



## GENDER LEARNING STUDY

FEED ENHANCEMENT FOR ETHIOPIAN DEVELOPMENT (FEED) III  
DECEMBER 2020

# CONTENTS

<b>BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>1</b>
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	2
RESEARCH METHODS .....	2
<i>Sampling, Participant Criteria, and Data Collection</i> .....	3
<i>Covid-19 Precautions</i> .....	3
<i>Data Analysis</i> .....	4
<i>Limitations</i> .....	4
<b>KEY FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1. WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT .....	5
1.1 <i>Increased Resources</i> .....	5
1.2 <i>Women’s Time-Use and Workload</i> .....	6
1.3 <i>Decision-Making</i> .....	6
2. EFFECTIVE TRAINING STRATEGIES .....	7
2.1 <i>Venue Location</i> .....	7
2.2 <i>Training Material</i> .....	7
2.3 <i>Domestic Responsibilities</i> .....	8
2.4 <i>Training Topics</i> .....	9
3. MEETING GENDER TARGETS .....	10
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<i>Gender Mainstreaming</i> .....	13
<i>Increase Women’s Participation</i> .....	13
<i>Refresher Trainings</i> .....	14
<i>Audiovisual and Hands-on Learning</i> .....	14
<b>ANNEX A</b> .....	<b>15</b>
WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE .....	15
WOMEN’S GROUP FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE .....	17
FEED III PROJECT STAFF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE .....	19
GOVERNMENT STAFF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE .....	21

## ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
FEED III	The Feed Enhancement for Ethiopian Development Phase III
FFPr	Food for Progress Program
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

## BACKGROUND

The Feed Enhancement for Ethiopian Development Phase III (FEED III) Project is a cooperative agreement between ACDI/VOCA and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) under its Food for Progress (FFPr) Program. The project aims to increase livestock and poultry productivity by further developing the animal feed sector. Ethiopia's livestock population is the largest on the African continent; livestock contributes to the livelihoods of 60 to 70 percent of Ethiopia's population. Feed is fundamental to livestock growth and sustainability in Ethiopia, yet there are major constraints limiting development of the livestock and poultry sector. The project objectives are to increase the productivity of livestock and poultry in Ethiopia by developing the animal feed sector, and to expand the trade of agriculture products in the livestock and poultry sectors.

FEED III builds upon the successes of FEED I and II by expanding into new geographic areas in the regional states of Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and SNNPR, working together with FEED I and II agricultural cooperative unions and their member cooperatives, as well as private sector actors, to expand markets and maximize returns on human and physical infrastructure investments made during the previous two phases. FEED III works to improve the enabling environment through capacity building activities targeting relevant regulatory bodies and policy makers. The following are the five major activity areas FEED III addresses:

1. Develop feed ingredient supply chain and improve the policy and regulatory environment
2. Build capacity and grow feed sector enterprises
3. Develop sustainable forage production systems
4. Expand fattening, dairy, and poultry enterprises
5. Promote improved on-farm feeding practices

Ethiopia's development has faced multiple challenges, from political and social conflict to climate-related crises. While droughts have prompted development partners to respond to the humanitarian crises to provide relief to the people of the country, they have not adequately addressed the correlated livestock crises. Livestock are important for livelihoods, including those of women. Research shows that past livestock interventions did not always benefit women. Since women worldwide make up approximately two-thirds of livestock keepers, there was a push to look at gender within livestock systems. As a result, subsequent livestock development projects became more appropriate for and accessible to women<sup>1</sup>.

To effectively address and increase livestock and poultry productivity, the FEED project looked at gender gaps and inequalities and how they affect access and opportunities within the livestock sector. Gender has been a cross-cutting issue throughout the project. During FEED II, the project developed a Gender Strategy. The strategy was developed in compliance with the ACDI/VOCA Gender Policy, which

---

<sup>1</sup> Kristjanson, P., Waters-Bayer, A., Johnson, N., Tipilda, A., Njuki, J., Baltenweck, I., Grace, D., and MacMillan, S. 2010. Livestock and Women's Livelihoods: A Review of the Recent Evidence. Discussion Paper No. 20. Nairobi, Kenya, ILRI

emphasizes gender equitable development as a means of alleviating gender equality gaps. The project conducted numerous activities to ensure gender was fully considered throughout the life of the project, such as conducting gender awareness training for staff and stakeholders, ensuring farmers' training met a minimum of 30 percent women's active participation, providing grants to women's groups, and offering specific training to women and women-dominated enterprises on business management and technical issues. The Gender Learning Study was conducted to assess how FEED III activities resulted in changes on gender equity and women's empowerment.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary objectives of the Gender Learning Study are:

- To understand the results the FEED II/III project had on gender equity and women's empowerment (intended or unintended) from the point of view of the project participants
- To understand project and government staff's perceptions on how successful the project's interventions were in achieving gender equity and women's empowerment, and if these varied from project participants
- To inform the project team and home office on best practices and recommendations for future projects when working with women's groups and women smallholder farmers

The guiding research questions are:

1. What results did the FEED III project interventions have on gender equality and women's empowerment?
2. Which project strategies worked well and why?
3. What challenges did the project face and how were they addressed?



## RESEARCH METHODS

This learning study used a combination of focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) to collect data from women smallholder farmers, women's groups, FEED III project staff, and government staff. FGDs were used with women smallholder farmers and members of women's groups to collect more data in a short amount of time. KIIs were used to collect data from project and government staff, allowing the team to gather data from a range of people with different roles and positions on the project for a variety of perspectives.

The research team developed four qualitative data collection tools to conduct data collection. Primary data were collected through FGDs and KIIs. All data collection tools, including FGD and KII guides, can be found in [Annex A](#).

## SAMPLING, PARTICIPANT CRITERIA, AND DATA COLLECTION

FEED III implements activities across four regions in Ethiopia: Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, and Tigray, where over 80 percent of the country’s livestock population resides. To ensure equal representation across all regions, the research team collected data from each of these regions. The sampling frame used to select participants for the FGDs included only female program participants, involving those who were engaged in women’s groups or as women smallholder farmers. Random sampling was used to identify one women’s group per region to partake in an FGD.

Furthermore, to capture learning around the success of the grants, the random sampling of the women’s groups was done among those groups that received grants under FEED II because grants were not distributed under FEED III. The research team also randomly selected two woredas per region, and within those woredas, randomly selected one kebele where the FGDs for women smallholder farmers were conducted. These FGDs were no larger than approximately 12 participants. Participants were selected using the same method of random sampling as the women’s groups. See **Table A** for total number of interviewed participants by region.

KIIs were conducted for FEED III project staff and government staff. The main criteria for project staff were those who were engaged in the selection and evaluation of the women’s groups and were involved in training processes. For the government staff, participants were selected if they had supported and worked with women’s groups, or if they engaged and trained women smallholder farmers.

Table A: Total Number of Interviewed Participants by Region

Gender Learning Study Participants	Amhara Region	Oromia Region	SNNPR Region	Tigray Region
Women Smallholder Farmers	16	12	23	21
Members of Women Groups	4	8	11	15
FEED III Project Staff	2	3	3	3
Government Staff	2	2	2	2

A total of 12 FGDs were conducted. Four FGDs (one per region) were conducted with women who are a part of a women’s group and eight FGDs (two per region) were conducted with women smallholder farmers. The research team also conduct KIIs with in-country FEED staff (11 KIIs) and government staff (8 KIIs). All data were collected and transcribed between October 5 and October 28, 2020.

## COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

The research team took necessary steps and precautions, following all health regulations and guidance, to ensure the safety and health of our participants and team were a top priority. All FGDs were limited to approximately 12 participants and conducted in a location that provided sufficient space between each of the participants. Additionally, participants from both FGDs and KIIs were required to wear a facial mask and follow proper handwashing procedures.

## DATA ANALYSIS

All FGDs and KIIs were audio-recorded to help in accurate notetaking and transcribing data. It was the responsibility of the local consultants to transcribe all data, including cleaning and translating the transcripts prior to sending to the HQ Associate Director of Gender and Youth for coding and analysis. The HQ Associate Director of Gender and Youth developed a code book for data analysis. Once all data were coded and analyzed, the HQ Associate Director of Gender and Youth drafted and finalized the Gender Learning Study.

## LIMITATIONS

Due to time limitations and COVID-19 precautions, the consultants were only able to interview a small percentage of FEED III stakeholders and participants. FEED III worked with approximately 34,755 smallholder farmers. Of those, approximately 12,713 were women; however, the team was only able to reach 73 of them, resulting in a small sample size in comparison to how many women smallholder farmers with whom they worked. Moreover, the research aimed to gather substantial information on grants the women's groups received during their time working under FEED II. However, the consultants were only able to conduct one FGD per region with women's groups, resulting in inadequate primary data to draw any conclusions regarding how the grants impacted these groups.

There was insufficient time between developing the data collection tools and data collection, which impacted the ability to translate the data collection tools to Amharic and other local languages. Furthermore, all the transcripts had to be translated from Amharic and local languages to English. There is the possibility that some nuance and meaning was lost in translation both when the data collectors were asking the questions and when the transcripts were being translated to English. Although there was a genuine attempt to document word for word what was said by respondents, there is a possibility that some phrases were left out. Data collectors used their phones or other handheld recording devices to capture the interviews, but due to lack of time and human resources, the team was unable to verify if the transcription captured all phrases.

In addition, data collection tools were not piloted because of the short timeline for data collection. As a result, the research team could not make any changes on the tools to help strengthen them or test whether the instruments' formats were comprehensible and appropriate for the targeted participants.

The local data collectors had varying degrees of knowledge on how to conduct FGDs and KIIs. Some of the facilitators did not properly use the probe questions, resulting in a lack of data collected. The consultants did not go through an ACIDI/VOCA data collectors training, which could have mitigated this issue. Because of COVID-19, international travel was restricted, and the HQ Associate Director of Gender and Youth was unable to be in country to oversee the onboarding of the local consultants, which would have included a refresher training on qualitative research methods and data collection.

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

#### 1.1 INCREASED RESOURCES

Women's economic empowerment is a fundamental component to realizing women's rights and gender equality. Economic empowerment is defined as women's ability to participate equally in existing markets, have access and control over their productive resources, access to sustainable work, control over their own time, and an increase in their voice, agency, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making<sup>2</sup>.

A key finding in this study was that respondents from all four regions agreed that improving their skills and knowledge positively impacted their incomes. For example, respondents mentioned that learning about giving their chickens clean water improved the health of the chickens, allowing women to sell them for a better price. Women also commented that learning about the importance of cattle feed, such as growing and feeding their cattle good forage instead of grass, resulted in their cows producing higher quality milk, which they can sell for a better price.

Respondents said they have improved self-confidence and knowledge on best practices when working on the farm with poultry and livestock, which has contributed to a shift in responsibility of "masculine" work, such as livestock production, from being solely men's work to now being the work of both men and women. Respondents from the women's group FGDs and the women smallholder farmers FGDs explained that the shift in responsibility and an increase in income has provided women opportunities to play a larger role in overseeing the family money and better positioned at home for joint decision-making because they are seen as knowledgeable farmers and equal income-contributing members of the family.

Women's increased knowledge and skills have led to higher quality and quantity of products to sell, resulting in higher family income. Respondents reported that, prior to working with the FEED III project, the main challenge they faced was a lack of income. Due to FEED III trainings, women feel equipped with proper skills and knowledge on poultry, livestock, and forage development. This enables them to practice better farming techniques, leading to improved products to sell, which increases their incomes. FGDs respondents agreed that their higher income is linked to economic independence from their husbands because they are economically contributing members of the family. With this independence, women mentioned they are now able to save money or use it to send their children to school.

*Sometimes when I receive 5000 ETB from my bank account, I doubt its mine because I've never earned this much*

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures#:~:text=Women's%20economic%20empowerment%20includes%20women's,economic%20decision%20making%20at%20all>



*money from milk! If I withdraw 3000, the remaining 2000 goes to savings and this means a lot to a woman like me.*

*—Member of a Women's Group, Oromia*

## 1.2 WOMEN'S TIME-USE AND WORKLOAD

In addition to increased income, respondents said the FEED III trainings provided women with information on how to care for their livestock that saves them time. Many of the interviewed respondents mentioned they are typically burdened with the responsibility of traveling outside of the home in search of forage to feed their livestock. Women said at times they must travel quite far to find and collect forage. Women smallholder farmers remain largely dependent on their own physical labor to keep up their farm and livestock, which cuts into valuable time they can use for income generating activities.



Improving practices that result in better time-use and workload has been noted as an improvement due to the FEED III trainings. An example of this is by looking at the impact forage development trainings had on women. Many respondents said the trainings offered them an opportunity to learn how and where to grow forage in their own backyards (or close by), eliminating any travel associated with feeding their livestock and allowing them to spend more time on the farm.

*Previously, we used to travel long distances to get forage and animal feed. This takes us time to travel, collect, and come back home. But now, we are growing it in our backyards. We have saved time.*

*—Woman Smallholder Farmer, SNNPR*

## 1.3 DECISION-MAKING

Substantial evidence suggests that bargaining power of individual household members can affect outcomes experienced by households and the individuals within them<sup>3</sup>. One way to measure an individuals' bargaining power is the extent to which they are involved in household decision making. This approach assumes that individuals who make more decisions over household production or consumption issues are more empowered and have increased agency. Many respondents gave credit to FEED III trainings for improving their decision-making abilities. Their increased capacity to critically think

---

<sup>3</sup> Doss, C. (2013). Intra-household bargaining and resource allocation in developing countries.

about their farm and livestock and have the knowledge to make sound decisions allows their husbands to see them as equal farmers, gaining more respect and having the ability to make household decisions they previously couldn't, such as those regarding household income and expenditure.

Women reported they now believe they should be involved and actively engaged in all farming activities. The increase in women's economic contributions have improved their status within the household, but it also has boosted their confidence on the farm, giving them the self-confidence it takes to make farming and household decisions jointly or independently from their husbands.

*We have developed self-confidence, as we are making income for the household as our spouses are doing. So, we equally decide matters of the family.*

*—Women Smallholder Farmer, Tigray*

## 2. EFFECTIVE TRAINING STRATEGIES

Data collected from all respondents indicated the training strategies were effective in increasing and retaining women's engagement. Women in Ethiopia are subject to strong gender roles that can limit their ability to attend events like trainings. Women's "assigned" work, such as cooking, cleaning the house, caregiving for children, fetching water, caring for the elderly or sick, washing clothes, and collecting firewood, are all time-consuming responsibilities. The qualitative data collected from all respondents revealed that these barriers were considered when designing the trainings, resulting in strategies that were effective and successful to draw in and retain women.

### 2.1 VENUE LOCATION

Prior to FEED III trainings, women typically found it very hard to attend events like trainings due to the venue location being far away from their homes and taking time away from completing their heavy household responsibilities. In addition, women participants do not have personal childcare, making it even more burdensome to travel if they need to bring their children along with them. However, FEED III took venue location into consideration and conducted trainings at the Kebele level. This allowed women an opportunity to attend the sessions without having to travel any distance, making it easier for attendees to get to regardless of sex.

### 2.2 TRAINING MATERIAL

The literacy rate for Ethiopia is approximately 51.7 percent for people over the age of 15. Women have lower literacy levels in comparison to their male counterparts, with women over the age of 15 at 44.4 percent and men at 59.2 percent<sup>4</sup>. Addressing the training needs of participants with varying literacy levels was regarded as one of the most effective strategies from all respondents. With the support of a Pico projector<sup>5</sup> and video-based training, FEED III developed materials that all participants could easily follow and understand.

---

<sup>4</sup> Data for the Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved November 09, 2020, from <http://uis.unesco.org/en/home>

<sup>5</sup> A mini portable projector.

Audiovisual technology was new for many of the participants. Videos were pre-recorded, uploaded to external memory devices, and given to each of the four woredas. The training followed best teaching techniques and practices suitable for adults with low literacy levels, including a combination of visual teaching material with practical sessions to see how to use the knowledge and skills in real time.

*Audio-video training materials were easy and understandable for participants with different literacy levels. The materials were prepared based on the real life of farmers and mirror their own farming life, which made the material easy to understand by the different segments of the participants.*

—ACDI/VOCA, Regional Coordinator, SNNPR

Different language considerations were acknowledged, and audiovisual training materials were translated from Amharic into local languages, further making the training material more accessible to a wider audience. In the regions Oromia and Tigray, training videos were readily available in the different languages spoken throughout the region; however, in SNNPR, due to the diverse range of languages, training material was kept in Amharic.

The facilitation team resolved any issues related to language barriers by having the training facilitators explain the topic in the local language in between sessions. In addition, respondents commented at the end of each training session there was allocated time given to participants to debrief and discuss the session, giving an opportunity to further elaborate on the training topic and make sure each participant fully understood the core concepts of the training.

### 2.3 DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES

As previously stated, most households in Ethiopia adhere to gendered household roles and responsibilities. Many daily tasks are allocated or explicitly labeled as women's work. The most noticeable pattern in the division of labor is women are typically confined to routine domestic and caregiving tasks, such as house cleaning, food shopping and preparation, and taking care of the children.

To maintain at least 30 percent participation from women, FEED III made sure training sessions did not impede or create heavier burdens for participating women by considering the timing of the training, market days, holidays, and the harvesting period when making the schedule. One respondent reported that they consulted with local kebele staff and participants to understand women's schedules to make sure they were not hindering women. In doing this, the pressure to choose between attending a session and completing daily tasks was minimized.

*Careful preparation of the training schedule in consultation with the Kebele office staffs and beneficiaries, exclusion of market days from the training schedule, and identification of nearby training venues convenient for women (i.e., FTC, schools, private houses/compounds, halls/houses/compounds of religious institutions) were the major strategies used by the project to reduce the impact of the identified barriers.*

—ACDI/VOCA Forage Development Specialist, SNPPR

In addition to the many domestic responsibilities women have, they are also the main caregiver in most households. The constraints women are under is due in large part to time spent on care, and how that hinders opportunities in other areas of life. Women in Ethiopia take on most of the responsibility of childcare, which means many times they are paying a price of working more hours and having fewer opportunities. In response to that barrier, FEED III encouraged women to bring their children along with them to the trainings if they had no other option. Respondents noted that women could easily take care of their children and still stay engaged with the session. A few respondents commented that, on occasion, it would cause a distraction if the baby or child began to cry, but that more often than not, it did not cause any real issue.

*We have tried to provide the children (who came to the training sessions along with their mothers) to feel comfortable by preparing places for them to move around and provide them with some things to eat.*

*—ACDI/VOCA Livestock Specialist, Amhara*

## 2.4 TRAINING TOPICS

Respondents agreed that all training topics and sessions were beneficial and noted that one topic was not more valuable than another; many commented on the interrelatedness of each of the topics. There was a high response rate that training on forage development was very informative. Common responses as to why forage development trainings were beneficial ranged from gaining better knowledge on how to feed livestock more nutritious food, improving a skill that is used daily, and participating in a training that was easy to understand.

*Without healthy cows, we do not have quality milk. Without feeding cows a variety of forages, it is impossible to get enough milk production. Thus, I put trainings about cattle treatment as most important and the feeding practices second.*

*—Member of a Women's Group, Oromia*

There was no consensus on training topics that were “less beneficial.” When respondents commented on topics that were not as useful, their reasons were because they were not personally benefitting from it. For example, some respondents commented that learning techniques on animal care was not helpful, such as shelter construction, because the cost of building shelters is too expensive for them, so they are unable to use those skills or knowledge. Yet, there was no agreement on topics that should be eliminated from the training.

A few respondents noted the sessions with a segment on recordkeeping seemed to be less effective compared to training topics on poultry, livestock, and forage development. The training on recordkeeping was not provided as a standalone training, but delivered at the end of another training topic, limiting the time devoted to it. Moreover, respondents commented that the recordkeeping sessions were not included in the audiovisual training material and lacked allocated time for practicing the skill, resulting in limited knowledge and skill increase in recordkeeping.

Respondents were asked if there were any additional skills or knowledge women needed to fully realize

their opportunities in agriculture. Although there was no agreement on topics they felt the training lacked, most respondents commented that it would have been beneficial if FEED III had follow-up or refresher trainings. Refresher trainings provide the opportunity to ensure important skills and knowledge that have been learned are not lost due to lack of use. Women smallholder farmers and members of women's groups both commented that having additional refresher trainings would be valuable and useful to make sure they are remembering and practicing the techniques properly. Many of the women participants have low literacy levels, making it difficult for them to take written material home with which to refresh their memories.



*Everything was good and satisfactory, but I assume it would have been better had the training had refresher trainings. You know, we are busy women. We have a lot of responsibilities to think about. We can forget the knowledge we obtained on the initial training as time passes. Refreshing our memories is a good thing to solve such problems.*

—Women Smallholder Farmer, Amhara

Moreover, there was mention that trainings could have benefited more from integrating gender equity discussions throughout all the activities. Respondents were able to see the connection between increased empowerment that came with more knowledge and skills and stated that targeted gender equality trainings could act as an additional tool to provide all participants relevant information and contribute to raising awareness on the gender inequalities women face on and off the farm.

Women farmers are typically not as productive as men due to a variety of reasons like less access to land, farming techniques, credit, and training. Respondents from both the women smallholder farmers and women's group FGDs commented that expanding awareness on gender equality issues to include information on things like the importance of shared childcare and financial literacy, in addition to facilitating better market linkages, would support expanding their access to equal opportunities.

### 3. MEETING GENDER TARGETS

The project had a target of hitting at least 30 percent women training participants. This was effective and the project was easily able to meet that percentage due to the FEED III team understanding the

importance of appropriate venue selection, accommodating women's schedules and domestic responsibilities, allowing them to bring their children, and providing training material that was accessible to all literacy levels. Due to the success of the training strategies, many respondents from both FGDs and KIIs reported that FEED III should have a higher target percentage to reach in terms of number of women attending.

Respondents also mentioned that recruitment strategies should take into consideration working with more rural or smaller kebeles to work with women who are in very vulnerable situations. However, recruitment constraints impacted where the program implemented trainings, limiting program reach into more areas and affecting the number of women in attendance.

*Regarding gender equality and women's empowerment, women must comprise 50 percent of the trainees in the future to increase the participation of women in the forage and livestock development sectors.*

*—ACDI/VOCA Forage Development Specialist, SNNPR*

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, FEED III was able to actively engage women in their trainings, which had multiple positive results for women and their households. The findings clearly show that the trainings had an impact on gender equity and women's empowerment. Designing trainings with effective strategies, such as considering accessible venue location, providing training materials that accommodate different literacy levels, and allowing training participants to bring their children to the sessions, provided women an opportunity to equally participate in these trainings and improve their knowledge and skills in poultry, livestock, and forage development.

Due to their improved knowledge and skills, women have been able to implement better practices regarding poultry, livestock, and forage development, contributing to their increased incomes. As a result of higher incomes, women smallholder farmers and members of women's groups stated that their husbands recognize them as equal household earners and more knowledgeable farmers. The gender gaps regarding income, time-burdens, and household decision making shrunk for many respondents, improving their self-confidence and ability to fully realize their potential.

The strategies FEED III took to improve on-farm practices, like developing training material that could be used with illiterate populations, using accessible training locations, and allowing women to bring their children, were effective for recruiting and retaining women. The training sessions, with support from the Pico projector and audiovisual-assisted technology, were successful in teaching project participants, including women with varying literacy levels. There have been many efforts from the Government of Ethiopia to improve the country's overall literacy rate. However, despite these efforts, illiteracy remains an issue for many people, particularly adult women.

A large majority of programs in Ethiopia have prioritized basic literacy skills for women, yet do not

address women's basic livelihood needs<sup>6</sup>. FEED III was able to address those needs and effectively reach women. However, the findings conclude that more women should be reached by these types of beneficial programs. The findings show that it was not due to inaccessibility to the training that prevented women from attending; rather, recruitment limitations impacted where the program implemented the training, resulting in recruitment strategies falling short of reaching a higher percentage of women and women in the most rural areas.

For women the program did work with, it was imperative for their success to make sure training designs took the barriers they face into consideration. Women and girls are largely disadvantaged compared to men and boys in Ethiopia. As mentioned throughout this study, women are heavily involved in agriculture work, yet there is a persistent belief they "don't farm" or are not equal economic contributors to their household. These ideas can be traced back to traditional views on women, gendered division of labor, or socially established gender roles.

Gender roles make it increasingly difficult for women to engage in educational opportunities like the FEED III training due to their heavy reproductive labor. The project's findings conclude that training location and schedule, and allowing women to bring their children to the sessions, were key to successful training outcomes for women participants. Eliminating long distance travel, arranging session times to accommodate women's busy schedules, and creating an environment where women are encouraged to bring their children were fundamental for FEED III in creating inclusive trainings for both men and women.

In addition, there is potential for women to play a major role in a possible cash crop that could elevate their role in the household. There is limited data currently on forage development becoming a profitable and income-generating activity. Further research should look at whether FEED III's investment in animal feed is transforming the way people see animal fodder from an unpaid task to profitable and in-demand.

Primary research lacked sufficient information to draw any definite findings on how grants impact women's groups. However, reviewing the Rapid Gender Impact Assessment Report from FEED II in combination with the primary data collected shows grants likely had an overall positive impact for women's groups. Grants supported women's groups by providing them resources to purchase equipment like milk cans, freezers, milk turning machines for butter and cheese production, and Bajajs<sup>7</sup> for transportation purposes. Obtaining such equipment increases women's time savings. This allows women to engage in productive, income-generating tasks.

The Rapid Gender Impact Assessment Report mentions that members of these cooperatives would walk for ten kilometers, or two plus hours, to bring their milk to a cooperation collection center. However, with the introduction of Bajajs, milk is now transported by a vehicle, freeing up those hours women spent walking to now use for taking care of other work on the farm. Owning technology that reduces

---

<sup>6</sup>Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme (IWEP), Ethiopia. <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/integrated-womens-empowerment-programme-iwep>

<sup>7</sup> A three-wheeled motorized vehicle used for transport.

women's time and labor burdens enables women to have more opportunities for productive work, leading to increases in economic empowerment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

FEED III used approaches and strategies that led to the active inclusion and retention of women in their trainings. By being intentional about what hinders women to fully engage in trainings and group activities, FEED III was able to specifically address those challenges, providing women with accessible trainings and improving their knowledge and skills. This resulted in higher incomes, increased capability to make decisions on the farm, and higher self-confidence. Yet, while skill and knowledge improvements were substantial, adaptations could be made to increase the positive impacts the project made.

### GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender mainstreaming is an important strategy towards realizing gender equality. Integrating a gender perspective into preparation, design, and implementation is key to promoting equity between men and women and combating discrimination. While barriers were taken into consideration to improve women's access to and understanding of the trainings and material, there was no additional information on gender inequalities or discrimination that women face throughout the agricultural sector.

Women's roles in agriculture vary across regions in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, women from all regions face gender-specific constraints related to socio-cultural forces that serve to reduce their agricultural productivity and limit their production ability. For example, women face serious gender gaps in access to productive resources because farming is considered a man's task. There is opportunity to build awareness and challenge predominant norms that impede full participation and benefit of women. For the project to successfully create spaces for women to work and earn income, men need to understand the importance of women's active participation. Integrating gender more fully, and incorporating male engagement approaches rather than relying on women-only approaches, could contribute to a more inclusive agricultural sector in Ethiopia.

### INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Benefits of the training were substantial in terms of increased income. This resulted in women feeling empowered and having more decision-making abilities within the household. FEED III could positively affect more women if the program had the ability to reach a higher percentage of women, specifically those living in the most rural areas of the woredas. The project achieved the minimum requirement of 30 percent participation from women. However, due to the large percentage of women who work in the agricultural sector, and in conclusion of the findings, future projects should substantially increase the minimum target percentage and work with program partners, such as extension service providers, on ways to expand their reach into geographic areas less served.

Continuous awareness on the importance of women's attendance and their engagement in these trainings is a critical component in advocating for gender equality. The findings show that it was not



inaccessibility to the training that prevented additional women in the targeted communities from attending, but rather that recruitment strategies fell short. A more effective recruitment strategy is needed, such as more support to local government partners for participant identification, and, should the budget allow, piloting new approaches like training couples together for future projects.

### REFRESHER TRAININGS

Participants benefited from the FEED III trainings but stated that refresher trainings or follow-up sessions would have improved their retainment of the knowledge they gained. By incorporating additional refresher trainings, participants would have more opportunities to practice and observe these new skills and have more success in remembering the new skills they learned during the initial sessions. Considering the low literacy levels of women participants, providing material to take home to consult if they need clarification is not an option. The project should therefore make sure extension service providers identify participants' follow-up needs and at what frequency to conduct refresher trainings to improve outcomes. This will also support sustainability after the program ends.

### AUDIOVISUAL AND HANDS-ON LEARNING

The findings showed that participants enjoyed and gained valuable knowledge on livestock, poultry, and forage development. In addition, a few respondents mentioned a short training on recordkeeping. However, they stated that this training was added to the end of another training and did not use the Pico projector format to teach the material. In addition, they did not have dedicated time to practice the skills they learned on that topic.

The Pico projector and having time to practice skills were key factors in successfully teaching participants with varying literacy levels. All training sessions should take the same format as those on poultry, livestock, and forage development, combining audiovisual and practical field sessions, so material is accessible for all participants regardless of their literacy level.

# ANNEX A

## WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Focus Group Discussion Template

#### Women Smallholder Farmers Focus Group Discussion

Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Group (Woreda/ Kebele): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Introduction:

Hello, thank you so much for participating today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a representative of the FEED III team conducting a learning study on the work the project has done with women. We are interested in how FEED III has been able to benefit you and what improvements could be made for future projects.

Your participation is **voluntary**—this means that you do not have to answer these questions. Whether you take part or not will not affect any future support that you receive. Additionally, you may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the interview without giving a reason. All information that you provide us will remain strictly private and confidential; we may describe the results generally, but any identifying information will be omitted. If we do end up wanting to name you specifically in the final report, we will seek written consent from you. I would like to know if you all still wish to proceed with this focus group discussion. *(If no, please thank the participant for their time. If yes, please have them fill out the participant list, including their signature indicating their consent to participate.)* Signing your name or providing your fingerprint indicates that you are voluntarily participating in this interview. Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

1. Please tell me how long you've been engaged with the FEED III project, including how you've been engaged with FEED III?
2. Prior to working with FEED III, what were the main challenges you faced as smallholder farmers? After working with FEED III, do you still experience these challenges? Please explain.
3. What have been the greatest changes or benefits you have seen since working with FEED III? Please explain how these changes came about and how they have affected you?

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Have your decision-making abilities changed? If so, how?*

- *Have you seen a change in your income? If so, how?*
- *Has there been a change in your labor or time-use? If so, how?*
- *Have there been any negative or unintended changes? If so, what were they and how did they affect you?*

4. The next questions will look at the trainings you received through the project. What trainings have you received since working with FEED III? What were the most beneficial training topics and why? What were the least beneficial training topics and why?

*If needed, please make sure to probe specifically on the **why** aspect of this question.*

- *What made a topic beneficial?*
- *What made a topic not beneficial?*

5. Have you been able to apply the skills or information you have gained through FEED III trainings to your work? If yes, please explain how you've applied them. If no, why not?
6. Please describe any changes you've seen or experienced as a result of FEED III trainings you received.

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Do you have more confidence in your abilities? If so, how has this impacted you?*
- *Do you feel your community treats or sees you differently? If so, how?*
- *Do you have greater access to the market? If so, how?*

7. Have you been able to replicate or share the knowledge you acquired through the trainings with anyone? If so, what knowledge and with whom? If no, why not?
8. In your opinion, was FEED III successful in delivering trainings and information to women in your community? If yes, why? If no, why not?
9. What advice do you have for the project to make it more successful in targeting and training women? What specific information or skills do women still need to fully realize their opportunities in agriculture?
10. If you had the opportunity to work with FEED III again, what improvements or recommendations would you make for the project to be more successful in working with you?
11. Thank you so much for participating today. Do you have any questions or comments for me?

## WOMEN'S GROUP FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Focus Group Discussion Template

#### Women's Groups Focus Group Discussion

Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Group (Location): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Introduction:

Hello, thank you so much for participating today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a representative of the FEED III team conducting a learning study on the work the project has done with women. We are interested in how FEED III has been able to benefit you and what improvements could be made for future projects.

Your participation is **voluntary**—this means that you do not have to answer these questions. Whether you take part or not will not affect any future support that you receive. Additionally, you may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the interview without giving a reason. All information that you provide us will remain strictly private and confidential; we may describe the results generally, but any identifying information will be omitted. If we do end up wanting to name you specifically in the final report, we will seek written consent from you. That being said, I would like to know if you all still wish to proceed with this focus group discussion. (*If no, please thank the participant for their time. If yes, please have them fill out the participant list, including their signature indicating their consent to participate.*) Signing your name or providing your fingerprint indicates that you are voluntarily participating in this interview. Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

1. Can you please tell me a bit about this group? What do you do and how long have you been engaged with FEED II?

*If needed please use this probing question:*

- *In what ways have you been engaged with FEED II?*

2. Prior to working with FEED II, what were the main challenges the group faced? After working with FEED II, do you still experience these challenges? Please explain.
3. How have the FEED II grants impacted this group? Please explain how the grants have made an impact on you, your work, and this group.

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Did the grants impact your decision-making abilities? If so, how?*
- *Did the grants impact your income? If so, how?*
- *Did the grants impact your labor or time-use? If so, how?*
- *Did the grants have any negative or unintended impacts on you or this group? If so, what were they and how did they affect you or this group?*

4. The next questions will look at the training you received through the project. What trainings have you received since working with FEED II? What were the most beneficial training topics and why? What were the least beneficial training topics and why?

*If needed, please make sure to probe specifically on the **why** aspect of this question.*

- *What made a topic beneficial?*
  - *What made a topic not beneficial?*
5. Have you been able to apply the skills or information you have gained through FEED II trainings to your work? If yes, please explain how you've applied them. If no, why not?
  6. Please describe any changes you've seen or experienced as a result of the FEED II trainings you received.

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Do you have more confidence in your abilities? If so, how has this impacted you?*
  - *Do you feel your community treats you or sees you differently? If so, how?*
  - *Do you have greater access to the market? If so, how?*
7. Have you been able to replicate or share the knowledge you acquired through the trainings with anyone? If so, what knowledge and with whom? If no, why not?
  8. In your opinion, was FEED II successful in delivering trainings and information to women in your community? If yes, why? If no, why not?
  9. What advice do you have for the project to make it more successful in targeting and training women? What specific information or skills do women still need to fully realize their opportunities in agriculture?
  10. If you had the opportunity to work with FEED II again, what improvements or recommendations would you make for the project to be more successful in working with you?
  11. Do you have any other questions or comments?

## FEED III PROJECT STAFF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Key Informant Interview Guide Template

#### FEED III Project Staff Key Informant Interview Guide

Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee (Title, Location): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Hello, thank you so much for participating today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a representative of the FEED III team conducting a learning study on the work the project has done with women. We're interested in how the FEED III project has been able to benefit women and what improvements could be made for future projects.

Your participation is **voluntary**—this means that you do not have to answer these questions. Whether you take part or not will not affect you. Additionally, you may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the interview without giving a reason. All information that you provide us will remain strictly private and confidential; we may describe the results generally, but any identifying information will be omitted. If we do end up wanting to name you specifically in the final report, we will seek written consent from you. I would like to know if you still wish to proceed with this interview. *(If no, please thank the participant for their time. If yes, please have them fill out the participant list, including their signature indicating their consent to participate.)* Signing your name or providing your fingerprint indicates that you are voluntarily participating in this interview. Do you have any questions before we get started?

1. How long have you worked with the FEED III project and what is your role?
2. The following questions will be about trainings. In your opinion, what were the most effective strategies FEED III used to target and train women? What made these strategies so effective?

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Which training topics were the most effective? Why?*
- *Which training topics were the least effective? Why?*

3. Did you observe any barriers women faced to participate in these trainings? If so, what were they?

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Was the training location convenient? Why or why not?*
- *Was the time of the trainings suitable for women's schedule? Why or why not?*

- *Do you think women had any issues attending due to household and/or childcare responsibilities? If yes, could the project have adapted anything to take these responsibilities into consideration?*
  - *Was the training material easy to read and understand for different literacy levels? If so, how? If no, what adaptations could have been made to make the material more accessible?*
4. Have you seen or observed any changes from or benefits to women as a result of participating in these trainings? If so, what have they been? Have these changes led to any other gender outcomes?

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Have you seen a change in their income? If so, how?*
  - *Has there been a change in their labor or time-use? If so, how?*
  - *Have there been any negative or unintended changes? If so, what were they and how did they affect them?*
5. Is there additional information or skills women need access to in order to fully realize their opportunities in agriculture? If so, what are these?
6. Are there any other strategies FEED III used to successfully promote and advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment? If so, what were these and why do you think they were successful?
7. If you had the opportunity to work with FEED III again, what improvements or recommendations would you make for the project to be more successful in promoting messages and achieving gender equality and women's empowerment results?
8. Thank you so much for participating today. Do you have any questions for me or any comments before we end?

## GOVERNMENT STAFF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Key Informant Interview Guide Template

#### Government Staff Key Informant Interview Guide

Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee (Title, Location): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Hello, thank you so much for participating today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a representative of the FEED III team conducting a learning study on the work the project has done with women. We're interested in how the FEED III project has been able to benefit women and what improvements could be made for future projects.

Your participation is **voluntary**—this means that you do not have to answer these questions. Whether you take part or not will not affect you. Additionally, you may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the interview without giving a reason. All information that you provide us will remain strictly private and confidential; we may describe the results generally, but any identifying information will be omitted. If we do end up wanting to name you specifically in the final report, we will seek written consent from you. I would like to know if you still wish to proceed with this interview. (*If no, please thank the participant for their time. If yes, please have them fill out the participant list, including their signature indicating their consent to participate.*) Signing your name or providing your fingerprint indicates that you are voluntarily participating in this interview. Do you have any questions before we get started?

1. How long has your organization been working in collaboration with FEED III and what has been your role?
2. The following questions will be about trainings. In your opinion, what were the most effective strategies FEED III used to target and train women? What made these strategies so effective?

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Which training topics were the most effective? Why?*
  - *Which training topics were the least effective? Why?*
3. Did you observe any barriers women faced to participate in these trainings? If so, what were they?

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Was the training location convenient? Why or why not?*
- *Was the time of the trainings suitable for women's schedule? Why or why not?*



- *Do you think women had any issues attending due to household and/or childcare responsibilities? If yes, could the project have adapted anything to take these responsibilities into consideration?*
  - *Was the training material easy to read and understand for different literacy levels? If so, how? If no, what adaptations could have been made to make the material more accessible?*
4. Have you seen or observed any changes from or benefits to women as a result of participating in these trainings? If so, what have they been? Have these changes led to any other gender outcomes?

*If needed, please use these probing questions:*

- *Have you seen a change in their income? If so, how?*
  - *Has there been a change in their labor or time-use? If so, how?*
  - *Have there been any negative or unintended changes? If so, what were they and how did they affect them?*
5. Is there additional information or skills women need access to in order to fully realize their opportunities in agriculture? If so, what are these?
6. Are there any other strategies FEED III used to successfully promote and advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment? If so, what were these and why do you think they were successful?
7. If you had the opportunity to work with FEED III again, what improvements or recommendations would you make for the project to be more successful in promoting messages and achieving gender equality and women's empowerment results?
8. Thank you so much for participating today. Do you have any questions for me or any comments before we end?