

Strengthening Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) Institutions and Resilience II (SPIR II) Gender Analysis Report Learning Brief

Ethiopia's current estimated population is around 123 million; out of which, approximately 50% are women, and 41% are under the age of 15 ([The World Bank](#)). Despite Government's efforts to close the gender gap, women and girls still do not have the same opportunities as men and boys. For instance, in Ethiopia girls and women aged 10 and above spend about 19.3% of their time on unpaid care and domestic work in comparison to only 6.6% spent by men ([UN Women](#)). This situation limits their ability to enter and remain in the labor force, which in turn hinders economic growth and development.

[World Vision \(WV\)](#), [CARE Ethiopia](#), [IFPRI](#), and [ORDA Ethiopia](#) are jointly implementing Strengthening Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) Institutions and Resilience II (SPIR II) – a five-year program funded by the USAID. SPIR II's goal is aligned with the Government of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program 5 ([PSNP 5](#)), that aims to address the pervasive issues of food and nutrition insecurity in Ethiopia's Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray regions. SPIR II targets 531,788 PSNP clients in nine, eight and four woredas in the Amhara, Oromia and Tigray, respectively.

In March 2023, SPIR II conducted a Gender Analysis (GA) to identify gender and social inequalities that could negatively affect the achievement of SPIR II project objectives and to ensure that the design and interventions to increase women's empowerment, equity for women, men, boys and girls, and other vulnerable groups (including the elderly, PWDs¹, IDPs²) do not exacerbate existing power or abusive gender relations. SPIR II was not implementing in Tigray at that time, so the results generated are from Amhara and Oromia only.



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Gender Analysis (GA) Findings

The GA analyzed the impact of various significant events, such as conflicts and climate changes, occurring between 2018 and 2023. The effects of these events have led to increased stress and fewer opportunities for women and PWDs. The GA also provides information for the Gender Action Plan, which aims to promote Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in SPIR II. To achieve this, the GA uses [CARE's Gender Analysis Framework](#), the '[Good Practices Framework](#),' and [World Vision's GESI Domains](#). The methodology included a desk review, 52 key informant interviews (KIIs), and 42 focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in four woredas located in Amhara and Oromia regions.



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Gender Division of Labor and Time Use

- Women have little to no opportunity to engage in productive work outside their homes and cannot focus on improving nutrition due to time poverty resulting from an overload of childcare and domestic responsibilities. Although some men, especially young, urban men in the Oromia region are challenging these norms, men face significant pushback when they challenge these norms.
- In Amhara region, women's workload increased during the conflict, as men were mobilized to fight.
- Youth are mostly engaged in unpaid work. Young men help their fathers on the farms and young women assist their mothers with domestic labor as well as on-farm activities.

Household Decision Making and Power

- In male-headed households in the Oromia region, decisions are commonly made jointly by the husband and wife. A trend towards more equitable decision-making has emerged among younger couples, with husbands consulting their wives on most matters. However, in case of disagreement, men still usually have the final say. Joint decision-making is crucial for households to optimize their use of time and assets, which can improve nutrition and overall family well-being.
- In the Amhara region, decision-making is mostly dominated by men. However, women in urban areas have more power to make independent decisions on domestic issues. Women's decision-making power increases with age and education.
- The most promising intervention to shift men's attitudes about gender roles, based on the [SPIR](#) endline, is the enhanced nutrition package, which SPIR II is replicating broadly.

Control over One's Body

- Regional and age differences are notable in terms of women's negotiation capacity, and discussions about sex and contraceptive use within and outside of the household.
- Younger men and women indicated that discussions related to sex, the spacing of childbirth, and the use of contraceptives were taking place intra household.
- Regarding use of family planning, men's educational level was noted as an enabling factor. Whereas, religious and cultural norms, especially in Oromia region, were limiting factors.

Access, Use and Control over Productive Resources

Men have access, use and control over key productive assets. However, women in Oromia region had more control compared to Amhara region. Male control over resources was a challenge during the recent conflict in Amhara region as women found themselves managing these assets alone. Also, as the conflict decimated the assets men traditionally control, women gained relatively more control because aid often comes in the form of cash for household spending or cooking equipment, which women have greater control over. Women have greater access to household income and resources, but men still have overall control over key productive assets. Women with disabilities are further disempowered. This lack of control over income limits women and PWD's ability to use family assets to increase household production and nutrition.



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Access to Services and Meaningful Participation in the Public Sphere

- In the Oromia region, there were improvements in how women, girls, and vulnerable groups could access services and engage in village economic and saving associations (VESA), compared to the 2018 SPIR GA .
- In the Amhara region, conflict reduced women’s mobility, time availability, and ability to participate in the public sphere.
- Despite increased awareness (compared to the 2018 SPIR GA) of the importance of women’s engagement in decision-making and access to services at the kebele level, women lack the time to participate due to unequal distribution of household labor and male-dominated spaces.
- Women rarely speak or make decisions in public spaces.
- In the Amhara region, women must get their husband’s approval to participate in PNSP-related work, programs, and committees.

Impact of Conflict

- The GA findings in the Amhara region reflected the challenges and shifts in gender norms caused by the Tigray conflict. With men being conscripted or killed, women became responsible for managing existing assets and making household decisions.
- The economic impact of COVID-19, desert locusts, and the conflict has increased economic uncertainty, increasing the responsibility on women to support their families. The additional stress on households caused some to resort to early marriage for their daughters.



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Violence Against Women and Girls and Restorative Justice

- Women’s movement has been more restricted due to conflict, and communication blackouts and conflict have increased gender-based violence (GBV) risks.
- GBV cases were prevalent in all study woredas, with the woredas in Oromia region having the highest rates.
- The conflict in Amhara region has dramatically increased GBV.
- Women and girls, including those with disabilities, and those living in extreme poverty, are most at risk of GBV.
- Underreporting of GBV cases, especially intimate partner violence (IPV), is rampant due to survivors’ fear of repercussions from challenging community norms.
- GBV depletes the overall physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being of the survivor. This limits the survivor’s ability to provide adequate care and nutrition for their children as well as restricts their participation in production and community decision-making.

Aspirations for Oneself

- Women, men, youth, and PWDs aspire to have a better life in secure and peaceful environments. However, various economic, environmental, social, cultural, and security factors limit these aspirations.
- Youth are limited by unemployment, familial dependence, feelings of hopelessness and political instability. Youth want to be productive, independent, and to graduate from PSNP.
- Women’s aspirations are limited by GBV (particularly IPV), conflict, unequal division of labor, and limited access to key productive resources and public services. Young women additionally lack ownership of assets and have limited mobility.
- Most women want to work hard, save, and get loans to engage in income-generating activities (IGAs), including animal husbandry, poultry, and other business activities.
- Unmarried women, want a greater role in decision-making, more agency, and higher access to services.
- Most older women did not want to graduate from the PSNP as they fear recurrent natural shocks and see limited economic opportunities.
- PWDs, especially female PWDs, are impacted by discrimination and are excluded from decision-making. They want a role in decision-making, a more inclusive environment, and increased access to health, education, and livelihoods services.

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Recommendations

While there have been promising shifts in gender norms and roles, particularly among youth in the Oromia region, these gender and social norms continue to prevent women, youth and PWDs from contributing to the overall well-being of their families.

- Current gender constraints will require programming that incorporates CARE's agency, structure and relations domains and WV's access, participation, decision-making, well-being, and systems domains.
- Women, youth and PWDs need to have more time to participate in productive activities; more decision-making power at the household and community levels to impact nutrition and livelihoods systems; and increased access to and control over land, finances, and household assets.
- GBV, particularly IPV, needs to be reduced so that women are protected from harm and can take advantage of available opportunities.
- Changes to gender relations take time and should not focus on women alone – men must also understand and value gender equality. Men can be powerful agents of change and can support women and girl's empowerment.
- Promotion of improved farming technologies that save time, energy, and cost can enable the engagement of women and PWDs in IGAs and social transformation processes. Priority Should be given to youth and women who are interested in utilizing labor and time saving technologies to increase their income.
- Women who engaged in male dominated IGAs after the onset of the conflict should be promoted as role models. Women who lost their spouses should be connected to IGAs.
- Loan access for women and PWDs requires promotion, especially in conflict-affected areas, to build/rebuild their family businesses.
- Strongly reinforce implementation of SAA together with Men's Engagement and Religious leader dialogues, to drive gender and social norm change at community level.
- Community dialogue opportunities should include discussions on accommodating PWDs, and on sexual and reproductive health/healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy, particularly in modules for VESA, SAA, religious leader dialogue, peer education manuals.
- The Woreda Food Security Taskforces should increase women's actual membership/meaningful participation from both male and female headed households in community committees and task forces and encourage these women to actively participate.