



Intervention: Livelihoods Training 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 the evidence base around the issue of adolescent childbearing globally.

Livelihoods Training

With delayed first birth comes the potential for alternative futures to early motherhood. The IMAGINE project posits that girls' access to earning opportunities is one possible pathway for contributing to self-realization as well as family and community support for delaying. In order to build their resiliency, support their financial and personal goals, and build the local economy, selected Girls' Collective participants in both Bangladesh and Niger have the opportunity to engage in **income generation activities**. Girls' Collectives function as a platform for **instruction on financial literacy and entrepreneurship**, including 10 sessions on topics like budgeting and financial planning, market research, and creating a business plan.

These sessions provide girls with a basis on which to build technical vocational and income-generation skills. After completing a **rigorous market analysis** to identify sectors offering transformational, accessible, and profitable opportunities for married adolescent girls, CARE worked with private sector and government partners to establish partnerships and training support in key sectors. In Niger, this includes training in cowpea processing and refinement, habbanaye (goat rearing), and feed/fodder input services. In Bangladesh, opportunities include IT entrepreneurship, jute and cotton diversified products, and telecom retailing and mobile phone repair. After the training, CARE and its partners are working to create market linkage opportunities for girls through internship and job opportunities, craft fairs and product promotion, professional associations, and ongoing mentorship. Finally, in Niger, 1170 Girls' Collective participants are participating in **Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) groups** to grow their savings and receive loans for income generation activities.

Key **livelihood activity materials** include:

- Youth Savings and Loan Association Manual and associated trainings (French)
- Financial literacy and entrepreneurship sessions (included in the Girls' Collective curriculum)

Upon finalization, all project tools will be accessible at:

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



Josh Estey, 2020

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.



Josh Estey, 2020

Livelihoods Training by the numbers:

- 991 girls in Niger
- 600 girls in Bangladesh

Key project Components:

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

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