

Advancing Opportunities for Women, Girls, and Youth

 ETHIOPIA

Cuso International's programs in Ethiopia focuses on creating opportunities for women, girls, and youth by addressing systemic barriers, promoting gender equality, and fostering community-driven development. These programs, including U-GIRLS 2 and SHARE, use holistic approaches to support individuals and strengthen community resilience through education, training, and social transformation.

- Support **1,000 adolescent girls**, including those with disabilities, to access higher education
- Enhance **youth employability** through skills training
- Promote **gender-responsive education** for over **7,500 students**
- Mobilize **100,000 community members** to support girls' education and gender equality
- Build capacity among **teachers, administrators, and government institutions** to institutionalize gender equality



Key activities

U-GIRLS 2

(Promoting greater access to university for GIRLS)

- **Educational support:** Tutorials, mentorship, leadership training, and resources to remove barriers for girls.
- **Community engagement:** Gender sensitization workshops for parents and educators to challenge societal norms. Engaging parents, teachers, and community members on the importance of girls' education fosters a more supportive environment for girls at home, in school, and throughout the community. Community engagement is vital, as parental attitudes and societal expectations often dictate whether a girl remains in school or is forced to drop out.
- **Capacity building:** Teacher and administrator training for inclusive, gender-sensitive education and gender-responsive climate action. The gender-responsive climate action training equips participants with practical knowledge on climate change and encourages them to engage in environmental protection activities, such as tree planting and creating green spaces within school compounds. By linking gender equality with environmental sustainability, the U-GIRLS 2 project acknowledges that girls' education can be a powerful force in addressing global environmental challenges.

- **Positive masculinity training program**, which acknowledges that true gender equality cannot be achieved without the active involvement of boys and men. This training targets male students, teachers, administrators, and community members, encouraging them to critically examine and challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes that perpetuate inequality.
- **Economic empowerment**: Business training for families to alleviate financial pressures on girls.
- **Green practices**: The project encourages schools and communities to take small but impactful steps, such as creating green spaces, adopting vermiculture and planting trees, which not only contribute to environmental health but also create a tangible connection between students and the natural world.
- **Mental health and psychosocial support**: Addressing emotional barriers and fostering resilience. The integration of mental health and psychosocial support through initiatives like the Multi-Family Healing Spaces recognizes the importance of addressing the holistic well-being of girls affected by conflict and displacement.

SHARE Program (Sharing Canadian Expertise for Inclusive Development and Gender Equality)

- **Skills development**: Technical and soft skills training for youth to improve employability
- **Gender equality training**: Workshops to integrate gender-sensitive practices across education and employment sectors
- **Inclusive governance**: Strengthening policies and institutions to support marginalized groups
- **Volunteer expertise**: Canadian volunteers bring global perspectives to support local development initiatives
- **Support for women and youth entrepreneurs**: Training programs to boost economic independence

Program success stories

“Cuso’s support transformed my life. From school supplies to leadership lessons, the program has improved my grades from 60% to 79.9% and made me a confident leader.”

Silvana Daniel, 11th Grade Student (U-GIRLS 2)

“The SHARE training taught me technical skills and boosted my confidence to secure employment. It’s been life-changing, opening doors I never thought possible.”

Hirut, SHARE Program Participant

“As a parent, I’ve seen how gender sensitization training has changed our community. Girls now focus on school, and families support their education more than ever.”

Birhane Derbie, Parent and PTSA Member (U-GIRLS 2)

Program timeline

U-GIRLS 2: 2020–2026 (extended for deeper impact)

SHARE: 2020 - 2028

Funding and donor engagement

\$14.9M

Global Affairs Canada for U-GIRLS 2

Program structure and key team

members

Country Representative

Wendwossen Kebede

Program Manager

Mahari Tadele

Sr MEAL Officer

Yabebal Ayalew Mengsha

Program Support and Finance Manager

Hirut Kassa



Partnerships and collaborations

- **Institute of International Education (IIE):** Capacity-building for U-GIRLS 2 beneficiaries
- **Interpeace:** Mental health and psychosocial resilience initiatives
- **Green Love Appreciative Development (GLAD):** Training for families and schools in green agricultural and economic practices (ex: vermiculture, organic composting, simple seedling, biogas etc.). Supporting strengthened environmental and agricultural clubs at school
- **Ministry of Labour and Skills (MOLS):** Volunteer providing support with development of concept notes and creating relationships with MOLS partners for possible employment opportunities
- **Global Affairs Canada:** SHARE program funding and collaboration