

## **ORIGINAL ARTICLES**

# **Success and Challenge of Girls' Living Quarters: the Case of Southwestern Ethiopia**

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### ***Abstract***

*The purpose of this study was to examine the success and challenges of Girls living quarters in the southwestern Ethiopia. To see this, data were collected from the beneficiary and non-beneficiary students, teachers, the donor representatives and the custodians with open and closed ended questionnaires, interview and focus group discussion methods. Then the data were analyzed through percentage and qualitatively. Results show that the girls living quarters create access to education, increased enrollment rate, increased academic performance, give security and create favorable learning environment to attend their education. On the other hand, the areas that need improvement in the hostel include administration, learning materials, vocational skill trainings, recreational center and food service. Thus, it is advisable that for better functioning of the living quarters the woreda education officers and other concerned bodies should strive to help the living quarters have independent administration, provide food services for the students, provide adequate, relevant and need based vocational trainings, and avail necessary educational materials for girls learning.*

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

It is an established fact that education is the means by which society conveys its experiences, new findings, skills, attitude and values accumulated for many years, in its struggle for survival and development. It enables individual and society to make all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes (Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), 1994).

Accordingly, in a world based on science and technology, education determines the level of prosperity, welfare, and security of the people. That is why educators say that on the quality and number of persons coming out of the school and colleges will depend on the success in the great enterprise of national reconstruction whose principal objectives is to raise the standard of living of our people (Aggrawal,1997)

In sum, education is a cornerstone of economic, political, social development

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and a principal means of improving the welfare of individuals (Fagerlind and Saha, 1988). It improves the productive capacity of societies and their political, economic and scientific institutions. It also helps to reduce poverty by mitigating its effects on population, health and nutrition and by increasing the values and efficiency of the labor offered by the poor (World Bank, 1991).

Research and experience has shown that particularly education of women plays an important role in the socioeconomic development of a country, because it has an important effect on the family in particular and the society in general than men education. It has been aptly remarked, "If you educate a boy, you educate an individual; if you educate a girl, you educate the whole family" (Aggrawal, 2004). Thus, the girls' education should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justices but also because it accelerates social transformation

The beneficial effects of female education have been well documented in literatures, that is, there is ample research that demonstrates that education increase the productivity and earnings of both men and women. Econometric studies estimate an increase in income of as much as 10 to 20 percent with each additional year of Schooling (World Bank, 1993).

In addition, Hans (2003) has pointed out that while the impact of additional schooling on earnings is similar for males and females, educated females generate more substantial social benefits. Educated women have healthier, fewer, and more educated children. As schooling tends to improve a mother's knowledge and use of health practices, each additional year of schooling is estimated to decrease the mortality rate of children under the age of 5

by up to 10 percent. Moreover, educated women have fewer children; it is estimated that one extra year of schooling reduces fertility by approximately 10 percent. Because educated women have fewer children, fewer will die in birth. Finally, women with schooling are more likely to send their own children, females in particular, to schools.

This being the fact of the importance of education for the whole society in general and for girls in particular, however, girls unlike their counterpart boys face many problems or challenge that affect their education and hinder them being successful. Generally, the factors are multifaceted, interrelated, and rooted in the culture, social, economic and other related problems of the society (UNICEF, 2003).

When we think of the constraints, limits and obstacles to girls' education in developing countries like Ethiopia; we tend to think in terms of ideas and concepts for instance cultural traditions and discrimination against girls. However, sometimes, the small but concrete things make a difference. One of these is where a school is located (UNESCO, 2003).

This simple but significant issue cannot be ignored. One major factor in parents' reservations about girls' schooling, in addition to the issue of not being able to pay for the education, is that their daughters will have to get education at a place that is far from home. This poses one important challenges, especially in poor rural areas (UNESCO, 2003).

One of the serious challenges is the issue of safety and security. Research findings in many countries (La Franiere, 2005) revealed that the further away a school is located, the more it is considered by

parents to be a threat to a daughter's security. This is evident in the example of primary schools in most rural areas in Ethiopia. The same author also stated that interviews with parents and students disclose that the closeness of the school to their homes was a major factor in girls attending primary schools there.

Substantiating the above idea a study conducted in Pakistan reveals that in a certain elementary school there was 33 percent female literacy rate increase when girls' primary schools was within a distance of one kilometer ( Sipahimanlani, 1999). This shows that when the school distances from home decrease there is an increase in girls' enrollment and attendance.

Another similar study conducted in Algeria makes the case even more clear. This study finding tells that the enrolment rate for girls was 84 percent when a school was less than one kilometer away. However, girls' enrolment dropped significantly, to 25 percent, when the school was more than five kilometers away. As it is clearly seen from the above two research results that distance from the school is the major factor affecting girls' education (World Bank, 1993).

Scholars suggest that to reduce the above problem and to boost girls' literacy and education in developing countries like Ethiopia a number of mechanisms should be designed. One of the best solutions for this problem suggested by scholars is constructing and administering schools in areas as near to residential areas as much as possible or establishing girls living quarters near the school. This proximity will reassure parents that their daughters' are safe and reduce the time spent in travel to the detriment of household responsibilities (Tilak, 2003).

It is with this objective that Menschen fur Menschen, established three girls living quarters some 10 years back in southwestern Ethiopia.

#### **Statement of the problem**

As it is clearly mentioned in the background part, girls face many problems that hinder them to continue their education. One of this is distance from the school. To overcome this problem different mechanism can be devised, of which one is establishing girls' boarding school/ girls' living quarters. With the purpose of reducing girls drop out and repetition, rate Menschen-fur-Menschen, non-governmental organization established three girls living quarters in south western Ethiopia some 10 years back. However, to the best knowledge of the researchers, since its establishment whether these living quarters are achieving the intended purpose or not are not yet assessed. Thus, the researchers are interested to know the contribution of these girls' living quarters in playing their roles of reducing girls' drop out and repetition rate and how much these girls living quarters are contributing for the expansion of girls' education. Moreover, the researchers are also interested to investigate the challenges these living quarters faced in playing their roles. Accordingly, the study addressed the following questions.

- ❖ What are the contributions of girls' living quarters for girls' educational achievement?
- ❖ What are the problems that affect girls' living quarters from playing their roles in reducing repetition and drop out rates?

#### **Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study was to examine the success and challenge of girls' living quarters in southwestern Ethiopia. More specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

- find out the major successes achieved by these girls' living quarters in creating access, reducing drop outs and repetition rate etc. of girls education
- investigate the major problems that affect girls' living quarters to effectively function their activities

### **Significance of the study**

The study is significant because it evaluates the contribution of girls' living quarters in increasing access, decreasing dropouts and repetition rates of girls in secondary schools. It would give an insight to those who are concerned with girls' education to take necessary measures for the betterment of girls' living quarters. Moreover, this study would be significant for those who are involved in establishing and expanding girls' living quarters or girls' boarding schools to be ware and adjust their program in line with the local context of the community. Generally, this study is a feedback to the organizations that has established and allocated fund to these girls' living quarters to improve the program in the future.

### **Delimitation of the study**

The scope of this study is delimited to Girls living quarters in southwestern Ethiopia. More specifically, it is delimited to girls' living quarters in Bedelle, Bure, and Yayu. It is also delimited to the investigation of the contribution and problems of girls' living quarters.

### **The study research design**

In conducting the study a descriptive survey method was employed on the assumption that it helps to examine the contribution of girls' living quarters in increasing access, decreasing drop out and repetition rate of girls in secondary schools and major challenges faced in playing its role.

### **Sample and Sampling techniques**

The samples of this study were teachers, students (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries), school principals, representatives, of donor organizations and custodians, who are found in three girls' living quarters. Generally for this study a total of 29 teachers (8 from Bedelle, 11 from Yayu, and 10 from Bure), 90 beneficiary students (34 from Bedelle, 25 from Yayu and 31 from Bure), 53 Non-beneficiaries students (15 from Bedelle, 17 from Yayu and 21 from Bure) were taken as sample of the study by simple random sampling techniques. Generally, from each school 30% of the teacher and beneficiaries students were included as a sample of the study. However, some teachers and students were not willing to return the questionnaires that make the number of responses rate low. The rational behind including non-beneficiary students as a sample of the study was to triangulate the information obtained from the beneficiary students. In addition, all the principals of sample secondary school, one representative from the donor organization and one custodian from each living quarter were taken as sample of the study through purposive sampling technique.

### **Instruments of data collection**

To gather data from the samples the following instruments were employed:

#### **A. Questionnaire**

To collect data from the students (both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) and teachers two set of both open and closed ended questionnaires were prepared. One set of questionnaires were prepared in Amharic and Afan Oromo for the students to avoid language problem and the other set of questionnaires were prepared in English for teachers.

### **B. Interview**

Interview guide question were prepared for the school principals and donor representatives. In addition, the researchers interviewed the principal and the vice-principal of the school and the donor representatives.

### **C. Focus Group Discussion**

Focus group discussion guiding questions were prepared for student (beneficiary and non-beneficiary students). Based on the guideline beneficiary and non-beneficiary students participated in focus group discussion independently.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

After preparing the instruments of data collection validating the instruments was done using experts review and discussion. Here some irrelevant items were discarded and some ambiguous items were modified as per the comments given by the expert . And then the issue of reliability was addressed by pilot testing of the instruments in one living quarters and the samples used for pilot testing were excluded from the actual data collection.

### **Procedures of data Collection**

After preparing questionnaires (both open and closed ended) for the students (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries') and teachers; it was pilot tested by some sample respondent. Then the instruments were modified based on the pilot test and the final drafts of questionnaires were prepared. Then after the questionnaires were administered to the sample respondents and enough time were given for the respondents to fill the questionnaires. On the other hand, after preparing the interview guide for school principals and donor organization representative's interview were conducted. Moreover, focus group discussion guiding questions were prepared for the students

and focus group discussion was conducted with students (beneficiary and non-beneficiary).

### **METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the sample students and teachers by the use of closed ended questionnaires were tallied, tabulated and analyzed quantitatively by the use of descriptive statistics. On the other hand the information, which was obtained by open ended questionnaires, focus group discussion and interview questions from students, teachers, principals, custodians and donor organization representatives, were analyzed qualitatively. In other words, both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data analysis were employed concurrently.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of closed ended questionnaires from teachers and students have been analyzed through percentage and on the other hand, the qualitative data have been analyzed qualitatively. Most of the results have been organized using tables followed by discussion. For the sake of convenience, related items or concepts have been treated together. Thus, following are findings and discussion with respect to the variables of the study.

#### **The Role of Girls living Quarters**

Girls living quarters are established with the purpose of helping the girl students by providing a hostel service and creating a good learning environment. To see its contribution data were collected from the respondents through the relevant instruments and the results of the study are presented in the following order.

#### **Access to Education**

One of the crucial goals of living quarters is to increase access to learning opportunities of children from underserved and disadvantaged communities like girls.

It makes schooling for many rural children particularly girls possible. Accordingly, the participants were asked to respond whether the girls' living quarters contributed in

providing opportunity for girls to attend their education or not and the result is presented in the table below.

**Table I. The role of Girls' living quarters in providing access to education**

Item	Beneficiaries		Non Beneficiaries		Teachers		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do hostels create access to education for girls?								
A. Yes	46	51	28	53	16	45	87	51
B. No	44	49	25	47	13	55	85	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

As it can be seen from the above table respondents were asked on the role of the girls living quarter in expanding access of education for female students. Almost half (51%) of them responded that this living quarters create access to education for female students. While (49%) of them replied that it did not creates access to education.

On the other hand, the donor representatives and school principals were interviewed on the same issue and they strongly believe that the presence of this hostel created access to education; because there are students who cannot continue their education if the hostels were not there. This result of the research also confirms the UNESCO (2003) view that states the primary goal of the hostel is to increase access to learning opportunities for girls and disadvantaged children.

However, as it is seen in the above table almost half (49%) respondents believe that the living quarters did not create access to girls' education. One of the possible reasons for this could be since the living quarters have limited capacity they can

accept few students in each year, as a result there are students who want to join living quarters but can not join it. Supporting this view the donor representative has to say this "in each year there are a number of applicants to join the living quarters but we accept some of them due to limited space in the living quarters." Hence, it might be due to this reason that some believe that the living quarters did not create access to girls' education.

#### **Attaining Gender equity in enrollment, retention and achievement**

A handful of literature review shows that since the hostel gives residence to girls who come from distant areas where opportunity for getting upper primary and secondary education is absent; girls living quarters are one of the strategies designed to achieve gender equality in enrollment, retention and achievement. To observe the contribution of girls living quarters for achieving gender equality, retention and achievement questions were forwarded to respondents and the results are presented in the following table.

**Table II. The role of Girls' living quarters for girls' enrollment, retention and achievement**

Item	Beneficiaries		Non Beneficiaries		Teachers		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do the presence of hostels increase number of girl students in the school?								
A. Yes	82	91	45	85	25	86	152	88
B. No	8	9	8	15	4	14	20	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Do the presence of the Hostels helped the girls to achieve better in their academics?								
A. Yes	89	99	46	87	23	79	158	92
B. No	1	1	7	13	6	21	14	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Do hostels helped girls not to repeat in schools?								
A. Yes	85	94	29	55	22	76	136	79
B. No	5	6	24	45	7	24	36	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

As it is seen from the table above the first item in the respondents questionnaire was the one that ask them to indicate whether the presence of the girls living quarter increase the number of girl students in the school or not. The great majority (88%) of them said that it increased the enrollment rate of female students. While a very few (12%) of them replied it does not increase.

In the same way interview and focus group discussion results show that these living quarters helped the students to attend their schooling by providing a hostel service. As a result, the number of girls increased in the secondary schools.

Supporting the respondents' response UNESCO (2003) research on boarding schools conducted in Asia and pacific regions particularly in Nepal showed that the presence of hostels for girls promoted

girls enrollment. Since the hostel bring girls from remote and rural areas of the country, where opportunity for obtaining secondary education do not exist.

As it is depicted in the above table respondents were asked on the role of this hostel on the academic achievement of girls' students. Most of them (92%) respondents believe that the presence of the hostel helped the girl students to achieve better in their academic performance. Where as very few (8%) of them said no.

Likewise, the interview result of the school principals and donor representatives confirmed that it helped the students to achieve better in their academic performance. They replied that since they live in the hostel they got free time for the study and tutorial class during night that helped them to perform better. In addition,

they asserted that due to this reason the numbers of repeaters are reduced significantly to very low or none.

Supporting the respondents' response scholars also contend that hostels facilitate conditions for girls to use their potentials. Research findings in Nepal, Vietnam and India (UNESCO, 2003) shows that when girls are living in the hostel they are free from labor work and they can have adequate time to study and thus improve their academic performance. On the other hand, when girls are with their parents, parents need their girls' labor for food production and for care of younger siblings, so they do not have time to attend school and study. Thus, in such cases, girls living quarters provide an opportunity for the girls students to attend their school and perform better in their academics.

The third item in the above table shows that respondents were asked to respond whether the living quarters helped the girls not to repeat in their education or not. As it is revealed in the table, most (79%) of the respondents believe that it helped the students not to repeat in their education. Where as, the remaining (21%) respondents think that it does not reduce repetition rate of girl students.

Research study in Malawi shows similar result with this study it claims that boarding schools enhance girls' academic performance there by reducing repeating rate of the girl students since they do not have to spend time going long distances to schools and are not burdened by domestic chores at home. Likewise, in 2000, a regional consultation for Ministers of Education in Nairobi agreed that boarding schools for girls were important in achieving Education For All (EFA) goals by giving access to education and by increasing retention rate of the students.

#### **Provide improved learning Environment for the students**

One importance of living quarters is that it can provide good learning environment for the students. Due to this reason, it is a choice for many families that cannot give adequate facilities for study. The hostel provides good water and sanitation services, sport and recreational service etc. All these have contributions for students good study environment. Respondents were requested to indicate their opinion on the role of living quarters in creating favorable condition for girls' learning and the result is presented as follows in the table below.

**Table III. The role of girls living quarters in creating suitable learning environment**

Item	Beneficiaries		Non Beneficiaries		Teachers		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do the hostels provide a good learning environment?								
A. Yes	89	99	50	94	26	90	165	96
B. No	1	1	3	6	3	10	7	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

Table III, shows that the proportion of respondents who replied the existence of

suitable study environment in the hostel. As it is seen respondents were asked to

reply whether the living quarters created good learning environment for girls or not. Almost all (96%) the respondents said that it created suitable learning environment for girl students. While others that is, (4%) of them believe that, the hostel did not create good learning environment.

However, the results of interview with principals of the schools and donor representatives confirm that the living quarters has good hygiene and sanitation service but poor in recreational and sport facilities, which are necessary for the girls to refresh their minds. Scholars such as Hein (1986) suggested that one of the necessities that the boarding schools should fulfill is recreational and sport facilities. He goes to say that without these facilities living quarters are incomplete. The living quarters should include the usual academic

facilities such as classrooms and laboratories, as well as a wide variety of other facilities for extra-curricular activities such as music-rooms, squash courts, swimming pools, cinemas and theatres.

**Enhance Academic Performance of Girls**

Girls living quarters are believed to enhance academic performance of girls. When girls are living in the living quarters they get free time to study, attend tutorial class, go to library and study their education , discuss with their friends etc. as a result their academic performance is enhanced. So as to know the role living quarters played in enhancing girls academic achievement (through developing study habit and helping to get tutorial classes) questions were prepared and administered to the participants and the result is presented as follows.

**Table IV girls living quarters and academic performance**

Item	Beneficiaries		Non Beneficiaries		Teachers		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do the hostels helped the Students to develop study habit?								
A. Yes	86	96	45	85	24	83	155	90
B. No	4	94	8	15	5	17	17	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Do you think that the hostel helped to get tutorial classes from the teachers and friends								
A. Yes	88	98	49	92	29	100	166	97
B. No	2	2	4	8	-	-	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

Table IV indicates that the majority of the beneficiaries, (90%) of participants replied that the girls living quarters helped the girls' to develop study habits. While a small proportion (10%) of the respondents reported that, it does not help to develop

study habits. From this result it can be said that when girls live in the hostel they get free time to do their homework, assignment and study their education as a result they might develop study habit.

On the other hand, as it can be seen from the above table respondents were asked to indicate whether living in the hostel helped the girls to get tutorial class from the teacher and friends. Almost all (97%) of the participants responded that it creates a suitable condition for getting tutorials. Where as, the rest (3%) of the respondents were replied that it does not help to have tutorial class.

In addition, the school principals and donor representative were interviewed and all of them confirmed that students who are residing in the hostel are beneficiaries of the tutorial class. They also explained that students are given a chance to choose a subject matter which they think is difficult to understand (they usually choose English and Mathematics) and the school principal together with the donor representatives assign teachers who give tutorial class. Moreover, the principals of the school stressed that when these teachers are giving tutorial class they also orient students how to study the subjects. Perhaps this could help the students to develop their study habit. On the other hand, teachers also described that after giving the tutorial class, they usually offer exercises that help to understand the concepts. When the students came to the regular class, it becomes a revision. As a result, students achievement increased they said.

Supporting the respondents' response UNESCO (2003) conducted research in Malawi and the results clearly showed that girls living quarters enhance girls' academic achievement, since they do not have to spend time going long distance to schools and are not burdened by domestic chores at home. Furthermore, a comparative research in southeastern Africa on secondary schools has been shown that academic performance among girls who live in the hostel is higher than

from those who live with their parents. From this result, it can be said that a living quarters for girls, offering the best academic education, and preparing the next generation of leaders and professionals.

### **Give Security and protection to girls**

Security is one of the concerns of the parents on sending the girls to school. Particularly in rural areas, when the schools are far from home. If girls have to walk a long way to school, parents do not want to send their children for security reasons. In this case, girls living quarters are better solution for the problem since it gives security for girls. Respondents were asked to give their opinion about the contribution of living quarters in protecting and securing girl students, and the result is presented in the table below.

Table V indicates that the great majority (96%) of the participants confirmed that living quarters give security for students. In open-ended questions, the respondents mentioned the reasons why they say it give security, by saying since the hostel has guards during night, the woreda policy is cooperative in cases of any problem, the schoolteachers and the principals of the school are cooperative in any time of emergency. In addition, they said the hostel has rules and regulation that guide us to keep our security. For instance male students or others cannot enter in to the campus, coming late (after 10'clock) is forbidden etc. These all helped them to be secured in the hostel. This result shows the living quarters solve one of the serious worries of the parents that is, their daughters security.

Moreover, the custodians of each living quarters mention during their interview that they usually patrol the campus during the day and the nighttime with the guards as well as pass the night with girls in the

**Table V. The role of girls living quarters in providing security and protection**

Item	Beneficiaries		Non Beneficiaries		Teachers		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do you think that the girls in the hostel are secured?								
A. Yes	90	100	49	92	26	90	165	96
B. No	-	-	4	8	3	10	7	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Have you experienced any security problem on girls that live in the hostel?								
A. Yes	14	16	11	21	5	7	30	17
B. No	76	84	42	79	24	83	142	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

hostel so they make students feel secured. Similarly, the focus group discussion results with the students also affirm that students feel secured in the campus it is protected with guards and woreda police.

Respondents were asked to cite if they have experienced any security problem since they started to live in the hostel. Most (83%) of the respondents replied that they have not experienced any security problems. On the other hand, few (16%) of beneficiaries, (21%) of non-beneficiaries and (17%) of teachers responded that they face security problem

In the open-ended questionnaires, the respondents were asked to report the type of problem they face and they reported that even though it is very minor they usually harassed (insulted, bullied etc) by boys while they are coming to the hostel, in the school and in the town. However, they explained that it is very minor and do not have much impact on their education.

Similarly, the responses of the interview with school principals and donor representatives assure that there is no

serious problem frightens the security of the students. They also stated there was no incidence they see or hear that affects any security problems on girl students live in the living quarters.

Research findings in Africa and other parts of the world indicates that in communities where girls are not allowed to move out side home, living quarters can give security and protection. In Mongolia, for instance, rural parents are more likely to encourage girls than boys to continue schooling because they perceive that living quarters offer personal protection and education that ensures their daughters of future jobs; conversely, boys are perceived to be better able to defend for themselves. Malawi research also tends to confirm that boarding schools provide security and protection to girls (UNESCO, 2003).

**Promote socialization and mainstreaming of poor and minority children**

Living quarters are established with the very objective of creating an opportunity to learn social skills for those groups of student who come from the minority

groups. In other words, it can be a means of socializing and mainstreaming children coming from rural and remote areas and those belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities. In the hostels children are introduced to new ways of living; new routines and responsibilities; new technologies; and new teachers and fellow students from outside their community.

This gives a wonderful chance of socialization for these children. Questions were posed for the participants of the study to investigate to what extent these girls living quarters are creating favorable conditions for girls to get socialization skills and the results are presented in the table below.

**Table VI. The role of living quarters in developing Social responsibilities (socialization, tolerance, responsibility and new ways of life)**

Item	Beneficiaries		Non Beneficiaries		Teachers		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do the hostel help the girls to develop socialization skills?								
A. Yes	64	71	49	92	28	97	141	82
B. No	26	29	4	8	1	3	31	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Do the presence of girls in the hostel taught them new ways of living?								
A. Yes	87	97	41	77	27	93	155	90
B. No	3	3	12	23	2	7	17	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Do the presence of girls in the hostel taught them responsibility?								
A. Yes	89	99	43	81	28	97	160	93
B. No	1	1	10	19	1	3	12	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Do the presence of girls in the hostel taught them tolerance?								
A. Yes	90	100	51	96	25	86	166	97
B. No	-	-	2	4	4	14	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Socialization**

Since girls in the living quarters are living and learning together with other students who come from different areas with varied economic background, social status, religion, culture, language etc.; one of the purposes of living quarters is helping the

girls to develop socialization skills such as tolerance, appreciating, respecting others culture language adapting new ways of life and so on.

As it can be seen from the above table, the great majority of them, (93%) of the

respondents believe that the hostel helped the girls to develop socialization skills. Whereas (7%) of the participants think that, the hostels do not create such skills. The contribution of the hostel for developing students' socialization skills is consistent with studies in Viet Nam, China and Nepal. According to UNESCO (2003) document, living quarters are means of socializing and mainstreaming children coming from rural and remote areas. This result indicates that hostels are places where girls who come from remote and rural areas learn socialization skills.

#### **New ways of living**

The respondents were asked about the role of the living quarters in developing a new ways of living. As it is seen from table VI, (97%) of the beneficiaries, (77%) of non-beneficiaries and (93%) of the teachers believe that the living quarters contributed a lot in developing students' new ways of living. While, (3%) of the beneficiaries, (13%) of the non-beneficiaries and (7%) of the teachers think that it does not help the students to develop new ways of living.

To supplement the respondents' information, interview was conducted with donor representative and school principals, their response confirm that when students come to the hostel for the first time they face a problem of adjustment. But after a few days they know each other and tried to adjust themselves with the new environment and the new ways of living in the hostel.

Research conducted by Collin (2006) also proves that boarding schools/ living quarters/ offer a unique opportunity for students to meet and make friends with students from other cultures. They will be exposed to students from different religious, geographic, and linguistic backgrounds. They will make friends with

students that they would usually not have a chance to meet. Being part of a boarding school community can help them overcome cultural barriers associated with living outside their country.

#### **Responsibility**

Questions were also posed to the respondents to see whether the living quarters helped the girls to shoulder responsibilities or not. As table VI, portray almost all (99%) of beneficiaries, (81%) of non-beneficiaries and (97%) of teachers deem living quarters contributed much for the students to practice and shoulder responsibilities. Whereas a very small proportion of (1%) of the beneficiaries, (10%) of non-beneficiaries and (3%) of teachers suppose that, the hostels do not have a contribution for students' development carrying responsibilities.

The interview response of the school principals and donor representatives also support the majority view of the respondents that the hostel provides a chance for the students to practice in taking responsibilities. They explained that when students live in the living quarters different responsibilities are given for each students starting from leading their dormitories to involving and guiding different committee. Moreover, they are requested to manage their economy (e.g. food, money etc.). All these give an opportunity for the students to practice bearing responsibilities by their own if they would not get when they were with their parents.

Emma (2006) in his research findings affirm that girls boarding schools are designed to encourage self-discipline and provide valuable lifestyle skills such as making healthy choices, engaging in empowering activities, and building confidence through their individual hard work. Besides, to the above idea living

quarters offer a variety of life-enhancing and positive activities, relationships, and other options that help them to develop responsibility that they would not acquire if they were with their families.

### Tolerance

As it can be observed from table VI, all (100%) of the beneficiaries, (96%) of non-beneficiaries and (86%) of teachers verified that the hostel provides a chance to develop sense of tolerance (to live together). On the other hand, very few, (4%) of non-beneficiaries and (14%) of teachers think that it does not help to develop tolerance. In addition to the above idea, the interview result shows that since students came from different background, they have different culture and to live together with the friends is very difficult without tolerance. Thus, students get an orientation from the donor representatives and the school principals on how to live together. This helped the girls to develop a sense of tolerance.

### Developing language, vocational skills and acquiring current information

In the current education system of Ethiopia, the students are expected to be competent citizens who possess adequate and relevant knowledge, skills and attitude and values that help them to play their roles in the society. This is possible when the learners are exposed to current information, given practical skills and capable in their language abilities, which are the means of understanding the subject matter that they learn. Thus, living quarters are expected to play a significant role in developing language, vocational skills and making aware of the students about the current information. To see these, questionnaires were prepared and distributed to the respondents and the results are presented in the table below.

**Table VII. Living quarter's role in developing language and vocational skills and acquiring current information**

Item	Beneficiaries		Non Beneficiaries		Teachers		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do the presence of girls in the hostel enable them to learn language?								
A. Yes	67	74	39	74	23	79	129	75
B. No	23	26	14	26	6	21	43	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Do the presence of girls in the hostel enable them to learn vocational skills?								
A. Yes	49	54	46	87	7	59	112	65
B. No	41	46	7	13	12	41	62	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Do the presence of girls in the hostel helped them to get current information?								
A. Yes	67	74	39	74	23	79	129	75
B. No	23	26	14	26	6	21	43	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Language**

Students who live in the hostel come from different ethnic groups. As a result, they speak different language. To see how much living together in the hostel helped the girls to learn others ( their friends) language respondents were requested to replay on this issue As it is depicted in above table (74%) of beneficiaries, (74%) of non beneficiaries and (79%) of teachers reported that it has created a favorable condition to learn the language of their friends. Where as (26%) of beneficiaries and (26%) of non-beneficiaries and (79%) of teachers replied that it does not allow them to learn language. This result clearly shows that the hostels contributed a lot for girls to learn and develop language skills other than their mother tongue.

Research findings by Collin (2006) affirm that living quarters are one of the places that create good opportunity to learn languages. In boarding school, students attend class, play sports, and live with different students who speak different language. This creates a helpful environment for learning English/ international language/, Amharic/ national/ language and others. This gives them the chance to make friends and communicate in a common language on a regular basis. Furthermore tutorial classes on language subject are offered in living quarters this also help students learn English or other languages more quickly. These classes are designed to improve student's speaking, reading and writing ability. Generally, living quarters provide students an excellent opportunity to improve their language skills.

### **Vocational skills**

Respondents were asked to report whether students who live in the living quarters got some vocational training (such as sewing,

food preparation, handcraft, dressing etc.). As it is shown in table VII, (54%) of the beneficiaries, (87%) of non-beneficiaries and (59%) of the teachers believed that the girls get such training. Where as (46%) of the beneficiaries, (13%) of non-beneficiaries and (41%) of teachers doubt the presence of such trainings.

On the other hand, information was collected from the donor representatives through interview. They explained that experts who come from at the center (Metu) give girls vocational training skills (sewing, food preparation, etc). They noted that since all students came from rural areas they may not have adequate skills on preparation of food and other skills thus the main objective of such training is to provide such skills for the students. As a result, the first training focuses on food preparation Moreover, to generate income for themselves handcraft training and sewing is also given. The major purpose of such training for girls is that perhaps some students may not be successful in joining universities and colleges in such case with the skills they acquire they can create their own job and earn a means of living and be independent citizen of the country.

As it can be observed in the above table, even though the majority of the respondents believe that the hostel provide vocational skill trainings, a quite significant number (41%) beneficiary students and teachers tend to believe that it did not give a adequate training. One possible explanation for this could be though there is vocational skill training, that training may not be need based or the frequency of the training may be limited.

### **Current information**

As it can be seen from the above table VII, (98%) of the beneficiaries, (97%) of the

non-beneficiaries and (97%) of the teachers responded that the presence of girls in the hostel helped them to get current information (e.g. HIV, sex education, family planning etc). On the contrary, a few number (2%) of beneficiaries, (3%) of non-beneficiaries and teachers each, think that they do not get current information.

The interview response also indicated that students get current information from different sources such as through the clubs and mass media. There is girls club in each hostel. Through this club, the students get current information about HIV, family planning, sex education, etc. In other words, the club members invite professionals (people from the health centers or other nongovernmental organizations) to give education on current issues. In addition, the donor representatives usually orient students on current issues. Moreover, the participants

make clear that in one of the hostel (Bedele) has Television donated by the sponsoring organization with the request of the students with the purpose of getting current information and as a means of recreation.

#### Problems of girls living quarters (hostels)

Like any other educational strategies, living quarters/hostels are not without problems. Some educators explained that living quarters/hostels might result in physical and psychological problems on the parts of the beneficiaries. These problems range from being ignorant of their culture to hampering of their growth and learning. To see the practical problems of the sample living quarter respondents were asked to replay on the issue and the result is put in the table below.

**Table VIII. Possible drawbacks of living quarters**

Item	Beneficiaries		Non Beneficiaries		Teachers		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do the Presence of girls in the hostel felt them as alienated from the society/parents?								
A. Yes	12	13	7	13	6	21	25	15
B. No	78	87	46	87	23	79	147	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Have you any experience of girls who live in the hostel dropped out of school due to pregnancy?								
A. Yes	37	41	17	32	14	48	68	40
B. No	53	59	36	68	15	52	104	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Cause of sense of alienation

Even though living quarters are correctly perceived as instilling social and personal survival skills and keeping children occupied, they also exclude children from

normal home-based, domestic daily life, and are liable to engender a sense of exclusiveness and superiority in students. Some believe that children attending boarding schools can become culturally

illiterate. Being away from home means being unable to learn many cultural values, beliefs, practices, and customs that are needed to function effectively in the community. Once these children return to their communities, a profound loss of identity may result.

However, as it is seen in Table VIII most (87%) of the beneficiaries, (79%) of the non-beneficiaries and (85%) of teachers consider that they are not alienated from the society/ parents. While (13%) of the beneficiaries, (21%) of non-beneficiaries and (15%) of teachers believe that the students are alienated from the society/parents. This result of the study is inconsistent with the other research findings that confirm living quarters as cause of sense of alienation.

The above results (that is the inconsistency with the other research findings) of the study might be due to: (1) the beneficiary girls join the living quarters not at the early age so that they might have learned their cultural values; and (2) the living quarters did not provide food they usually go to their families so that they do not feel that they are not alienated from their parents.

The school principals and donor representatives were confirmed that since students either they went to their families at the end of a week or two weeks to bring their rations or their parents come to bring the students ration frequently. As a result they always meet with their parent due to this students may not develop a sense of alienation from their families.

#### **At risk of Pregnancy and drop out**

One of the challenges of girls living quarters is that students may be exposed to unsafe pregnancy and drop out from schools. Accordingly, the respondents were requested to report if they have any

experience that girls who live in the hostel dropped out of school due to pregnancy cases. As it can be seen in the table XIII most (59%) of the beneficiaries, (68%) of the non beneficiaries and (52%) of teachers reported that they did not know any girl who was living in the hostel and dropped out of school due to pregnancy case. Nevertheless, a significant number of (41%) beneficiary, (32%) of the non-beneficiaries and (48%) of the teachers said that they know a girl who dropped out of school due to pregnancy case.

A critical observation of the above table portray that though most of the participants believe that there is no girl who dropped out of school due to pregnancy case a significant number of participants disagree with this idea. They strongly argue that there are few students dropped out from the school due to unsafe pregnancy. They support their argument by providing specific case for instance one of the respondent reported that there was a girl who attended her education living in the living quarters and has a boy friend from the town and when she was grade 10 she become pregnant and drop out from school and left the town and went to somewhere else.

Supporting the respondents' response research findings in Zimbabwe and Nigeria indicates that girls in the living quarter are at risk of becoming pregnant and dropping out of schools. The risk of pregnancy prevents parents from sending adolescent girls to living quarters.

#### **Areas that needs improvement in the existing scheme**

To support the quantitative data open ended questionnaires were prepared for the students and the teachers to report on areas to be improved in the hostel, other kind of help this nongovernmental organization

render to the hostel, and whether there is any other body who support these living quarters other than Menschen fur Menschen or not?

Respondents (beneficiary students, non-beneficiary students, and teachers) were asked to respond to mention the things to be improved in the hostel to provide appropriate service for the beneficiary students. Accordingly, the respondents listed different issues to be improved. The points can be categorized in to administrative, material, training and other issues.

The respondents strongly contend that of all issues the administrative issue needs very much attention. Since the hostel has no manager who runs and controls the activities, many problems are arising due to absence of good management. For instance, when there is a problem in the hostel such as lack of water, electric city, no body is responsible for immediate action. Thus, they stressed that the responsible body should assign independent manager who is diligent and responsible for carrying out the activities of the hostel effectively. In addition, to strengthen the security of the girls' adequate number of guards should be assigned. Again, they also suggested that in each hostel adequate number of facilitators/custodians, counselors/advisors should be assigned. Similarly, there should be a follow up of students discipline by the administrators. In order to develop teamwork and cooperativeness among students and to improve the students' performance students of the same grade should be assigned in one dorm.

The second issue that the respondents suggest to be improved is material support. They remark that since the purpose of the hostel is to facilitate girls learning who are poor and come from remote rural areas, it

is good to provide learning materials for the students such as exercise books, pen, pencil, reference materials/books etc. In addition the tutorial class being given should be strengthened by including other subjects and extending the time of the tutorial class. Furthermore they commented that in the hostel there should be mini library and reading/ study rooms.

The third issue they raised is related to training. All the respondents note that training should be given for the girls side by side with academic education. They pointed out that first since girls came from rural areas they might face a lot of problems in their life as well as in their education so to tackle their problem life skill training is necessary for girls. So there should be life skill training for these students. Moreover, as it is known not all the students may be successful in their academic schooling as a result students should have got vocational trainings that will enable them to create job and generate income for themselves.

The other issue they mentioned is that to attentively follow their education girls need to be recreated. Hence, different recreational centers such as sport fields, different games should be established in the hostel. In addition to this a mechanism should be designed that enable students to get current information as students in the hostel are adolescent, information related to HIV, sex education, family planning etc. are necessary for them to led their life safely.

Finally, they suggested that since girls are usually from remote and rural areas they frequently went to their families in the weekends to bring food. As a result, they cannot use the weekends for their education. Sometimes, they face many problems when they went home in the

weekends. Therefore, to minimize this risk and enable the girls to use their time (particularly at weekends) properly a mechanism should be designed that help the girls to get food.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the study the following conclusions were formulated:

The girls living quarters help to increase access to education, gender equity in enrollment rate of female students, retention rate of female students, and academic performance in the secondary schools through providing opportunities to attend education, tutorial support, and free time to study, attend tutorial class, go to library, discuss with their friends and study their education. These shows that living quarters are one of the strategies of increasing gender equity in secondary schools of the country.

Even though the living quarters tried to create suitable learning environment for girl students the environment is inadequate since it lacks recreational and sport facilities, which are necessary for the girls to refresh their minds.

Since the living quarters created a favorable conditions for the girls to learn new ways of living; new routines and responsibilities; tolerance, new technologies; language, get current information, vocational skills, from their teachers and outside their community. Thus, it is one of the institutions that serves as center that promote socialization and mainstreaming of poor and minority girl students.

The girls living quarters give security for the girl students as a result they have not encountered any security problem since they started to live in the hostel this indicates that living quarters are the safest

place to attend education that can reduce portents fear of their daughters security.

The living quarters did not create a sense of alienation on the parts of the girl students besides it did not exposed to unsafe pregnancy and drop out from schools. Hence, this indicates that the living quarters are the safest place to learn that is it is a home away from home.

The area that needs improvement in the hostel related on administration, material support, recreational facilities, nourishment support, and different vocational skill trainings.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and formulated conclusions the study comes up with the following recommendations:

Any institution to achieve the desired outcome should have independent administration that effectively manage and coordinate the resources to achieve the set targets. Thus the Region Education Bureau or the Zonal Educational Department or the woreda Education Office or Menschen fur Menschen should assign skilled administrators who manage the institution successfully to realize the target set.

Girls who join the living quarters come from rural areas and those who cannot afford house rents, buying educational materials. To encourage and enhance the academic performance of girls the concerned bodies should provide educational materials such as exercise books, pen, pencil, reference materials/books etc or design mechanisms that these students should generate income and support themselves by fulfilling the necessary educational materials which are vital to their education.

The current trend on objectives of education is to help the learners to be productive by creating jobs. Moreover, it is clear that not all the students may be successful in their academic schooling so students should have got vocational trainings that will enable them to create job and generate income to be self-sufficient. Therefore, the concerned bodies (Region Education Bureau or the Zonal Educational Department or the woreda Education Office or Menschen fur Menschen) should provide for the girls adequate and relevant vocational and life skill training side by side with academic education to make girls self sufficient and self employed.

To make the living quarters suitable for girls learning and creates conducive learning environment the concerned bodies (Region Education Bureau or the Zonal Educational Department or the woreda Education Office or Menschen fur Menschen) should establish different recreational centers such as sport fields and different games in the hostel. Moreover, the concerned bodies should designed mechanism that enable students to get current information as students in the hostel are adolescent, information related to HIV, sex education, family planning etc. are necessary for them to led their life safely.

Students who join the living quarters are from the remote and rural areas and they frequently went to their families by traveling a long distance at the end of each week for bringing their rations as a result they might waste their study time. To make girls attend their education effectively the concerned bodies (Region Education Bureau or the Zonal Educational Department or the woreda Education Office or Menschen fur Menschen) should supply nourishment for the girls together with the living hostels or design other

mechanisms that enable the girls generate income and fulfill their food.

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