



## Summary

The project aimed to facilitate the creation of a strong women's movement and activism, enhance the participation of women and women's groups and to bring women's socio-economic issues and especially Violence Against Women (VAW) to the attention of decision-makers at the national and regional levels. In addition, the project worked towards ensuring the realization of the socio-economic rights of women through enhancing the capacity of women's associations and promoting dialogue in good governance and women's rights protection. As a result of implementing this project, NEWA and its partners have made notable impact with regards to empowering women and girls and enhancing gender equality.

## Project Objectives

The overall objective of this project was to strengthen dialogue and awareness towards the progressive realization of the socio-economic rights of women and contribute to the achievements of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) component on women's empowerment and good governance. NEWA implemented the project in Addis Ababa, Gambella and Amhara region with its partner organizations.

## Results

The project registered impressive results in undertaking women's empowerment actions that contributed to safeguarding women's socio-economic rights. The project has implemented activities that resulted in enhanced women's and girls', as well as other stakeholders', capacity that helped the community, women, men, service providers and decision-makers understand and act towards gender equality. Notably, the project achieved the following results:

- The establishment of 65 Girls' Clubs in which 765 members have been active in initiating, organizing, leading and participating in discussion forums. In addition to developing their confidence, the member girls increased the awareness of the school community and the public at large on Gender-based Violence (GBV) and issues affecting the lives of girls and women.
- A significant contribution to the institutional sustainability of NEWA and its partners, despite the challenging times they experienced due to the civil society proclamation in place since the year 2009. This allowed them to continue to play a major role in effectively addressing gender equality and women's socio-economic empowerment in their respective regions and at national level. The EU CSF II grant helped the network organization and its co-applicant partners strengthen their activities by providing the necessary resources to have the required human resources, organizational strategies and capacities in place.
- 1,690 local community members were organized into 92 discussion groups. These regularly conducted discussions and provided feedback based on their monitoring of the implementation of existing policies and laws relevant to women, thereby ensuring the accountability and responsiveness of socio-economic services in the target areas. To support these groups, the project developed policy monitoring tools for their application.
- A total of 114 women support groups were established and these are actively engaged in the protection of women from violations of their rights in the target area.

## **Impact**

As a result of the implementation of the project, girls feel more empowered in a sense that they are protecting themselves and their fellow students from GBV that used to be common practice around schools. They have built their confidence to speak out about their interests and needs and to promote gender equality. As a result of the intervention, women are voicing their concerns regarding the government's implementation of national laws and policies. Women and women's groups are demanding quality, women-friendly service delivery in their localities by applying social accountability tools.

The capacity of women's associations to proactively engage in preventing and responding to women's rights violations has also been increased, as has dialogue amongst stakeholders. Furthermore, women's associations and government women's units were provided with resource documents on existing policies and laws relating to women's rights, and these are being used as a reference to effectively translate women's rights issues into action. Such documents have equipped the stakeholders with better information, guided their interventions in the promotion of gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence, and have strengthened their institutional capacity.

In addition, the positive influence of the intervention on the community resulted in the cancellation of 53 early marriages. To further strengthen and sustain this impact, six anti-GBV taskforces were established and these continue to monitor GBV cases in Amhara and Gambella regions.

The project has documented and disseminated the lessons learnt and good practices on the promotion of gender equality through women's rights law manuals, leadership training manuals and IEC materials. In addition, a documentary film about the socio-economic condition of women and the progress made as a result of the project intervention was produced and disseminated.



Fig 2. 2-Panel Discussion on Increasing Networking among Stakeholders to Tackle Barriers to Gender Equality, October 2018, Addis Ababa

#### Key Information

Programme	: 10 <sup>th</sup> European Union Civil Society Fund II
Implementing partner	: Network of Ethiopian Women Associations (NEWA) with partner organizations
Total EU Contribution	: EUR 249,902.91 (100% of the total project budget)
Project Duration	: August 2016 to November 2018
Target Groups	: Women, the youth, marginalized community groups as well as decision

## Related human story : A Role Model for Activism in Women's Rights

Her name is Nacheng Woldu, born 40 years ago and raised in Gambella town where it has been customary for men to have polygamous marriages. Five years after Nacheng was married and with four children, her husband decided to marry another woman. Nacheng by then had graduated from a vocational college in Human Resources Management and was aware of women's rights because of her active membership in the Gambella Region Women's Association (GRWA), a co-applicant organization with NEWA benefitting from the European Union Civil Society Fund II (EU-CSF II). She refused to stay in a polygamous relationship and left her husband taking her children with her. She faced the challenge of lack of finances as her husband refused to pay maintenance for her children. She was also under intense pressure from her relatives and other members of the community because of their view that a woman should not raise children on her own and that polygamy is a tradition that she should accept. She refused to give in and went on with her life, though she was forced to sell household items to overcome her financial problems as her income from her employment in the Gambella Finance and Economic Bureau was not sufficient for a family of five.



As a member of the Women's Support Group in GRWA, Nacheng took a series of training courses that equipped her with an awareness of the national and international laws that

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*"I want today's young Girls to have a better future when women's rights is realized" Nacheng Woldu*

Ethiopia has ratified regarding women's and girls' rights. Her determination to resist the customary laws that contravene the universal rights of women has made

her a highly respected role model amongst the young girls in the region. She is educating young girls and the community in general on GBV and harmful traditional practices that are widely practiced. She encourages them to choose to continue with their education rather than to marry at a young age and presents herself as an example of an independent women. For example, recently she helped a widow reclaim her rights to inherit, fighting against her in-laws who attempted to deny her under the pretext of culture. In the future, Nacheng wants to continue educating her community on GBV, HTP and women's rights.

Nacheng strongly believes that it was the support that GRWA received from the EU CSF-II that enabled women like her to claim their rights. She witnessed changes in the attitudes and practices of her community and relevant government offices in their understanding of the rights of women and girls.