

*A360 Ethiopia*

---

**RESEARCH  
SNAPSHOT**

---

*Here are some of the stories of the people we met who inspired us in our initial research phase. We heard about the trajectories of a girl's life, how contraception is being used, and amazing stories of advocacy in the community. This only begins to capture the rich conversations we had about a complex challenge.*

*Where we went*

# 127

## INTERVIEW SESSIONS



### 29

ADDIS ABABA

### 20

AFAR

### 40

OROMIA

### 38

TIGRAY

*Who we talked to*

# 295

## PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

### 83

ADOLESCENT  
GIRLS

### 49

ADOLESCENT  
BOYS

### 55

MOTHERS

### 32

FATHERS

### 13

MALE  
PARTNERS

### 35

COMMUNITY  
INFLUENCERS

### 6

HEALTH  
EXTENSION  
WORKERS

### 21

OTHER  
SERVICE  
PROVIDERS

# SELECT STORIES

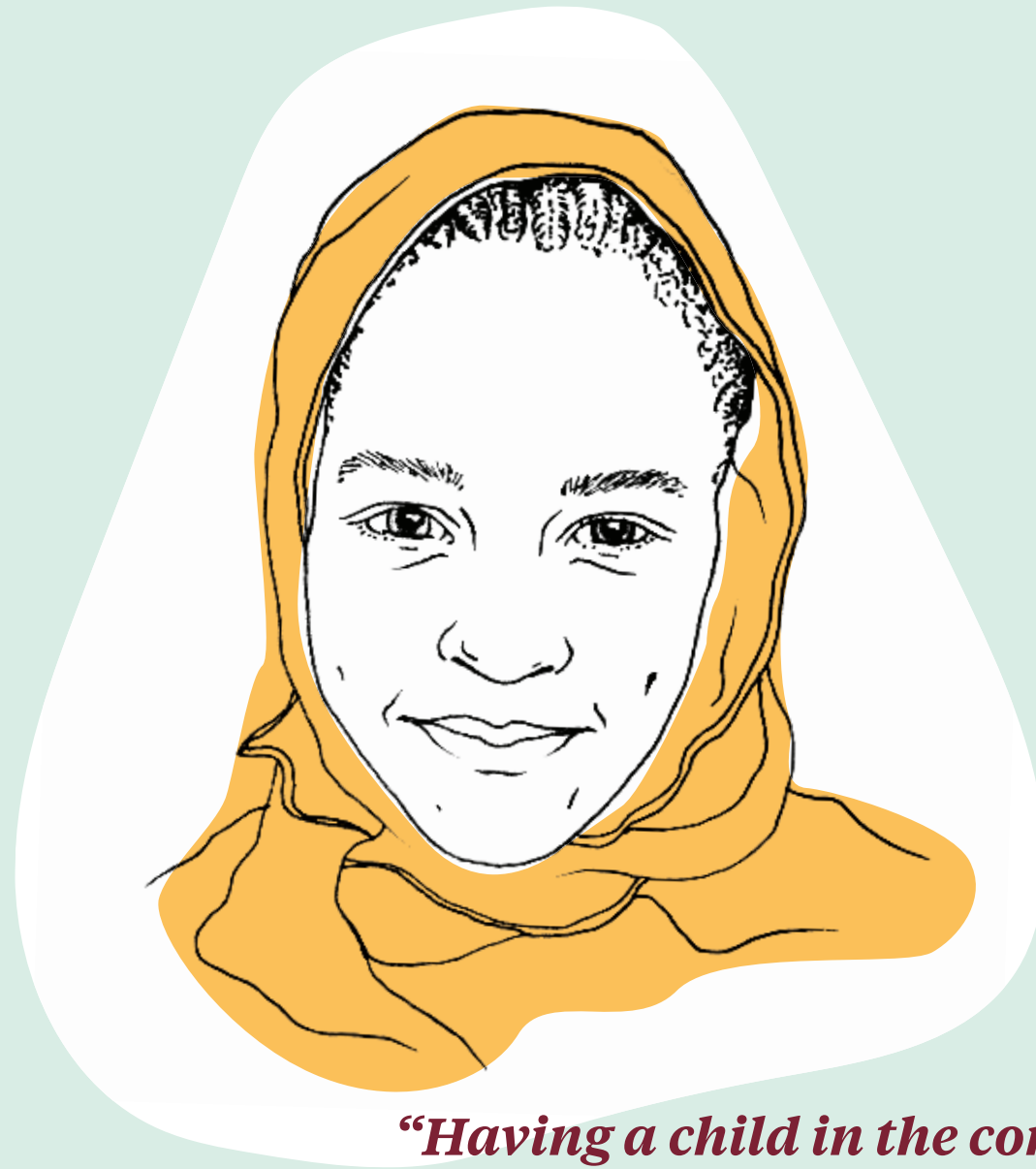
*\*All names have been changed*



## EAGERLY ANTICIPATING MOTHERHOOD

Meseret is a 17 year old girl who has grown up in a rural community, an hour's walk from the nearest town. Her daily routine consists of making breakfast for her family, fetching water, and collecting wood for the fire.

She is approaching 18 years old, which is widely regarded by her community as the appropriate age to marry. After the first year of marriage, she expects to have a child. As many of her friends, she eagerly anticipates this milestone as the moment when she will gain respect in her community. She will be happy to have a child — it's seen as a gift from God.



***“Having a child in the community is a big thing. It is being respected. They will not call me Meseret anymore. They will call me [my child’s] mother.”***

— MESERET, 17 YEAR OLD UNMARRIED GIRL

## FEELING STUCK IN AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE

Meet Yeabsira. She is a 19 year old married girl with a young child.

In her community, families expect their daughters to get married after grade 10. Yeabsira really respects her parents, so when she did not do well on her exams, she felt the only way she could make her parents proud was to accept an arranged marriage. And without her education, she felt the only way to achieve greater respect in her community was to have a child.



***“If you don’t have a job and can’t continue your education, then having a child is the only profit you have.”***

— YEABSIRA, 19 YEAR OLD MARRIED GIRL

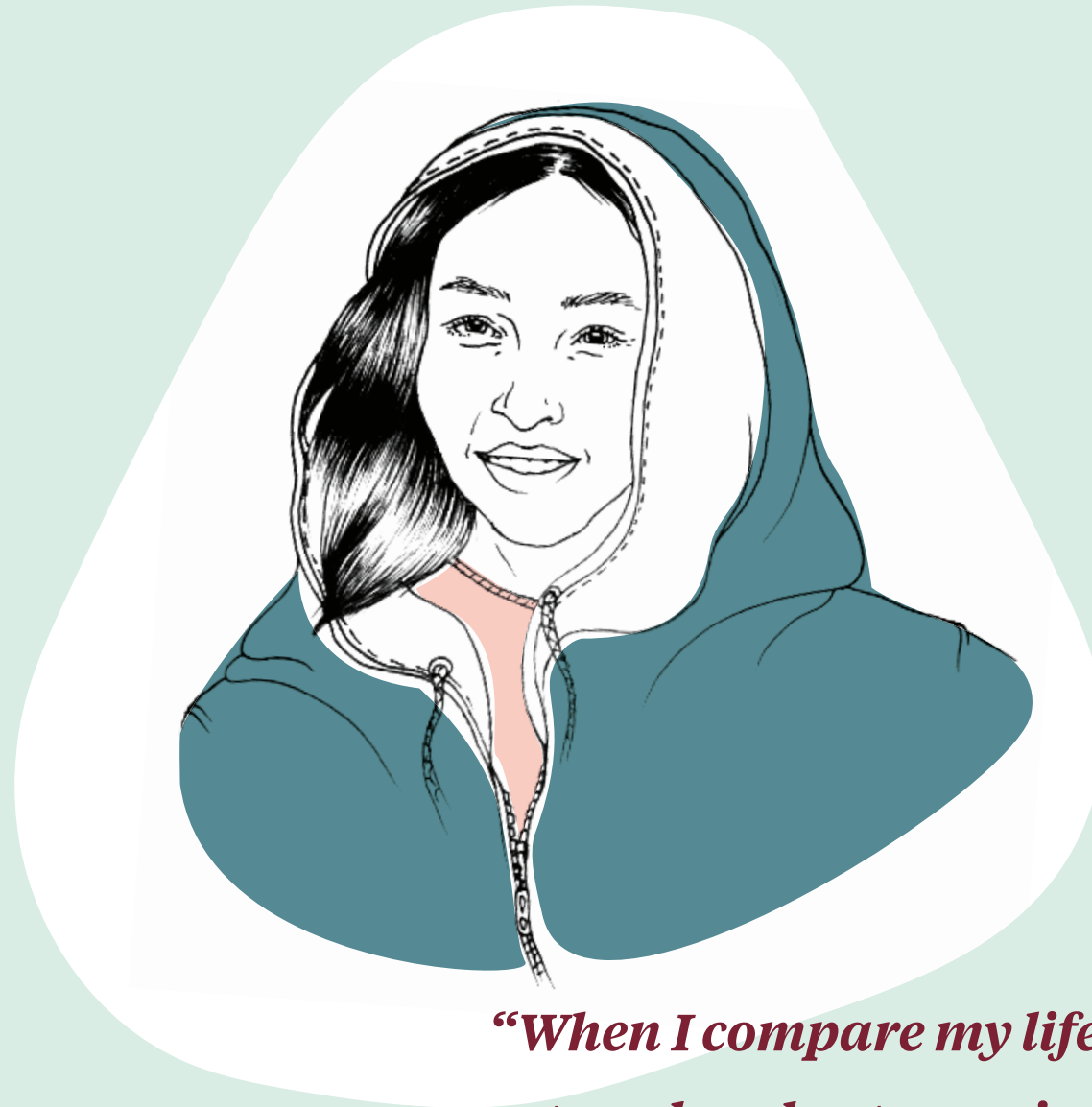


## MIGRATING FOR A NEW FUTURE

Meet Saba. She is a 19 year old girl who avoided an arranged marriage by migrating to an Arab country to work as a housemaid.

When Saba was 16 her family encouraged her to accept an arranged marriage. She did not want to marry at the time and called her older brother, a teacher, for help. He helped Saba apply for her visa, without their parents' knowledge.

After 3 years abroad, Saba returned to Ethiopia and started her own business. She is now financially stable and able to make her own decisions about who and when she will get married. Thanks to her brother's support, Saba created a new life for herself.



***“When I compare my life with those who stayed and got married, I see them living a bad life and having children over and over. I thank God that I have better economic status and no bad marriage.”***

— SABA, 19 YEAR OLD UNMARRIED GIRL



## FEELING LATE TO THE GAME

Salem is a young nurse at a busy health clinic. A large part of her job is performing abortions, often for unmarried adolescent girls. She takes advantage of the opportunity to talk to these girls about modern contraceptive methods in the hopes of preventing further unwanted pregnancies.

While she knows she is doing her job well, she is disheartened by the number of girls who keep returning for repeat abortions. She wishes that she could interface with these girls earlier and that there was more she could do to prevent these unwanted pregnancies.



***“I know I am doing a good job, but I am not fixing the problem. I keep seeing the same faces.”***

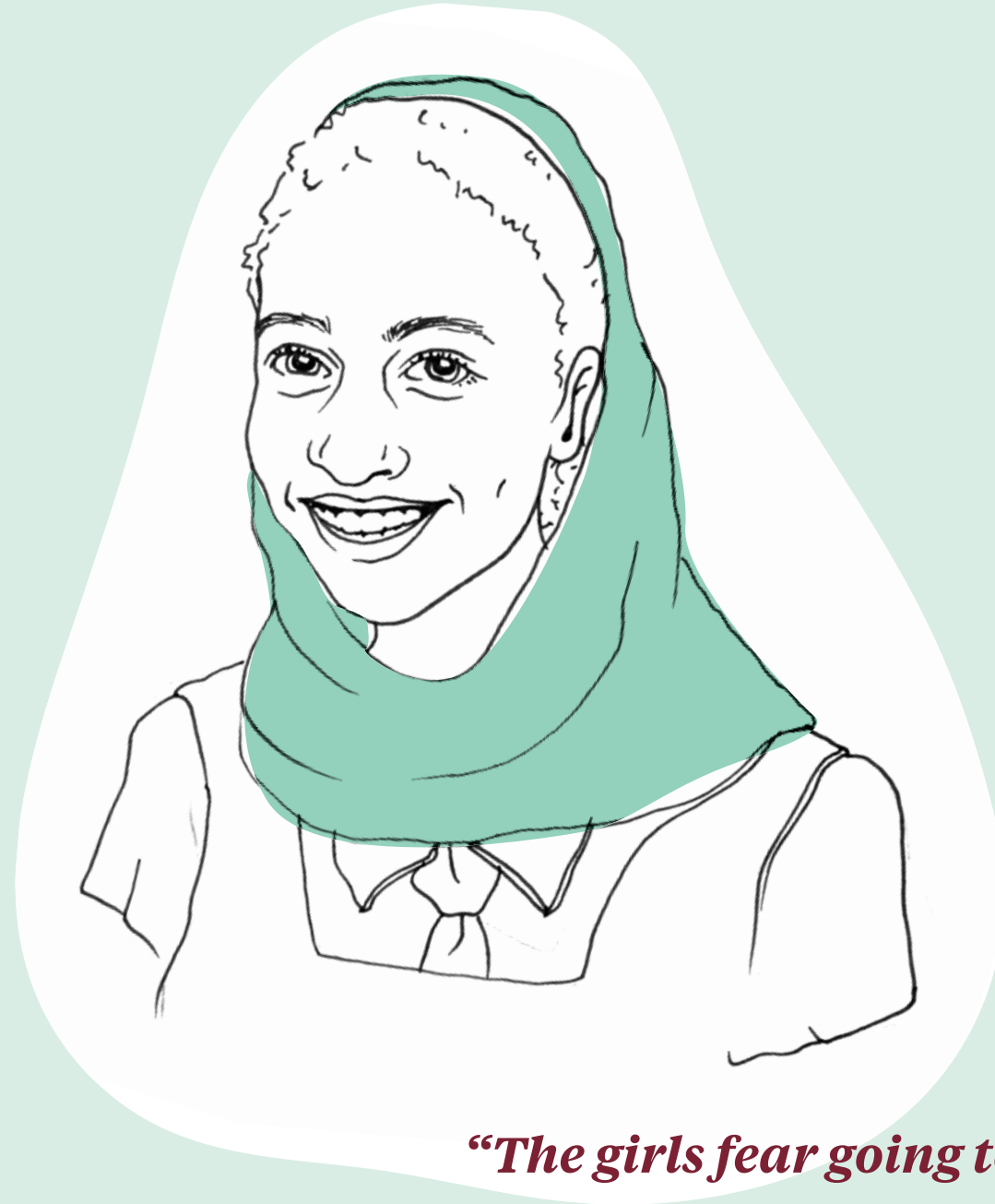
— SALEM, NURSE

## CONNECTING GIRLS TO SERVICES

Amene is a Health Extension Worker who is responsible for serving 500 households. She regularly goes door-to-door teaching people about family planning. She usually meets with the whole family at once, but usually adolescent girls don't feel free to ask questions in front of their parents.

One day after a home visit, an unmarried adolescent girl followed Amene out of the house to ask about the modern contraceptive methods without her parents hearing. The adolescent girl had sex with her boyfriend and was afraid that she might be pregnant.

After going to the clinic with Amene to take a pregnancy test that turned out negative, the girl elected to receive the depo injection. She wanted to continue having sex with her boyfriend, so now comes to the clinic every 3 months to get the injection.



***“The girls fear going to the clinic.  
They fear that someone they know  
will see them.”***

— AMENE, HEALTH EXTENSION WORKER

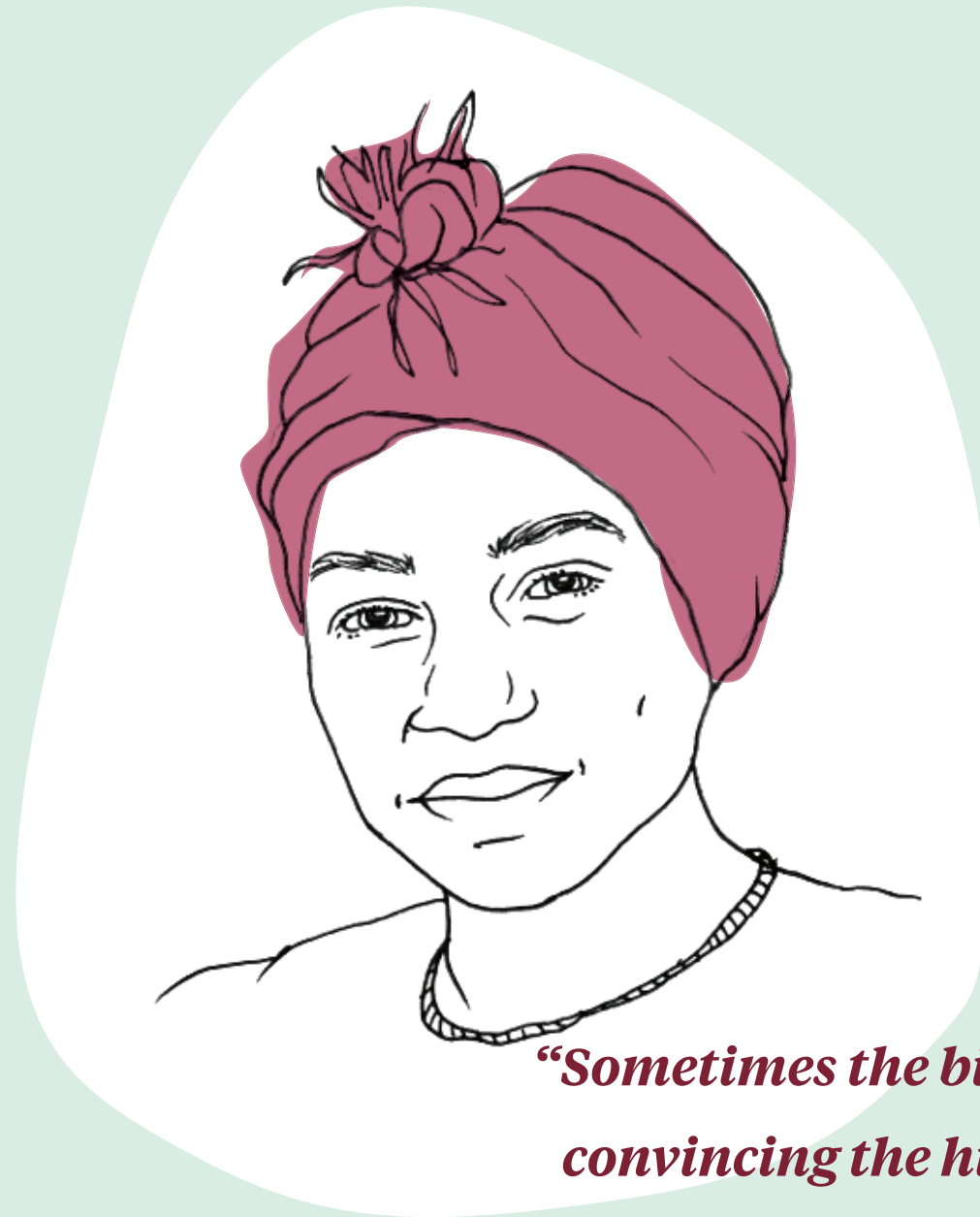
## TAKING SIDES

## WITH THE WIFE

Meti is a midwife at the health clinic, where she regularly sees young women coming in to receive family planning or abortion services.

One day, a young married woman who had previously received the implant came in with her husband. He demanded Meti remove the implant immediately; but in private, the woman told Meti she wanted to keep using contraceptives so she could finish her studies.

Meti ceremoniously removed the implant in front of the husband and then asked him to go bring the car around. When he was out of sight, Meti administered the injection to the young woman.



***“Sometimes the biggest challenge is convincing the husband, since they hold the money and accompany their wives here. But I am protective of young women so I’ll do what I can to help them.”***

— METI, MIDWIFE



## CO-CONSPIRING WITH HIS FUTURE WIFE

Yadeta is 18. He lives with his parents, and his girlfriend lives with her parents in the adjacent village. Pastoralist responsibilities consume the majority of his days, giving him little time to see his girlfriend.

Herding his goats gives him the opportunity to meet up with her several times a week, and they find a quiet space out of view to talk about their future. Yadeta plans to marry his girlfriend within two years, and they will delay pregnancy using a contraceptive method that they will get from the pharmacist in the nearby town.

To defer their parents' judgment of being married without bearing children immediately, they plan to tell their parents fictional stories of a fertility journey wrought with miscarriages.



***“We would tell our parents about ‘pain in her womb’ and they would stop asking us where our first child was.”***

— YADETA, 18 YEAR OLD PARTNER

## CREATING SUPPORT SYSTEMS AT CRITICAL TIMES

Kiya has taught math and physics to 5th-8th graders for the past 4 years. Since teachers spend the most time with adolescents, girls have come to respect and trust their teachers, even more than their own parents. Kiya feels a great responsibility to be a role model, educator, advocate, and confidante to girls.

Kiya told the story of a 15 year old unmarried student who got pregnant and dropped out of school. A year later, Kiya and the other teachers went to the girl's home to show their support and encourage her to come back to finish her studies. When the girl returned, she became a vocal advocate of contraception and acted as a peer educator to other adolescent girls in school.



***“We especially try to help the girl(s) who get pregnant.”***

— KIYA, TEACHER



## BUILDING A SCHOOL-BASED NETWORK

Meet Sara, a high school teacher working to help students secretly access contraception at school.

She teaches her students about contraception during the after school Girls Club. These girls know they can come to Sara to ask for contraception if they need it.

Sara gets birth control pills from the Health Extension Worker and distributes them to the girls at her school. Occasionally Sara also sets up time for the Health Extension worker to come give a student the injection at the school. Only female teachers, the Director, and the girls at school know about Sara's project.



***“Most adolescent girls hide that they are having sex. They use tablets because they don’t want to be known by society.”***

— SARA, HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

## PREACHING FOR CONTRACEPTIVE PRAGMATISM

Meet David. He is a young, energized Orthodox priest who is part of a new generation of religious leaders.

David sees many parents struggling to support their large families. He wants to change how his community views family planning and make contraception a viable option for them.

David frequently accompanies the Health Extension Worker when she educates families about sexual reproductive health at community events. Sometimes he discreetly pulls couples aside to encourage them to use family planning methods. In this way, he is challenging tightly-held traditional beliefs and starting to shift community values.



***“The religion says contraception is not acceptable...but if I see someone in the community having children over and over, I will call them secretly and ask them why they aren’t using contraception. I tell them my wife and I use it!”***

—DAVID, PRIEST

# WHAT'S NEXT

*In the coming weeks, the design team will be integrating all stories we heard and synthesizing our data to create insights and design opportunities.*