

Economic participation of women and girls in rural Ethiopia (2010-13)¹

Lilli Loveday



Successful businesswoman in Somodo



Women working at Aze Debo'a coffee plant

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the evidence of women and girls' economic participation from the data made in twenty rural communities studied first in 1995 and subsequently in 2003 and in 2010-2013. Thanks to WIDE's longitudinal and cross-sectoral nature, processes that may have brought changes in women's and girls' economic activities are analysed within the evolving community and broader contexts, which allows to show how economic opportunities for women and girls interlink and interact with other changes. Furthermore, as the introductory chapter outlines, the data allows for synchronic case-based comparisons between different types of communities, so as to analyse what factors were significant in influencing change related to women and girls' economic participation in different community contexts, as well as looking at individual experiences within the communities.

Thus on the one hand, the data highlights significant commonalities of experience across different groups of women and communities, and broad trends in the diversity of activities being undertaken. On the other hand, looking at individual women's experiences what was striking was the multiplicity of factors influencing the type of activities they undertook, the reasons for engaging in some activities and not in others, as well as their relative economic success. As such, I have structured this chapter to explore some of the commonalities and trends, as well as to highlight key factors influencing women and girls' economic engagement, including the impact of different interventions aimed at improving livelihoods, or more generally promoting gender equality.

In doing so, this chapter presents evidence supporting a number of broad findings, namely that: (1) there was an expansion and diversification of women's and girls' economic participation; (2) a

¹ The author would like to express sincere thanks to Dr Emebet Mulugeta, Associate Professor at Addis Ababa University and Director of Nia Centre for Children and Family Development, for the very useful feedback reviewing the draft paper which led to this book chapter. The author would also like to thank Catherine Dom for providing considerable oversight, guidance and input during the process of undertaking the analysis and drafting this chapter.

unique combination of community-level (economic and social) and individual-level factors influenced economic participation, and access to new opportunities was driven largely by broader infrastructural developments as well as individual/household wealth/access to capital; (3) women's and girls' economic participation and shifting social perceptions of women's roles were interlinked in a two-way process whereby they could mutually reinforce one another; however (4) weaknesses in livelihoods interventions meant progress was more limited than might have been possible.

The evidence and discussion also forms the basis for a number of policy suggestions aimed to further strengthen women's and girls' economic participation and in this way, contribute both to realising wider gender equity and women's empowerment objectives, and the broader Government goal of transformation of Ethiopia. The evidence is presented in four main sections: the first considers the types and range of activities women and girls were engaged in, looking at the 1995 and the 2010-13 data and drawing together broad trends; the second considers women's and girl's economic participation in the light of both community and individual characteristics; the third looks at interventions supporting livelihoods; and the fourth considers the broader gender equity drive and the importance of changing perceptions and role models in guiding transformation. Conclusions and policy considerations are presented in the final section of the chapter.

Expanding economic opportunities, continued reproduction responsibilities

In this section, I first present a short summary of the key activities in which women/girls were engaged in 1995. The next part of the section presents an overview of the trends in reported participation in different categories of activities based on comparison of the 2010-13 and 1995 data. Given the focus of this chapter, the emphasis is on income generating activities, but I also seek to understand how engagement in these interacted with and affected women's and girls' non-income producing activities. The 2010-13 data enabled a classification of activities by type (see box below) with key sub-categories and two 'sectoral' groups defined, namely farm/farm-related and non-farm. Although it does not allow such detailed classification, the 1995 data provided the basis upon which to assess what had changed and to consider what trends in women's and girls' economic participation were emerging between the periods. In turn, the comparison is indicative not only of what has changed for women, but also of wider, structural changes taking place across Ethiopia – and how women have fitted into and contributed to these.

Box 1: Categorisation of women's activities in 2010-13

Activities were grouped by type into the following ten broad categories: own account agricultural activities for income; food/drink production for sale; petty trade (natural, agricultural, livestock products and goods); bigger scale trade of agricultural products (e.g. wholesale trading); small businesses (shops, restaurants, cafes, tea rooms, bars, beauty salons/hair dressers); PSNP/FFW labour; daily labour on private farms; other daily labour; local domestic work for other households; local industrial employment; and other activities (e.g. cooperatives, crafts/skilled work).

Migration was recorded as a category, where it was mentioned in relation specifically to women/girls' employment opportunities.

Across sub-categories, two sectoral groups can be distinguished: farm/farm related, and non-farm (noting, however, that at times there were interactions between the two). The literature also uses an 'off-farm' category. Off-farm activities include farming activities but not on one's own land (e.g. daily or wage labour on other farmers' land or commercial farms) and other activities. Non-farm activities exclude farming activities.

Activities undertaken in 1995

Overall, in 1995, women and girls recorded spending more time working than men or boys. Women in all villages were engaged in agricultural activities, with this reported to be rising in some villages (e.g. Harresaw (Eastern Tigray)), as well as their engagement in non-farm activities. In all cases, women were reported to be responsible for domestic management, including collecting water, wood and dung; and girls started taking on domestic responsibilities at about the age of 8 and by the age of 12 were usually assisting in all of their mothers' tasks. Some women reported having authority to decide on the use of their own income - mainly as long as purchases were made for household use, e.g. salt, coffee, spices; and there were instances where women had control of assets/purchases (e.g. women controlled dairy production income in Gara Godo (Wolayta)). However, household control of income was predominantly with male household heads, and in most sites, women were not regarded as equal partners in household decision-making and management. This disparity seemed to be more prominent in vulnerable sites, and there were cases of intra-household conflict over the use of resources (e.g. Kormargefia (North Shewa)). Improved technologies were reportedly benefiting some women in some communities in terms of them reducing time spent on some domestic tasks (e.g. use of improved stoves in Adele Keke (East Hararge); a mill in Sirba (East Shewa)). There were very few mentions of interventions potentially supporting women's economic participation: in Turufe (not far from Shashemene) women wanted interventions that would help them to engage in non-farm activities, in Adado (Gedeo) there was an interest in ways to decrease fertility, in Aze Debo'a (Kambata) and Do'oma (Gofa) women wanted a grain mill or that it would be repaired, respectively.

Farm/farm related: The range of farm-based activities undertaken was wide – including some responsibility for garden plots, and work in threshing, weeding, and harvesting. Women played an important role in harvesting (e.g. maize and beans in Korodegaga (Arsi)), but in other places were not involved in harvesting certain crops (e.g. maize and onions in Adele Keke). Ploughing was generally considered to be a male activity, although some changes were recorded in Tigray (with women ploughing during the war in the absence of men). Women in many sites were reported to undertake a lot of the work in rearing livestock (girls herding alongside boys e.g. in Adele Keke and Shumsheha (North Wello); women doing the milking in various sites such as Geblen (Eastern Tigray), Girar (Gurage), Do'oma (Gofa), and Sirba).

There were mentions of women being involved in wage labour in only three communities, namely Dinki in North Shewa, Harresaw in Tigray and Sirba in East Shewa. In Sirba, landless women were also employed to prepare food for wage labourers (earning around 15 birr a month). Women reported being paid less than men in Harresaw (women were paid 5 birr whilst men were paid 7 birr). However, in Dinki, men and women were reportedly paid the same.

Non-farm: Women were involved in traditional occupations, such as spinning, basket-making, and making/selling local food and drinks, and trading items such as eggs, milk and butter. They were engaged in marketing, which was sometimes seasonal (e.g. Adado (Gedeo)) and in *enset* areas they sold *enset*, oil, butter and salt (e.g. Imdibir/Girar). In some sites, women sold dung cakes, and grain (but only in small amounts) (Sirba). Alcohol production was an important area of work, and was considered to have expanded – although in some sites religion was said to reduce demand (e.g. Aze Debo'a (Kambata and mostly Protestant)), and in others it was a more recent activity (e.g. food/drink sales in Adado). Some women were potters and spun cotton in their 'spare time', seasonally or year-round (e.g. Girar).

Activities in 2010-13 and broad trends of change

By 2010-13, a number of notable changes were evident from the data. Women continued to be significantly involved in agriculture, but strikingly an increased number of women were reportedly involved in daily labour on other farms (in twelve communities versus three in 1995), at the same time as being engaged on their own, home-based agricultural activities. Work in daily labour was often linked to the introduction or expansion of irrigated farming, and could be seasonal in relation to periods of crop production, harvesting (e.g. Adado, Oda Haro (West Shewa)), and coffee berry picking (Somodo (Jimma)). In various sites, women involved in daily labour were reported to have been paid a lower rate than men for the same tasks (e.g. in Yetmen (East Gojam), Do'oma, Shumsheha; in Harresaw women were paid 30-40 birr/day and men 50-60 birr/day for work on irrigation).

Women's own farm activities in 2010-13 were still broad and involved livestock care (e.g. Dinki, Harresaw, Adele Keke, see picture), terrace-building, weeding and harvesting. The traditional restrictions on women ploughing applied, and were noted as being a particular barrier in Geblen. It was not always explicit whether women's activities were directly income producing and/or whether any income generated was for the woman herself or if it contributed to the household income/supported the husband's income.



Young woman tending a cow. Adele Keke

However, there were a number of cases where own-farm activities were linked more to women/girls generating their own income when they were involved in the whole process of production through to sale. 'Own account' activities were mentioned across a total of twelve sites and included chicken rearing for sale (e.g. Dinki, Yetmen, Oda Dawata (Arsi)), cattle ownership and/or fattening for sale (e.g. Adele Keke, Aze Debo'a, Gelcha (East Shewa), Gara Godo, Kormargefia), and crop or vegetable harvesting for sale (e.g. Shumsheha, Adado, Turufe (West Arsi)).

The comparison with 1995 data highlights a reported expansion of opportunities for women in the non-farm sector. Often arising from context-specific investments, work opportunities in local industrial employment, not reported in 1995, had emerged as significant in 2010-13. Female employment was reported in flower farms (e.g. Sirba and Turufe), factories (e.g. a shiro processing plant in Kormargefia, factories near Sirba, and a coffee processing plant in Aze Debo'a), in seedling nurseries (e.g. Dinki) and at a flour factory and an agricultural research institute near Oda Dawata.

In 2010-13, there was significant variation across communities in terms of the extent of trading undertaken by women. Small-scale/petty trading (of commodities such as fruit, coffee, salt/herbs/garlic etc.) was reported in almost all communities. Women's involvement in larger-scale trading (e.g. more significant quantities or wholesale trading) was expanding, and was reported in six communities in 2010-13 whilst in 1995 all larger-scale trading was undertaken by men. Adele Keke was one example where in 2011/12 there were women engaged reportedly with success in large-scale milk-trading (see chapter on economic success). However, there were

also counter-indications with milk trading reportedly being ‘taken over’ by men in Kormargefia (linked with the increased income potential of this activity). Similarly, women producing and selling *chat* was reported in 1995 in Adele Keke, but by 2010-13 these activities were exclusively male – as *chat* had become a more profitable cash crop over the period. Roadside trade, linked to infrastructural development, had emerged as an activity in a few communities (e.g. Turufe, Luqa (South Omo), and Sirba). There were mentions of some constraints, and the data indicate that successful year-round trading was linked to having access to storage (e.g. women in Sirba wanting to store as much as possible to wait until prices of grain would rise), and to a degree of financial stability (e.g. a successful female trader in Sirba having a number of different income sources).

Women were increasingly involved in running small businesses (e.g. teashops, restaurants, bars, and some hair/beauty salons), reported in thirteen communities. This was a growing area of activity, which in some instances had been facilitated by access to credit or loans (e.g. Geblen, Shumsheha, Harresaw), and was considered to be ‘important’ for income generation in six of the communities. There were some distinctions between communities in terms of the types of businesses women were involved in. For instance, women ‘controlled’ shops/teashops in Geblen, whilst in Shumsheha men were reported to normally be the ones running shops. In 2010-13, the production of alcoholic drinks continued to be widespread: women in twelve communities reported engagement (versus eleven in 1995), with income from production significant for some in both 1995 and 2010-13 (e.g. Turufe, Yetmen and Kormargefia). In Oda Dawata, production of malt and *areqe* was regarded to have improved women’s economic status. Yet, in two southern communities (Aze Debo’a and Do’oma) the activity had disappeared by 2010-13, a shift which was likely linked to the rise of Protestantism (forbidding the consumption of alcoholic drinks) in this area. There were also indications that this activity was not considered appropriate for ‘respectable women’ (e.g. in Kormargefia drink making was reportedly ‘shameful’ and not an activity for women with husbands to undertake).

Engagement in women’s co-operatives was also more widespread in 2010-13 (e.g. a spinning cooperative in Gara Godo, milk/irrigation cooperatives in Adele Keke), though with varying degrees of success. In many food insecure communities, women/girls participated in government/NGO food/cash-for-food work. Whereas women moving to cities and/or abroad for work was mentioned in only three communities in 1995 (Yetmen in East Gojjam, Shumsheha in North Wello when whole households would move seasonally, and Harresaw to Eritrea), women migration occurred in all of them by 2010-13, with varying patterns and varying degrees of importance (see chapter on migration). It could be temporary/seasonal (e.g. Turufe to flower farms), or linked to factory/daily labour work (Kormargefia, Oda Haro); women migrating in urban areas worked as domestic workers, in hospitality services and in commercial sex work (e.g. Geblen). Female migration abroad was reported in nine communities – with the majority being for work as housemaids in Gulf-state countries.

Traditional craft activities such as spinning and basketry seemed to have declined – with the exception of Girar where pottery, previously frowned upon and emerging in 1995, had become widespread in 2010 and was especially important for poor girls and women. The decline may have arisen as a result of women and girls being engaged in a wider range of other activities in 2010-13 than in 1995, especially in the better connected and/or more urbanised communities. The replacement of pots with plastic and generally competition from imported goods may also have contributed to this trend (Pankhurst 2000).

Regarding employment there were mentions of women working in government paid positions as HEWs, teachers, health post workers, Development Agents or vets etc., but these women were not necessarily from the community itself.

Amidst the broadly expanding economic opportunities reported, there were also counter-indications of economic un(der) employment. Increased migration for work pointed to limitations in local employment options; land scarcity limited youth employment opportunities, as noted e.g. in Geblen, Girar, Aze Debo'a; and there were instances of closure of industrial sites with a direct impact on individuals' employment status, e.g. a metal recycling factory closing in Gelcha. Furthermore, despite some reported minor changes in the division of reproductive labour, women and girls across all communities still reported undertaking a significant portion of household tasks (e.g. child care, food preparation, water fetching etc.). Time spent on household activities often competed with other tasks, and some women reported that their overall workload had increased (e.g. Dinki, Yetmen, Aze Debo'a) and that they were now 'doing everything' (Shumsheha). Girls' school enrolment often competed with household responsibilities, and – from mothers' perspectives – reduced available time to assist with household tasks.

The WIDE evidence highlighted above resonates with trends documented in a range of studies and policy documents which suggest a good deal of continuity in the importance of agricultural activities in rural communities - such as for instance a recent publication noting that 75% of the population was still employed in the agriculture sector in 2013, and that there had been only a marginal increase in off-farm opportunities in rural areas (Lenhardt et al. 2015). However, the WIDE evidence also clearly suggests significant change, with a sense that new opportunities had emerged generally and for women. Many women in the WIDE communities combined domestic responsibilities, 'own farm' activities, and increasing economic participation in a range of other activities in and outside of the farming sector, rather than wholly transitioning to non-farm economic income sources – a trend less well captured in studies based on more macro data. That said, the WIDE evidence also suggests considerable potential for further development of the non-farm sector in rural areas – as also noted in several other chapters of this volume (on urbanisation, inequalities and economic success). This, in turn, resonates with recent studies highlighting the relative underdevelopment of Ethiopia's Rural Non-Farm Enterprise sector (e.g. World Bank 2016), and that for instance, only 24% of rural households owned non-farm enterprises in 2012 in Ethiopia compared to 61.7% in Niger (Habtamu Fuje and Lire Ersado, draft, 2016)².

Factors influencing women's economic participation

Looking at a number of contextual factors, I consider their influence on what things women and girls were engaged in. For every woman/girl, economic participation was influenced by a unique combination of community-level economic factors, social norms and changes in these; as well as individual characteristics, notably of social status, and access to assets and resources. The WIDE data illustrate how this multiplicity of factors produced a wide range of individual experiences, which I summarise in the sections below beginning with a presentation of community factors before considering individual factors.

² This analysis is part of a broader body of work undertaken by the World Bank (with external funding), based on data of a longitudinal Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey (ESS) of which the first two rounds were completed in 2012 and 2014.

Community economic context: infrastructural developments and other factors

The data highlight that the wider community context was significant for the types of income-generating opportunities available to women: with opportunities often connected to investments, and found in communities with good growth and/or good roads, well-connected to markets, and/or nearing relatively large and fast developing urban centres (see chapter on urbanisation). This again, supports findings from country-wide analyses which note that poor access to markets, financial services, transportation and electricity were reported as key constraints (and conversely, good access a catalyst) for growth of rural non-farm enterprises (see notably World Bank 2016, Habtamu Fuje and Lire Ersado, 2016, and CSA 2017).

The analysis indicates that a number of structural change factors were instrumental in increasing women's and girls' economic participation. Notably, in communities where the expansion of irrigation was enhancing opportunities for crop production, there were associated economic opportunities for women especially in daily labour (e.g. Korodegaga (Arsi), Do'oma (Gamo), Harresaw (Eastern Tigray), Shumsheha (North Wello); emerging in Yetmen (East Gojam), but not in Gelcha despite the irrigation potential). Other examples included increased opportunities for irrigated *chat* cultivation in Adele Keke (East Hararge).

The introduction/expansion of new cash crops in some of the sites also provided economic or trade opportunities for women (e.g. larger-scale trading of coffee in Somodo (Jimma), and trading beans in Oda Dawata (Arsi)). In Luqa the introduction of sesame was beneficial for some women (e.g. a successful female household head producing irrigated crops, including sesame). However, as noted earlier, most cash crop trading continued to be dominated by men (e.g. large-scale coffee trading in Adado (Gedeo), potatoes in Oda Dawata) or 'taken over' by men (e.g. *chat* in Adele Keke, milk in Kormargefia).

Processes of industrialisation were slowly expanding, bringing new non-skilled wage labour opportunities for women and girls. However, such opportunities, linked to inward local/nearby investment, were primarily found in sites which were closer to urban centres and had good road connectivity (e.g. Habesha beer factory, private dairy farm, shiro processing factories in/near Kormargefia (North Shewa); other examples in Oda Dawata, Turufe (West Arsi), Sirba (East Shewa)). Improvements to community roads and connectedness, including access to markets, were reported to have contributed positively to local economies and therefore, indirectly, to women's and girls' economic participation as well, to different degrees.

Industrial-type wage labour opportunities were less frequent in more remote and/or difficult to access sites. There were a number of such sites where inward investment was very limited (Geblen) or non-existent (Oda Haro (West Shewa)). However, there were also exceptions linked to specific activities such as coffee production although even for those, the pattern was idiosyncratic. For instance, there were private coffee plants in two sites: Aze Debo'a (Kambata) and Gara Godo (Wolayta) despite their relative remoteness, and in Aze Debo'a these provided the biggest off-farm employment opportunity for women; but none in Somodo, also growing coffee, in spite of it being a better connected site.

In all cases, however, where there were economic investments they were introducing new employment opportunities, although it was not always clear from the data the extent to which women had access to such opportunities. Targeted employment for women was noted in some instances, for example it was reported that local factories in Oda Dawata had affirmative action policies towards female Grade 10 leavers and degree completers, and local flower farms and factories in Sirba supported female employment creation. However, there were no mentions of

women holding 'senior' positions (unlike, for example, a male coffee plant manager in Gara Godo; a male seedling nursery head in Dinki; and a male coffee union manager in Adado).

The ease of connection of a community with the outside world also influenced trading opportunities. There were no larger scale trading activities carried out by women in communities that were more remote and poorly accessible (Korodegaga, Harresaw, Geblen, Dinki and Adado). Conversely, there were reports of roadside trading linked to infrastructure development/improvement.

In Luqa for instance, a recently started activity was the sale of soft drinks and beer from a roadside tent along the recently tarred road to Jinka – still on a small scale as this development was very new (see picture of the 'London Café').

Connectedness and proximity to urban centres was also reported to provide access to other economic opportunities. For instance, in Shumsheha, close to Lalibela, there were opportunities at or linked to the Lalibela airport, situated on what had been Shumsheha's land.

Conversely, in a number of communities, poor road accessibility was raised as a key factor limiting economic opportunities, including for women.



London café, roadside, Luqa

That said, there were no reports of women engaged in larger-scale trading activities in a number of well-connected communities, suggesting that, whilst good external access to and from the community was necessary it did not automatically lead to women engaging in this type of activities. Other factors also played a role, such as lack of or limited range of commodities to trade. As I further discuss below, social factors were also particularly significant.

There were some links between different forms of community urbanisation and the relative importance of types of activities undertaken by women and girls – albeit with idiosyncrasies. For instance, there were no women running small businesses in Dinki and Korodegaga, the only two communities with no form of urbanisation (in 2010). Women running small businesses were found in remote but internally urbanising communities, where this may have been a response to increased demand for local 'urban' services as the community was far from bigger urban centres (e.g. Geblen); and in peri-urban communities where people may have found it convenient to access more easily services also found in the nearby towns (e.g. Shumsheha, Turufe). The production of food and drinks for sale was also more notable in peri-urban communities, with four out of the five communities in this category reporting engagement in this activity, and in communities with a slightly larger urban centre. So for instance, alcoholic drink production was explicitly reported to be for urban consumption in Turufe (near Shashemene); and in Yetmen it was associated with prostitution and found in the community's urban centre.

In 2010/13, not all sites had electricity or mobile phone reception and where these amenities were present, coverage was often only partial. Whilst mobile phone reception was considered generally helpful in e.g. facilitating trading, there were more direct links between access to electricity and a number of specific activities undertaken by women. All of the communities

where small businesses were said to be flourishing had electricity in the areas where these were found, and there was no mention of such activities in the seven communities with no electricity at all. For example, in Gara Godo women engaged in owning or running restaurants/salons in the electrified centre, and in some places the presence of light had enabled shops/salons to stay open and trade later. The presence of electricity had also enabled the use of technologies reducing the time women spent on reproductive activities (e.g. grinding mills), with potential repercussions for economic participation.

Lastly, with regard to access to land, women's rights to land reportedly had been enhanced in principle. However, in practice they continued to face constraints and limitations, and there were widespread reports of rising youth landlessness in most communities, this being linked in turn with youth un(der)employment, extended parental dependence, and difficulties establishing an independent household. Land scarcity continued to matter mainly for young men's economic prospects, more than for young women: but there were indirect effects as young men's marriageability was delayed, with some young women reportedly migrating for work as a result of this. These aspects are further considered in the chapters on youth transitions and on migration.

Individual factors: wealth and access to capital

Within communities, women were differentiated by their wealth, age and status in the household³. In this section I show that each of these factors had some influence on the activities in which different categories of women and girls were engaged in. The WIDE data also shows that whilst different individual factors interacted in complex ways, wealth was the most important. Patterns were not always clear within each community; however, looking across all of them there were distinctions in some of the activities undertaken by women and girls of different wealth statuses. Wealth influenced both the types as well as the diversity and relative success of the activities undertaken (see chapters on inequality and economic success).⁴

Wealth status

Looking across income groups, the very poor women had limited options and were often reliant on support of others, both informally (including begging in e.g. Dinki, Geblen) and through formal safety-nets. In contrast, poor women reported engagement in the widest range of types of activities (all except larger-scale trading). However, for them, economic participation was often linked to necessity and a matter of survival. For example, in Shumsheha it was reported that poor women were more likely to try out different activities and in Oda Haro they were especially likely to take on a wide range of activities. Women in 'more comfortable' economic positions were often not required to seek an income, and there were cases where wealthier women were less economically active in terms of engaging in their 'own' income producing activities (e.g. in Yetmen). However, in some instances (perhaps linked to the presence of more opportunities in these communities), such wealthy women from richer backgrounds engaged in a wide range of activities, facilitated by access to capital, and when they did so they were often

³ i.e. whether they were 'dependent' or 'independent' members of their household. 'Dependent' female household members include daughters still at their parents' house, and married women. Women heads of household are 'independent' member of their household.

⁴ Wealth status was as reported by the individual interviewed (or the Research Officer) and statuses were not strictly defined across categories.

able to achieve quite significant success (see chapter on economic success). Furthermore, whilst poor women were burdened by taking on economic activities alongside domestic work (e.g. in Adado), richer women/households were able to hire domestic maids to support household responsibilities (Somodo, Yetmen).

Wealthier women were able to invest in income-generating activities (e.g. larger scale trading, running small businesses). Petty trade was important across wealth groups, but with higher value products traded more commonly (though not exclusively) by rich women (e.g. coffee, crops, milk or butter); lower value products traded by middle wealth women (e.g. vegetables, see picture) and poor women (livestock feed), and the lowest value products by destitute/very poor women (grass/wood/dung cakes). In Kormargefia, for example, rich women sold milk/butter; middle wealth women sold eggs; and poor women sold dung cakes and firewood.



Selling vegetables on market, Harresaw

Larger-scale trading was only undertaken by wealthier women and reported in five communities (e.g. of coffee and crops in Somodo, and milk in Oda Haro). Similarly, running small-scale businesses was more frequently reported amongst rich women (in nine communities), some of whom seemed to have larger-scale businesses (e.g. hairdressing/ beauty salon for the wife of a rich farmer of Aze Debo'a) – with only three communities where it was mentioned as an activity undertaken by poor women (retail shops in Dinki, Geblen and Adele Keke). The distinctions in types and scale of trading were linked with access to capital, and being able to purchase products from wholesalers (e.g. the wife of a rich man in Gara Godo buying *teff*/maize and coffee for re-sale), as well as demand for the product. Women in richer households also had a degree of financial stability to be able to cope with periods of no or low trading, and/or access to assets such as land and the means to grow products for sale (e.g. rich farmers' wives in Sirba selling crops).

Very poor/destitute and poor women were more frequently engaged in 'hand-to-mouth' activities (e.g. trading grass/firewood). Poorer women lacking land or with land but lacking labour engaged more often in daily labour/wage labour activities in the farm and non-farm sectors – reported in twelve communities, including collecting peppers in Do'oma (poor), preparing *enset* in Somodo (poor) and cleaning cattle houses in Sirba (very poor). Whilst women from very poor, poor and middle-wealth backgrounds reported engagement in local industrial wage work (e.g. working on the nursery in Dinki, on flower farms in Sirba, and harvesting coffee in Somodo), rich women did not. The pattern was less clear in relation to daily labour in FFW or PSNP: some wealthy women engaged, whilst some destitute/elderly/or women unable to work, reported that they did not have access to this support. Domestic work in other people's households was only mentioned amongst women/girls from poor/very poor backgrounds, though it was likely underreported given that it may have been associated with failing to be more honourably occupied. (See also inequalities chapter)

Status in the household

Although a woman's status in her household had some influence on the type of activities undertaken, this in turn was strongly influenced by household wealth and resources. Ownership or access to assets was an enabling factor (e.g. a woman from Girar (Gurage), selling drinks for an income, whose oxen and cow provided a safety-net) and the lack thereof a strong constraint. Running a business was most commonly reported amongst wives/dependents in wealthier households, and conversely, there were fewer reports of independent female household heads engaged in business activities, aside from a successful female household head in Adado who was running a teashop and selling bread/drink. An exception was the production and sale of alcoholic drinks, a relatively common business activity among 'independent' women which was generally considered as not respectable for married women. Even so, poverty was a more significant factor than dependent/independent status in the household in determining whether a woman undertook this activity or not.

For dependent women, the combination of having access to capital and a degree of financial security was significant, as well as having time available to engage in business activities (e.g. a rich wife running a shop selling consumables in Adele Keke, a rich wife engaged in retail in Gara Godo, and the wife of a couple of successful business people in Somodo). In some instances, it was explicitly said that these activities were facilitated or supported by the woman's husband, for example, the wife of a successful farmer in Aze Debo'a was able to use the household's money to open a shop and beauty salon.

In the same vein, both 'own account' agricultural activities and supporting the household income were mostly done by wives of rich or successful and middle-wealth farmers/businessmen. 'Own account' activities were undertaken by dependent women in nine communities, all of them from rich or middle-wealth households, except a poor wife in Girar who was fattening sheep for sale. In Gelcha, a middle-wealth woman was covering her household's expenses from her successful sheep fattening activities. In Adele Keke a married woman earned an income from selling water from the household compound's water point. In wealthy households, it was common for wives to support the household income through participating in the household's main activity, like a rich farmer's wife in Harresaw who helped with the household's irrigation work and with livestock care, and a rich wife in Adado supporting the household coffee production. However, it was not always evident that women retained control of the income they contributed to the household: whilst in Kormargefia a middle-wealth wife reported controlling the income from her production and sale of dung cakes, in Oda Haro a wife oversaw the production of butter but it was her husband who controlled the income.

There were also cases of wives in poor households engaged exclusively in supporting household activities (e.g. a poor wife in Harresaw). However, more frequently, they were engaged in a range of other activities such as petty trade and daily labour, alongside support to the household activities. For example, a poor wife in Shumsheha supported household activities and at the same time was engaged in daily labour, trading eggs and cotton spinning and had previously been involved in collecting and selling wood. This suggests that in poor households the main activity (farming in most cases) may often not be sufficient to support themselves, and wives had to diversify into other activities. The WIDE evidence suggests, therefore, that women's participation in a wide range of economic activities may be dictated by poverty; and these are then often hand-to-mouth activities generating little income. This in turn resonates with country-wide analyses showing that female-headed households, often poorer than most,

tended to earn less than other households engaged in non-farm activities but at the same time, make a larger part of their total income from these (see e.g. World Bank 2016). That said, macro analyses such as that one and others often overlook the fact that female-headed households are not a homogeneous category. As documented in WIDE, female-headed households include a lot of very poor and vulnerable ones but also some very successful ones (as shown in the chapters on inequalities and on economic success), and others in between.

Age

Wealth and household status, individual access to resources and assets and physical capacity were more significant than age alone in determining the types of activities undertaken by women. Some general patterns were identified, however, with older women more reliant on support from others and less able to engage in PSNP/daily labour activities as a result of physical strength and/or health issues. Economic activities involving work on local industrial sites was more frequently reported by young women/girls. Migration for work was also reportedly more common for young women, for whom it was a way of seeking independence as well as pursuing aspirations for livelihoods beyond farm and local work, sometimes linked to the higher level of education reached by some of them compared to earlier generations (see chapters on education and migration). These types of opportunities were also reported to be less accessible for women with a household to oversee, given their responsibilities at home (e.g. in Turufe, a woman struggled to maintain employment alongside childcare; in Dinki, a young woman with a daughter could not look for employment in urban areas).

Access to assets, labour and capital

Access to assets was a significant determining factor and, conversely, lack of assets often limited women's economic participation. For example, a middle-wealth woman in Girar owned a cow and an ox and was able to sell drinks to increase the household income, with her cattle providing a 'safety net' in case of hardship. In contrast, a very poor dependent woman in Geblen who had no assets and no fertile land was reliant on PSNP and assistance from others for food. Land was a particularly important household level factor. Women without land and any form of capital often ended up trapped in low productivity activities. For instance a poor, dependent woman in Adado with only 0.125 ha of land, who supplemented her household's production for consumption by seeking an income through daily labour activities, reported that despite doing this for three years the profits were not enough to bring about any changes in her life.

Access to labour was also important, especially for female-headed households when the woman was the only adult. Some women who had land but lacked labour sharecropped out (which in some cases increased the household's vulnerability and exposed some to wrongful claims on their land, e.g. in Turufe), and engaged in the same activities as landless women heads of household (daily labour, petty trading, PSNP/FFW labour). Women hiring labour rather than sharecropping were not always better-off as labour could be too costly. For example, a poor independent woman in Adele Keke with good, fertile land had to sell assets to cover labour costs and reported diminishing harvests. However, some women share-cropping out land were reasonably successful, such as a poor independent woman from Oda Dawata who shared the produce with those farming her land, alongside undertaking trading and daily labour activities to supplement her income and who, although poor, was financing children at secondary school.

Access to capital was a significant enabling factor for women from different backgrounds. Some were able to invest and establish activities generating a good income. In Yetmen, a middle-wealth woman reported that her household income had improved because she was able to invest in a donkey to assist with transportation of goods for trading. The wife of a rich man in Aze Debo'a, who was able to open a shop and beauty salon, reported that she was generating good income from this investment and was able to increase the range of products being sold. In some cases, credit schemes enabled women to access capital, but this was not always an available (or desirable) option, and did not always generate successful returns (see more on this later in this chapter).

Combinations of factors

The above analysis suggests that, while there were some patterns in the activities undertaken by women sharing a specific individual characteristic, any one factor in isolation did not determine what women/girls were engaged in. The box below presents contrasting profiles of women with similar wealth and household status but with different access to land, labour, capital etc., to demonstrate how a multiplicity of interacting factors were shaping the type of activities that individual women and girls were undertaking.

Box 2: The diversity of individual experiences⁵

Two poor married women

Kormargefia - 'Own' account agricultural activities (crop production; milk); trading – Positive factors: Rising prices/ profitability; ability to store produce until better time of sale. In the last agricultural season, SZ grew *temej* on 0.25 hectares of the household's land. Her husband ploughed and prepared the land, while she sowed the seed, weeded, harvested and threshed the crop. She produced 10kg and is storing the crop until July when the prices rise. She started crop production because she had trouble affording the costs of salt and coffee. Previously she processed milk to make butter and sold this to generate revenue. Now the price of milk has risen and the household sells the milk. Although in principle the household manages all money together, in practice it is her husband who saves the money in an *iqqub*. Her independent crop production replaces her loss of control over the revenue from butter. She has not received any agricultural extension support.

Adado - Daily labour; petty trading. Negative factor: Small amount of land - The household owns 0.125 ha land on which they grow a little coffee and *enset*, cabbage and maize. AB is involved in processing *enset* into *kocho* on contract for others, and trading flour that she buys in Bule and sells in Adado. She started this three years ago but it is not profitable enough to make any change in their life.

Two poor women heads of household

Adele Keke – Widowed, sharecrops. Negative factors: lack of labour to work own land; no capital - The household condition has deteriorated since FF's husband died. She has a good plot of land, fertile and free of erosion, but there is no active man in the household who can do farm work and her harvests are diminishing. She hires daily labourers. As there is no one to guard her crop in the evening her *chat* has been stolen. Her valuable assets have also been diminishing. She sold livestock to cover the cost of medical treatment for her husband; and gave farmland to a son as marriage gift. Now she no longer has even one ox and she is forced to sharecrop out her land. She also does not have the capital to buy a cow

⁵ To protect the anonymity of the respondents initials have been used instead of names.

or bull and increase her livestock.

Oda Dawata - Petty trading; daily labour on private farms; local 'industrial' work; making dung cakes. Negative factor: Lack of labour for own land - Divorced, has children. The main livelihood of the household is share-cropping (1ha of land); she shares produce and uses any surplus to sell and buy other food items. Land was divided during her divorce but her husband had previously sold assets. Chickens died due to disease. During the harvest season she is involved in grain trading. She also works on other people's farm and at Kulumsa Agricultural Research Centre as a daily labourer, weeding, digging and harvesting potatoes. Kulumsa is about 30 minutes' walk away and they pay her 20 birr/day. Farmers in the community pay 25 birr a day. She also makes dung cakes for other households and they share the income from the sale. She took credit twice: 4,000 birr for trading and other purposes and this year she has taken 5,000 birr for agricultural inputs for next year's production. She currently has 5,000 birr of debt. She trades vegetables (onion, local *gomen*, green pepper, potatoes, and other leaf spices) at the market. She used to pay 2-5 birr market tax, but municipality officials told her that she should pay 100-150 birr in a month for a *medeb*, ensuring her a permanent place, but this is a lot of money and it may prevent her from being able to trade. She gets remittances from her daughters overseas and labour from her other children. All the children except her granddaughter are participating in paid labour and buy some food for the household such as coffee, bread and sugar.

Supporting women's livelihoods: progress alongside shortcomings...

In all communities there were a number of mainstream livelihood-related interventions not necessarily targeting women but to which, in principle, they had access. The most important intervention was the government's agricultural extension services. Others were youth livelihood interventions, women's cooperatives, credit schemes, support for non-farm activities, and the PSNP in the food insecure communities. In half of the communities there were also some women-focused livelihood interventions discussed below, but in the others they were either non-existent (Dinki (North Shewa), Geblen and Harresaw (both in Eastern Tigray)), or said to be very limited (Aze Debo'a (Kambata), Gara Godo (Wolayta), Luqa (South Omo), Do'oma (Gofa), Yetmen (East Gojam), Adado (Gedeo), Kormargefia (North Shewa) and Oda Dawata (Arsi)).

In reality, women/girls were often not reached by livelihood interventions: they faced constraints in accessing the mainstream ones and as just noted, there were very few significant women-focused ones. There was a strong sense that '*not enough*' was being done for women/girls. For example, in Geblen the absence of women-focused interventions was severely criticised by some women, who stressed it was due to '*lack of commitment*' from government structures, despite promises of provision of training in woodwork or pottery. In Oda Dawata, the HEWs talked of '*theoretical ideas from authorities, (but) no practical initiatives to inspire strong women*', whilst in Adado young women and girls expressed frustration that, although there were promises that they would be involved in economic activities '*there was nothing that the government was doing*'. In Aze Debo'a the only women-specific intervention was through an NGO and women/girls expressed the wish that more would be done (e.g. creating jobs for youth). Where such interventions existed, there were issues limiting their effectiveness with poor access in the first instance, and weaknesses in the interventions themselves (e.g. insufficient credit or follow-up). Only in Girar (Gurage) does the data present a different picture, with a range of activities reported by *wereda* officials to have had positive outcomes: there were women's cooperatives, and access to credit had increased to the extent that a quarter of women were said to participate.

Agricultural extension services and women

Despite policy provisions for their inclusion, women farmers were often overlooked by agricultural extension services, as recognised by the Agricultural Transformation Agency (2015). Across communities, advice and inputs were geared towards supporting usually male model farmers, thus not reaching the majority of women. The selectivity of extension advice and support was noted in a number of communities (e.g. in Do'oma, Oda Dawata, Girar). Moreover, the extent to which married women had access to extension services on their own was unclear, as DAs tended to work with the male head of household (noted in e.g. Kormargefia, Oda Dawata and Girar).

However, there were a number of examples of women getting and using advice through the agricultural extension services (e.g. in Sirba, Oda Dawata, and Luqa). These were mostly widows or divorced women, with strong community relations and/or sufficient wealth and capacity in their own right. There were also examples of female-headed households involved in government initiatives alongside male-headed households, such as 53 female-headed households (of the 240 households in total) getting access to irrigated land in Korodegaga (Arsi). There was mention in 2013 of groups in Adado and Oda Haro to be organised under the Agricultural Growth Programme, with a requirement that 40% of beneficiaries should be women - although activities had not yet started.

When women were provided with advice and support, it was often in relation to activities stereotypically seen as 'female', such as women encouraged to establish hen and egg production activities in Somodo (Jimma), and women receiving advice/inputs for vegetable gardening in Kormargefia. On the one hand it is important to acknowledge that these options are often practical – e.g. chicken-keeping is done at home and does not take much time. On the other hand, in some instances there were indications that they hardly met the expectations of some of the women, often the younger and/or more educated ones (e.g. in Somodo).

PSNP and women

Women were said to be given equal opportunities to participate in the PSNP works, and female-headed households were said to be prioritised in several communities. However, women faced issues arising from unadjusted work norms (see Kidist Gebresellassie and Hirut Bekele 2013). In several communities the provision for pregnant and lactating women to be exempted from work and get direct support did not seem to be fully implemented. Moreover, across communities there were several mentions of work being too hard for women and yet nothing was done to address this, even though this is also provided for in theory in the PSNP implementation processes (e.g. by allowing women to work less hours/do smaller quantities of the work at hand, or by better dividing tasks between men and women). For instance, in Geblen 'heavy work' in construction was considered more appropriate for men but was done equally by both men and women.

Even when women were given lighter tasks, participation in public works forced them to make time-related trade-offs that were not necessarily in their best interest – as in the case of a poor woman in Harresaw, who did not have enough time to weed her land properly, which reduced her harvest, but who could not spend time in her fields because it would mean losing her PSNP registration. A number of women noted the time burden and extra workload (e.g. in Geblen). There was limited evidence that PSNP support alone enabled households/women to overcome poverty.

Youth livelihood interventions and women

By and large, young women tended to be bypassed by youth livelihood interventions, and in the few cases of reportedly mixed membership, officials did not even know how many young women were involved.

Activities were either considered traditionally 'male' (such as beekeeping in Geblen, which deterred women from joining, although it reportedly was possible for them to join in Shumsheha, see picture); or young women had limited awareness or were dissuaded/not encouraged to participate (e.g. in male dominated stone or forestry cooperatives in many communities). For example, in Oda Dawata, the youth cooperatives for stone quarrying and forestry/harvesting were all male, although the *kebele* was registering both male and female youth.



Youth group's modern beehives in Shumsheha

In some instances, saving prerequisites made it hard for young women to join, as for instance in Adado where youth groups were being formed under the new 'rural youth job creation opportunities' scheme, with a requirement to save 20% of the capital needed to get the remaining 80% on credit and start an income-generating activity. Young women reported that this made it impossible for them to participate.

More generally, and unlike in urban areas, across all communities there was little support to non-farm activities (see also the chapters on urbanisation, youth transitions and economic success). As noted in Adado, Dinki, Somodo, Kormargefia, Oda Dawata and Oda Haro (West Shewa), this frustrated in particular young people, and women who were often more involved than men in this sector. Women in Girar also complained about the lack of support for pottery, in which many women were involved.

Women's cooperatives

There were women's cooperatives in nine communities, all established through government- or NGO-initiated support. Some showed or had shown potential, such as a savings and credit cooperative scheme in Gelcha reporting some success in providing individual loans. However, the majority were struggling. Constraints included issues about output marketing or input supply (e.g. a spinning cooperative in Gara Godo and an improved stove cooperative in Shumsheha); lack of trust between members; lack of support (including financial, follow-up and technical assistance); and insufficient management skills.

Table 1 below provides an overview of a number of selected women's cooperatives and the challenges and potential they faced.

Table 1 - Women's cooperatives – status and challenges

Community	Cooperative	Reported status	Issues
Adele Keke	Milk cooperative	Failing	Concerns about membership commitment; issues raising capital
Gara Godo	Spinning cooperative	Successful (but issues)	Limited output marketing
Gelcha	Savings and credit group	Successful	Individual loans, success
	Grain mill	Failed	Closed – operating costs too high
Luqa	Drink production	Failed	Membership reduction
Shumsheha	Cotton spinning cooperative	Failed	Input supply issues
	Improved stoves	Some success (but issues)	Output marketing (high cost of stoves)
Girar	Teff production cooperative	Successful	Wereda support (but high cost for new members)
Yetmen	Spinning cooperative	Some success	Support received (land); but need for additional resources
Korodegaga	Vegetable production	Some success	Activities supported by wereda (eventually); land prepared/money
Do'oma	Trading cooperative	Failing	Support received (land); but issues around membership/nepotism

Kebele support was variable, ranging from disinterest from the leadership in some instances to allegations of nepotism by *kebele* leaders, regarding membership. There were cases where cooperatives were getting support from *kebele* authorities but also instances of hindrance. In Girar, for example, the Women's Association cooperative (65 members) had been given land for *teff* production by the *kebele* leadership and they employed daily labour and provided credit to members from the income generated. They received advice from the *wereda* Women's Association office, had good relationships with the *kebele* leader, and were audited so there was transparency. In contrast in Korodegaga, the *kebele* leadership had initially refused to give irrigated land to a women's cooperative. However, they were subsequently successful following a complaint raised with the Women and Children's Affairs office, and received a subsidy covering 20 per cent of their costs from the *kebele*.

It was not clear how easily young, unmarried women could access women's cooperatives (e.g. the spinning cooperative in Yetmen was reported to be for young women, until older women joined), or whether they were excluded from membership. Yet, the majority of women involved in cooperatives across communities seemed to be married, or widowed or divorced. This, as further discussed in the chapter on youth transitions, suggests a lack of recognition of young, unmarried women, 'missed' by both 'adult women' and 'youth' interventions, as a group with distinct needs, constraints and possibilities.

Credit schemes

Access for women to credit schemes (both general and women-focused) was said to have increased, and some women reported that it had become more 'straightforward'. In Geblen women were said to be better than men in handling loans and repayment, and in Adele Keke (East Hararge) more women than men participated in an Oromia Development Association

credit scheme for poultry and sheep fattening. There were also credit schemes targeting women specifically. For instance, this reportedly had increased access to 25% of women in Girar, whilst in Turufe 70 women received loans through a private Micro Finance Institution supporting female income generating activities, such as drink production for sale. In some cases, credit enabled women to access capital and establish effective income-generating activities, such as a rich wife in Geblen who opened a shop and a poor woman in Adele Keke who was able to purchase sheep to sell and to invest in products for petty trading. In Aze Debo'a, an NGO was providing loans alongside technical follow-up and assistance exclusively to women, with some reporting that this had enabled them to save on a monthly basis.

However, credit was not always an available option. For example, a poor female household head in Adado, land-poor and trapped in lowly-paid *enset* production-related daily labour, lacked the required collateral to access credit. In yet other cases, women reported that they were pressured to take credit in order not to lose other benefits (e.g. in Geblen).

Generally, access to credit was limited, insufficient and did not meet the demand, which limited its potential impact. This was noted, for example, in Turufe, where a woman complained about lack of credit to buy cross-bred cows, and in Aze Debo'a where, despite a local NGO's efforts, women complained that budget constraints had meant only a limited number of women benefited. Similarly, in Oda Haro women were supported by an NGO to engage in businesses such as weaving, and getting training courses and advice, but experienced difficulty getting the supply needed due to budget limitations. In Somodo, young women were being encouraged to form savings groups and register with the *wereda* to get credit to complement their savings and start activities such as hen or egg production in a bid to curb international migration. However, there was doubt as to whether this would be sufficiently attractive (see chapter on migration).

There were also significant risks, and cases where women's investments did not generate returns, or even led to economic decline. For instance, a poor female household head in Geblen invested in a cow which died, and crop failure prevented women in Korodegaga from being able to pay back debt. Women also raised concerns that repayments would be costly, or money would be poorly invested/ or used by their husband (e.g. Turufe).

Individual versus community level effects

At an individual level, a few women linked their ability to engage in an activity requiring capital to a specific intervention. For example, a wife in a successful couple in Sirba received credit from the WALQO MFI in the early stage of their activities, and the couple was engaged in various business ventures (see chapter on economic success). But this was not widespread, and interventions supporting livelihoods did not seem to give rise to wider community effects in relation to women and girls' actual economic participation. In most cases, interventions mattered little in what women and girls were actually doing. For example, in a number of communities where there was no or very limited support for women's livelihoods (such as Geblen, Harresaw, Gara Godo, Adado, Oda Dawata, and Kormargefia), one found nonetheless a number of women engaged in business activities requiring a degree of financial capital and knowledge, which they must therefore have accessed through other means – such as family support etc.

The gender equity drive: effective but 'barriers' remain...

There were indications that the broader gender equity drive was contributing to shifts in

perceptions of women/girls, and of a two-way process whereby changing social norms and greater economic participation of women and girls were mutually reinforcing each other. Yet social barriers remained, including male concerns over divisions of labour and decision-making, and competition for economically lucrative activities (such as dairy production in Kormargefia for instance).

Interventions for women's rights

By 2010/13, a wide range of government interventions, indirectly but importantly, were supporting women's rights. These included contraceptive provision, infrastructural developments, focus on girls' education, and emphasis on maternal health as a priority (see further details in chapters on urbanisation, inequality, education and maternity).

In particular, interventions supporting women's rights to access health and education services led to improvement across communities. In principle, this would be expected to contribute positively to women and girls' economic participation. There were individual-level instances of this effect, with, for example, educated girls in a few of the communities employed as professionals in government or private sector positions. And in many different communities, a number of girls and young women had high aspirations towards this kind of life. However, progress in girls' education was relatively recent. Moreover, more generally, and as further discussed in the chapter on education, more schooling was not necessarily leading to better economic opportunities. Given these factors, there was no community-wide discernible pattern of better access to education influencing women's and girls' economic activities; and individual cases were still relatively rare. One exception, very visible in a number of communities, was how young women's increasing educational level led to higher aspirations, which often could not be met locally, thus in turn leading them to seeking employment opportunities outside of the community through migration this is discussed more fully in the chapters on education, youth and migration).

In relation to health, individual women emphasised that ill-health was a critically negative factor limiting their economic activities, such as a woman in Somodo (Jimma) who was unable to engage in butter trading as a result of a car accident affecting her physical mobility. As discussed in the chapter on maternity, there was a general expansion of the provision of family planning services. Whilst some women still reported barriers to accessing contraceptives (including male resistance), there were instances where family planning was used for economic reasons. For instance, a woman in Aze Debo'a (Kambata) reported being able to trade as she avoided unwanted pregnancy, and a recently married young woman explained that she and her husband had agreed not to have a child immediately because they first wanted to become better established financially. Similarly, young men and women in Harresaw reported delaying their first child to first become economically strong.

In addition to these indirect interventions, there was a fairly standard package of government-led gender equity actions being implemented across communities. Awareness raising campaigns promoted a range of women's rights related to marriage, land and property, inheritance etc., and local leadership/support structures were being put in place to promote women's affairs, such as the Women Affairs' offices at *wereda* level and Women Affairs' representatives at *kebele* level. Broadly, there were signs that these actions generated some progress, with many women aware of their rights, and indications that relations between men and women were less unequal. There were also instances of affirmative action, such as in Harresaw (Eastern Tigray), where female headed households were prioritised in land redistribution, and examples of

women who had been successful in securing control over resources following divorce (e.g. Sirba (East Shewa) and Oda Dawata (Arsi)). However, achievements varied, linked to differing degrees of male resistance and depending, notably, on the elders' position in the community, support from male kin, the calibre and commitment of women's leaders and officials at *kebele* and *wereda* level, as well as the extent of support from male-dominated institutions such as the courts and police.

Although not everywhere (e.g. in Gelcha most marriages were still arranged by the family), the right of young people to choose their partner was increasingly accepted and many young women indicated that they would be the ones to select their partner. Campaigns against harmful traditional practices had reduced early marriage, abduction, rape, and widow inheritance, with some women who resisted supported by their families (for example in Gelcha and Adele Keke). But these practices had by no means disappeared. Female genital cutting being illegal made it difficult to determine whether it had been abandoned or not in communities where it was customary, but there was vocal opposition to the ban in three sites. (See further discussion in the chapters on youth transitions and young women's reproductive health and wellbeing).

Measures to enhance women's political participation were generally not very effective. In some communities they were weakly implemented. For example, although two communities (Sirba and Harresaw) reportedly observed the required quota for the proportion of female *kebele* council members, in others this first step towards representation was not achieved (e.g. only four women were *kebele* councillors in Do'oma; and there was no mention of women councillors in Kormargefia). Where efforts were greater they still were of uncertain effectiveness, and overall the majority of women across communities were not very politically engaged and had limited political power. (See further discussions in the chapter on innovations).

Individual women pursuing their rights needed courage, time and support from kin, elders or courts. Poor women and women-headed households often faced particular problems in doing so, and persistent customary norms often disadvantaged women, making it rare for them to be able to have access to land (e.g. in Oda Haro (West Shewa) and Aze Debo'a). Yet, there were indications that gender equity measures were slowly helping to make women more assertive and to shift perceptions.

Perceptions – both enabling and limiting economic participation

Shifts in social norms, more or less pronounced across communities, mattered for the types of activities in which women could participate.

There was a change in that women who had been perceived as 'weak' were now seen as capable of engaging in independent activities, in for instance, Oda Haro. Women were involved in larger-scale trading in three of the seven communities where the perception of women was reported to have changed (Adele Keke, Oda Haro, and Somodo, all Oromo cultures). In Somodo, changed perceptions were said to have an important impact on women's economic empowerment, and women were increasingly undertaking trading activities as well as



Enset preparation in Aze Debo'a

work in industrial and daily labour and in running businesses.

There were also shifts in terms of customary gendered divisions of labour, with women taking more of a role outside of the household. Less commonly, some men were also taking on some domestic responsibilities (e.g. in Girar (Gurage), Geblen (East Tigray), Aze Debo'a and Adele Keke). However, this did not contribute to a reduction in women and girls' domestic burden, and there was hardly any change in the perceptions of certain activities as 'women's tasks', such as *enset* preparation in the communities where this was staple food (see picture).

Overall, there was a sense that women's work load had increased, and as women from Shumsheha (North Wello) said, they were now '*doing everything*' (both productive and reproductive work). However, there were also indications of changed or changing aspirations surrounding marriage and economic independence (with e.g. women's migration said to be bringing about '*another type of household*' in Kormargefia); as well as changed perceptions of, and emphasis on, the importance of girls' education (with e.g. wealthier households hiring domestic labour to leave study time to their daughters in Somodo and Sirba).

So on one hand, shifts in perceptions of women facilitated their greater engagement in economic activities. At the same time, women's success in economic affairs and their hard work were also the causes of changing perceptions in some cases, such as in Kormargefia where it was remarked that some female-headed households were more successful than male-headed ones.

These examples illustrate well what I found to be a two-way link between changing social norms and changing economic opportunities for women and girls. However, other factors interacted with that one, differently in different communities. One such factor was the extent of variation across communities in terms of broader economic growth and ensuing economic opportunities. Thus for instance, less conservative attitudes towards women were noted in drought-prone and aid-dependent Geblen and Harresaw, both sites in Tigray where the TPLF had promoted women's rights during the liberation struggle, but the range of activities undertaken by women was nonetheless still limited, as generally economic opportunities were few. In contrast, in Gara Godo (Wolayta), where there was reportedly little social change in relation to women's status, but a developing urban centre and coffee production, women were de facto engaged in a wider range of economic activities. Women were also more involved in trade in the densely populated *enset* areas in the south.

Another 'confounding factor' was the extent to which men dominated the more profitable activities. Trading of the main cash crops, for instance, was still often overseen by men or even exclusively controlled by men, as in the case of coffee in Adado (Gedeo). In other instances, as noted earlier, men started competing with women when previously 'female activities' were becoming more profitable, such as with milk production/trading in Kormargefia.

Culture and religion interacted in complex ways with women's and girls' economic participation. Religion supported the shift in perceptions of women in some instances, or on specific issues, and not in others. For instance, the growth of Protestantism had had different effects in Aze Debo'a and in Adado, both southern communities predominantly Protestant in 2010-13. In Aze Debo'a, where Kambata women customarily remained at home, they now were involved in a range of activities outside of the homestead and even migrated for work, and it is likely that the growth of Protestantism over decades contributed to this shift. But Protestantism was also underpinning a very conservative attitude towards women in cases of divorce. In Adado there was a contest between sets of norms, and in 2013 it seemed that customary ways keeping

women at home continued to be more influential than the Protestant values promoting economic success.

Some men also expressed concerns reflecting patriarchal values, including that greater women's economic participation would conflict with, or lead to, neglect of household responsibilities, or lead to inappropriate behaviour. For example, a farmer in Do'oma was concerned that his wife would 'be taken' or adopt inappropriate behaviour if she worked on farm daily labour. In other cases, women were said to be too 'shy to participate' in schemes not only because of their '*domestic mind-set*' but also due to their husband's reluctance (e.g. Girar). On the other hand, women sensed that male concerns were linked also to what these shifts would mean for their own status. Thus women in Sirba, for instance, expressed the view that although there had been progress and some women were successful in crop trading, men feared that women would become '*too powerful if set free*'.

Guiding transformation: the importance of role models and aspirations

The data showed some evidence of a virtuous spiral, whereby the presence of a number of women role models, together with the wider shifts in perceptions of women and girls and their rising aspirations, were expanding the types of activities that women and girls undertook and/or considered possible for themselves. These role models, including women and girls who were economically active in atypical ways, or simply educated, economically successful and/or independent, were few. However, there was evidence that their role in pushing boundaries could be significant, as illustrated in the box below.

Box 3 - Women pushing boundaries

Somodo: wife of a successful businessman: engaged in trading - AD is very much active in the trade businesses, both the shop and the trade of grain and coffee – she is one of the seven principal representatives of the investors buying coffee in Somodo. Initially her husband did not want this as he is Muslim (she is Orthodox Christian but converted), but as they quarrelled, she raised the issue with the elders who reconciled them and convinced him. With the profit from her activities they are now building a modern villa.

Sirba: wife of a successful business man: engaged in running a restaurant - RE runs the couple's restaurant and the household's other businesses alongside her husband. She says that she is the one to contact the kebele Small Industry and Petty Trade office whenever they need advice. She also recently participated in a meeting to discuss business and petty trade activities in the kebele. They talked about the problems that business people face and possible solutions. An example was that the local multi-purpose cooperative was not providing key products like coffee and sugar to local restaurants and drink houses, which had to buy them from towns which raised the price of their services. The meeting agreed that the multi-purpose cooperative would provide sugar to these local businesses in as big a quantity as they required.

Dinki: Women's Wereda Councillor - In earlier times, the people did not think that a woman could manage her own household. But I am being a model for them that a woman can live alone supporting herself without being under men. Some women used to work but once married their wealth would be under their husband and they depended on them. Now when I see women have a say on their wealth I am very happy.

What makes each of the cases above remarkable was how the women were challenging customary roles and perceptions of what activities women should/should not participate in. The

wereda Councillor in Dinki (North Shewa) saw her role as serving as a direct model, for other women to see that they did not have to depend on men economically. The wife of the successful businessman in Somodo challenged customary views of women's roles by approaching community elders to obtain permission to engage in running a business. In the case of the woman from Sirba, she was the one to raise business-related issues with *kebele* officials, and not her husband as would be more usually the case. In both cases, their economic activity and lead role had improved the household's economic status, with the potential to positively reinforce the perception that women were able to contribute effectively to business endeavours.

Girls reportedly aspired to follow women who had prioritised their education, who were economically successful, and who had sought to establish themselves independently. This is illustrated in the table below which shows a range of profiles held as role models in various communities - such as teachers, HEWs, as well as successful traders and women who were able to establish themselves independently as a result of migration.

Table 2 - Role models for women/girls in communities

Community	Which women/groups of women are considered role models?
Gelcha	HEW held as role model for woman wanting her daughter to continue education and get a similar job
Harresaw	Successful international returnees (involved in trade, not farming)
Kormargefia	Educated graduate working in Addis (owning a modern house); and a government employee working/living in Addis
Oda Haro	For youth, doctors , but also traders doing well; secondary school English teacher
Adado	Educated women and girls who had continued their education rather than getting married; educated female working in <i>wereda</i> office of agriculture
Sirba	Athlete a role model
Adele Keke	Role models are those engaged in milk trading ; strengthening their economic situation
Do'oma	Young women – one trading maize alongside education (aspiring to become a nurse); other involved in teff trading .
Somodo	Successful international returnees

The data suggest that girls/young women were often seeking greater independence and a 'better life'. This was often associated with education, with a number of girls and young women noting that they believed education provided opportunities to obtain professional jobs (e.g. in Oda Haro), or 'good' jobs (e.g. Aze Debo'a). Some who were already employed saw education as providing an opportunity to get better work – as in the case of a young rich girl working as a HEW in Do'oma who had ambitions to upgrade her education to improve her job opportunities. However, high and rising perceived and actual levels of youth un(der)employment also generated uncertainty about the returns of education (e.g. Oda Haro). Migration, aspired to more because of the hoped-for returns than because of seeking particular types of opportunities, was also linked with a wider aspiration to mobility as a step toward a better life, with many girls not wanting to settle in their community. For example, in Geblen, migration was

said to offer the opportunity for ‘a better life’, and in Oda Haro it was considered as ‘very important’ for establishing independence. Many girls, as explained by one in Oda Dawata, wanted to migrate, earn enough money and then build their own house and have a family. Further discussion of these factors is presented in the chapters on education, youth transitions and migration.

Younger girls/women were generally more ambitious in thinking about what was possible (many wanted to study and work for instance as doctors and engineers – see more in chapters on youth transitions and education). In contrast, slightly older women, often less educated, already engaged in ‘real life’ and in charge of a household, were more aware of the constraints on securing an income and had ambitions more in tune with local possibilities such as opening shops or restaurants (e.g. Harresaw, Gara Godo), engaging in irrigation farming (e.g. Gelcha) or expanding their existing business (e.g. Gara Godo).

There was indeed often a considerable gap between young women’s/girls’ aspirations and the jobs actually available locally. Some young women had a ‘plan B’ if their first ambition did not materialise – often migration or engaging in income-generating activities if continuing education was not possible (with examples e.g. in Oda Haro involving migration, in Kormargefia raising chickens, in Shumsheha and Adele Keke opening commodity shops and in Somodo opening a hairdressing salon, see picture).

As for the more realistic aspirations, most were aimed outside farming. Only a few women or girls wanted to engage in farming/farm-related activities, which may reflect a more general trend among both male and female youth.

Moreover, adult women did not usually see themselves as ‘farm managers’ even when some of the land belonged to them, and/or they were in principle co-tenant with their husband for the couple’s land.



Young woman in her hairdressing salon in Somodo

Conclusions and policy considerations

Overall, the analysis highlighted that women’s and girls’ economic participation had increased and diversified, with both the farm and the non-farm sectors providing important opportunities. Changes in the economic and in the social context interacted with one another in community-specific ways, in turn shaping women’s and girls’ economic participation. Changed perceptions of women’s capabilities and local economic growth had no doubt contributed to open up some opportunities for women; at the same time, girls’ education was progressing, alongside rising disillusion with returns from education and an increasing number of young women migrating for work. This in turn was likely to lead to further shifts in perceptions of women. However, weaknesses in interventions supporting livelihoods, both mainstream and focused on women, were limiting progress; and individual or household wealth and access to capital, resources and assets mattered significantly in determining what women were (and were not) doing.

Based on these conclusions, a number of suggestions are made below, for consideration in policies and interventions aimed at further enabling women and girls’ economic participation in rural Ethiopia. The first set of suggestions covers how the expanding opportunities can be made

more inclusive to ensure that economic participation is equitable. I then consider how interventions might better reach women to support their livelihoods. A third set of considerations focuses on how norms and attitudes might be influenced in order to build on progress in promoting equality.

Towards more-inclusive economic employment

Earlier sections suggested that broader community-wide infrastructural developments expanded opportunities for women/girls. As an element of this I showed how migrating for work and to some extent local industrial work was reportedly more common among girls and young women, linked to their seeking independence, shifting aspirations and higher levels of education (see chapters on migration and education). However, there was also evidence of issues arising in relation to equitable employment. Women reported being paid a lower rate than men both in industrial employment and daily labour. Local industrial employment had reportedly had a significant impact in some communities, in some cases benefitting more specifically women (e.g. flower farm and coffee plant work), but in other cases favouring men. Higher grade and better paid positions seemed to rarely be given to women. Moreover, there were reports that industrial work opportunities were less feasible/accessible for women with family responsibilities.

Alongside continued focus on further developing infrastructure and better connecting rural communities, addressing these equitable employment issues would help ensure that more women benefit equally with men from the new opportunities emerging in rural areas. A number of measures aimed at promoting equitable employment are provided for in the 2009 National Employment Policy and Strategy and the 2003 Labour Law. These, such as ensuring equal pay for equal tasks for women and men and the provision of child care options and maternity rights, could be implemented more fully. Integrating such provisions in regulations on minimum work conditions would enhance employment protection and go some way to avoid discrimination or exclusion of women, including those with or expecting children (see chapter on mothers' health and wellbeing).

More explicitly, promoting awareness of employment rights, e.g. through targeted messaging, would also support equitable employment. Lack of understanding of what the standards should be may limit women's (and men's) capacity to demand their rights. Improving this understanding would support women to better negotiate their terms of employment, better assert themselves and increase their bargaining power for employment on non-exploitative and equal grounds. Noting that un(der) employment affects young men as well as young women, affirmative actions focusing on women must therefore be carefully calibrated. However, there may be scope to encourage investors to promote women's employment – such as offering incentives to businesses for generating income opportunities for women.

Better reaching women

Promoting economic participation forms part of a wider commitment by the Government to reducing inequality and lifting vulnerable individuals out of poverty - as reflected among others in the government Social Protection Policy approved in 2014. Yet, the WIDE evidence highlights that in 2010-13 women were not equally equipped to engage in income generating activities. Their ability to do so was shaped by their individual economic status. Credit had not offered many a 'route out of poverty'; and women were often not reached by interventions aimed at supporting their livelihoods. These facts suggest that there is scope for "*doing things differently*

to reach the poor” (World Bank 2016) and as part of this, for alternative mechanisms supporting the poorest women to access capital. This could include well-targeted ‘capital injection’ through grants/asset transfer in sufficient amounts, alongside sufficient training, monitoring and follow-up, with a view to enabling the poorest women to reach a level where taking credit becomes feasible.⁶

Other measures to strengthen existing interventions could be considered. In the first instance, there is scope for strengthening ways in which agricultural extension services reach out to women in practice, among others by ensuring that advice is also provided to wives in male-headed households; and ensuring that DAs are able to advise on a wide range of activities, including, but also going beyond, those considered as typically female-oriented. Paying more attention to young women’s specific needs, interests and constraints in youth cooperatives and other youth livelihood interventions would enhance their access to these opportunities, and go some way to facilitate the transition from youth to adulthood and overcome the challenges of un(der)employment. The data also clearly indicate that opportunities to work in enterprises, locally or nearby, were limited in the WIDE communities. As also suggested in several other chapters of this volume, expanding support to micro-and-small enterprise establishment into rural areas would help address this constraint, and could be designed in such a way that this reaches both women and men.

Influencing norms and aspirations to build on progress

Despite changing perceptions, social norms often remained barriers to women’s economic participation, more so in some communities than in others. This is a potentially powerful area for action: reinforcing the two-way dynamic between economic participation and shifting perceptions and overcoming persistent social barriers would contribute positively to both wider gender equality goals, as outlined in the National Policy on Ethiopian Women, and to ensuring women’s full and equitable participation in the country’s transformation, as foreseen in the GTPII. There are a number of actions that might be considered to strengthen women-focused livelihood interventions – such as efforts to bolster resources and training, ensuring support from local authorities, and, most importantly, tailoring actions to the communities’ specific potentials and constraints, so as to maximise their impact and support women’s effective engagement in the labour market.

The WIDE data indicate that some men have genuine and justifiable concerns about what changes in the division of labour, and more widely in women’s and men’s respective statuses, might mean for their own positions and activities. Yet, too often, gender equality efforts have ‘missed’ men, thus also missing their concerns. There is scope for gender equity messages that target ‘real life’ situations, address ‘real life’ concerns, and engage with both women and men. In particular, recognising men’s concerns and devoting time to engage them in discussions about these and about what changes for women mean for them, could help convincing them of the benefits of considering women as equal partners.

The data clearly indicated the potential of role models to positively influence the types of opportunities that girls sought and considered possible. Broadening the influence of existing

⁶ This gradual approach was recently piloted in Tigray where it was implemented by a CGAP-Ford Foundation Graduation Programme. The experience highlighted the potential of the approach to ‘tactically build on PSNP’ and provide ‘pathways out of poverty’ when appropriately targeted and accompanied by sufficient support (Sengupta 2012).

‘role model’ women in communities would be a potentially effective mechanism to revalorise certain sectors, as well as open up consideration of opportunities in others. This could be achieved through more targeted and effective profiling of women from across a range of economic areas/professions, and with experiences in common with those of women and girls from rural communities. Successful women could be invited to speak at schools, school media clubs encouraged to highlight positive female trajectories, and informal social groups could be encouraged to identify and promote cases of ‘success’ among women.

References

- ATA (Agricultural Transformation Agency), 2015, ‘Agricultural Transformation Agenda Progress Report covering 2011-15 in the GTPI period,’ December 2015, Addis Ababa: ATA.
- CSA (Central Statistics Agency Ethiopia), 2017, LSMS – Integrated Surveys on Agriculture Ethiopia Economic Socioeconomic Survey (ESS), a report by the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia in collaboration with the National Bank of Ethiopia and the World Bank, February 2017, also available at https://www.google.be/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwiwzd2Q_ofUAhVGDMAKHZTtBdEQFgg0MAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmicrodata.worldbank.org%2Findex.php%2Fcatalog%2F2783%2Fdownload%2F39569&usg=AFQjCNG2jCMih8BmKaXxx8-aLSF1c-AuyA&cad=rja
- Habtmu Fuje & Lire Ersado, 2016, ‘Rural Non-Farm Economy and Structural Transformation in Ethiopia,’ Group, draft, May 2016.
- Kidist Gebreselassie & Hirut Bekele, 2013, ‘The Gender Dimensions of Food Insecurity,’ in Dessalegn Rahmato, A. Pankhurst and J.-G. van Uffelen (eds), *Food Security, Safety Nets and Social Protection in Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies.
- Lenhardt, A., A. Rogerson, F. Guadagno & T. Berliner, 2015, *One foot on the ground, one foot in the air – Ethiopia’s delivery on an ambitious development agenda*, Development Progress series, London: Overseas Development Institute, available at <https://www.odi.org/publications/9884-ethiopia-progress-development-mdgs-millennium-development-goals-employment-agriculture-extreme-poverty-education> [accessed 25/11/16].
- Pankhurst, A., 2000, ‘Decline, survival and development of crafts: Comparison of tanning, ironwork, pottery, woodwork and weaving with particular reference to southwestern Ethiopia,’ in *Ethiopian Journal of Development Research* **22** (2): 1-64.
- Sengupta, A., 2012, ‘Pathways out of the Productive Safety Net Programme: Lessons from Graduation Pilot in Ethiopia,’ *Working Paper CGAP/Ford Foundation*, June 2012.
- World Bank, 2016, *Ethiopia – Priorities for ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity – Systematic Country Diagnostic*, Report No. 100952-ET.