

CARE WE-RISE Ethiopia Endline Evaluation



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Acronyms

AACES	Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CFIRW	Chronically food insecure rural women
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
DA	Development Agent
EEA	Ethiopian Economic Association
EEPRI	Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute
EL	Endline
ETB	Ethiopian birr
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance
FG	Focus group
FGD	Focus group discussion
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FSPM	Food Security Programme Manager
FTC	Farming Training Centre
FTF	Feed the Future
GBV	Gender-based violence
GOE	Government of Ethiopia
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GRAD	Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Score
HH	Household
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGA	Income-generating activities
BL	Baseline
KI	Key informant
LOA	Life of the activity
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MIT	Micro-irrigation technology
MTE	Midterm evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
ODK	Open Data Kit
PM	Project Manager or Programme Manager
PQL	Programme Quality and Learning
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
RUSACCO	Rural Savings and Credit Cooperative
SAA	Social Action and Analysis
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
SII	Strategic Impact Inquiry
SMFI	Sidama Microfinance Institution
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
SPMG	Seed and Planting Producer and Marketing Group
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
TANGO	Technical Assistance to Non-governmental Organizations
TBH	Traditional beehives

TO	Topical outline
TOC	Theory of change
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollars
VSL	Village savings and loan
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WDDS	Women's Dietary Diversity Score
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WEI	Women's Empowerment Index
WE-RISE	Women's Empowerment Improving Resilience, Income and Food Security

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The evaluation team is also thankful to the staff at SOS Sahel led by Naomi Berhanu who handled the necessary and extensive logistical arrangement for our team to go into the *kebeles* and conduct the survey in more than five hundred households, with several focus groups in nine different kebeles, and focus groups and key informant interviews in the *woredas* cities, as well as arranging interview times and location in Hawassa.

The success of this assessment also owes inestimable credit to the outstanding qualitative and quantitative teams that carried out the fieldwork, working through duress and logistics challenges with courage and patience. This bright and dedicated group of individuals drawn from DICT proved to be resourceful at finding ways to meet the households to complete the interviews. Girma Tegenu of DICT worked especially long hours to provide essential liaison between TANGO and the enumeration team to systematically ensure that quantitative data was properly downloaded, entered, and sent on to TANGO for analysis. The qualitative four-person team deserves extra credit for working tirelessly, often overtime.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the generosity and hospitality of the many communities and households that took the time to explain their lives to us and patiently sat by as we asked question after question. It is our sincere hope that the women living in rural Sidama will benefit from this study and experience true empowerment and truly sustainable livelihoods.

The TANGO team (Phil Sutter, Syrukh Sutter, and Vicki Brown)

1. Executive Summary

CARE's program, Women's Empowerment: Improving Resilience, Income and Food Security (WE-RISE), focuses on improving household food security and resilience by empowering women, particularly through increased agricultural productivity. Funded by the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) and implemented in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Malawi, WE-RISE is designed to improve the quality of life for chronically food insecure rural women (CFIRW). The program seeks to increase agricultural productivity through income generating activities, support environments promoting women's rights and gender-sensitive agricultural programming, and increase institutional capacity for improved gender-equitable programming at the global level.

WE-RISE targeted 15,441 households in three districts – *woredas* – in the Sidama zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR) of Ethiopia just south of the regional city of Hawassa; the project had actually counted approximately 10,950 participating households by December 2015. . The implementing partner for CARE in Sidama is SOS Sahel Ethiopia. This NGO has a history of programme support to farmers in the region.

CARE has contracted with TANGO International to design and support the implementation of a global evaluation framework for WE-RISE. TANGO led the baseline survey evaluation and the midterm reviews in all of the WE RISE programme countries.

1.1. Methodology

The endline evaluation team relied on triangulation of diverse quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative enumeration team, consisting of twenty enumerators and five supervisors, used a comprehensive questionnaire to interview female and male household heads and VSLA members in 580 households. The qualitative team, consisting of a team leader and four researchers, employed structured in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and a program activity effectiveness ranking scorecard exercise, to gauge programme performance, programme quality, and programme impact from the perspective of WE RISE project participants, field staff and management, partners, and other stakeholders.

The original baseline survey was drawn randomly from a sample frame composed of all households with a female member of a collective – the VSLA – in the WE RISE programme. The baseline and subsequent endline survey sample design was based on a longitudinal study for pre and post-comparison of results, requiring comparison of the same sampled households. The sample size for the household quantitative survey was determined to be 890; the baseline team managed to interview a total of 921 households. SOS Sahel field staff undertook a validation process entailing the identification of WE RISE households sampled during the baseline to verify their continued presence in the sampled *kebeles* and

participation in WE RISE. This process restricted the sample size to 578 households to be interviewed for the endline survey.

The qualitative endline component profiles six kebeles comprising two *kebeles* from each of the three *woredas* of the programme region. The selected kebeles were purposively selected with representative diversity based on different activities undertaken by kebele, geography, topography, and agro-ecological areas with information provided by CARE Ethiopia and SOS Sahel staff. The evaluation process was highly participatory, incorporating a cross section of key stakeholders, including but not limited to, project participants, local government institutions, NGO and local partners, technical partners, and CARE programme staff.

The quantitative enumeration team used tablets loaded with a software system allowing an extensive quantitative questionnaire for recording information from the household interviews. The team interviewed female and male heads of households and women primary decision-makers in households. The qualitative study provides complementary information relating to women's ability to actively engage in agricultural production activities, participate in Village Savings and Loan – VSLA – group activities, and invest in IGAs. In addition to focus group discussions, key informant/stakeholder interviews and a number of other tools were used to secure data – all participatory in format and process.

1.2. Analysis of Baseline Findings

Table 1 outlines the changes that WE RISE project participants have experienced in the four years from project inception to the endline survey, comparing baseline to endline results for the impact indicators that measure the WE RISE Theory of Change – TOC – goal and objectives. The WE RISE goal sought to improve food security, income and resilience of CFIRW through their social and economic empowerment.

Food Security: WE RISE households have experienced an improvement in their food security. Household dietary diversity – HDDS – increased by twelve percent from 4.1 to 4.6 food groups for all households, who now consume an average of just less than five different types of food daily. Women's intra-household access to food improved from 3.4 food groups recorded during the baseline to 4.5 food groups today, an improvement of 32%. Women told the team that they now increasingly eat their meals together with their husbands, consuming the same food items on a daily basis as well as during special meals.

Poverty Reduction: WE RISE households have markedly increased their asset holdings; all household asset values increased by nearly fifty percent. Households have significantly increased their asset ownership of cell phones and farm as well as non-farm business equipment. Land inheritance practices are only very slowly changing. Female WE RISE participants have experienced a major increase in savings and loan access. WE RISE women are increasingly successfully accessing and maintaining control over loans used for income-generating activities (IGA).

Table 1: WE RISE Baseline to Endline results for Impact Indicators

WE-RISE Goal: To improve food security, income and resilience for chronically food insecure rural women through their social and economic empowerment.

Impact Indicators ^A	Point Estimate		
	BL	EL	
Food & Nutrition Security			
IM 1.1: Mean household dietary diversity scores	4.1	4.6	***
IM 1.2: Mean women's intra-household food access	3.4	4.5	***
Livelihoods Resilience			
IM 1.3: Coping strategies index	26.7	8.6	***
IM 1.4: % households adopting negative coping strategies in past 3 months	80.9	35.9	***
IM 1.5: % households using adaptation strategies to reduce the impact of future shocks	71.2	72.7	
IM 1.6: Mean asset index (including agricultural land)	98.9	144.6	***
Economic Poverty Reduction			
IM 1.7: % households with non-agriculture income source	22.1	33.8	***
IM 1.8: % households with 3 or more income sources	24.5	75.7	***
IM 1.9: % households with savings	40.6	82.9	***
IM 1.10: % female loan sources accessed through VSLAs	9.9	71.5	***
Women's Empowerment			
IM 1.11: Women's 5 domains of empowerment score	55.3	59.0	**

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

^A Detailed sample size and disaggregation provided in indicator specific tables

Income Diversification: WE RISE households have also successfully diversified their income sources. At the time of the baseline, less than one-quarter of Sidama households reported earning income from three or more sources; more than three-quarters of WE-RISE participants now report such income earning diversity. Much of this newfound income diversification – female-headed households have experienced more than a three-fold increase – is directly attributable to their participation in WE RISE activities, such as sheep or goat rearing and fattening, chick rearing, honey production or other activities. WE RISE households, particularly female-headed, have also increased their non-agricultural income, promoted through WE RISE. More than one-quarter of WE RISE women are engaged in some form of small business activity, which could include beekeeping and honey production, small ruminant raising and fattening, and poultry production. Women involved in poultry production activities have not only diversified their household diet by adding nutritious eggs, they have used the income from egg and poultry sales to purchase other forms of livestock. Fewer women currently sell firewood and charcoal than at the baseline.

Household Resilience: Sidama WE RISE households at the endline no longer report nearly as many food and income shortages than was the case during the baseline survey. The Coping Strategies Index – CSI – is a powerful indicator of resilience, in this case signalling that WE RISE households have successfully weathered shocks to bounce back and resist engaging in harmful consumption strategies. High index numbers indicate higher frequency and greater severity of coping strategies undertaken by the household. CSI scores have declined dramatically, from 26.7 at baseline to 8.6 at endline, successfully shattering the end-of-project target of 20. CSI score differences between female- and male-headed households have become negligible, one indicator that female-headed households have attained a degree of resilience.

The ability to save offers another indicator of resilience. Households currently save at twice the rate reported at the baseline. Participation in VSLA activities has proven to be instrumental in accounting for this very substantial change in savings behaviour. The importance of this phenomenon is that even though savings amounts are small in the VSLA, participation in a savings institution has introduced a newfound savings culture, which is now widely adopted by project participants. FGD participants invariably cited VSLA participation as the most beneficial WE RISE activity. Households have parlayed their VSLA group participation into a list of diverse benefits, including increasing their savings and the ability to access credit, given the dearth of financial services with attractive lending terms. VSLA loans have allowed women to invest in small livestock and other IGAs as well as pay educational expenses, purchase food, improve their houses purchase, and cope with emergencies. VSLA group participation exposed women and men to information about earning income as well as gender equality, and opened opportunities to learn new skills, such as saving and spending wisely and social skills such as presenting their ideas in public.

WE RISE Impact on Women’s Empowerment: Application of a Women’s Empowerment Index – WEI – comprising the Five Domains of Empowerment (5DE) and Gender Parity, has allowed TANGO to assess women’s empowerment in the WE RISE Sidama context. The 5DE reflects the percentage of women who are considered empowered, based on their empowerment score. Women participating in the WE-RISE project have experienced a slight increase in their empowerment, but Sidama women who participate in the WE RISE programme frankly continue to engender relatively low empowerment, despite the introduction of a very powerful tool, the Social Analysis and Action – SAA – approach.

WE RISE successfully applied the SAA, promoting gatekeepers who facilitate the process of discussion, reflection, and behaviour to enable shifting patterns toward more equitable gender relations, increased sharing of gender roles, and breaking down negative cultural practices. The SAA process has allowed WE RISE to tackle patriarchal social norms and relationships and begin the process of transforming gender roles within Sidama communities and households and promote women’s empowerment and inclusion as well as address negative traditional practices that subjugate women. SAA is a powerful, transformational, tool for building awareness around gender perceptions based on socio-cultural traditions.

Another component of the WEI, the Gender Parity tool, which examines the parity between men and women within each empowerment domain, however, reveals continuing statistically significant differences in parity between male and female achievement of empowerment in the domains of income, production, and resources.

The endline data largely support the proposition that women are increasingly expressing a degree of economic empowerment but lag in their social, cultural, or political empowerment, although economic production roles remain stubbornly unchanged during the short life of WE RISE. VSLA activities have undoubtedly contributed to women's increased participation in household income and expenditure decision-making, the only empowerment domain indicator to show a dramatic increase over the life of the project. VSLA formation – a total of 621 across the three *woredas* – has served as an excellent entry point for other WE RISE activities and women participants offer positive role models in Sidama communities. The integration of SAA and VSLA activities and participation has greatly contributed to enhanced community discourse about patriarchal roles, relationships, and practices, including some negative cultural practices. The VSLA has developed as a new informal institution, providing WE RISE with a most consequential engine as change agent. The expansion of VSLA participation provided the gateway to participation in the RUSACCOs, which allowed women to access loans of larger amounts than possible in VSLAs to invest in shoat production and other IGAs. VSLA involvement has allowed women to be more frequently included in household purchasing decisions. All household members consider it a benefit to the household when women are able to save and access credit. Women within their households have benefited from VSLA assistance by enhancing agriculture and livestock productivity in and around their homesteads over which they continue to have more control.

Some of the most rudimentary changes are beginning to occur in the process of redefining female and male relations and roles, largely through application of the SAA process. Qualitative as well as quantitative evidence strongly suggests that gender-based violence has declined throughout the WE RISE *kebeles*. WE RISE participants credit this shift in attitudes and practice to repeated messaging and initiatives through the SAA process as well as to GoE efforts and initiatives against early marriage, female genital cutting and polygamy. In addition, paralegals trained by the project successfully facilitated discussions aimed at publicizing women's rights, especially the need to combat harmful practices. The Paralegal groups broached once-forbidden subjects of gender-based violence (GBV), female genital mutilation (FGM), polygamy, early marriage, and rape. Progress toward reducing or eradicating harmful practices has varied, depending on the harmful practice. Sidama WE RISE households have experienced reduced inter-household conflict between wives and husbands and decreased violence against women and other harmful practices. Polygamous marriages have apparently declined. On the other hand, FGM remains intractable.

Patriarchal attitudes about family life are slowly dissipating. More than two-thirds of women responded affirmatively with gender-equitable attitudes, contrasted with 61% of men with such responses. Both surpass the end-of-project targets. Despite these gains, it is not a surprise that less than forty percent of women have achieved freedom of mobility; sociocultural norms continue to constrain women's freedom of movement. Men and women FGD participants affirmed that women normally require men's approval to venture outside of home and village areas during the day and anywhere outside their homes at night. Despite enhanced discussion in WE RISE *kebeles* about attaining equality within households and communities, the vast majority of women must gain men's approval prior to venturing outside of their immediate home area and their regular routines of mobility – such as neighbour's homes, churches and markets.

Perceived improved wellbeing resulting from WE RISE: Most WE RISE project participants – both women and men – describe their lives as improved since the onset of the project four years ago. Seventy-one percent of men and 69% of women told the enumeration team that they were better off four years after WE RISE initiated its activities in Sidama. Only nine percent of men and ten percent of women described their lives as worse off than four years ago. Why has wellbeing improved, according to most interviewed women? Not surprisingly, WE RISE participants prioritize their improved access to credit and savings as the most impactful changes to their wellbeing. Forty percent of female participants cited improved access to credit and one-third mentioned improved household savings.

2. Introduction and Background

TANGO International has supported the design and implementation of an evaluation framework for CARE WE-RISE implemented in three countries – Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Malawi. This collaboration has included.

1. A global monitoring and evaluation framework;
2. Identification of the most appropriate, rigorous and ethical impact assessment methodology to use across the different countries allowing for comparability between projects and countries;
3. Support to CARE country offices and their local partners in conducting the baseline and end-line evaluations as well as a qualitative midterm review, ensuring quality data collection protocols and supporting data analysis;
4. A three-year cohort study of ten purposively selected WE RISE participating women and their households to track progress, using the Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) and qualitative topical outline;

The TANGO proposal to CARE for Technical Support to Monitoring and Evaluation of CARE WE-RISE and Pathways Programme can be found as **Annex 1**.

2.1. Why WE-RISE?

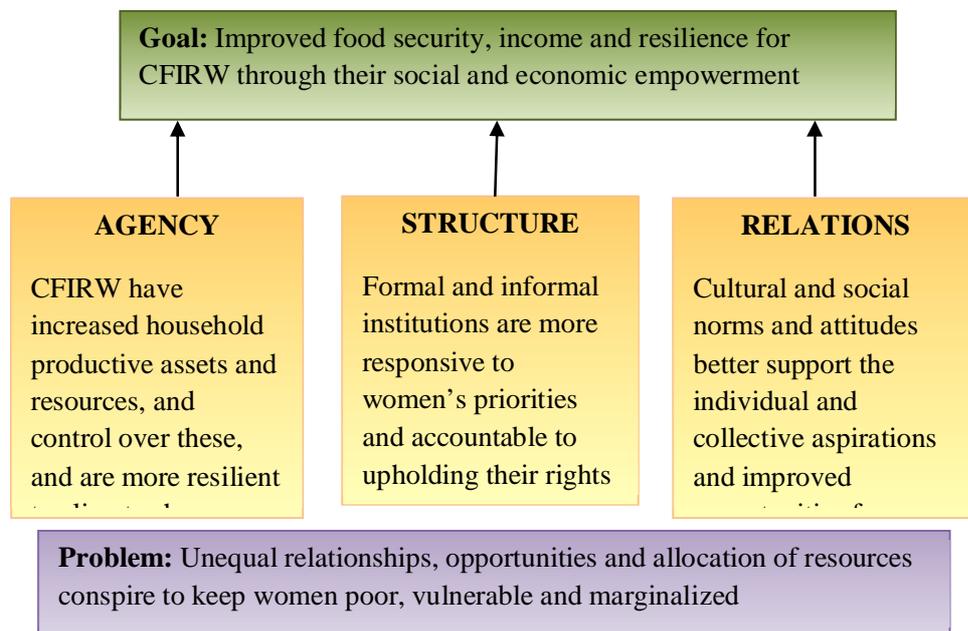
Funded by the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) and implemented in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Malawi, the WE-RISE programme has sought to increase poor women farmers' productivity and empowerment in more equitable agriculture systems at scale, and improve the quality of life for chronically food insecure rural women (CFIRW). WE-RISE is associated with the CARE USA programme known as Pathways, similarly designed to overcome the constraints that prevent women from more productive and equitable engagement in agriculture in India, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Mali, Malawi and Ghana. Both programmes have a strong gender focus, similar programme approach and methodology, and overlapping countries of implementation. CARE has sought to promote WE RISE as an effective programming platform with evolving networks of influence and learning partnerships, and to achieve impact at scale for prioritized segments of smallholder farmers.

CARE's WE-RISE programme initially targeted 9,846 households in two districts of Tanzania, 15,441 households in three districts of Ethiopia, and 15,000 households in two districts of Malawi. However, the programme did not actually achieve those numbers. By the end of the fourth year, WE RISE Sidama participating households, that is, households with one or more member who had participated in at least one project activity, numbered approximately 10,950. One explanation is that the project got off to a slow start during the initial two years of WE RISE.

2.2. WE-RISE Theory of Change

CARE's previous work on the Women's Empowerment Strategic Impact Inquiry provides the basis of the WE-RISE Theory of Change (TOC), which includes three domains of change: a) women's agency (i.e., skills, knowledge and aspirations), b) formal and informal structures, and c) social relations that women engage in on a daily basis (i.e., cultural and social norms and attitudes). **Figure 1** represents the WE-RISE TOC.

Figure 1: WE-RISE Theory of Change



Thus, the program theorized that marginalized, chronically food insecure rural women would be more productive and their families more food secure when:

- Women have increased capacity (skills, knowledge, resources), capabilities (confidence, bargaining power, collective voice), and support;
- Local governance and institutions have/implement gender-sensitive policies and programming that are responsive to the rights and needs of poor women farmers;
- Agricultural service, value chain, and market environments of relevance to women are more competitive, gender-inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

2.3. Goals and Objectives

The WE-RISE Evaluation Plan has utilized the WE-RISE framework and AACES goals to inform development of a set of indicators useful across all three WE-RISE country

programs. The alignment of WE-RISE and AACES framework and goals and the WE-RISE program indicators is presented as **Annex 2**.

WE-RISE Goal: To improve food security, income and resilience for chronically food insecure rural women through their social and economic empowerment

The WE-RISE objectives have been framed as change outcomes and represent the intermediate objectives sought by the program.

- **Change Outcome 1: CFIRW have increased household productive assets and resources and control over them, and are more resilient to climate shocks.** This objective has sought to improve women's productivity through increased production, income, or income generating opportunities; knowledge and skills; access to and control over productive resources, assets, markets, services and inputs; and influence within the household and community. The ability of women to access productive assets, financial instruments and knowledge, and to exercise control over decisions related to their use, enhances the role of women as change agents benefitting their households and communities.

WE RISE has relied on building and strengthening collectives, beginning with Ethiopian Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to contribute to increasing women's knowledge and capacity as a pathway to increasing women's agricultural productivity and empowerment. Interventions under this objective have included promoting equitable access to sustainable means of production (inputs, financial instruments, productive assets and improved agricultural practices), access to information and skills building (community-based extension workers, government extension services), improved market access and income generating opportunities.

- **Change Outcome 2: Formal and informal institutions are more responsive to women's priorities and accountable to upholding their rights.** This objective has addressed the structural barriers within local institutions (planning committees, micro-finance institutions, farmers groups) by promoting gender-equitable agricultural practice and policies to increase women's effective participation in agricultural production activities and outcomes, building capacity in local institutions for promoting representative processes, and increasing women's representation as members and leaders in formal and informal groups, institutions and decision-making bodies.
- **Change Outcome 3: Cultural and social norms and attitudes better support the individual and collective aspirations and improved opportunities for CFIRW.** The third objective has sought to improve the structures, rules and power relations that define how resources are allocated among citizens by changing socio-cultural norms and promoting more gender-sensitive practices and attitudes. Strategies include working with elders, community and religious leaders to advocate for gender equality,

promoting public awareness on gender issues, and building capacity and accountability in community structures for encouraging women's participation in the public sphere and local decision-making.

2.4. WE RISE in the Sidama Ethiopia Context

Since 2012, the WE-RISE programme has been implemented in the Sidama zone, in proximity to the regional capital Hawassa, in three woredas: Loka Abaya, Dale and Shebedino. Sidama is one of 13 zones within the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples' Region of Ethiopia (SNNPR) and is divided into four major livelihood zones: Bilate Basin Agro-Pastoral, Sidama Maize Belt, Hawassa *Chat* and *Enset*, and Sidama Coffee Livelihood Zones. The Sidama Maize Belt is the only zone not categorized as food secure.¹

CARE and its partner SOS Sahel selected the three woredas for WE-RISE programme activities because the Sidama maize-growing zone was classified as food insecure, with a large number of vulnerable households identified through the government's safety-net programme. CARE assessments also identified this area as characterized by highly patriarchal social relations between the sexes within households, communities, and social, economic and political institutions.

CARE Ethiopia opened an office in Hawassa several years ago to enhance the government's safety net programme through the CARE-Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP)-Plus project, working to link food insecure groups with markets in Dale in selected sub sectors of livestock, cereals and red beans. PSNP-Plus sought to promote income generating potential among poor rural agriculture households and facilitate saving and loan activities in association with the PSNP, using food inputs targeting chronically food insecure households to build community assets.

SOS Sahel Ethiopia, CARE's implementing partner in Sidama, has a history of programme support to farmers in value chain development of agricultural products and improving access to land and natural resources targeting landless youth.

3. Methodology

The original sample design was based on a longitudinal study for pre and post comparison of results, designed to compare the same households from the baseline of the project to the endline. Both the baseline and endline surveys were therefore "beneficiary-based." The baseline was drawn randomly from a sample frame composed of all households with a female member of a collective – the VSLA – in the WE RISE programme. The sample size for the household quantitative survey was determined to be 890.

¹ Information from Final Report, Review of Gender, Social Norms and values; and livelihood Perspective of Chronically Food Insecure Households (HHs) in Sidama Zone, SNNPR; Submitted to CARE by UMA Consult PLC; February 2011.

The validation process severely restricted the sample size, which dropped from 890 households at the baseline to 578 households to be interviewed for the endline survey. Some entire *kebeles* sampled during the baseline were abandoned for the endline because the project, which originally targeted 15,441 but actually worked with approximately 11,000 households, subsequently dropped those *kebeles* from WE RISE. Attrition and non-response reduced the final tally of households actually interviewed for this endline survey to 551, a forty percent reduction from the baseline survey, which managed to sample 921 households. The results are presented in **Table 2**.

In order to compare baseline-to-endline results, TANGO in each of the three WE-RISE countries only analysed the 551 baseline and endline households interviewed by the enumeration team during the endline survey.

Table 2: Baseline to Endline Sample Sizes

	<i>Baseline Achieved Sample Size</i>	<i>Endline target sample size^A</i>	<i>Endline Achieved Sample Size</i>	<i>Attrition and Non- response rate^{B,C}</i>
WE-RISE	921	578	551	40.2%

^A This list was based upon all households participating in the baseline survey, and was updated by project staff to exclude households no longer participating in the programme or having migrated from the WE RISE *kebeles*.

^B This figure includes non-response and attrition. Many households that remained on the endline target list were not programme participants and should have been omitted from the endline target list. This figure also includes households chosen during the random sample procedure that either could not be located, had been located but stated they had never been WE RISE participants, or did not agree to participate.

^C Any household without valid baseline and endline survey responses was omitted from endline analysis. This includes households that never participated in the programme but were included in the baseline survey, who were removed at the time of the endline from the baseline sample frame. Point values for the baseline are recalculated to better reflect the status of the project participant population.

The qualitative baseline component profiles six *kebeles* comprising two *kebeles* from each of the three *woredas* of the programme region. The selected *kebeles* were purposively selected with representative diversity based on different activities undertaken by *kebele*, geography, topography, and agro-ecological areas with information provided by CARE Ethiopia and SOS Sahel staff.

The quantitative enumeration team used tablets loaded with a software system allowing an extensive quantitative questionnaire for recording information from the household interviews. Male and female heads of households and women primary decision-makers in households were interviewed. The qualitative study provides complementary information relating to women's ability to actively engage in agricultural production activities, participate in VSLA group activities, and invest in IGAs. In addition to focus group discussions, key informant/stakeholder interviews and a number of other tools were used to secure data – all participatory in format and process.

A comprehension outline and discussion of the methodology, including baseline and endline comparison methods, the development of indicators and data collection tools, quantitative and qualitative methods, survey training, the sampling framework, data collection and data quality control, and limitations to the survey and evaluation process, is included as **Annex 3**.

4. Findings and Outcomes

4.1 Household Characteristics

Baseline and endline household demographics are similar, as would be expected in a longitudinal study. Female-headed households comprise 39% of the endline households, slightly lower than the baseline. The proportion of widowed household heads increased (from 14% to 16% of the sample), as did the proportion of divorced household heads (from 8% to 10% of the sample), which should indicate more female-headed households at the endline. Many households, however, declared the woman as head of household at the time of the baseline, in order to indicate that women were VSLA participants. (VSLA offers the gateway into the project.) Fewer households therefore declared themselves to be female-headed for the endline survey.

Average household size remains just below five, although the number of children per household increased very slightly. Several WE RISE female participants – more than six percent of the sample – appear to have married during the past

two years; young marriages were virtually non-existent prior to the inception of WE RISE. The average number of females involved in agricultural production activities has increased by thirty percent, from 1 to 1.3 per household. This may be an indication of increased participation in agricultural activities promoted by the project.

Education levels remain extremely low. More than ninety percent of the WE RISE household heads (92%) have received no education or were never able to complete their primary school education. Approximately seven percent of households include a disabled member.

4.2 WE RISE Impact on Household Food Security

To understand progress toward the long-term goal of “*Improved Food Security, Income, and Resilience for Chronically Food Insecure Rural Women (CFIRW) through their social and economic empowerment*”, WE-RISE tracked information to inform two key areas or primary indicators used to measure changes in food security: 1) the household average dietary diversity score (HDDS), a proxy for food access, and 2) the mean women’s intra-household

Table 3: Types of households Interviewed

	<i>Baseline Sample Size</i>	<i>Endline Sample Size</i>
All households	551	551
Female HHHs	232	217
Male HHHs	319	334

food access score. Table 5 illustrates substantial improvements in these two indicators from the baseline to the endline, four years into the WE RISE programme (all statistically significant changes at the 1% level), despite falling short of the stated goal, which was undoubtedly overly ambitious.

Table 4: Household Demographics

Indicator	Point Estimate		Sample Size	
	BL	EL	BL	EL
Household size	4.8	4.9	551	551
Number of children (under 18)	2.7	2.9	551	551
Number of females in household	1.5	2.4	551	551
Number of females involved in Ag in HH	1.0	1.3	551	551
% of female headed households	42.1	39.4	551	551
Age of head of household	41.8	41.5	549	533
Education of head of household (%)				
No education	60.1	44.1	551	551
Started Primary, but did not complete	^	48.1	551	551
Primary	35.9	4.9	551	551
Secondary	2.2	1.6	551	551
More than Secondary	0.2	0.9	551	551
Marital status of head of household (%)				
Single	0.9	7.3	551	551
Married (Less than or equal to two years)	0.7	6.4	551	551
Married (More than two years)	72.8	64.4	551	551
Divorced	5.8	4.5	551	551
Widow/Widower	19.8	15.6	551	551
% of households with a disabled member	^	7.1	^	551

*Baseline did not include "Started primary (but did not complete)"

^Not collected at Baseline

4.2.1 Dietary Diversity and Intra-Household Access

Baseline survey results identified dietary diversity, an essential aspect of food security, to be clearly problematic for many households in the three woredas of Sidama. Dietary diversity refers to nutrient adequacy, defined here as a diet that meets the minimum requirements for energy and all essential nutrients. The rationale for using dietary diversity as an indicator for dietary quality stems primarily from a concern related to nutrient deficiency and the recognition of the importance of increasing food and food group variety to ensure nutrient adequacy. Dietary diversity assesses the number of different food groups consumed over a 24-hour period by household members. Lack of dietary diversity is typically a serious health problem in poor rural communities. For this survey it serves as indicator of access to food by women, socioeconomic status and highlights differences between female and male-headed households.

Household food preparers were asked to report on food consumption of eleven different food groups within the previous 24 hours.² A higher score demonstrates household and women's consumption of more food groups, indicating their access to a more diverse diet. After determining whether *any* household member consumed each of the eleven food groups, the main food preparer was asked if all, some, or no female household members over the age of 15 ate the food item.

From the commencement of WE RISE to the endline survey, the mean HDDS for all surveyed households increased by twelve percent from 4.1 to 4.6 food groups; households now consume an average of just less than five different types of food daily. This result falls short of the end-of-project target of six food groups. As was the case at the baseline, female-headed household members at endline continue to consume fewer food groups daily compared to members of male-headed households (4.4 versus 4.7), male-headed households consume slightly more diverse household diets.

One significant finding is that women's intra-household access to food improved from the dismal 3.4 food groups recorded during the baseline to 4.5 food groups today, an improvement of 32%. Although this outcome also falls short of the target goal of six food groups proposed following the baseline, that target was

undoubtedly unattainable in four years. Women now consume basically the same diet as other members of the household, only marginally fewer food groups (confirmed when comparing the Household Diet Diversity Score of 4.6 and Women's Intra-Household Food Access score of 4.5). This outcome was substantiated within FGDs with women, who told the team that they now increasingly eat their meals together with their husbands, consuming the same food items on a daily basis as well as during special meals to celebrate occasions such as weddings religious events or commiserate with others during funerals. This is a substantially new finding since the baseline.

Table 6 disaggregates the diet diversity data by consumption of specific food group, serving to further analyse dietary changes noted since the baseline. Women within the households are consuming (with statistical significance) more of eight of the eleven food groups,

² The Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) and Women's Dietary Diversity Score (WDDS) have been modified based on eleven dietary items versus twelve in the other country studies, because sugar/honey was inadvertently omitted from the baseline household survey questionnaire.

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
IM 1.1: Mean household dietary diversity scores					
All households	4.1	4.6	***	475	506
Female HHHs	3.9	4.3	***	199	202
Male HHHs	4.2	4.7	***	276	304
IM 1.2: Mean women's intra-household food access					
All households	3.4	4.5	***	475	506
Female HHHs	3.3	4.2	***	200	217
Male HHHs	3.5	4.7	***	275	289
Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels. The Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) and Women's Dietary Diversity Score (WDDS) are modified on 11 dietary items vs. 12 in the other country studies, because sugar/honey was inadvertently omitted from the Baseline survey.					

including five that are considered nutritious foods, such that women’s consumption patterns across all food groups are virtually the same as those of other household members. Consumption of the high protein foods, including meat, eggs and fish, remains very low (although surveys such as this one that utilize the FANTA model invariably understate consumption of high protein items in Ethiopia by posing the question, “Was yesterday an unusual or special day, involving a festival, wedding or funeral?” A “yes” answer requires the enumerator to skip all consumption questions. Weddings, funerals, and festivals are essential events allowing poor rural household members to consume those high protein items.)

Table 6: Food Group Consumption

Indicator	Point Estimate		Point Estimate	
	BL	EL	BL	EL
Food categories consumed yesterday				
	% of households reporting someone in HH consumed item		% of HH reporting women consumed item	
Cereals	83.4	*** 90.9	69.9	*** 89.9
Tubers	65.3	*** 78.3	55.0	*** 77.1
Vegetables	76.8	75.5	66.7	** 73.3
Fruits	10.1	11.9	6.5	*** 11.3
Meat	1.3	1.4	0.2	*** 1.4
Eggs	1.5	1.4	0.4	0.8
Fish	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Pulses / legumes	14.6	*** 4.4	11.8	*** 4.0
Dairy	26.0	** 32.6	19.4	*** 31.6
Fats/Oils	36.7	*** 64.2	33.3	*** 63.2
Condiments, etc.	90.9	*** 96.1	79.5	*** 95.1
N	630-634		566	

4.3 WE RISE Impact on Incomes and Economic Poverty Reduction

To understand progress toward the long-term goal of “Improved Food Security, **Income**, and Resilience for Chronically Food Insecure Rural Women (CFIRW) through their social and economic empowerment”, WE-RISE tracked information to inform four key areas: the mean asset index, the percentage of households with non-agricultural income, percentage of households with three or more different income sources, and per capita monthly household expenditures. As mentioned in the Limitations section, the endline enumeration team failed to capture the fourth listed impact income indicator – household expenditures. The other three indicators, however, serve together as excellent proxies for income outcomes.

4.3.1 Mean Asset Index

The *mean asset index* is a proxy for household income and wealth and measures the number and weighted value of animal and other productive and household assets. The asset index is computed by multiplying the number of each type of household asset by the index value for that particular asset type. Index values of household assets used for construction of the asset index are presented in **Annex 8**. A higher asset index value indicates that households have been able to accumulate assets over time. Households are able to accumulate assets if income is greater than the necessary expenditures to meet household subsistence requirements. Assets also provide households with a cushion to adjust to shortfalls in incomes, or sudden increases in necessary expenditures. Asset ownership is an important buffer to cope with shocks. Thus, households with a higher asset index are less vulnerable than households with lower asset index values.

Table 7: Mean Asset Index

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
IM 1.9: Mean asset index (with agricultural land)					
All households	101.6	144.5	***	551	551
Female HHHs	95.9	126.1	***	232	217
Male HHHs	105.7	151.5	***	319	334
IM 1.9: Mean asset index (without agricultural land)					
All households	48.1	62.7	***	551	551
Female HHHs	43.7	52.4	***	232	217
Male HHHs	51.3	69.3	**	319	334

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Asset holdings have increased markedly since the baseline (see **Table 7**); all household asset values increased by nearly fifty percent (42%) from 102 to 145. Although female-headed households have experienced greater gains in asset holdings than have male-headed households, differences in asset holdings between female and male-headed households remain significant and have actually broadened: female headed households own approximately 83% of the value of assets of male-headed households, compared to 90% baseline differences. When agricultural land values are subtracted from the calculations, asset-holding gains for male-headed households are even more pronounced. The value of assets owned by female-headed households was 85% that of male-headed households at the baseline; that proportion has now decreased to 76%. Baseline FGD female participants, however, described frequently being compelled to sell assets in the absence of a husband assisting with farm or income generating activity; they had limited capacity to develop their assets. The endline team heard fewer such stories.

Figure 2 % of Households Owning Assets (by category)

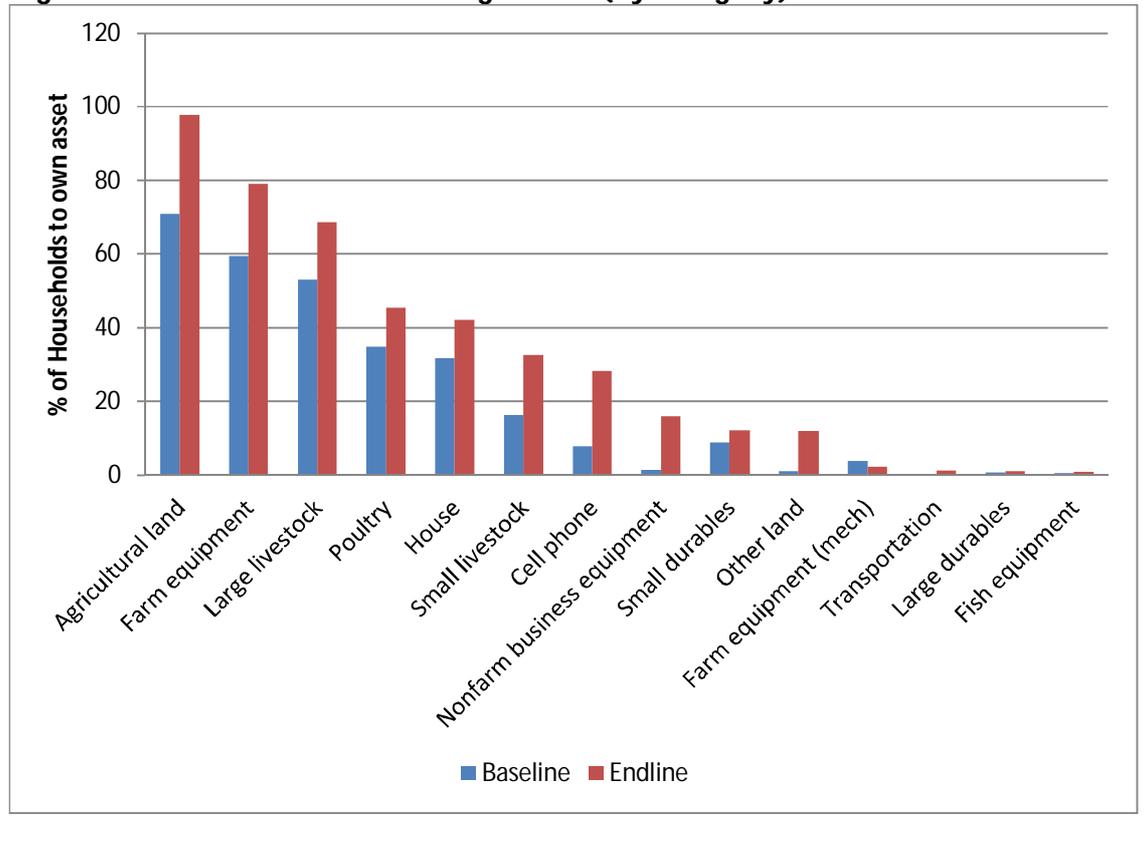


Figure 2 offers another indication of increased asset ownership during the past 3½ years. Since baseline, across the full sample, households have significantly increased their asset ownership of cell phones and both farm and non-farm business equipment (which increased from one to fifteen percent). The percentage of households reporting ownership of cell phones has increased by 25 percentage points from only four percent to almost one-third (30%) of all households at endline. More households have invested in large livestock as well as small ruminants and poultry.

Land inheritance practices are only very slowly changing. Kebele FGD participants could usually cite two to four cases within their kebele of women accessing land for agricultural production, beyond homestead land used to produce *enset*, which is the Sidama woman’s crop.

“If there are three brothers and one dies, one brother takes the wife of his deceased brother and inherits the land and other assets, like livestock. This practice has reduced but still exists.” – SAA FGD Core Group participant, Chancho, Loka Abaya

4.3.2 Income Diversity Patterns

At the time of the baseline, less than one-quarter of Sidama households reported earning income from three or more sources; more than three-quarters (76%) of WE-RISE participants now report such income earning diversity. Female- as well as male-headed households experienced this gain, which is presented in **Table 8**; 72% of female-headed households and 78% of male-headed households now source at least three different types of income for their households. This substantially surpasses the end-of-project targets, established in the Theory of Change at the outset of WE RISE, of 68% and 70% for female- and male-headed households. Much of this newfound income diversification – female-headed households have experienced more than a three-fold increase – is directly attributable to their participation in WE RISE activities, such as sheep or goat rearing and fattening, chick rearing, honey production or other activities.

Table 8: Income Diversity

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
IM 1.5: % households with non-agricultural income [promoted by the project]					
All households	22.1	33.8	***	551	551
Female HHHs	21.0	38.3	***	232	217
Male HHHs	23.0	30.8	***	319	334
IM 1.6: % households with three or more different income sources					
All households	24.5	75.7	***	551	551
Female HHHs	22.0	72.4	***	232	217
Male HHHs	26.3	77.8	***	319	334

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels. Independent t-test only conducted on means.

WE RISE households, particularly female-headed, have also increased their non-agricultural income, promoted through WE RISE. At the time of the baseline, only 22% of households derived non-agricultural income. Nearly forty percent of female-headed households (38%) and just over thirty percent of male-headed households (31%) now derive some of their income from non-agricultural sources. Male-headed households remain more dependent on income from agriculture production. This is not surprising as men continue to control the important Sidama cash crops of coffee and *chat*, as well as the sale of large livestock – cows and oxen. Decision-making on how this income is utilized remains normally at the discretion of men. Women’s control of work, assets and income tends to be derived from resources close to and around the home. These include access to poultry, milk and butter from livestock, and garden vegetables. To the degree these can be sold in local markets, women are often involved – especially if living in close proximity to these markets. The more distant the markets, the greater the involvement of men, due to more limited mobility afforded to women. Women in focus groups indicated their influence on marketing decisions is “suggestive or consultative” to men who ultimately decide on the use of this

income; these patterns are slowly changing however, as men increasingly accept women's involvement in income earning activities.

The 82% increase in female-headed non-agricultural income sources marks a definitive success for the project, which has promoted women's economic involvement in a variety of activities.

4.4 WE RISE Impact on Livelihood Resilience

To understand progress toward the long-term goal of "*Improved Food Security, Income, and Resilience for Chronically Food Insecure Rural Women (CFIRW) through their social and economic empowerment*", WE-RISE tracked information to inform two key areas: coping strategies related to food scarcity, which is reflected in a coping strategies index, and household savings patterns. Measuring the resources upon which individuals and households can draw to reduce vulnerability provides insight on household capacity to absorb a range of different risks and adapt to various external economic, ecological, social, and cultural drivers of change.

4.4.1 Consumption Coping Strategies

Table 9 indicates that food and income shortages were significantly more problematic for Sidama households for the three months prior to the baseline survey than for the sampled WE RISE households during the three months prior to the endline survey. At the baseline, nine out of every ten households, including 91% of female-headed households reported experiencing insufficient food or income to purchase food. In contrast, less than half of all sampled WE RISE households (48%) experienced food and income shortages for the three months leading up the endline survey, with no differences between female-and male-headed households.

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
Households who did not have enough food or money to buy food in past 3 months					
All households	89.5	47.5	***	551	551
Female HHHs	91.4	48.4	***	232	217
Male HHHs	88.1	46.7	***	319	334

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

There are two contradictory or opposing factors completely beyond the scope of the project assisting in mitigating these results. The first factor is the timing of the two surveys. The TANGO team undertook baseline survey data collection in July 2012, during the early onset of the *Meher* hunger season, at least a month after the planting season. The team interviewed endline survey households, on the other hand, in November 2015, after at least some the *Meher* crops had been harvested. One would expect less transitory seasonal food

insecurity in November than in July. There is another, contradictory mitigating factor however. Ethiopian farmers have experienced drought conditions and poor-to-inexistent harvests throughout much of the country. Although Sidama farming households have been less affected, agricultural yields in Sidama have suffered this year, partly due to flooding and other weather conditions.³

The *Coping Strategy Index (CSI)* measures the frequency and severity of a household's behaviour in coping with shortfalls in food supply, including inaccessible or unavailable foods. The CSI can be used as a food security indicator, an early warning indicator, and as an indicator of longer-term changes in food security status.⁴ The CSI attempts to answer the following question: "What do you do when you don't have enough food, and don't have enough money to buy food?" The various answers to this question comprise the basis of the CSI score. Households react in different ways, such as selling assets, taking loans, changing consumption

patterns and migrating. Severity weights of each strategy are then applied, based on an average from countries around the world, to enable comparisons. **Annex 9** provides more details on how the CSI is computed.

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
All households	26.7	8.6	***	551	551
Female HHHs	28.1	9.3	***	232	217
Male HHHs	25.7	8.3	***	319	334

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Table 10 measures and compares the CSI of female- and male-headed households. High index numbers indicate higher frequency and greater severity of coping strategies undertaken by the household. CSI scores have declined dramatically, from 26.7 at baseline to 8.6 at endline, successfully shattering the end-of-project target of 20. This low CSI score compares very favourably to recent CSI scores throughout the Horn of Africa and East Africa, including recent surveys in Ethiopia. The CSI is a powerful indicator of resilience, in this case signalling that WE RISE households have successfully weathered shocks (discussed later in this report) to bounce back and resist engaging in harmful consumption strategies. CSI score differences between female- and male-headed households have become negligible – only one percentage point.

The CSI is partly derived from **Table 11**, which presents the percentages of households using eight common consumption coping behaviours one or more times per week during the previous 30 days. All households in the sample have significantly reduced using each of these eight strategies from baseline to endline (statistically significant in each case at the

³ FEWSNET, Ethiopia Food Security Outlook, December 2015.

http://www.fews.net/sites/default/files/documents/reports/Malawi_FSO_2015_04.pdf

⁴ Developed by CARE and field tested by WFP and CARE, the CSI has been used for early warning and food security monitoring in African and Asian countries, in addition to several Middle Eastern countries.

1% level). Borrowing food, reducing food quantities, and relying on less-preferred food continue to be the most common tactics households used to combat shortages, but have reduced their use respectively from 74% to 30%, 87% to 41%, and 84% to 26%; 26% of WE RISE households also restrict consumption of some family members, down from 68% at the baseline. Fourteen percent of households have skipped an entire day of eating due to food scarcity in 2015, which is worrying, but 68% reported doing so at the time of the baseline. Virtually no household has consumed taboo or wild “famine” foods (two percent) in 2015 or have resorted to begging or scavenging (two percent). This is encouraging data.

Table 11: Consumption Coping Strategies

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
% of HHs using consumption coping strategy 1 or more times each week					
Borrowed food or borrowed money to buy food	74.4	30.3	***	551	551
Relied on less preferred or less expensive foods	83.7	25.8	***	551	551
Reduced the number of meals or the quantity eaten per day	86.8	41.2	***	551	551
Skipped eating due to lack of money or food for entire day	68.4	14.2	***	551	551
Consumed taboo food, wild food, famine foods which are normally not eaten	9.8	2.4	***	551	551
Restricted consumption of some family members so that others could eat normally or more	68.4	26.1	***	551	551
Eat seed stock held for next season	42.8	18.9	***	551	551
Beg or scavenge	6.7	1.8	***	551	551

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

As economic wellbeing decreases, women report that girls are impacted disproportionately. They, rather than boys, are the first to stay at home from school during times of stress. This happens, for example, when mothers are out of the home cutting rock in a public works programme (reported as a common occurrence in Chancho kebele of Loka Abaya woreda).

4.4.2 Savings

Households currently save at twice the rate reported at the baseline. Although slightly fewer female-headed households than male-headed households report any savings in formal or informal institutions (77% versus 86%), this more than 140% higher than savings frequency reported by households at the time of the baseline (32%). Endline household savings in institutions (83%) is also significantly higher than the 64% savings rate projected in the WE RISE Theory of Change end-of-project target.

Participation in VSLA activities has proven to be instrumental in accounting for this very substantial change in savings behaviour. FGD participants repeatedly told the evaluation teams during the baseline exercise as well as during the endline process: “WE RISE has

introduced a savings culture for us. We never saved anything before WE RISE.” This newfound behaviour and economic attitude has clearly borne fruit for participating WE RISE households.

Table 12: Household Savings (in formal or informal institution)

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
IM 1.8: % households with savings					
All households	40.6	82.6	***	550	551
Female HHHs	31.9	77.0	***	232	217
Male HHHs	46.9	86.2	***	317	334

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*) , 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels. Independent t-test only conducted on means. No statistical tests were conducted on median values.

Why do WE RISE

women save? Endline respondents reportedly overwhelmingly strive to save in order to cope with shocks, including emergencies (68% of households) and seasonal hunger (42% of households) to a degree not disclosed during the baseline interviews, when only 31% and 20% respectively of households claimed to save to cope with such shocks. This information would appear to be counterintuitive following the discussion of significantly lower CSI scores indicating lower frequency and severity of consumption coping strategies, but Table 13 actually supports that data: Women who save express increased confidence that they are not compelled to engage in harmful consumption coping strategies.

On the other hand, **Table 13** also indicates that few women save to invest in a small business enterprise – only eleven percent save as an investment strategy – or save to purchase a productive asset – only five percent of WE RISE women save to invest in their productive assets as a means to increase their production or productivity, lower than the seven percent recorded at baseline.

Table 13: Reasons for saving

	Point Estimate		
	Baseline	Endline	
Productive asset purchase	6.9	5.1	
In case of emergency	30.5	68.1	***
Facing seasonal hunger	20.0	42.1	***
Household asset purchase	7.9	12.0	**
Invest in small business	10.7	11.4	
Health care/ medicine	14.2	17.6	
Education	8.2	6.9	
Social event (wedding, etc.)	7.3	9.4	
Other	6.9	0.9	***
N	534	551	

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*) , 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Participation in VSLAs has allowed WE RISE women to begin to save. That is clear from both the quantitative and qualitative data. More than three quarters of respondents (78%) rely on the VSLA as their savings mechanism; another fifteen percent use Rural Savings and Credit Cooperatives – RUSACCOs – to save. The importance of this phenomenon is that even though savings amounts are small in the VSLA, participation in a savings institution has introduced a newfound savings culture, which is now widely adopted by project participants. Virtually nobody utilizes formal institutions for their savings, however, such as banks (only one percent of WE RISE participants, down from eight percent recorded at baseline) or other formal institutions.

Table 14: Where savings are held

	Point Estimate		
	BL	EL	
VSLA	32.6	78.2	***
Home	4.9	0.9	***
Bank	8.0	1.3	***
RUSACCO	1.6	15.1	***
Other (friends, NGO, insurance, Post office)	7.6	5.4	
N	551	551	

Statistically different from baseline at the 1% (***) levels.

4.5 WE RISE Impact on Women’s Empowerment

4.5.1 Women’s Empowerment Index

TANGO constructed a Women’s Empowerment Index (WEI) for CARE, modelled after the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).⁵ The WE RISE WEI comprises two sub-indices, including the Five Domains of Empowerment (5DE) and Gender Parity. Gender Parity explores parity between men and women within male-headed households for each of the empowerment domains (explained more fully and presented at the end of this section of the report).

Domains of Empowerment: The 5DE reflects the percentage of women who are considered empowered, based on their empowerment score. For Ethiopia, this empowerment score is calculated from 12 weighted indicators⁶ within the five domains of production, resources, income, leadership, and family life (**Annex 9** presents the domains, their total weight within the index, and the weight of each indicator as well as additional context to the table below). CARE’s WEI includes nine of the ten indicators that comprise the WEAI,⁷ as well as indicators for mobility, self-confidence, and attitudes on gender.

⁵ International Food Policy Research Institute. 2012. *Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index*. Feed the Future.

⁶ The WEI score normally includes thirteen weighted indicators; the indicator “Demonstrating Political Participation” was dropped for the Ethiopia baseline and endline survey because of the sensitivity of the questions in the Ethiopian context.

⁷ The WEI does not include the indicator for workload; however the qualitative team explored this topic.

Consistent across all WE-RISE and Pathways country programmes, a woman who achieves an empowerment score of .80 or greater in the weighted-index of the 12 indicators underlying the WEI is considered to be empowered.

The 5DE index is calculated using the following formula.

$$5DE = H_e + H_d A_e = (1 - H_d A)$$

Where:

H_e is the percentage of empowered women

H_d is the percentage of disempowered women

A_e is the average absolute empowerment score among the disempowered

Women participating in the WE-RISE project have experienced a slight increase in their empowerment, as measured by their level of empowerment and the prevalence of women who have achieved empowerment; therefore realizing the WE RISE Theory of Change end-of-project target. The mean 5DE score has increased from .58 to .62 (which appears slight but is a statistically significant change at 5%). Although the score for women in female-headed households has actually declined from .73 to .68 (also statistically significant), it is worth noting that the score for women in male-headed households has increased significantly from .46 to .57, an increase of 25%.

Table 15: Women's empowerment index -- WEI

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
Women's 5 domains of empowerment score					
All households	57.6	61.5	**	551	551
Female HHHs	73.4	67.8	**	232	217
Male HHHs	46.1	57.4	***	319	334

% of women achieving empowerment (.80 or greater)					
All households	16.3	18.5		551	551
Female HHHs	32.3	31.8		232	218
Male HHHs	4.7	9.9	***	319	334

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*) , 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

From baseline to endline, Sidama women who participate in the WE RISE programme frankly continue to engender relatively low empowerment, despite the introduction of a very powerful tool, the Social Analysis and Action – SAA – approach (discussed in detail below). WE RISE successfully applied the SAA, which CARE introduced to project field staff during the second half of WE RISE's project life, promoting gatekeepers who are so important to the process of discussion, reflection, and behaviour change toward offering models of shifting and more equitable gender relations, greater sharing of gender roles, and breaking down negative cultural practices.

In addition to their higher domains of empowerment scores, however, some additional women have crossed the threshold of .80 that defines the WE RISE criteria for WEI empowerment. After 3.5 years of WE RISE activities, the prevalence has increased from

sixteen to nineteen percent. Women in female-headed households have registered virtually the same WEI empowerment scores as they did at the time of the baseline. Women in male-headed households have scored significantly higher at the endline compared to the baseline, although only ten percent of such women feel empowered today, compared to less than five percent 3.5 years earlier; twice as many women in male-headed households have achieved empowerment at endline compared to the baseline.

“Yes, there are a number of males who can be models in our locality, who are supporting women in activities like cutting or collecting *enset*, fetching water, and cleaning houses. We know that educating women is educating the whole of the community. We are doing now what the women were previously doing by 75%.” – Wenenata Kebele, Dale Male FGD

Table 16 presents individual indicators contributing to the WEI, women’s empowerment scores. Sidama WE RISE women continue to express more confidence in their economic empowerment than in their social empowerment.

Domain	Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
		BL	EL		BL	EL
Production	With decision-making input for all HH productive decision domains	66.5	71.2	*	501	548
	With autonomy in one or more HH production domains	38.3	28.8	***	501	548
Resources	With sole or joint ownership of 75% of household assets	78.4	62.0	***	476	548
	With sole or joint control over purchase or sale of 75% household assets	79.1	68.3	***	478	548
	With access to and decisions on credit	63.4	67.0		257	303
Income	With control over household income and expenditures in 50% of HH decision-making domains	55.5	71.7	***	510	551
Leadership & community	Participating in formal and informal groups	96.0	89.2	***	525	499
	Confident speaking about gender and other community issues at the local level	82.6	70.7	***	534	543
	Demonstrating political participation	^	^		^	^
	Who express self-confidence in 5 of 7 statements	50.6	52.9		534	534
Autonomy	Satisfied with the amount of time available for leisure activities	64.4	71.3	**	533	543
	Achieving a mobility score of 16 or greater	46.7	46.8		533	543
	Expressing attitudes that support gender equitable roles in family life	74.1	68.7	**	534	543

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

WE RISE participating women have experienced statistically significant declines in half (six) of the twelve empowerment indicators that define the five empowerment domains of

production, resources, income, leadership, and autonomy since interviewed for the baseline survey. They have evinced statistically significant improvements in only three indicators. Three others have remained essentially unchanged. Notable among the indicators projecting low percentages of women achieving the empowerment thresholds include mobility (47% in both surveys), self-confidence (a slight increase from 51% at baseline to 53% at endline), and autonomy in household production domains (a surprisingly significant decline from 38% at baseline to 29% at endline).

Intransigent reactionary attitudes about women's empowerment are exemplified by the fable below:

"Views of the former Sidama Queen called Fura exemplify the negative attitudes in the community. She was the leader of the Sidama community once upon a time. Men remember her for always harming men in her governing system. Before Fura became Queen, men had all the privileges and women were treated badly. When she took power as Queen, she became impatient and took all the power away from the men. The Sidama people say that she gave all the hard tasks to men and when they failed she applied unforgettable wounds on them. She did not have the wisdom to use her power as men did; she only wanted to harm men. Because of this oral history, men are afraid. Within the current environment of empowering women, some men say, 'if women get rights to do anything they want, they may destroy the society, because they have the hereditary traits of Fura'."

– Soyama, Dale Men's FGD

The higher proportions of women achieving the empowerment thresholds include women's participation in institutions (89% at the endline versus 96% reported at baseline), confidence in speaking locally about gender and other community issues (currently 71% from 83% 3 ½ years ago), sole or joint ownership of 75% of household assets (which declined from 78% to 62%), attitudes supporting gender roles in family life (which nevertheless declined from 74% to 69%), and inputting decisions on household production matters (which increased from 67% to 71%).

The endline data largely supports the proposition that women are increasingly expressing a degree of economic empowerment but lag in their social, cultural, or political empowerment, although some economic empowerment indicators remain very poor – women's autonomy in production remains quite low (only 29%). Cash crop production of coffee and *chat* continues to be solely the economic domain of men, and homestead production of the staple, *enset*, remains the domain of women. These economic production roles are stubbornly unchanged during the short life of WE RISE. Economic practice and behaviour lags behind slowly changing attitudes and acceptance of change promoted through WE RISE.

Women in the Sidama WE RISE context have evinced some empowerment in other economic domain indicators, however, including input in their control over household income use (72%) production decisions (71%), the purchase or sale of assets (68%), access to and decisions about credit (67%), and sole or joint ownership of assets (62%). VSLA

activities have undoubtedly contributed to women's increased participation in making decisions with their husbands or other male household member about how to use household income and make expenditures, the only empowerment domain indicator to show a dramatic increase over the life of the project (from 56% to 72%).

Despite expressing confidence to speak in public on issues about gender (71%), Sidama women have yet to articulate their empowerment in some social or cultural spheres, however, as evidenced by scores conveying their self-confidence (53%) and mobility (46%).

Women FGD participants expressed hope for changing attitudes in future generations:

"The attitudinal change over the elders is not very interesting, because they are occupied with old thinking and ideology. So it is difficult to change them compared to youth groups, but some of them are starting to accept the equality of women, because they are engage in church and are able to read the Bible; according to the Gospel, it is not allowed to hurt women. But the changing progress is good even if it is slow, especially among the young people compared to the last ones." Soyama, Dale Women's FGD

Gender Parity: The WEI also examines the parity between men and women within each empowerment domain. Gender parity measurements are based only on households in which a man and a woman answered questionnaire modules respective to their sex, which eliminates female-only households from the analysis as well as households where a man was unavailable to respond to the male portion of the questionnaire. Empowerment scores are constructed (as defined above) for all men and women.

"Traditional leaders are not changed because they have limited and rigid thinking over the women." – Wenenata Kebele, Dale Men's FGD

Statistically significant differences in parity between male and female achievement of empowerment remain in the domains of income, production, and resources. Although some gaps have narrowed, particularly in the production and income domains, others have widened in the 3½ years since the project's inception (see **Table 17**). The greatest shift toward parity has occurred in women's control over household income and expenditures—the 56 percentage point spread between men and women at baseline has been reduced by nearly half, to 29 percentage points. Nearly all men (92%) continue to express their control over income and expenditure household decisions, but two-thirds of women (66%) now have a say in the income and expenditure decision-making process (up from 36% at the baseline).

Agricultural and non-agricultural production decision-making and production autonomy have also narrowed, from, respectively, 41% and 44% differences at baseline to 26% and 22% differences at the endline. This data is not unambiguously positive however: Although men expressed a decline in production autonomy (from 52% at baseline to 28% at endline), meaning that the majority of men (72%) now feel less autonomous because they claim to be sharing household agricultural and non-agricultural decisions with their wives, only six

percent of WE RISE women expressed their autonomy over production decisions at the endline (actually a decline from eight percent recorded at the baseline).

“Land distribution and ownership is changing; in the years of the past, the elder daughter or any females among the family members had no rights to inherit land, but now that has been resolved and all daughters can now own land from their families according to inheritance rights. There is a proverb in the Sidama language, *‘baionon que ballo ragiranno,’* meaning a household with bad fortune is inherited by the son-in-law, which means that a family who is only begotten with females is considered a family of misfortune, because everything will go to the in-laws.” – Soyama Kebele, Dale Men’s FGD

Similarly, fewer women at the endline in contrast to the baseline feel that they have sole or joint ownership of their assets (53% today versus 72% earlier) or of the sale of their assets (60% at endline versus 73% at baseline); in contrast, the vast majority of men described retaining sole or joint control of their household assets and of the purchase or sale of assets (86% and 92% respectively), resulting in a widening gender parity gap for these two resource domain indicators (to 33 and 32 percentage points respectively). These findings may be an indication of women’s frustrations that although the project, and through the project, men, talk about the desirability for increased joint household production and asset decision-making, the reality of changing household production and asset decision-making has yet to match the talk.

The vast majority of men and women continue to participate in informal and formal groups; women’s participation has surpassed men’s participation at the time of the baseline (91% of women versus 87% of men). Both men and women continue to express their confidence in speaking about gender and other issues of the community at the local level (76% of women and 88% of men). One interesting indicator is satisfaction with the time available for leisure activities: Women’s satisfaction has remained virtually unchanged (from 68% to 67%) while men have expressed increased satisfaction (from 76% to 88%), widening the gap in gender parity from only eight percentage points at the baseline to 21 percentage points at the endline. Finally, a majority of both men and women continue to express attitudes that do not support gender equitable roles in family life.

Table 17: Gender Parity

Domain	Indicator	% achieving indicator at baseline			% achieving indicator at endline			Females BL to EL	Males BL to EL
		Females	Difference F & M	Males	Females	Difference F & M	Males		
PRODUCTION	With decision-making input for all HH productive decision domains	50.4	+++	91.2	69.1	+++	94.8	***	*
	With autonomy in one or more HH production domains	8.1	+++	52.1	6.4	+++	28.3		***
RESOURCES	With sole or joint ownership of 75% of household assets	72.4	+++	85.1	53.0	+++	86.1	***	
	With sole or joint control over purchase or sale of 75% of household assets	73.2	+++	88.1	60.3	+++	91.9	***	
	With access to and decisions on credit (#)	54.7		79.5	51.5		55.2		***
INCOME	With control over HH income and expenditures	36.0	+++	91.7	66.1	+++	95.4	***	***
LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY	Participating in formal and informal groups	96.6	+++	100.0	90.5	+	87.2	***	***
	Confident speaking about gender and other community issues at the local level	83.7	+++	93.3	75.7	+++	87.5	**	***
	Demonstrating political participation	Na		Na	na		Na		
	Expressing self-confidence	48.7	+++	68.0	55.7	+++	70.7	*	
AUTONOMY	Satisfied with time available for leisure	68.3	+++	76.0	67.2	+++	88.4		***
	Expressing attitudes that support gender equitable roles in family life	38.7	+	31.0	30.1		31.3	**	
	Achieving a mobility score of 16 or greater	22.7		50.3	27.0		23.8		***
	N	269-300		269-300	304-345		304-345		

This table reflects interviews of Men and women only in households where both were present

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5% (**) or 1% (***) levels.

Statistically different (pairwise) from females (during same time period) at the 10% (+), 5% (++) or 1% (+++) levels.

(#) Pairwise test not completed due to a difference in credit access between males and females in households with a male and female respondent

4.6 WE RISE Participant Perceptions of Impact

The TANGO evaluation survey team has assessed participant perceptions of impact by triangulating information gleaned from (1) qualitative exercises involving participant and stakeholder ranking of the various WE RISE components and activities with (2) analysis of participant perceptions of changing wellbeing resulting from participation in WE RISE from responses to the household questionnaire administered distinctly to women and men.

Figure 3: Participant/Stakeholder Perception of WE RISE Impact/Effectiveness

Impact of Interventions/Activities (Ranked in order of perceived impact)	Ranking of Women members (58 women)	Ranking of Community Leaders (48 men, 8 women)	Ranking of Woreda Technical teams (22 men, 3 women)	Ranking of SOS 6 Field staff
1. VSLA formation and participation	3, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1	4, 1, 2, 2, 1, 1	1, 1, 2	2
2. Livestock – Sheep & goats	4, 3, 2, 3, 5	5, 3, 4, 3, 5, 6	4/10,5/9, 4	4
3. Financial services – RUSACCOs	3, 2, 4, 9	3, 9, 8, 2, 6	3, 2	3
4. IGA for Women – Day old Chicken	4, 9, 5, 9, 4, 6	9, 6, 9, 9, 6, 2	2, 3, 3	1
5. Paralegals	2, 6, 5, 3, 2, 6	8, 4, 6, 8, 4	6, 8, no rank	5
6. Beekeeping & Honey Processing – TBH	7, 4, 8, 2, 11, 10	10, 5, 5, 5, 4, 2	5, 10, 5	6
7. SAA – Women’s empowerment	10, 8, 8, no rank	7, 3, 1, 2, 10, 5	9, 15, 1	5
8. Sheep & goat fattening	1, 2, 11, 11, 3, 11	6, 9, 6, 13, 8	8, 6, 9	7
9. Support for disabled and orphans	4, 5, 10, 10, 6	7, 8, 9, 7, 7, 10	15, 4/7, 7	10/12
10. Micro Irrigation Technology – MIT	8, 9, 12, no rank	11, 12, not ranked	11, 12, 8	9
11. Agricultural inputs – Improved Seed	11, 13, 14, 7, 8, 12	10, 7, 12, 12, no rank	17, 14, no rank	15
12. Watershed Development	8, 5, not ranked	13, 9, 12, not ranked	12, 17, 11	14
13. Forage – Seed & planting multiplication	9, 12, 7, not ranked	13, 11, not ranked	16, 11, 10	15
14. Petty Trade	Not ranked	Not ranked	13, 13, 6	8
15. Pullets – Cocks	Not ranked	Not ranked	7, 16, no rank	11
16. SMFI	Not ranked	Not ranked	14, 18, no rank	13

4.6.1 Ranking the Effectiveness and Impact of WE RISE Interventions

TANGO modified CARE’s Community Scorecard approach by asking focus group participants, including VSLA members in six communities spanning the three woredas, six

community leader groups, the group of SOS-Sahel field staff based in the three *woredas*, and the three *Woreda* GOE technical teams – to rank project activities according to their perceptions of effectiveness and household-level impact. The scorecard ranking exercise complemented participatory FGD sessions and the quantitative questionnaire. Figure 3 presents the results of the ranking exercise. An activity with few numbers represented in the grids or with the statement “not ranked,” indicates a non-functioning or non-operational activity, according to the knowledge of the FGD participants. The activities are arranged from highest ranked to lowest ranked by participating VSLA members and GoE Woreda technical staff and SOS Sahel field staff implementation teams.

1. **VSLA Formation and Participation:** As we saw during the midterm exercise, FGD participants across the board tended to rank VSLA formation and participation as the most important and effective WE-RISE activity impacting on the lives and livelihoods of individuals and households. WE RISE has explicitly targeted women members, who appreciated their VSLA participation for ushering in a “saving’s culture” and developing their “business skills.” They mentioned their decreased reliance on local moneylenders who charge exorbitant interest rates for repayment of loans. SOS Sahel staff added that VSLA members have managed to save ETB1.5 million in Dale *Woreda* alone, largely because members value the VSLA savings component enough to increase their monthly savings investments fivefold. VSLA formation – a total of 621 across the three *woredas* – has served as an excellent entry point for other WE RISE activities and women participants offer positive role models in Sidama communities. For example, WE RISE has recently begun to integrate SAA (discussed below) and VSLA activities and participation. This informal institution has provided the project with the most consequential engine as change agent. Women have invested in IGA activities such as sheep fattening (although, as we shall see, investments in sheep fattening is poorly ranked by WE RISE FGD participants).

Some VSLAs have developed and grown stronger than others. WE RISE is currently screening and assessing current VSLAs to identify potential models of good practice and commence the process of certifying model VSLAs. As reported at the midterm, WE RISE SOS Sahel rushed to establish VSLAs during the early years of the programme in Shebedino, for example, without completely comprehending the VSLA approach. Leadership remains problematic (as we shall see below) in some VSLAs, especially those developed hastily. VSLAs that have successfully promoted women who have been trained into leadership positions are successfully progressing and may be sustainable post-project. Some women continue to lack the financial skills to properly manage the savings, indicating the need for enhanced financial management and leadership training, as well as numeracy and literacy training. The moneybox is secured in one of the member’s houses. Because only two SOS Sahel field personnel have been deputed to oversee WE RISE activities in each *woreda*, VSLA supervision and training activities are insufficient. The government

has yet to officially recognize VSLAs, so they remain informal community savings groups. The GoE technical teams specifically mentioned the need for government certification to sustain this activity by conferring legal status on the VSLA and enhance women's economic empowerment.

2. **Sheep and Goat (Shoat) Rearing:** WE RISE has provided 1221 shoats to 1221 women – 407 in each woreda, surpassing the output target. Project women have ranked this IGA activity high because shoats can breed twice a year and bring in income, allowing for investment in cows, oxen or other IGAs. WE RISE women described shoat rearing as easily “manageable,” allowing households experiencing shocks or seasonal food shortages to retain their larger livestock, especially cows. Shoat rearing is credited for reducing household transitional food insecurity. Women participants were trained in small ruminant management and composting. Survival rates improved as the project progressed.

The idea is for women selected by *kebele* committee to transfer the first offspring to another woman. Despite signing an agreement to that effect, some participating women have tried to retain the offspring and avoid handing over the initial offspring to another *kebele* woman. Project documents indicate that just over half (55%) of women shoat recipients have transferred the firstborn shoat to another WE RISE recipient. The turnover rate is particularly dismal in Shebedino, where only one-quarter (98) of the participants have managed to transfer the firstborn to another household. It could be that shoat rearing activities commenced later in Shebedino, which tends to trail the other two WE RISE *woredas*. GoE technical teams, while highly commending this very successful activity, told the TANGO team that some *kebele* committees have engaged in a degree of nepotism in the targeting process.

3. **RUSACCO Financial Services:** WE RISE field staff facilitated the development and growth of eighteen Rural Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations – RUSACCOs – one per *kebele* in Dale and Loka Abaya *woredas*, none in Shebedino – to increase access to financial services. The development and expansion of VSLA participation provided the gateway to participation in the RUSACCOs, which allowed women to access loans of larger amounts than possible in VSLAs to invest in shoat production and other IGAs. Some women complained of drawn out overly bureaucratized procedures to secure credit compared to the VSLA experience. This activity has been ranked among the most impactful because of its sustainability potential, especially given the difficulties that poorer Ethiopian farming households face in securing credit from the Sidama Microfinance Institution – SMFI – and other formal financial institutions.

WE RISE initiated each of the eighteen RUSACCOs by providing ETB 120,000 in a revolving fund. Key informants told the TANGO evaluation team, however, that the revolving fund lacks an established structure: the funds have not really been

revolving; many RUSACCOs are completely reliant on those funds for their existence; older RUSACCOS were poorly organized, while more newly established RUSACCOs have more effectively enhanced management records, leadership and training. Therefore, although RUSACCOs are potentially sustainable, “they may fall apart.” Some women were unable to adequately invest loans secured through their RUSACCO because they lacked sufficient financial management skills or planning to properly manage a small business activity and repay the loan in time. Technical staff disseminated bookkeeping and accounting training for RUSACCO managers. The project demonstrated sufficient flexibility to expand the repayment period from six to twelve months to mitigate this problem. One SOS KI estimates that about half of the RUSACCOs are effective.

4. **IGA for Women – Day old chicks:** WE RISE has provided fifty to one hundred day-old chickens to 35 selected female-headed households in the three woredas. With Woreda Task Force support, WE-RISE supplemented chick provisioning with training in the technical aspects of poultry production as well as management. Despite directly benefiting only a few vulnerable households, this highly visible activity offered a new technology and a new approach to poultry rearing and development for Sidama households and communities. Participating households then sold pullets and cockerels to other vulnerable women. Chickens were ready for market after 48 days of incubation and growth, allowing for four or five production cycles annually. Because of high demand, the value of each chicken has apparently risen from an average of ETB 5 to ETB 35. The mortality rate, which was ten percent or more in the early stages, has apparently declined to less than five percent (although women FGD participants claimed a higher mortality rate than reported by implementing partner staff). The project successfully intensified training and inputs, including medications and vaccines, to increase survival rates and impact; women expressed the need, however, for more intensified training. Some of the participating households apparently have used their profits from selling eggs and chickens to reinvest in their poultry businesses, invest in other IGA activities such as livestock, or purchase items such as corrugated sheeting for household improvements.

As noted at midterm, the project implementers, including the SOS-Sahel and Woreda technical teams, ranked this activity quite high, whereas community FGD participants ranked this activity in the middle range, relatively low. This is because although this activity successfully targeted poor vulnerable women with income earning opportunities, female-headed households targeted for women entrepreneurship only totalled 35 throughout the three woredas; they in turn sold chick offspring to another 223 women. The targeted numbers were too low. GoE technical team members also noted that women participants lacked adequate marketing skills, although they certainly have gained business confidence. This

activity offers great potential for expansion using a value chain approach involving a women's production or marketing collective.

5. **Paralegals vs. harmful practices:** By the midpoint of the project, WE-RISE had formed 26 Paralegal groups, one in each of the participating kebeles, led by Paralegals trained by the project to facilitate discussions aimed at publicizing women's rights, especially the need to combat harmful practices. The Paralegal groups broached once-forbidden subjects of gender-based violence (GBV), female genital mutilation (FGM), polygamy, early marriage, and rape. FGD women participants appreciated the paralegal approach – ranked higher at endline than at the midterm of the project – that has reduced inter-household conflict between wives and husbands and decreased violence against women and other harmful practices. Polygamous marriages have apparently declined. Women have credited paralegal groups with helping pregnant women and facilitating the transport of women to health institutions for delivery as well as enhancing awareness of the damaging effects of harmful practices and the laws protecting women from violence. Implementing FGD participants described the paralegal groups as providing a bridge between communities and the GoE to promote the messages designed to reduce the harmful practices discussed above. Participants in virtually all FGDs, including WE RISE participants as well as implementers, agreed that the process should only be seen as a beginning, because many kebele residents are “talking the talk but not necessarily walking the walk” (paraphrasing from the Amargina and Sidamigna). The paralegal approach is supplementary to the SAA approach, which WE RISE introduced during the second half of the project life.
6. **Beekeeping and Honey Processing:** Participating women have increased their beekeeping harvests from approximately four Kg to ten to twenty Kg (depending on the FGD) by adopting the improved practices promoted by WE RISE, which provided 2000 transitional beehives (TBH) – two per household – to 1000 individual households, headed by 840 women and 160 men. This activity has shown substantial progress, despite a shortage of flowers, which slowed production. All participating households received beekeeping training, fulfilling the beneficiary target and superficially indicating that women have dramatically taken on this traditional male activity. FGD participants however, again contradicted this false reality, echoing MTE discussions. Although women are increasingly involved in various bee and honey production and decision-making functions, men actually continue to control most beehive activities, particularly honey marketing, which has proved lucrative. One KI interviewed by the evaluation team declared, “We can change the name but maybe not the attitude.” The honey processing cooperative visited in Hantate, Loka Abaya, for example, boasts 340 members, including only fifteen men; twelve of those men, however, control the core management committee consisting of eighteen project participants.

This activity is ranked higher at endline than at the midterm of the project, when the benefits from improved beekeeping fluctuated significantly by location and were not so clear. Some households lacked the capacity to properly use or manage the hives and were unable to provide the intensive facilitation, oversight, and capacity building to realize extensive results from the use of TBH technology. GoE technical team FGD participants note that poor training and poorly designed TBHs during the first two years of the project plagued beekeeping households; training and TBH design have both improved. Bee mortality rates have increased. The Technical Teams also note, however, the need for more intensified training; some beekeeping households continue to harvest too early and lack proper techniques; sanitation remains problematic; women lack sufficient support and follow up to show that they can take over this activity. The honey cooperative core group complained of continued production problems – including competition from animals that overturn the TBHs, birds that love the product, anti-mosquito spraying that kills bees, and climate change that wither the flowers required to create nectar – as well as processing and marketing constraints – including transport costs, lack of electricity at the Honey Processing Centre, water shortages, insufficient containers, and especially marketing problems given the location of the centre far from the market. Despite such complaints, bee production has improved both quantitatively – increased production and profits of one hundred to three hundred percent – and qualitatively – increased women’s participation and improved honey quality that fetches more at the market.

“We used to throw away the honey dregs as trash, but now we know it is like dollars” – Loka Abaya Honey Coop Core Group, after receiving training in producing wax from dregs.

7. **Social Action and Analysis for Women’s Empowerment:** WE RISE introduced the Social Action and Analysis approach to more effectively tackle patriarchal social norms and relationships and begin the process of transforming gender roles within Sidama communities and households. The SAA approach has effectively displaced another approach, known as the Stakeholder Platform, to promote women’s empowerment and inclusion in Sidama social and economic activities as well as address negative traditional practices that subjugate women. SAA is a powerful, transformational, tool for building awareness around gender perceptions based on socio-cultural traditions. WE RISE has facilitated the formation of 26 SAA groups – one per WE RISE kebele – during the last two years of the project. SOS field staff facilitated the recruitment of 52 different types of people from throughout each kebele who in turn selected 14 core group members in the case of the SAA visited by the evaluation team in Loka Abaya. One major purpose of the core group – consisting of the kebele manager, chair and vice-chair, a police commander, the DA, an elder, a paralegal, three promoters, a security person, health extension workers, a women’s affairs representative, and a homemaker, who acted as the legal advisor; a total of eleven men and one woman met the TANGO team – is to produce model

gatekeepers promoting progressive attitudes, behaviour and practice concerning gender relations, gender roles, and entrenched negative cultural and social practices. Two other women were absent, which is an unfortunate trend in exercises such as these and other community events: Women continue to find it much more difficult to obtain sufficient time to participate and contribute to the discussion than do men.

“As one of the only women selected to the Core Group, I was the most opposed to change. Now I accept that change is necessary and right. I had trouble talking in the group at first. Now it is not a problem; we have learnt much. Now I share the new ideas with everybody in the *kebele*. But some of the older ones still stick to their cultural beliefs.” – Woman SAA Core Group member, Loka Abaya

Women members ranked this activity much more harshly than did the SOS and GoE FGD participants, primarily because SAA formation was very late in the project cycle but also because the potentially powerful SAA process involving self reflection and critique of gender roles, patriarchal relations, and harmful practices has yet to become fully inclusive within the *kebeles*, according to women VSLA members. (Quantitative data largely confirm this finding; Table 19 below indicates that only twelve percent of VSLA women and nine percent of VSLA men participated in gender dialogues.) Implementing FGD participants and KIs agreed that SAA success depends profoundly on the quality of training and facilitated discussion, the intensification of the process, and the persistence of gatekeepers to carry the issues into households and communities to provoke changing practice. This powerful tool for change deserves more time to allow SAA participants to take it forward into the community. Sidama culture is conservative but accommodating to listen to new ideas.

The core group prioritizes and selects two topics from the SAA manual to discuss every month and then tasks sub-groups to disseminate discussions in the community and talk to men and women. The idea is that change begins from within the group; members who internalize this change set the example to become positive role models, or gatekeepers, of change. Implementing FGD participants agreed that discussion of change has yet to be matched by actual changing practice. Changing some of the practices under consideration amounts to “revolution” in the Sidama culture. The SAA groups are now tackling everything from allowing women to participate and actually express opinions in groups, to women and men walking side by side, to household division of labour – some men talk about helping their wives by brewing coffee or carrying water – to increasing girls’ school attendance, to issues of inheritance – the SAA members interviewed for this review counted seven women in the *kebele* who had gained access to land for cultivation – to reducing female abduction for early marriage – most FGD participants agreed that this practice more than any other is now in decline –to reducing the incidence of polygamy – FGD participants agreed that the practice was slowly decreasing but old

habits die hard – to tackling the seemingly intractable problem of FGM – participants in all of the FGDs agreed that this practice appears to be the most difficult to actually realize change, although the SAA Core group participations discussed young role models who had refused the FGM surgery and are now proving to people that their children are as normal as everybody else’s children.

8. **Sheep and Goat Fattening:** Half of the VSLA member FGDs ranked this activity quite low; the other half ranked it very high. The ranking apparently depended on the current market conditions of supply and demand, which resulted in market fluctuations. High ranking FGD groups described the benefits of profits garnered from purchasing shoats relatively inexpensively, spending some months fattening the shoats, then selling at a profit in the market. A total of 637 female members received loans through the *kebele*-based RUSACCO or the Sidama Micro-Finance Institution – SMFI – to purchase shoats for fattening; ninety percent of these participating women had managed to repay all of the loan by December 2015; repayment had been most problematic in Shebedino, presumably because this activity, like so many of the other activities, commenced late there. Following the midterm, WE RISE adjusted the loan repayment conditions and period, allowing women to more easily repay after they had completed the fattening and marketing process. Field staff described shoaat fattening as a “great activity” if women were able access credit; women could not partake in shoaat fattening as an IGA in those *kebeles* without functioning RUSACCOs. GoE Technical teams described shoaat fattening as a hugely beneficial IGA *theoretically*, but women generally did not apply the training, the fattening season of three months or less was frequently too short, and therefore few participating households ever reinvested in a second cycle.
9. **Support for People with Disabilities and Orphans:** This is another activity that might have been ranked higher if more households had participated. FGD participants commended the project for assisting orphan girls, who received direct support, and some disabled members of the communities, who accessed credit for IGAs, but also commented on the very few numbers of beneficiaries. During the second year of the project, WE-RISE provided direct support to 25 orphan girls, one from each woreda in the project, with school supplies to continue their educational pursuits – all but six were apparently pursuing their education at the time of the endline – and with two sheep each as an IGA. After year two, the project supported the orphans’ guardians, who participated in a revolving fund. The project provided grants to 71 disabled and physically weak people to invest in an IGA (only three beneficiaries from Shebedino had failed to invest in an IGA at endline). Support to people with disabilities commenced at a late stage; hence nobody had begun to repay their loans. This activity is “encouraging women to help themselves” according to FGD participants. Implementing FGD participants noted that households took over Shoat management from the orphan girls, who did not receive

sufficient capacity to build their assets. This activity has provided a “big impact on the lives of a few people.”

10. **Micro-Irrigation Technology:** For some farmers, MIT water pumps have brought “remarkable change” to their lives (as pronounced by more than one KI). The problem is, what type of farmer and how many WE RISE households have benefitted from the opportunity to produce vegetable crops for an additional season by accessing irrigation. The three GoE Technical Teams confirmed to the evaluation team virtually no changes in impact from this activity than that reported at the midterm, when FGD participants unambiguously ranked the impact and effectiveness of MIT use dead last amongst all activities implemented under WE-RISE, primarily because few farmers expressed interest in or sufficient resources to purchase the robin diesel water pumps on credit and the number of farmers managing to use the irrigation technology could not justify the capital costs incurred to the project. The land for cultivation needs to lie along the river to make use of the irrigation technology. Implementing FGD and KI participants have added that although benefits have accrued to farming households able to use irrigation technology by cultivating vegetables – cabbage, tomatoes, spinach and onions, among others – for an additional cultivating season during the year, which is a decidedly important benefit that has increased farming incomes, only relatively resource-endowed farmers can afford even the subsidized but high cost of the water pumps. Although important for increasing vegetable production and agricultural incomes, the benefits from this activity accrue to a type of farming household that does not fit the profile for a WE RISE project participant. Some farmers however, have managed to turn their land into very productive land through the irrigation technology.

According to SOS Sahel records, GoE partners in the three *woredas* distributed a total of 61 water pumps through WE RISE to groups of six farming households each, including non-WE RISE client households, although the Loka Abaya technical team contradicted the SOS records, noting that fourteen water pumps remain unutilized in storage and others are damaged and unused. The technical teams claim that fewer farmers than projected have actually benefited from the technology, although WE RISE has trained 255 farmers on MIT adaption, irrigation technology, water pump utilization and maintenance, and provided seed and pesticides to cultivate the land efficiently.

11. **Agricultural Inputs – Improved Seed:** All FGDs ranked the provisioning of seeds very low. Although WE-RISE provided 1450 farmers with improved seeds during the initial two years of the project, including wheat in Shebedino, *Teff* in Dale Loka Abaya, and haricot beans throughout the project area, farming households expressed dissatisfaction that agricultural training, seed multiplication activities, and improved seed provisioning were poorly timed with the agricultural season.

Seed types were limited. Yields from improved seed cultivation were disappointing, requiring application of other inputs such as fertilizer, but fertilizer costs are beyond the capacity of many farmers. Farmers complained that inappropriate seeds dried up for lack of water. Farming households never experienced the expected impact.

12. **Watershed Development:** A longstanding SOS Sahel strength as well as a GoE national priority, natural resource management activities were nevertheless terminated at the midterm. As designed, this activity could never have attained any impact. Although land use and a watershed development strategy clearly remains a potentially valuable contribution to combat the negative effects of climate change impacting Ethiopian farming communities, tool provisioning and some training were insufficient inputs to realize any progress toward improved NRM and watershed management. A huge resource commitment – a project in itself – is required to show impact. Some FGD participants added that the topography of the area limited the potential effectiveness of a watershed development approach.
13. **Forage Production through seed planting multiplication:** Despite its promise and the high expectations of upcoming successful harvests, few farming households participating in FGDs experienced positive results from forage production through planting multiplication. WE RISE piloted and then scaled up 26 Seed & Planting Producer & Marketing Groups – SPMGs – and one Loka Abaya Women’s Forage Group, which became a legal entity and was visited by the evaluation team. FGD participants complained that generating income from forage was limited because of its lack of marketability. Unable to find buyers, forage dried up. The one Forage Group, a cooperative constituting nine women and nine men members, has experienced success however, using the forage from the seed multiplication process to fatten their animals and earn enough cash by selling some of the forage to purchase shoats for further fattening. The group used otherwise fallow government land to cultivate the forage. Ridiculed at the beginning of this process, these eighteen members applied for and received a loan of ETB 27,000 from SMFI to invest in and earn income from forage production, although not enough to induce other households to join the collective. This potentially promising activity was ranked near the bottom only because so few WE RISE members participated.
14. **Petty Trade:** WE RISE provided loans to 55 women from six *kebeles* in the three *woredas* to engage in petty trade as IGAs very late in the project cycle. The limited number of participants and late inception of implementation limited the impact and breadth of petty trade activities. Technical teams and SOS staff regard this activity as one with potential, but the impact was clearly not felt amongst VSLA members; none even mentioned the activity when ranking the WE RISE interventions. Women who accessed loans managed to invest in a variety of small enterprises, including trading

or selling, often on a seasonal basis, *bunna* (from coffee, *kocho* (from *enset*), *duket* (flour), *Kibe* (local butter), salt, and other petty trading items.

15. **Pullets and Cockerels:** This potentially nutritious activity (from the eggs produced) also went unmentioned by project participants in the FGD ranking exercises, because its impact has unfortunately been minimal. WE RISE provided households with ten pullets/cockerels but no housing or feeding, which limited the outputs, because the type of pullets and cockerels provided required proper feeding; they were unable to adequately scavenge like traditional Ethiopian chickens.
16. **Sidama Micro-finance Institution:** The GoE Technical Teams and SOS Sahel staff ranked SMFI activities as dead last because of the sheer frustration of wasting a highly potential implementation strategy. CARE and SOS Sahel management echoed these frustrations in KI discussions. CARE and SOS Sahel injected ETB 1.5 million into the SMFI for loans to WE RISE project participants to promote IGA investments and small business ventures as well as support cooperative and collective activities. Project management made a mistake from the beginning injecting that amount into this government parastatal and probably over-invested to allow SOS Sahel to mitigate the effects of a very poor burn rate during the initial two years of project implementation and needed to show more financial activities. SMFI managed to disburse ETB 250,000 in loans during the initial two-year period; by December 2015 a total of ETB 1,016,000 had been disbursed to potential WE RISE women toward IGA investments. WE RISE was furiously working with SMFI management to disburse loans to project participants to utilize the entire investment during the visit of the endline team.

The SMFI business model, which contradicts CARE, SOS Sahel, and GoE development strategies, is partially to blame. Although SMFI makes no collateral demands on marginalized poor households who lack sufficient assets to apply for loans, loan repayment is sometimes beyond the capacity of asset-poor households who form the WE RISE project participant base. SMFI also blocks loans to collectives and cooperatives that need operating capital to move their incipient businesses forward; the group collateral approach has disadvantages of its own. Implementing partners from SOS Sahel and the Technical Teams described the MFI credit structure as “illogical.” WE RISE has invested in a Soap Producing Cooperative and a Honey Producing Cooperative that need credit injections to invest in capital inputs to improve their young businesses. WE RISE is currently devising a strategy calling on farming households to provide collateral for each other, but this strategy sometimes requires the intervention of the *Kebele* Administrator or RUSACCO Manager. Key informants and FGD participants described the SMFI staff as too lazy to go into the communities to ensure repayment of loans. SMFI also requires three months or more to process loans; by the time the farmer receives the loan, it may be inevitably too late in the cultivation season to use the loan for the purpose requested. The

evaluation team interviewed the SMFI manager at the zone office in Hawassa who basically admitted that SMFI was not interested in providing loans to very poor households and remained fearful of loan default. But the manager could not answer why SMFI does not provide loans to more *kebele*-based or *woreda*-based collectives, although the Forage Producer Group managed to secure a loan of ETB 27,000 to invest in its small-scale business.

RUSACCOs may not be sustainable because they lack sufficient capital to move forward – as discussed above, the revolving funds injected by CARE at the onset are not really properly revolving. At the same time, SMFI is sitting on several thousands of birr that could have been used by WE RISE participants.

4.6.2 Participant Wellbeing post-WE RISE

The evaluation survey team requested female and male respondents within the sampled households about their participation in VSLA groups and gender dialogues. This question was followed by questions about perceived VSLA effectiveness, perceived WE RISE impact on various livelihoods endeavours and outcomes, and finally participant's perceived well being four years after the inception of WE RISE. These questions were added to the endline questionnaire and therefore are not comparable to baseline findings.

Nearly two-thirds of female respondents (63%) claim participation in a VSLA; nearly one-quarter (22%) of their husbands participate as the household representative. Nearly half of male respondents (49%) claim to be VSLA participants; just a bit more than one-third of their wives (35%) apparently participate. One stated project WE RISE objective was for eighty percent female participation in the VSLAs. This objective has not been met. Although all sampled households ostensibly are VSLA members, thirteen percent of interviewed women and sixteen percent of interviewed men had not participated in VSLA activities. They may have been members, but they apparently did not participate in VSLA activities.

Table 18: VSLA Participation				
N= 551	Self	Spouse	Other HH member	No one
Interviewed women	62.6	22.0	2.9	12.5
Interviewed men	48.5	34.6	1.4	15.6

Table 19: Participation in Gender Dialogues				
N= 551	Self	Spouse	Other HH member	No one
Interviewed women	12.1	4.3	1.4	82.1
Interviewed men	9.2	6.3	1.4	83.0

Table 19 indicates less than satisfactory participation in the activities promoting gendered dialogues and discussions. Women and men were asked about their participation in community about gender roles and responsibilities. Only twelve percent of women and nine

percent of men responded that they had participated in such community discussions. Only approximately five percent of spouses had participated.

More than three-quarters of all WE RISE female participants (78%), including the thirteen percent who claimed not to participate, enunciated a positive review of VSLA effectiveness. More than half of WE RISE women participants (52%) were impressed that VSLAs engendered equitable male/female participation; more than half (51%) also observed an improvement in VSLA leadership over the course of WE RISE. That also means, however, that nearly half of all respondents did not observe equitable participation by sex or an improvement in collective leadership. Less than one-third of WE RISE women (32%) felt that VSLAs were responsive to community input; and only fifteen percent of interviewed women viewed the VSLA decision-making process to be transparent. This data indicates that Sidama women generally proclaim VSLA effectiveness but have doubts about individual VSLA management effectiveness.⁸

Table 20: Women participants perceptions of VSLA Effectiveness

	Female respondents
% who view VSLA positively	77.7
N	551
Reasons why VSLA effective	
More equitable participation by men and women	52.3
Quality of leadership improved	51.2
More responsive to community input	31.8
Decision-making is transparent	15.0
Other	2.3
N	428

Most WE RISE project participants describe their lives as improved since the onset of the project four years ago. Women and men have virtually identical perceptions of their changing well-being: Seventy-one percent of men and 69% of women told the enumeration team that they were better off four years after WE RISE initiated its activities in Sidama. Only nine percent of men and ten percent of women described their lives as worse off than four years ago (see **Table 21**).

Why has wellbeing improved, according to most interviewed women? How has WE RISE contributed to changes in participating household perceived lives? Not surprisingly, WE RISE participants prioritize their improved access to credit and savings as the most impactful changes to their wellbeing (see **Figure 4**). Forty percent of female participants cited improved access to credit and one-third mentioned improved household savings.

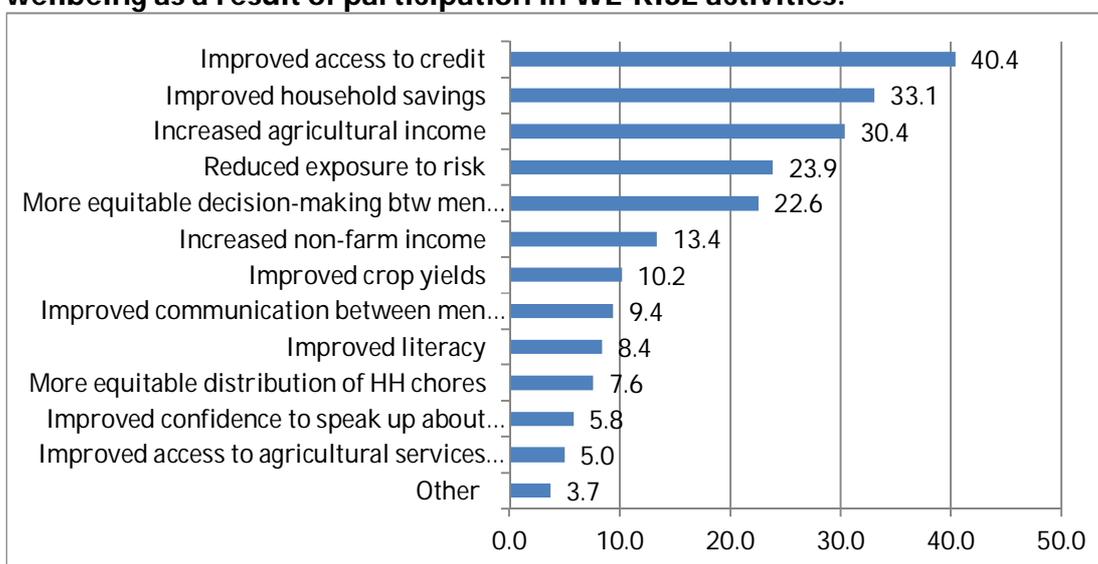
⁸ This question asked respondents to give as many reasons as they wanted as to why the VSLA was effective. This may be a case where enumerators failed to ask the follow-on question: “What other reason...?”

Table 21: Participant perception of HH status after project participation

	Female respondents	Male respondents
Better off than 4 years ago	69.1	70.7
Same as 4 years ago	20.5	21.3
Worse off than 4 years ago	10.3	8.9
N	551	348

Thirty percent told the enumeration team that they have increased their agricultural income and thirteen percent have increased their non-agriculture income as a result of their participation in WE RISE. Nearly one-quarter of interviewed women (24%) believe that WE RISE participation has improved their household resilience to risks and shocks. Not all of the impacts have been in the economic realm. Nearly one-quarter of interviewed women (23%) have found the household decision-making process to be more equitable since the onset of WE RISE; less than ten percent also mentioned improved communication with their male spouses (nine percent) and more equitable sharing of household chores (eight percent).

Figure 4: Women reporting household or individual improvement to wellbeing as a result of participation in WE-RISE activities.



4.7. Outcome 1: Increased Productivity, Resources and Resilience

CARE WE RISE designed Outcome 1 activities and interventions in order that ***“CFIRW have increased household productive assets and resources and control over them, and are more resilient to climate shocks”***.

The objective of Outcome 1 is to increase household access to, control over, and ownership of productive assets and resources, thereby bestowing on targeted women and households the means to become more resilient to climate shocks. WE-RISE theorizes that increased agricultural income would derive from smallholder farmer increased access to inputs and adaptation of improved agricultural and post-harvest practices, potentially newfound skills learnt from Development Agents – DAs – who would work with the project. WE RISE hypothesized that women’s participation in project activities designed to increase ownership of and control over household productive resources and assets would result in an improvement or increase in the following Outcome 1 indicators:

- Production, economic activities, and related processing activities;
- Agricultural yields for crops supported by WE RISE⁹;
- Net income from agricultural production or related processing activities;
- Number of crops grown by women farmers;
- Women’s access to and control over loans for IGAs;
- Women adopting improved agricultural practices;
- Women adopting value chain practices;
- Women adopting improved livestock practices;
- Women accessing agricultural inputs;
- Women accessing output markets to sell agricultural products; and
- Household adoption of negative coping strategies (should decline).

This section compares baseline and endline values of these indicators to determine change in the status of poor women farmer’s agricultural productivity. The evaluation team interviewed only women who engaged in any agricultural activity to understand their involvement in and perspectives on changing agricultural production activity outcomes.

4.7.1 Women’s Access to and Control of Loans

We begin by analysing WE RISE female access to and control of loans for investment in income generating activities – IGAs. CARE has promoted women’s participation as members of collectives – the Village Savings and Loan Associations, or VSLAs – as the means by which women and households participate in and successfully benefit from income earning and agricultural activities. Women’s access to credit is understood by both men and women

⁹ Data for agricultural crop yields is not included in this evaluation report because of irreconcilable discrepancies between baseline and endline data collection differences that have rendered the data useless.

alike as creating new dynamics relating to gender roles including more sharing in decision-making and greater opportunities for women and their families.

Table 22: Loan access and control

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 1.4: % women with access to and control over loans for IGA (of women to take loan or want to take a loan)					
All households	9.1	18.2	***	254	303
Female HHHs	14.8	28.6	***	128	119
Male HHHs	3.2	9.8	**	126	184

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Table 22 illustrates a major increase in the number of female WE RISE participants who have successfully accessed and maintained control over loans used for income-generating activities (IGA). Control over loans is defined as solely determining to take out the loan *and* solely determining how the borrowed capital was used. Twice as many women from all sampled households have gained access to and control over a loan than was the case at the time of the baseline survey. Although WE RISE just fell short of the end-of-project target of 20% women with access to and control over loans for IGA, their loan access and control increased from nine percent at the baseline to eighteen percent at the endline. Female-headed households, however, managed to surpass the project target; nearly three out of ten women heading households (29% at endline, up from 15% at baseline) accessed loans for investment in an IGA, compared to only ten percent of women in male-headed households (an increase from only three percent at baseline).

Part of the change reflects slowly changing attitudes about loan dispersal and use since the baseline, when men looked at household financial decisions as the male domain, even despite women's formal ostensible participation as the household representative in the VSLA. Baseline FGD participants appeared to express suspicion that the loan process should occur at the behest of men and that only "desperate" men would allow their wives to make key decisions about credit and other financial matters. This attitude appears to be a thing of the past, largely because of the importance of VSLAs to households and communities in promoting savings, improved household financial management, and credit, if only in relatively small amounts.

Sidama households have continued to use these loans overwhelmingly to purchase food, as recorded at baseline, although the incidence of loan use to supplement household food supplies from other sources has declined somewhat, from 95% and 91% at baseline to 79% and 70% at endline for, respectively, women and men. These data contradict the coping strategies data – taking a loan to purchase food in a coping strategy. This is also somewhat a cause for concern because borrowing for this purpose can often result in a cycle of debt.

These data, however, are trending in a positive direction for the number of households who report they are using loans to invest in small business capital, which increased from a paltry three percent of households at baseline to 29% at endline. Small business investment is now the second most prevalent reason cited by WE RISE women and men to seek credit. Male respondents are more invested in seeking credit to purchase agricultural inputs than are women (24% versus 15%). More than twice as many WE RISE participants have utilized their loans to purchase livestock at endline (approximately ten percent) than at baseline (four percent), but that figure remains surprisingly low considering the importance of large livestock – cows, oxen, and donkeys – as well as small livestock – small ruminants in the form of sheep and goats – to household economies in Sidama, as is the case throughout Ethiopia. FGD participants discussed increasingly investing in small livestock – sheep and goats – for fattening as an IGA.

Table 23: Use of Loans (of respondents who took out a loan)

Uses of Loans	Female respondents		Male respondents	
	BL	EL	BL	EL
Business capital	2.8	29.1	2.9	28.6
Purchase agricultural inputs	14.9	14.9	25.3	24.2
Purchase agricultural land	1.1	0.7	2.9	1.2
Purchase livestock	3.9	8.9	4.0	9.9
School expenses	11.0	15.2	16.7	21.1
Medical expenses	18.2	16.7	21.8	27.3
Purchase food	95.0	79.1	90.8	69.6
Repay other loan	7.7	5.0	7.5	3.1
Clothing	18.2	9.9	22.4	10.6
Housing	10.5	4.6	10.9	8.7
Furniture	2.2	2.1	1.7	1.2
Funeral expenses	11.0	4.3	6.9	3.1
Wedding/dowry	1.7	2.8	2.3	6.2
Other	7.7	4.3	7.5	5.0
N	181	282	174	161

Other WE RISE households continue to pursue loans to pay for medical expenses (27% of men and 17% of women) or school expenses (21% of men and 15% of women). Thankfully, fewer households are seeking loans to pay for funeral expenses (down from eleven percent and seven percent reported by women and men respectively at baseline to four and three percent reported at endline). Fewer households are also using loans to purchase clothes (down from 18% and 22% reported by women and men respectively at baseline to 10% and 11% reported at endline).¹⁰

¹⁰ Statistical tests of significance not conducted.

Table 24 indicates that VSLAs and the concomitant development of RUSACCOs, made possible because of the VSLAs, have provided WE RISE participants with an essential newfound means to access credit. The proportion of households relying on VSLAs to access credit, even if relatively small loan amounts, increased from 10% at baseline to 72% at endline for women and from 8% to 68% for men. The end-of-project target for this impact indicator was established at 20%; WE RISE Ethiopia managed to far eclipse that goal.

Indicator	Female respondents		Male respondents	
	BL	EL	BL	EL
Friends	79.6	43.3	70.1	47.2
VLSA	9.9	71.5	7.5	68.3
Informal lender	19.3	10.1	32.2	9.9
Shop/merchants	0.6	6.5	0.0	6.2
Other community group	1.1	3.6	2.3	1.2
NGO	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.0
Formal lender	0.6	2.2	2.3	3.7
Government extension	0.0	0.4	0.6	1.2
Other	0.0	0.7	0.0	1.2
N	181	282	174	161

The rise in importance of the VSLA to the lives and livelihoods of WE RISE participating households has coincided with a decline in reliance on other informal forms of credit. Reliance on informal lenders for credit needs has declined to ten percent for both men and women at endline from 32% and 19% at baseline. WE RISE successfully met this end-of-project target. Many households continue to draw on friends for informal loans – 43% of women and 47% of men approached their friends or relatives for a loan sometime during the year of the endline, but they requested loans from friends far less frequently than during the year approaching the baseline, when eighty percent of women and seventy percent of men asked their friends for a loan. WE RISE Ethiopia managed to fulfil the end-of-project target for this performance indicator as well.

“Above all, the VSLA has helped us to develop a savings culture and business skills. Moreover, we are freed from the exploitation of local lenders who charge more than 100% on loans.” – Arbegonamero Kebele, Shebedino Men’s FGD

Marginally more households have increased their use of formal institutions – two percent of women and four percent of men at endline versus one percent and two percent at baseline – thus fulfilling the end-of-project target. Realistically, however, very few respondents have accessed credit from a formal institution, such as the SMFI (discussed above). FG participants expressed their preference for accessing VSLAs and RUSACCOs over formal

institutions characterized by less desirable loan terms and onerous collateral requirements. Households who use the formal institutions are typically not VSLA members, who tend to be poorer households, including female-headed households. As we found during the midterm review, the WE-RISE VSLAs remain highly relevant to women's priorities and fill a wide gap in access to financial services, despite the very low credit ceiling offered to members. At some point, households seeking investment and income enhancement opportunities will need to seek service from the formal financial sector.

VSLA involvement has allowed women to be more frequently included in household purchasing decisions. All household members consider it a benefit to the household when women are able to save and access credit. Women repeated in this evaluation that their involvement in VSLAs has increased their confidence. Their households have benefited from VSLA assistance by enhancing agriculture and livestock productivity in and around their homesteads over which they continue to have more control.

4.7.2 Diversification of Sources of Income

Table 25 indicates that WE RISE households have successfully diversified their income sources in the 3 ½ years since the baseline of the project. Income from agriculture remains the most important source of income. The enumeration team has probably overstated agricultural

wage labour, in which more than nine out of every ten households (93%) reported to be engaged, up from 37% at the baseline. It is fair to say however, that 93% of households are engaged in crop agriculture production activities, although fewer households

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
Non-production					
Agriculture wage labour	36.8	92.7	***	551	551
Non-agriculture: wage labour	16.3	37.9	***	551	551
Skilled labour	4.9	2.9	*	551	551
Small business activity	12.5	28.0	***	551	551
Formal employment	4.5	3.8		551	551
Handicrafts	4.4	3.8		551	551
Remittances	3.6	1.5	**	551	551
Firewood/charcoal sales	8.3	4.7	**	551	551
Production					
Crop sales	41.9	75.3	***	551	551
Livestock sales	18.9	43.7	***	551	551
Nursery products	4.7	39.9	***	551	551
Seed selling	5.1	26.7	***	551	551
Apiculture	3.8	8.7	***	551	551
Other	3.8	8.7	***	551	551

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

derive wages from working somebody else's land. More than three-quarters of Sidama WE RISE households reported crop sales from agricultural production, a significant increase from 42% of households at the baseline.

Participation in WE RISE activities has undoubtedly contributed to increased involvement in non-agricultural income-earning activities. More than one-quarter of WE RISE women (28%, compared to 13% at baseline) are engaged in some form of small business activity, which could include beekeeping and honey production, small ruminant raising and fattening, and poultry production. For example, the women involved in poultry production activities have not only diversified their household diet by adding nutritious eggs, they have used the income from egg and poultry sales to purchase other forms of livestock. Fewer women sell firewood and charcoal than at the baseline (a decline from more than eight percent to less than five percent), which is good for ecological reasons but also because firewood selling is often a type of coping strategy as much as it is a livelihoods strategy.

On the production side, three-quarters of households are involved in crop sales, a major increase from 42% at baseline; 44% of households market their livestock as a livelihoods activity, an increase from 19% at baseline; four out of every ten households sell nursery products, in contrast to only five percent at baseline; more than one-quarter of households (27%) are involved in seed selling, an increase from only five percent at baseline; and households engaged in apicultural production has more than doubled from four to nine percent, probably a result of WE RISE beekeeping activities.

Table 26: % of women earning income from agricultural production or other economic activities promoted by WE-RISE

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
All households	35.0	69.5	***	551	551
Female HHHs	41.7	67.7	***	228	217
Male HHHs	30.3	70.7	***	323	334

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels. Independent t-test only conducted on means.

Table 26 presents another indicator of increasing income diversity. The number of WE RISE women participants earning income from agricultural production or other economic activities promoted by the project has doubled since 2012 from 35% to 70% by the end of year 2015. This increase has been felt in both female- and male-headed households, but particularly in male-headed households, where more than seventy percent of women were earning income from WE RISE promoted activities at endline compared to thirty percent at baseline. This indicator easily fulfils the end-of-project target, which sought an increase in the number of women earning income from economic activities promoted through WE RISE.

4.7.3 Agricultural Production, Diversification, and Improved Practices

One theme of this endline evaluation has been the progress and improvement in various indicators of economic and social empowerment that women involved in WE RISE have achieved in the 3½ years since the project's inception and implementation in Sidama. Several of the crop agricultural production indicators, however (presented below), which were chosen to measure the desired Change Outcome 1 – increased household productive assets and resources – have registered declines since the onset of the project. This is partly because some of the indicators used to measure change in Outcome 1 do not actually reflect the major project activities, because they measure crop production changes, which has not been a major WE RISE Ethiopia direct project strategy. In addition, those activities promoted by the project to increase crop production and diversification have proven to have less impact – as measured by ranking exercises according to project participants, field staff, and partner staff. These activities include Micro Irrigation Technologies (MIT), which gave a few farmers – very few farmers – the means to increase their crop production and productivity by cultivating their crops using irrigation, improved seed distribution, and seed multiplication.

Table 27: Number of Crops Women Cultivate

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 1.3: Number of different crops grown					
All households	2.15	1.85	**	551	551
Female HHHs	2.08	1.74		232	217
Male HHHs	2.20	1.93		319	334

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Crop Diversification: Sidama WE RISE women continue to cultivate an average of approximately two crops (Table 27). Although undertaking a slight decline from 2.15 to 1.85 crops cultivated, the decline in number of cultivated crops by women in male-headed and female-headed households was not statistically significant. As a result of this decline, WE-RISE did not come close to meeting the end-of-project target of seven crops, which was wildly optimistic. Women in male-headed households grow marginally more crops than women in female-headed households, which have less favourable dependency ratios – fewer people contributing to productive labour versus food consumers within their households.

Sidama coffee and *chat* crops – the two major cash crops in the zone – have become quite lucrative, which may help explain why Sidama women farmers have failed to diversify and expand crop production. Men control the cash crops, particularly coffee and chat, and sale of livestock. Decision-making on how this income is utilized remains the discretion of men. This holds true for cash crops existing in the shadow of the home dwelling as well. It may also be that the enumeration team understated *enset* production from the false banana,

which is normally a homestead crop, but that would probably have occurred at baseline as well.

Improved Agricultural Practices: Table 28 outlines women’s adoption of various improved agricultural practices. Development Agents (DAs) – normally three per *kebele* – offer the main channel through which Ethiopian farmers adopt improved agricultural practices. The dismal results – only nine percent of women

“Coffee is our blood vessel. Don’t let women sell immature coffee to fill their and their children’s needs” – Soyama, Dale male FGD

were adopting three or more improved agricultural practices at the endline – reflect the reality that crop production and productivity has not been a successful focus of WE RISE in Sidama. The most commonly applied improved agricultural practices promoted by DAs (and frequently adopted by male farmers) include adoption of improved seeds, use of irrigation technologies, crop diversity, use of manure or composting, intercropping, crop rotation, and soil erosion methods. The end-of-project target was 50%, so WE RISE has clearly not come close to achieving that goal. SOS Sahel has developed and maintained excellent relationships with GoE Sidama extension service personnel at the zone, *woreda*, and *kebele* levels in an effort to promote and sustain WE RISE activities, but the project has either advanced less emphasis on promoting crop production and productivity or those activities relating to crop production have been relatively less successful or have targeted few households. Marginally fewer women in female-headed households have adopted improved agricultural practices than those in male-headed households – explained, at least in part, by greater access of men to agricultural extension services.

Table 28: Improved agricultural, harvest, storage, and livestock practices

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 1.5: % women adopting 3 or more improved agricultural practices	23.8	8.8	***	445	331
OC 1.6: % women farmers adopting a minimum of 2 value chain practices	13.5	0.6	***	445	331
OC 1.7: % women adopting improved storage practices	2.0	3.9		445	331
OC 1.8: % women using one or more improved livestock practice	24.0	24.2		445	331

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Value Chain Practices: Virtually no woman farmer (less than one percent) has adopted two or more value chain practices, which include activities such as sorting, processing, packaging, and use of farmer production and marketing groups for sale or transporting. The project established an unattainable end-of-project target of 46% adoption of value chain practices for women who participate in agricultural production, given the lack of value chain programming in the WE RISE programme arsenal.

Improved Storage Practices: Adoption of improved storage practices designed to protect farmer harvests from losses from the weather or pests or small animals and enable

improved efficiency, continues to be dismal amongst Sidama farmers, even though this practice increased from two percent adoption at baseline to four percent at endline. Practically no female farmers were utilizing improved storage practices. The vast majority of female farmers continue to utilize traditional storage practices. Sidama farmers normally store their food in a traditional *kafecha* kept underground.

Improved Livestock Practices: Improved livestock practices include seeking proper veterinary and animal health care and improved husbandry and feeding practices. Only about one-quarter of women (24%) are utilizing improved practices, as was the case at baseline, despite WE RISE promotion of improved livestock practice as an integral part of the sheep and goat offspring distribution activities. WE RISE therefore failed to fulfil the end-of-project target of 38% for this indicator.

4.7.4 Access to Agricultural Inputs and Markets

Only one-third of women WE RISE participants are accessing agricultural productivity-enhancing inputs, primarily seeds and fertilizers, from a diversity of sources, thereby falling substantially short of the end-of-project target of eighty percent. FGD participants expressed profound disappointment with the attempt at increasing access to improved seeds, describing the seed type as limited, untimely provisioning of seed too late to plant, a seed supply shortage, and seeds drying up for lack of water. Inputs are derived from a variety of sources, including producer groups, government-sponsored programmes such as PSNP, and agro-input suppliers. Farmers told the evaluation team of difficulties finding sufficient resources to purchases agricultural inputs.

Table 29: Women's access to productive resources and markets

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 1.9: % women accessing agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, etc.) over the last 12 months	57.5	32.6	***	445	331
OC 1.10: % women accessing output markets to sell agricultural production over the last 12 months	7.7	4.8		445	331

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Access to Output Markets: Fewer than five percent of women involved in agricultural production have accessed output markets to sell any of the harvest within the previous twelve months prior to the endline. The vast majority of women farmers continue to sell their agricultural products individually in local markets. The end-of-project target, established the project's inception, was 48%. This is another indicator that WE RISE Ethiopia has not successfully promoted agricultural marketing as an implementation strategy. Similar to the poor results of other indicators measuring agricultural production and productivity, this may also indicate poor agricultural performance this year for all farmers in Sidama.

Productive enterprises that garner income through marketing, such as honey from bees, continue to be controlled by men, despite the rhetoric of the project beneficiary numbers. This is not a criticism of the project approach or accomplishment; it is the reality of an entrenched patriarchy that will take years of effort to break down. Women's control of work, assets and income tends to be derived from resources close to and around the home that do not involve marketing productive outputs at a major market. These include access to poultry, milk and butter from livestock and garden vegetables. To the degree these can be sold in local markets, women are often involved – especially if living in close proximity to these markets. The more distant the markets, the greater the involvement of men, due to more limited mobility afforded to women.

4.7.5: Coping with and adapting to Shocks – Resilience

As we saw earlier (in the section on Impact), Sidama WE RISE households have successfully increased their resilience to risks and shocks, as measured by improved CSI scores, fewer food and income shortages, and lower incidence of utilizing damaging consumption strategies to cope with shocks and risks. Tables 30, 31 and 32 add to this story and confirm increased WE RISE participant household resilience.

Table 30: Shocks

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
Number of shocks experienced per household over 5 years					
All households	2.8	1.2	***	551	551
Female HHHs	2.8	1.1	***	232	217
Male HHHs	2.7	1.3	***	319	334
Percentage of Households to experience each shock in past 5 years					
Major drought	67.9	26.3	***	551	551
Chronic illness or severe accident of HH member	31.6	23.1	***	551	551
Indebtedness	31.2	16.0	***	551	551
Death of HH income earning members	24.7	8.4	***	551	551
Major flooding	22.3	7.4	***	551	551
Epidemic disease (crop, livestock, human)	18.5	7.8	***	551	551
Dowry/wedding costs	16.7	6.7	***	551	551
Loss of a regular job of a HH member	10.9	6.2	**	551	551
Major conflicts	10.5	2.5	***	551	551
Divorce or abandonment	9.8	2.5	***	551	551
Issues with division of father's property	9.3	3.3	***	551	551
Failure or bankruptcy of business	9.1	3.8	***	551	551
Withdrawal of NGO or government assistance	8.0	9.8		551	551
Decreased or cut off regular remittances	5.4	0.0	***	551	551

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Table 30 indicates that WE RISE Sidama households at endline averaged just over one shock during the previous five years. The same households reported experiencing nearly three shocks in the five years leading up to the baseline (2.8 at baseline and 1.2 at endline). The difference between shocks experienced by female-headed versus male-headed households has been negligible. Households at the endline reported experiencing fewer incidents of virtually every type of shock. The major shocks reported by households continue to be drought (down from 68% to 26%), chronic illness or severe accident suffered by a household member (down from 32% to 23%), and indebtedness (down from 31% to 16%).

Table 31: Adoption of Non-consumption Coping Strategies

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 1.11: % households adopting negative coping strategies in past 3 months					
All households	80.9	35.9	***	551	551
Female HHHs	78.5	32.7	***	232	217
Male HHHs	82.8	38.0	***	319	334
Percentage of households to utilize specific "negative" coping strategies:					
Reduce expenditure on livestock and agricultural inputs	63.3	5.3	***	551	551
Reduce expenditures (e.g., health care, education)	60.1	5.4	***	551	551
Take a loan with interest	42.3	18.2	***	551	551
Pledge or sell labor/crops/livestock in advance	37.0	16.5	***	551	551
Sell a higher number of livestock than usual	26.5	4.2	***	551	551
Unusual sales (e.g., household assets, firewood, charcoal, etc.)	19.2	0.5	***	551	551
Send children away to better-off relatives and friends	15.3	1.8	***	551	551
Migrate	9.3	3.5	***	551	551
Slaughter more animals than normal	5.3	0.2	***	551	551
Lower school attendance or drop out from school	0.0	3.8	***	551	551
Percentage of households to utilize "other" coping strategies:^					
Request local government for assistance	27.8	3.3	***	551	551
Receive remittances (food or cash) from relatives, friends	14.5	14.9		551	551

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*) , 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

^ Not considered a negative coping strategy for OC 1.11

Partly because Sidama WE RISE households have perceived fewer crises or shocks that have affected them deleteriously, they have adopted fewer negative coping strategies. The results are encouraging, as presented in **Table 31**. The number of households employing negative coping strategies declined precipitously from baseline to endline from 81% to 36%, a statistically significant decrease that easily fulfilled the end-of-project target. Slightly more male-headed households (38%) than female-headed households (33%) reported employing coping strategies to deal with stress or shocks during the previous three months. There is

one caveat to these findings: As discussed earlier, the TANGO team undertook baseline survey data collection during the month of July, which is the early onset of the *Meher* hunger season, and endline data collection during the month of November, after at least some the *Meher* crops had been harvested, when there would be less need to adopt negative coping strategies.

The use of virtually all categories of coping strategies has shown declines. Of particular note is the very significant decline in reducing expenditures on productive inputs for crop and livestock production and for health care and education, from more than sixty percent to only five percent of households compelled to employ these detrimental coping strategies. Far fewer households took loans with interest in the three months prior to the endline (18%) compared to the three months preceding the baseline interviews (42%). Virtually no households at the endline (only four percent) reported distress sales of livestock to cope with stress or shock compared to more than one-quarter of all households (27%) at the baseline. As noted earlier, the percentage of households who cite the use of savings to cope with shock and stress has increased, indicating greater absorptive resilience capacity.

Table 32: Adaptation Strategies

Indicator	Point Estimate		Sample Size	
	BL	EL	BL	EL
OC 1.12 % households using at least one adaptation strategy to reduce the impact of future shocks				
All households	72.1	73.3	483	345
Female HHHs	66.8	70.4	205	135
Male HHHs	75.9	75.2	278	210

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Nearly three-quarters of all WE RISE households told the enumeration team of their use of at least one adaptation strategy to protect their household from the potentially negative impact of a future shock. Whereas coping strategies normally imply a negative or detrimental impact on the household, adaptation strategies represent a positive proactive action of an increasingly resilient household. Households at endline are much more likely to invest in savings and diversify their livelihood strategy by investing in an IGA. They are also more likely to cultivate some drought tolerant crops and purchase additional livestock. The use of adaptation strategies remains virtually unchanged since the baseline and is undertaken slightly more frequently by male-headed households (75%) than by female-headed households (70%).

4.8 Outcome 2 – Enabling Institutional Environment

CARE WE RISE designed Outcome 2 activities and interventions in order that ***“Formal and informal institutions are more responsive to women’s priorities and accountable to upholding their rights”***

The objective of Outcome 2 is to improve the linkages between service providers, including the private sector, institutions, and government, and women farmers. The WE-RISE Objective 2 has sought to develop the capacity of local institutions to increase awareness of women’s rights and inclusion of women into leadership positions. WE RISE hypothesized that women’s participation in project activities designed to enhance institutional responsiveness to women’s priorities would result in an improvement or increase in the following Outcome 2 indicators:

- Percent of women accessing agricultural extension services;
- Percent of women accessing agricultural financial services;
- Percent of women satisfied with a selected list of services;
- Percent increase in women’s representation in formal and informal institutions;
- Percent of women holding leadership positions with decision-making power in membership groups and community institutions;
- Percent of women and men confidently speaking publicly about women’s rights.

4.8.1 Women’s Access to Agricultural Financial and Extension Services

The development of VSLAs has proved to offer an essential gateway for women to access services, particularly financial services, but also other social services and activities in the service of promoting social as well as economic WE RISE objectives to increase women’s empowerment. As we saw in quantitative and qualitative findings discussed in the previous section, WE RISE Ethiopia has been more successful in their promotion of increased access

to and use of (some) financial services than in achieving improved access to agricultural services or an increase in agricultural production or productivity. **Table 33** supports these findings.

Indicator	Point Estimate		Sample Size	
	BL	EL	BL	EL
OC 2.1: % women with access to agricultural extension services in last 12 months	23.6	11.8	551	551
OC 2.2: % women accessing agricultural financial services (loans, savings, crop insurance) in last 12 months	60.9	95.5	***	445 331
OC 2.3: % women reporting satisfaction with agricultural extension services	77.1	71.2	131	66

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Women's Access to Agricultural Financial Services: Virtually all WE RISE women involved in agricultural production activities (96%) have managed to access some form of financial service at endline, a statistically significant increase from more than one-third from 61% at baseline that more than fulfilled the end-of-project target. Many women access financial services such as microfinance loans, VSLAs and financing through their own savings, which have grown, according to all FGD participants. As we saw in the Savings and Loans sections above, VSLA participation has been an essential prerequisite for women's increased financial engagement.

Women's Access to Agricultural Extension Services: The number of women who told the enumeration team that they had met with an agricultural crop or livestock extension agent – usually a DA – during the previous twelve month agricultural cycle has actually declined from baseline, when less than one-quarter (24%) of female respondents responded “yes,” to only twelve percent four years later, falling short of the project target, although the difference from baseline to endline was not statistically significant. Similar to baseline results, amongst women who had met with an extension worker, a majority of approximately three-quarter of respondents (77% at baseline and 71% at endline) expressed satisfaction with the services provided. This indicator also fell somewhat short of fulfilling the end-of-project target.

These results appear to validate FG discussions at endline as well as at baseline and the MTE with women WE RISE participants who continue to perceive government agricultural extension workers, who are usually men (although the proportion of female-to-male DAs appears to be inching very slowly upward), as serving the needs of men. They generally believe that extension workers elicit little interest in valuing women as agricultural producers. Women understand extension outreach as generally relating to the continuing greater public prominence and mobility of their husbands and men and the most influential farmers in the *kebele*.

At the *kebele* level, agricultural extension occurs through Farming Training Centres (FTCs). Men understand the FTC as an influential and important formal institution throughout the local communities. Active involvement in FTC activities allows men to access important social capital as well as future economic capital. Women view their participation with FTCs as indirect, largely through their husbands or males in their families. Women farmer FGD participants continue to identify the need for improved access to agricultural information and assistance in their farming activities, such as gardening close to their homes as well as other cash and food crop cultivation activities that require women's involvement, particularly during the planting and harvesting cultivation phases.

Although decision-making roles are slowly changing (discussed in the next section), men continue to dominate agricultural decision-making on planting, harvesting, seeds, fertilizing, feeding and protection of crops and livestock, especially on farm and pasture land relatively distant from the homestead. Women dominate *enset* production and some vegetable

production on gardens closer to the homestead, as well as feed and care for livestock, which provide dairy and poultry products.

4.8.2 Women’s Participation in Formal and Informal Groups

In order to understand the extent of women’s participation and leadership in formal and informal groups, the survey team initially inquired about the existence of ten different types of groups in the community. If groups existed, women were asked about their active participation, reasons for not participating, amount of decision-making input they contribute, and whether they held a leadership position. This section presents the results.

Table 33 indicates that nearly nine out of every ten women sampled (89%) are active members of at least one formal or informal group in their community; this high number, however, falls short of the participation reported at baseline (96%). It may be that the endline enumeration team was more diligent in asking about **active** participation and not just participation in the form of membership. It is also true that sometimes women are listed as VSLA members but their husbands may take on the role of active members. Slightly fewer women from female-headed households, however, actively participate in formal or informal groups than do women from male-headed households.

Although Sidama women report very high levels of participation in groups, their participation can be understood in a more nuanced context. When in groups with men, it is not common for women to speak out in comparison to men in the group. The evaluation team’s discussions with women and men in mixed FGDs validate this experience. Sidama men are trying to be more inclusive of women but frequently cannot draw on old habits to cut women off during discussion or display patrimonial attitudes about women’s contributions to the discussion.

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 2.4: % women participating in formal and informal groups					
All households	96.0	89.1	***	525	505
Female HHHs	95.6	86.8	***	226	197
Male HHHs	96.3	90.6	***	299	308
OC 2.5: % women holding leadership positions in formal and informal groups (of active members)					
All households	16.1	17.8		514	450
Female HHHs	15.4	15.8		221	171
Male HHHs	16.7	19.0		293	279

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*) , 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Women’s participation is more active within informal groups of women as opposed to more formal institutions. In addition to VSLA participation, Sidama women continue to greatly

value the *idir* – the local death and burial support membership group – as the most important institution within their communities. Membership is dictated by a regular system of contributions dependent on the economic capacity of families. Men lead the *idirs*. When a member of a family dies, the *idir* provides vital resources to help with burial costs and burdens, and strong support to families in other ways during these difficult transitions.

FGD participants invariably cited VSLA participation as the most beneficial WE RISE activity; because group participation in VSLAs produced a list of diverse benefits, including increasing their savings and the ability to access credit, given the dearth of financial services with attractive lending terms. VSLA loans have allowed women to invest in small livestock and other IGAs as well as pay educational expenses, purchase food, improve their houses purchase, and cope with emergencies. VSLA group participation exposed women and men to information about earning income as well as gender equality, and opened opportunities to learn new skills, such as saving and spending wisely and social skills such as presenting their ideas in public.

Participation in production and marketing groups has unlocked opportunities formerly only open to men, exemplified by the quote below from a member of the Soap Producing and Marketing Group. The soap cooperative has managed to produce a product of high quality and increasing demand. In fact, demand currently outstrips supply. The cooperative remains dependent on inputs, such as caustic soda and oil, unavailable in the region, and needs to work out arrangements to access such inputs. The Group management would like to access a loan currently forbidden from SMFI as a matter of policy not to provide loans to such Producer groups, presumably because the group does not represent farmers with sufficient collateral. The group would like to invest in inputs to increase production and quality.

“Women were only consumers before; now we are involved in production and decision-making. We have economic opportunities. We have gained knowledge. We couldn’t participate in discussions before. We were oppressed. Now we have equal rights within our households and within our group.” – Soap Producing and Marketing Group member, Tula Gorbe, Loka Abaya

For women who participate in groups, the number of women who claim to hold leadership positions has increased very slightly from sixteen percent to eighteen percent, not enough to meet the end-of-project target of 28%. This is a rather disappointing finding and contradicts FGD qualitative findings as well as SOS Sahel project figures, which indicate a higher proportion of women occupying leadership positions. Men in Sidama WE RISE communities claim that women are increasingly leading VSLA collectives. Male participants in one FGD recognized the growing number of women holding management positions in government and NGOs – SOS Sahel and CARE are admirable examples of this phenomena – and understand this as resulting from improvements in education for women and commitment of the government and NGOs to women’s rights and priorities.

4.8.3 Self-confidence Speaking and Expressing Public Opinions

Women’s ability, confidence, and comfort to speak up in public and participate in community affairs about issues of importance to them, including women’s rights, represent equally important objectives of WE-RISE Change Outcome 2.

The enumeration team asked men and women about their comfort level in speaking in public about the topics of women’s rights and infrastructure needs in the community in order to understand their potential for leadership and influence in the communities where they live. The quantitative data indicate that WE-RISE project participants of both sexes have not increased their confidence or comfort in speaking up in public, but the endline data nevertheless confirm that men especially remain comfortable speaking up in public; nearly nine out of every ten men (88%) expressed their confidence at endline speaking locally in public about gender and other community issues, compared to 93% of men at the baseline. A majority of Sidama WE RISE women also continue to express confidence in their ability to speak their minds (71% at endline versus 83% at baseline). Because the baseline results (which may be circumspect) were so high, the endline results failed to meet project targets.

Table 34: Expressing opinions in community affairs

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 2.6: % respondents confident speaking in public about gender and other community issues at the local level					
Female respondents	82.6	70.8	***	534	551
Male respondents	93.4	87.6	***	317	348

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*) , 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Women in focus groups reported they occasionally speak up in public forums concerning important issues facing their lives and community, which is under the purview of men. Women prefer speaking in smaller groups composed of other women, to articulate community concerns. As mentioned earlier, men tend to dominate the discussions in mixed FGDs of men and women, but occasionally one dominant woman will speak up as well. Men normally dominate discussions.

4.9 Outcome 3 – Gender Equitable Environment

CARE WE RISE designed Outcome 3 activities and interventions in order that **“Cultural and social norms and attitudes better support the individual and collective aspirations and improved opportunities for CFIRW.”** The central features of Change Outcome 3 are to use the VSLA as an entry point for women and men to discuss gender equality issues and to promote adaptation of cultural-social norms, such that women actively participate in decision-making.

WE RISE Ethiopia incorporated the SAA model used in other CARE projects (described above in Section 4.6), which has proved more successful than the Stakeholder Platform to tackle gender roles and support women empowerment efforts in the communities. We shall see, below, that the SAA approach has introduced lively discussions, led by gatekeepers, into communities, but transforming talk into incipient practice by a few gatekeepers and then into widespread revolutionary behaviour (within the Sidama cultural paradigm) is more easily said than done; changing practice is lagging behind attitudinal change, which is also a struggle to achieve for specific practices and gendered relations.

WE RISE hypothesized that women's participation in project activities designed to enhance their aspirations and opportunities through relevant cultural and social norms and attitudes would result in an improvement or increase in the following Outcome 3 indicators:

- Joint control over household and agricultural income and expenditures;¹¹
- Joint decision-making and control of household assets;¹²
- Sole or joint decision-making related to health care and reproductive health;
- Attitudes that reject household gender-based violence;
- Attitudes that support gender-equitable roles in family life;
- Women's mobility; and
- Women's equitable time distribution between productive and domestic tasks.

4.9.1 Women's Control of Income, Expenditure, and Asset Decisions

Table 35 indicates that across sampled households the number of women who report decision-making control over household income and expenditures has increased significantly by roughly fifteen percentage points to 70% from 55% at baseline, just short of the end-of-project target of 78%. Impressively, women in male-headed households have experienced the entire gain — 66% now report decision-making control of household income and expenditures compared to only 32% at baseline. More than twice as many women living in male-headed households at endline compared to baseline have reported joint control over household incomes and expenditures. Of concern is the finding that women who reside in female-headed households feel less empowered to make decisions about income and expenditures than they were at baseline (84% versus 77%), although the difference is not statistically significant, and, as should be expected, women in female-headed households express approximately ten percent more control over their household income and expenditure than do women in male-headed households.

"The time of foolishness has passed; we are eating with our wives today."
– Salasire Kebele, Loka Abaya
Community Leader FGD

¹¹ Women's control of income and expenditures is defined as women who have input into most or all decisions relative to a household or agricultural domain AND who have input into most or all decisions regarding the use of income from the activity (if it is an income-generating activity).

¹² Women's control of household assets is defined as women who state they are a sole or joint decision maker regarding the sale or purchase of various household and agricultural assets.

Women’s control of household assets is defined as women who state they are a sole or joint decision-maker regarding the sale or purchase of various household assets. For WE-RISE Ethiopia, the outcome indicator is computed as the

percentage of women who have control in 75% or more of the domains in which the household reports they hold assets. Women at endline reported less joint household decision-making and control over assets (59%) than at baseline (73%), therefore failing to attain the end-of-project target of 72%. Women who head households reported the most precipitous decline, from 80% at baseline to 61% at endline.

Table 35: Women's decision making and control over household income, expenditures, and assets

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 3.1: % women with sole or joint control over household income and expenditures					
All households	54.5	70.2	***	510	551
Female HHHs	84.3	76.5		217	217
Male HHHs	32.4	66.2	***	293	334
OC 3.2: % women with sole or joint decision-making and control over household assets					
All households	73.0	58.8	***	204	359
Female HHHs	79.5	61.2	***	83	134
Male HHHs	68.6	57.3	**	121	225

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

“Previously, the woman didn’t even see the face of her husband, but now we are eating together.”
 “Before, there were women who have died without looking at their husbands’ faces.”
 “The women served their husbands’ dinners by covering their faces or looking away because a woman is half the value of man”
 -- Wenenata Kebele, Dale Male FGD

Female-headed households continue to face heavy burdens when attempting to juggle farming and household chores. Women without husbands are vulnerable to the approaches of men, including relatives of deceased husbands, who may already be married and have designs on her farm.

4.9.2 Women’s Control of Health Care and Reproductive Health Decisions

Participating Sidama WE RISE women have expressed significant decision-making control – either jointly with their husbands or solely – about household health care and reproductive health care or family planning. The enumeration team reports small but statistically significant positive changes to both women’s household health care and family planning decisions. Women experienced an increase from 83% to 91% baseline to endline for health care

“There is a light now. Change is possible.”

household decisions, which surpasses the end-of-project target of 87%. Women in male-headed households in particular have experienced significant gains; nine of every ten women in these WE RISE households expressed their empowerment to share in household health care decisions.

“The traditional saying, “a woman is half of a man” has changed. Women are treated equally. In previous times, women – even pregnant women – were not recommended to eat quality food in a household; the best food was only allowed for husbands. Now they feed together.”
– Soyama Kebele, Dale Male FGD

Family planning or reproductive health decision-making has seen similar gains for participating WE RISE women. At baseline, the majority of women (90%) were the sole or joint decision maker for family planning decisions including contraception, and whether to space or limit births. At endline, 94% of women report decision-making control in this area; there is no difference in decision-making about reproductive health for women in female-or male-headed households. All of these results far surpass end-of-project targets of 65% for all households and 50% and 80% of male- and female-headed households. Qualitative discussions confirm that men and women alike consider family planning to be one of the most important decisions that must be made jointly.

CARE and SOS Sahel deserve credit for helping to initiate these changing household decision-making patterns. They share this trend toward increased family planning joint decision-

Table 36: Women's decision making and control over health care and reproductive health

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 3.3: % women reporting sole or joint decision-making over reproductive health decisions (family planning; spacing of children)					
All households	90.3	93.9	***	483	532
Female HHHs	94.5	93.8		201	209
Male HHHs	87.2	94.1	***	282	323
OC 3.4: % women making sole or joint decisions about health care					
All households	82.7	90.5	***	468	546
Female HHHs	95.5	93.0		202	214
Male HHHs	72.9	88.9	***	266	332

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*) , 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

making with Ministry of Health advocacy and support for family planning, the growing recognition of decreasing land size for farming families, and the presence and support of local health posts and centres.

4.9.3 Attitudes about Gender Equality in Family Life

The TANGO team asked male and female respondents about their attitudes, perceptions, and practices related to gender roles, household violence, and women’s mobility in order to determine whether men’s and women’s attitudes about gender-equality have changed.

Female and male heads of households and primary female decision-makers were asked four questions that reflect men’s and women’s roles in family life, including attitudes about sharing household work roles and a husband’s use of free time with his family, as seen in **Table 37**. Responding to three of the four questions in a gender-equity supportive manner provides a positive attitude expression for the measurements underlying gender-equal attitudes.

“Women were the inferior group of the community before, but now, thanks to the SOS and CARE project, women are respected.” – Salasire Kebele, Loka Abaya Men’s FGD

Attitudes in support of household gender-equitable roles: More than two-thirds of

women (68%) responded affirmatively with gender-equitable attitudes, contrasted with 61% of men with such responses. Both surpass the end-of-project targets of 60% for women and 50% for men. Patriarchal attitudes about family life are slowly dissipating.

Some of the most rudimentary changes are beginning to occur in the process of redefining female and male relations and roles, largely through application of

the SAA process, which identifies issues for gatekeepers as model men to mentor others in the community. For example, some men now walk side-by-side with women. Men are now allowing women their space to speak in public fora. Many male FGD participants, however, continue to express the need for separate household division of labour roles that call for women to solely handle traditional household activities such as some gardening, food preparation, cooking, cleaning and caring for the young, and men to bring the income into the household by earning income outside of the homestead and through marketing agricultural production on land owned by the man of the household. A few men discussed the process of taking on traditional women’s roles, such as brewing coffee, but other men noted that they could face shame if they are seen within the community taking on work and roles traditionally assumed by women. Women sometimes offer resistance to change: One male FGD participant told the team that after having washed the dishes outside, his wife lambasted him for undertaking shameful behaviour.

Table 37: Perceptions of Gender Roles and Gender-based Violence

Indicator	Point Estimate			Sample Size	
	BL	EL		BL	EL
OC 3.5: % of respondents expressing attitudes that support gender-equitable roles in family life					
Female respondents	74.9	68.7	***	534	543
Male respondents	57.3	60.6	**	316	348
OC 3.6: % of respondents expressing attitudes that reject household gender-based violence					
Female respondents	34.5	54.7	***	534	543
Male respondents	36.7	51.7	***	316	348

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*), 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

Attitudes about Gender-based Violence (GBV): Men in male-headed households and women from all sampled households were asked two questions: If there are times women deserve to be hit and whether women should tolerate violence at times for family stability. Answering negatively to both qualifies as an attitude rejecting GBV within the household and serves as the underlying measurement for the indicator summarized in **Table 37**.

“Women’s rights means protecting women from any attack. Previously for many years she was denied all rights, but now women’s rights against such practice is being guaranteed. It has changed over the past four years. Our perspective is on the progress of changes for the good of the households.” – Soyama Kebele, Dale Male FGD

The survey data indicate improved attitudes about GBV within the household by both women and men. Women’s attitudes rejecting GBV in their household improved from 35% at baseline to 55% at endline; men’s attitudes improved from 37% at baseline to 52% at endline. Men’s responses, however, may be suspect since some men may think their responses could be seen as an indication that they are perpetrators of violence. The improved attitudes rejecting violence in the household were not sufficient to fulfil the end-of-project target of 75%, which was based on the theory that the messaging through the SAA process would offset the longstanding imperatives of this negative cultural practice. In fact, these data provide insights about attitudes toward domestic abuse, but may or may not reflect actual practice.

“Previously there was a need for women to be beaten every fifteen days by her husband, but that practice has declined. Women are now respected. The harmful practices like abduction, female genital mutilation, and early marriage are less practiced, but more work is needed.” -- Wenenata Kebele, Dale Community Leader FGD

Qualitative evidence from FGD participants, key informants, and project staff strongly suggests that gender-based violence has been reduced throughout the WE RISE *kebeles* visited by the TANGO team at endline; participants credit this shift in attitudes and practice to WE-RISE messaging and initiatives through the SAA process as well as to GoE efforts and initiatives against early marriage, female genital cutting and polygamy. The GOE has prioritized women’s rights in many ways – including dealing with women’s issues at many levels of government and support to women’s groups, although the Ministry of Women’s Affairs remains underfunded and largely ineffective. GBV remains a sensitive issue for everyone.

“The paralegals are solving conflicts between wives and husbands. It has helped the community reduce polygamous marriages. If there is no paralegal, we cannot stand. Previously women were seen as unequal with men, but now women are getting legal support. It is our power. It protects women’s property if she divorces her husband. It is increasing awareness of the community on the traditional harmful practices. It is also helping pregnant women and facilitating delivery of the women in health institutions. With fair and transparent legal actions, women get protection.” – Soyama Kebele Women FGD

Women’s perceptions of gender-based violence, however, remain different than those expressed by men and (usually male) government authorities. Women in the programme zone applaud the efforts to reduce GBV and describe progress in the realms of certain practices, particularly early marriage and abduction of females for marriage, and to a lesser degree, polygamy, but less progress toward ending or at least reducing other GBV practices, including sexual harassment and female genital cutting. Some KIs mentioned to the evaluation team the need to engage schools, where peer pressure reigns, as well as mothers.

“There are some unchanged previous attitudes like ‘man manages seven women’ (*Labbahu lamala geersanno*), which promotes polygamous marriage. There are a few people who still believe that women must stay below men in the traditional manner at home. The attitude of a few people has not changed on polygamous marriage. There are still men in our kebele who are interested in polygamy.” – Sala Kebado Kebele, Loka Abaya Men’s FGD

Awareness and concern over GBV has intensified in recent years as a result of increased public scrutiny made possible by programme messaging through WE RISE and other programmes. Many women and men now discuss female genital cutting in negative terms; however FGD discussions in communities and government offices indicate its continued wide practice. FGM remains the most intractable GBV practice to change. Fathers, mothers, and peers compel young girls to experience the FGM surgery; young women (or young teenagers) who enter into marriage without facing the surgery may be forced by their husbands to succumb to it. The struggle involves men publicly making and acting on statements of belief. Some young gatekeepers – model males in Chancho, Loka Abaya – declared that they would not marry women who have undergone FGM. Twenty-eight young women formed an informal pact, declaring their intention never to undergo the operation.

The SAA process must battle against cultural beliefs epitomized by the box below:

Changing attitudes about FGM remains a protracted struggle. Many Sidama men and women continue to believe that uncircumcised women:

- Are contaminated and impure;
- Should never harvest *enset* or prepare *kocho* from the *enset*;
- Cannot pass the spoon or other utensils at mealtime to other members of the household;
- Will not behave like proper wives;
- Will produce babies born with defects.

4.9.4 Women's Mobility

The TANGO enumeration team interviewed female WE RISE survey participants to enquire if they had to ask permission from their spouse or another family member to go to ten different locations in order to understand the extent of their freedom of mobility. Four responses were possible: 'Yes, always' 'Yes, most often' 'yes, but only now and then', and 'No, never'. **Table 38** presents the data as a mean score of women's individual answers.¹³ The maximum score is 30. Women with a score of 16 or greater are considered to be mobile.

Table 38

indicates a slight detectible change in women's freedom of mobility, which increased from 35% of all

Indicator	Point Estimate		Sample Size	
	BL	EL	BL	EL
OC 3.7: Women's mobility				
All households	34.9	38.5	533	551
Female HHHs	74.0	65.0	***	231
Male HHHs	5.0	21.9	***	302

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*) , 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.

sampled women at baseline to 39% at endline. Although the change is not statistically significant, participating WE RISE women's mobility has improved since the inception of the project four years ago, thereby fulfilling the end-of-project target. When data are disaggregated by sex of household head, mobility has in fact declined slightly for women residing in female-headed households, from nearly three-quarters of female household heads at baseline (74%) to less than two-thirds at endline (65%).

Women living in male-headed households are far more mobile than recorded at baseline; their mobility increased four-fold, from five percent to 22%. Women heading households however, remain approximately three times as mobile as women in male-headed households. Women who head households are, by necessity, mobile in order to secure income and purchasing household goods.

"Previously, women needed permission to even visit their neighbours. They did not go anywhere, with the exception of household services and tasks. Now they are involved in all decision-making that allows them from the home up to the woreda."
 – Salasire Kebele, Loka Abaya Men's FGD

It is not a surprise that less than forty percent of women have achieved freedom of mobility; qualitative evidence confirms that sociocultural norms continue to constrain women's freedom of movement. Women's mobility remains a sensitive issue. Men and women FGD participants affirmed that women normally require men's approval to venture outside of home and village areas during the day and anywhere outside their homes at night. Despite enhanced discussion in WE RISE *kebeles* about attaining equality within households and

¹³ The scores for women's mobility are calculated by taking the mean across women's individual scores. They are calculated using the following categories and score values from 3 (most mobile) to 0 (least mobile): "Never" (3), "Yes, but only now and then" (2), and "most often" (1) and 'always' (0).

communities, the vast majority of women must gain men's approval prior to venturing outside of their immediate home area and their regular routines of mobility – such as neighbour's homes, churches and markets. Women who venture beyond these familiar settings may find themselves suspected of seeing other men. Some women also fear gender-based violence, especially after dusk. Many Sidama women have few opportunities to deviate from their daily routines. Lacking control of financial resources and requiring men's approval combine to limit women's mobility.

5. Project Management and Cross-Cutting Topics

CARE-Ethiopia and SOS-Sahel developed a working relationship and partnership from the onset of WE RISE, designed on specific roles to ensure an effective and efficient programme operation in the three Sidama woredas of SNNPR – Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region. CARE has coordinated overall programme operations, including overseeing SOS-Sahel efforts to sustainably achieve results as designed in the Theory of Change and M&E Framework, promoting and facilitating learning, sharing learning documentation internally and externally, providing strategic direction to the project, mobilizing external support, building capacity of implementing partners and other stakeholders, and monitoring the progress through field visits and management meetings. SOS-Sahel established a project office in Hawassa, capital of the Sidama Zone and has implemented project activities and operations at the field level in the three target woredas, with field staff based at the woreda level.

At the midterm of this project, the MTE team reported less than satisfactory supervision of the WE RISE implementation strategy by both SOS Sahel and CARE, stemming essentially from inefficiencies within SOS-Sahel management systems and CARE's poor oversight of those inefficiencies. This in turn largely resulted in a very poor burn rate – the project failed to spend the money allocated in the budget for project activities during the initial two years, severely hindering WE RISE progress toward meeting the goals, objectives and outcome indicators used to measure the effect and impact of the project implementation strategy. SOS Sahel KIs – more than one – admitted to not fully understanding the project's goals, objectives, methods, and approaches during the first two years of the life of WE RISE.

"I had no awareness of gender issues before being trained in the SAA approach and methodology." – member of the SOS Sahel field team

SOS Sahel and CARE have managed to turn around the weaknesses identified at the midterm point of the project in remarkable fashion. The oversight, supervision, management and staffing stabilized at the point of the midterm and has remained stable. SOS Sahel and CARE Sidama offices housing the WE RISE teams each had management weaknesses to overcome during the initial couple years of the programme. Both organizations made the management and staffing changes required to effectively and efficiently supervise WE RISE operations and activities. Institutionalization of these management and staffing changes has profoundly contributed to the success that WE RISE has experienced.

SOS and CARE also recognized the need to streamline WE RISE operations to promote efficient implementation and effective results by jettisoning some ineffective activities that were detracting from fulfilling or accomplishing the project's Theory of Change (TOC). There were far too many activities, rendering it difficult to fashion an effective approach. For example, although known for its organizational imperative to programme NRM and watershed management initiatives and interventions in Ethiopia – this is also an essential GoE strategy to combat climate change – SOS Sahel agreed to drop the watershed management activities, which included insufficient components to be effective and did not fit the WE RISE TOC. Initiated in the eyes of some within SOS Sahel in particular as a Food Security project, WE RISE was actually designed to promote women's empowerment in the social as well as economic realms that included food security as one of its outcomes, in conjunction with resilience and women's empowerment. CARE and SOS Sahel management also recognized at the midterm of the project the necessity of adjusting approaches to more effectively promote women's empowerment. CARE adapted its SAA approach, which has been described elsewhere in this report, to the Sidama WE RISE setting, training SOS Sahel personnel who in turn have facilitated its process in all 26 of the WE RISE operating *kebeles*.

CARE and SOS Sahel Staffing and Collaboration for WE RISE

CARE and SOS Sahel have been well managed and staffed for the past three years, since just prior to the MTE, overcoming early inappropriate and inefficient staffing arrangements. The SOS Sahel WE RISE office in Hawassa is managed and staffed by a young, energetic team – nobody remains from the early days of WE RISE – that has completely overcome the problem of staff morale plaguing the office and affecting programming effectiveness at that time. The SOS-Sahel WE RISE office consists of a Team Leader who supervises the M&E Officer, a Gender Officer, and the Agriculture and Value Chain Expert, who replaced the Marketing and Business Officer, a position that was no longer necessary because it did not fit the WE RISE programme model or strategy. CARE's Food Security Program Manager (FSPM), based in Addis, manages WE-RISE, spending approximately one week a month in Hawassa and Sidama to work with SOS Sahel and the CARE Hawassa office. The SOS-Sahel team also includes six field officers (FOs) based at the woreda level – two in each woreda.

CARE and SOS Sahel have enjoyed much more fruitful collaboration following the midterm. The relationship is now transparent and an example of how NGOs and other organizations can partner together to achieve something. More than one SOS staff member told the evaluation team: "Worku (CARE's FSM, based in Addis) belongs to the SOS staff." All SOS KI participants echoed his importance as a mentor, advisor, and WE RISE father figure to their growth within the WE RISE team. CARE PQL – Program Quality and Learning – team members disseminated training on a variety of subjects to SOS Sahel staff, including (the most highly ranked training sessions) the VSLA approach, the SAA approach, Role modelling and best practices, and the community scorecard. There has been some collaboration with the GRAD project.

"We didn't know the importance of the VLSA before the training. We learned applied practice, using the VSLA as the project entry point." – Member of the SOS Sahel field team

There could be more. SOS staff learnt some processing and value chain skills to apply to WE RISE attempts at strengthening their Processing Cooperatives. GRAD staff in turn learnt about the WE RISE SAA experience. SOS has occasionally collaborated with CARE Sidama: “We occasionally see the GRAD M&E officer, Mesfin.” All KIs commented that the input of the Sidama M&E office has been negligible.

WE RISE remains understaffed at the field staff level. Given the problem of transportation and accessing *kebeles*, WE RISE should depute one Field Officer to cover three *kebeles*. There are currently six Field Officers covering 26 *kebeles* in the project area. Field staff complained of difficulties overseeing VSLA, RUSACCO, SAA, MFI, Processing Groups, and other activities in all of the *kebeles* at the present time. CARE Australia budgeting constraints and priorities have perhaps reduced field staff presence on the ground.

Collaboration with GoE Partners

As reported at the midterm of WE RISE, the collaboration and partnership between SOS Sahel and GoE offices at the woreda and zone levels constitutes one of the major strengths of this project. SOS has managed to sustain an excellent working relationship with each of the three Woreda Technical Teams in Loka Abaya, Dale, and Shebedino, as well as the Sidama Zone office based in Hawassa. The woreda teams have worked diligently with SOS-Sahel field staff to support the project by providing relevant technical expertise, capacity building through training exercises, and collaborative targeting exercises with the *kebeles*. Such collaboration fosters project sustainability post-WE-RISE. In fact, the collaboration is so strong that one Woreda Technical Team disclosed to TANGO that some Woreda managers question the motives of Technical Team members for spending inordinate amounts of their time working with SOS Sahel on WE RISE activities. The zone and woreda teams ranked their partnership with SOS Sahel and CARE to be the most satisfying of all the NGOs operating in Sidama for these reasons:

- Clearly defined project activities;
- Clearly delineated roles and responsibilities in collaborative efforts;
- Meeting field staff often to generate solutions to project problems;
- Maintaining close working relationships;
- Transparency in sharing resource and activity information, including quarterly budgets;
- Heightened consciousness and awareness of issues affecting women, especially GBV;
- Appropriate and effective training regimens;
- WE RISE explicitly targets women;
- VSLA participation is slowly changing household division of labour; and
- The impact of WE RISE activities on the participating households and communities.

Zone office representatives as well as *Woreda* Technical Teams commended WE RISE and SOS Sahel for devising their programme strategy to coincide with the GoE Transformation Plan and Woreda development plans. The collaborative effort mentioned above has helped.

Monitoring: Technical team members regularly accompany WE RISE field officers and the M&E officer to the sites – two of the eight or nine *kebeles* in the woreda – to conduct joint monitoring by visiting project participants, discussing issues and problems, and monitoring progress, adopting the community scorecard format prepared by the WE RISE M&E team. CARE initially trained SOS M&E and field staff on the application of community scorecards to process and outcome monitoring. Different types of stakeholders, including service providers as well as project participants, provide input into the scorecard grading process. There is a feedback process that culminates in an Action Plan. The team returns to their offices to discuss lessons learnt and devise strategies relating to WE RISE activities. The CARE and SOS Sahel monitoring approach also includes quarterly reviews that try to involve higher level *woreda* officials, and finally annual reviews that may involve regional officials as well as woreda and zone offices in collaboration with CARE and SOS Sahel to review progress and devise adjustments and modifications to project approaches if needed. The biggest issue to daunt joint exercises remains the payment of per diem for government staff. Government offices are also plagued by high rates of turnover.

Women's Affairs and SMFI: Through WE RISE, SOS Sahel and CARE have maintained excellent working relationships with all of the offices at the zone and woreda levels. It was clear to the evaluation team, and confirmed by other KI participants, however, that the *Woreda Women's Affairs Offices* remain woefully underutilized, under-budgeted, weak, and floundering. They need enhanced support to be able to fulfil their mandate, support programming efforts like WE RISE to promote women's empowerment within highly patriarchal social, economic and cultural contexts, and sustain such programme approaches. The SMFI office remains the most difficult office in Sidama Zone with which to partner. The MFI strategy is currently far too rigid and unaccommodating to the credit needs of the types of clients – poor vulnerable households including female-headed households who even lack access to land, as well as collectives such as Production, Processing or Marketing Groups in need of capital to invest and expand their small businesses – to offer a fulfilling partnership.

6. Conclusions

Four years into the inception of WE RISE in Ethiopia, CARE and its implementing partner SOS Sahel have successfully achieved the goal – “*Improved Food Security, Income, and Resilience for Chronically Food Insecure Rural Women through their social and economic empowerment*” – of this highly ambitious project. Designed, developed, and implemented within a highly patriarchal social-cultural context where women's access to and control over productive assets and resources have been highly constricted, WE RISE has successfully if modestly undertaken and realized progress toward attaining the simultaneous empowerment of women economically and socially. This is an important project for Sidama women,

In order to achieve this goal within its theory of change, the WE RISE Ethiopia team has successfully and appropriately devised and addressed three change outcomes or objectives. WE RISE may have seen its most unambiguous positive progress through Change Outcome

1. Sidama WE RISE households have indeed increased their household productive assets and resources; women have more control over household assets and resources; and WE RISE households are substantially more resilient to climate and unnatural shocks than they were four years previously. To this effect, WE RISE VSLA participating members have increased their skills, knowledge, and confidence, thereby improving participating women's **agency**.

Depending on the institution in question, several of the formal and informal institutions at the community, *kebele*, and *woreda* levels appear more responsive to women's priorities and accountable to upholding their rights – change outcome 2. Participation in VSLA, RUSACCO, and SAA groups is slowly altering women's structural involvement and engagement in community affairs, thereby affecting structural relations and patterns. Although male household heads continue to control the most important household resources and assets and usually but not always have final decision-making power and male *kebele* leaders continue to dominate community decision-making, household and public community relationships are changing, resulting in large part from increased female leadership and active participation in VSLAs; these trends are slowly shifting the **structures** that influence women's choices.

The project has successfully commenced the protracted struggle to overcome and alter the patriarchal structures, agency and social relations to allow CFIRW to live their lives within cultural and social contexts where norms and attitudes better support their individual and collective aspirations and opportunities – change outcome 3. WE RISE has contributed mightily to the long march toward women's empowerment in Sidama, Ethiopia. Although this struggle remains in its incipient stages, WE RISE has worked closely with local government and non-government partners to institute and mobilize appropriate group structures and alliances to promote social and economic issues relating to women's empowerment. The project has contributed toward reducing gender-based violence and harmful practices such as FGM, rape, and early marriage, thereby improving and fostering more productive **relations** between women and men within the household and community. Women value the relatively newfound relationships fostered within the VSLAs in particular, as well as the proactive community engagement of recently formed SAAs, citing the groups as a valuable form of social support, solidarity, and social capital.

Female and male participants overwhelmingly perceive that their households have improved their wellbeing after participating in WE-RISE activities.

WE RISE's most relevant and impactful project activities in the Sidama, Ethiopia context included the formation, strengthening, and mobilization of collectives in the form of VSLAs and RUSACCOs, which have built women's capacity and participation in IGAs, and, during the second half of the project, the development and mobilization of SAAs, which have addressed harmful traditional practices begun to remove some cultural barriers that block women's participation in formal and informal institutions and obstruct their decision-

making capacity and encouraged women and men to discuss gendered relations, roles, and divisions of labour within Sidama households and communities.

Improved Food Security: Over the past four years, WE RISE households have experienced an improvement in their food security, including an increase in household dietary diversity and women's intra-household access to food. Women are increasingly eating their meals together with their husbands, consuming the same food items on a daily basis as well as during special meals.

Table 39: WE RISE Baseline to Endline results for Impact Indicators			
WE-RISE Goal: To improve food security, income and resilience for chronically food insecure rural women through their social and economic empowerment.			
Impact Indicators ^A	Point Estimate		
	BL	EL	
Food & Nutrition Security			
IM 1.1: Mean household dietary diversity scores	4.1	4.6	***
IM 1.2: Mean women's intra-household food access	3.4	4.5	***
Livelihoods Resilience			
IM 1.3: Coping strategies index	26.7	8.6	***
IM 1.4: % households adopting negative coping strategies in past 3 months	80.9	35.9	***
IM 1.5: % households using adaptation strategies to reduce the impact of future shocks	71.2	72.7	
IM 1.6: Mean asset index (including agricultural land)	98.9	144.6	***
Economic Poverty Reduction			
IM 1.7: % households with non-agriculture income source	22.1	33.8	***
IM 1.8: % households with 3 or more income sources	24.5	75.7	***
IM 1.9: % households with savings	40.6	82.9	***
IM 1.10: % female loan sources accessed through VSLAs	9.9	71.5	***
Women's Empowerment			
IM 1.11: Women's 5 domains of empowerment score	55.3	59.0	**

Statistically different from baseline at the 10% (*) , 5%(**) or 1%(***) levels.
^A Detailed sample size and disaggregation provided in indicator specific tables

Increased Incomes: WE RISE households have also successfully diversified their income sources, as measured by earning income from three or more sources, which is now the case for more than three-quarters of WE-RISE participating households. Participation in WE RISE activities, such as sheep or goat rearing and fattening, chick rearing, honey production or other activities is an essential factor largely explaining enhanced household income diversity. Female-headed households have also increased their non-agricultural income, through their engagement in some form of small business activity promoted through WE RISE, including beekeeping and honey production, small ruminant raising and fattening, and

poultry production. The relatively few women involved in poultry production activities – this activity is particularly popular with scope for expansion – have not only diversified their household diet by adding nutritious eggs, they have used the income from egg and poultry sales to purchase other forms of livestock.

Enhanced Resilience: Food and income shortages have declined for Sidama WE RISE households during the last four years, according to survey participants. The CSI tool, which offers a powerful indicator of resilience, signals that WE RISE households have successfully weathered shocks to resist engaging in harmful or negative coping strategies. CSI score differences between female- and male-headed households have become negligible, a very encouraging finding. Households are also currently saving at twice the rate reported at the baseline, another indicator of resilience. Participation in VSLA activities has proven to be instrumental in accounting for this very substantial change in savings behaviour. Despite their relatively small savings amounts in the VSLA, participation in a savings institution has introduced a newfound savings culture, which is now widely adopted by project participants. VSLA group participation has also encouraged more households to increase their ability to access credit, given the dearth of financial services with attractive lending terms. RUSACCO and VSLA loans have allowed women to invest in small livestock and other IGAs. VSLA group participation exposed women and men to information about earning income as well as gender equality.

Women's Empowerment: Women participating in the WE-RISE project have experienced a slight increase in their empowerment, but Sidama women's empowerment indicators, which have been measured and analysed within an extremely patriarchal social, cultural, and economic environment in Sidama, Ethiopia, remain relatively low, despite the introduction of a very powerful tool, the Social Analysis and Action approach. The SAA process has encouraged community women and men to discuss, reflect, and enable shifting behaviour patterns toward more equitable gender relations, increased sharing of gender roles, and breaking down negative cultural practices. WE RISE has adopted SAA to tackle patriarchal social norms and relationships and begin the process of transforming gender roles and promoting women's empowerment and inclusion as well as addressing negative traditional practices that subjugate women. SAA is a powerful, transformational, tool for building awareness around gender perceptions based on socio-cultural traditions.

The SAA process has begun to redefine female and male relations and roles. Gender-based violence is slowly dissipating throughout the WE RISE *kebeles*. The SAA mobilization process has complemented GoE initiatives against early marriage, female genital cutting and polygamy. Paralegals trained by the project successfully facilitated discussions aimed at publicizing women's rights, especially the need to combat harmful practices by broaching once-forbidden subjects of gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, polygamy, early marriage, and rape. Polygamous marriages have apparently declined. On the other hand, FGM remains intractable.

Sidama WE RISE women have increasingly enjoyed a degree of economic empowerment but lagged in their social, cultural, or political empowerment. VSLA activities have undoubtedly contributed to women's increased participation in household income and expenditure decision-making, the only empowerment domain indicator to show a dramatic increase over the life of the project. VSLA formation – a total of 621 across the three *woredas* – has served as an excellent entry point for other WE RISE activities and women participants offer positive role models in Sidama communities. The integration of SAA and VSLA activities and participation has greatly contributed to enhanced community discourse about patriarchal roles, relationships, and practices, including some negative cultural practices. Women cite their VSLA involvement as a gateway toward more equitable household decision-making.