Girls Gotta Run: Empowering Girls through Sports & Education

October 2026 Featured Grant

TOGETHER WOMEN RISE

Ethiopia: Barriers to Girls' Education

Poverty, gender norms, & early marriage take girls out of school

Nationally:

- Only 20% of girls complete secondary school
- Nearly 40% are married before age 18
- Adolescence is critical turning point
- Most people deprived of adequate education, health, & living standards

Featured Grantee: Girls Gotta Run Foundation

$40,000 Project Grant: Girls Gotta Run Foundation's Athletic Scholarship Program

Holistic, community-rooted program in Ethiopia's Bekoji and Wolaita Soddo – two regions where girls face significant barriers to education and opportunity

- Supports girls at critical dropout ages (10 – 12)
- Year-round program to maintain continuity & motivation
- Life skills & athletics
- Support for participants' mothers

Featured Grantee: Girls Gotta Run Foundation

Girls receive

- Academic funding & support
- Weekly life skills lessons & personal mentoring
- Daily nutritious lunch
- Health support & hygiene kits
- Sports kits
- Structured, coached running practice, races

Mothers are paid to prepare meals, receive vocational skills, business development & financial cooperatives

Bethlehem's Story

Bethlehem is rewriting the narrative. She joined Girls Gotta Run Foundation's three-year Athletic Scholar program in 2024. This year, she ranked #1 across all Grade 9 sections at Abba Pascal Secondary School. She dreams of becoming a cardiologist.

"The director listened to my story, and I was given dignity," she said. "I was seen. Through the program, I received school fees, a new uniform, sanitary pads, books, and meals. I also joined the girls' running club and life skills training."

Her father, once hesitant about girls' education, is now a vocal advocate. Her mother returned to school herself and proudly celebrates Bethlehem's achievements.

Ethiopia

- Population: 139 million
- Young & fast-growing population
  45% of children malnourished
- Large number of internally displaced persons (4.2 million)
- Poverty, conflict, climate challenges, famine
- Strides made in gender equality, many challenges remain

Impact and Transformation

Girls Gotta Run Foundation

- Started as scholarship fund in 2006
- Founded in response to girls training to be professional runners to escape child marriage
- Highly successful integrated model addresses root causes of school dropout

Direct impact: 326 women and girls; Indirect impact: 1,800 community members

Budget

Item	Description	Cost
Daily Lunch	Daily meals, with enhancements to include higher-protein options to improve health and athletic performance	$12,500
Program Salaries	Salaries for local coaches and program managers	$10,500
Program Expenses	Tuition, uniforms, and school supplies for new and existing scholars	$10,000
Life Skills and Health	Sessions include vocational training and self-defense; hygiene kits and urgent medical support	$4,500
Mother's Group	Vocational training and savings support	$2,500
Total	Total project cost: $115,000. Rise funding: $40,000 (35%)	**$40,000**