



COUNTRY BRIEFING: ETHIOPIA



GEC-T	2 projects	60,459 target beneficiaries
LNGB	2 projects	41,500 target beneficiaries ¹

The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) has four projects working in five regional states in Ethiopia.

Two GEC-T projects are focusing on girls' transition from basic to secondary education and two LNGB projects are supporting some of the most marginalised and vulnerable out-of-school girls. All projects have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and schools closed in March 2020. This has been compounded by access and safety issues caused by escalating political tensions and conflict, and severe weather events. In response, projects have focused their efforts on continued learning, safety and wellbeing support, and hygiene and sanitation provisions. Between April and September 2020, projects in Ethiopia maintained direct contact with and offered support to 79,447 girls.

PROJECT NAME	WINDOW	LEAD PARTNER	PROJECT START DATE	PROJECT CLOSE DATE
<u>Excelling Against the Odds</u>	GEC-T	ChildHope UK (ChildHope)	1 April 2017	31 Mar 2021
<u>BiruhTesfa for All</u>	LNGB	Population Council	18 September 2018	31 Jan 2022
<u>Change</u>	LNGB	People In Need (PIN)	1 November 2018	31 Oct 2023
<u>Supporting Transition of Adolescent Girls through Enhanced Systems (STAGES)</u>	GEC-T	Link Community Development (LCD)	1 May 2017	30 Aug 2024

All projects have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and schools closed in March 2020.

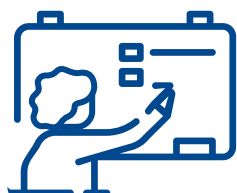


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¹ Number subject to adjustment following identification of beneficiaries

Project data is based on reporting from May to October 2020

Since the start of the second phase of the GEC² (2017-2025), projects in Ethiopia have reported the following achievements up to June 2020:



14,837

teachers trained



37,295

textbooks distributed



115,686

sanitary/wash kits distributed



66,211

learning packs distributed



7,506

bursaries distributed to girls who are most marginalised, including girls with disabilities and to girls who may be vulnerable to childmarriage

Achievements

ChildHope's recent results demonstrated improved educational outcomes:

- **ChildHope** has supported 97% of girls in the project to progress into secondary school, in comparison the national average in Ethiopia is 54%.
- 22% of girls supported by **ChildHope** have increased attendance rates since the start of the project.

ChildHope have also published reports on how they are [helping Ethiopia's poorest girls get an education](#) and an [analysis of their impact](#) in the first phase of the GEC.

Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic, local ethnic and political tensions and severe weather events have made it difficult for project staff to reach girls and continue their learning, particularly in the Afar region. The fighting in Tigray may have long term repercussions. **LCD** in particular has faced operational problems, whilst **Population Council's** support for child domestic workers has been disrupted due to widespread, undocumented movement of beneficiaries.

Many girls do not have access to mobile phones, radios and televisions and this has prompted projects to identify low-tech solutions to reach girls, relying heavily on local community networks and groups. Safety and security have been a key concern as there have been reports of increased gender-based violence and abuse, as well as concerns over the emotional wellbeing of girls who have reported feelings of isolation and boredom. Projects have also reported an increased risk to girls of early marriage and pregnancies during the period. Furthermore, girls with disabilities have suffered from mobility problems in their communities, with people being reluctant to help them for fear of contracting the virus. Some families have been unable to travel to health centres to pick up the critical medical supplies needed by girls with disabilities.



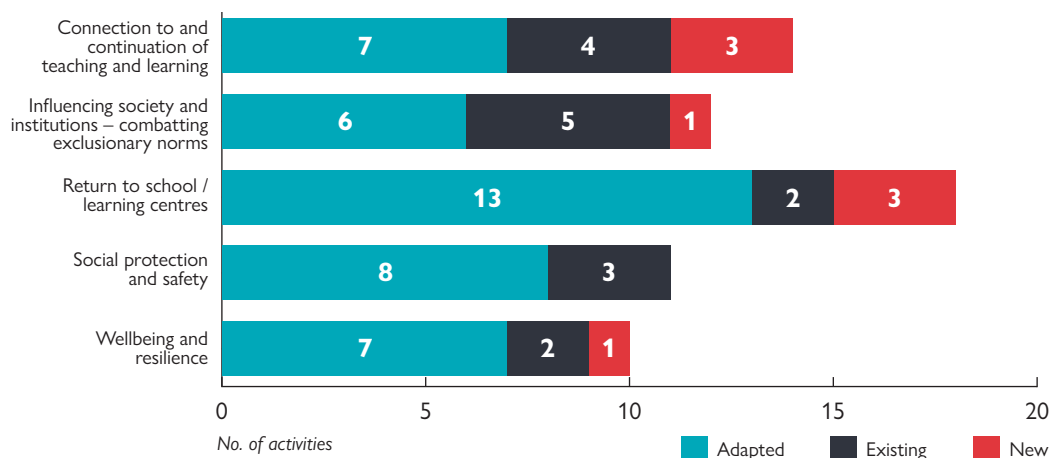
² The first phase of the GEC ran from 2012-2017 and provided quality education for over a million marginalised girls. The GEC is now in its second phase (2017-2025), with up to 41 projects in 17 countries. The second phase is enabling existing GEC beneficiary girls to complete primary school and transition to secondary education, technical vocational training or employment. Within the second phase, a second cohort of girls are also being supported through the Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) funding window, which consists of interventions for highly marginalised, adolescent girls who are out of school.

Recent highlights

In response, all projects in Ethiopia changed their activities to best meet the needs of the beneficiary girls. *Figure 1* outlines the types of activities projects have implemented and indicates the proportion of these that are existing, adapted or completely new to projects. Some highlights from these activities include:

- In October 2020, UK Government Minister for Overseas Territories and Sustainable Development at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, [Baroness Sugg, visited the PIN project](#), meeting community volunteers who have been supporting girls during the COVID-19 crisis and learning about how the girls have been able to continue learning.
- **Keeping in contact with beneficiaries and reaching more girls:** Since April 2020, the projects have maintained contact with 79,447 girls including 305 girls with disabilities.
- **Reaching girls and wider communities through broadcasting:** LCD have disseminated messages targeting over 12,000 students through TV and 67,000 through radio networks.
- **Helping girls continue to learn:** ChildHope has created and distributed 12,292 learning worksheets in various local languages for girls to continue learning at home. LCD conducted training for 193 school head teachers and cluster supervisors on COVID-19 mitigation and supporting girls through self-directed learning. PIN has supported girls with home-based learning in small groups, such as [Tigist](#) who loves maths and wants to be a doctor. Her school in Ethiopia is closed because of COVID-19, but the PIN project makes sure she can carry on learning safely through home-based learning classes led by community groups.
- **Supporting girls to stay safe and focus on safety and hygiene:** Most projects have distributed care packages consisting of food, PPE, soap and sanitary supplies.
- All projects have put in place safeguarding protocols and procedures to ensure that their COVID-19 responses are safe for girls, other beneficiaries and staff members. Safety, as well as learning, continues to be a top priority for all GEC projects.*

Figure 1: COVID-19 Response activities in Ethiopia³



Coordination and collaboration

The projects in Ethiopia have strong links to one another and to government, NGO and civil society groups. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, coordination and collaboration efforts have significantly increased. Since schools have been closed, projects have engaged with the Ethiopia Education in Emergency group led by the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and Save the Children, sharing lessons and inputs with project consortium members. **Population Council** has also participated in government-led COVID-19 task forces (Risk Communication and Community Awareness sub-teams). The GEC projects in Ethiopia have also established regular zoom calls with one another to discuss the challenges they face and share information.

* Please see the safeguarding section on the COVID-19 page of the GEC website for materials and guidance provided to projects: <https://girlseducationchallenge.org/#/article/covid-19-response>. The GEC expects our projects to be compliant with our 14 minimum standards on safeguarding.

³ Projects began implementing the COVID-19 response activities in Q2 2020 and will continue or be adapted in accordance with the evolving COVID-19 situation in each context and in agreement with the FM.

Lessons learned

- The lack of access to technology has meant that in-person and ‘no-tech’ continued learning and support has been critical. As such, projects have found that maintaining contact with girls through community workers or volunteers has been vital to success. In the long term, projects are now considering that community-based approaches, involving community members and schools could be a viable way to support long-lasting change and sustainability.
- While projects have had to respond rapidly to imminent risks, they are now concerned with addressing the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the disruption of learning to the current cohort of girls, including their vulnerability to early marriage, pregnancy, GBV and migration, all of which may inhibit a return to school.
- Sharing approaches and lessons learned among projects and other actors in education, and taking collaborative approaches is showing positive and significant effects in reducing dropout and encouraging girls to return to school, especially in rural communities.

Priorities from January 2021

Schools began reopening in October 2020, but dropout rates appear to be high. Therefore, projects are focused on activities that support the return to school. These include:

- **Amplifying the national government’s return to school campaign.** For example, **ChildHope** are running an information campaign and working with the Ministry of Education to track attendance and dropout rates. **LCD** are supporting the campaign through radio and TV messages, as well as loud-speakers and in-person presentations in more remote areas. **Population Council** are increasing efforts to identify child domestic workers in urban areas.
- **Helping schools to prepare for reopening safely.** **LCD** are going to be delivering workshops for STAGES supported schools looking at ways to minimise risk of COVID-19 transmission, improve safety and wellbeing and supporting catch-up for those who have missed out on learning during closures. And several projects are going to support schools to set up water facilities for hand washing, provide water filters and distribute soap and hand sanitisers.
- **Supporting students financially, enabling them to return to school, learning centres or vocational training.** For example, through bursaries or cash transfers to the most vulnerable girls and families. These include young mothers whose livelihoods depend on the sale of agricultural produce or food production which has been severely affected by COVID-19 restrictions and/or recent flooding.
- **Increasing psycho-social support for girls.** **ChildHope** will be training teachers and mentors in psycho-social support, encouraging regular check-ins with girls as they return to school. **PIN** will also train field staff to provide psycho-social support and counselling to girls and caregivers, including for girls with disabilities.



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The Girls’ Education Challenge is a project funded by the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (“FCDO”), formerly the Department for International Development (“DFID”), and is led and administered by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and Mott MacDonald (trading as Cambridge Education), working with organisations including Nathan Associates London Ltd. and Social Development Direct Ltd. This publication has been prepared for general guidance on matters of interest only and does not constitute professional advice. You should not act upon the information contained in this publication without obtaining specific professional advice. No representation or warranty (express or implied) is given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this publication, and, to the extent permitted by law, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and the other entities managing the Girls’ Education Challenge (as listed above) do not accept or assume any liability, responsibility or duty of care for any consequences of you or anyone else acting, or refraining to act, in reliance on the information contained in this publication or for any decision based on it.