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## “I was biased about family planning”

“Men have accepted and understood family planning,” says Adi Dida, 28, from Tuka, Ethiopia. “A lot of women now come for the service, not only for the short-acting but the long-acting contraceptives, as well. I love seeing more women come to the center for family planning.”

Adi is a mother of three children between 2 and 10 years. She works for the Kebele as a health extension worker, where her husband is a teacher. Their source of income is their salary since both are under the government structure.

She has been involved with CARE in the RESET plus project as Social Analysis and Action group member for two years. The SAA is one of CARE’s approaches through which individuals and communities explore and challenge the social norms, beliefs and practices that shape their lives. She also attended a trainer’s training on long acting family planning organized by the project. “I was engaged in health education and awareness creation activities for the last two years on gender and FP issues.”

“Family Planning used to be a very sensitive topic for the Borena community,” she recalls. “During the starting phase of the project we were not allowed to speak about FP in front of the community since FP was politicized. There was ethnic conflict between Somali and Oromo going on. So there was a strong stand among the community to replace the dead during the conflict. Also FP is not culturally accepted. But now, thanks to RESET plus the community understood the importance of FP for a pastoralist community and I started to educate the community with full confidence and they are accepting the service with trust.”

Adi Dida also drew very personal consequences for herself and her family from her participation in the SAA Group: “I personally started to use contraceptives and my husband is also convinced. Men started to share household chores, women started to visit health posts for FP with confidence. Women and men started to discuss about sexual and reproductive health issues openly, which had been a taboo before. The practice of female genital mutilation and early marriage have reduced since. And girls and boys now have equal opportunity for education. Families have started to share household chores equally, girls have started to report early marriage proposal to schools and are getting legal support from the government.”

“Before I joined the RESET plus project I was biased about family planning and providing contraceptives for adolescents, as it was about sex before marriage. But after I joined the SAA group the community started discussing openly about the issues and I have started to challenge myself and understood adolescents are sexually active. I am the one who has to support them to exercise a safe sexual life.”

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