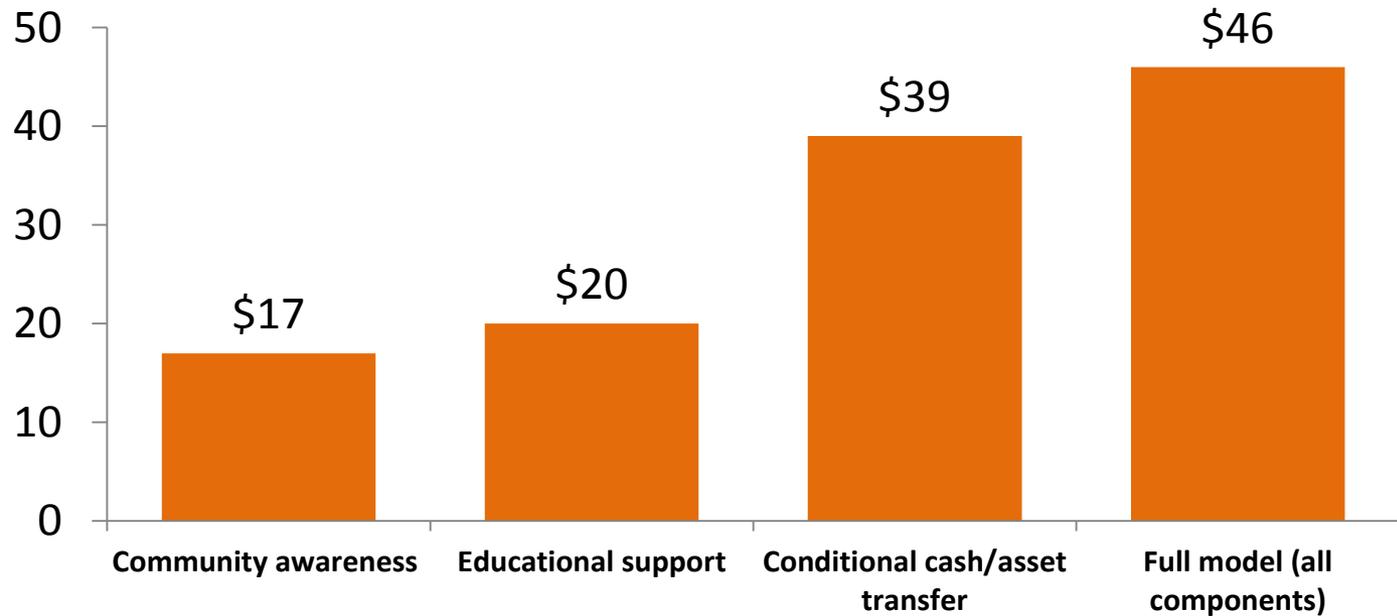




# Tracking cost & coverage, Ethiopia



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



M O D E L

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





# Building an evidence base on how to delay marriage in Africa (2010 – 2015)



- Baseline surveys undertaken in Ethiopia and Tanzania
- Burkina Faso baseline survey is underway
- Interventions in Ethiopia and Tanzania have completed one of two years
- Endline surveys planned for 2014, in two countries





# 'Meseret Hiwott' Program for Married Girls in Rural Ethiopia



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





# 'Addis Birhan' program for husbands



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

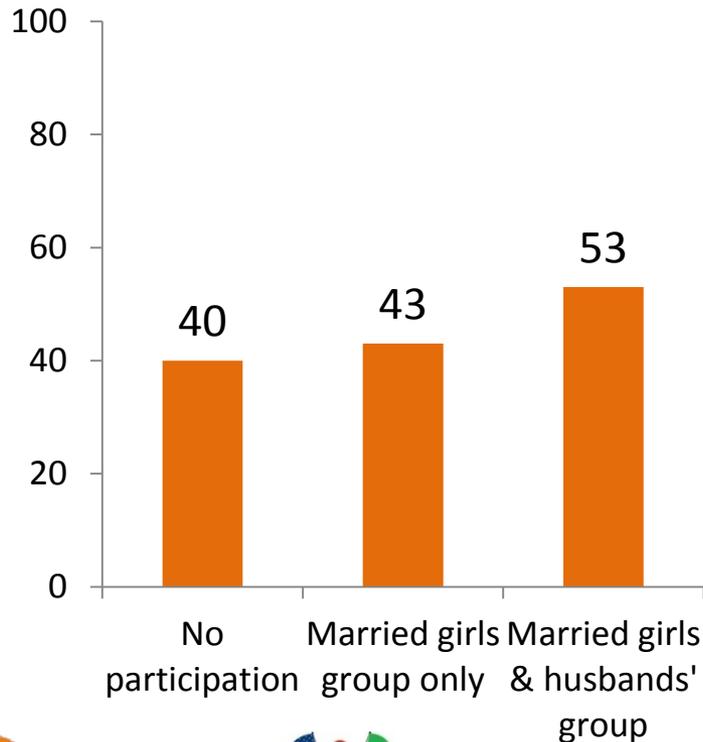




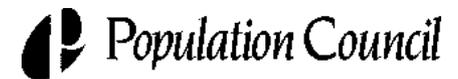
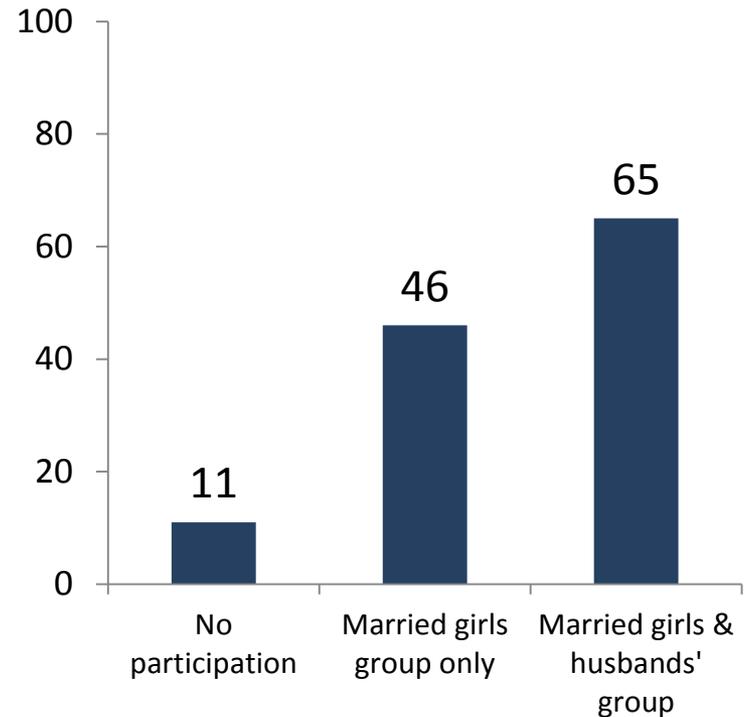
# Indications of positive improvements associated with programs



## Percent of married girls reporting that spouse accompanied them to the clinic, by program participation



## Percent of married girls reporting couples' VCT, by program participation



# Final thoughts



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

