

**RELIVES: RESilient LIVelihoods and Sustainable
Ecosystems in the Simien Mountains National Park
(SMNP) Project**

GENDER ANALYSIS



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Definitions and Acronyms

ADA: Austrian Development Agency

FEWSNET: Famine Early Warning System Network

FGDs: Focus Group Discussion

Kebele: Ethiopian wards (administrative division)

KII: Key Informant Interviews

PWD: Persons with disabilities

RGA: Rapid Gender Analysis

SGBV: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

SMNP: Simien Mountains National Park's

WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Woredas: Ethiopian districts (administrative division)

Executive Summary

The purpose of the gender analysis is to help identify the key and existing social and gender norms that are relevant to and responsible for perpetuating gender inequality in the communities in the targeted project woredas. The gender analysis has generated information that will feed into the project strategic intervention. It also aims to ensure that the design and interventions not only increase women's empowerment, but also equity for vulnerable groups including women and girls, and persons with disabilities and do not exacerbate existing power or abusive gender relationships.

To achieve this, CARE's gender analysis framework the 'Good Practices Framework' has been employed. The study was conducted in Amhara region in three project intervention woredas namely Debark, Janamora and Beyeda. The assessment has employed 22 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with women, men, boys, girls and persons with disabilities and 17 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders.

The Gender Analysis reveals that normative gender roles and inequitable power relations between men and women significantly constrain women's access to productive assets and services, and decision making at home and community level in Debark, Janamora and Beyeda.

The analysis looked specifically into gender disparity in terms of i) household division of labor, ii) decision making, iii) control of productive assets, iv) access to public space and services, and v) claiming rights in public decision making, vi) violence & restorative justice in target woredas and vii) aspirations for oneself. Women and men engage in roles and responsibilities traditionally ascribed to both genders in most of the households. Men and boys are expected to engage in livelihood activities and women and girls are expected to engage in household chores and assist in livelihood activities such as farming. Social norms related to the type of tasks and work men and women are able and authorized to do are learnt from childhood. Interchanging men and women's traditionally assigned tasks is frowned upon and the community social norms are strongly upheld to what is perceived as tradition.

In these communities men are meant to earn the income in the family. Even though women are consulted, men are often the final decision makers in major household decisions. Women are perceived and portrayed by the community as having limited agency and bargaining power at household and community level, which hinders them from making decisions. However, in case of women who are the head of their household, they make a majority of the household decisions.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that men own and control most of the high value/productive assets in the household whereas women own and control low value assets. The existing cultural norms and patterns of control and management of productive assets favor men compared to women. Regarding land ownership, even though the law dictates that the owners of land are both women and men, practically it is the men/husbands who own and control the land. Women have limited access to public spaces and cannot influence decisions at community level. Unequal access to

resources, assets and information in the community, as well as the burden of household chores, are major barriers that hinder women in Debark, Janamora and Beyeda.

The common form of violence that has been cited in the three woredas are child marriage, wife beating (Intimate Partner Violence), sexual violence including rape, taking land and abduction. All have life changing and threatening effects on women and girls in the communities.

The study recommends that the project should ensure that women can exercise decision-making power as equally as men at household and community levels. Women should have equal access, ownership and control over productive resources and assets. Access to public services and information must be improved to equip women. Changes to gender relations cannot focus on women alone – men must also understand and be part of the change. Men can be powerful agents of change and can support women and girl’s empowerment. Relevant stakeholders must engage in those interventions directly with women, girls, men and boys.

1. Background and Project Context

Context

Ethiopia is a country that experiences the effects of climate change shocks, including recurring droughts and flooding. According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), drought conditions have persisted for over two years, with some regions receiving only 30 percent of typical rainfall during the most recent rainy season. This has greatly affected farming and livestock activities, with an estimated 2.5 million livestock which have died between May 2021 and May 2022.¹

The population in need of humanitarian food assistance in Ethiopia has reached record levels in 2022, with 10 to 15 million people in need, mainly as a result of ongoing crises and climate shocks.² Large-scale food and livelihood assistance, as well as nutrition and WASH services, coupled with unhindered humanitarian interventions in northern Ethiopia, are urgently needed to mitigate the further loss of life and livelihoods in this country.

Women’s rights in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has made numerous efforts to counter such a highly gendered cultural, social, and political landscape through the introduction and adoption of policies geared toward achieving gender equality and the promotion of women’s rights. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE)³ entrenched equality of women and men in all areas of life and

¹ [Increasing hunger-related mortality likely due to historic drought and unresolved conflict | FEWS NET](#)

² Ethiopia Food Security Alert May 27, 2022

³ See for example Articles 25, 34, 35 and 38 of FDRE Constitution,

introduced special measures in the domestic system that aim to accelerate the achievement of gender equality in the country.

Over the years, several legislative measures have been taken and progress has been recorded in achieving formal equality and legal protection of women and girls through relevant legal reforms such as that of criminal law, family law, labor law, land law, pension law, and others.⁴ With the view to operationalizing the commitments made under the national and international development frameworks, important measures have been introduced by the Government that specifically target gender equality and women's empowerment.⁵

However, gender inequality is a persisting issue in Ethiopia and women's rights including economic rights are still not fully realized, depriving women of their rights and opportunities as well as hampering their participation in development endeavors. Most women are left out of decision making around the use, ownership and control of land and resources. Women's ownership of property such as housing and land is usually at a rather lower rate than men's. In both rural and urban areas, women control small-scale assets in comparison to men who control larger assets like oxen and farmland. Despite the government's efforts to increase access to credit to women to bolster their savings, the gains have been modest, with women still facing limited access to credit and capital.

Project background

The project is taking place within Simien Mountains National Park, a protected area situated in Northern Ethiopia (North Gondar, Amhara regional state). The local communities rely on the park's natural resources and agriculture for their livelihoods. They face a multitude of challenges including low agriculture and livestock productivity resulting from land degradation, droughts, unsustainable farming practices, overgrazing, and deforestation.

The Austrian Development Agency (ADA), CARE, and ORDA Ethiopia aim to address these challenges by implementing the project "RELIVES-Resilient livelihoods and sustainable ecosystems in the Simien Mountains National Park (SMNP)". The objective is to improve the livelihoods and resilience of the communities and thereby improve the conservation of the SMNP and its ecosystems. A total of 150,700 primary beneficiaries (at least 70% women, youth, and vulnerable persons) will be reached. The project outcomes are as follow:

1. Natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems are well protected through community involvement in restoration, rehabilitation, and conservation measures in the SMNP and surrounding kebeles.

⁴ Gender, Development and Women's Rights Ethiopian Perspective, 2020: Center for Human Rights, Addis Ababa University page 2.

⁵ Ibid. page 3.

2. Livelihood options for women, youth, and vulnerable groups are diversified and improved while at the same time, gender equality, climate-resilience and sustainable natural resource management are enhanced.
3. Capacities of EWCA/SMNP administration in inclusive participatory approaches are enhanced and coordination mechanisms at relevant regional, zonal, woreda, and kebele level are improved.

2. Purpose of the Gender Analysis

This Gender Analysis seek to identify, collect, examine, and analyze information on the needs, capacities, and coping strategies of the population in the project's intervention location using a gender and intersectional lens. The purpose of the gender analysis is to help identify the key and existing social and gender norms that are relevant to and responsible for perpetuating gender inequality in the communities in the targeted project areas.

Gender Analysis is a key step towards implementing a gender-transformative project, it generates information that will feed into the project strategic intervention. It also aims to ensure that the design and interventions not only increase women's empowerment, but also equity for vulnerable groups including women and girls with disabilities or women heading their household. The objectives of the following gender analysis are as follow:

- To explore how unequal gender relations, gendered discrimination, subordination, and exclusion influence rights denials in the project implementation woredas,
- To identify the different gendered roles and relationships within RELIVES intervention districts (woredas) and identify how these create specific needs, risks, and inequities for different groups,
- To understand how the gender relations and dynamics can affect each of the project outcomes and overall achievement,
- Identify, analyze and examine underlying gender and social norms that affect women's, men's, young women's, and young men's participation and gain from productive engagement in the project implementing communities,
- To propose a concise set of recommendations and indicators that would serve as markers of progress for the project's gender objectives, from an intersectional lens.

This gender analysis selected five areas of inquiry that are directly related to the project outcomes:

- Gender division of labor
- Household decision-making
- Control over productive assets
- Access to public space and services

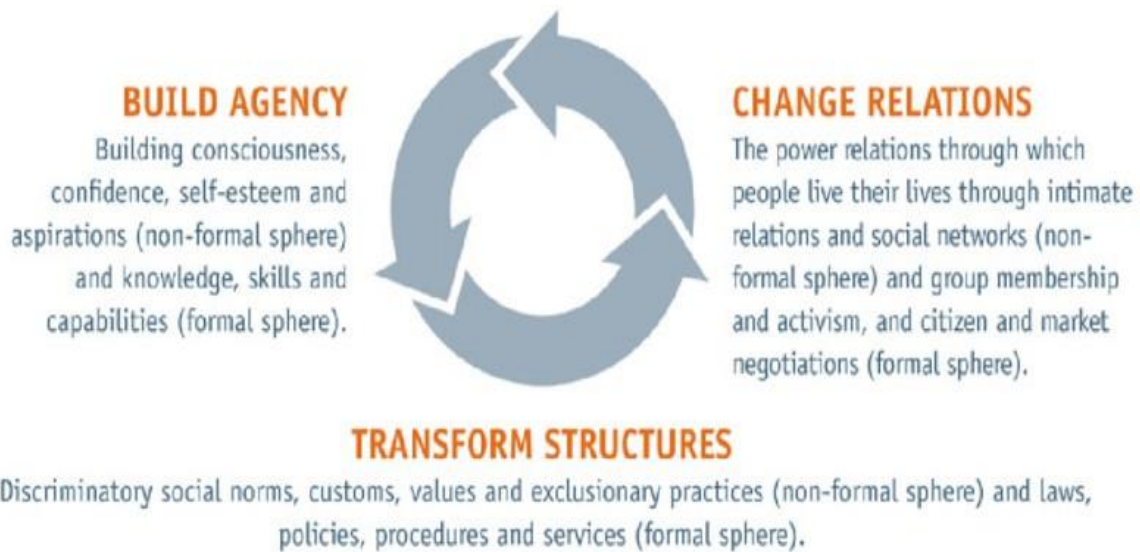
- Claiming rights and meaningful participation in public decision-making
- Violence and restorative justice
- Aspirations for oneself

It includes an intersectional analysis exploring the impact of intersecting identities (e.g. age, disability, gender, social class) and power structures (e.g. patriarchy) in contributing to further marginalization and exclusion of specific social groups in the project intervention area.

The Gender Analysis also employs **CARE’s gender analysis framework** which focuses on:

1. Building agency
2. Changing relations
3. Transforming structures

CARE’S GENDER EQUALITY FRAMEWORK



4. Methodology

A qualitative study approach was employed, and information was collected to undertake this Gender Analysis. The primary data collection was completed between May 29 and June 05, 2023 in four kebeles of the three woredas of the RELIVES project implementation. Prior to the data collection, a data collection tool was developed and reviewed and the data collection team was

trained on the tools, safeguarding issues and ethical considerations. In order to test the tool, one FGD with a women's groups was conducted.

The analysis includes the following data collection methods:

- **Document Review:** documents such as international, regional, and national studies and legal frameworks related to gender have been rapidly reviewed to collect relevant information and facts.
- **Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** Total of 22 FGDs with women, men, boys, girls and persons with disability within the community have been conducted to generate primary data for the gender analysis, that addressed a spectrum of issues related to agency, relations, and structures. FGDs were also conducted with 12 project stakeholders.
- **Key Informant Interview (KII):** A total of 5 (4 female) stakeholders that will be involved in the project implementation and who understand the gender dynamics in the project intervention woredas participated in the KIIs.
- **Community, social, and Resource Mapping:** A participatory exercise where respondents were asked to draw maps that show the spatial spread, natural resources, access to infrastructure and the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion from development and decision-making structures. This mapping was done with fourteen FGD groups (4 women, 4 boys, 3 men and 3 girls FGD groups)

The number of participants of the assessment is presented below across the three woredas and sample kebeles.

| Woreda | Kebele | # Women in FGD | # Men in FGD | # Boys in FGD | # Girls in FGD | # of female persons with disabilities | # of male persons with disabilities | # women stakeholder | # Men stakeholder |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Debank | Addisge | 11 | 13 | 10 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| | Arginjona | 13 | 12 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 1 | | |
| Janamora | Saqba | 12 | 11 | 8 | - | - | - | 3 | 4 |
| Beyeda | Medebay | 7 | 12 | 11 | 9 | | | 1 | 3 |
| Total | | 43 | 48 | 38 | 27 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 10 |

5. Limitations

Even though the project is planned to be implemented in five woredas of North Gondar, this study could only be conducted in three (Beyeda, Janamora, Debark) due to the security situation in the two remaining woredas (Adarkay, Tselemit). The sample Woredas were selected using purposive sampling techniques taking into consideration accessibility and proximity of the sample Kebeles in each woredas.

6. Findings of Gender Analysis under Core Areas of Inquiry

Area of inquiry 1: Gendered Division of Labor

Work permeates all parts of people's lives – in public and domestic spheres. In many societies, gender norms influence who is allowed to do certain types of work, and who is expected to complete certain tasks. Specific household duties and types of work may confer specific sets of opportunities, constraints and status for individuals. This differentiation may reinforce or transform gender inequalities.

Livelihoods and seasonal types of work

There is limited paid job opportunities in all three woredas for both women and men. Women who are married are highly dependent on their male partners/spouse to fulfill their basic needs while those who are not married try to pursue different kinds of income generating activities. They mainly brew and sell *tella* in their home or engage in petty trade (selling of small items in the market during the market day). Young men mainly travel outside their kebele to do different kinds of manual labor focused jobs. The busiest months vary from woreda to woreda due to different climate/seasonal patterns and the roles and responsibilities of women, men, boys and girls differ with every season.

During the busiest months in December and May, women, in addition to their regular household responsibilities have to prepare *Tella*⁶ and food for the people working in the field. They also support the farmers/husbands with all the farming activities (except ploughing), cultivate low value items like vegetables and poultry work, carry and transport animal feeds, wash clothes, fetch water, collect firewood, and go to the grind mill; the same is true for girls. Girls usually have to support the household by doing different chores after they return from school. The role of men during those months is focused on farming activities, including ploughing, mowing, smashing, identifying production from straw (thresh), and collecting straw for animal feed. Boys also support their

⁶ Tella is a traditional drink that is brewed at home.

families in carrying crops, smashing, threshing, digging and help their mothers in fetching water, carrying grains to the grind mill, and attending cattle.

During those months, women are overburdened as they must support their husbands and manage their families simultaneously. **Female-headed households** face specific challenges during these months, struggling to balance household chores, livelihood activities and family responsibilities.

During the dry season in April, the household roles do not change much, but there will be less work. Both women and men in the community will be participating in different community-level activities including planting trees, terracing, attending meetings, participating in kebele meetings and different natural resource conservation activities. In addition to this, women also join their peers in the community through government structured women development groups where they discuss family planning, nutrition, hygiene and other social issues.

In July, August and September households have the least income, which pushes men and young community members to move outside their kebele, i.e. nearby cities, to earn an income. Households try to fill that income gap also by selling sheep and cattle, cutting eucalyptus trees, preparing and selling handicrafts, and also taking loans with high interests from wealthy people in the area. When the situation gets very dire, coping strategies at household level to avoid hunger involve reducing the amount of food and number of meals per day, eating less expensive food (such as maize) or eating some vegetables which are not customary, as well as receiving aid from support programs. Respondents also reported going through the day by drinking coffee or water mixed with salt.

Perception on distribution of household and work responsibilities

In all the sampled kebeles, women, men, boys and girls' perception of their gender roles and values regarding household work and livelihood activities were found to be broadly similar. In general, men's role tended to be associated with the "heavy" work as well as managing high value assets.

The main means of livelihood for the communities in these woredas is farming and it is perceived as the role of the men. They are also responsible to earn money and provide for the family. Women are perceived as having a limited role in ensuring their family's subsistence as they are "only" involved with selling low value items like chicken, eggs and butter.

Men are expected to lead in livelihood activities such as ploughing, harvesting, mowing and all kinds of farming activities but are not expected to engage in household chores more than in maintenance and construction of the house and fence. Women are expected to engage in all the household chores including cooking, fetching water, washing clothes and assisting their husbands with the farming activities like cleaning the farmland, weeding, harvesting and collecting and sorting of grains. **This is a strong indication that women have in fact an important role in ensuring the household's livelihood, contrary to the perceptions in the communities.**

Women are also bearing the whole responsibility of the daily care of children in the household and men's involvement in daily household chores was badly perceived.

“Cooking and washing clothes is done by women. The reason for this is cultural influence and if a man does a woman's work, he will be despised and insulted by the local community, and it will have a cultural impact.” (Beyeda Boys FDG)

This is in line with existing data on the weak participation of men in household chores: according to EDHS 2016 data, most husbands do not help out on a regular basis; 63% rarely participate in household chores, and only 18% assist with chores almost every day.⁷ **In general, women and men's role are highly dictated and ascribed by their community.**

Gender Roles are Learnt from Childhood

Social norms related to the type of tasks and work men and women are able and authorized to do are learnt from childhood: As noted by one participant,

“The community perception and the household norms related to involving women in decision-making is at infant stage” (Janamora, stakeholders FDG).

Among boys and girls' groups, assessment findings show that these **gender rules are internalized early on and collectively accepted:**

“There is a thinking in which the kitchen is always for women” (Janamora, boys FDG)

“The absolute decision-making power of women is related only to food preparation and consumption”. (Janamora, stakeholders FDG)

Girls' roles were described as mainly confined to assisting their mother in the house, by supporting them with cooking, preparing coffee, cleaning the cattle barn and attending the cattle, or delivering food for the person who works at the farm -while boys were mainly described as assisting their fathers on farming activities.

Boys are also expected to carry out some tasks for the household such as fetching water, taking care of cattle, preparing wood for fencing and fire. Conversely, girls are also expected to support their fathers with different farming activities except for ploughing.

Community sanctions for not complying with gender norms

The assessment results show that gender stereotypes are still being adhered to, along with social-cultural practices and customs. Interchanging men and women's traditionally assigned tasks is

⁷ EDHS, p. 261.

frowned upon and the community social norms are strongly upheld to what is perceived as tradition.

Men who try to assist their wives with home duties will be despised by the neighbors. Hence, both women and men in the community strictly follow these assigned roles to avoid labeling, nicknames and shaming if they deviate from the assigned roles.

Although individual attitudes may change, participants highlighted that change needs to happen at a collective level because individual change will likely only be suppressed by **fear of social sanctions** (community holding negative views and stigmatizing individuals for not conforming with norms).

There is a level of pessimism amongst community members who tend to think that as long as no one is showing the way, detrimental gender norms will persist: *“Men do not assist women in performing household duties since there is a lack of role models, even in the woreda's urban community”*. (Janamora stakeholders KII).

There is also this idea **among young people that awareness is a key element** of progress towards more gender equitable attitudes:

“The household work responsibility goes to women. Because it's our culture and norms and there is absence of awareness among the community about the shared household responsibilities” (Beyeda, girls FDG)

Aspirations for change

However generalized feelings that gender roles are strictly and deeply rooted into society, a number of participants have noted that things are starting to shift, mainly thanks to the mobilization of civil society organizations.

“(…) in recent times change is being observed in the community, girls start to go to school, and boys started to help with household chores. Men nowadays help in the household by taking care of children, in some instances some even cook food for their children. When there is a feast or celebrities like christening and other feasts the men do all the cooking”. (Janamora KII Community leader)

This aspiration is particularly strong amongst women and girls' groups:

“If possible and men share women responsibilities, they will lead a good life, improve their livelihood, children will be happy and learn from the experiences of their parents. Hope this practice will change because there is motivation among young men to support their mothers and sisters”. (Beyeda, women FDG)

Area of Inquiry 2: Household Decision-making

Household decision-making is a key component of gender equality programming and varies depending on the geography, class and social group. Understanding women's ability to negotiate and navigate household decision processes is a central part of any initiative that aims at addressing gender inequalities.

Men are the main decision-makers at home

In the three woredas, the gender norms and community expectations in terms of decision-making processes are found to be similar. Respondents' household decision making lies mostly with men but depending on the issues the decision might involve both women and men in the household.

"Making decisions in the household lies with the man. Most of the time ideas come from the man. The income comes from the man, they will discuss together and decide and then the woman manages it". (Janamora boys FDG)

"(...) the lion part in decision-making is for men". (Beyeda, women FDG)

According to research participants, most of the strategic decisions regarding family income and expenditure, accessing loans, moving to a new house, attending trainings, children's education and children's marriage will be decided upon by men. Decision-making concerning women, like family planning and food allocation, is mostly done by women. Some examples have been shared during FGDs about changes in household decision-making in favour of women as a result of increased awareness of women's legal rights. For instance, if the man sells materials or cattle without the knowledge of his wife, participants mentioned she may go and report to police and open a case, so men will live with this fear and will try and consult their wives more. However, the money earned from selling any household items will still be controlled by men, participants added.

Decision-making and household finances

Men are meant to earn income in the family. According to community perceptions, major income is earned by men because they are the ones who manage livelihood goods, they work outside the domestic sphere (e.g like daily manual labor), hence they are in a position to manage high-value assets. The decision and the management are owned by men and are done in men's interest although there is some level of consultation with women:

"Most of the time the women tell the men about the basic supplies needed in household and the husband will go and buy it or he will just give her the money for the expenses. She will not decide alone because she doesn't hold money. They are not happy with this decision because the mother doesn't have freedom, and he will not give her the right to do that." (Beyeda, girls FDG)

Both women and men have access to financial services like credits and loans where the services are available. Both usually discuss together if they need the services, but it is the man who will be managing and controlling the finances accessed.

Barriers to participation of women in household decision-making

On the whole, women were portrayed as having **limited agency and bargaining power** at household level and within the family sphere.

This is due to a number of constraints already listed in other sections including detrimental gender norms placing them as inferior beings, and beliefs around women's inability to express themselves, "*women will not share their ideas because of their shyness*" (Beyeda, men FDG) and inability to "*discuss openly*" as participants highlighted. They were also considered to have too much work in the house and supporting their husband.

Other quantitative research results from national and regional surveys in Ethiopia show a somewhat different picture when it comes to men and women's roles and decision-making at home. Overall, the quantitative findings show that women reported a higher share of decision-making at home than this assessment showed. The National DHS 2016 study findings highlighted that 71% of currently married women participate in three specified household decisions (own health care, household purchases, and visits to their family), while 10% are not involved in any of these decisions⁸. Similarly, intersectional research carried out by Helvetas Ethiopia and Concern International in the Amhara region (published in 2022) showed that respectively 75% and 70% of women had a say in decisions to buy assets and overall household expenses.⁹

Further research is needed as to why these results differ from the current assessment in which men are portrayed as the ultimate decision-makers in the domestic realm. One possible explanation is that measurement domains differ in the sense that the surveys asked about women participation in domestic decisions while this current assessment looks at independent and autonomous decision-making. This assessment suggests that while women may participate in these, they rarely hold control over these decisions and their power remains limited.

Female-headed households

FDG participants highlighted that female headed households are able to make decisions on the use of land. However, they still face challenges because of the community thinking that women are not allowed to oversee crop division. There is a belief in some of the communities in Debar

⁸ Central Statistical Agency (CSA) [Ethiopia] and ICF. 2016. Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: CSA and ICF.

⁹ Intersectional Gender Analysis. Helvetas Ethiopia and Concern International, p. 22.

woreda that if women approach the harvested crop, the production will be jinxed (there will be bad luck), and the produced crop will not last. When renting land, they can only work with the amount of crop that the tenant farmer has given them and their decision power will remain limited.

Area of Inquiry 3: Control over Productive Resources

Access and control over different forms of resources (land and inheritance, financial capital, income generating and livelihood opportunities, community and government services, natural resources, external information) are key dimensions of addressing unequal gender power relations.

Household assets

In the three study woredas, household assets were listed and split into groups according to highest and lowest value. Participants had then to describe which were controlled and owned by men and women respectively. Findings show that **men owned the assets with the highest value**, while women owned the ones with the lowest value.

Most of the participants of the study noted that the existing cultural norms, beliefs, values, and patterns of control and management of productive assets still favor men compared to women. Men have control over major productive assets like farming land, cattle, sheep, goat donkey, mules, horses, agricultural tools, fertilizers, and other farm-related assets whereas women control small and less valued assets like hens, eggs, and dairy products.

“Seeds and hen are given to women because they are simple, and they have the lowest value. The community will not accept a woman if she controls the highest value. They will give her a nickname like “balwan yenakech (a wife who doesn’t respect her husband)”, “balwan matakbr (disrespectful to her husband)”. There is a saying “set biyawk bewend yalk” (Whatever the woman knows at the end things will be finished by the man)” (Stakeholder KII)

The most widely cited reasons for preventing women to exercise control over high value household assets is that it is believed they **lack the knowledge and experience** to do so and there is a risk she will mismanage these resources. It also comes from a deeply entrenched norm that men are more able and should be dominant in the productive and economic sphere:

“The reason why a man controls the most and highest value assets are that men think that women are nothing. They also think that if she controls or manages the highest value assets she will waste and finish it. This comes from the absence of awareness and the backward thinking”. (Beyeda, men FDG)

“Most assets found in the family are controlled by men. Because it’s a tradition they get from their father and are among the practices which are common in this area” (Janamora boys FDG)

Also, **community markets are more accessible to men** in most of the community, hence it is the men who are responsible for having the final say and sell vital productive assets. According to men focus-group discussants, women do not know how the market works and lack negotiation skills and the knowledge to set the price for high-value assets in the market. Hence, men are preferred in managing and controlling high-value productive assets.

There are strong **social sanctions for married women who try to control and manage high value assets** since it is considered as unacceptable behavior by the community. They will be labeled as lacking respect for their husbands, being out of control, and their husbands will be considered as weak men who cannot control their assets, and who are in turn controlled by women. Exemptions are made in the case of female-headed households, in which women can control and manage all the productive assets themselves.

Ownership and control over high value item is a key aspect of women economic empowerment. High disparities are observed in the use and ownership of items such as mobile phones for instance in other quantitative surveys, suggesting how vulnerable economically women are in comparison to their male counterparts. National data (EDHS 2016) show that respectively 55% of men and 27% of women owned a mobile phone.

Land rights

Though women make up more than 40% of the agricultural labor force and head approximately 25% of all farming households, they have less access to land and other factors of production than men. **Their important contribution to the agricultural sector does not translate in economic terms and assets such as land.**

There has been recent **legal progress** though, increasing land registration for women and providing land certificates for women in rural Ethiopia in recent years. This is due to important legal reform. The 2003 land certification indeed allows joint titling of land holdings between husband and wife and replaced the 1998 titling regulation, which often only recognized the male household head as owner. **Nowadays, in theory, both women and men have equal ownership of land**, as per the law and men cannot rent/change or sell the land without agreeing with his wife.

At national level, approximately 40% of women and 50% of men own land, either alone or jointly. In Amhara region, the proportion of women who own land is surprisingly higher than for men with about 51% women and 45% of men who own land, either on their own or jointly.¹⁰ Through the implementation of land certification programs as well as specific housing schemes, significant advances have been recorded in terms of women's access to land and housing. Thousands of women have also become house owners in both urban and rural areas of the country through the

¹⁰ EDHS, p. 270-271.

implementation of pro-poor, pro-women housing programs including a quota system in housing allocation (FDRE 2017; UN WOMEN 2015).

However, **this legal progress has not always translated into actual equality** and has not necessarily ensured effective control or decision-making power for the majority of women over their land and house as the issue is inextricably linked to the broader gender roles and power relations within family and society (Chuta 2017). Increased titling of women did not immediately confer **tenure security or land management rights** within the family ecosystem for instance, as highlighted by a recent report from UN Women¹¹.

Even though the law dictates that the owners of land are both woman and man, practically it is the men/husbands who have the ownership and control over the land. When looking further at the data on land ownership, we can notice that **a higher number of women own land jointly** than men and a higher share of men own land on their own. In reality, when women manage to get their land titles, it is most often jointly with their male partner.

Additionally, women landowners face higher difficulties in claiming and using their rights to land and its related product. This is especially the case for **female headed households** whose rights to land have sometimes been violated by men working in their land in complicity with men in power: there are times for instance when women are denied of their land or crop share by the person whom they rented the land to. It is usually difficult for the women to win in court because they don't know about their legal rights.

“There are scenarios’ where disadvantaged women, especially women in female-headed households (are tricked) through false information which leads to land ownership transfer to others (lessees for instance). This is done through corruption within the kebele officials and land administration. Because men have an opportunity to meet them and discuss their issues with them while women usually stay at home. As a result, there are women who lost their land because of false information and documents” (Janmora Stakeholder KII).

Similarly, the same respondents observed a similar trend in the context of community polygamous marriages. There have been occasions where men have tried to take land ownership that was initially in the name of their first wives and children. A woman who does not live with her husband (in case the husband has married another wife) does not have the right to manage her land according to community perceptions. In case of divorce or the husband's death, there is a high risk for women to simply lose land ownership *“and become simply empty handed” (Janmora KII stakeholder).*

Access to employment and constraints related to mobility

¹¹ UN Women. IN BRIEF. June 2022. Beyond land registration. How to support rural women to derive the full range of benefits from land in Ethiopia. Accessed here: <https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Policy%20Brief%20BEYOND%20LAND%20REGISTRATION.pdf>.

Access to employment is restrained by social norms surrounding the need for women to stay confined to the house and perform only duties related to the maintenance of the household. Men's roles are associated with being able to operate outside the household, which facilitate their integration to the job market and social networks whereas women's authorized circle must remain confined to the household:

“Men stay outdoors than the women's do, and they can access information on different issues easily” (Beyeda, girls FDG)

These patriarchal norms are putting a strain on women's access to the formal employment market, therefore **preventing them to access the cash economy** while severely **restricting their mobility and access to outside information and networks**. Some participants also raised that staying home was a choice that was accepted by women too:

“Women do not want to be outdoors, they would prefer to stay home and take care of the house and even when they want, the men will not be okay with that”. (Beyeda, girls FDG)

This in turn considerably affects their ability to negotiate, access and understand livelihood options and feel the necessary confidence to bargain and claim power in the economic sphere. Women who cross that threshold (disregard the established rule) would be badly considered as men would fear to be bypassed:

“If she gets out) the husband will think she might be above him (...) and he might also think she is cheating on him” (Beyeda, girls FDG)

Existing data on the mobility options for women in Amhara region show that women face disproportionately higher constraints on their mobility than men: for instance, 85% of men reported they could access health centers without restrictions as opposed to 57% women.¹²

Financial capital

Access to financial resources is key to women empowerment and autonomy. However, access to banking facilities and credit opportunities are scarce for both women and men. Existing data from the Amhara region shows that only 11% and 20% women and men respectively had access to credit facilities at the time of the survey.¹³ When it comes to bank account ownership, the gender divide increased: a smaller proportion of women owned a bank account in comparison with their male peers (15% women and 25% men owned a bank account respectively).¹⁴

In the project area, assessment participants pointed at some associations that provide financial services to the population such as RuSACCO (Rural Saving and Credit Cooperative) and ACSI (Amhara Credit and Saving Institution). However, access to these services do not seem to benefit

¹² Intersectional Gender Analysis. Helvetas Ethiopia and Concern International, p. 46.

¹³ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁴ EDHS 2016, p. 259.

all and there are a number of barriers preventing their effective access and use that need to be investigated further.

On the whole, women do not benefit from financial support and services (such as loans) on their own because they are not considered as suitable candidates if **they are not applying jointly with a man.**

Persons with disabilities

Participants highlighted that challenges remain high for persons with disabilities, even if times are changing. In the past, they did not have the right even on their farming land even though they own land. Other members of the community used to take away their land and properties. But nowadays they are protected by the Kebele administration. If properties are taken away from a person with a disability, the kebeles use “shengo” or “shemagles” and give it back to them¹⁵.

In terms of livelihood options, persons with disabilities who own land usually rent out their land and get half of the production (crop sharing) or if they have sons, they will be doing the farming. Other income-earning activities include poultry raising, selling goods in rare cases. Women with disabilities face heightened discrimination according to FDG participants as they usually do not have a source of income, they lead their life with the subsidy they get from the government safety net program.

Participants also stressed that persons with disabilities face high discrimination and stigmatization due to negative cultural beliefs surrounding disability. They shared traditional sayings/proverbs used in the community which say that persons with disabilities become disabled because of “their family’s sin”, “this happened because God is angry and scolded”, “it is a curse” or “bad luck”. These sayings will affect the life of persons with disabilities, as they think they are not enough, **and that they cannot do anything to help themselves or their families.** Families consider them as a burden, and they suffer high levels of psychological violence (e.g. insults).

Area of Inquiry 4: Access to public spaces and services

Understanding women’s barriers and opportunities related to public spaces and services is key to understanding if women’s rights are to be fulfilled. Not only public spaces and public goods should be inclusive and accessible to women, but they also should demonstrate accountability to its users. Access to these services is unequal and not universal across society. According to assessment participants, especially women and girls, they are not benefiting from these up to the same level as their male counterparts.

Participants listed key community resources and services such as churches, health centers, schools, kebele centers, water points, forests, rivers, springs, parks, roads, and farming land. They

¹⁵ Shengo is a community level justice structure which is organized by the local administration with 9 members and Shemagles are elders in the community.

highlighted that government services and Kebele center information are accessed and controlled by men while water points, forests, health centers, rivers, and springs are accessed by women. School access is only for young girls and boys. They added that poor infrastructure and facilities have made life hard for the community, especially for women and persons with disabilities.

Community services/resources usually accessed by women are mostly informal (such as water points and women's groups), they are also accessing **health posts** as they are responsible to take their children for vaccination while **men access the structures and institutions which hold more formal power** such as the Kebele administration, and the agriculture office. The forest is restricted for all because it is protected by the government, although men can go through it and participate in its protection program.

Women claimed that in the past no organizations, service providers or resources specifically involved or benefited women, girls, female-headed households or persons with disabilities. However, even when they do exist, they are only accessible by women who have obtained prior agreement from their husbands. This makes it difficult for all women to take advantage of these resources. informational resources, public services, and chances to join civil society activities.

Barriers related to public Space and Services

Participants mentioned that **several barriers** prevented the effective and inclusive enjoyment of public goods and services for women and girls. Women encounter difficulties due to widely held **discriminatory social norms** that contribute to devaluing them. These norms attribute a lower status to marginalized individuals in the social hierarchy and prioritize men as the main users. **Men claim that most of the time, they (men) utilize community resources and institutions better than women.** This considerably reduces the chance for women, girls or people with disabilities to be heard, and to influence policies to reflect their needs.

According to women participants from Beyeda (FGDs), the Kebele administration is meant to distribute formal services and resources equally to the community, however, these **do not** actually **meet the needs of women and girls**, and power still rests with the **leaders who mostly are men.** Women FDG participants emphasized that **male kebele leaders and cabinet members control opportunities provided by various institutions**, particularly those provided by the government. As a result, women do not benefit equally from these resources.

“Most of the time the kebele leaders and cabinets including men have controlling opportunities for different services specifically those offered by government. Due to this, resources do not equally benefit women”. (Beyeda women FGD).

Area of Inquiry 5: Claiming rights and meaningful participation in public decision-making

Enabling women to claim their rights, meaningfully participate in the public sphere and become decision-makers are key dimensions of a gender transformative approach.

Women participation and decision-making at community level

In this assessment, **men were reported to be the main decision makers at both household and community level**. Participants in all the FGDs felt that women are not involved enough. Women's voices are not heard, they do not highlight their concerns and interests. In general, women's participation is nominal, and not encouraged by family and community.

“Women raise their voice in spaces where there are no men, it is rare for women to talk in community meetings where there are men. Even the 1 to 30 structure leaders, the women association leaders and the head of women affair office (who are expected to say more in public spaces) do not talk/say much in meetings where different community issues are discussed, other than women’s issues. Mainly because of lack of experience and self-confidence. – it is only representation of women, not meaningful participation.” (Debarek, stakeholders KII).

When comparing with existing quantitative research undertaken in the same area (Amhara region), it was found that **participation levels in community decision-making are particularly low for both men and women**: 73% of both male and female study participants do not take part in local government’s leadership works. The same holds true for participation of study subjects in land administration committees and has been found to be as low as 26% for female and 34% for male.

However, the difference is that men do not need to anticipate their wives’ permission before entering the public space while **women need to get their husband to agree** before engaging in any form of activity that exposes them at the community level.

Barriers to women participation in public life

As mentioned before, **women are not perceived as being fit for decision-making positions**.

(...) “even if women participate, they will not give ideas because they are shy to speak up, and they don’t get the chance to be leaders in the kebele”. (Beyeda, men FDG)

Communities think that gender in general, but also age or a disability, are factors that determine if people have the required **knowledge about public spaces** or the necessary **assertiveness** to engage in these spaces. In addition, the community often does not accept when a (young) woman or person with a disability becomes a leader.

“There are many reasons that hinder women from participating in community spaces. Women are shy and they do not have confidence, the community doesn’t encourage them, and they are occupied with family responsibilities and giving birth. Illiteracy, age, and disability are some of the factors”. (Men FGD).

It is assumed by the community that **men have better knowledge and experience** in making of decisions and can influence decisions in different platforms. Most participants highlighted that men (including husbands and community leaders) oppose the participation and emergence of women’s voices in the public sphere:

“The major problem is low level commitment of kebele leaders to let women participate in the system and the process” (Beyeda, women FDG)

Family members and the community are not supportive of or encourage women and marginalized individuals to participate in the decision-making process in formal and informal institutions either. Further community mechanisms are not in place to address women’s issues:

“Things that hinder women from participating in household and community level decision making are that the community doesn’t accept women to be in a decision-making body, they will say “why can’t she just stay at home”, but also shyness and lack of self-confidence.” (Janamora women FDG)

Additionally, men have relatively better exposure to **accessing information** that can be helpful for making decisions as they spend most of their time outside their home. Women confined in their household have limited information about their community. As the community is not responsive to women’s participation of different community level roles, this will contribute to limited exposure for access to information and opportunities.

Progressive change towards women’s participation in the community

Participation in public life and decision-making has changed to some extent compared to past years:

“Compared to former times, participation in decision making and public life has changed. Women were never participating in public space; they always used to stay at home and will not go to school. But now there is a slight change. They will participate in public life aspects, they will go to school, she can tell what she thinks and feels.” (Beyeda, girls FDG)

There are been, for instance, a few developments that could increase women’s participation in official spaces (in the women’s league, women’s federation, development group, and Women

affairs office). In some cases they participate in a community-level court called Shengo¹⁶ which has 9 members and women members count up to 3 in each shengo group.

“Compared to earlier time, there is a slight change in participation of women. Earlier, if a woman went outside, she would be beaten by her husband. But now there are different development groups in the community they participate in without facing challenges from their spouse.”

“In this kebele, there are two women leaders in the women’s affairs and agriculture office. In current time if the women participate in leadership position, there is nothing wrong with it. The community will think that she will bring income or other benefits”. (Janamora boys FDG).

Participants also noted that women tend to be more visible in the management of natural resources. On some occasions, they also are seen to take part in community development projects, agriculture, health issues, and natural resource conservation.

Positive conversations were noted with community leaders as part of this assessment who noted that creating more equitable power relations and women's empowerment require men's help to raise awareness. To address this issue, the woreda community leader advised boosting women's participation, and the kebele leaders answered, *“Let us distribute the work and do it together”*.

Persons with disabilities

Unless they are the head of the household, persons with disabilities are excluded from the major household decisions and are seen as invisible by community members.

“Persons with disabilities don’t have much involvement, they are not seen as a full person”. (Beyeda, men FDG).

Outside the household, they are not included in the different community level decision making spaces. They are not provided with the chance to participate, and their voices are not heard. The existing social norms discriminate against persons with disabilities, they are verbally abused, and they are denied opportunities in formal and informal institutions.

“Although there are persons with disabilities, they are not included in community initiatives, they don’t participate in community decision making and their voices are not heard. In this area they are not respected and mostly they are being discriminated against. Even during parties or feasts, people arrange segregated seating places for them” (Beyeda, women FDG).

Area of Inquiry 7: Violence and Restorative Justice

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is recognized as both a cause and consequence of gender inequality and is a major obstacle to women and girls’ enjoyment of human rights and their full participation in society and the economy. There is no single root problem that causes VAWG;

¹⁶ Shengo is a community level social court.

rather, there is a combination of **factors operating at individual, family, community, and institutional levels that perpetuate and reinforce gender discriminatory** and biased attitudes, norms, and practices that contribute to the pervasive imbalance of power that exists between men and women within societies and contribute to VAWG.

Protection and safety are key fundamental aspects for women’s empowerment, especially for female-headed households and persons with disabilities who are more at risk. In Ethiopia, the latest national household survey data shows that **more than a third of women (34%) have experienced emotional, physical and/or sexual violence** from a current or more recent partner/spouse.¹⁷

| Table 1. Forms of spouse violence experienced by ever-married women, age 15-49 (N=4,469) | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Ever experienced | Experienced in the past 12 months |
| SPOUSAL VIOLENCE COMMITTED BY CURRENT OR MOST RECENT HUSBAND/PARTNER¹ | | |
| Physical violence | 24% | 17% |
| Sexual violence | 10% | 8% |
| Emotional violence | 24% | 20% |
| Physical and/or sexual violence | 26% | 20% |
| Emotional, physical and/or sexual violence | 34% | 27% |
| SPOUSAL VIOLENCE COMMITTED BY ANY HUSBAND/PARTNER | | |
| Physical violence | 25% | 17% |
| Sexual violence | 11% | 8% |
| Physical and/or sexual violence | 28% | 20% |
| MARITAL CONTROL (3 OR MORE SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS) BY ANY HUSBAND/PARTNER | | |
| Controlling behaviors | 16% | |

Source: 2016 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey, p. 305

The common form of violence that has been cited in the three woredas are child marriage, wife beating (Intimate Partner Violence), sexual violence including rape, taking land and abduction. According to the key informants, even though these violences have significantly decreased, cases are still being reported.

Child marriage is a common violation of rights that disproportionately affects girls. Current national data shows that more than half women (58%) are married before turning 18 years in Ethiopia. In Amhara, a recent survey showed a critical gender difference when it comes to boys and girls with 73% of girls being married before turning 18 as opposed to only 14% of boys.¹⁸

Women participants described how girls would usually not be able to continue their education once they get married because their husbands will not let them go to school. Husbands are afraid that girls will become superior to them through their education. Additionally, girls would be shamed by others if they actually went to school so they would rather not pursue their education.

Despite legal progress in favor of women’s rights, women and girls find themselves struggling to claim the effective implementation of their rights in both home and community settings. Examples

¹⁷ POLICY BRIEF 2019 Further Analysis of Findings on Violence Against Women From the 2016 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey.

¹⁸ EDHS 2016, p. 72; Intersectional Gender Analysis. Helvetas Ethiopia and Concern International, p. 45.

were given by participants in the area of divorce and marital rights. They described the case of neglected **divorced women** who have to cope with detrimental divorce agreements because they are not aware of their rights when it comes to reaching a divorce settlement. Children usually stay with their mother and the husband/father does not provide child support. Women do not ask for or report this to the court as they do not know they have the right to do so. Hence, they often have to struggle to raise their children alone without getting support from their ex-husbands.

Root causes of violence

Some forms of violence are **condoned in the culture**, such as early marriage, insulting, beating (particularly by the husband), scorn, and intimidation. Other risk factors cited by participants were:

- Tolerance to violence (including IPV/ wife beating)
- Victim blaming
- Substance abuse (drinking)
- Mediation (to avoid judicial proceedings)
- Male dominance
- Unfriendly services/ unfair access and treatment
- Migration and unemployment of young men (returnees)/ mobility
- Being “young”

“Currently, there are many unemployed youths and they do not have land for farming. In previous times youths migrated to Mekelle and engaged in different works including labor works to earn money. After the northern war, all youths returned to their community and became jobless, they do not have an income to cover their expenses or even to feed themselves. So, they are violent against women and girls, and especially stealing money not only from women but also men” (Beyeda women FGD).

“The value associated of using violence for perpetrators is pleasure (for the moment) and to show power.” (Beyeda women FGD).

Perpetrators

Assessment participants noted that for most forms of violence, perpetrators were men, and often, young men. Women usually experience emotional violence by husbands and other relatives, they also face physical violence such as beating by their husbands.

“Violence observed in this kebele are rape, beating, insulting, and theft. These violences mostly occurs in out of sight places like forests and also in public areas. Most of the time the perpetrators are young men and the subject or victims are women or girls.” (Beyeda, men FDG)

Violence was often cited to occur in the context **where women and girls are travelling on their own**. Even though participants of the assessment indicated that incidences of violence has decreased in these areas, girls and women still have to move in groups to school, water points and the market. It is not common in the area for women and girls to go alone because of fear of violence. Even the women who are married and have children do not have confidence to go alone, and they have to be accompanied by someone to move freely.

Social norms related to violence against women

Further research is needed on the social norms underlying violence in the assessment communities. Findings from Debark woreda show that there are types of violence that the community does not accept or tolerate such as rape or harassment, however, other forms of violence like abduction, insult and early marriage are tolerated, as they can be discussed and sorted among the community members, or some are not considered as violence.

In some discussions, it was noted that **men perceive that violence happens somewhat because of the women themselves and their inappropriate behavior**, which shows how victim blaming is happening, and is a demonstration of common gender bias and strong patriarchal thinking:

“Women will be beaten by her husband if she is aggressive, or if she lost or lends tools/assets of her husband without permission” (Beyeda, men FDG)

Service seeking behaviors and Settlement

In case of incidents of VAWG, people report the cases to kebele administration in order to seek justice. The kebele administration and women affairs office are in charge of receiving such reports and depending on the severity of the case these parties investigate the case with the police and report to the judicial system which is the woreda level court. However, these places may not be reliable for women to seek help and therefore are not being used:

“The place to report when violence occurs are the kebele centre and community police centre. However, those are not accessible to all communities, specifically women”. (Beyeda women FGD).

Area of Inquiry 8: Aspiration for oneself

Assessment participants were also asked about their most pressing needs, their aspirations and desire for change as well as the type of relationships they wanted in their home and community.

On the whole, men and women expressed high needs in terms of basic services and access to economic opportunities. **Men** aspire to access financial services in the forms of loans for instance, and talked about organizations that could assist with various agricultural goods. **Women** wish that health centers would provide comprehensive services and would like more assistance in gaining employment/work prospects. Participants also noted that **potable drinking water is scarce**. The limitations they encounter in achieving their objectives are a lack of cash, a lack of improved seeds and fertilizers, they pointed at the government promising assistance but failing to deliver on time, and a lack of agricultural professionals.

Participants also mentioned the **importance of having better relationships with one another**, encouraging one another, accepting diversity, and thriving as a group. Participants in the focus group of Beyeda discussed important community needs such as job creation (having job prospects), drinking water, health centers, and a telecommunications network. Because, as previously stated, there are many unemployed youngsters in the region, and some of them are disrupting community life by stealing money and assets, increasing work possibilities would be beneficial to the region.

In Debark, **girls** mentioned they want **safer environments** (free from violence), materials for learning, uniforms for school and job opportunities to pursue after school. The problems that hinder them from accomplishing their dreams are the shortage of family income and the absence of high school in their area.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

All three woredas and kebeles show similar traditional beliefs, with a clear division of gender roles/ responsibilities and decision-making processes, which are all deeply rooted in patriarchal social norms. Women and girls are seldom able to make positive breakthroughs in an environment that suppresses their confidence to speak up and thinks they cannot handle responsibilities alone. People with disabilities and female headed households face more stringent challenges, as they are barely supported and sometimes taken advantage of.

In previous years some changes have been observed, for instance in the distribution of household tasks between men and women. Young respondents seem more hopeful and open for changes in norms. But women continue to be overburdened with chores, posing a serious barrier to accessing their rights.

Finally, the lack of awareness on policy provisions regarding women's rights, or on accessing land and other assets, also pose a serious barrier to the empowerment of women, girls, female-headed households and persons with disabilities.

8.1 General Recommendations

Based on the assessment findings below are the major recommendations provided under the three gender equality framework domains.

Agency

- Address low **self-esteem** and confidence to strengthen **women's individual and collective agency** and enable them to make decisions for themselves and on behalf of the community.
- Conduct awareness with women and men with the aim to increasing **information and knowledge** about their rights, including their right to contribute to household and community decision-making processes on equal terms with men.
- Develop and encourage **mentorship** programs to allow women to increase **self-efficacy**, exercise power and voice through the help of more experienced peers. Showcase successful examples of women who have actively participated in decision-making and achieved positive outcomes for themselves and their families.

Relations

- Establish or strengthen working relationships with **grassroot/national women organizations** as well as feminist organizations in-country to further enhance feminist coalitions, space and platforms dedicated to make women visible in the public space and further the women's rights agenda.
- At community level, create **opportunities for women and other excluded groups to join existing networks and women's support groups**. Engage them in intervention design: women need to have a voice and say in interventions aiming at supporting them and local organizations are best placed to open the space and develop culturally appropriate programs benefiting women and girls.
- Cater the opportunities to **work with men** who are in favor of shared responsibility for supporting women to speak in public as well as enable them in the decision-making process to decrease fear of women to speak in public and transform their leadership.
- Engage men and community leaders throughout the gender action plan implementation and work with male role models in the community for them to support the change to improve the women and girls' situation in the area.

Structure

- Conduct **evidence-based strategic advocacy** on women and other excluded groups' rights such as persons with disabilities and for the inclusion of excluded groups in government policies and practices with the aim to reduce inequalities.
- Work closely with administration and existing institutions to ensure **gender responsive planning and budgeting** for women's rights and empowerment.

- Create policy awareness for persons with disabilities rights and women's right to access **economic opportunities**.
- Define strategies to address the immediate and strategic needs of invisible groups such as persons with disabilities and female-headed households to increase their **access to basic services and enforce duty-bearers' accountability** towards them.
- Address **social norms/barriers** for enhancing women's ability and capacity to generate income, expand and make relevant economic choices.
- Work closely with women organizations and protection stakeholders to enhance **protection from SGBV services and reporting mechanisms**. Engaging Kebele leaders, create awareness of the legal process in line with the national women's rights normative framework.
- Analyze women's constraints in relation to **access to markets** (e.g. transport costs, social norms) and develop a strategy to remove these barriers.

Capacity development

- Capacity development of project team and government stakeholders on gender integration and to discuss and explore areas of capacity development in terms of **addressing norms, and unequal power relations**.
- Provide women with training and **skills development opportunities** that enhance their capabilities in **income-generating activities**. This can include vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, financial literacy training, or workshops on marketable skills. By equipping women with relevant skills, they can pursue alternative livelihoods and generate income more effectively.
- Communication and negotiation skills (soft skills): Offer training on effective communication and **negotiation skills to women**, enabling them to express their opinions, concerns, and needs assertive.

8.2. Recommendations against Areas of Inquiry

Below are presented the specific recommendations under each area of inquiries.

Gender division of labor

- Conduct awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of **shared household responsibilities** and challenge traditional gender norms related to labor division. Engage with both women and men in the community to foster understanding and promote equitable distribution of household chores.
- Collaboration with community stakeholders: Engage local leaders, community organizations, and other stakeholders to support and champion initiatives that address the

gender division of labor. Foster dialogue and collaboration to ensure that the community understands and actively supports the empowerment of women. Encourage the involvement of men in discussions and actions, promoting shared responsibility within households and communities.

- **Childcare and women's economic empowerment:** Develop future interventions taking into consideration women's burden in relation to her childcare responsibilities. Advocate for a more equitable involvement of men in childcare.
- Capacitate women through providing trainings for women to develop their personal skills, knowledge or attitudes for them to negotiate on the division of labor in their community.

Household decision Making

- **Engage men as allies:** Organize community dialogues and engage with men in conversations about gender equality and the benefits of women's participation in decision-making. Highlight the positive impacts on family well-being, children's development, and community progress that can result from women's involvement. Encourage men to support and promote women's decision-making roles and responsibilities.
- Enhance women's access and use of information about their legal rights, child rights, and women's empowerment. This knowledge will help women understand their capacity to make decisions and advocate for their own and their children's rights.
- **Advocate for the rights of excluded groups** such as Female Headed Households to seek support from the community, support them on how to navigate the legal system and support their inclusion in community spaces. Equip them with the skills to make decisions about themselves and their children.
- Provide **life skills & leadership training** and community dialogue that will enable women to voice their opinions and negotiate with their husband and decide on major household matters. Also, to request their voices to be heard public decision-making and eventually have a place in decision-making position.

Control over productive assets:

- Engage with local institutions and leaders: Collaborate with local institutions, community leaders, and influential individuals to promote gender equality and inclusivity. **Encourage their support** for women's economic rights and control over productive assets through policy advocacy and community engagement.
- Financial inclusion and access to resources: Facilitate access to financial services, such as savings accounts, microfinance, or credit opportunities, specifically tailored to women's needs.
- Tackle barriers to women's participation and use of economic resources (such as mobility constraints), promote **women's access to productive resources** like land, technology, and

market linkages, enabling women to engage in income-generating activities with greater success.

Claiming Rights and meaningful participation

- Define and revise strategies to ensure women and **persons with disabilities' effective participation** in public institutions, to input into policy development, to represent excluded groups in public decision-making bodies.
- Legal and policy support: Advocate for policies and legal frameworks that promote women's rights and equal participation in decision-making. Work with local authorities and community leaders to enforce and implement these policies effectively.
- Strengthen **women's support networks**: Facilitate the formation of support groups or women's associations where women can share experiences, challenges, and strategies for effective decision-making. These networks provide a platform for women to collectively support each other and develop strategies to overcome barriers they may face in decision-making processes.
- Promote **women role models** in the community who are in leadership position to encourage other women in the community to voice their opinions in public decision-making.

Violence and restorative justice

- Raise duty bearers' awareness on SGBV engaging leaders and influential men as well as **men allies** and seek their commitments and accountability to women survivors of all forms of violence.
- Create **referral mechanisms** and working relationships with organizations that address and respond to SGBV including those who provide legal support, shelter, MHPSS, health and other remedial services.
- Raise community awareness on different types of prevailing violence including economic violence and gender norms conducive to the exclusion of women from political and economic spaces.
- Tackle social norms detrimental to women's rights and conducive to violence in the home and in communities.
- Involve women in formulating messages fighting violence and discrimination.
- Include **safety and protection** issues in programming, research/surveys. Assess program impact in terms of "do no harm" risks on women's rights. As women expand their economic choices and access men dominated structures and resources, there is a risk of tension and backlash on women's rights. This needs to be addressed through rigorous risk assessment throughout the project cycle.

Aspiration for oneself

- Address the issues of lack of job opportunity through **alternative livelihood** by providing need-based training for the community specifically targeting women and youth. Address practical issues such as lack of water and access to financial services through drilling water and working with financial service providers in the community.
- Address the issue of resource sharing especially **land and mobility** problems that affect women through creating awareness on women's legal rights.

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