



### PROBLEM STATEMENT

In Ethiopia, adolescent girls have great potential to bring positive change to their communities and country, yet their potential is too often constrained by early marriage. While trending downward, child marriage rates in Ethiopia are still near 40%, with 16% of girls married by age 15. Early marriage contributes both to high primary school drop-out and high fertility rates for adolescent girls.

### OUR SOLUTION

TESFA's approach builds on CARE's successful Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) model by organizing early-married girls into groups through

which a 12-month sexual and reproductive health curriculum is delivered, in addition to financial literacy training. In TESFA, these groups not only provide a forum for economic empowerment and sexual/reproductive health (SRH) curriculum, but also creates a safe space to meet and build a supportive network with other married adolescents. TESFA also works with community 'gatekeepers' (village elders, religious leaders, mothers-in-laws, husbands, etc.) who are recruited to become champions of the program and help to create an enabling environment for married adolescent girls to achieve both economic and health-related goals.

### PROGRESS

Program evaluations of TESFA have proven this model improves the economic, personal, and social lives of married adolescent girls. The proportion of girls who used modern contraception increased by 27% and there was an increase in SRH knowledge and communication with their husbands. In addition to positive health impacts, TESFA led to increases in saving for productive investments and income generating activities.

### LOOKING FORWARD

This initiative will contribute to CARE's Taking Charge program, which aims to scale TESFA to improve the lives of married and unmarried adolescent girls across contexts with a high prevalence of early marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. This investment will initiate this program, which we hope to catalyze with financial support from additional champions for adolescents' sexual and reproductive health.

