

INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES : A FACILITATED DIALOGUE



WORKSHOP REPORT

9 – 10 November, 2023
Haile Resort, Adama

BACKGROUND

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the Integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Development Initiatives dialogue workshop, held from the 9th to the 10th of November 2023 in Adama, Ethiopia. The event was organized by the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) with financial and technical support from SouthSouthNorth (SSN) and the Global Green Growth Initiative (GGGI). The training workshop aimed to enhance the capacity of the MoPD and its affiliate institutions' staff to identify and integrate relevant GESI issues into their day-to-day activities. The workshop had a total of [44 participants](#), including 27 male and 17 female attendees.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The training had a dual focus: enhancing participants' understanding of the importance of gender equality and social inclusion, particularly when reaching vulnerable groups, and providing practical insights into applying a GESI lens throughout the development cycle. This included planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Participants were expected to grasp the relevance and steps involved in conducting a GESI analysis, as well as integrating key elements of the GESI development initiatives process.

The specific objectives of the workshop were to:

- Enhance understanding of the concept of GESI and other related concepts and its nuanced application at an institutional level.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of MoPD's staff concerning the integration of GESI in the various stages of a project's cycle.
- Improve awareness on GESI-related national policies and frameworks.
- Understand the relevance of GESI integration into development initiatives and the role each has to play in the processes

This report summarizes the workshop discussions highlighting outcomes, key takeaways and next steps. The detailed agenda for the two-day dialogue workshop can be found [here](#).

OVERVIEW OF THE DAYS:

DAY ONE:

Opening Session: Context Setting, Workshop Opening, and Introduction of GESI Concepts: The morning session started with a detailed contextual overview and program introduction led by Medhin Fissaha, the project lead for the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Green Climate Fund (GCF) readiness project at GGGI. During this session, Medhin took the participants through the collaborative journey between GGGI and SSN, emphasizing on the efforts of both institutions in providing technical support in the area of Climate Change (CC) actions.

The collective efforts of both institutions further enhanced the GESI sensitivity of the country's efforts in advancing climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. Furthermore, Medhin shed light on the strategic positioning of MoPD in mainstreaming GESI within the broader scope of the country's development initiatives, considering its overarching role and mandate. Medhin urged the

participants to actively engage in the workshop and beyond - to deliberate, discuss, explore and brainstorm the issue of GESI and development so that women and other vulnerable groups benefit equally out of the country's development gains. Her presentation emphasized the strong commitment of SSN and GGGI to support the ministry's capacity in its effort to ensure the relevant GESI issues are integrated into its overarching commitments and initiatives, particularly in the context of climate change-related efforts.



Subsequently, welcoming notes were delivered by Robi Redda, Director of SouthSouthNorth (SSN) and the Country Engagement Lead for the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) in East Africa (Ethiopia and Kenya). Robi provided a comprehensive overview of the global history and framework underpinning climate change prevention and mitigation efforts. He

underscored the imperative of addressing climate change to effectively achieve the country's broader development goals, highlighting the intrinsic and indispensable relationship between GESI and climate change.

Following these presentations, Shalom Gebredingel, Chief of Staff and Special Advisor to the Minister at MoPD, took the floor to officially open the workshop. In her opening remarks, Shalom emphasized the paramount relevance of targeted capacity development support extended by CDKN and GGGI for the ministry. This support aimed to ensure that development benefits are equitably distributed among all constituents, irrespective of gender, religion, disability, ethnicity, and other factors. She also went on to acknowledge the vast capacity development needs of the ministry in addressing GESI issues at the required level, stressing that the support provided would be continuous and strategically refined. Shalom encouraged participants to fully capitalize on this initiative, recognizing its potential impact in empowering MoPD's staff to fulfill their designated roles in fostering inclusivity and equal access to development opportunities.

The official opening was followed by participants' introduction. To foster a sense of camaraderie and open dialogue, an icebreaker activity was introduced. Participants were encouraged to reflect on childhood rules that had shaped their gender identity. This activity served as an insightful exploration of individual and collective experiences, unveiling deep-seated societal norms and expectations that were not previously understood or recognized. During this engaging exercise, participants shared childhood rules that had left a lasting impact on their perceptions of gender roles. Examples ranged from societal expectations like "women should not laugh aloud" to more subtle norms such as "women are expected to use low voices when

speaking indoors as well as outdoors." Additionally, reflections surfaced on traditional beliefs, like the notion that "husbands should always walk in front of their wives." These shared experiences not only created a collective understanding but also laid the foundation for more detailed discussions on gender dynamics and societal expectations. The process not only strengthened the sense of camaraderie among participants but also facilitated a more nuanced exploration of gender equality and social inclusion within the context of the workshop's overarching objectives.

Building on this shared experience, participants proceeded to collaboratively establish common ground rules that would guide the discussions over the next two days. This inclusive approach set the tone for a collaborative and participatory learning environment, ensuring that diverse perspectives and experiences were integral to the dialogue.

The next session was focused on the basics of GESI Concepts. The session introduced the concept of GESI and the key concepts associated with GESI. Concepts such as equality and equity, the need for affirmative action /positive discrimination, and their role in bringing about equality were explored and discussed using different activities.

Activity One: Exploring the Concept of Sex and Gender:

This activity aimed to use participants' prior perception of "man" and "woman" characteristics, attributes, roles, and expectations through a facilitated open discussion and brainstorming, which led to the definition of the biological differences (sex) and socially constructed differences (gender) in society.

Sex vs Gender

TYPICAL WOMAN	TYPICAL MAN

Draw the table on flipchart, and Ask participants to do the following exercise on their notebook.

- Ask participants to write on their notebook, using the template, those characteristics or attributes which they consider to be typically female and typically male without pausing to think too long
- Ask volunteers to share what they wrote on their notebook under each columns-WRITE IT ON FLIPCHART
- ASK exchange the title "man" and "woman". Ask participants to discuss if all the listed words/phrases still apply for the other party one by one.
- Now, discuss on the ones which do not apply for the other party In most cases these ones are tending to be "natural or biological" characteristics of men and women which cannot be changed.

Outcome: Participants were able to reflect on some of the prominent traditional/ common gender roles in society by naming the stereotypes associated with someone's gender and were able to learn that the same activity is different for girls, boys, women, and men.

Participants put forward strong arguments regarding the positive rationale behind some of the "characteristics" assigned to men and women. For instance, men are provided with the role of protecting the family or always walking in front of their wives in some communities due to their physical strength.

Activity Two: Understanding the Impact of Gender Stereotype on Male and Female:

The activity aimed to enhance the awareness and understanding of participants on key societal norms which resulted in stereotypes, while also encouraging critical

reflection on personal biases, promoting diversity and inclusivity, identifying challenges associated with stereotypes, empowering individuals to challenge norms, and aligning with inclusive practices.

Outcome: The participants understood the fact that existing gender stereotypes not only put women in a disadvantaged position but can also be harmful to men and boys in various ways. Here are some of the potential negative impacts of gender stereotypes on men/boys, that are usually ignored, identified during the discussion:

- Assuming the role of the sole provider within a family can lead to heightened stress and pressure, particularly for men facing financial hardship or unemployment;
- The stress experienced in such situations can manifest in physical health issues, engagement in risky behaviors such as substance abuse, and tragically, an increased risk of suicide; Men, often not encouraged to express their emotions, find themselves without a healthy outlet for their feelings. This expectation to maintain strength persists even during emotionally challenging times, like mourning the loss of a spouse or a family member;
- Social expectations may compel some men to adopt violent behaviors against their own wishes, as they feel pressured to conform to certain stereotypes;
- Pressure to have multiple sexual partners, particularly at a younger age, can contribute to an elevated risk of HIV and sexually transmitted infections;
- Traditional gender norms may restrict a man's role within the family, limiting his ability to fully embrace and enjoy fatherhood;
- The role of being perceived as the "leader of the house" can, at times, be associated with emotional distance and even violence, negatively impacting relationships with a spouse and/or children;
- Men who do not conform to the societal ideal of being big, strong, and powerful may struggle to feel less valued and productive members of society; and
- Traditional gender norms may push men toward certain career paths, limiting their choices based on societal expectations.

National Framework on Gender:

The afternoon session aimed to improve participants' understanding of Ethiopian national frameworks (policy, strategy, flagship program, initiatives, and so on) which guide the integration of GESI into development programs as well as into institutional environments. A presentation was delivered on key national policies and proclamations that guide the integration of gender equality issues by Getu Belay Zeleke, Head of Institutional Inclusive Implementation and Empowerment Desk of the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA).

MoWSA's Inclusive Leveling Tool

The tool is introduced to ensure monitoring and evaluation of various government institutions does not focus on only on gender issues but also includes social inclusion.

Purpose: to institutionalize gender inclusion in government institutions everyone's right, welfare, just pa benefits are ensured.



He explained the evolution of the policy environment the government put in place to ensure women and other vulnerable community

members benefit from development interventions and live in a safe and secure environment. Frameworks such as the Constitution, the national policy on Ethiopian women, the women development package, revised family law and criminal law, and the inclusive leveling tool were discussed in detail. The inclusive leveling tool is a tool MoWSA has started to use to monitor, support and provide feedback on aspects of gender and social inclusion for each line Ministry. Ato Getu also linked the discussion with MoPD's mandate regarding gender mainstreaming by connecting it with the proclamation that mandates all ministries to include women and other vulnerable people's issues in all policy and development interventions. During and at the end of the presentation, the participants reflected on the ranking MoPD received during the leveling exercise carried out by the MoWSA and the possible causes for its lower rank.

The first day of the workshop ended with the basic understanding of gender, sex, gender stereotypes, gender roles, expectations, and division of labor, distribution of resources, and gender norms and values, as well as its impact on women and men. The participants also became aware of the national policy environment that guides gender equality work, as well as the gaps MoWSA identified for MoPD executing its GESI-related mandate and its possible causes. The identified gaps encompass a range of issues, including:

- the absence of a gender policy and associated guidelines and strategies.
- the capacity development initiatives on gender undertaken by the Ministry primarily targeted women employees, overlooking a holistic approach.
- There is a notable absence of gender-responsive budgeting, with no allocated budget for the Women and Social Affairs Directorate in MoPD.
- No gender audit has been conducted to assess the MoPD's adherence and capacity to gender equality principles.
- Additionally, the monitoring of integration of women's issues is confined to the women and social affairs directorate only, highlighting a need for broader inclusion and awareness across the different directorates in the Ministry.

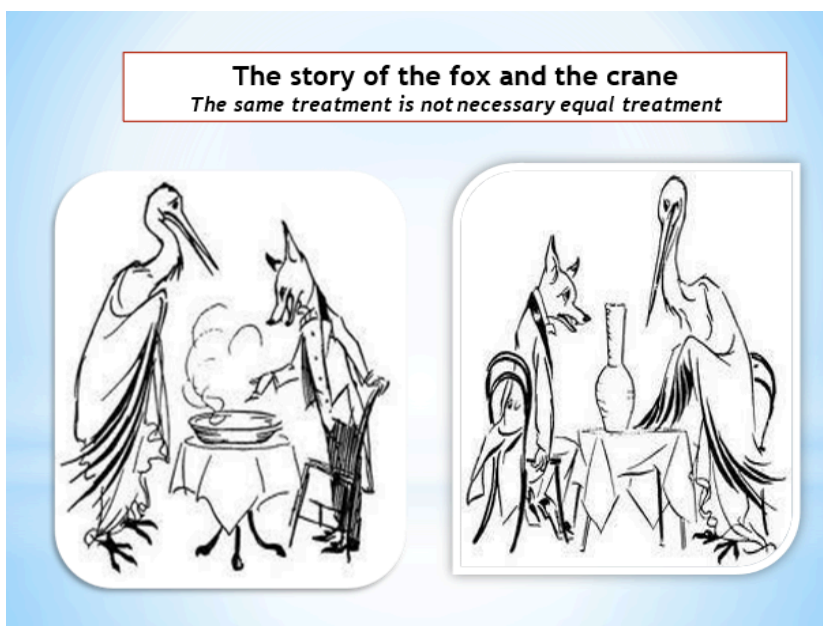
DAY TWO:

The second day started with a very participatory recap of the previous day by the participants and proceeded to the next session.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB): the session aims to improve participant's understanding of the rationale behind gender-responsive budgeting, learning about its guiding principles, and gaining practical insights into its implementation. The

session provided an overarching guidance that aims to improve the understanding of participants on the benefits of GRB to address gender disparities in resource allocation, ensuring that budgetary decisions contribute to gender equality and the well-being of all individuals, irrespective of gender. Rahel Messele, Acting Head of the Gender Directorate in the Ministry of Finance delivered a presentation on the “what, why, how and who” aspects of the GRB.

During the presentations, participants discussed the rationale behind promoting GRB, what GRB is, its guiding principles, and so on. The session was very interactive focusing on the experiences and lessons of the Ministry of Finance in carrying out gender-responsive budgeting and the guidelines and frameworks available to guide such work.



A story about a fox and crane was presented for participants which helped to think about the differences between men and women as well as among different groups. The story highlighted the significance of acknowledging and considering differences, particularly in the context of Gender Responsive Budgeting.

GESI and Climate Change (CC): The discussion on GRB was followed by a presentation on GESI and CC by Geleta Kedir from the UN Women Ethiopia office. The presentation started with an overview of the gender and development nexus, the rationale behind discussing CC as well as gender equality issues in relation to



designing and rolling out development initiatives. It then dived deep into the differential impact of climate change on women and men, as well as girls and boys. The presentation also provided in-depth information on gender equality considerations within climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives,

along with policies related to climate change. As climate change is a relatively new

area of responsibility for the MoPD, the presentation sparked various questions and debates among the participants, including the role of MoPD in ensuring the integration of climate change and GESI across national programs.

Going Forward: The concluding session of the training aimed at pinpointing gaps in understanding, identification, and mainstreaming of relevant GESI issues within the internal processes of the MoPD, along with its collaborative responsibilities with other line ministries. The discussion also involved exploring opportunities and brainstorming strategies for the way forward. Participants raised the following concerns:

- The limited capacity of the Women, and Social Affairs Directorate, highlights a lack of clarity regarding its role among other directorates.
- The absence of GESI mainstreaming guidelines in the Ministry
- Role confusion between the Women and Social Affairs Directorate and the Social and Governance Directorate

To design a workable way forward, a Committee comprising five members from the Women and Social Affairs Directorate, Social and Governance Directorate, Population Directorate, Climate Change Directorate and GGGI was established. This committee is expected to propose an action plan which aims to validate the identified gaps and propose a way forward by bringing them to the attention of the leadership and formulating specific activities. An understanding was reached that the committee will meet with Shalom G/dingle, Chief of Staff of MoPD for further guidance and direction on the way forward.

Finally, a CDKN evaluation questionnaire was distributed to gather comments and feedback from the participants, officially concluding the event.