



© Martha Tadesse/CARE

## “Things have changed around here”

“I share responsibility in the house. We make decisions together. Things have changed around here,” explains Eshetu Alemu, 41, preacher and SAA group facilitator at Tuka Kebele, Ethiopia. “One of my relatives was a circumciser and through my training, I was able to convince her, and she no longer practices it. I share the training at my church as well. I am happy about it.”

Eshetu joined CARE’s RESET plus project two years ago as a chair person of a Social Analysis and Action group. 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. He saw it as an opportunity to learn about sexual and reproductive health, since he did not really know how he should act as a religious leader with regards to family planning and gender equality.

Before the SAA intervention he had been acting like most of the community members he is living with: He was not sharing household chores, never commented on relatives who had been performing female genital mutilation and he had a biased understanding of gender equality.

After the SAA implementation, says Eshetu, he saw lots of changes: “The community including me started believing that women and men are equal. Now we are trying to give equal opportunity to all. Previously, dominant men were highly acceptable by the community and all the decisions or final approval on existing household resources were made by men but now it is considered a shame to control everything. We have started to share household responsibilities like cooking foods, washing household clothes, wood collection and fetching water.”

After the first training conducted by the RESET project, the Kebele community also started to ask about the advantages of using FP especially for their pastoralist context. “The interval between our children is short,” Eshetu says. “When someone is having multiple sexual partners, there are diseases which are fatal, so we have critically discussed and decided to use FP. My wife was the first one who started using FP after the SAA intervention. Recently women became confident to talk about FP in front of others including their husbands. Previously, early marriage and FGM had been accepted by the community and performed secretly which was not reported but now both early marriages and FGM have started to be reported and stopped.”

*The RESET Plus project is funded by the European Union, and implemented by CARE, AMREF, Save the Children and We Action in 3 regions in Ethiopia. This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of CARE and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European.*