

Accomplishment Report: In-depth training using CDKN GESI-CC modules

SouthSouthNorth (SSN) CDKN Programme

In coordination with the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD)



Photo: Group discussion. Credit: Kaleb Worku

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1. Introduction

Since 2021, the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) Ethiopia has supported the national [Gender Equality, Social Inclusion and Climate Change \(GESI-CC\) Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#), established following a 2019 [scoping study](#) that identified coordination gaps between gender and climate departments in the Ministry of Finance and the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission. To broaden participation and collaboration, the CoP has since expanded to include youth groups, civil society organisations (CSOs), private sector actors and development partners.

The scoping study also showed the capacity gap within institutions in fully grasping the need to integrate GESI in climate action, leading to a request by the Ministry of Finance for a GESI-CC training module that is aligned with the Ethiopian context. The CDKN Ethiopia team worked with CDKN's GESI Thematic Lead, Patricia Bamanyaki, to adapt CDKN's GESI-CC [training modules](#) to meet this request. The modules were used in 2021 by the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) facility which manages the climate fund of Ethiopia and in the same year, orientation on the modules was given during one of the GESI-CC CoP meetings. Feedback during these sessions highlighted the need to translate the modules into Amharic to ensure accessibility and relevance for Ethiopian practitioners and policymakers.

From 2023 to 2024, CDKN refined and updated its GESI-CC training modules to align with Ethiopia's policy and cultural context, and translated them into Amharic. Following the adaptation, two foundational two-day trainings were delivered to members of the GESI-CC CoP in [February](#) (12 F and 13M) and [March](#) (10 F and 12 M) of 2024. These sessions introduced participants to the updated resources and laid the groundwork for a more sustained and self-reinforcing learning journey.

Building on this foundation, SouthSouthNorth (SSN) in coordination with Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) developed a plan to further strengthen Ethiopia's institutional capacity in GESI and climate change. The vision was to create a pool of up to ten highly skilled

experts by selecting a group of committed CoP members that would include representatives from Ministries, CSOs and youth organisations, who could confidently serve as trainers within their own sectors, ministries, and institutions.

2. Methodology

Following the earlier trainings that were delivered in 2024 to the CoP members, it was agreed that it would be important to train a smaller (up to 10 members) of capacity-development taskforce that could cascade the GESI-CC trainings in different institutions. Based on this, a request was sent out by MoPD and CDKN to the CoP members to indicate their interest in joining this task force. Out of the initial 12 participants who indicated interest, six individuals (4F and 2M) took the training fully (see detail under participation section).

CDKN's GESI-CC Training Resource Pack is comprised of six modules: (1) international and national gender frameworks; (2) the rationale of a gender approach; (3) assessing climate risks and resilience; (4) designing gender-responsive, socially inclusive climate solutions; equity-responsive budgeting, and (6) implementing projects and programmes inclusively. The rollout of the Ethiopia GESI-CC training was, therefore, structured around these six training modules (with the final two merged into one).

Each module followed a clear and structured learning cycle:

- Preparatory reading and submission of reflections.
- Two virtual discussions (1-2 hours each) with peer-to-peer exchanges.
- Two-day in-person practice sessions where participants assumed the role of trainers.

This blended approach combined self-study, group dialogue and practical facilitation, enabling participants to understand and communicate the material effectively, while accommodating their professional time constraints.



Image: Presentation by trainee. Credit: Jeb Studio

Key features of the approach included:

- Grounded in adult learning principles and participatory methods, combining reading assignments with virtual discussions and practical facilitation exercises. Participants engaged in interactive group discussions, and hands-on activities to practice and internalise key skills. Reflection exercises, and an opportunity to self-assessments encouraged deeper understanding, while live demonstrations and guided practice allowed participants to apply facilitation techniques in real contexts. Collaborative projects (in case of the games and group works), and experience-sharing during training facilitation connected theory with practice, and enhanced engagement and learning.
- Pre-reading assignments and structured submission of key takeaways, insights, and questions.
- Weekly virtual discussions where participants presented, reflected, and engaged with their peers.

- In-person practice sessions where participants delivered training as if to real audiences, followed by structured peer and facilitator feedback.

3. Implementation

The in-depth GESI–CC training programme ran from 5 May to 22 August 2025, combining individual preparation, peer learning, and hands-on practical facilitation. In total, 11 rounds of weekly virtual discussions were conducted, followed by five in-person practice sessions, each lasting two days.

3.1. Preparatory phase

Before each virtual session, participants were provided with the module materials in Amharic and English, along with supplementary readings and reference documents. They were asked to prepare written reflections in their preferred language, summarising their understanding of the content, highlighting key takeaways, and raising any questions. Some of these reflections include:

- “Gender inequality in Ethiopia is deep-rooted and affects economic, educational, and health outcomes – especially for women. A GESI approach ensures fair opportunities, strengthens resilience, and improves climate and development outcomes for all.”
- “Though educational parity across the indicators is gradually improving, Ethiopia has one of the lowest parity levels globally (135th) at 85.4%.”

More member pre session written submissions can be found here: [Alemeshet](#); [Helina](#); [Jodahi](#); [Rukia](#) and [Aynalem](#)). Some participants expanded their submissions by consulting additional resources, thereby enriching their analysis with broader perspectives.

These submissions were reviewed by the facilitator in advance to identify common misconceptions and prepare targeted clarifications.

3.2. Virtual sessions

Virtual discussions provided an interactive space for exchange and reflection. Each participant had the opportunity to present their reflections, respond to peer questions, and debate different interpretations of the material. The discussions encouraged critical thinking and exposed participants to perspectives they might not have considered otherwise.

During one discussion, youth groups with limited exposure to rural contexts gained a deeper understanding of gender inequality and social dynamics in those areas. In another, discussion around budgeting for gender mainstreaming, some participants initially questioned why a budget was needed, while others argued that all gender-related activities require dedicated funding.

Through dialogue and shared experiences, participants came to recognise that while certain actions indeed require financial resources, meaningful gender mainstreaming also depends on intentional planning, mindset shifts, and inclusive implementation practices. They concluded that simple, practical measures, such as ensuring equitable participation and addressing diverse needs, can advance gender equality even within existing resources.

When needed, the facilitator provided structured input; for example, explaining the steps and application of gender analysis within climate action planning. This iterative cycle of preparation, presentation and clarification significantly enhanced both knowledge and analytical depth.

3.3. In-person training

After completing two virtual rounds per module, participants took part in in-person sessions, delivering training segments as though leading a real session for colleagues from their ministry or sector. Participants were encouraged to use real examples and cases from their respective ministries or institutions.

The presentations were followed by structured peer feedback on both content and facilitation, and then consolidated feedback from the facilitator. This process proved particularly effective. Participants showed progressive improvement, with the quality of delivery increasing noticeably after the first round of practice.



Image: Interactive game session. Credit: Kaleb Worku

4. Participation

A total of six participants actively engaged throughout the process, including two from MoPD, one from the Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure (MoUI), and three from youth groups.

While representatives of some institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands, Ministry of Industry, and Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association joined initially, they withdrew during the process due to competing priorities – even though the other active participants were able to sustain their involvement despite their own demanding professional workloads. Within MoPD, due to uncontrollable health challenges, one participant from the had to withdraw, while another was able to join later. The Youth Council representative’s participation was irregular due to competing priorities,

but when present, their engagement was highly active and demonstrated strong comprehension of the content.

Submission rates, ahead of the virtual discussions, varied across modules. Eight submissions were recorded for Module 1, while only five were received for Module 4. These variations reflected differences in participants' availability, including the preparation for the African Climate Summit, held in Addis Ababa, which competed with their priorities. However, this process still ensured a good level of engagement across all modules.

5. Lessons learned

The process produced several valuable insights:

- **Deepened learning through preparation:** The requirement to prepare written submissions pushed participants to study the modules carefully and internalise the content, leading to greater ownership of the material. By doing so, participants not only applied concepts from the modules, but also modified presentations to suit their institutions' needs, referred to additional reference materials beyond those provided, and identified sections of the module that required revision.
- **Value of peer learning:** Virtual discussions exposed participants to diverse perspectives, enabling them to explore alternative interpretations and sharpen their understanding through debate and dialogue. Interactions among participants evolved positively over the course of the training – from cautious exchanges to active collaboration and joint reflection. MoUI, for instance, invited participants from other sectors to co-facilitate sessions in its upcoming cascading training, demonstrating collaboration that extended beyond the initiative. Participants also continued to connect through virtual platforms, sharing resources and experiences.
- **Practical application of facilitation:** The in-person sessions provided a safe and supportive environment for practicing training delivery. Structured peer and facilitator feedback accelerated improvements in both content mastery and facilitation techniques.

- **Strengthened interdepartmental understanding:** Participants from the same institutions (in the case of MoPD) gained a clearer appreciation of the roles of other departments, highlighting the importance of cross-departmental collaboration in advancing GESI-CC objectives.
- **Increased responsibility and ownership:** Despite busy professional schedules, participants consistently demonstrated strong commitment, dedicating time to prepare, attend, and present. Representatives of four institutions have also committed to organising training sessions for their colleagues. This sense of responsibility was a key driver of the programme's success.



Photo: Interactive game session. Credit: Kaleb Worku

6. Challenges

While the assignment achieved its core objectives, several challenges were noted:

- **Competing professional demands:** Participants often struggled to balance training requirements with their regular workloads, which affected the consistency of submissions and attendance.
- **Institutional dropouts:** The withdrawal of some institutions reduced the breadth of the training's impact.
- **Irregular participation:** Inconsistent attendance of the Youth Council representative limited both the continuity of learning and institutional representation. From the consultant's perspective, this meant that the representative was only able to engage with some modules through independent reading rather than active participation in discussions and practice sessions, raising concerns about whether this level of engagement was adequate to ensure full comprehension and effective application of the training content. Therefore, only those individuals who fully attended the process were recognised as having finalised the training and can provide training going forward.

Based on the challenges faced, future considerations include:

- If possible, engage higher leadership from the trainees' institutions during the design of the training, so that the trainees can be fully relieved from their day-to-day responsibilities during the few days of engagement in the training.
- Integrate incentives and recognition for participants who performed well.

7. Conclusion

Overall, the assignment successfully strengthened the technical and facilitation capacity of a core group of participants, and laid a strong foundation for scaling up GESI and climate integration across ministries and institutions. The blend of preparatory reading, peer-to-peer learning, and hands-on facilitation allowed participants to build both knowledge and confidence, equipping them to act as trainers and multipliers of expertise within their respective sectors.

Some of the highlights from this work include:

- The training is already demonstrating ripple effects. Representatives of two of the youth groups, MoPD, and MoUI have developed their own plans to roll out the training within their respective institutions. This represents an important step toward institutionalising the skills and knowledge gained.
- CDKN team members and the consultant will continue to provide technical support to ensure quality and consistency in these rollouts.

In terms of next steps, four to five rollout sessions are planned, with the first two sessions scheduled for October 2025 (by participants from the two youth groups, Enfluencers and EWYCA) and November 2025 (by the participant from MoUI), marking the beginning of a new phase where the trained participants will transition from learners to trainers.