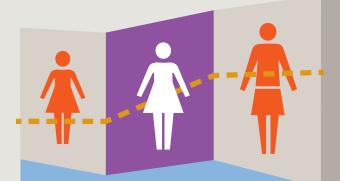
ACT WITH HER: Forging Panoramic Pathways with Girls from Adolescence to Adulthood

Strengthening Local Systems for Very Young Adolescents: Perspectives from the Frontline

Act With Her is a five-year program in Ethiopia that partners with girls to forge the health, education, and social pathways they need to thrive during the transition to adulthood. We engage girls, boys, and their parents or caregivers in group sessions over 10 months, and in some areas also work over a longer period to catalyze shifts in social and gender norms and in the adolescent-friendliness of key systems and services. Designed to separately serve very young adolescents (VYAs) and older adolescents, with a learning period built in between, we engaged the first cohort of VYAs from March 2019 through January 2020, with over 13,000 girls and boys participating in over 500 groups. Through implementing the related local and light-touch systems strengthening, **WE LEARNED:**



Early adolescence is an "in-between" stage of life

VYAs are older than the target audience for most early childhood development, nutrition, and health investments, and slightly younger than the adolescents most likely to need financial services or who directly seek health services. Thoughtful tailoring is needed to strengthen the social services most relevant during this unique age (which may be largely school-centered in most settings).



School directors, staff, and teachers were some of the most passionate and effective change agents, proactively and swiftly making small doable changes to better support their VYA students.



With trust and support, VYAs can drive change

VYA girls and boys played important roles in our participatory systems strengthening activities. For example, together with parents, teachers, and community health workers they were key members of the

local social accountability committees tasked with improving the adolescent-friendliness of school-based education and health services.





Effective networking, coordination, and collective action between economic, education, health, and child protection sectors is necessary to further raise the visibility of adolescent issues and nurture more cross-sector responses.

Act With Her is led by Pathfinder International, in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, in partnership with CARE International, and with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Evidence of impact is being assessed by the UK Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Gender & Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) research consortium.



TO LEARN MORE VISIT www.pathfinder.org/projects/act-with-her/