

Towards Improved Economic and Sexual/Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls (TESFA)

Dr. Feven Tassew - CARE Ethiopia

Dr. Jeff Edmeades - ICRW

THE NIKE FOUNDATION



Project Background and Context

Launched in 2010 reaching over 5000 ever-married adolescent girls (ages 10-19) to mitigate the effects of child marriage through a focus on sexual/reproductive health (SRH) and economic empowerment (EE)

CONTEXT

no/little education + lack of social networks / isolation
high GBV + FGC + limited reproductive health services



Innovative Programming

Working directly with hard to reach married and most vulnerable adolescent girls

Creation of buy-in and sustainable social support systems for married girls through Social Analysis & Action (SAA) groups

Group based peer education model based on VSLA approach to provide safe spaces for discussion and education on SRH and EE



Photo Credit: Jeff Edmeades

Program Implementation

Girls' Groups

curricula

- comprehensive & age specific
- takes into account gendered issues relevant to the community
- tailored curricula for 3 arms: SRH only; EE only; and combined

formation

- community leaders identify/recruit girls based on set criteria
- organized to be participant led group

facilitation

- peer facilitators selected by group members & trained on curricula & facilitation skills
- groups meet regularly and receive support through community/SAA
- group members receive trainings, take loans, save, and engage in income generating activities

Program Implementation

Community / Social Analysis & Action Groups

formation

- “gate keepers” nominated by community members
- includes religious leaders, *kebele* leaders, HEW, mother in laws, husbands and fathers
- go through critical reflection dialogue on socio cultural practices

function

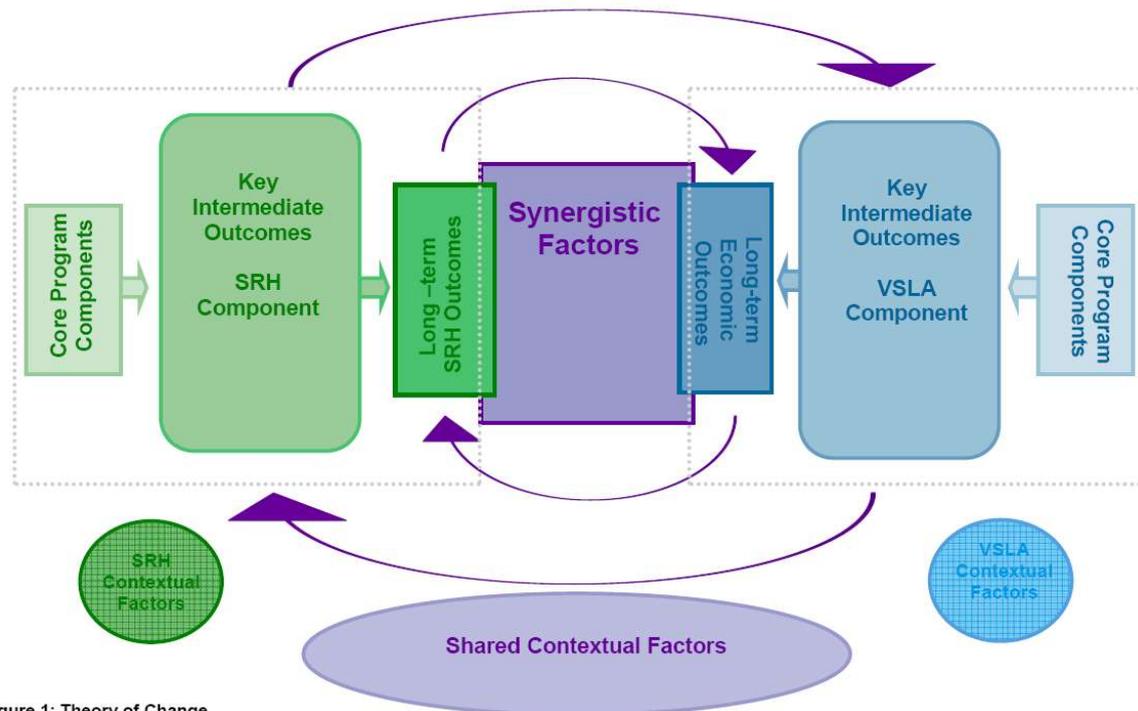
- liaison between project and community
- challenge community attitudes using accurate information
- identify eligible girls, visit households of participating girls & provide ongoing support to girls’ groups

Evaluation Goal

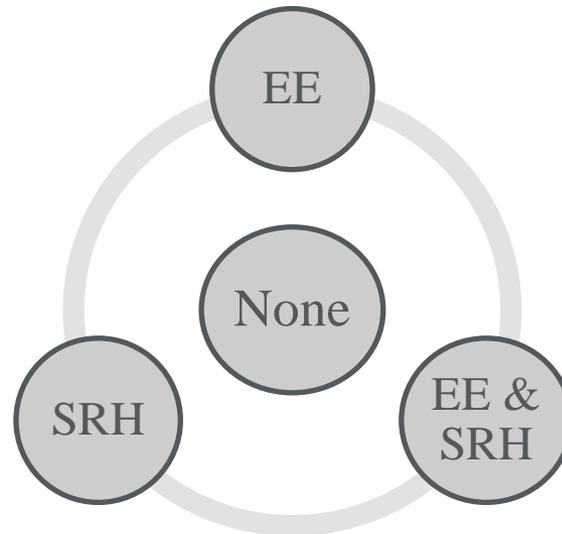
Core Question: Is there a synergistic relationship between increased capacity around economic and sexual/reproductive health matters?

Does providing both types of programming together result in better outcomes for each than providing each individually?

TESFA Improves SRH and Economic Outcomes



Quasi-experimental Mixed-Method Approach



- Three main intervention arms and smaller comparison group
- Study *kebeles* purposively matched
- Cohort design with one year apart baseline and endline data collections
- 3,197 girls were interviewed at both points
- Quantitative data complemented by qualitative data and detailed monitoring data

Preliminary Findings: Sexual and Reproductive Health

Increased correct knowledge about
contraception

Increased use of contraceptives

Increased use of reproductive health services
(e.g. ante-natal care, childbirth assistance)

Increased support for using contraception

Increased ability to negotiate contraceptive use
with husbands

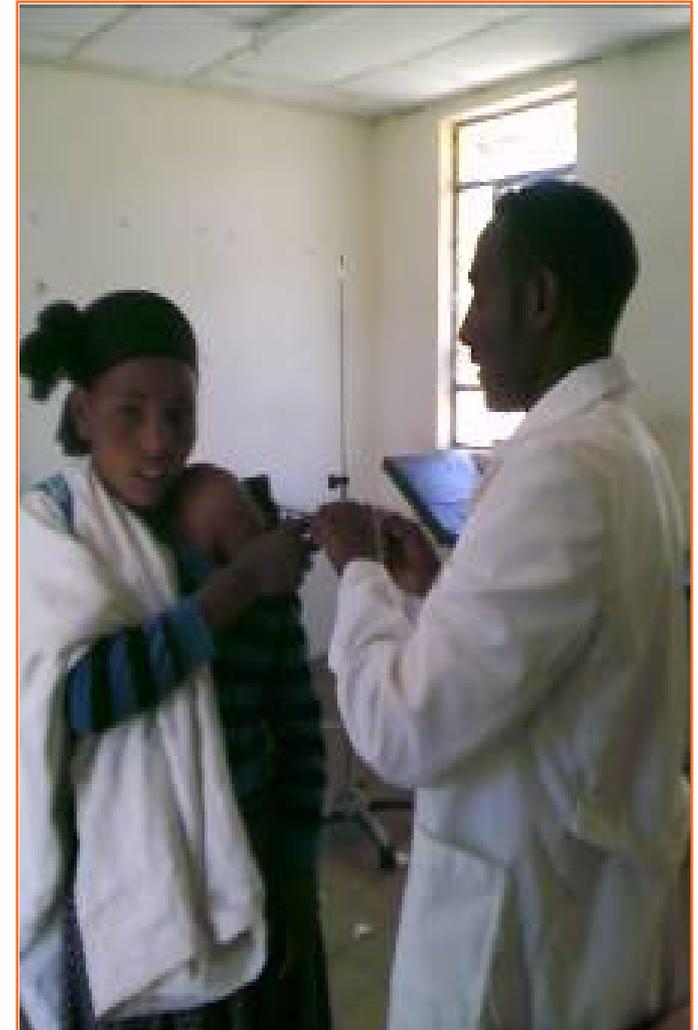


Photo Credit: TESFA PhotoVoice Participant

Preliminary Findings: Economic Empowerment

Sharp increases in economic activity

- Savings and loans in EE arms

- Greater diversity of income

Greater confidence in ability to deal with economic crises

Increased ability to negotiate with husbands about earning money



Photo Credit: Jeff Edmeades

Preliminary Findings: Unexpected Benefits



Intent to return to school

Significant increases in couple communication

Improved self-worth, mental health and self-confidence

Changed view of women's roles in society and best age at marriage

Direct prevention by community members of at least 180 child marriages

"I observed huge difference in our life before and after TESFA. It is like the distance between the earth and the sky."

Male SAA Member

"I want the world to know that washing his feet used to be my responsibility! I don't have to wash his feet anymore..."

TESFA Program Participant

Source: Qualitative and Project Monitoring Data

Peer-led girls support groups work even in rural, conservative context by providing critical **safe spaces**, expanding **social capital**, and as effective **vehicles** for a variety of **training** topics

Contextualized community outreach and continued engagement is key:

- Active inclusion in project is key for achieving buy-in

- Community reflection and transformation is possible and generates supportive environment for girls

- Targeting and engaging gate keepers is key to creating mutual accountability

- Linking to existing community support systems inspires commitment for further social change

Lessons Learned

Rapid changes in knowledge and behavior are feasible using this approach

Including tailored 'life skills' training, particularly around negotiation skills is key

Effects extend beyond health and economic empowerment



Photo Credit: Jeff Edmeades

Lessons Learned

Coordination between project design and evaluation from the beginning is key

Program participation itself can make a very large difference in the lives of girls

Mitigating the effects of child marriage should be a focus of more programming and can contribute to prevention



Photo Credit: Jeff Edmeades

More focus on married girls is needed

Most vulnerable yet underserved

Significant in number, yet invisible

Safe spaces and supportive environments key to unleashing their potential

Give married girls more voice and visibility

Working with community through social gate keepers is key

Deliberate and active engagement at all stages of program cycle

Create sense of ownership and accountability

Enable *them* to be change agents

Fully integrate evaluation and program design

Communication and dissemination

National

Global

Going to scale

Huge need and demand both in Ethiopia and elsewhere

Research on how to effectively go to scale with group-based programming needed

Active engagement in national and global forums on child marriage to both inform and influence



Photo Credit: Jeff Edmeades

Thank You