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# How Do You Prevent Child Marriage And Early Pregnancy And Keep Girls In School? Empower Their Grandmothers

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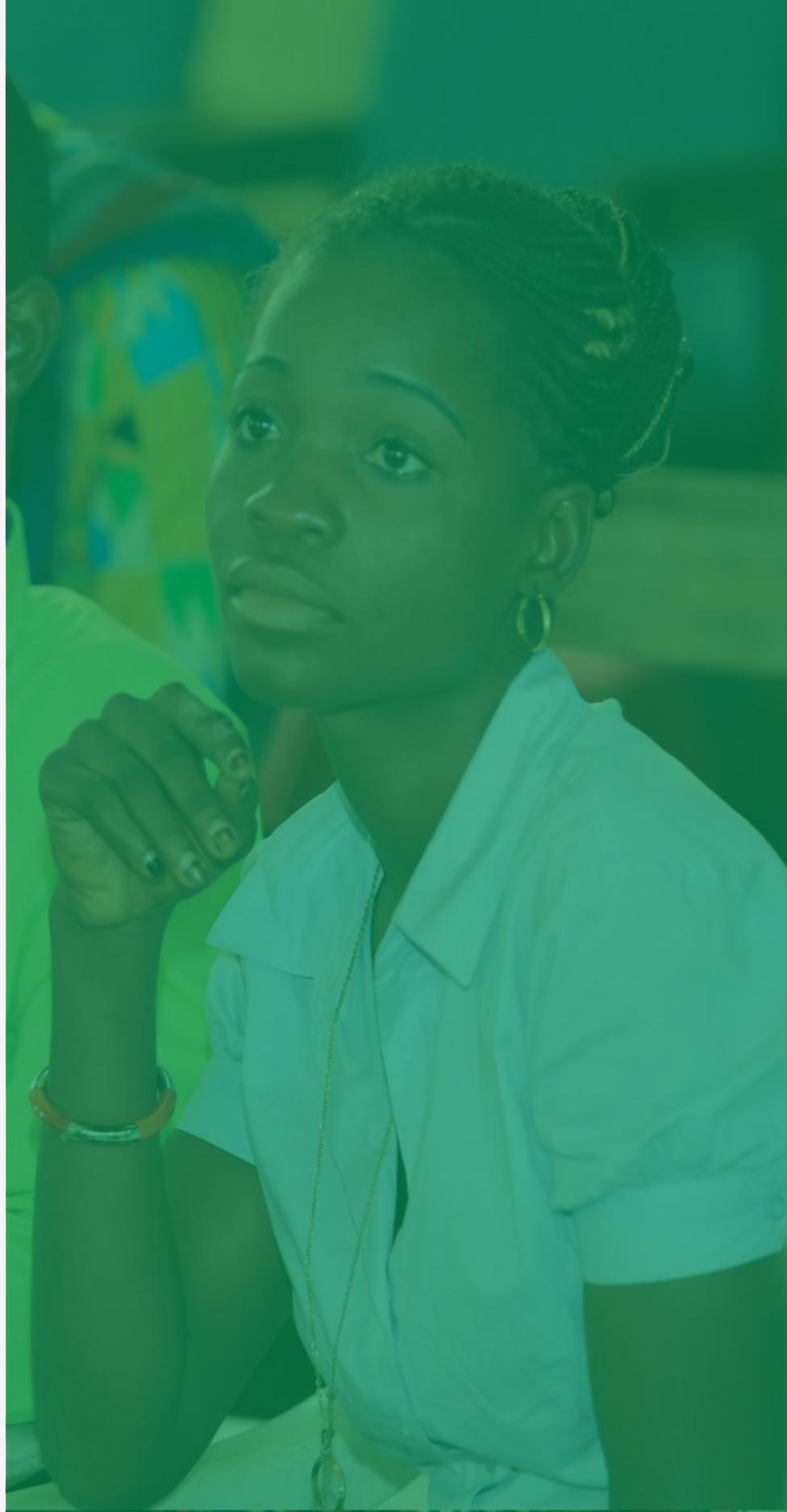
**A Collaboration between Passages and  
Grandmother Project – Change through Culture**

Anjalee Kohli, IRH/GU on behalf of the Collaboration



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Passages



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# Girls' Holistic Development (GHD)

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# Adolescent Girls in Kolda, Senegal

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- Strong family ties
- Identification with tradition and cultural values
- Parental responsibility to protect and ensure girls' well-being
- Average age of marriage: 17 years
- 64% of women circumcised

# Considering Culture

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## ISSUE BASED PROGRAMS

- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Norms
- Practices

## CULTURAL FOCUS IN PROGRAMS

- Values and vision
- Dynamics of families and community systems
- Hierarchies of authority
- Interaction, decision making



# Cultural Influence On Girls' Rights & Development

- Girls can rarely make decisions on their own
- Various family members are involved in decisions regarding girls' welfare and options in life
- Senior women/grandmothers have considerable influence in those decisions.
- Grandmothers play a central role in socialization of adolescent girls and throughout the lifecycle

### **GHD KEY ACTIONS**

Intergenerational dialogue  
and critical thinking

Grandmother leadership  
training, confidence and skill  
building

Participatory learning  
sessions with groups of  
grandmothers



### **GHD KEY CHANGES**

Changing social norms

Girls empowerment and  
strengthened social connections

Keeping girls in school

Preventing child marriage,  
circumcision/FGM, early pregnancy



# Intergenerational Communication

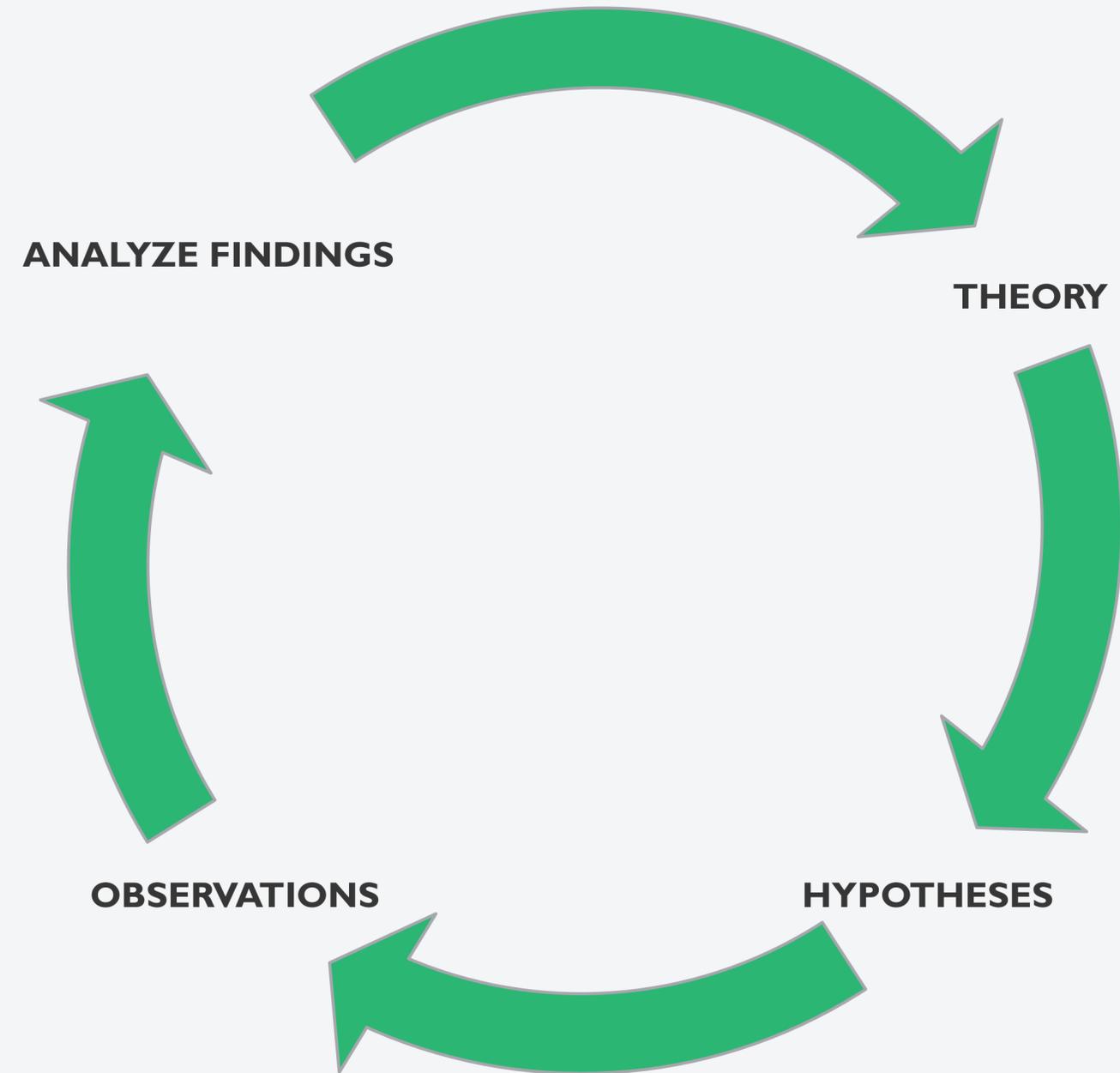
- Traditional and existing attitudes, beliefs and practices
- New and improved information and practices
- Strengthen existing communication links within communities
- Create new communication links within communities

**How Does The GHD Approach, With Its  
Emphasis On Grandmother Action,  
Foster Normative Change?**

# USING A CYCLICAL, EVIDENCE- DRIVEN APPROACH TO THEORY PROVING

1-What are the change mechanisms  
and are they leading to normative and  
behavior change?

2-How will they be scaled (and  
documented)?



## Girls’ Holistic Development Package of Activities

**Strengthening Social Infrastructure**

Activities

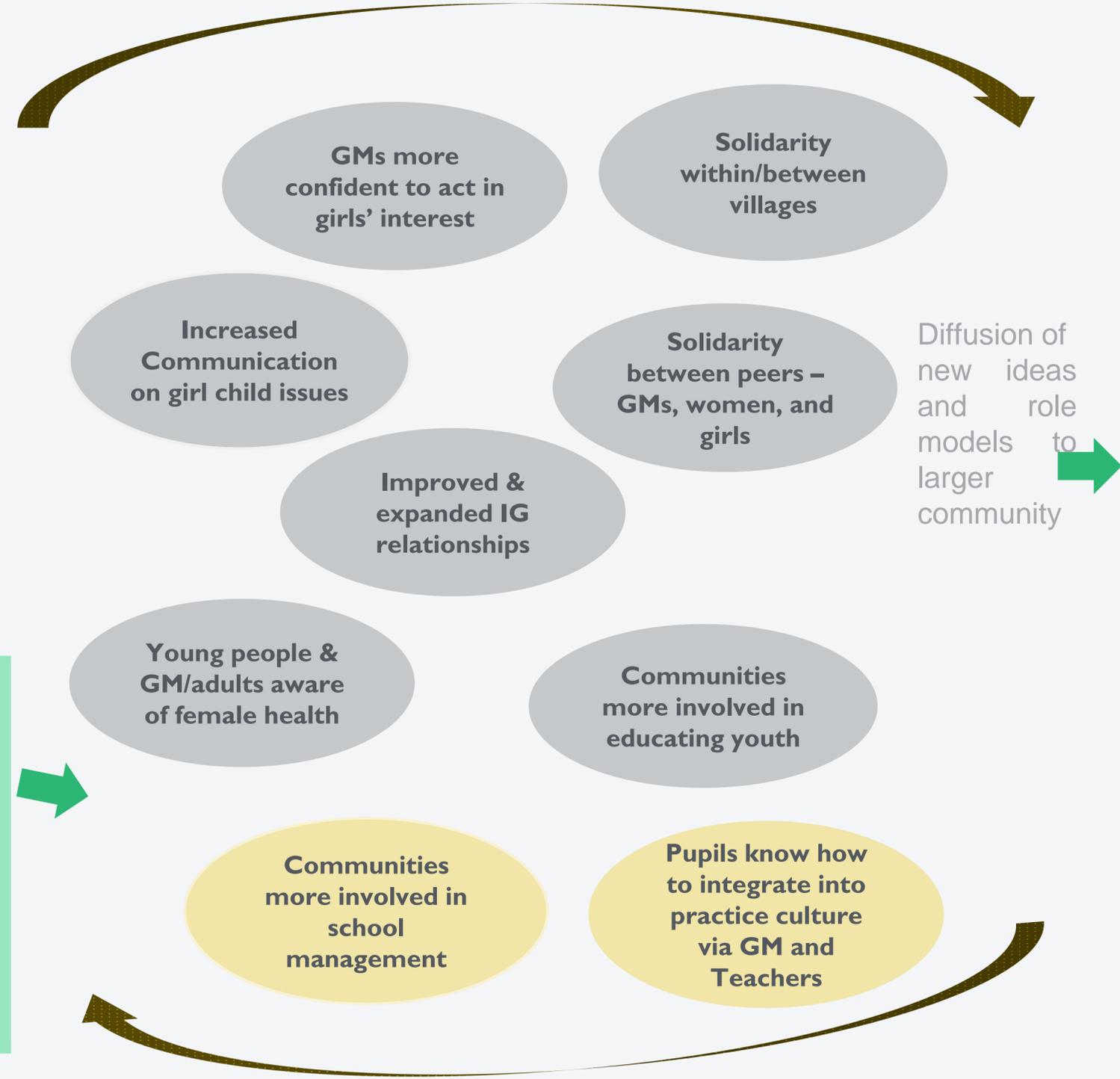
- IG forums (communitywide)
  - GM leader training
  - Women’s forums (3 generations)
- Days of praise of GM’s
  - Days of Solidarity (Intervillagemeetings)

**Linking Schools to Culture via GMs**

Activities

- Teacher workshops
- Teacher + GM workshops
  - Teacher-GM-led classroom sessions

## Mediating/Enabling Effects



## Behavioral & Normative Shifts

**More coherent and collective social mobilization** in favor of strengthening positive practices/discouraging negative practices on girls’ futures/choices in health, education, marriage and related practices & wellbeing

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**GM and other adult allies and champions** advocating for girls rights to education, health, expanded life roles

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**Education system better aligned with Community and Cultural values**

- ✓ Children, especially. girls, stay in school
- ✓ Better teaching quality
- ✓ Better pupil performance

## Ultimate Aim

**Strengthened community infrastructure**

- ✓ Inclusive of all voices regardless of gender, age, socioeconomic status
- ✓ Better able to engage with changing culture and society

**Better girl-child outcomes**

- Decreases in
  - Practice of early marriage and FGC,
  - Extra-marital teen pregnancy



# Research Questions

- How does Girls Holistic Development (DHF) influence **self efficacy, intentions, social norms and behaviors** of grandmothers and girls?
- How does DHF influence **communication?** And the **value and role of grandmothers?**
- How does DHF influence **community collective agency in favor of girls, social cohesion and collective action?**

# Qualitative Methods

METHOD	POPULATION GROUP	TOTAL NUMBER	# PARTICIPANTS
INTERVIEWS	FEMALE ADOLESCENTS (10-14 YEARS)	16	16
	GRANDMOTHERS	16	16
	PARENTS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS	8 MOTHERS, 8 FATHERS	16
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION	FEMALE ADOLESCENTS	4	25
	GRANDMOTHER LEADERS	4	23
	MOTHERS OF FEMALE ADOLESCENTS	4	26
	FATHERS OF FEMALE ADOLESCENTS	4	15



# Adolescent Girls & Grandmothers

Grandmothers have a very important role in the home and educating the community.

- Adolescent girl

# CHILD MARRIAGE

- Protect girls from unplanned pregnancy/early pregnancy
  - Family honor
- Father as the traditional decision maker
- Economic security

The girls mother will see that her child is growing up. She will want her to marry. If the girl refuses, the parents will force her to marry

- **Adolescent Girl**, *speaking about her parents before GHD program*

# CHILD MARRIAGE

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- Communication is more inclusive of household members
- Grandmothers and community members voice their opinions
- Father retains role as decision maker and now considers others opinions and disagreement

Before (GHD), fathers and mothers discussed and made decisions about their daughters marriage without consulting anyone. But now, everyone is involved. Grandmothers have close relationships with adolescent girls and their mothers. In the community, everyone is talking to each other

**-Adolescent girl**





# Girls Education

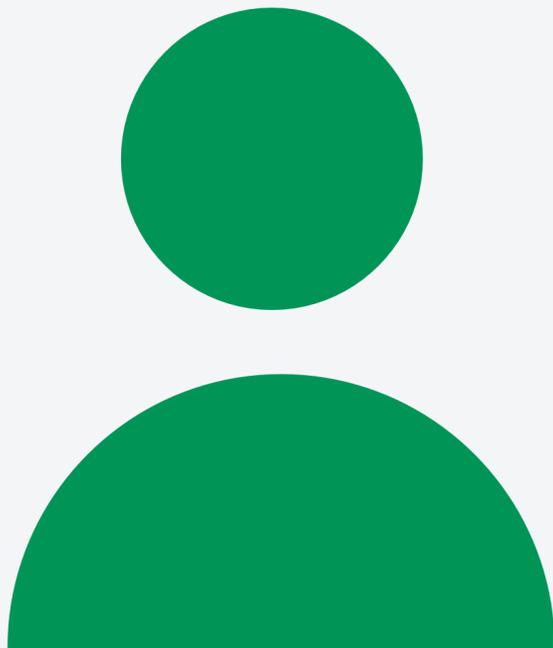
- Birth registration
- Parents engaged in school
- Grandmother story telling
- Value of education uplifted
- Chores and homework

# Early Pregnancy

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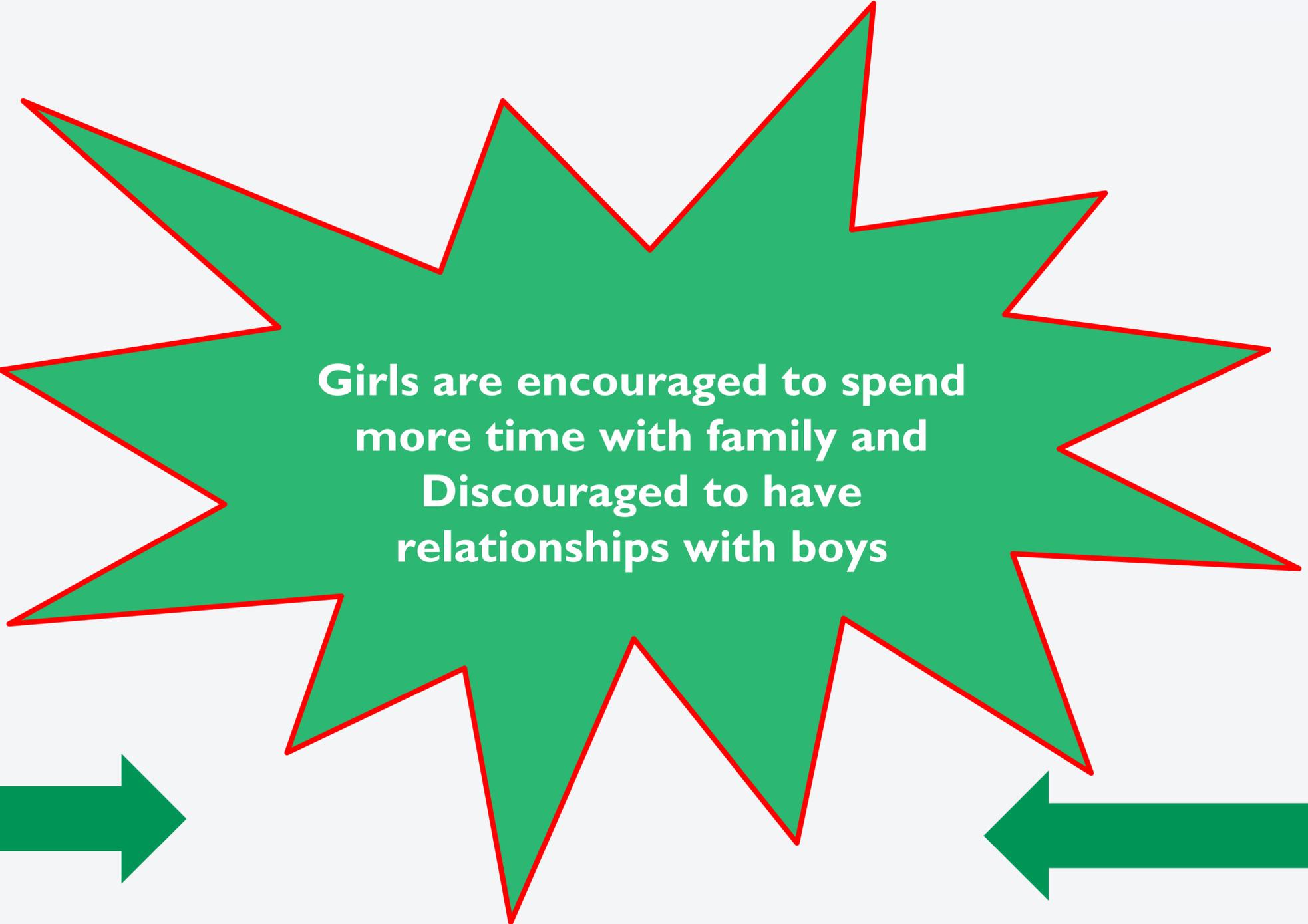
We wanted to marry adolescents before 18 years to avoid some problems (e.g., early, unmarried pregnancy) that they face. Now (after GHD), we refuse that our children are married (before 18 years). But we see, when we follow this new system, girls start spending more time with boys. The result is that they come back with the very thing that most concerns their parents (i.e., early, unmarried pregnancy)

**- Father of adolescent girl**



# New Strategies Emerge

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Girls are encouraged to spend  
more time with family and  
Discouraged to have  
relationships with boys



Changing norms and Practice  
of child marriage and girls  
education



Retained norms of  
purity, honor and  
girls virginity



Grandmothers teach the community about its culture. When young people know their culture, they will not go in the wrong direction. Culture should not disappear. It should be passed on one generation to the next.

**- Father of adolescent girl**



# WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT HOW NORMS SHIFT IN GHD?

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# Project Actions To Prevent Violence

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- A **holistic approach** to supporting girls resonates more with communities than single issue programs
- **Accurate information and support** among and between groups support change
- **Grandmothers constitute an abundant and underutilized resource** given their status and their proximity, experience and commitment to girls' well-being.
- Project staff and community agents use **respect and dialogue** to shift norms

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# Community Actions To Prevent Violence

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- Communities are supportive of **strategies which recognize and value** their culture
- **Girls and grandmothers can lead change**, influence peers and elders
- Girls well-being is a critical concern to the community and **locally identified solutions** can protect protection and ensure girls well-being
- Working within existing hierarchy, **shifts in interaction, dialogue and content of communication** can influence decision making



If someone wants to bring down a large tree, they will get tired before they even starts the battle. But if they work in a group, then in no time, the tree will fall. This demonstrates the benefits of communication, solidarity and cohesion.

- **Mother of adolescent girl**

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**THANK  
YOU!**