

Girls' Empowerment & Management Project



Background

GEM is implemented in fifteen secondary schools in Amhara, Gambella, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regions (SNNPR). 500 secondary school girls are direct participants in the project. The project also reaches boy students, parents, selected school administrators, parent teacher association members and other girls through a variety of empowerment activities.

The GEM Project is funded by the Nike Foundation, while GET-SET gender violence prevention is funded by the Oak Foundation. GEM is implemented by Pact Ethiopia, in collaboration with the Forum on Street Children in Ethiopia in Amhara region, Action for Development in SNNPR region, and Pact's own satellite office in Gambella. GEM is operational from March 2006 through September 2008.

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GEM: Girls Empowerment and Management Project

The Girls Empowerment and Management (GEM) Project seeks to empower girls who are committed to academics, but whose life circumstances put them at risk of not completing secondary school. The GEM project employs a holistic approach to empowering adolescent girls, focusing on financial, academic, life skills and institutional support. GEM works in conjunction with the Girls Empowerment Through Sexual Exploitation Termination (GET-SET) project which strengthens the abilities of institutions and individuals to prevent and respond to gender violence.

Approach to Empowerment

The GEM project defines girls' empowerment as the ability to make decisions on issues that affect one's life in the social, cultural, economic, political and historical spheres. To be empowered to make choices, girls need to enhance their knowledge and acquire capability and skills. Education is seen as a means of achieving these ends and becoming self sufficient. Girls also need to develop the life skills and thinking processes to be able to make decisions effectively. Basic health and economic subsistence are seen as a cross-cutting foundation for progress in all other areas.

GEM Objectives:

GEM seeks to effect the following objectives to achieve holistic empowerment of adolescent girls.

- support adolescent girls to meet their basic financial needs so that they can continue their education and complete secondary school;
- increase leadership skills among adolescent girls.
- improve life skills among adolescent girls including awareness and knowledge of reproductive health.
- build the capacities of secondary school staff, school committees, and school clubs to better support adolescent girls and respond to their needs

GEM Activities:

In order to achieve these goals, the project:

- Provides monthly financial support to beneficiary adolescent girls to cover basic living costs such as food, hygiene and house rent etc.
- Covers the cost of school materials, including school uniforms, textbooks, and stationary materials
- Supports the academic development of girls through tutorial support and summer supplementary classes
- Builds the life skills of girls in the areas of leadership, communication, HIV/AIDS, harmful traditional practices, reproductive health, family planning, women's rights and gender
- Engages empowerment workers, school committee members and female leaders in mentoring girls throughout the process of their development
- Widens the breadth of girls' experience through exposure visits and experience-sharing by role models
- Advocates and sensitizes the community on the importance of girls education, the consequences of harmful traditional practices and other issues affecting girls lives, through presenting drama, musical shows, and publication of periodic newsletters
- Strengthens the abilities of wider institutions to provide ongoing support to empowering girls, including: school clubs, school committees, counselors, school staff and the wider community.

Conceptual Framework of Empowerment

