



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



World Vision



Increasing incomes, building confidence

DryDev is changing the lives of rural women in the drylands of Ethiopia

Impact brief series

Background

Over the past decade, while gender parity scores in Ethiopia have improved (from .59 in 2007 to .66 in 2017)¹, women are still lagging far behind men in many spheres of life. Ethiopia's highly patriarchal society makes women's participation in the economy limited. Consideration must be made when encouraging women's participation in any rural development programme. This is particularly the case for landscape restoration programmes, such as the Drylands Development Programme (DryDev) because their participation may increase their burden without necessarily benefitting them.

At DryDev implementation sites, landscape management and farming are considered "men's work" and women are not very active in marketing either. Local committees and institutions, including cooperatives, have been historically dominated by men, especially in leadership roles.²

DryDev Ethiopia has been working to increase women's participation in the programme in a culturally-sensitive manner and in line with the Government of Ethiopia's commitment towards women's empowerment in their "Growth and Transformation Plan II". DryDev interventions are aimed at increasing women's economic capacities as well as their participation in wider community development interventions. This approach aligns with the well-understood and established pathways between women's economic empowerment, gender equality and poverty eradication.³

What has DryDev achieved?

The DryDev programme in Ethiopia has successfully increased women's participation in various interventions since the beginning of the programme in 2014. As of June 2018, 22,441 women were reached by the programme, which is nearly 40 percent of the total community members reached. Nearly 30 percent of sub-watershed (SWS) committee members and 70 percent of savings group (SGs) members are women. More than 8,400 women have been reached with various climate-smart production options and 7,100 women are participating in various value-chains.

As a result of their participation in various programme interventions, women have improved their skills, enhanced confidence, increased income and have a stronger voice at a household and community level.

The DryDev external programme review (2018) undertaken using mainly qualitative methods concluded that:

- "Women have been empowered by the project by training them on natural resource management (NRM) and area closure and subsequent income-generating activities."
- "Women have been empowered in some areas where value-chain commodities, such as dairy and shooat rearing, overwhelmingly benefit women."
- "The introduction of a savings culture has been greatly appreciated by women and this ability to create and manage wealth has given them more bargaining power within the family."

Overall,

"their status and bargaining power within both the family and community had improved and that decisions were now taken after discussion and negotiation within the family."

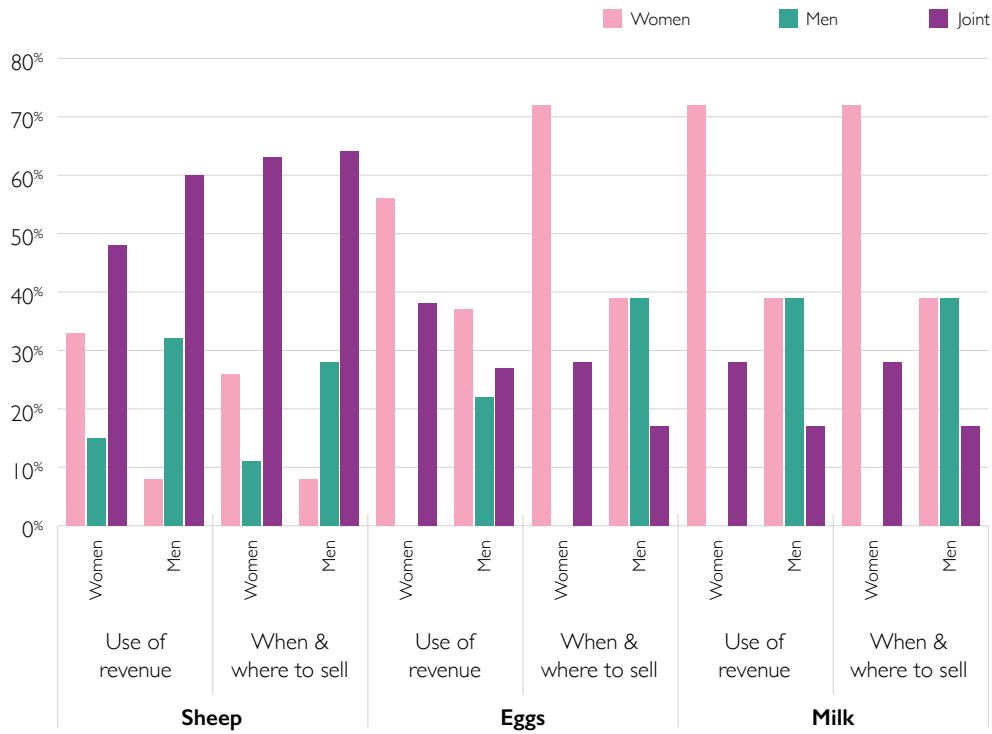
By developing value-chain activities, which were predominantly led by women, DryDev increased women's opportunities for income-generation and participation in markets. According to the DryDev Uptake Survey 2017, household decision-making has become more equitable, shifting from mainly male-dominated to joint decision-making regarding when and where to sell and how to spend revenue. Men and women both reported a larger decision-making role by women in value-chains (VCs), particularly in activities targeting women including sheep rearing, and eggs and milk production (Figure 1).

1. The Global Gender Gap Report – Ethiopia (2016) [online]. Available at <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=ETH>

2. DryDev Community Action Planning (2015)

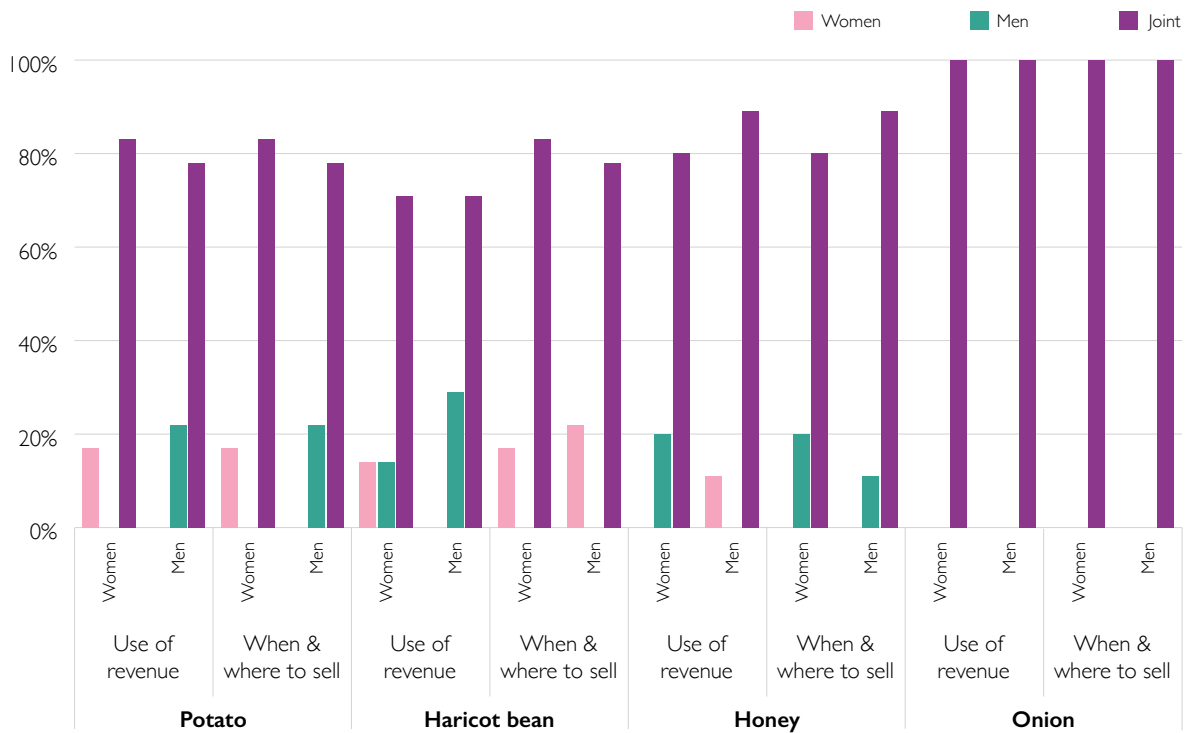
3. UN Women (2018) [online]. Available at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment>

Figure 1: Decision-making power of women, men and joint power as reported by women and men for women-dominated VCs



On the other hand, higher rates of ‘joint decision-making’ were reported both by men and women in enterprises or value-chains traditionally dominated by men, mainly in regards to crops (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Decision-making power of women, men and joint power as reported by women and men for men-dominated VCs



These results indicate that the programme’s strategy of involving women in interventions and focusing on improving women’s economic capacity has been contributing to women’s empowerment.

What worked? Perspectives of Ethiopian women

An assessment using 10 stories of change from selected women was undertaken to uncover the factors which contribute to women's improved economic capacities. The assessment also evaluated whether those improved capacities resulted in improved decision-making power and wider empowerment indicators, such as self-confidence and increased ability to participate in local institutions and leadership.⁴

All respondents were aged 23-50 years and are all married with children except for one. Most belong to households with a piece of land between 0.25 to 1 hectare. All respondents started with the programme at least three years prior.

What did DryDev do?

- DryDev has encouraged women to join SGs and all women have been saving regularly.
- Women have been provided with initial support in the form of subsidized inputs, such as poultry, goats and dairy cows. As a result, women have increased their productive assets.
- All women have participated in some form of training provided by DryDev, including natural resource management, value-chains and leadership.
- All households have been linked to financial institutions and women are able to take out loans to expand their own enterprises either from SGs, Rural Savings and Credit Cooperatives or Microfinance Institutions.

What did women do?

- Women were either contributing to family enterprises such as crops, or were doing something independently, such as milk value-chain or goat fattening.
- Most women were involved in at least two enterprises, such as goat rearing and poultry, goat rearing and vegetables, or khat trade and dairy cows.
- All interventions remained within traditional occupations or domains. Women were provided with opportunities to upskill through training and engagement throughout various steps of the value-chain to maximize their profits and benefits.

What has been the impact?

At a household (HH) level

- Women have increased their household economic capacities. This was indicated by an improvement in their housing, such as improved roofing, construction of an additional room, buying a house in a nearby town, and meeting other household needs. Women have improved their ability to provide for the family. They can now provide more food and can send their children to school. Increased food was indicated through positive changes reported in nutritional statuses, substantiated through a survey of a small number of randomly selected participating households, which found that dietary diversity has doubled, and the number of hungry months has halved.

At a personal level

- Women have witnessed improved self-esteem due to their increased ability to contribute to household income.
- Improved self-confidence – participation in SWS committees, SGs and producer groups and training were mentioned as the main factors leading to women's improved self-confidence and success.
- Increased financial management skills and confidence by taking loans, utilizing and repaying them.
- More control over use of income - all women reported an increase in access to cash and freedom to spend as they wish.
- Changes in household decision-making where it has become a 'joint' activity. Previously, men were mainly making decisions.
- All women felt that participation in economic activities had increased their workload but without any exception, all of them considered it worthwhile.
- All women felt that they are now more respected in the community compared to the past; the reasons identified included improved household economic capacity, increased women's confidence, and active involvement in various activities.

4. Programme staff were asked to share a story of a woman from their district who they and the SWS committee members consider successful in increasing her income. However, some districts shared more than one story.

How has DryDev made this happen?

At DryDev intervention sites in Ethiopia, the programme has introduced multiple interventions focusing on products and value-chains where women can participate and enhance their access to resources and markets. These include:

- Encouraging women's participation in savings groups (SGs) and facilitating access to loans.
- Reaching women with energy-efficient technologies, both as users and producers.
- Selecting value-chain commodities traditionally favoured and dominated by women (such as milk, poultry rearing and goat fattening) and enhancing their capacities to participate in these value-chains.
- Targeting women farmers with capacity-building on improved agricultural practices to improve production on their farm or in their family's enterprise.
- Subsidising inputs for women from extremely poor households or provision of inputs through revolving funds to help them build productive assets or start an income-generation activity.

In addition, women were invited and encouraged to participate in community decision-making processes that are traditionally dominated by men, such as:

- Sub-watershed committees and other local institutions.
- Natural resource management activities alongside men or through women-only groups such as managing area closures and grazing land.

Programme field staff were oriented towards gender and women's empowerment concepts, creating action plans to introduce approaches and activities which would make them more gender-responsive.

Key learnings from women's point of view:

- Even a small initiative like savings-focused interventions can contribute towards generating personal and household benefits.
- Participation in groups and income-generation activities can build confidence and enhance decision-making abilities.
- Income diversification is important as this helps families absorb economic shocks and women can assist by partaking in income-generation activities.
- Women can get involved in income-generation activities that can bring quick returns, so they can support the household economy alongside men.

Shemshi Yousaf Sani, from Jarso Woreda, is a mother of seven and is contributing to the household economy by participating in goat fattening and poultry rearing. She is a member of a producers and marketing group and a member of a savings group. From the savings of her goat fattening business, she has improved her housing, changing her straw roof to a corrugated iron roof, costing her 15,000 Ethiopian Birr (US\$585). Her poultry brings in an additional regular income of around 35 birr (US\$1.30) per day from the sale of eggs. She is now able to support her eldest daughter's attendance at a secondary school in a nearby town, which would have been impossible without her contribution to the household economy due to her small land holding of 0.25 hectare. She urges other women:

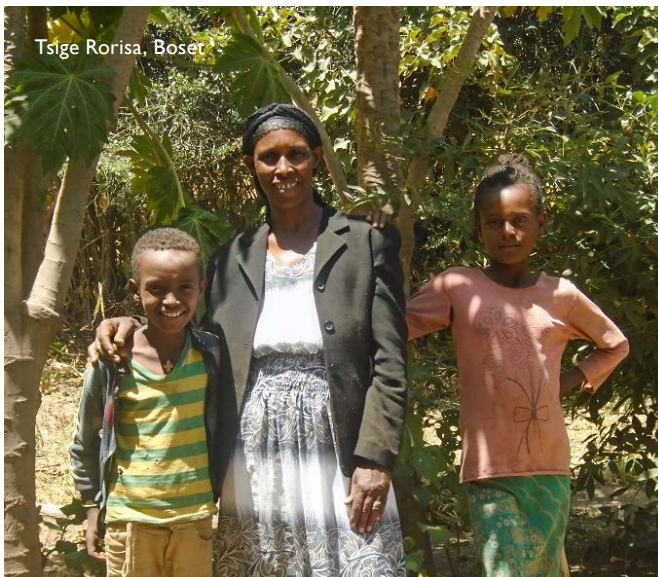
“To bring change at household and at the community level, be organized as a group for development, participate without hesitation. This increases women's empowerment.”



Goat producer group, Jarso, with DryDev field staff.

Points for consideration for scaling up

- Begin by empowering the programme staff through targeted training and capacity building – the programme staff need to understand broader concepts and benefits of gender equality.
- Select a combination of economic interventions, including those where women farmers have more access to and control over resources and therefore have more chances to benefit.
- Provide small subsidies to ultra poor women at the start, as this can go a long way in improving their economic conditions.
- Build women's self-confidence both for social and economic development – savings groups are a good entry point. Leadership training can further build on their capacities.
- Make targeted efforts to involve women in community-level discussions and consultations, and in general, ensure that meaningful participation in decision-making occurs in all key components of the project.



Tsige Rorisa, Boset

Tsige Rorisa, a mother of five, works on her family farm of nearly one hectare with her husband where they grow haricot beans. Before joining the programme in 2016, they had been on food aid for several years as they were unable to produce enough for the family. At times, their children would work on a neighbour's farm to cover school expenses. Tsige joined the DryDev-established VSLA and received training on financial management among other things. Training on good agronomic practices and access to improved seeds created by the programme helped the family exponentially increase their production. Tsige took loans from her VSLA to buy improved seeds and they joined the haricot bean farmer cooperative. Now, the family is earning around 10,000 Ethiopian Birr (US\$360) from haricot bean production alone and they have started saving towards their eldest daughter's college fees. Tsige is now chairperson of her savings group and also leads a forest management group. She says:

“Change is gradual. When I was selected the chairperson of my group, I was afraid and was uncomfortable talking in front of people. Leadership training provided by the programme and the experience gained gradually has made me confident. I can talk in front of others and can make decisions.”

DryDev is implemented by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (DGIS) and a substantial contribution from World Vision Australia. In Ethiopia, DryDev is led by World Vision Ethiopia (WVE), working with implementing partners, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC).



www.drydev.org