



Intervention: Girls' Collectives

Inspiring Married Adolescent Girls to Imagine New Empowered Futures (IMAGINE)

ABOUT IMAGINE

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CARE is **testing a package of interventions that hold promise for delaying the timing of first birth among married adolescents in Niger and Bangladesh**. IMAGINE takes a holistic approach to build married girls' capacity and agency to make decisions about their life courses, to address social and structural barriers that prevent delaying, and to present alternative economic opportunities for girls so that early motherhood is not their only option. We aim to **document and share learning** from this initiative to build evidence around the issue of adolescent childbearing globally.

Girls' Collectives

In both Niger and Bangladesh, Girls' Collectives underpin the implementation of the IMAGINE project. Led by trained female facilitators from the region, these important platforms **ensure married and unmarried adolescent girls' social support and access to information**. Each group is made up of approximately 15-25 girls aged 15-19 from a single village.

Girls follow a 25-session (Bangladesh) and 26-session (Niger) participatory curriculum designed to enhance their knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy related to **sexual and reproductive health, relationships, and financial literacy**. Sessions address puberty and other reproductive health topics, decision-making, communication skills, and gender and social norms, and a range of other issues. The sessions also serve as a platform to connect girls with community health workers and women role models, such as entrepreneurs.

Girls' Collectives also function as a platform for **instruction on financial literacy and entrepreneurship** and as an **entry point for training on vocations and income-generating activities**. In Niger, Girls' Collective participants also have the option to participate in **Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups, supervised by field facilitators and trained adult VSLA mentors**, to grow their savings and receive loans for important income generation activities.

Following the full implementation of the curricula in 2019, **peer leaders were selected and trained to deliver Girls' Collective sessions**. Starting in 2020, Girls' Collectives transitioned to a peer-led model where peer leaders facilitate and manage the Collectives with ongoing support and mentorship from the previous facilitator. By engaging peer leaders, the project aims to facilitate sustainability of the groups while providing opportunities for girls to build their leadership skills.

Key **Girls' Collective materials** include:

- Girls' Collective Field Facilitator Curriculum
- Girls' Collective Peer Leader Curriculum
- Girls' Collective Peer Leader Mentorship Packet
- Girls' Collective Peer Leader Gender-Based Violence Training Package

Upon finalization, all project tools will be accessible at:

<https://www.care.org/our-work/health/adolescent-health/Imagine/>



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Implementation timeframe: January 2019 – May 2021

Donors: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Participants: The project will reach married and unmarried adolescent girls ages 15-19, their husbands, families and communities, as well as health workers in Kurigram District, Bangladesh and Zinder Region, Niger.



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Girls' Collective by the numbers:

- 1,430 girls in Bangladesh across 60 groups
- 1,318 girls in Niger across 55 groups

Key project Components:

- Girls' Collectives
- Health Worker Transformation
- Livelihoods Training
- Fada Groups (Niger only)
- Community reflective dialogue (Niger only)
- Couples Counseling and Couples Events (Bangladesh only)

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