ETHIOPIA

GIRLS' EDUCATION AND COVID-19 IN

MALALA FUND

EDUCATION CHAMPION NETWORK ETHIOPIA

FOREWORD

COVID-19 is creating a girls' education crisis in Ethiopia, threatening to reverse the country's recent progress towards gender equality in education.

Over the last two decades, the Ethiopian government has expanded its education system and made important gains for girls at the primary and secondary levels. The net enrolment rate in elementary school increased from 29% in 1989 to 86% in 2017. The same year the Gender Parity Index also reached 0.90 at the primary level and 0.87 at the secondary level. However, harmful traditional practices, social norms and poverty continue to prevent girls from completing their education, resulting in high dropout rates at the secondary level.

Now COVID-19 is putting girls' futures at even greater risk. Pandemic-related school closures are forcing girls — particularly in regional states — into child marriage and causing increased rates of gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. Limited access to distance learning initiatives are stopping girls from continuing their studies at home. And fears of COVID-19 and the economic consequences of the pandemic make returning to school uncertain for some girls. If leaders don't act now, we risk losing another generation of girls.

In *Girls' education and COVID-19 in Ethiopia*, Malala Fund highlights the impact of school closures on girls in the regions of Amhara and Gambela and the city of Addis Ababa. The report attempts to highlight how preexisting social norms compounded with the economic burden caused by COVID-19 puts girls' education and well-being at risk.

Malala Fund's Education Champions in Ethiopia work in communities where girls face the greatest challenges accessing education. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, they have been fighting to promote girls' education and support distance learning. As schools begin to reopen, Malala Fund and our Education Champions are focused on ensuring that girls are safely able to return to the classroom.

In the pages that follow, Malala Fund lays out a roadmap for how government officials and other stakeholders in the education sector can address the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on girls. Based on our field research and an extensive review of policy and relevant literature, *Girls' education and COVID-19 in Ethiopia* outlines steps to improve Ethiopia's education system, strengthening it against future shocks and making it easier for girls to go to school and catch up on lost learning.

Girls are paying the highest price of the pandemic. By taking immediate action and following these recommendations, leaders can mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and ensure that every girl in Ethiopia is able to learn during and after this crisis.

**Ziauddin Yousafzai**
Co-Founder
Malala Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2020 Ethiopia closed its schools in response to the COVID-19 crisis and, shortly afterward, the government implemented a nationwide lockdown.

This report documents the impact that these closures have had on students and their families, summarises the distinct gendered effects of the lockdown and recommends policy measures that have helped — or could help — to mitigate the lockdown's worst impacts.

Our study finds that, among our research sample, students' education has suffered as a consequence of the pandemic. Although both girls and boys remain committed to their education during lockdown, **only 11% of students surveyed were able to access government TV and just 2% used radio distance learning initiatives.** The majority found them to be insufficient. While the government's response plan included material distribution in its distance learning provision, only 3% of households — all in Addis Ababa — reported receiving education-related materials directly from the government, schools or education department. Worryingly, **50% of students reported they received no learning assistance at all during lockdown.**

As schools prepare to reopen, fears of COVID-19 and the need to work to support their families make returning to school uncertain for some girls. Across our research sample, of those students who did not expect to return to school, **57% cited fears of COVID-19, making it the most cited reason.** The **need to work was the second-most common reason girls gave for not returning to school.** All of this points to a **widening of educational inequalities in Ethiopia** if leaders do not act, particularly between richer and poorer communities.
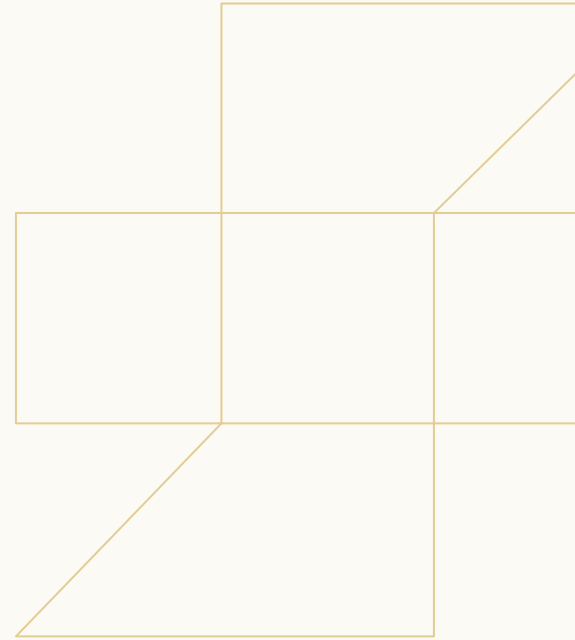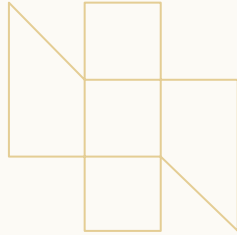
Our full list of recommendations begins on page 25. At a high level, we are calling upon federal and state governments to:

1
Provide inclusive distance learning

Provide gender-equitable and inclusive distance learning to support all students through current and future school closures.

2
Ensure safe, gender-responsive reopenings

Ensure safe and gender-responsive school reopenings and help girls make up for lost learning.

3
Mitigate economic effects

Mitigate the economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis to help families prioritise education, especially for girls.

4
Improve collaboration

Improve cross-sector collaboration to overcome social norm barriers for girls.

5
Protect progress

Protect progress for girls' education and rebuild the education system with gender at the centre to promote inclusive growth and ensure every girl can learn.

1. CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

1.1 Education before COVID–19

Over the last two decades, Ethiopia's commitment to the development of its education sector led to impressive gains in terms of primary enrolment, which increased from 21.6% in 1995–96 to 94.7% in 2018–19.
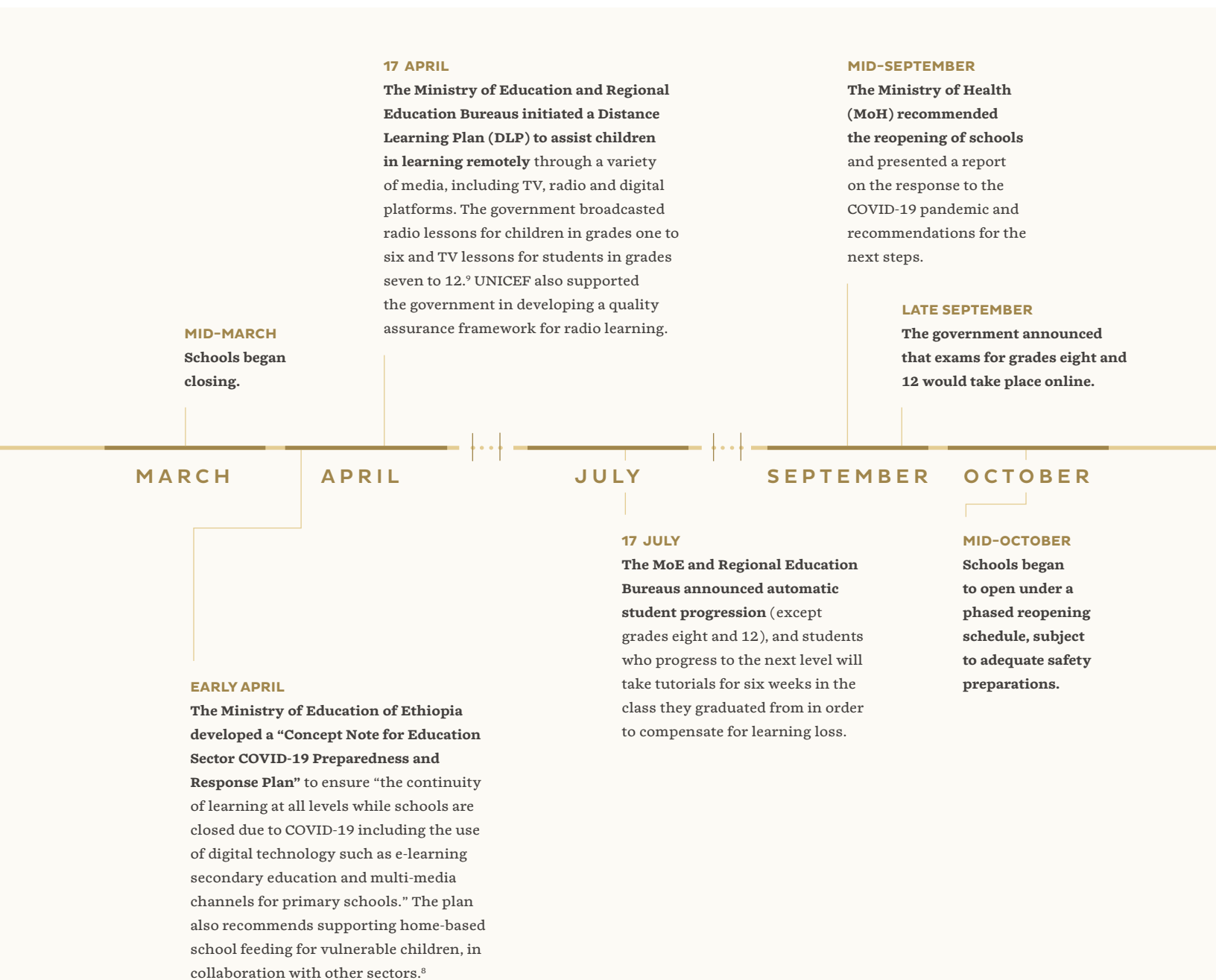
It has also significantly narrowed the gender gaps in 2018–19, enrolling 22.9 million students in primary and secondary schools, of which 46.7% were female students. Yet, despite progress, the country continued to face the following challenges before the pandemic hit:

1   **There were gender gaps at every grade level.[1]**

2   **Boys completed secondary education at a higher rate than girls.[2]**

3   **Quality of education was poor and learning outcomes were weaker for girls compared to boys.[3]**

4   **Conflict and displacement in some parts of the country have kept girls out of school.[4]**

5   **The high prevalence of child marriage prevented girls from completing their education.[5]**

6   **Schools had poor infrastructure, particularly in the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.[6]**

7   **Education financing was disproportionately targeted towards tertiary education.[7]**

1.2 Education: COVID-19 response timeline

Here is a timeline of key dates related to Ethiopia's COVID-19 response in 2020 and its impact on schools:

17 APRIL
The Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus initiated a Distance Learning Plan (DLP) to assist children in learning remotely through a variety of media, including TV, radio and digital platforms. The government broadcasted radio lessons for children in grades one to six and TV lessons for students in grades seven to 12.[9] UNICEF also supported the government in developing a quality assurance framework for radio learning.

MID-SEPTEMBER
The Ministry of Health (MoH) recommended the reopening of schools and presented a report on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and recommendations for the next steps.

LATE SEPTEMBER
The government announced that exams for grades eight and 12 would take place online.

MID-MARCH
Schools began closing.

MARCH   **APRIL**   **JULY**   **SEPTEMBER**   **OCTOBER**

17 JULY
The MoE and Regional Education Bureaus announced automatic student progression (except grades eight and 12), and students who progress to the next level will take tutorials for six weeks in the class they graduated from in order to compensate for learning loss.

MID-OCTOBER
Schools began to open under a phased reopening schedule, subject to adequate safety preparations.

EARLY APRIL
The Ministry of Education of Ethiopia developed a "Concept Note for Education Sector COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan" to ensure "the continuity of learning at all levels while schools are closed due to COVID-19 including the use of digital technology such as e-learning secondary education and multi-media channels for primary schools." The plan also recommends supporting home-based school feeding for vulnerable children, in collaboration with other sectors.[8]

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2.

RESEARCH PROCESS

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This report presents the findings from a rapid assessment that Malala Fund and our Education Champions conducted in the regions of Amhara and Gambela and the city of Addis Ababa in July and August 2020, as well as a desk review of policies and relevant literature.

Our goal was to better understand the ways in which girls and their families were navigating the economic and social crises caused by the pandemic in Ethiopia, with a particular focus on how COVID-19 was impacting girls' education.

2.1 Survey methodology and limitations

In July and August 2020 we surveyed a sample of 2,604 respondents in Amhara, Gambela and Addis Ababa through telephone interview survey methods. Here is a summary of the people to whom we spoke:

- **The 2,604 survey participants represented 1,302 households and included 1,302 parents and 1,302 children.**

- **The children ranged from below grade four to grade 12.**

- **50.5% of the children interviewed were girls.**

For more details on the survey and on the respondent profile, see Appendix.

This was a convenience sample, drawn from contacts of the Ethiopia chapter of Malala Fund's Education Champion Network. Due to the sample size it cannot be considered representative of the whole of Ethiopia. Researchers administered questionnaires over the phone due to the need to observe COVID-19 safety guidance.

As this was a rapid assessment without opportunity for follow-up psychosocial or legal support, the survey did not include direct questions about sensitive issues like early and forced marriage, teenage pregnancy or gender-based violence. However, media reports point to a surge in rates of all these, each of which has the potential to impact girls' education.
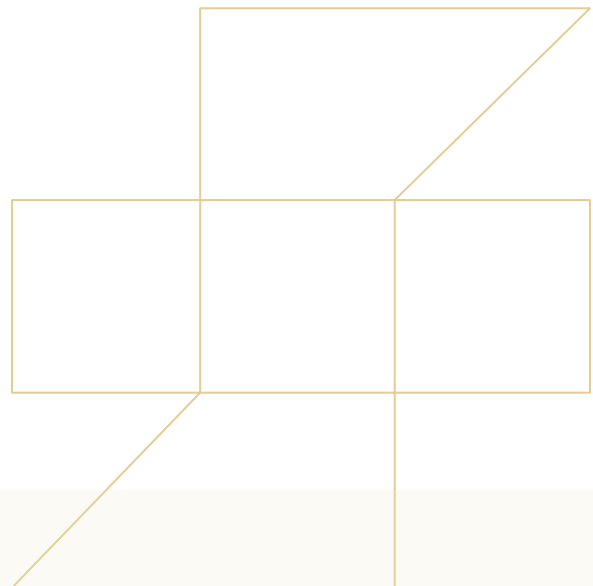
3. SURVEY ON COVID-19, GENDER & EDUCATION

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Our assessment offers a snapshot of how the school closures and lockdown have affected the households and students in Addis Ababa, Amhara and Gambela.

It looks particularly at the extent to which gender inequalities in education have persisted or even intensified during the pandemic. The survey also assesses the distance learning initiatives and other education support measures provided by the government or other sources, as well as social protection in the form of cash or in-kind support such as food aid.

"There is nothing new at home but in the school there was competition between students."

— Eshe, grade nine*

The majority of students that we surveyed — both girls and boys — wanted to learn during lockdown and anticipated returning to school. However, girls and boys received little support with distance learning from any source and access to the government's TV and radio distance learning lessons was limited.

Analysis of responses showed that the financial pressures were having a greater impact on girls' prospects of returning to school than boys'. Of the respondents not expecting to return to school, girls were three times more likely than boys to say it was because they would need to work and twice as likely to say that fees were a barrier. Girls in households facing food and/or cash shortages were less likely than girls and boys in richer households to say they would definitely return.

3.1 Poverty influences return to school prospects

When asked whether they expected to return when schools reopened, almost all girls and boys (95%) said they expected to return. However, the evidence is clear that

Comparative prospects of return to school in richer and poorer households

DEFINITE RETURN TO SCHOOL BASED ON **FOOD SECURITY**

DEFINITE RETURN TO SCHOOL BASED ON **FINANCIAL SECURITY**
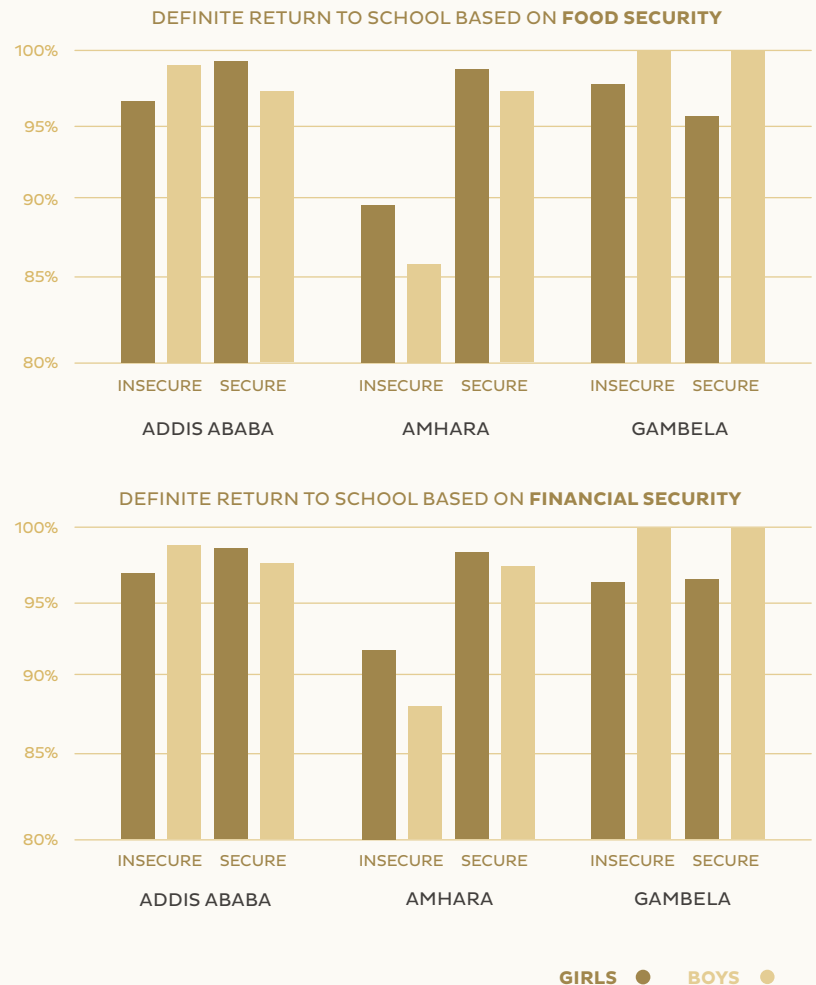
GIRLS ● BOYS ●

FIGURE 1

the economic crisis impacts girls' prospects of returning to school to a greater extent than boys'.

In Addis Ababa and Gambela, girls from households facing a cash crunch were less likely than boys to report that they would definitely be returning to school and even less likely if their households were facing food insecurity. Across the board, girls and boys from households that reported some form of hardship were less likely to be certain that they would return to school.

*Indicates pseudonym.

3.2 Girls have particularly strong commitment to learning

Over 90% of girls and boys said that they would be happy to receive learning material during lockdown.

When asked about the amount of time they would be willing to spend studying such material, over 50% of respondents reported that they would spend up to two hours per day on study. A significant minority of girls said they would be willing to dedicate more than three hours to learning each day. This compares with approximately five to six hours per day that they spent in lessons at school before the pandemic.

Girls also appeared to be overcoming the odds to find time to study during lockdown. When asked about actual time use, girls were slightly more likely to report spending time studying than boys despite also being much more likely to report spending time doing chores and caring for family members. This demonstrates a strong resilience and appetite for education despite the challenges they faced from the pandemic, poverty and social norms.

When asked about their quality of life before and after lockdown, girls were more likely than boys to report that their life was better before lockdown.

"Talking with adults is not interesting, I need to talk with my school friends."

— Kayla, grade seven*
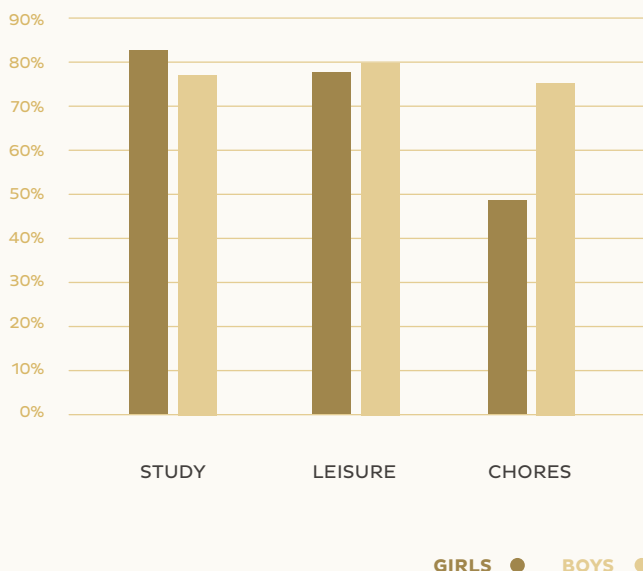
Indicates pseudonym.

Time use

GIRLS ● BOYS ●

FIGURE 2

Perception of quality of life before and after lockdown

(Question: When was life better?)

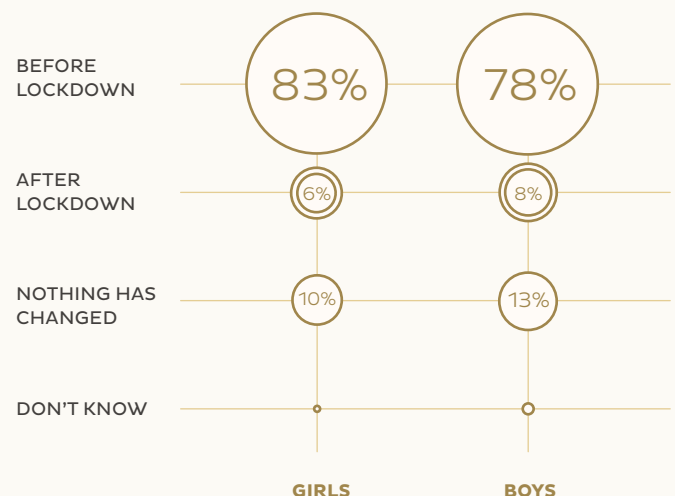|	GIRLS	BOYS
BEFORE LOCKDOWN	83%	78%
AFTER LOCKDOWN	6%	8%
NOTHING HAS CHANGED	10%	13%
DON'T KNOW		

FIGURE 3

3.3 Distance learning initiatives are not reaching students

Despite their reported commitment to learning, students faced a number of barriers to studying.

Worryingly, 50% of students reported they received no learning assistance at all.

There are a number of factors preventing students — particularly girls — from learning during school closures:

1

Lack of access to learning via technology

While the DLP theoretically makes distance learning available to many students via the internet, TV and radio, **a number of barriers — infrastructural, financial and social norm-related — prevent students from accessing technology-dependent learning options.** Although two-thirds of the households surveyed reported owning at least one phone, the majority of respondents said that they only intermittently have access to smartphones. Two-thirds of respondents reported

that they could only afford data sporadically. There were marked differences according to location. For example, respondents in Gambela were almost twice as likely to report not always having money for data than those in Addis Ababa, and 70% of respondents from the district of Debre Tabor in Amhara said that the phone they are using does not have access to the internet.

While most households surveyed have access to TV and almost half reported having a radio,

the uptake of EduTV and EduRadio was very low at 11% and 2% respectively. Relying on broadcasting as a learning tool depends on strong infrastructure and uninterrupted electricity. Furthermore, educational broadcasts provided under the DLP are only available at specific times of day in many regions; this presents a challenge for girls in particular, whose household responsibilities and lower status can prevent them from having access to the TV or radio at certain times.

"At school before COVID, I could discuss things with my teachers, meet my friends and learn."

— Mariam, grade eight*

2
Lack of alternatives to tech-based learning

While the government's response plan included material distribution in its distance learning provision, **only 3% of households — all in Addis Ababa — reported receiving education-related materials directly from the government, schools or education department.** The support they did receive was mostly in the form of rations or health-related items, such as medicine. Charitable organisations were more likely to provide education-related materials, such as books and stationery, compared to government or schools. Reports of this were still very low compared to health-related and food assistance.

3
Reliance on support from family members

38% of respondents said they relied on their family to support them with learning at home. While this is a positive sign of family motivation to support learning, it nevertheless represents a risk to their education by reproducing intergenerational education inequalities given the relatively low levels of parental education across Ethiopia.[10]
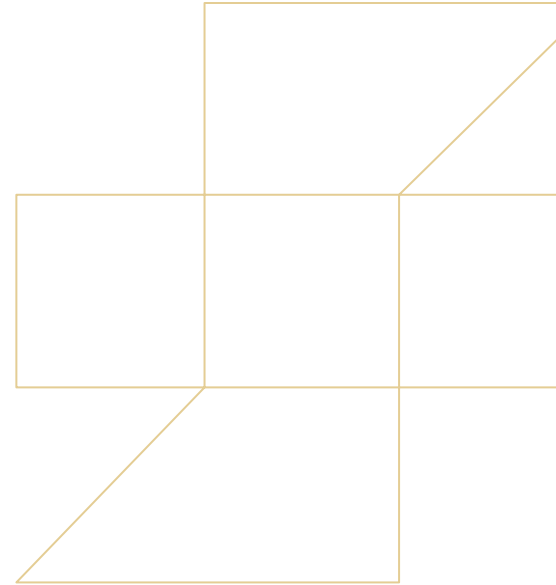
4
Unequal access to private tutors

While access to tutors is low in general, girls were 50% less likely than boys to report that they received learning assistance from a personal tutor.

Indicates pseudonym.

"I will take grade 12 national exams and now there is not enough access [to learning] at home to help me to study."

— Deborah, grade 12*

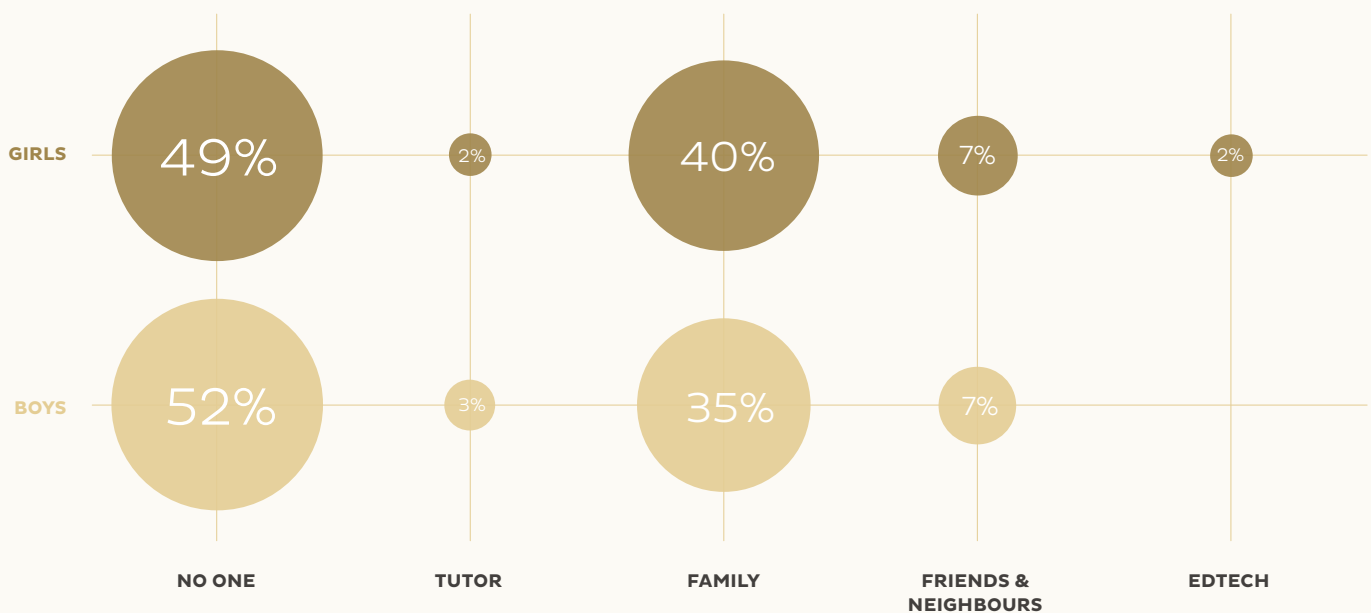*Indicates pseudonym.

Learning assistance received at home

	NO ONE	TUTOR	FAMILY	FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS	EDTECH
GIRLS	49%	2%	40%	7%	2%
BOYS	52%	3%	35%	7%	

FIGURE 4   16

3.4 COVID-19 fears, gender and poverty all influence return to school prospects

We asked those students who did not expect to return to school to explain the reasons they expected not to return. The reason cited most often was fear of COVID-19, which made up 57% of responses overall and 75% of responses in Addis Ababa, the most cited response for both girls and boys. The government used many schools as quarantine stations during lockdown, which may have created fears about contamination, deterring reenrolment.[11] These safety concerns about returning to school are reminiscent of those following the Ebola crisis, when fear of disease stopped teachers and students alike from returning to schools even after the crisis was over.[12]

The need to work was the second-most cited reason for not returning to school. Girls in Addis Ababa were three times as likely as boys in our sample to cite work as a reason for not returning to school. This was the opposite in Amhara where boys in our sample were more than twice as likely to cite work. Boys in Amhara also cited lack of money as a reason for not returning to school, which is unsurprising given that more than half of children in Amhara were in unaided private schools (compared with less than 15% and 3% in Addis Ababa

Reasons for not returning to school

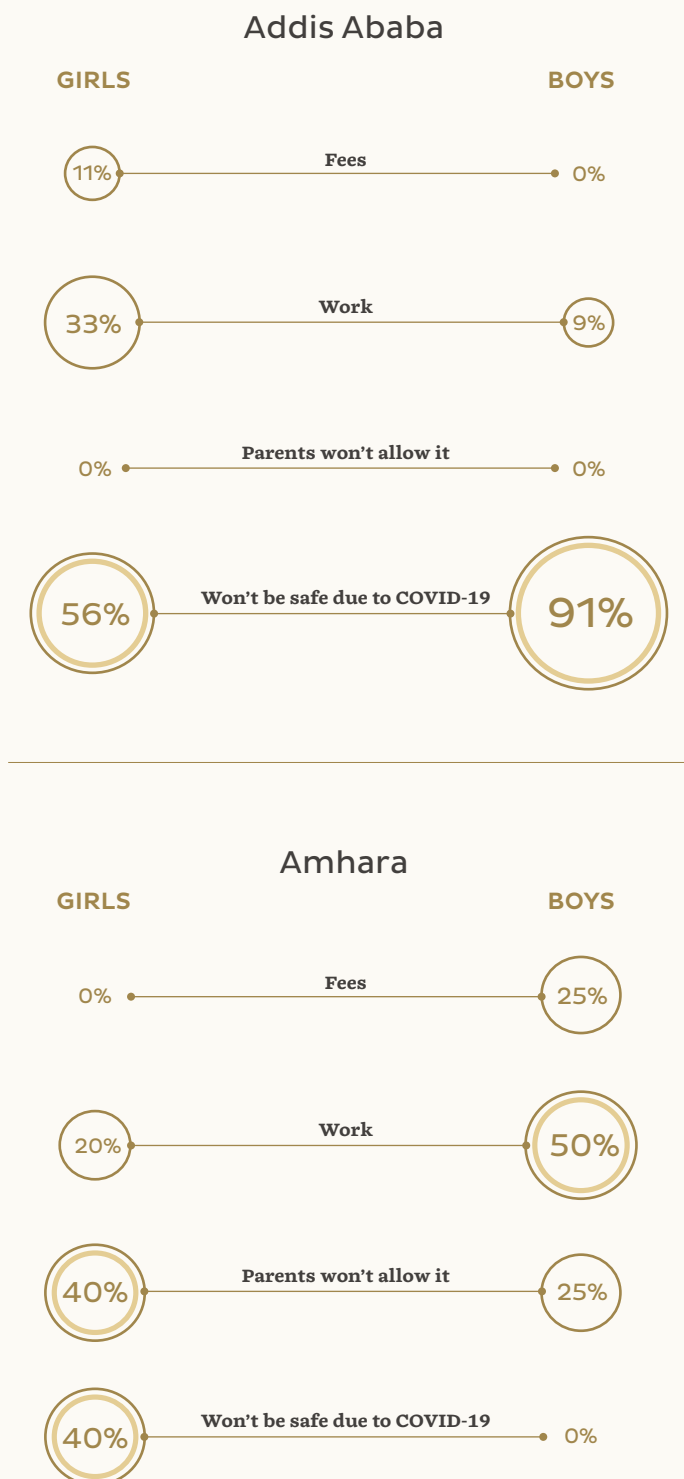Note: Respondents in Gambela did not provide answers to this question

Addis Ababa

GIRLS		BOYS
11%	Fees	0%
33%	Work	9%
0%	Parents won't allow it	0%
56%	Won't be safe due to COVID-19	91%

Amhara

| GIRLS		BOYS
0%	Fees	25%
20%	Work	50%
40%	Parents won't allow it	25%
40%	Won't be safe due to COVID-19	0%

FIGURE 5 · 17

and Gambela). The financial strain on households as a result of the pandemic — evidenced in findings below — may explain both a growing pressure on children to work and a reduction in students able to afford fee-paying school. While both boys and girls in Amhara reported that their parents would not allow them to return to school, girls were almost twice as likely to cite this as a reason for dropping out of education.

"For me learning is better than working in a garage because if I finish my education I will have a better job."

— Liya, grade 12*

*Indicates pseudonym.
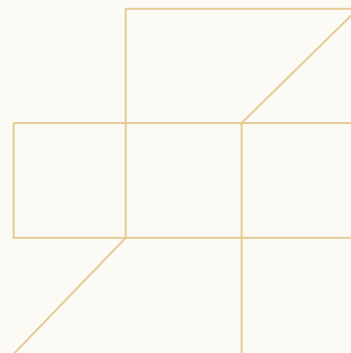
3.5 COVID-19 has intensified economic stress on households

Poverty prevents students from completing their education and is a factor in driving gender gaps in education in Ethiopia.

For those households reliant on income from the informal sector (the majority of those surveyed for this paper), the distancing measures have made it virtually impossible to continue earning a living.

Our survey showed that the economic impact of COVID-19 translated into grave financial circumstances for families:

- **Over 70% of adults reported facing a cash crunch coinciding with the crisis.**

- **Less than 2% felt they have sufficient employment opportunities where they live.**

- **More than half of adult respondents stated that they did not have enough food at home and had been using various coping strategies that could ultimately have negative impacts.**

Despite the evident severity of the situation, very few respondents reported receiving economic assistance. Less than 4% of respondents reported receiving any cash assistance from the government, with respondents in Gambela the most likely to report receiving assistance. Almost no respondents reported receiving some form of assistance from the education system; only 1% of respondents in Amhara reported receiving such support. Only respondents in Addis Ababa (0.57%) and Amhara (7.11%) reported receiving assistance from charities.
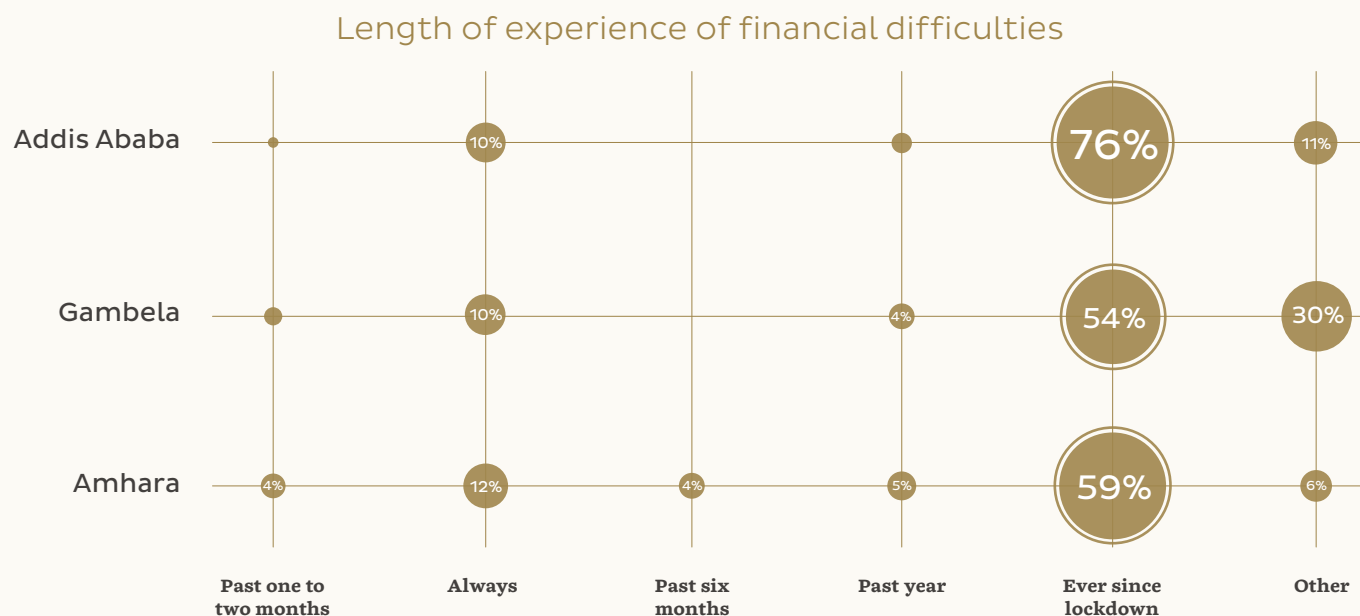
Length of experience of financial difficulties

	Past one to two months	Always	Past six months	Past year	Ever since lockdown	Other
Addis Ababa		10%			76%	11%
Gambela		10%		4%	54%	30%
Amhara	4%	12%	4%	5%	59%	6%

FIGURE 6   19

4.

EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT PROVISIONS

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4.1 Distance learning

As there are no monitoring systems in place to assess Ethiopian students' access to distance learning and their performance, there is no clear data to show if and how girls and other vulnerable groups are accessing and learning through these methods across the country. Our findings show that only 13% of students surveyed were able to access TV and radio distance learning initiatives and the majority found them to be insufficient.

The government broadcasts 30-minute daily lessons in six core subjects through TV and radio, but students have reported that this form of education was inferior to what they would have received in school.[13] Some students are having to be self-sufficient to fill the lost learning by reading books or going over previous exam papers.[14]

Patchy internet connectivity and lack of electricity are widespread issues in Ethiopia.[15] [16] Secondary evidence also shows that, nationally, fewer women and girls have access to media including TV, radio and internet than men and boys.[17] Girls from rural areas, pastoralist communities, female-headed households, poorer households and marginalised societies are less likely to access distance education services.[18]

In addition to educational broadcasting, the Ministry of Education published digital copies of textbooks for ninth and 12th grades on its website. Unlike broadcasting, this is an option accessible to students whenever they choose to study, though technology barriers may still limit access for some. A representative of the School Improvement Programme Directorate from the Ministry of Education reported that some regions have produced and distributed textbooks in hard copy format, while other regions have tried to facilitate home-based learning by deploying one teacher per five students. There is not yet public evidence available as to the scale and reach of these measures.

Many students in our sample also reported relying on family members to assist them with distance learning. However, a recent study also found that the majority of teachers believed parents were unable to support their children's learning given work commitments, low literacy levels and low value for education.[19]

4.2 Return to school and remedial learning

The Ministry of Education's COVID-19 response plan includes a provision of one million birr for a "back to school" campaign with particular emphasis on girls and students with special needs.[20] Ensuring all children return to school — particularly those most at risk of dropping out — will require local authorities and school management committees to raise awareness among their communities of the importance of education and to reassure them of the safety measures in place at school. However, in a survey of school staff, only 60% of principals and

41% of teachers indicated that their schools were making preparations to support the students least likely to reenrol.[21]

Given the reported rise in child marriage and gender-based violence during the pandemic, this support will be critical for girls.[22] [23] Child brides are much more likely to drop out of school and complete fewer years of education than their peers who marry later.[24] Before the pandemic the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate of the MOE prioritised improving girls' enrolment rates, reducing their attrition rates and tackling violence and

harassment in and out of school. During the pandemic, the Directorate has also been working as a member of the Ethiopia Education Cluster to integrate gender in the COVID-19 education response strategy and guidelines, but with limited success.

The government's intention to automatically promote students to the next grade may increase morale and incentivise students to return to school. But it is critical that education authorities plan remedial classes to help students catch up, particularly for lower-performing students and those not able to learn during lockdown. Without this support, students may fall further behind and this may increase dropout rates later in the academic year.

The government must ensure schools are COVID-safe in order to allay the fear of contamination that may deter students and teachers returning. Just 5% of schools in Ethiopia (1% in rural areas) have basic hygiene service that includes handwashing facilities with soap and water.[25] Social distancing will be a challenge for those schools with small or few classrooms.

Analysis of the government's Safe School Reopening Protocol revealed gaps in planned interventions to reach more marginalised girls, including:

- **Little evidence of targeted support or catch-up provisions for marginalised girls specifically to address learning loss.**

- **Little evidence of targeted incentives that support girls' reenrolment, such as funds for uniforms and education materials.**

- **Insufficient guidance on how to ensure that girls, students with special needs or disabilities and those of lower socioeconomic backgrounds will reenrol in school.**

- **Insufficient evidence of additional support — human, financial and technical — provided to the Women, Youth and Children Offices, who are mandated to support girls' reenrolment.**

- **Little evidence of plans to make WASH facilities in schools gender-responsive, including the provision of sanitary pads.**
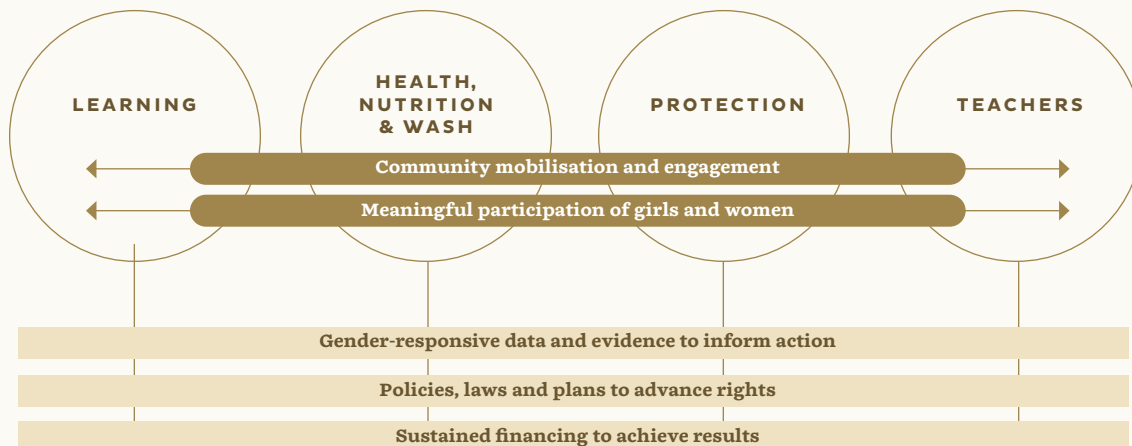
Building back equal: Girls back to school guide

Evidence from past crises shows that girls are particularly vulnerable when schools are closed for a long time.[26] In September 2020 Malala Fund joined with UNESCO, UNICEF, Plan International and the UN Girls' Education Initiative — a sub-group of the UNESCO-convened **COVID-19 Global Education Coalition** — to provide guidance for education ministries.[27]

Building back equal: Girls back to school guide recommends how policymakers can help keep girls learning during school closures and ensure they are able to return to the classroom once it is safe.

The guide makes suggestions around four dimensions of school closures, highlighted in the diagram below. They include actions needed prior to, during and after school reopenings and are grounded in an awareness that schools may close again to respond to subsequent waves of the pandemic.

Dimensions of school closures

LEARNING **HEALTH, NUTRITION & WASH** **PROTECTION** **TEACHERS**

Community mobilisation and engagement

Meaningful participation of girls and women

Gender-responsive data and evidence to inform action

Policies, laws and plans to advance rights

Sustained financing to achieve results

4.3 Nutrition and livelihoods

School closures not only resulted in the suspension of classes but the loss of school feeding programmes, which many households relied on to support their children's health. Prior to lockdown, the government had extended school feeding programmes for the most vulnerable children and around one million children benefited from these programmes across seven regions by the end of 2019.[28] However, reports suggest that this provision has been curtailed by school closures and only 27% of schools who reported having a school feeding programme pre-pandemic confirmed that it was being redistributed during school closures.[29]

Our findings show that while 70% of adults reported facing a cash crunch during the pandemic, just 4% of respondents claimed to have received cash assistance from the government. The government's national social security programme (the Productive Safety Net Programme) covers 300+ woredas, with a reach of approximately eight million households per year. The programme has continued through the pandemic, with larger advance payments made to families upfront.[30] However, with estimates of between 1.6 million and four million projected job losses during COVID-19 and as many as 600,000 people per year falling into poverty in the socioeconomic fallout, the demand for such assistance is now much greater.[31] [32]

The National Education and Training Policy sets out special financial assistance to those "deprived of educational opportunity" to improve their participation in education.[33] In practice, education-focused cash transfer programmes have largely been reliant upon donor funding and administered through multilateral agencies during emergencies.[34] However, the MoE is planning to establish a girls' education fund as well as encouraging donors to promote cash programming for vulnerable girls in emergency-prone areas.[35]

4.4 Financing

COVID-19 required the government to put a temporary halt to economic activity to decrease virus transmission, putting a strain on the economic growth and available resources in the country. While Ethiopia allocates an impressive 27% of its national budget to education, the fall in GDP inevitably reduces the public revenue available to spend on all social sectors.[36]

Despite the economic challenges, the government has so far signalled its commitment to education by allocating 22 billion birr towards school reopening, which is the highest emergency education budget that the country has ever seen. The majority (60%) is to be mobilised via development partners, with the government covering the remaining amount from the central and regional governments' budgets.

4.5 Building schools' resilience and inclusivity

Contingency planning is essential to ensure learning continuity during times of crisis to protect students and educators and to build resilience within the education sector. The government's Ethiopia Education in Emergency 2016–17 Response Strategy, developed to address the then severe drought in the country, was not prepared for a scenario such as that caused by the pandemic.

5.

RECOMMENDATIONS

✿ ✤ ✤

Our research has highlighted the depth and scale of the educational challenges facing girls and boys in Ethiopia.

Economic stress and social norms exacerbate school closures to create a perfect storm. More marginalised girls are particularly at risk of learning loss and dropping out from school. Government provisions, however well-intended, have not proved adequate to keep children learning or guarantee that the crisis does not lead to a permanent setback.

1

Provide gender-equitable and inclusive distance learning to support all students through current and future school closures.

- The federal government should review the Distance Learning Plan to be more adaptive to the needs of marginalised populations of all kinds, taking into account students' reported low use of lessons offered via television and radio.

2

Ensure safe and gender-responsive school reopenings and help girls make up for lost learning.

- Federal and regional governments should take the recommended, gender-responsive actions detailed in the _Building back equal: Girls back to school guide._

- The federal government should effectively communicate the health and safety measures they are taking to make schools safe from COVID-19 to reassure teachers, students and their families.

- Given limits on resources and infrastructure, plan for rearranging classroom layout, building additional classrooms and implementing a half-day shift cycle.

- Initiate affirmative action on grading exams and provide catch-up tutorials for girls.

3

Mitigate the economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis to help families prioritise education, especially for girls.

- The government should expand the Productive Safety Net Programme to support those newly vulnerable to food and income insecurity and help families meet immediate needs.

- The federal and regional governments should scale up social protection programmes targeted at girls to help mitigate negative coping strategies that could impact reenrolment, such as rushing girls to get married.

4

Improve cross-sector collaboration to overcome social norm barriers for girls.

- Launch special programmes to tackle harmful traditional practices that may have surged during the pandemic, such as early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting as well as all forms of gender-based violence.

- Provide free sanitary pads and separate WASH facilities for girls.

5

Protect progress for girls' education and rebuild the education system with gender at the centre to promote inclusive growth and ensure every girl can learn.

- Federal and state governments should establish emergency financing packages for education and increase the budget for the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children.

- Federal and state governments should make education a key component of their disaster risk preparedness strategies and ensure that these strategies address gender-specific challenges.

- Federal and state governments should adopt — or, in some cases, continue to use — education sector planning and budgeting approaches that take gender-specific challenges into account.

- The federal government should expand crisis modalities developed during the pandemic to reach children who were out of school prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
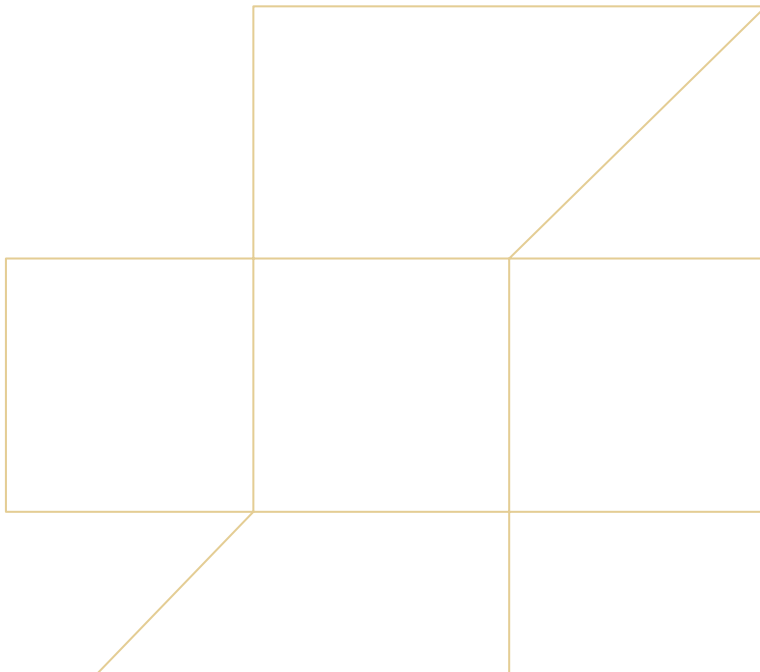
APPENDIX

Methodological note

This study was conducted in partnership with organisations with presence in the selected regions, therefore sampling was purposive. The survey was conducted between the months of July and August 2020. Researchers carried out all interviews over the telephone. We spoke to households in two parts. First, we spoke to a parent or guardian within the household and then sought their permission to speak to a child from within the same household. We asked parents questions pertaining to: (i) their social and demographic profile, (ii) the impact of COVID-19 closures on the economic status of the family and (iii) the receipt of support from governments and civil society. We spoke to children about

their: (i) educational profile, (ii) access to and use of technology, (iii) continuation of learning during lockdown and (iv) time use. While the data we gathered was mostly quantitative, we collected some qualitative data as pertains to perceptions of quality of life during lockdown.

Following our ethical guidelines, we did not ask questions regarding gender-based violence as we could not ensure mechanisms for safeguarding.

Enumerators collected the data and recorded it in an Excel database. Malala Fund then cleaned and analysed the data using Excel and Tableau.

Type of school

GOVERNMENT SCHOOL	70.43%
UNAIDED PRIVATE SCHOOL	29.57%

Grade distribution

	GIRLS	**BOYS**
BELOW GRADE FIVE	4.26%	4.04%
GRADE FIVE	5.62%	3.26%
GRADE SIX	2.74%	3.73%
GRADE SEVEN	7.90%	5.12%
GRADE EIGHT	5.17%	6.37%
GRADE NINE	25.99%	29.19%
GRADE 10	35.11%	36.80%
GRADE 11	6.23%	4.81%
GRADE 12	6.99%	6.68%

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Malala Fund Education Champions in Ethiopia

The Ethiopia chapter of the Malala Fund Education Champion Network is a national cohort of educators and activists who advocate for policy and programmatic solutions to ensure that all girls can have access to 12 years of free, safe, quality education.

Through our Education Champion Network, Malala Fund supports the work of local leaders in Afghanistan, Brazil, Ethiopia, India, Lebanon, Pakistan and Turkey who understand challenges in their communities and are best placed to identify, innovate and advocate for progress towards girls' secondary education around the world.

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