PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Until we are all equal

In partnership with Canada

Women's Voice and Leadership Ethiopia



Final Project Results and Operations Report

March 25th, 2019, to August 30th, 2024

Project Number: P002931

Country/Region: Ethiopia (Amhara, Addis Ababa, Oromia, and SNNPR)

Submitted by Plan International Canada

Women's Voice and Leadership – Ethiopia

Final Project Results and Operations Report

Prepared by Plan International Ethiopia and Plan International Canada

Prepared for Global Affairs Canada
Project Number: P002931
Submitted: September 4th, 2024

Financial Information
Initiative Total: $7,644,513
Global Affairs Canada: $7,300,000; Plan Canada: $344,513

Initiative Duration
Start Date: March 25th, 2019
End Date: September 30th, 2024 (5 years plus 6-month NCE)

Contact Information
Fitsum Teshome Programs Director, Plan International Ethiopia
Address: Adama Real Estate Building, ECA Road, Kirkos Sub-city,
5696 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: Fitsum.Teshome@plan-international.org

Ashley Dawson, Senior Program Manager, Plan International Canada
Address: 245 Avenue Eglinton East, Suite 300, Toronto, ON, M4P OB3
Email : ADawson@plancanada.ca

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms 4

Executive Summary 6

1. Project Description & Context 8

1.1 Project Overview 8

1.2 Context Changes 10

2. Outcomes Achieved 15

2.1 Reach 15

2.2 Assessment of Changes to Initial and Final Theory of Change, Logic Model, and Performance Measurement Framework 16

2.3 Progress on Ultimate Outcome 1000 17

2.4 Progress on Intermediate Outcome 1100 20

2.5 Progress on Intermediate Outcome 1200 31

2.6 Progress on Intermediate Outcome 1300 33

2.7 Progress on Immediate Outcomes 1110 & 1120 36

2.8 Progress on Immediate Outcome 1210 38

2.9 Progress on Immediate Outcomes 1310 & 1320 39

2.10 Gender Equality 41

3. Outputs 46

4. Project Governance and Management 78

4.1 Governance 78

4.2 Management 79

5. Risk Management Tools and Analysis 83

6. Lessons Learned and Actions Taken, and Promising Practices 83

List of Annexes 85

List of Acronyms

AAWA	Addis Ababa Women's Association
ABL	Action for a Better Life
ACA	Aisha Charity Association
AFEL	Amaranth Farm Eco Lodge
AKCCD	Arat Kilo Childcare & Community Development
APS	Annual Perceptions Survey
AWA	Amhara Women's Association
AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
AWF	Amhara Women's Federation
AWP	Annual Work Plan
AWS	Africa Women's Summit
AYWA	Antsebaraki Young Women Association
BL	Berhan Lehetsanat
BWCBDA	Beza for Women Community Based Development Association
CAT	Core Assessment Team
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CECI	Centre for International Studies and Cooperation
CoSAP	Consortium of Self-Help Group Approach Promoters
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTC	Capacity Transformation Center
CTC	Core Trainers and Coaches
CTE	Community Transformation Ethiopia
DANFE	Development through Adult and Non-Formal Education
DGGE	Donor Group for Gender Equality
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EBA	Evidence-Based Advocacy
ECD	Ethiopian Center for Development
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
EMAC	Ethiopian Mediation and Arbitration Center
EMWA	Ethiopian Media Women's Association
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force
ENG	Empowering Next Generation
ELEYHDO	Egna le Egna Youth Health and Development Organization
ELIDA	Empathy for Life Integrated Development Association
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
EWDNA	Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
FIA	Faith in Action
FIAP	Feminist International Assistance Policy
FRFM	Flexible Response Funding Mechanism
FSA	Family Service Association
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEDI	Grassroots Empowerment and Development Initiative
GTMOD	Gender Transformative Model for Organizational Development
GTP	Gender Transformative Programming
ICDP	Institutional Capacity Development Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEG	Influencing and Evidence Grants
IFSO	Integrated Family Service Organization
IGA	Income-Generating Activity
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
IWD	International Women's Day
KMG	Kembatti Mentti Gezzima-Tope
KYRHDO	Kulich Youth Reproductive Health and Development Organization
LCO	Love for Children Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MHO	Meseret Humanitarian Organization
MIS	Management Information System
MLWDA	Mujejeguwa Loka Women Development Association

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWSA	Ministry of Women and Social Affairs
NBCDC	New Bright Community Development Center
NLTCDRP	New Life Teen Challenge Development & Relief Program
NEWA	Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations
NYWCO	National Young Women Charity Organization
OGAA	Organization for Girl Adults and Advocacy
OLA	Oromo Liberation Army
OPRIFS	Organization for Prevention, Rehabilitation and Integration of Female Street Children
PFE	Passionate Forever Ethiopia
PIA	Participatory Institutional Assessment
PIE	Plan International Ethiopia
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
PMT	Project Management Team
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSI	Population Services International
PTD	Progress To-Date
PWD	People with Disabilities
RBM	Results-Based Management
RFC	Reach for Change
RM	Resource Mobilization
RMP	Resource Mobilization Plan
RPC	Remember the Poorest Community
S2S	Saved to Save
SGDA	Save Generation Development Association
SGESD	Sinqqee Gender Equality for Social Development
SHG	Self-Help Group
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
SWDA	Siiqqee Women's Development Association
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TGAC	Technical Granting and Advisory Committee
TSD	Terkanfi Sustainable Development
UEWCA	Union of Ethiopian Women and Children Associations
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNWPHF	United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund
VFMF	Vision Fund Micro Finance
WCDI	Women Can Do It
WEG	Women's Empowerment Grant
WfWSDA	Women for Women Social and Development Association
WO	Women's Organization
WVL	Women's Voice and Leadership
Y	Year
YFL	Young Female Leader

Executive Summary

The Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) program is a global initiative that recognizes the power and potential of women and girls to promote, protect, and uphold their human rights. Global Affairs Canada (GAC) launched the initiative as part of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) which is founded on the premise that Gender Equality (GE) is one of the most effective ways to eradicate poverty. Plan International Ethiopia (PIE) and Plan International Canada are proud to partner with GAC on this innovative and feminist program, to lead the WVL – Ethiopia project in partnership with four Women's Organizations (WOs), namely the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA); Union of Ethiopian Women and Children Associations (UEWCA); Ethiopian Center for Development (ECD); and Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), hereby known as the "WO Collective". Together, the project partners delivered a five-and-a-half-year initiative that promoted a vibrant and sustainable women's rights movement and contributed to the wider funding ecosystem of over 100 WOs across four regions of Ethiopia (Amhara, Addis Ababa, Oromia, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR)). The project empowered 98 WOs from across the country to lead their own development, demonstrate their agency, and influence policy. In the delivery of the initiatives, the WVL Ethiopia project worked closely with the Ethiopian Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA), Ministry of Health (MoH), and Ministry of Education (MoE), among others, including their regional-level bureaus and woreda offices.

The project was guided by a GE strategy that detailed how feminist principles would be applied to achieve the project's three outcome areas targeting local, regional, and national WOs to: 1) enhance their organizational capacity, 2) deliver gender transformative programming (GTP), and 3) lead collective action on a common advocacy agenda. The project's feminist approach was founded on two main principles: "Nothing about or for WOs without WOs," thus ensuring full and meaningful participation and influencing of all program processes; and secondly WOs are experts in their contexts and know how best to address issues. These principles galvanized the need to leverage expertise through collaborative, reflective and mutual learning processes to ensure the project did not embody a top down or one-size-fits-all approach. The project implemented gender-specific actions to overcome operational and financial barriers faced by WOs, reflecting the feminist principles in both results and processes, and was built upon extensive engagement with WOs at local, regional, and national levels as key drivers of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The needs, priorities, and strengths of these WOs were at the heart of the project's strategy and design. To ensure effective delivery project management and governance structures had been defined with equal participation of WOs at all levels. At the national level, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) composed of GAC, MoWSA, the WO Collective, and Plan International provided overall strategic direction and guidance to the project. A Technical Granting Advisory Committee (TGAC) was also established to ensure transparent, fair, and inclusive selection of funding recipients, whereby the WO Collective held key decision-making roles. Lastly, Plan's Project Management Team (PMT) held responsibility for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and learning; all in close collaboration with representative WOs. A robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning system founded in feminist principles was also developed for the project. WOs were co-creators and owners of knowledge, engaged in data sharing and discussion, and contributed to continuously improving programming through analysis and evidence-based planning.

This report is the Final Results and Operations Report which provides an overview of the life of the project from March 25th, 2019, to August 30th, 2024, and is organized in various sections with corresponding annexes. Through this report, Plan aims to present the project design and context, and convey the cumulative progress against reach targets and outcome results, the gender equality strategy and sustainability strategy, and the risk management approach. The report also provides a detailed account of the outputs achieved over the project, supported by an overview of the key actors, partners and governance structures which made activity implementation possible.

Project Reach:

- The project **trained and mentored 660 staff (384F/276M)** from 96 WOs to **strengthen their organizational capacities and sustainability** by addressing common needs identified through individual participatory institutional assessments (PIAs).
- Addressing the capacity gap related to having young voices apart of WO platforms, **180 YFLs participated** in a series of **leadership workshops, intergenerational engagements** with experienced WO leaders, and strengthened their evidence-based advocacy skills.
- Three funding streams were established to provide WOs with accessible, diverse, and responsive grants. The Women's Empowerment Grants (WEGs), "Yesetwa Tegate'", represent the first stream of funding, **providing 28 WOs with $3,061,534 CAD** (including CAD $286,012 in COVID-19 responsive funding) **in predictable, core funding for multi-year gender transformative programming**. Recipients of the WEGs also benefited from the institutional development described above. Flexible Response Funding Mechanisms (FRFM) - "Yemudaye" - represented the second funding stream, supporting **84 WOs through 111 FRFMs totaling CAD $1,267,632 CAD** (including $160,046 CAD in COVID-19 responsive funding).
- The third funding stream was the Influencing and Evidence Grants (IEGs) - "Yesetwa Demetse," where the **four members of the WO Collective received IEGs totalling $191,982 CAD to lead a wider base of WOs on a common advocacy agenda for gender equalit**y.

Outcomes Achieved: At the ultimate, intermediate, and immediate outcome levels, the **project demonstrated positive progress across 100% of its outcome indicators,** whereby **89% of outcomes surpassed their targets.**

With regards to the results of the ultimate outcome 1000: ***Increased achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia***, the following results were achieved:

- 1000a. The vibrancy of women's networks and organizations in Ethiopia increased from 2.58 at baseline to 3.92 at endline, resulting in an increase of 1.34 points based on six domains of change on a five-point scale – the largest change coming from the increase in voice and participation of women and girls (+1.62).

Intermediate Outcome indicators for 1100 ***Improved management and sustainability of WOs advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia***, particularly those representing vulnerable and marginalized women and girls., the following results were achieved:

- 1100a. The average organizational capacity score of supported WOs increased from 79.2 at baseline to 84.1 at endline, resulting in an increase of 4.9 points out of 100, just shy of the end of project target of 85 by 0.9 points. The largest increase across the five organizational functionality areas being measured was in external engagements and networks (+5.7)
- 1100b. The number of supported WOs who are now using best-practice governance and management practices increased from 46% at baseline to a remarkable 83% at endline.
- 1100c. On average 72% of WOs planned activities were completed in their resource mobilization plans (RMPs). Out of the 25 WO reports, 24 have completed more than 50% of planned resource mobilization activities.

Intermediate Outcome indicators for 1200 Enhanced ***performance of programming and advocacy of WOs advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia****,* the following results are shared:

- 1200a. A total of 97.9% (46/47) WO grantees reported greater reach of programs, as a result of more effective utilization of resources, continuous capacity building, diversification of funding and programming, as well as adaptability to changing contexts.
- 1200b. 100% of WOs supported under the project have met objectives and targets as stated in their annual work plans (or priorities)

Intermediate Outcome indicators for 1300 ***Increased effectiveness of national and sub-national women's platforms, networks, and alliances to affect policy, legal, and social change in Ethiopia that advances gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls***, the following results were achieved:

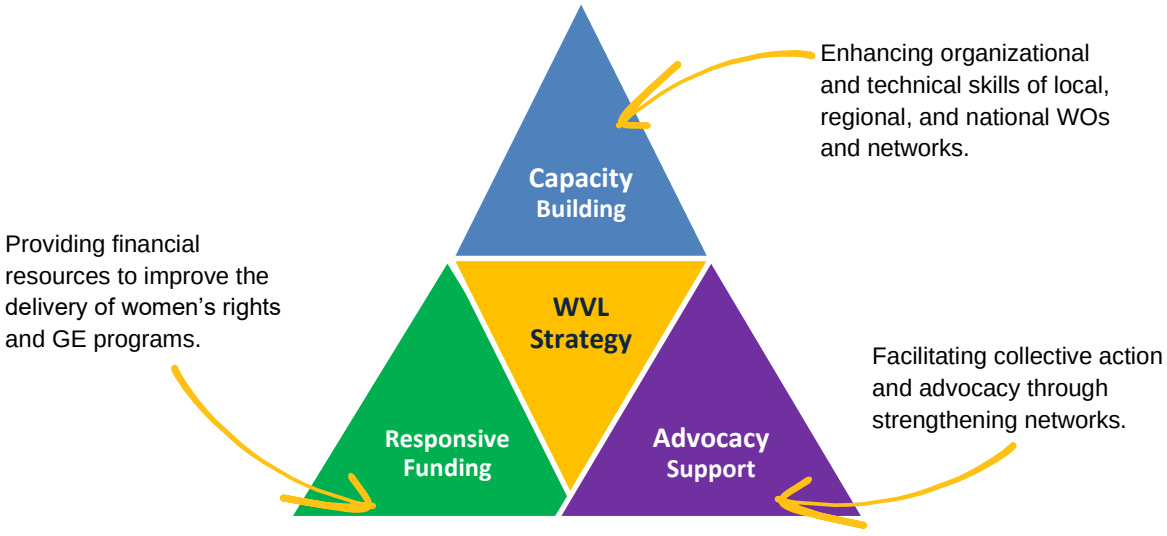
- 1300a. Level of coordination among local, national, and regional women's networks and stakeholders increased from 78.7 (out of 100) at baseline to 85 at endline demonstrating a 6.3-point increase in the level of coordination among local, national, and regional women's networks and stakeholders.
- 1300b. The number of policies/laws/frameworks/mechanisms/procedures/plans etc. that were influenced by interventions from WOs, networks, and alliances increased from 19 at baseline to 35 at endline, reporting an increase of 16, 11 more than the projected target.
- 1300c. 100% of the advocacy agendas and strategies were implemented, exceeding the 70% target by 30%. Topics included gender-based violence (GBV) and disaster risk management (DRM).

A detailed analysis of progress against outcomes can be found in the body of this report. The stakeholders involved with the WVL project are proud of the results and the sustainability plans that have been set in place to build on the project's successes and continue to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia.

1. Project Description & Context

1.1 Project Overview

The WVL - Ethiopia project is a five-year initiative running from March 2019 to September 2024 conducted by Plan International Ethiopia and Canada, and the WO Collective, through the support of GAC. The project is part of a GAC's global initiative under FIAP, focused on strengthening and supporting WOs and movements that advance women's rights, GE, and the empowerment of women and girls, while also supporting evidence-based advocacy (EBA) and program delivery for GE. With a total budget of CAD $7,644,513 (GAC: $7,300,000; Plan Canada: $344,513), the project reached over 100 WOs across four regions of Ethiopia (Amhara, Addis Ababa, Oromia, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR)). The initiative enhanced WOs capacities and resources, provided opportunities to realize their mission and vision, addressed organizational challenges, promoted efficiencies in programming, and created a coordinated platform for advocacy and networking, ultimately advancing GE and the empowerment of women and girls. To achieve its ultimate objective, a three-pronged strategy was implemented.



The strategy resulted in significant achievements to the projects' following three intermediate outcomes:

- **1100:** Improved management and sustainability of WOs advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia, particularly those representing vulnerable and marginalized women and girls.
- **1200:** Enhanced performance of programming and advocacy of WOs advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia.
- **1300:** Increased effectiveness of national and sub-national women's platforms, networks, and alliances to affect policy, legal and social change in Ethiopia that advances gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The project was guided by a GE strategy, which applies feminist principles to achieve its outcomes and strengthen WOs' agency. Up to 113 WOs participated in institutional capacity building, gender transformative (GT) programming, and collective advocacy efforts. Collectively, these interventions strengthened feminist and GT programming by WOs to advance GE and promote women's and girls' rights in the social, economic, and political spheres. To successfully achieve the above project outcomes, the following stakeholders worked in collaboration throughout the project and were responsible for unique and complementary roles.

Key Project Stakeholders included:

The WO Collective: A group of four WOs, namely the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA); Union of Ethiopian Women and Children Associations (UEWCA); Ethiopian Center for Development (ECD); and Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) who partnered with Plan to implement the WVL-Ethiopia project. The WO Collectives main role in the project was to provide strategic direction and guidance for project interventions as members of the PSC and TGAC, provide capacity building and coaching to WOs as part of the team of CTCs, and lead advocacy platforms for collective action. Their core capacity was to strengthen vertical linkages with their members and lateral coordination to define and deliver a common advocacy agenda, enabling them to hold the national government accountable for Ethiopian women's and girls' rights.

Local, Regional, and National WOs: Engaged in the project design and implementation by helping drive collaboration, reflection, and mutual learning from one another, and ensured the project embodied a participatory approach to grassroots development. A total of 111 WOs received WEGs, FRFMs and IEGs. Additionally, 20 WO representatives also became members of the Core Assessment Team (CAT) and team of CTCs that helped build the capacity of WOs through institutional assessments, trainings, and mentorships, 29 WOs also participated in networking and advocacy activities.

Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA): Supported collaboration with other ministries, engaged relevant institutions on policy dialogues, and elevated awareness of the project within the government, including engagement of district-level assemblies at the local levels by providing direction, recognition, and added accountability to new and existing laws, while also ensuring gender was mainstreamed. MoWSA also supported the project through membership in the PSC.

Plan International Ethiopia (PIE): responsible for leading implementation of activities, grant management procedures and processes; financial management of funds and disbursement to implementing partners and grantees; managed relationships with WOs, government, and relevant stakeholders; and delivered the GE strategy and feminist MEL system. To carry out this work, PIE established a PMT based at the country office in Addis Ababa. PIE also served on the PSC, as well as the TGAC to ensure fair, transparent, and inclusive funding of awards.

Plan International Canada: accountable for the overall quality of implementation, financial management and compliance, feminist MEL, the achievement of results, and donor deliverables such as reporting. Plan Canada also led communication and relationship management with GAC and served as a member of the PSC.

1.2 Context Changes

Throughout the life of the project, the context within Ethiopia was consistently changing. These changes spanned political, health, environmental, and socio-economic aspects, many of which created unpredictable, multifaceted and perilous situations. The challenging operating circumstances also had an impact on the staff who delivered the project and the government departments and communities that they worked in partnership with. However, together, Plan and the WO Collective, were able to successfully collaborate with and maintain strong relationships with government departments and communities, pivot and adapt implementation strategies and methodologies, and monitor and navigate a myriad of risks to deliver a final project that showed positive progress on 100% of its outcome indicators, including meeting or exceeding targets for 89% of them.

Political Context

Ease of CSO Restrictions: Fortuitously, as the WVL-Ethiopia project launched in March of 2019, Ethiopia's new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed also introduced reforms to ease restrictions on civil society organizations (CSOs), repealing the repressive Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2009. The previous law restricted CSOs' foreign funding and advocacy activities and imposed stringent regulations that hindered their operational flexibility, including a rigid '70/30 rule' for fund allocation and significant bureaucratic oversight by the Charities and Societies Agency. The new 2018 Proclamation allows all CSOs, including foreign-funded ones, to engage freely in advocacy and human rights work, marking a shift towards a more open and democratic approach. It replaces the old categorization system with a simpler distinction between local and foreign CSOs and maintains some restrictions, such as limiting lobbying political parties. However, it improves the clarity on administrative costs, reduces the allocation limit to 20%, and promotes self-regulation through a voluntary code of conduct, involving CSOs in their own governance. This shift provides NGOs with greater budget flexibility[1].

Elections: The national elections were scheduled for August 2020. However, they were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related logistical challenges. The postponement was contentious and faced criticism from opposition groups and international observers. The political environment remained tense, partly due to ongoing conflicts in various regions, including Tigray. The elections were rescheduled to June 21, 2021. This was the first general election since Abiy Ahmed's rise to power in 2018. The ruling Prosperity Party formed under Abiy Ahmed's leadership won a significant majority. However, the elections were marred by violence and disruptions in various regions, particularly in areas with ongoing conflicts and unrest, boycotts by some opposition parties, reports of irregularities and unfair practices, and postponed or cancelled elections in some areas, including Tigray and other conflict-affected areas due to on-going violence and instability.

Changes in Ministry: Following the 2021 national election, the elected government reshuffled ministries, including the previous Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) which was enlarged to include social affairs under its mandate and role coverage. As such, the ministry was renamed to the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA). The WVL-Ethiopia project continued to work closely with the Women Directorate under the MoWSA and the state minister for the women affair's directorate. However, the shift within the ministry resulted in delays in the approval of some of the WOs project implementation plans funded through the WVL-Ethiopia project.

Ethnic Conflicts and Political Instability Context

Ethiopia's federal system is organized along ethnic lines, which has contributed to tensions between different ethnic groups. The rise of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in April 2018 brought significant political changes, including promises of reform and greater political freedom. However, these changes also

1 Iinternational Federation for Human Rights, Feb 2019. https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/ethiopia-a-new-era-for-human-rights-organisations

intensified existing tensions and rivalries, particularly among various ethnic groups and political factions, impacting the four targeted regions (Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, and Addis Ababa) under the WVL-Ethiopia project.

- **Amhara Region:** Amhara is a large, ethnically diverse region in Ethiopia with historical issues over land and representation. In June 2019, unrest followed the assassination of key Amhara leaders, including the region's President, Ambachew Mekonnen, leading to a nationwide internet blackout. This disruption limited the WVL project's outreach and first round of Yesetwa Tegate grant applications. To compensate for this disruption, Plan made additional efforts in Y2 to reach WOs in Amhara and Oromia during the second round of grants. In 2023, tensions between the government and the Amhara Special Force escalated, resulting in a six-month State of Emergency starting in August. Emergency measures included curfews, movement restrictions, a gun ban, and increased law enforcement.[2] Internet blockages and mobility issues forced PIE to suspend operations in August, resuming partially in late September. The region remains volatile with ongoing clashes between the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and local armed groups, and the state of emergency has been extended through May 2024 and has resulted in civil unrest and restrictions, including limited mobile internet access.[3] Major cities like Bahir Dar and Gondar are under heavy military presence, and peace talks have been unsuccessful.[4]
- **Oromia Region:** In 2018, Abiy Ahmed's government released political prisoners and lifted the state of emergency, leading to increased political activity and unrest, particularly within the Oromo community saw increased activism and calls for greater regional autonomy and representation. The assassination of Oromo singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa in June 2020 sparked widespread protests and violence in Oromia, causing significant casualties, property damage, and disruptions to WVL project activities. There was a total of 15 projects run by WOs in the Oromia region that were impacted, resulting in delayed implementation. By August 2023, heightened tensions led to increased movement restrictions due to curfews, checkpoints, and road closures. The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) attacked civilians in West Shewa Zone, leading to ongoing clashes with government forces and further violence in East Shewa and West Guji Zones.[5] Despite two rounds of peace talks, conflict persists in Oromia. In response, PMT conducted carefully planned supervision visits, considering security protocols. WOs in Amhara and Oromia adapted their strategies by focusing on safe zones, collaborating with local authorities, and reallocating budgets as needed to complete their activities successfully.
- **The Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNP):** Since July 2019, unrest has plagued the Sidama Zone in the SNNP region, following its request to become a Regional State. The approval and referendum in November 2019 led to protests, restricted travel, and increased competition among ethnic groups. This resulted in violence and displacement, prompting a State of Emergency. In 2023, tribal conflicts erupted in various zones, including South Omo, where the killing of a local official triggered clashes between the Bodi and Demi ethnic groups. Armed groups targeted civilians and looted schools during the evacuation of SNNP Special Forces.[6] In August 2023, the SNNP was divided to create the South Ethiopia Region and the Central Ethiopia Region, leading to concerns over administrative distribution.[7] Protests erupted in Gamo Zone and Arba Minch city over a proposal to make Wolaita Sodo the administrative

[2] REUTERS August 7, 2023, reporting by Dawit Edenshaw https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/ethiopia-accuses-amhara-militia-trying-overthrow-government-2023-08-07/

[3] IEGs implemented by ECD and UEWCA were particularly affected by this circumstance. While ECD's advocacy initiatives was disrupted by the ban on mass gatherings and changes in regional government staffing; on the other hand, UEWCA's attempt to physically gather data was severely hampered. Despite delays, both IEGs adapted to the context with necessary approvals secured from the command post and remote data gathering employed respectively to successfully complete their activities.

[4] Crisis24. March 29, 2024. https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2024/03/ethiopia-security-situation-likely-to-remain-volatile-in-amhara-region-through-at-least-late-april-amid-ongoing-military-operations-update-9

[5] Addis Standard. August 15, 2023. https://addisstandard.com/news-at-least-12-civilians-killed-in-chobi-oromia-region-residents-and-opposition-parties-accuse-govt-forces-of-indiscriminate-attack/.

[6] EPO Weekly: 22-28 April 2023". Ethiopia Peace Observatory. May 3, 2023. https://epo.acleddata.com/2023/05/03/epo-weekly-22-28-april-2023/

[7] Agence France-Presse. July 5, 2023. https://www.voaafrica.com/a/ethiopia-creates-a-12th-regional-state-/7168313.html

center.[8] Despite these issues, WOs in the SNNPR have largely avoided conflict due to their diverse locations.

- **Tigray Region:** For nearly 30 years, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) led Ethiopia's ruling coalition. However, in 2018, discontent from the Oromo and Amhara regions led them to support Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party, ousting the TPLF. The TPLF then moved its operations to Mekele, Tigray, and in September 2020, held a regional election despite the federal government's postponement due to COVID-19. This escalated into a military conflict, with federal forces seizing Mekele by November 2020 and TPLF fighters retreating to rural areas. The conflict caused a severe humanitarian crisis, displacing millions and leaving many without basic necessities. NEWA responded by partnering with the Regional Health and Women's Affairs Bureau to provide essential supplies such as oil, flour, macaroni, baby formula, sanitary pads, and masks to displaced Tigrayans. In November 2022, a peace agreement was brokered between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF, marking progress but facing challenges in implementation. Many areas still suffer from disruptions to essential services.

Health Context

COVID-19: On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, which continued to impact the WVL project in unprecedented ways over the next three years until it was no longer declared a global health emergency on May 5, 2023. Ethiopia, a high-risk country due to Bole International Airport's status as a major African transit hub confirmed its first COVID-19 case on March 13, 2020, and the government declared a State of Emergency on April 9, 2020, imposing restrictions on transport, gatherings, and schools, along with public health measures.[9] Recognizing that the C-19 crisis would overwhelm national health systems, badly damage economies, and put millions of children and women at significant risk of harm, PIE formed a C-19 Task Force to monitor and adhere to public health guidance. Measures included travel restrictions and limiting physical contact, causing delays in project activities such as the launch and grant reviews. As of July 16, 2024, Ethiopia reported 501,193 infections and 7,572 deaths. The healthcare system, strained by the pandemic and Tigray conflict, faced shortages in medical supplies and staff.[10] Ethiopia began its vaccination campaign on March 13, 2021, administering 53,514,115 doses, with 38.09% of the population receiving at least one dose.[11] PIE enhanced its COVID-19 measures, providing awareness and adhering to health guidelines. With additional $500,000 CAD from GAC, 20 WOs integrated COVID-19 responses into their programs, supplying PPE, food, and prevention efforts. Despite easing restrictions, many Ethiopians face financial hardship, leading to reduced meals, borrowing, and migration for work.

Socio-economic Context

Currency Devaluation and Inflation: On October 6, 2021, the Ethiopian government devalued the birr by approximately 30% to address economic instability and foreign exchange shortages. This devaluation, coupled with COVID-19, political instability, locust swarms, and rising fuel prices, led to severe inflation, doubling the cost of essential goods like teff.[12] By February 2024, annual inflation had slightly eased to 28.2%, with food and non-food prices decreasing marginally.[13] Despite this, economic challenges hindered the WVL project, increasing costs for office rent, materials, transportation, and services. The rise in costs

[8] Addis Standard August 2023, Allocation of administrative offices between cities in newly established cluster regions in Southern Ethiopia raises discontent. https://addisstandard.com/allocation-of-administrative-offices-between-cities-in-newly-established-cluster- regions-in-southern-ethiopia-raises-discontent/
[9] WHO Director-General's Opening Remarks: https://www.who.int/news-room/speeches/item/who-director-general-s-opening-remarksat-the-media-briefing---5-may-2023
[10] Ibid
[11] Ethiopia - COVID-19 Overview - Johns Hopkins (jhu.edu)
[12] The Reporter July 22, 2023, https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/35634/#:~:text=For%20almost%20two%20years%2C%20inflation,to%2030.8%20percent%20in%20May
[13] Trade Economics, Ethiopia Inflation Rate; https://tradingeconomics.com/ethiopia/inflation-cpi#:~:text=Ethiopia%20Inflation%20Rate%20Edges%20Higher,driven%20by%20a%20weakening%20birr

posed considerable obstacles to WOs operations which required frequent revisions to their budgets. Plan and partners responded by enhancing staff benefits and adjusting salaries, including pegging salaries to the Euro in July 2021. However, competition from other agencies and the removal of a fuel subsidy in mid-2022, which raised transportation costs, led to some staff attrition. Close financial management and monitoring was also required to review exchange rates and ensure the budget was managed within the overall scope of the Contribution Agreement. The birr was floated on July 29, 2024, rising from ETB 62 to ETB 113 to the Euro, and later stabilizing at ETB 108.[14] Daily fluctuations of up to 10% in the exchange rate required meticulous financial management to control project costs. Economic reforms in August 2024, which secured $2.5 billion in IMF/World Bank loans, aimed to stabilize the exchange rate but had little impact on the WVL project as it was nearing completion.

Gender Equality and Women's Rights Context

Since the Ethiopian government change in October 2018, the country has integrated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP-II), emphasizing gender equality and women's empowerment. The establishment of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) in October 2019 marked progress in promoting GE and female leadership, though deep-rooted gender biases and traditional practices persist. As of October 2021, women held only 36% of ministerial and 33% of cabinet positions, a regression from 2018.[15] The COVID-19 pandemic worsened gender inequalities, leading to increased gender-based violence (GBV), economic hardships, and limited access to education and services. Women were disproportionately affected, with higher job loss rates and increased poverty. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March of 2020, it further exacerbated gender inequalities in Ethiopia, impacting women and men differently and intensified existing disparities. Despite more men contracting COVID-19, women and girls faced disproportionate challenges, including increased gender-based violence (GBV), economic hardship, and limited access to education and basic services. Data collection on GBV is challenging, but reports suggest a rise in violence against women and girls. Economic impacts led to increased poverty and job losses, particularly affecting women who were 14% more likely to lose their job then men.[16] School closures also put additional strain on women and girls, leading to higher dropout rates and potential setbacks in reducing early child marriage. Additionally, longstanding gender disparities mean women have less access to essential supplies and services, further exacerbating their vulnerability during the pandemic.

Over the course of the project, the ongoing conflicts in northern Ethiopia significantly worsened the vulnerability of women and children in Ethiopia, placing them at a heightened risk for violations of their basic rights. The health system has been damaged, with a shortage of health service providers and medical supplies, and access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services disrupted. Maternal health and response to life threatening obstetric complications were also severely compromised. Comprehensive services for GBV victims were limited and nonexistent in some contexts. GBV is a significant issue in Ethiopia, with 23 percent of women having experienced physical violence and 10 percent having experienced sexual violence in their lifetime according to a report by UN Women[17]. The number of people needing GBV services in these areas has nearly doubled, rising from 3.5 million in 2021 to 6.7 million by 2023. In the northern regions, the conflict has severely disrupted health facilities, leading to interruptions in facility-based childbirth services and worsening maternal mortality and morbidity. [18]

[14] Bloomberg July 29, 2024, Blhttps://www.reuters.com/markets/currencies/ethiopia-shifts-market-based-foreign-exchange-system-2024-07-29/
[15] UN Women country profile, Ethiopia: ethiopia_country_gender_profile-web.pdf (unwomen.org)
[16] https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/labor-market-impacts-covid-19-four-african-countries
[17] UN Women country profile, Ethiopia: https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/ethiopia_country_gender_profile-web.pdf
18 Relief Web. April 19, 2023. https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/gender-based-violence-area-responsibility-ethiopia-secondary-data-review-february-2023

Female unemployment and underemployment are driven by gender barriers, including limited knowledge and skills due to unequal access to training and education; difficulty accessing financial services and markets; disproportionate responsibilities with care work (namely Unpaid Care Work (UPCW)) and traditional cultural norms, such as early marriage. A UN women report estimates that, women and girls aged 10+ spend 19.3% of their time on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to 6.6% spent by men.[19] With more people migrating in search of food, pasture, water and alternative livelihoods, women are being left to head households, creating barriers for women and girls' progress and achievement of their rights. Inadequate protection services, including Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), and livelihood supports have exacerbated existing challenges for IDPs, particularly youth and Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW). According to the 2021 Ethiopian Labor and Migration survey, only 56.8 percent of Ethiopian women participate in the labor market, while the figure for men is 72.6 percent[20] . In 2024, a concerning situation emerged as 417,649 refugees, including survivors of GBV, faced the abrupt halt of crucial services such as healthcare and psychosocial support. Due to insufficient funds, seven refugee hosting areas in Ethiopia were unable to sustain life-saving services for GBV survivors. Compounded by limited access to documentation and registration challenges, refugees struggle to access basic services and integrate into national systems. The lack of adequate food further exacerbates the plight of refugee women, children, and families. Alarmingly, there has been a surge in reports of GBV, a decline in the enrollment of refugee girls in schools, and an unsettling rise in child labor and child marriages, underscoring the urgent need for intervention and support[21]. Despite these challenges, WOs have made significant efforts to improve the situation for women and girls, though the needs remain vast and urgent.

Environmental Context

Climate Change: The prolonged drought in Ethiopia rendered 13 million individuals severely food insecure, posing a significant risk of a humanitarian crisis compounded by the effects of El Niño. Moreover, heavy rains since March 2023 during the rainy season have impacted multiple regions across the country[22]. Extreme weather events, including the worst drought in four decades followed by devastating floods in late 2023, are exacerbating the situation, pushing communities on the verge of survival increasing food and nutrition insecurities. These crises have made the country in need of humanitarian assistance[23]. In the country, an estimated 8.8 million people need food assistance in only the Afar, Amhara, and Tigray regions. The food aid that was paused in early 2023 by aid organizations has resulted in negative repercussions. Such as food insecurity, early marriage, and family separation[24]. This has impacted the most vulnerable and marginalized populations including children, girls, women and People with Disabilities (PWDs), creating more demand from the communities that the WOs serve.

[19] UN Women country Fact Sheet Ethiopia: https://data.unwomen.org/country/ethiopia

20 https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/ethiopia_country_gender_profile-web.pdf

21 Relief Web March 2024, UNHCR Ethiopia | Protection - Gap Analysis for Refugees, https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/unhcr-ethiopia-protection-gap-analysis-refugees-march-2024

22 Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA), 25 August 2023". WHO. September 22, 2023.https://www.afro.who.int/countries/ethiopia/news/northern-ethiopia-public-health-situation-analysis-phsa-25-august-2023#:~:text=The%20prolonged%20drought%20in%20the,or%20worsened%20by%20El%20Ni%C3%B1o

23 Reliefweb, Feb 2024, ECHO Factsheet – Ethiopiahttps://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/echo-factsheet-ethiopia-last-updated-27022024

24 Ethiopia: Floods Flash Update, as of 12 May 2023". Relief Web. May 15, 2023. https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-floods- flash-update-12-may-2023

2. Outcomes Achieved

2.1 Reach

Target Group	Life of Project Targets	Life of Project Actuals
Capacity building for WO staff	200 WO members (170F/30M) from 48 WOs	**660 staff (384F/276M) trained** and mentored from 96 WOs
Core Trainers and Coaches	Total: 24 CTCs (20F/4M) and 3 young female leaders	43 (27F/16M) CTCs trained including 3 YFLs
Young Female Leaders	72 leaders (1 – 2 for each of the 48 WOs)	180 YFLs
Yesetwa Tegate recipients	24 WOs + 4 WOs from the WO Collective (Total: 28 WOs)	**28 WOs receiving WEGs;** 28 WEGs disbursed, 16 COVID-19 top-ups completed. **CAD $3,061,534 provided to WOs** (including CAD $286,012 COVID-19 top-up).
Yemudaye recipients	85 grants up to 85 WOs	**111 FRFM and COVID-19 grants disbursed to 84 WOs**; 97 FRFM grants disbursed at CAD $1,136,586 and 14 COVID-19 FRFM grants disbursed at CAD $160,046 **totaling CAD $1,296,632**
Yeswa Demetse recipients	4 WOs from the WO Collective (working together with 5 – 15 WOs per platform, totaling 24 – 64 WOs) $50,000 each for the 4 WOs for a total of CAD 200,000	**4 WOs received IEGs**, receiving **a total of $191,982 CAD**

FIGURE 1: PROJECT REACH PLAN VS ACCOMPLISHMENT

Cumulative progress contributing to the ultimate outcome and strengthening the vibrancy of the women's rights movement



Vibrancy of the women's rights movement in Ethiopia: baseline value of **3.92 ON A 5-POINT SCALE**



159
Grants and partnerships



Programs predominantly targeting **WOMEN & YOUNG WOMEN**



48 institutional **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT** plans created



$4,546,112 CAD
Disbursed to 100 WOs



1 **GTMOD** and 7 **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULES**



30 grants to address gendered impacts of **COVID-19**



43 (27F/16M) CTC Trained, 70 WOs and 660 (384F/276M) people **TRAINED AND MENTORED**



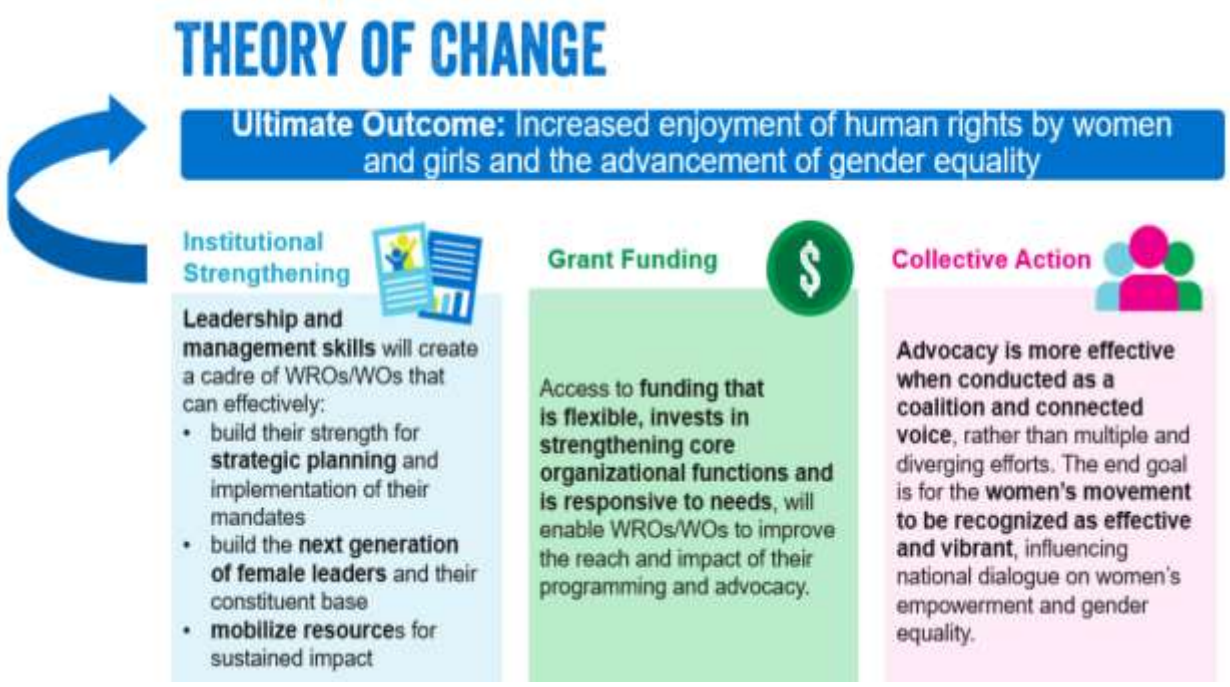
DIVERSE THEMATIC FOCUS
gender roles, prevention of SGBV, legal aid, youth networks and advocacy



WOs actively working on **35 POLICIES & PLANS**

2.2 Assessment of Changes to Initial and Final Theory of Change, Logic Model, and Performance Measurement Framework

From its onset, the project adopted a feminist MEL approach that valued the agency, rights, autonomy and choice of WOs involved in the project. Applying feminist MEL required a shift from what was previously the norm in how MEL is implemented particularly in the power relations, putting WOs and networks in the driver's seat of the design, implementation and interpretation of MEL. Plan emphasized and practiced the co-creation of learning and knowledge, respecting WOs' local expertise and knowledge as well as adapting tools for the unique working context of the WOs. Using flexible, adaptable and less demanding approaches and methodologies, the project prioritized understanding and captured various dimensions of transformative change. Principles of co-creation, nothing about the WOs without the WOs, and inclusivity were demonstrated in the many opportunities that the project involved the WOs in the design, review and sense-making of the different tools, approaches and results.



During an intensive and highly participatory PIP process, Plan and the WO Collective reviewed the LM and proposed changes to strengthen the logical flow and alignment with the WOs strategic directions. One change was proposed at the outcome level, specifically for immediate outcome 1330 ("Engagement of Local Women's Networks and member organizations with the National Women's Machinery at the local, sub-national and national level"). The group proposed to remove this outcome and as the intent of collaborating with government is streamlined throughout immediate outcome 1310 ("Capacity of local WOs and networks to undertake coordinated evidence-based advocacy at the national and sub-national level"). Feedback from WOs emphasized that to undertake coordinated advocacy, the government needs to be a key stakeholder within the developed advocacy plans. In addition to this outcome change, some activities and sub-activities were added, removed or replaced to ensure a logical flow of activities and/or integrate monitoring and evaluation tools within activities. The changes were presented and explained as part of the project's PIP submission and were approved by GAC along with the PIP. In conjunction with the changes made on the LM, the needed changes on the PMF were also made and summarized in the PIP, which mainly included the refinement of indicators to be more relevant to the project and to ensure that GAC's WVL Standard Indicators are appropriately incorporated into the PMF.

Overall, these changes allowed the project to better monitor and manage the progress on its expected outcomes and to better utilize the results by ensuring that a well-established and documented process existed in which the WOs are directly and meaningfully engaged and involved in the interpretation of results and in how these results particularly informed the foundational elements of the capacity building components of the project such as the determination of the priority capacity areas and the modules that were developed by the project after the completion of the PIA process. For instance, before developing the PIA, an exploratory survey was administered to a group of WOs to better understand their experience with similar organizational capacity assessments, the aspects they would like to see covered in the PIA and how to implement it. Accordingly, the PIA tool was fully designed with the participation of the WO Collective, and covered a wide range of organizational capacity domains that are relevant to almost any WO, including leadership, governance and strategic management, grant management, resource mobilization, gender transformative programming, M&E, planning and project design, people management and culture, among others. Afterwards, during the institutional capacity building process, individual trainings were monitored through attendance sheets and training pre- and post-tests to gather feedback on the WOs' learning and measure the change in the WOs capacities at the immediate outcome level. The pre and post-tests were developed as part of the training module development to ensure relevance and adherence to the learning objectives. CTCs were then trained in administering the pre and post-tests as part of their orientation on the different capacity building modules.

Through the Y2 Annual Reporting, the second indicator measuring the Ultimate Outcome was proposed and approved for removal. This was intended to be a composite indicator based on a predetermined scoring and weighting system. Using data from different data collection tools such as the PIAs and the questionnaires, these data points were to be aggregated to determine a score out of 100. However, during data analysis in Y2 it was determined that the scope variable within the index no longer added value as the project does not seek to change the WOs' scope, and all other data points were already captured in other indicators and thus the index did not add unique value in providing evidence of contribution towards the ultimate outcome. For this reason, it was removed and supplemented with qualitative data through the endline.

2.3 Progress on Ultimate Outcome 1000

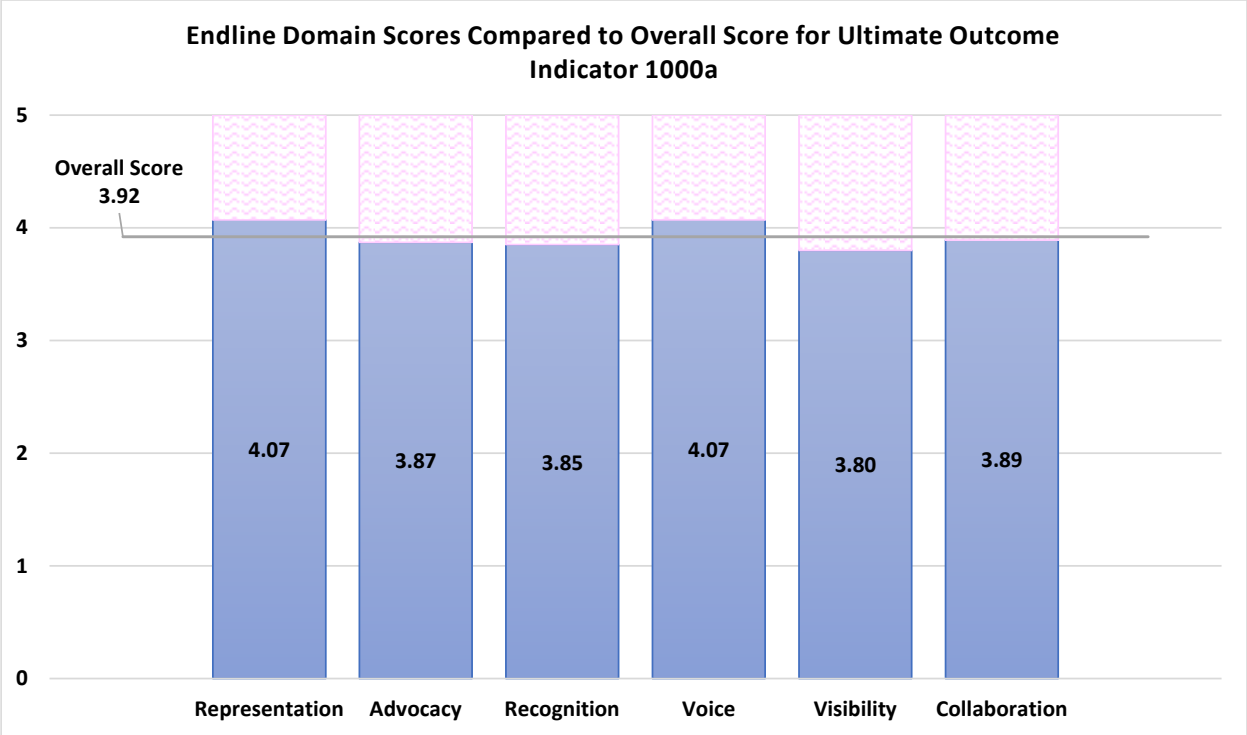
Ultimate Outcome 1000: Increased achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia.

1000a. Vibrancy of women's networks and organizations in Ethiopia		
Baseline: 2.58 on a 5-point scale	**End of Project Target:** 3 on a 5-point scale	**Endline:** 3.92 on a 5-point scale
In Year 6, an endline questionnaire was conducted to measure the ultimate outcome of the project. A total of 46 out of 48 WOs responded to the questionnaire designed to gather deep insights into the status of WOs and networks, and how the WOs perceive their vibrancy and activism at the end of the project. The level of vibrancy is calculated based on six domains of change each rated on a 5-point Likert scale by representatives from the WOs. The domains are: i) representation of women and girls by WOs; ii) advocacy for the rights of women and girls; iii) recognition of women's networks and organizations; iv) voice and participation of women and girls; v) visibility of women's networks and organizations, and vi) collaboration and coordination among and across women's networks and organizations. At baseline, the project, in collaboration with the WOs, defined a vibrant network of WOs as a network full of energy, life, and enthusiasm, and one that has a strong resonating voice where WOs are visible, recognized, and are able to achieve their full potential. Through the questionnaire designed to measure this ultimate outcome indicator, WOs were asked to share what they define as a vibrant network of WOs. Their responses strongly resonated with this definition and with the identified 6 domains of change particularly the representation of all women and girls, giving women and girls a voice ("becoming a voice of the voiceless"),		

in addition to advocating for and influencing policy change. Collaboration, sharing knowledge, and working towards a common goal were also stated as key characteristics of a vibrant network.

The overall endline value for the level of the vibrancy of WOs and networks in Ethiopia (1000a) is 3.92 on a 5-point scale, compared to the baseline value of 2.58. This indicates that the perceived vibrancy of WOs and networks has improved by 1.34 points, exceeding the project's target of 3 points by approximately 1 point. The table below shows the average scores per domain at baseline and endline.

Domain	Baseline	Endline	Variance
Representation of women and girls by WOs	2.84	4.07	+1.23
Advocacy for the rights of women and girls	2.34	3.87	+1.53
Recognition of women's networks and organizations	2.70	3.85	+1.15
Voice and participation of women and girls	2.45	4.07	+1.62
Visibility of women's networks and organizations	2.53	3.80	+1.27
Collaboration and coordination among and across women's networks and organizations	2.62	3.89	+1.27
Overall Score	**2.58**	**3.92**	**+1.34**



Throughout the project, the WOs showed progress under this ultimate outcome, as documented in the endline questionnaire, the project results and operations reports, and the Annual Perceptions Survey (APS). From the reflection of WOs and networks, the following progress was captured:

Representation of women and girls by WOs: The WOs have demonstrated a strong commitment to representing women and girls and addressing their practical and strategic needs. The endline data showed this variable had the highest score, which was reaffirmed in the project reports, and APS. For example, the Beza Women Community Based Development Association (BWCBDA) attended a workshop in South Africa, representing women and girls from conflict-affected areas of the Amhara region to reflect on the peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF. Additionally, EWLA and NEWA are represented in the national women/gender policy taskforce and are working group members supporting policy development processes. A participant from BWCBDA noted that since the start of the WVL project, there has been increased collaboration and coordination with other stakeholders, leading to a more unified

and impactful approach to advancing gender equality and women's rights, also reflected in the APS. WOs have improved the skills and capacity of women in their organizations, engaged in advocacy and campaigning work, and increased the representation of women in top management positions.

Advocacy for the rights of women and girls: The WOs and networks have engaged in evidence-based advocacy initiatives and accountability processes, despite skills gaps in advocacy and influencing. These efforts have aimed to bring about social, legal, and policy changes that ensure gender equality and empower women and girls. For instance, NEWA's "Gender in Focus" webinars have provided a platform to build evidence, define advocacy agendas, and influence policymakers on issues like menstrual health, sexual and reproductive rights for young women, and school-related gender-based violence. NEWA and AAWA also disseminated evidence from a study on gender desks in Addis Ababa social services through the "Gender in Focus" platform. To raise awareness and advocate for the draft anti-GBV policy, EWLA organized high-level discussions and a TV panel. After the panel, EWLA collaborated with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs to present and socialize the policy, which is now awaiting endorsement.

Recognition of women's networks and organizations: The WOs and networks reported receiving recognition from the government, multilateral agencies, and communities for their work in representing women and girls, advocating, and influencing policy and legal frameworks, and contributing towards women and girls' empowerment. For instance, DANFE, one of the project WOs, received national recognition from the Federal Authority of CSOs on International Volunteers Day for their contribution towards women's empowerment. During the 3-day African Women's Conference in October 2023 in Addis Ababa, EWLA received an award in recognition of their contribution to policy influencing and work in the women and girls' rights space. Other examples include the Executive Directress of Berhan Lehetsanat (BL) who received the Bego Sew award, and DANFE who received the 2023 Civil Society Organization (CSO) award from the Authority of Civil Society Organizations (ACSO). These awards and recognitions demonstrate the growing acknowledgment of the WOs' and networks' crucial role in advocating for and advancing women and girls' empowerment.

Voice and participation of women and girls: The WOs reported involving women and girls in the design of their respective projects, incorporating the interests and needs of marginalized and vulnerable women. They also reflected on the views and thoughts of women and girls during the design and implementation of projects. For example, the Consortium of Self-Help Group Approach Promoters (CoSAP) worked to increase the participation of women in various project activities, from the design and idea generation to the implementation of their project, including the needs assessment and workshops. This helped women and YFLs transition from passive to active participation. The WOs recognized the importance of centering the perspectives and needs of women, especially those from marginalized and vulnerable groups, in the project design and implementation processes. This approach ensured that the projects were better tailored to the realities and priorities of the target beneficiaries.

Visibility of women's networks and organizations: Through the interventions on communications and media engagement, the WOs reported increased visibility in mainstream, print, and social media, including TV and radio. They also developed or upgraded their websites to showcase their work and organizations.
The WOs organized several events and conducted campaigns for major occasions such as the multi-platform African Women Conference, International Women's Day (IWD), and the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV. Additionally, through the capacity building grants from WVL, 6 WOs have enhanced their communication and media engagement practices. The WOs also participated in joint networking events, workshops, and training sessions. This engagement is expected to contribute to increased visibility and awareness of the WOs and their work among the public. The WOs' efforts to strengthen their communications and media presence have been an important strategy to amplify their voices, share their impact, and engage with a wider audience in support of women's empowerment and gender equality.

Collaboration and coordination among and across women's networks and organizations: the WOs reported significantly increased collaboration and coordination efforts during Y4-Y5 of the project. They engaged in joint resource mobilization, project design, and implementation with a wide range of stakeholders, including other WOs, UN agencies, INGOs, government bodies, academic institutions, and grassroots women's structures. This collaborative approach enabled the WOs to leverage their collective expertise, resources, and networks to amplify their impact. Highlights included the establishment of national women's associations and virtual platforms to facilitate networking, alliance-building, and the sharing of experiences. The regional platforms such as Women Deliver. African Women Conference and African Women Summit also served as a key platform for WOs to develop new partnerships and strengthen existing collaborations and facilitate cross learning and sharing. Overall, the WOs demonstrated a strategic focus on enhancing their coordination and cooperation to advance women's empowerment and gender equality more effectively.

2.4 Progress on Intermediate Outcome 1100

Intermediate Outcome 1100: Improved management and sustainability of WOs advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia, particularly those representing vulnerable and marginalized women and girls.

1100a. Average organizational capacity score of supported Women's Organizations		
Baseline: 79.2/100	**Target:** 85/100	**Endline:** 84.1/100

A Participatory Institutional Assessment (PIA) survey was conducted at baseline and endline to capture the WOs' self reflections on their organizational capacity across different domains and variables. In Y2 and Y3 of the project, 48 WOs in total completed the PIA. The baseline value was 79.2 out of a maximum score of 100 whereas the endline overall capacity score was 84.1. The average organizational capacity score increased by 4.9 points yet was just shy of the end of project target of 85 by 0.9 points.

The overarching Participatory Institutional Assessment and Planning (PIAP) process was designed to support organizations of different types and sizes whose work focuses on women's rights and gender equality programming. Its core objective was to provide support to organizations to examine, prioritize, and address their organizational development needs. In addition, the PIAP aimed to:

- Support a process of self-reflection, rather than external assessment or evaluation,
- Facilitate an internal discussion about their success in and capacity to realize gender-transformative outcomes,
- Self-identify current strengths and gaps relating to their ability to deliver gender transformative programming and advocacy,
- Self-define priorities and needs, analyze root causes, and formulate targets and action plans for improvements.

This PIA survey was based on the recognition that the WO staff, governing members, volunteers, and management are their own experts. They have the relevant knowledge and the greatest ability to identify and analyze areas for capacity building and development, and to design a plan for organizational development to meet their own needs and priorities. The PIAP process was, therefore, a journey of self-assessment, analysis, and planning that was centrally driven by the perspectives and priorities of the different WOs. The PIA survey was structured through a set of domains, sub-domains and variables that were validated with the WOs. Each sub-domain covered key organizational aspects explored through a series of statements to which survey participants (staff, board members, volunteers, etc.) expressed their level of agreement through a 5-point Likert scale where: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

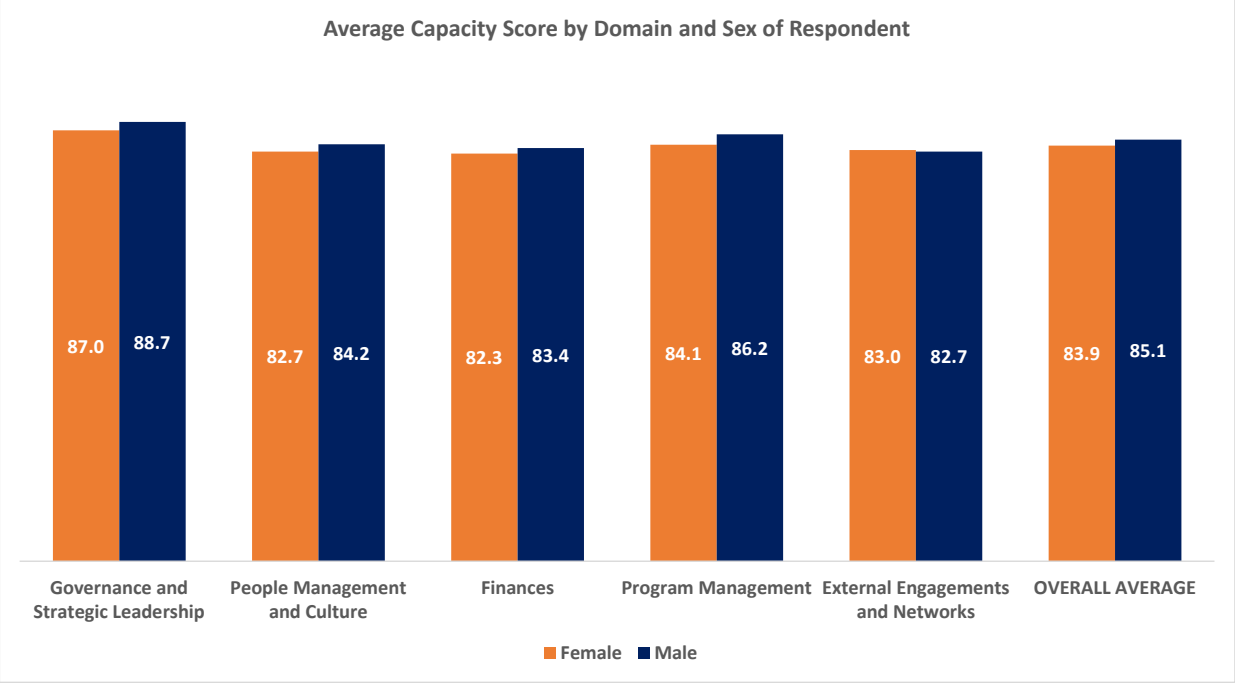
Scores provided by survey participants were then averaged to generate a single raw capacity score per variable. To understand capacity scores by domain and sub-domain, as well as the overall capacity score for the organization, scores were aggregated. The raw capacity score for each domain and sub-domain

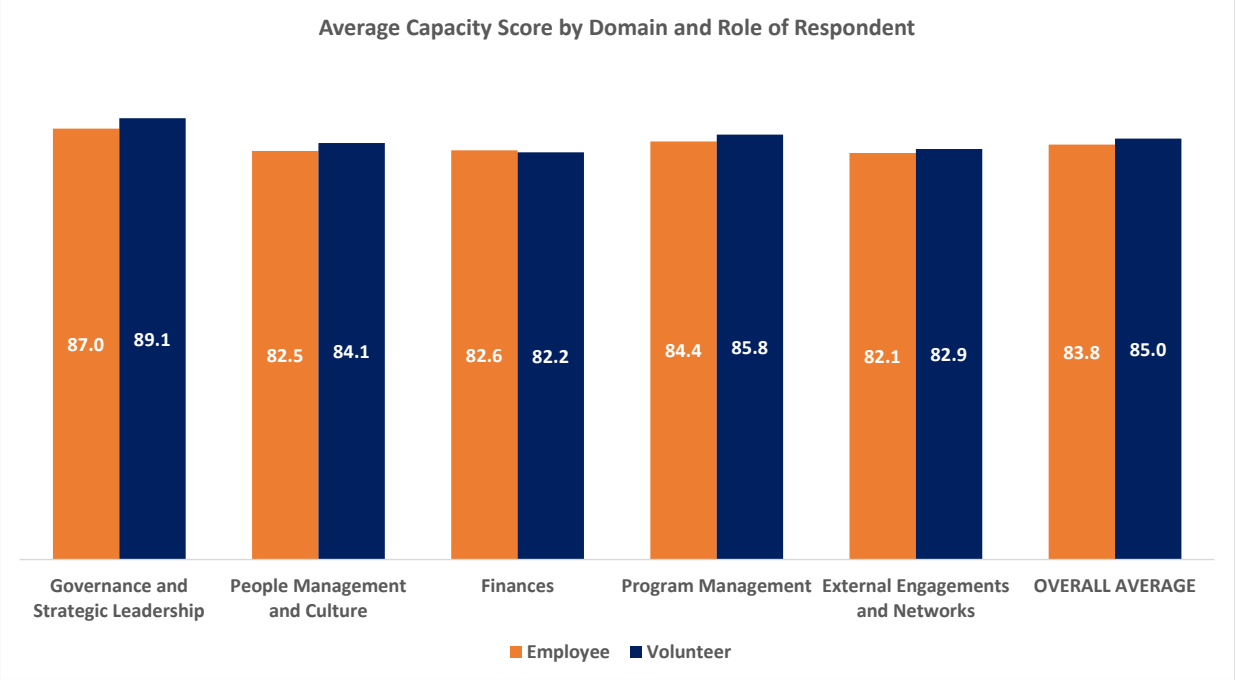
was tabulated by obtaining each respondents' total score for the section and then obtaining an average score for the section (i.e., take the mean of the respondents' totals). Once aggregated, the global capacity score for the WO, as well as its overall domain and sub-domain scores were standardized. The standardized capacity score uses an index to allow the different capacities to be compared meaningfully. The standardized score is tabulated by dividing a capacity domain's raw score by the domain's maximum number of points and then multiplying by 100 to get an indexed score. Capacity scores are finally presented using a 0 to 100 scale. Scores closer to 100 reflect a perception of high capacity, while scores closer to 0 indicate a perception of low capacity.

During the endline PIA process, a total of 448 (284F/164M) representatives from 46 WOs participated, including employees, volunteers, and board members of the WOs. Participants were asked to share their level of agreement with a series of statements across five organizational functionality areas: A) Governance and Strategic Leadership; B) People Management and Culture; C) Finances; D) Program Management; and E) External Engagements and Networks. The score of each of the 48 WOs was averaged to determine the overall capacity score. The table below shows the average capacity score by domain, as well as overall, at baseline and endline. The biggest increase in capacity score from baseline was in the external engagement and networking domain (+5.7 points) followed very closely by the finance's domain (+5.6 points). Similar to the baseline, the governance and strategic leadership domain remained the domain with the highest average score (3.4 points above the average score).

Domain	Average Score - Baseline	Average Score - Endline	Variance
Governance and Strategic Leadership	82.8	87.5	+4.7
People Management and Culture	78.2	83.0	+4.8
Finances	77.0	82.6	+5.6
Program Management	80.2	84.7	+4.5
External Engagement and Networks	76.9	82.6	+5.7
Average Organizational Capacity Score	**79.2**	**84.1**	**+4.9**

The two graphs below show the average capacity score by domain and sex of respondent, and the average capacity score by domain and role of respondent.





A) Governance and Strategic Leadership

The governance and strategic leadership domain were assessed through 22 variables under four subdomains: 1) mission, 2) governance, 3) leadership and 4) strategic planning. The table below shows the average capacity score by subdomain at baseline and endline. The strategic planning subdomain witnessed the biggest jump in score (7 points increased from 79.4 to 86.4), followed by the mission subdomain with 4.1 points from 88.2 to 92.3. It is worth noting that the mission subdomain had the highest average score among all the subdomains across the entire PIA survey. Additionally, all four subdomains under this domain had scores higher than the overall average organizational capacity score, both at baseline and endline.

Subdomain	Average Score - Baseline	Average Score - Endline	Variance
1. Mission	88.2	92.3	+4.1
2. Governance	83.5	87.4	+3.9
3. Leadership	82.5	86.3	+3.8
4. Strategic Planning	79.4	86.4	+7.0

Key Changes under Governance and Strategic Leadership as reported by WOs during APS.

- **Women in leadership**: Through the APS, participants reported an increase in the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions within their organizations and communities. WOs have focused on promoting women's leadership and building their capacity, thereby promoting women to lead, decide and influence women's rights agendas. As an example, Kembatti Mentti Gezzima-Tope (KMG), ECD, and New Life Teen Challenge Development & Relief Program (New Life) brought women leaders into the Directress, Board Chair and Program Manager roles, respectively. A total of nine WOs also recruited YFLs as officers to assist WOs leaders. At the same time, these recruited YFLs received mentorship on leadership skills and experiences from WOs leaders that cultivated the successor leaders of WOs. Altogether, 109 YFLs were hired as interns to be mentored and exercise leadership and organizational governance with experienced women leaders. This action was important to have capacitated successor YFLs for WOs.
- **Improved leadership and management practice:** According to the APS, this was the second most frequently reported improvement by participants. Change in leadership systems,

transparency and accountability in leadership and management, improved decision-making and problem-solving, accessibility of the leaders and information on decisions made, and increased time management are some of the practices that contributed to the improvement in the ability to govern and manage the organization.

- **Improved Participation and Representation:** Increased inclusion of women in governance structures, leading to more inclusive decision-making. *For example, EWDNA's APS respondent stated the change towards having structural change and strengthening our organizations direction towards leadership and decision-making position of Women with disabilities.*
- **Increased Women's Leadership:** Increased women leaders in projects, male-to-female ratio improvement, gender inclusive leadership).
- **Improved Management:** Capacity building efforts helped identify and address operational gaps, leading to better management and engagement.
- I**mproved working systems** a**nd positioning:** The provided support has been deemed valuable for the development and functioning of the organizations' systems. As a result, WOs have created various manuals and guidelines that facilitate the integration of gender considerations and streamline their *operations.* The response from the WFWSDA's APS participant can be evident here and stated *''different organizational capacity development documents, strategies and guidelines were developed. The documents have huge potential benefits to the organizational development''.*

The WVL project significantly improved the participating organizations' ability to manage and govern themselves. This enhanced governance, combined with a strong focus on capacity building and gender equality, has positioned them as more effective advocates for women's rights in their communities.

"The WVL project supported us to develop the five-year strategic plan that will serve as a guiding document to show the road map for the association. With WVL project support, EMWA was able to undertake editorial policy assessment from the gender perspective that helped to advance women journalists' interests and rights in the media. It also provides insights for media organizations to examine their editorial policy to reflect the gender equality schemes." ***APS participant from Ethiopian Media Women Association.***

B) People Management and Culture

The second capacity domain that was assessed through the PIA tool is people management and culture. This domain has five subdomains and 26 variables that measures progress in human resources, including staff and volunteers, and the quality of their skills, motivation, and management. Policies and practices should create a fair environment, that respects diversity, and that encourages the growth and development of staff and volunteers. This includes how decisions are made, how conflicts are resolved, the nature of communication, and how work is assigned, organized, and recognized. Among the five subdomains under people management and culture, the highest increment was exhibited under policy and organizational planning subdomain from 77.1 to 82.8 with 5.7 points, followed by development and compensation with 5.4 points increment from baseline.

Subdomain	Average Score - Baseline	Average Score - Endline	Variance
5. Policy and Organizational Planning	77.1	82.8	+5.7
6. Individual Experience (organizational culture)	80.8	84.8	+4.0
7. Development and Compensation	79.6	85.0	+5.4
8. Quantity and Quality of Staff	75.7	80.7	+5.0
9. Volunteers	**77.2**	**81.1**	**+3.9**

Summary of Key Changes in People Management and Culture Reported by WOs During APS

- **Improvement in people management:** Participants in the APS reported that WOs demonstrated improvement in people management and organizational culture. Positive working relationships between staff, managers, and leaders, and teamwork were reported. The participants noted that qualified and experienced staff have joined the WOs because of improvements in the human resources recruitment process.
- **Improvement in the capacity of staff and volunteers in priority areas:** The reflection of participants of the APS revealed that significant improvement in the capacity of WO staff and volunteers has been realized through the project intervention in the areas such as leadership, Human resource, financial management/IPSAS, child and at-risk peoples safeguarding, gender policy, gender analysis and GTP. For Example, a respondent from ECD stated that "*this project has enabled and helped us improve the financial management systems, increased transparency, and diversified our funding sources, leading to greater financial sustainability resilience. Strengthened Leadership Skills, strategic planning, and project management, enabling them to effectively lead advocacy efforts and manage complex projects."*
- **Improved volunteer engagement practice**: The engagement of volunteers, specifically the deployment of YFLs, was one area that has seen significant improvement. One participant explained, *"The organization has engaged young female graduates in programming activities at the field office."* Most of the participants agreed that volunteer engagement has increased significantly in each respective WO.
- **Improvement in Organizational culture**: Creating an inclusive work culture and diversity of staff and targets. WOs also reported an increased ability to motivate staff and attain staff commitment. Some APS participants from ECD, EWDNA, BL and SGDA had briefly stated improvements in their organizational culture including the ability of the management team to motivate the staff; to improve accessibility of information, staff participation staff in decision making processes, and improved staff relationship and communication with the management and board.
- **Enhanced Staff Expertise**: Training sessions and workshops bolstered leadership competencies, staff expertise, and engagement with gender issues (e.g., capacity building for staff, experience sharing for management teams).
- **Enhanced Transparency and Accountability**: Improved communication and information sharing, fostering a more collaborative and transparent culture (e.g., participatory decision-making processes and openness). During the APS, participant from more than 20 WOs has reflected changes in their organizations to enhance transparency and accountability because of the change in organizational policy, engaging, open and proactive leadership approaches, capacity development and increased staff commitment, motivation and ownership.

"Our organization (CoSAP) has recognized the importance of engaging Young Female Leaders (YFLs) from Plan International Ethiopia to establish connections with WOs and federations. We have implemented various activities to strengthen the capacity of YFLs and promote their leadership roles. These activities include providing internships for YFLs in WOs and federations, conducting capacity building trainings, organizing intergenerational dialogue forums, supporting YFLs in identifying community issues and developing project proposals, and facilitating their participation in annual learning and exchange forums. These initiatives aim to prepare and encourage YFLs to assume leadership positions in the future." ***Source: COSAP's Report***

C) Finances

The finances domain consists of three subdomains; financial management, accountability and resource mobilization, which assessed through 15 variables the WO's viable capacity in terms of placing systems and procedures to mobilize and manage finances in an efficient and effective manner. The findings from the baseline and endline PIA illustrated that the targeted 48 WOs perceived an overall improvement in their financial capacities translating into an increase from 77 points at baseline to 82.6 points at endline. Accordingly, the score increased by 5.6 points and stood in second among the five domains. In terms of

the subdomain scores, the resource mobilization subdomain, which had the lowest baseline score among 21 subdomains with 66 points, increased by 6.3 points at the endline assessment.
Because of group and individual coaching and firsthand support, 15 WOs apply call for proposals individually and in collaboration with a like women organizations. This hand on/coaching support helped WOs to understand donor standards and requirements and to build practical skills to win grants within a competitive funding environment. Due to this need-based support, 6 WOs have secured funds from different donor organizations.

Subdomain	Average Score - Baseline	Average Score - Endline	Variance
10. Financial Management	81.1	86.5	+5.4
11. Financial Accountability	84.8	89.4	+4.6
12. Resource Mobilization	66.0	72.3	+6.3

Key changes under Finance domain as reported by WOs during APS.
Participants outlined improvements in their knowledge and skills in RM, financial management, and grant writing and application as part of the APS. As a result, some WOs reported securing new funds from a variety of donors and started working on diverse means of mobilizing resources such as IGAs and local fundraising. WOs has improved their financial systems and practices after they started implementing International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and using updated financial and procurement manuals.

D) Program Management

The Program Management domain encompassed three subdomains: Design and Planning, Implementation and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E). This domain assessed the WOs' ability to deliver quality, cost-effective services to their constituents and communities, while ensuring the sustainability of their programs. The 23 variables focused on evaluating the WOs' understanding of community needs, their specialized technical expertise, and their unique approaches to service delivery. Importantly, the assessment of program impact - the changes in clients' lives resulting from the WOs' services - was an integral part of evaluating their program management capacity.

The baseline value for the Program Management domain was 80.2 out of 100 points. At endline, this increased to 84.7 points. The PIA assessment revealed that the WOs perceived the most significant positive change in the M&E subdomain, which saw an increase of 4.8 points from the baseline.

Subdomain	Average Score - Baseline	Average Score - Endline	Variance
13. Design and Planning	81.2	85.7	+4.5
14. Implementation	81.1	85.6	+4.5
15. Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	78.3	83.1	+4.8

Key changes under Program Management as reported by WOs during APS.
These findings demonstrate the WOs' strengthened capacity in designing, planning, implementing, and monitoring their programs to effectively meet the needs of their constituencies and communities, while also enhancing the sustainability of their initiatives. 16 WOs have gotten coaching and hand on support on grant application and grant writing in response to the FRFM grant call by WVL Ethiopia. So, 8 of the 16 WOs were well-positioned to be successful in the call for proposals as they met the TGAC's criteria.

Gender transformative and Results-Based Management (RBM): Most of the participants reported that WOs' program management significantly improved, particularly reflecting improvements in gender transformative, participatory, and results-based programming. The practice of designing projects in gender transformative taking on an integrated approach to address the root causes of gender equality including working on addressing gender norms, improving women's participation in decision making as well as their

access and control of resources, engaging men and boys in advancing gender equality and working on gender equality domains such as women's participation, leadership, decision making, land rights, economic empowerment, and GBV were recognized as areas of improvement in programming.

Improvements in the M&E system, project design, planning, proposal writing, and implementation among WOs were also noted by participants. The practice of project review and sharing learnings both internally with management, staff, and volunteers and externally with government stakeholders were mentioned as areas of improvement. Timely recording, reporting, and improved monitoring systems have contributed to successful M&E efforts, benefiting women's networks and grassroots organizations through mentorship and comprehensive tracking of project activities, results, and finances.

The participants of the APS: *"The most significant improvement in our organization's ability to deliver quality programming since the start of the WVL project has been the implementation of rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems, increased capacity building efforts, and tailored program designs informed by community feedback and local needs assessments."*

APS Participant from Mothers and Children Rights Organization (MCRO)

Project design and planning: WOs reported improvement in the ability to prepare resource mobilizing proposals and document lessons learned. These enhancements have led to better tracking of progress, improved program quality, and tailored program designs based on community feedback and local needs assessments.

The following statement is from the APS: *"Our organizational capacity has been significantly increased in implementing different women empowerment-related projects. For instance, since the start of the WVL project, we successfully implemented two important projects." Siiqqee Women Development Association.*

E) External Engagements and Networks

The fifth and final domain focused on the External Engagements and Networks capacity, which assessed their external relations and partnerships. This included their linkages with government agencies, other NGOs/CBOs, and their constituents - key elements for building supportive networks and collaborative relationships. The four subdomains and 20 variables assessed were crucial for understanding the WOs' ability to cultivate partnerships, enhance their reputation and track record within relevant communities, and leverage community and network engagement. This also encompassed their use of media and communications tools, as well as their advocacy efforts and alliance-building. Through the assessment, 48 WOs demonstrated notable improvements, with an overall increase of 5.7 points - from a baseline score of 76.9 to an endline value of 82.6 out of 100 points. The WOs exhibited their most significant progress in the Communication and Media Engagement subdomain, recording an impressive 8.3 points increase - the highest positive variance across all subdomains. This was followed by a 4.7 points improvement in the Stakeholder Engagement subdomain between baseline and endline.

Subdomain	Average Score - Baseline	Average Score - Endline	Variance
16. Stakeholder Engagement	79.9	84.6	+4.7
17. Alliances and Coalitions	80.9	85.4	+4.5
18. Advocacy engagement/networks	80.0	84.3	+4.3
19. Communication and Media engagement	69.0	77.3	+8.3
15. Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	78.3	83.1	+4.8

Key changes under External Engagements and Networks as reported by WOs during APS.
These findings underscore the WOs' strategic focus on strengthening their external relations, visibility, and collaborative networks to amplify their impact and advance women's empowerment and gender equality more effectively. 23 WEG and FRFM recipients who received coaching support and hand on supports on

communication and media engagement, are developing communication guideline, website, using social media outlets (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter Telegram) for organizational visibility.

Improved communication and networking: Many WOs have been able to network and partner with similar organizations to advocate for women's rights. Communication skills have been improved, enabling women to speak on different platforms and empower young female girls to communicate their needs. WOs and women's structures have also pushed forward the women's rights agenda by jointly organizing the IWD and 16 Days of Activism Against GBV events.

Advocacy and influencing skills: Many organizations have reported an improvement in their advocacy and influencing skills, which has enabled them to create strategies, systems, and skills to lead the women's rights agenda. They have also been able to identify and focus more clearly on advocacy agendas that are most directly linked to women's rights agendas according to their context. One of these examples was the effort to promote the women's rights agenda during the COVID-19 pandemic through social media campaigns and alliances with different stakeholders and government bodies. Besides, WO have implemented advocacy actions on various agendas. For Instance, Faith in Action has conducted advocacy actions to influence on the implementation of Rural Land policy by promoting women's rights to own and administer land, BWCBDA has conducted advocacy on the reform of family law in Amhara Region, and SGDA has influenced on the female workers rights and protection from GBV and violation of rights in industrial zone in Oromia, Dukem and Bishoftu towns.

Engage with formal and institutional networks and alliances: WOs are engaging and networking with similar organizations and introducing organizations to different networks and alliances to stand together against GBV and promote women's rights, GE, and peace building. One of the participants of the APS survey said, "*Since the start of the WVL project, the engagement with networks increased with international and national organizations such as Population Services International, WABE Development and Relief Association, Her Choice, CoSAP, Plan International, etc.*"

The WVL project's networking strategy enhanced participants' understanding and ability to use social media platforms and networks to become stronger and more vibrant WOs. One participant of the APS mentioned, "*Our organization has been able to upgrade its organizational website and social media engagement. We were also able to improve our engagement with mainstream media (TV and radio), enabling us to network with potential alliances*."

Stakeholder Engagement: The findings from APS revealed that WOs have made significant improvements in stakeholder engagement by actively networking, collaborating, and forming partnerships with institutional stakeholders, informal and community stakeholders, and like-minded organizations. *"We were able to form a close collaboration with rights-based organizations such as CRD, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, and the UN Office of Higher Commission for Human Rights, amongst others. Moreover, all of our current projects are designed to address women's rights inclusiveness and empowerment." Source: OPRIFS*

Networking and Collaboration Participants have reflected that WOs have significantly demonstrated improvement in their networking and collaboration with various stakeholders, including institutional stakeholders, government agencies such as MoWSA, donors, and like-minded organizations to create platforms and strategic partnerships. The organization's networking efforts have been instrumental in fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and advocating for policy changes related to gender equality and women's empowerment. For example, PFE took steps to enhance its networking and communication by establishing an organizational website. The website serves as a platform for sharing information and knowledge with both internal and external stakeholders. PFE attended the African Women Conference,

PFE became a member organization of NEWA, further expanding its network and collaboration opportunities within the organization.

Advocacy and Coalition building: The response from the APS indicated that WOs have significant improvement in their coalition building and advocacy efforts by actively engaging in various platforms and coalitions, leading to notable achievements such as leadership positions and founding a new consortium.

- WOs participated in two multiplatform events for networking and coalition and the African Women's Submit, Women Deliver, and African Women Conference.
- NEWA became a member of DGGE (Donors of Gender Equality Group).
- EWLA Executive Directress was recognized by the African Women Conference on advocacy and women's right advocator.
- Newly emerging WOs with FRFM grantees are members of umbrella organizations like NEWA, UEWCA, CoSAP and SIHA.

Through stakeholder feedback, internal assessments, and strategic development, WOs have strengthened their networking, alliance, and coalition-building activities, utilizing social media, webinars, broadcasts, and other means to enhance collaboration, expand reach, and amplify advocacy efforts, resulting in effective engagement with institutional stakeholders, government bodies, donors, and global/regional collaborating bodies. The IEG grant was also a vital means to strengthen and enhance skills and practices in collective advocacy. *"The project contributed to the enhancement of collaboration, alliances, and partnerships with other networks, individual CSOs/NGOs, and specifically, NEWA. It played a role in strengthening the existing networking system, with notable contributions such as the development of the Gender in Focus online platform (Weekly Webinar)."* - ***APS Participant from NEWA***

Gender Transformative and Feminist Principles

Keeping the feminist principles in mind and reflecting the common mandate of WOs to achieve gender transformative outcomes, Gender score of WOs was calculated using two sub-domains; 1) **The Gender Transformative Programming;** reflecting perceptions about how effectively the organization's programming achieves real change and empowerment for women and girls. 2) **The Feminist Approaches;** reflecting perceptions about how well the organization's operations and culture reflect principles of feminism. These domains were calculated using questions from across all sub-domains, as they are cross-cutting issues.

Subdomain	Average Score - Baseline	Average Score - Endline	Variance
Feminist Approaches	81.5	85.7	+4.2
Gender Transformative Programming	80.6	85.5	+4.9

Ability to mainstream women's rights agenda across projects making them more gender-transformative: WOs mentioned that they have become more gender-transformative and have a better perspective on GE and women's rights. In this regard, WOs' gender sensitivity is manifested through programmatic implementation to achieve GE. One of the respondents Y4 APS Stated: *"The organization has advocated for equal pay for all women as a serious matter, as many women working in industrial parks have unequal pay to men. The organization is now very well equipped to cope with challenges related to women's rights with the tools and skills received through WVL"* During Y4, WOs reported that through participation in capacity building activities of WVL such as training, workshops and panel discussions, gender sensitivity and application of gender transformative approach to programming in their organizations increased. According to one of the WOs, "*Our organization's improvement in relation to gender sensitivity as well as a gender transformative approach is significant. We have seen an increase in the organization's capacity to address the women's rights agenda.*" WOs reported that through coordination and collaboration with other organizations, they were able to amplify the voices of the most marginalized women. A participant from Beza for Women Community Based Development Association reflected that since the start of the WVL

project, collaboration and coordination with other stakeholders has increased, leading to a more unified and impactful approach to advancing GE and women's rights. For example, Beza's geographic focus was limited to small areas of the Amhara region but after participating in the WVL project, they joined NEWA's network and have been able to expand to other areas of the country. This has allowed them to gain recension letters from regional and zonal government officials. WO leaders have even stated that because of the WVL Ethiopia project implementation, their organizational brand is changing to "Women organization" which means the organizations are standing for women/girls right. "Named or labeled by Women Organizations, all donors and stakeholders are beginning to call us Women organization as a group name of a like-minded women focused organizations. Our existing and new donors started to allow organizational capacity development budgets and grants which serve as core funding." (staff member at Beza for Women Community Based Development Association)

Variance explanation: The project target of 85 points out of 100 was set after the baseline value was measured. The project's final value for indicator 1100a was less than one point below target. This must be considered in light of the nature of the design and use of the PIA. The PIA encouraged the self-reflection of members of the WOs on their organizations and their programs. The assessment was not meant to be used as an external evaluation of the WOs' performance. The PIA tool was also designed to be valuable to a wide range of WOs with varying capacities and structures, therefore, some assessment variables may not have been directly applicable to every respondent from each WO. However, participants were encouraged to answer all questions as best as they can and add comments if they wanted to. Therefore, as with any organizational capacity assessment, the ratings are reflective of the perceptions of the different participants which is subject to bias. That is, a lower score at one WO does not necessarily always mean low capacity in that area or that their programs are not technically sound – it may indicate that a WO is more aware of its areas of improvement than another WO that perceives itself strong in that area.

1100b. #/total of supported women's rights organizations who are now using best-practice governance and management practices

Baseline: 22 out of the 48 WOs (46%)	**Target:** 60% of the WOs	**Endline:** 40 out of 48 WOs (83%)

Utilizing the PIA, the project measured the baseline and endline values for indicator 1100b under this intermediate outcome. Based on a set of 20 variables reflecting different organizational best-practices in governance and management, during the baseline assessment 22 out of the 48 WOs participating in the PIAs (46% of the WOs) were determined to be using the predefined organizational best-practices based on their average score across the 20 variables. Similarly, the same PIA tool that was administered during the endline revealed that 83% (40 out of 48 WOs) demonstrated using the predefined organizational best practices. The table below shows the average score and percentage of WOs above the 80% benchmark per variable, sorted from the highest score to the lowest score.

Variable	Average Score	% of WOs scoring above 80
Management is committed to promoting female representation at the board level	92.0	97.9%
Leaders in my organization support and promote women's rights and equality in their actions and decisions.	91.1	95.8%
Leaders in my organization support and promote women's rights and equality in their language and messaging to staff and volunteers.	90.1	97.9%
Any sub-contracts or purchasing of goods by my organization is done in a fair and transparent way (for example, transparent comparison of several offers for large purchases).	89.5	89.6%
My organization provides opportunities for training in gender equality.	88.8	91.7%
Our organization has a code of conduct that is inclusive and protective of all staff, including an anti-harassment policy	88.6	91.7%
Our organization effectively monitors and analyzes actual expenditures against planned budgets	88.2	89.6%
Program results are being used to improve our organization's future programming and decision-making	86.6	85.4%

The governing body plays an important and active role in the organization	86.4	89.6%
Leadership engages staff to determine the direction for the organization and determining appropriate policies and procedures	85.4	85.4%
The HR policy includes positive recruitment/promotion policies to achieve gender equality/diversity in staffing, especially in decision-making positions	84.9	75.0%
The governing body or group includes diversity within its membership that reflects the community we serve (for example, racial, religious, economic, linguistic diversity).	84.7	87.5%
Our project/programs use results-based management tools in the project cycle (for example, logic models, theory of change, results measurement framework).	81.2	70.8%
Volunteers are mentored and supported to improve their skills and knowledge.	80.7	68.8%
A risk assessment and mitigation strategy are used throughout implementation (including specific gender-related risks that apply to women and girls).	80.2	60.4%
The strategic plan is tracked, monitored, and regularly reviewed.	79.7	52.1%
Our organization has an effective and active communications strategy (or guide/plan) that outlines key audiences and messaging.	79.5	66.7%
Volunteers with our organization have clearly defined roles.	78.9	60.4%
There is a regular and fair appraisal system for staff performance.	77.8	58.3%
Our organization has a good diversity of donors (i.e. foundations, NGO partners, government) which ensures we are not entirely dependent on one source	75.5	45.8%

1100c. Level of implementation of the WOs' resource mobilization plans

Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70%	**Endline**: 72% of the RMP activities were completed

48 WOs participated in the RM training and prepared RMPs with the technical support of the CTCs. Experience sharing with other CSOs on how to mobilize resources was also facilitated for WOs. Multiplatform and donor sensitization events were held, intended to bring WOs and potential donors together for WOs to showcase their power and expertise and learn about different funding mechanisms. WOs have also demonstrated joint efforts to mobilize and share resources. By the end of the project, reports were collected from 25 WOs to analyse achievements on their RMPs, and according to the reports, on average 72% of the planned activities were completed. Out of the 25 WOs, 24 have completed more than 50% of planned resource mobilization activities, and out of those. 13 WOs completed more than 70% of their activities planned through their respective RMPs. Moreover, 28 WOs developed RMPs for 2024 by revising their 2023 RMPs in collaboration with assigned CTC teams. Some of the successes from the implementation of the plans are as follows:

- ***Amhara Women's Association (AWA)*** *raised 495,037 ETB from International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs) including UNICEF.*
- ***Amhara Women's Federation (AWF)*** *raised up to 1,440,000 ETB from private sector organizations and banks.*
- ***BL*** *raised funds to equip an orthopedic center with machines to generate income for its other activities and operations. 50% of the work was completed and they have received an official license to operate.*
- ***Ethiopian Center for Development (ECD):*** *provided RM training for 20 RM section teams and staff and officially licensed with business to run income generating schemes. ECD also applied for a grant opportunity announced by UN Women Ethiopia, PMT provided technical support to ECD staff in writing the proposal which later resulted in ECD being awarded an advocacy, influencing grant, and securing its first partnership with UN Women.*
- ***Faith in Action (FIA)*** *organized an RM event on March 25, 2024, to strengthen relationships with existing and potential donors.*
- ***Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO)*** *mobilized 4,638,768 ETB from identified corporate partners including Ethiopian Airlines.*
- ***Kembatti Mentti Gezzima-Tope (KMG)*** *raised 130,000 ETB generated through renting out an office space they owned that was not being used for current operations and 45,000 ETB generated from the sale of vetiver grass.*
- ***Mujejeguwa Loka Women Development Association (MLWDA)*** *mobilized 156,000 ETB by organizing fundraising events and 500,000 ETB through a grant proposal from the Civil Society Support Programme.*

- ***Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA)*** *raised 12,000 ETB from its members and were granted a land request by Addis Ababa's mayor's office for the construction of a center for women with disabilities.*
- ***Beza Women community Based Development Association/BWCBDA;*** *Mobilized ETB 150,000 from the Zekah of Muslim community) through communicating with bank managers with Islamic banking system in Dessie town, this budget is serving to rehabilitate and support prisoner women to create business in the Dessie prison.*
- ***OPRIFS*** *has begun running a garment business as IGA scheme following the RM training and coaching support conducted by CTCs.*
- ***Save Generation Development Association (SGDA):*** *an Indigenous organization assisting marginalized and vulnerable communities in Ethiopia, focusing on women's empowerment, orphaned children and people living with the HIV/AIDS, was awarded a grant from UN Women entitled "Participation and representations of women in peace building in Ethiopia."*
- ***Passionate Forever Ethiopia (PFE):*** *PFE is a women led local CSO working to bring positive changes in the lives of women and girls through health promotion, economic empowerment, capacity building and entrepreneurship in Ethiopia. PFE was awarded a grant from the Ethiopian Social Accountability Program Phase 2-ESAP 2 (World Bank Program) entitled "Improved public service delivery through social accountability in Amhara regional state".*
- ***Young Women Christian Association/YWCA/;*** *Mobilized 1 million EBT from summer season volunteers, individuals, and private sector organizations for emergency response/support to Internally displaced people at Amhara regional state Debre - Birhan town.*
- ***Meseret humanitarian Organization/MHO;*** *Mobilized resources in kind from different individuals and private sector organizations. Like, Food Items, Cloths and shoes, Sanitary materials Kitchen Items-, Educational materials/Stationaries and Total in kind mobilized resources estimated prices: 5,536,868 ETB, which may serve 2 Re-habilitation center for women with children, adults, and children at Addis Ababa and Bahirdar.*
- ***Integrated Family Service Organization/IFSO;*** *Mobilized close to ETB 5,748,769.60 in total (4,638,769.60 in-kind and 840,000 in ETB), in-kind resource mobilized were 12,000 kg and 378kg of milk for street children and girls' education.*
- ***Addis Ababa Women Association/AAWA/;*** *Collected 8.5 million ETB from different private sectors with Ethiopian telecommunication and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.*

Variance explanation: 24 WOs RMPs were not submitted, the analyzed result demonstrated here is only from 24 WOs.

2.5 Progress on Intermediate Outcome 1200

Intermediate Outcome 1200: Enhanced performance of programming and advocacy of WOs advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia.

1200a. %/total of grantees reporting greater reach of programs		
Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70% of the WOs	**Endline:** 97.9% of the WOs (46 out of 47)

In Y5, the final APS was conducted to track progress among WOs on reporting the change their programs' reach. A total of 414 members from 47 WOs were asked if their reach had changed since their engagement in the WVL project. A total of 97.9% of the participants reported an increase in their overall reach, while one WO out of the 47 (2.1%) reported no change in their overall reach. The periodic reports of the WOs to the WVL PMT further support these findings and have shown how the project has contributed to reaching vulnerable and marginalized women and girls and partnering with formal and informal institutions. The data from the APS was analysed with the WO as the unit of analysis to report on indicator 1200a and revealed that 46 WOs out of the 47 participating in the APS reported an increase in their reach as shown in the table below.

Variables	Total Score of 47 WOs	Responses	No. of WOs	Percentage %
				2024
Since the start of WVL, has the organization's overall reach increased	47	5	20	42.6%
		4	26	55.3%
		3	1	2.1%
		2	0	0.0%
		1	0	0.0%

* 5= Significantly Increased, 4= Increased, 3= No change, 2= Decreased, 1=Significantly Decreased

FIGURE 2: REPORTED OVERALL REACH OF WOS

The periodic reports of the WOs to the WVL PMT further supported this finding and have shown how the project has contributed to reaching vulnerable and marginalized women and girls and partner with formal and informal institutions. As reported by the participants at the end of the project, 43 WOs reported that they have reached **586,389** (325,446F/260,943M) people across the targeted regions. This is an increase from the **227,762** (125,269F/102,493M) individuals reached by the WOs reported in Y3 annual report.

Based on the provided responses, the key factors that contributed to increases or decreases in the overall reach of the WOs is discussed as follow: Factors Contributing to increased reach were access to diverse grants/funding (e.g. WVL grant), capacity building and organizational development, increased staff capacity and size, increased advocacy, networking, and partnerships with diverse stakeholders, expansion of thematic focus and target groups (e.g. reaching more women and girls with disabilities), improvements in organizational visibility, accessibility, and use of media and lessons learned from previous projects and adoption of more effective strategies. On the other hand, few WOs also described factors such funding/budget constraints and loss of major grants (e.g. WVL project ending), security issues, COVID-19 restrictions, and challenging operating contexts, shifting donor priorities towards humanitarian response, and limited geographic coverage and intervention areas were mentioned as factors that contributed to decreased reach of their organization.

Overall, the key drivers were effective utilization of resources, continuous capacity building, diversification of funding and programming, as well as adaptability to changing contexts - all of which enabled the WOs to significantly expand their reach over time. WOs highlighted their ability to achieve high reach and impact relative to their limited size and resources through efficient utilization of committed staff and volunteers, technical capacity, and context-appropriate approaches. While constrained by funding challenges, they have adapted strategies to maximize their limited budgets, leveraging partnerships and in-kind support. Emerging organizations recognized the need for further capacity building and resources to meet the growing demand, while more established entities demonstrated steady increases in reach over time through sustainable institutions. Overall, the organizations' commitment, adaptability, and judicious use of available means have enabled them to significantly extend their services to marginalized communities.

1200b. #/total supported of WOs who have met objectives and targets as stated in their annual work plans (or priorities)

Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70% of the WOs	**Endline:** 100

Throughout the lifetime of the project, the PMT, with the endorsement of the TGAC, established three types of granting streams: Flexible Responsive Fund Mechanisms (FRFM), Women Empowerment Grant (WEG), and Influencing and Evidence Grant (IEGs) and provided financial support through the disbursement of about CAD $4,546,112 through 159 grants to 100 WOs including, 11 WOs and women structures through hosting arrangement. These grants were relevant to respond to the needs and interests of women and girls as the grants were designed in alignment with gender equality domains, embedded in feminist principles and with the goal to bring about gender transformative results.

As part of its feminist MEAL, the PMT provided continuous support in the project design, planning, implementation, and reporting of all grants and conducted monitoring visit to all WEG and IEG and more than 90% of FRFM grantees. Final reports for all the grants were received, reviewed, and progress was analyzed to compile data for the SARs and ARs of the project. A total of 28 WEG, 4 IEG and 82[25] FRFM grantees submitted their final narrative and financial reports. Based on the review of these reports by PMT, all WOs have implemented 100% of their planned actions and reported to meet their objectives as stated in their workplans, despite some adjustment in their budgeting and repurposing leftover budget to strengthen actions and implement organizational capacity development activities including WOs that developed ICDPs.

2.6 Progress on Intermediate Outcome 1300

Intermediate Outcome 1300: Increased effectiveness of national and sub-national women's platforms, networks, and alliances to affect policy, legal, and social change in Ethiopia that advances gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

1300a. Level of coordination among local, national and multinational women's networks and with the national women's machinery		
Baseline: 79%	**Target:** 85%	**Endline:** 85%

As part of the PIA survey during baseline and endline, WOs were asked to rate a set of variables related to their perceived level of engagement with stakeholders and alliances and coalitions from their point of view to determine the value for indicator 1300a. The overall level of coordination according to the 48 WOs that completed the PIA was 78.7 (out of 100) at baseline. This value increased to 85 out of 100 at endline demonstrating an increased level of coordination among local, national, and regional women's networks and stakeholders. The score was measured as a function of:

- *The frequency of engagement with relevant formal and institutional stakeholders, such as the government and regional bodies, to the extent that serves these relationships,*
- *The frequency of engagement with informal and community stakeholders, such as local partners, grassroots organizations, and community members, to the extent that serves these relationships,*
- *The active membership of WOs in women's rights networks and coalitions,*
- *The participation of WOs in other relevant professional networks,*
- *The opportunities to form alliances with young feminist and youth organizations to provide mentorship and support.*

[25] Does not include the two FRFM grants (CTC and AWAY) issued in August 2024 with the approval of the interest funds ($29,199 CAD)

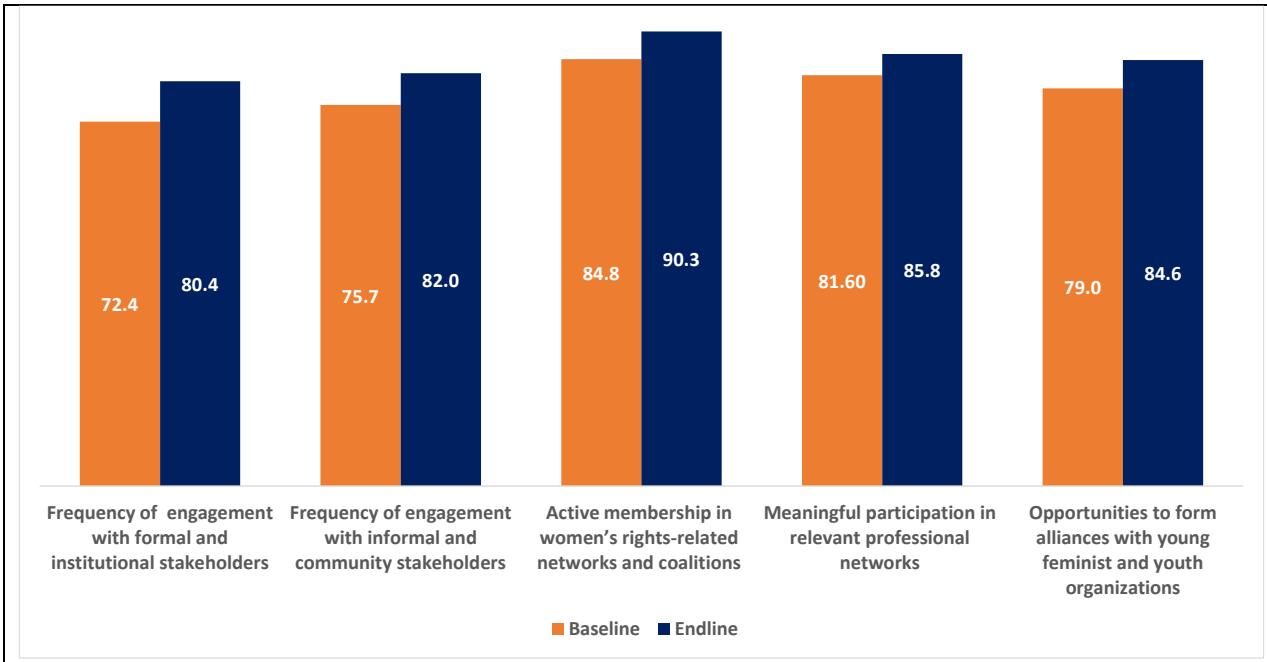


FIGURE 3: AVERAGE SCORE OF WOS PER LEVEL OF COORDINATION VARIABLE

The frequency of engagement with formal and institutional stakeholders had the lowest score (72.4) at baseline and endline (80.4), however, that variable witnessed the biggest increase in terms of points with 8 points gain. Followed by the frequency of engagement with informal and community stakeholders (75.7 at baseline), which jumped to 82.0 at endline; 6.3 points increase. The perceived active membership in women's rights-related networks and coalitions was the highest both at baseline (84.8) and endline (90.3). This indicates that WOs perceive a higher level of coordination among themselves and within their networks and coalitions, while coordination with formal institutions and community stakeholders has significantly improved since baseline.

1300b. %/total targeted policies/laws/frameworks/mechanisms/procedures/plans etc. that were influenced by interventions from women's rights organizations, networks, and alliances.

Baseline: 19	**Target:** 24	**Endline:** 35

Baseline data for the above indicator were collected through the WO's questionnaire from the 17 WOs receiving the first round of WEGs. After reviewing the responses, a total of 19 different policies, laws, and strategies were found to have been targeted and are being influenced through various intervention mechanisms such as training, consultative workshops, interface meetings, press releases, media engagement, etc. During the endline data collection, using a revised advocacy and influencing documentation tool, WOs reported an additional 16 (3 policies, 3 Laws/Proclamations, 5 strategies/plans and 5 directive and guidelines) targeted and influenced by WOs and Networks for a final total of 35 unique policies, laws, strategies, plans, guidelines.

Due to the broad definition of the indicator and the different levels of influence among the WOs, that vary in size, resources, and capacity, and the progress made towards influencing the different policies, laws, strategies, etc. as an ongoing process, the project considered the targeted policies/laws/ frameworks/plans/ etc. reported by WOs as influenced if they had been targeted by:

- *Influencing the development of new policies, laws, frameworks, and/or procedures, etc.*
- *Influencing the improvement (reform) of existing policies, laws, frameworks, and/or procedures, etc.*
- *Influencing the implementation of policies, laws, frameworks, and/or procedures, etc.*
- *Influencing government funding/budgetary decisions for a certain priority area(s)*

The compiled list of targeted and influenced policies, laws, strategies, plans, guidelines by the WVL Ethiopia grantees is:

1. Land Policy	2. Report on the Implementation Status of CEDAW by MOWCY
3. Gender Equality Policy	4. Ethiopian National Action Plan on women, peace, and security
5. Digital Inclusion (Increasing governments' ability to mainstream gender and information, communication and technology)	6. National Plan of Action of Persons with Disabilities
7. Women Self Help Group Policy	8. DRM Policy and Strategy
9. Gender Policy and Anti-sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy of Addis Ababa University (AAU)	10. Youth Policy and Implementation of Youth Package
11. Addis Ababa City Transport Policy and 10 years Transport Sector Plan (Safe and Inclusive Transport)	12. Environment Policy of Ethiopia
13. Education Policy	14. Media Editorial policy
15. Technical and Vocational Education Policy	16. General Education Student Assessment and Grade Transfer Guidelines
17. Family Law (including Oromia Regional Family Law)	18. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) guidelines
19. Criminal Law on Female Genital Mutilation, Rape, Child Marriage, and Harmful Practices	20. Transitional Justice Policy
21. Election Law	22. Reintegration of Returnees- Directive No. 969/2023
23. Convention of People with Disability Rights	24. National Adolescent and youth health strategy
25. 10 Years Perspective Plan on Women, Children, and Youth	26. Right to Employment of Persons with Disability Proclamation No. 568/2008
27. Community Safety / Community Policing Strategy implementation	28. Ethiopia HIV/AIDS national strategic plan
29. 10 Years Perspective Plan by Environment and Climate Change Commission	30. Financial Administrative Proclamation and A Directive Providing for Channel Two Finance Administration for the Health Sector Number 979 /2024
31. Migration and Human Trafficking Mechanisms	32. ILO article 189 Domestic Workers Rights
33. Ethiopia COVID-19 Response Plan	34. ILO Convention C191 - Safe and Healthy Working Environment
35. Women Participation and Leadership in the house of representatives	

1300c. Level of implementation of the advocacy agendas and strategies

Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70% of the advocacy agendas to be implemented	**Endline:** 100%

In terms of the level of implementation of the advocacy agendas of the four WO Collectives, 100% of the planned activities (21 activities in total) were completed, despite various challenges faced such as difficulty in coming to a consensus on the advocacy agendas among the WOs, delays in the government signing agreements with WOs to approve their advocacy agendas, high WO staff turnover, unequal commitment among WO implementing partners, and a lack of clarity about activities. EWLA also specifically experienced issues moving forward their advocacy agenda as the government requested them to pause further sensitization on the anti-GBV policy before it was officially released. ECD and collaborating WOs faced delays in implementing their advocacy actions due to the conflict in the Amhara region. To continue moving forward with their advocacy agenda, ECD approached regional government officials and discussed the challenges they were experiencing with the command post representatives, and as a result, they were granted permission to organize their meetings and workshops.

The implementation of UEWCA's advocacy actions was also delayed due to the conflict in the Amhara region as well as challenges in getting MoWSA to sign their agreement as the government is required to approve

WOs' activities before being implemented. UEWCA initiated an agreement to implement advocacy actions by negotiating with regional government officials and as a result, the implementation of their actions continued and finalized accordingly as planned. Throughout the Y5 implementation period, PMT and CTCs supported the WO Collective to accelerate their agendas. The activities under the advocacy agendas that were achieved are listed in detail under Activity 1311.5.

2.7 Progress on Immediate Outcomes 1110 & 1120

Immediate Outcome 1110: Enhanced organizational capacity and leadership of Women's Organizations

1110a. #/total of supported women's organizations reporting increased ability to lead the women's rights agenda

Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70%	**Endline:** 44 out of 47 WOs (93.7%)

To measure this immediate outcome indicator 1110a "#/total of supported WOs reporting increased ability to lead the women's rights agenda", data from the APS conducted in Y4 and Y5 was used. Findings from the APS from 2023 and 2024 on this indicator are summarized and compared in the table below.

Ability to lead women's right agenda- Comparison of APS 2023 and 24

		2023			2024		Variance	
Responses	No. of WOs	Responses	No. of WOs	Percentage %	No. of WOs	Percentage %	No. of WOs	Percentage %
Rate of Change organization's ability to lead the women's rights agenda	48	5	13	27.10%	13	27.70%	0	0.60%
		4	34	70.80%	31	66.00%	-3	-4.80%
		3	1	2.10%	3	6.40%	2	4.30%
		2	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
		1	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%

* 5= Significantly Increased, 4= Increased, 3= No change, 2= Decreased, 1= Significantly Decreased

Among the 47 WOs that participated in the APS in Y5, the majority (93.7%) rated the change in their ability to lead the women's rights agenda since the start of the WVL project at least a 4 out of 5 on a 5-point Likert scale, reflecting an increase in their ability. This represents 44 out of the 47 WOs, while only 3 WOs (6.4%) perceived no change in their abilities in this particular area. Since this was the last and final measurement of this immediate outcome indicator, the project has successfully contributed to improving the management and sustainability of WOs and has surpassed the target set at the start of the project.

As depicted in the table, the combined percentage of WOs that reported at least a 4 in Y5's APS declined about 4% from Y4's value. As per the discussion while validating the Y5 APS findings, some WOs explained that their increased awareness of gender transformative programming and feminist principles and agenda gave them a better sense of how much more needs to be done in this regard.

The responses nonetheless revealed that participants believed that WOs will benefit further from tailored capacity building interventions and clear strategies to enhance their organizations' ability to lead the women's rights agenda and enhance advocacy and influencing work in the following: (1) mentorship and support to young feminists and youth organizations, (2) opportunities to form and lead alliances with other like-minded stakeholders, (3) being an innovator in advancing women's rights and gender equality and (4) becoming a role model in influencing policy makers and duty bearers.

1110b. #/total supported women's rights organizations reporting increased ability to manage and/or govern

Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70%	**Endline:** 43 WOs out of 47 (91.5%)

The other immediate outcome indicator measured using the APS was the change in WOs' ability to manage and govern since the start of the WVL project. Consequently, on average, 21.3% of WOs who participated in the survey rated the change in their organization's ability to manage and govern since the start of the project

as 5 out of 5. Most of the participants from WOs (70.2%) rated it as 4 on the 5-point Likert scale. The aggregate data revealed that 91.5% of WOs perceived a positive change in the management and governance of their organization since the start of the project. Once more, only 3 WOs (6.4%) perceived no change (3 out of 5 on the Likert scale) while 2.1% perceived a slight decrease (a 2 on the 5-point Likert scale) in their organization's ability to manage and govern, respectively. The slight decrease from the Y4 average value of 95.9% to 91.5% in Y5 APS was explained during the validation session with the WOs as a result of a better understanding and appreciation of the capacity development areas and a more critical thinking of their organizations' true abilities. This is typically expected in self-reported experiential indicators.

Comparison of WVL Annual Perception Survey 2023 and 24

			2023		2024	Variance
Responses	No. of WOs	Responses	No. of WOs	Percentage %	No. of WOs	Percentage %	Percentage %
Rate of Change organization's ability to manage and govern	48	5	9	18.80%	10	21.30%	2.50%
		4	37	77.10%	33	70.20%	-6.90%
		3	2	4.20%	3	6.40%	2.20%
		2	0	0.00%	1	2.10%	2.10%
		1	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%

* 5= Significantly Increased, 4= Increased, 3= No change, 2= Decreased, 1= Significantly Decreased

1110c. #/total of trained members of supported women's organizations with adequate knowledge in self-identified priorities and areas of capacity development

Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70%	**Endline:** 60 out of 60 (100%) participants score 50% and above at post test

The project delivered training to members of the WOs on selected topics such as M&E, strategic planning, and financial management and compliance for 60 WO staff between Y3 and Y5. Pre- and post-tests were administered to the participants who completed the training to measure the gain in knowledge from the different trainings. Accordingly, a total of 60 trainees filled the pre- and post-tests which included between 10 to 15 questions that questioned the knowledge and understanding of the participants in each respective capacity area.

The pre- and post-tests from these training sessions were analyzed and used to determine the number of participants who scored 50% or more on the pre-tests and post-tests. At the pre-test, a total of 38 participants out of 60 from across the three trainings scored 50% or higher on the test. By the end of the training, all 60 participants achieved the benchmark of 50% at the post-test. With 100% achievement, this result has surpassed the target (70%) by 30% and remained indicative of the success of the project in enhancing WOs staff capacity in the self-identified capacity development areas, as well as the quality of the training sessions.

Immediate Outcome 1120: Enhanced capacity of Women's Organizations to mobilize resources

1120a. #/total of trained members of supported women's organizations with adequate knowledge in resource mobilization

Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70%	**Endline:** 51 out of 52 participants (98%)

In Y4, following the completion of the draft resource mobilization module, the PMT decided to rollout a training with the aim to test the module, and support WOs in developing RMPs. During the three days RM training, the CTCs administered a survey to assess the impact of the training on the knowledge of the WOs staff. Feedback from the participants was also collected at the end of the workshop and some areas for improvement were:

- *Participants suggested more participatory and interactive facilitation including exercises, case studies etc.*
- *Longer duration of the sessions*

- *Bringing more innovative resource mobilization strategies and mechanisms*

In Y4, following a resource mobilization training focusing on grant writing and application, to track the improvement in knowledge among participants, the M&E Specialist administered pre- and post-training tests using an online interactive survey tool (Mentimeter). A total of 15 questions were presented using Mentimeter. On average, at the post-test 62% of the participants selected the correct answer over the course of 15 questions, up from an average of 48% at pre-test. The data collected through Mentimeter, however, did not allow the project to analyze the responses by participant to determine the number of participants who scored 50% or higher on the pre-test and post-test. In Y5, another round of resource mobilization training that especially focused on social enterprise and fundraising techniques was organized. A different technique was used this time to administer the pre- and post-tests. Out of 54 participants, matching sets of pre- and post-tests were completed by 52 participants. The number of people scoring above 70% went up from 6 in the pre-test to 31 in the post-test, indicating a significant improvement in the level of knowledge among participants. The number of people scoring between 50% and 70% increased from 18 in the pre-test to 20 in the post-test. Overall, at the end of the training, 51 participants out of the 52 (98%) who completed the pre- and post-tests scored above 50%. Overall, the findings from the pre- and post-tests administered during the different rounds of resource mobilization trainings clearly demonstrated that the WOs staff acquired adequate knowledge and skills to carry out diverse resource mobilization activities and contribute to increased resources that will in turn positively impact the management and sustainability of their respective WOs.

1120b. #/total of women's organizations with an upgraded resource mobilization plan		
Baseline: 0	**Target:** 28	**Endline:** 48 WOs with upgraded RMPs.

Beside delivering different types of RM training and facilitating learning exchanges, the PMT in collaboration with the CTCs conducted a range of one-to-one and group coaching sessions to support WOs in developing strategies and action plans for resource mobilization.

Starting in Y3, 48 WOs prepared and started implementing their respective resource mobilization plans. In Y5, 24 WOs reported on their resource mobilization plans (please refer to **1100c)** and were supported to revise and update their resource mobilization plan. Through the support of the CTCs and external resources, 28 WOs have revised their RMPs from 2023 and committed to include it in their organizational operational plan for the year 2024. Over the course of the project's lifetime, a total of 48 WOs were supported to develop and upgrade their organizational resource mobilization plan and implemented actions to secure additional grants, mobilize local resources, build capacity of their members and put in place systems and structure that better position them to raise more resource to deliver their mandate, reach more women and girls and sustain their organization.

2.8 Progress on Immediate Outcome 1210

Immediate Outcome 1210: Improved ability of Women's Organizations to deliver programs and initiatives to advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls		
1210a. #/total supported women's rights organizations reporting increased ability to deliver quality programming		
Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70%	**Endline:** 45 out of 47 WOs (95.8%)

The project used the APS to determine the progress on this immediate outcome by collecting data on immediate outcome indicator 1210a. The APS was conducted in Y4 and Y5.

Results from the Y5 APS revealed that 95.8% of the members of WOs perceived an increase in their organization's ability to deliver quality programming (at least a rating of 4 out of 5 on a 5-point Likert scale). Out of the 47 WOs who participated, 45 of them reported an increase in their overall ability to deliver quality programming, whereas only 2 participating WOs reported no perceived change in their ability to deliver quality

programming. However, this result showed a slight decline from the Y4 APS, as 98% (47 out of 48 WOs) of members perceived an increase in their organization's ability to deliver quality programming while one WOs reported no change on this particular indicator.

Ability to deliver quality programming- Comparison of WVL APS Survey 2023 and 24

			2023		2024		Variance	
Responses	No. of WOs	Responses	No. of WOs	Percentage %	No. of WOs	Percentage %	No. of WOs	Percentage %
Rate of Change organization's ability to deliver quality programming	48	5	8	16.70%	7	14.90%	-1	-1.80%
		4	39	81.30%	38	80.90%	-1	-0.40%
		3	1	2.10%	2	4.30%	1	2.20%
		2	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
		1	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

* 5= Significantly Increased, 4= Increased, 3= No change, 2= Decreased, 1= Significantly Decreased

Despite the overall positive perception of the increase in the organization's ability to deliver quality programming since the start of the WVL project, the findings demonstrated a few areas in which some organizations perceived no change such as: (1) volunteers' skills to support and contribute to programming, (2) using program monitoring data and results to improve projects, future programming and decision-making, and (3) organization's ability to document and disseminate best practices, success stories and learned lessons.

1210b. %/total of grants disbursed to WOs led by and/or representing marginalized women and girls

Baseline: 0	**Target:** 80%	**Endline:** 100%

All 100 WOs who implemented the 159 grants of the WVL project were selected based on set criteria. WOs commitment to gender equality, percentage of women in leadership and management positions and representation of marginalized groups of women and girls were crucial criteria to the selection process. Accordingly, all (100%) of the total grants were disbursed to WOs led by women or representing marginalized and vulnerable women, young female, and girls. The grants were able to address vulnerable and marginalized women in their diversities such as:

- → women at risk of violence and survivors of violence,
- → women and girls with disabilities,
- → women and girls in crisis affected communities including conflict and natural catastrophes.
- → marginalized rural women and girls,
- → grassroots women leaders,
- → single moms,
- → female students at high schools and universities
- → Women and girls living in IDPs,

Of the total 100 WOs, 68% are women-led. The remaining 32 WOs have female board of directors and predominantly female leadership and staff.

2.9 Progress on Immediate Outcomes 1310 & 1320

Immediate Outcome 1310: Enhanced capacity of Women's Organizations and Networks to undertake coordinated evidence-based advocacy at the national and sub-national level

1310a. #/total of trained members of supported women's organizations with adequate knowledge to undertake evidence-based advocacy

Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70%	**Endline:** 44 out of 59 participants (75%)

To measure progress on immediate outcome 1310, the project used pre- and post-test comprising of 15 questions that capture the knowledge and expected learning outcomes from the training activities under this outcome. Accordingly, during the EBA training, the pre- and post-tests were administered at the beginning and the end of the training. The pre-test results revealed that 33 participants (56%) out of 59 participants

scored the passing score of 50% and above, whereas at the end of the training, 44 participants (75%) out of the same 59 participants who completed the training scored 50% and above on the post-test. WOs members who completed the training then were able to put the knowledge and skills gained into practice by working on setting the common advocacy agenda, defining advocacy strategies, and developing and implementing different advocacy actions through generating sound evidence, building collaboration and influencing target audiences with the leadership of the WOs Collective. The successful implementation of the IEG grants and the advocacy coalitions established such as: the Gender Responsive Budgeting National Advocacy Coalition lead by UEWCA, The Ethiopian Women's Movement led by seven WOs, Advocacy for Female Domestic Workers Rights organized by EWLA and CoSAP, the Coalition of WOs for Vulnerable Women and Girls organized by MHO and ECD, Coalition of Women's Voice for National Dialogue hosted by TIMRAN, a CSO in Ethiopia, and women spaces like Gender in Focus weekly webinar hosted by NEWA such as the Ethiopia Women Movement, are evidenced for the attainment of this particular outcome.

Immediate Outcome 1320: Strengthened cooperation and coordination between local, national, and multinational Women's Networks

1320a. #/total supported women's rights organizations reporting increased ability to engage in networks/alliances/platforms/movements

Baseline: N/A	**Target:** 70%	**Endline:** 43 out of 47 WOs (91.5%)

Change in the organization's ability to engage in networks, alliances, platforms, and movements (indicator 1320a) was another immediate outcome indicator measured through the APS conducted in Y4 and Y5. In Y4, 46 organizations out of the 48 surveyed reported an improvement in their ability to engage in networks, alliances, platforms, or movements. In Y5, 43 organizations out of the 47 who responded to the survey reported on the similar indicator. Four WOs (8.5%) responded that they perceived no change in their organization's ability to engage in networks, alliances, platforms, and movements. Aggregately, in Y4, out of the 380 individual participants, the findings of the aggregate value analyzed for the six variables that are included under indicator revealed that 95.8% of the participants perceived that their organization's ability to engage in networks, alliances, platforms or movements has increased, while in Y5, based on the aggregated responses of 414 surveyed participants, it was found that 91.4% of the WOs reported an increase in their networking and alliance building ability since the start of the project.

Although a slight decline is observed from Y4 to Y5, in general, the project delivered positive results with a high percentage of WOs agreeing that the project has increased their ability in this area. During the validation session of the Y5 APS, WOs further explained that this small decrease in the overall perception may be linked to an increased understanding of the acquired knowledge and skills as the staff went through a series of capacity building training, coaching, and learning sessions.

Ability to engage in networks, alliances, platforms or movements - Comparison of WVL APS 2023 and 24

			2023		2024		Variance	
Responses	No. of WOs	Responses	No. of WOs	Percentage %	No. of WOs	Percentage %	No. of WOs	Percentage %
Rate of Change organization's ability to engage in networks, alliances, platforms or movements	48	5	11	22.90%	9	19.10%	-2	-3.80%
		4	35	72.90%	34	72.30%	-1	-0.60%
		3	2	4.20%	4	8.50%	2	4.30%
		2	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
		1	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

* 5= Significantly Increased, 4= Increased, 3= No change, 2=Decreased, 1=Significantly Decreased

Despite the perceived significant progress of WOs' ability to engage in networks, alliances, platforms, and movements, some of the respondents reflected that there is still room for improvement in the areas of the

organization's skills and ability to engage with formal and institutional stakeholders, for example government, donors, global/regional collaborating bodies (i.e., UN Clusters, advocacy networks, etc.), to engage in relevant professional networks and alliances, to set SMART networking goals to guide the networking process, and the ability to use social media to reach out to potential connections and strengthen relationships with existing contacts. The results also captured the need to continue to adapt and develop strategies and guidelines for networking and partnerships and use opportunities for networking and building alliances and movements.

2.10 Gender Equality

The project's GE strategy and feminist principles applied to support project implementation across the three intermediate outcomes. The primary feminist principles of "nothing for or about WOs without WOs" and "WOs are experts" are core elements that drive the entire project implementation at all stages and promote co-creation and collaboration together with WOs. In addition to the core principle the project partners and participating WOs also adhered to additional feminist principles including voice and co-creation, transforming power relations, diversity and inclusion, transparency and accountability, respect and tolerance, and pursuing a feminist agenda. Over the past years of project implementation, the project management team regularly reflected on how the project was implementing the feminist principles, as well as utilizing the principles to address any challenges in the project. Outlined below are a few examples of how the project has been implemented using feminist principles over the periods:

Outcome 1100: the feminist principles of *participatory*, *co-creation*, *flexible and contextual*, *respect*, *tolerance* and *understanding* were applied during coaching engagement of CTCs. During the coaching sessions, these principles were emphasized particularly during the crucial phase of idea generation, where the input and perspectives of all participants were actively sought and incorporated. Moreover, the implementation of intergenerational dialogue sessions and the development of the web-based PIA also incorporated feminist principles. *Co-creation*, *flexibility*, and *contextual relevance* played a central role, ensuring that the tools and methodologies used were inclusive and adapted to the specific needs of diverse participants. Notably, the feminist principles of *voice*, *agency*, and *co-creation* were prominent in showcasing WOs' efforts towards GE and women's empowerment during the multiplatform conference. The engagement of WO Collective members and WOs from the inception to the execution of the conferences underscored the commitment to inclusivity and collaboration by ensuring all participants had a voice at the table during the planning and execution of the conferences. This holistic approach ensured that the conferences not only discussed but actively demonstrated feminist principles in action, amplifying the voices and agency of women throughout the process. Throughout, the website development ensured the active participation of WOs in the development process, and now it is completed. Specifically, the entire feature and content of the website was co-created by women collectives in collaboration with the consultant. Another example of feminist principles application includes partner organizations that started revising their HR and financial manuals in line with feminist principles applications. The second multi-platform conference was also organized by WOs for WOs, ensuring WOs were in the driver's seat coordinating the conference. In addition to this, in Y5 implementation, the annual perception survey was conducted. This allowed them to evaluate their organization and their performance by themselves. The survey ensures inclusivity by ensuring all people have a stake in the organization, directors, staff, board members, volunteers etc.

The Gender Transformative Model for Organizational Development (GTMOD) was designed. The GTMOD is a foundational component of the WVL project and serves as a guiding tool that provides a concise conceptual and technical foundation for gender transformative organizational development and an overview of how that can be applied in the core areas of organizational development, which mirrors the PIAP domains. The project's GTMOD reflects the development needs and priorities of participating WOs as well as acts as a model that can be adopted by other WOs beyond the project. While the GTMOD is built on

organizational development best practices, it distinguishes itself from a traditional model by implicitly incorporating and explicitly promoting principles of feminism within each component.

The methodology used in the PIA process and in the GTMOD is based on feminist theory and best practice and focuses on collective participation, inclusion, self-reflection, and agency. The GTMOD is based on the recognition that WO staff, governing members, volunteers, and management are their own experts. They have the relevant knowledge and the greatest ability to identify and reflect upon strengths and challenges within organizational domains, and to assess their own needs and priorities. The GTMOD is designed primarily as a reference and guide for WOs who are part of the WVL project to dive deeper into a reflective practice around feminist organizational development. The GTMOD is also utilized by CTCs who are working one-on-one with WOs to further support them, especially in relation to rolling out the capacity building modules and continuing to support their Institutional Capacity Development Plans (ICDPs). The GTMOD is a product of co-creation – and recognizes the ultimate expertise of WOs themselves to define their own feminist approach and determine their priority issues.

Outcome 1200: the principles of co-creation, *transparency and accountability*, and *flexibility and contextualization* were applied while transferring grants in a timely and transparent manner to the WOs. Flexibility, respect and tolerance principles were applied in the financial management process. Due to this, aging advances were patently tolerated until liquidated. This has improved the status of liquation which is now over 90%. Furthermore, the PMT well understood the context of the partner organizations and respectfully handled the liquidation issues that occurred. Thus, applying these basic principles led to attaining the project objectives as intended. While 1200: component enhanced the performance of programming and advocacy of WOs starting with the design of the call for EoIs which put WOs in the driver's seat allowing WOs to design their respective WEG and FRFM actions as to their interest and mandate. Limited criteria were put on the EOI, allowing more opportunities for various and diverse WOs to apply and use the funding while primarily promoting the feminist principle that "WOs are experts" in their programmatic and influencing work and know what is best for their communities and stakeholders. Accordingly, selected WOs obtained funding and are implementing interventions which they believe are relevant and most significant for their constituencies. The grant management manual guiding the implementation of the grants was developed using language to be more partnership-focused and empowering for WOs. This was made to ensure the feminist principles also guided internal processes including liquidations, financial reporting, and due diligence processes. The Program Management Team (PMT) played a pivotal role in collaboratively developing the WOs' proposals and capacity building resources, ensuring they were tailored to the WOs' needs and equipped them with gender transformative project design and monitoring and evaluation skills.

Outcome 1300: the feminist principles of *coordination and collaboration, feminist agenda*, *transparency*, *voice, agency and co-creation, respect, tolerance and understanding* were applied to the advocacy actions conducted by the WOs on their coordinated advocacy initiatives. The WOs applied these principles while setting common advocacy agenda, generating evidence, conducting interface meetings and consultative workshops with stakeholders. These feminist principles were also applied while engaging in the networking and sharing/learning events. The other initiatives, to further strengthened linkage and collaboration with national regional GE platforms such as AWS, AWC and WD were crucial to demonstrate application of feminist principles. The national initiative- Ethiopian women's movement-building, that was initiated, led and run by WOs and aimed to strengthen women's movement was epic momentum where PIE and WOs able to uphold the application of feminist principles throughout their engagement.

Capacity building intervention: Besides this, resource mobilization module which is one of the seven capacity building modules as well as resource mapping which undertaking by a consultation firm follows a participatory approach among the feminist principles of the project. Lastly, the membership of both the TGAC and PSC include WOs to ensure that the project keeps them at the forefront of the project design and implementation, knowing that they are experts in their contexts and know how best to address issues.

This will drive the need to leverage expertise through collaborative, reflective, and mutual learning processes to ensure the project does not embody a top-down or one-size-fits-all approach. In terms of capacity building, a refresher session on gender equality and feminist principles specific to the WVL-Ethiopia project was provided by the Senior Gender Equality Advisor of Plan International Canada, with support from the PMT and WO Collective. The training was for PMT, PIE staff, and WO Collective, which provided an opportunity for participants to learn about gender equality and feminism and how they can apply these principles to their work on the WVL-Ethiopia project. In relation to this training some CTC members raised some challenges in relation to the development of module as it is a new concept. Accordingly, after the training session they were able to understand and incorporate in the modules as well as the training and coaching process while capacity building WOs.

MEL Activities: Supporting the quality and effectiveness of the three intermediate outcomes, Plan and the WO Collective continued to implement the **project's feminist monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system.** The key MEL activities that were carried out throughout the project implementation period. Including project co-creation, project performance review meeting held with grantees, and undertaking supportive monitoring visit with aim of accelerating implementations, assuring quality and compliance requirements. Moreover, PMT closely worked with Women Collectives and project technical committee to ensure application of feminist principles throughout out the monitoring and evaluation process including design of tools, data collection, and validation processes.

During the end-line survey, after the WVL intervention women-led became eligibility criteria for the call for proposals, women became in leadership positions and strategic planning documents stated explicitly gender equality in their roadmap and it is revised accordingly. The commitment of the staff and the management in working aggressively in local resource mobilization and strengthening the effort of addressing the issue of women and Girls with disabilities significantly increased and WOs started revising their HR, and financial manuals in line with GTMOD applications. To ensure an open and transparent financial system WOS has started to follow government procedures

The main **challenge in implementing the project using the feminist principles** was from a compliance standpoint. As Plan has rigorous compliance measures and systems adaptations, and flexibility was required to meet WO's interests and capacity levels. To mitigate this issue, the WVL team worked consistently with WOs to share information from the grant management model, to work with WOs on templates and reporting systems, and to be a partner for WOs instead of a barrier. Additionally, to emphasize the "business not as usual" principle, the project team has developed an internal project operation manual to ensure that all Plan staff, across multiple departments (programs, finance, and partnerships) are aware of the feminist principles which have informed the revised internal guidelines for processes such as partnership agreements, due diligence, liquidations, etc. The project is guided by core feminist principles, which are applied to all aspects of project design, implementation and monitoring. The project has made remarkable results throughout the implementation phase such as.

- *Collaboration and coordination of WC and WROs in successfully delivering multiconference platforms, realizing collective website and module development.*
- *100% completion of advocacy agenda initiatives*
- *WO collaboration, co-working on resource mobilization, establishing consortium for funding, and collective advocacy e.g. EWLA and CoSAP under Packard foundation funding, DANFE, MHO and Beza under UN Women funding, Beza and ELIDA under AWFD funding etc.*
- *WOs initiative to improve their financial system to uphold transparency and accountability through implementing IPSAS system, develop/update financial, HR manuals and procedures, enhancing capacity of board of directors on governance and strategic issues, enhancing the organization system to meet donor requirements and compliance.*

In general, participants of the Y5 APS reflected that the project has enabled WOs to gain significant improvement in organizational capacity development areas, their organizational governance and financial

management are progressing positively, their networking and collaboration with coalitions and Women network widened as they joined different networks and platforms at regional and national level. Moreover, the evidence demonstrated that WOs have achieved significant stride in their organizational size, reach and quality of programming. Areas of improvements that highlighted by participants are also relevant recommendations to expand and scale the capacity development intervention and continuity of self-assessment, planning and reflection. Networking and Collaboration Participants have reflected that WOs have significantly demonstrated improvement in their networking and collaboration with various stakeholders, including institutional stakeholders, government agencies, donors, and like-minded organizations. This was achieved through the creation of platforms, participation in conferences and events, and the development of strategic partnerships, resulting in enhanced visibility, collective impact, and access to resources. The organization's networking efforts have been instrumental in fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and advocating for policy changes related to gender equality and women's empowerment. They have also effectively engaged with community members, utilized social media platforms, and strengthened their presence in the media, resulting in increased engagement, knowledge exchange, and amplification of their mission and objectives.

Advocacy and Coalition building: The response from the APS indicated that WOs have significant improvement in their coalition building and advocacy efforts by actively engaging in various platforms and coalitions, leading to notable achievements such as leadership positions and founding a new consortium. Through stakeholder feedback, internal assessments, and strategic development, WOs have strengthened their networking, alliance, and coalition-building activities, utilizing social media, webinars, broadcasts, and other means to enhance collaboration, expand reach, and amplify advocacy efforts, resulting in effective engagement with institutional stakeholders, government bodies, donors, and global/regional collaborating bodies. The IEG grant was also a vital means to strengthen and enhance skills and practices in collective advocacy. WOs and women's structures have also pushed forward the women's rights agenda by jointly organizing the IWD and 16 Days of Activism Against GBV events.

In addressing gender equality, several lessons and achievements have emerged, particularly when measured against the six domains of the Gender Transformation Framework presented as follows.

Norms: The partnership with WOs and funding of projects also highly focused on tackling negative gender norms and practices, specifically focusing on GBV, HTPs- FGM, and CFEM. During implementation, the project meaningfully invested its resources to increase awareness and improve perceptions through conducting training, organizing community conversation and dialogues, disseminating information and mass education through public gatherings and media, and grassroots mobilization to address gender norms affecting women and girls. Example: Some of the partners who implemented projects to address gender norms and practices include KGM's project has focused on tackling harmful practices such as Early Marriage and FGM in the Oromia Region, Kore district, Siiqqee Women Development Association-has implemented actions targeted to reduce FGM in Oromia Hana Dabo District. In addition, the Amhara Women's Association also implemented projects that focused on addressing GBV and reducing Harmful Practices in the Amhara region; Meket and Wadla districts of North Wollo. QWDA was working on the FGMs at Somalia regional state, two woredas. Through awareness creation and mass organizations in the local communities.

Agency: The WVL project has strengthened the leadership skills and capacity of 180 Young Female Leaders (YFL). They have actively engaged in the advocacy actions of WOs as well as become part of WO's activities through internship engagement and volunteering work. These specific interventions have enabled girls to participate in decision-making spaces within the community and WOs they are affiliated. The young female leaders also- supported to imitate their own community actions to reach more girls and young women through cascading leadership and other life skill training, facilitated platforms to advocate girls' issues and account duty bearers at different level including government actors, INGOs, WOs and

community leaders for their decision and actions. These enables girls to exercise to identify issues and risks, raise their voice, speak about their Rights, and build their confidence. YFL also become Youth advisory member in Plan International Ethiopia with their representatives to consult the CLT in reviewing country policy and program of PIE. YFLs also represented the voice of girls through the Girls Take Over campaign and engaged in various met with leaders at higher government officials, Ambassadors, and INGO leaders. These YFL established Telegram Group to share information and capacitate others. After they took intensive leadership training and cascaded for others by their own initiatives and out of them 109 were deployed in internship programs and nine of the got employment opportunities by WVL facilitation. In addition, the project facilitates coaching and peer learning for WOs on young female engagement strategies and approaches to ensure the sustainability of this initiative beyond WVL project.

Working with boys and men: Women Voice Leadership Project attained results in improving the equality of women and girls through collaborations with boys and men. It also contributed to the improvement of the condition of girls and women by providing various capacity-building training, facilitating platforms to amplify their voice, strengthening collaboration among themselves, and facilitating linkage of regional, national, and local gender equality resources. Projects implemented under WVL were relevant in terms of harnessing the engagement of boys and men in gender equality and women and girl's empowerment actions. Through WOs, awareness is raised on positive masculinity and boys' and men's active engagement was enhanced. Projects implemented by WVL partner WOs were relevant in terms of reaching more boys and girls at school and community level, several capacity building interventions were conducted to enhance active participation of boys and girls on gender equality and community development actions.

- *E.g.: Women Can Do it, ELWA, YWCA, OPRIFS, Women for Women Social Development are among the partners who have implemented actions to empower boys and girls on gender equality, prevention and responding to school based GBV. Several indicatives such as girls' safe space, strengthening GBV reporting, and referral linkage mechanisms were conducted by partner organization to create enabling school environment for girls.*
- *E.g. DANFE has engaged husbands in their project intervention following learning of the importance of men's engagement towards positive outcomes on women's participation in decision-making, access, and control over household resources. Following the husband's engagement and improved understanding of the negative impacts of gender inequalities, they began to realize the challenges and decided to engage their wives in decision-making, women were able to open bank accounts, and husbands decided to share household burden.*

Conditional and position: Women Voice Leadership project works to improve the equality of girls and strives to improve condition of girls and women by providing varies capacity building trainings which supports girls/women to be competent and improve their social status and position. The WVL project has contributed significantly for the improvement in women status of conditions and positions. WOs have reported that women are holding positions and decision-making spaces within their communities and local governance structures. There increased the participation of women in decision making spaces resulted from the capacity building, advocacy and influencing works conducted by partner women organizations at different levels. For Example: In North Gonder Debark woreda, DANFE reported that six women were able to hold cabinets positions in their woreda. AWF reported that due to the interventions on shift gender role and responsibilities in Banja woreda of Awi zone and Rural kebele of Gonder Town women engagement in public life increased and some women has become active in community works including to the extent of becoming community elders play key roles in mediation of conflicts and addressing local community matters. AWA also supported women development groups in Meket and Wadla Woreda to enhance women leadership and shift norms that affect women's from actively engage in public lives and occupying leadership positions. As a result, five women were able to hold positions in local governance committees and party cabinets. Women have played key role in the fight against GBV and harmful practices within their community. Women organization like FIA and TSD have conducted series of capacity building, women land right awareness and advocacy actions in Oromia region. As a result, women's status with land ownership and use of land for production has improved, by breaking the negative social norm, some widowed women have begun tilling their own farmland and to sustain their household after ensuring their inheritance. Women also to enable to champion for economic rights and become agent for other women in the fights against

GBV. Self Help Group Structure leaders under COSAP and RPC has proven through brining women to the leadership position to advocate for women's economic rights and represent women's voice in policy dialogue session at federal and regional level. WVL project has contributed serving as platform for women leaders to met and discuss contemporary women's issues and voice their concerns through various media and press statements.

Diversity: The WVL Project from the design focused on the feminist principle that is diversity, the project partners focused on all marginalized communities and participants in all their diversities such as, PWD, Women, Youths, Children, age, and marital status. WOs engaged various, youth-led, disability-focused, hard-to-reach, regional diversity, geographic location, emerging organization, hosting, gender-focused, all genders included.

Enabling environment: The project worked to improve the equality of girls and strives to improve condition of girls and women by providing varies for different stakeholders which includes duty bearers, service providers who are the main actors for the realization of social positioning of women and girls through the implementation of the various WOs gender equality actions. Four advocacy initiatives done by women collective organizations have created space to advocate for women and girls' issue to create an enabling environment. Among donors and granting system, a combination of TGAC. Infrastructure improvement office renovation like Beza Community Based Women Development organization, school-based space created like by YWCA, development. Manual development for capacity development training & coaching, GBV training for women staff officer, peer learning, and experience sharing among WOs, MIS system, PIA, APS, regular M &E.

3. Outputs

Intermediate Outcome 1100: Improved management and sustainability of WOs advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and WE girls in Ethiopia, particularly those representing vulnerable and marginalized women and girls.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Immediate Outcome 1110: Enhanced organizational capacity and leadership of Women's Organizations</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Output 1111 Institutional capacity assessments of women's organizations conducted.</td></tr>
<tr><td>End of Project Target:
48 PIAs and ICDPs with WOs
(24 WOs + 4 WO Collective) and 20 FRFMs</td><td>End of Project Achievement:
48 PIAs and ICDPs developed, (24 WEG WOs, 4 WO Collective and 20 FRFMs)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Linking the capacity development and granting components of the project, a self-reflective Participatory Institutional Assessment (PIA), Institutional Capacity Development Planning (ICDP) tool (including a database), and a comprehensive Gender Transformative Model for Organizational Development (GTMOD) to guide the project's overall approach to training and coaching were developed by a consultant with expertise in gender quality. These tools were developed using a feminist approach and in consultation with WOs and Plan, incorporating feminist principles and regionally relevant self-assessment methods. Key elements of the PIA framework include:
1. Focus: The PIA methodology was structured in a way that empowered WOs to self-determine what their organization requires to advance their feminist agenda, gender transformative programming and advocacy platforms, strengthening the voice and agency of the WOs, both individually and collectively.
2. Domains and Variables: The final PIA tools covered two cross-cutting themes on gender transformative programming and feminist approach, along with five core domains: i) Governance and Strategic Leadership; ii) People Management and Culture; iii) Program Management; iv) Finance; and v) External Engagement and Networks, having 19 sub domains, and series of questions to probe further in each of the domains for staff, boards members and volunteers of WOs to self-assess how strong the organization is, as well as areas of improvement.
3. Process: The development of the PIA involved five steps—Introduction, Survey, Interviews, Validation, and Planning sessions.</td></tr>
</table>

An exploratory survey launched in February 2020 gathered insights from 39 out of 77 WOs in Ethiopia, guiding the design of the PIA and GTMOD tools. The survey highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to organizational assessments, including creating safe spaces for self-assessment and developing tools that measure change over time. Key findings included:

- Many WOs lacked or underused capacity development plans.
- Including diverse staff perspectives is crucial.
- Tools should be user-friendly and accessible.
- Translating materials into local languages is important.

By Y2, the same consultant finalized the PIA methodology, including a facilitator's manual and a Management Information System (MIS) tool. The step-by-step facilitator's manual was developed to guide the Core Assessment Team (CATs), Plan staff, WO staff, management, and volunteers through the 4-day PIA training. The manual was supported by a MIS survey tool that provides an analysis of the perspectives of participants on the functionality of their organization in different key areas and domains as indicated above. While the ICDP tool was also developed to prioritize organizational improvements. In Y2, 20 (13F/7M) participants from the WOs and WO Collective were selected to form the Core Assessment Team (CAT) primarily based on their experience and knowledge of gender equality and women's rights, data collection and analysis, computer, communication, and facilitation skills. Due to COVID-19, the CATs were trained by the consultant through virtual sessions on the applications of the PIA, ICDP development and how to facilitate the PIA tool with target WOs. The sessions provided time before and after for the CATs to familiarize themselves with the tools, practicing and further contextualizing them. In Y3, an additional 11 CAT members (3F/8M) identified from the second round of WEG grantees, to address scheduling and workload issues. The newly recruited CAT members underwent three days of training and one day of refresher training, along with the existing CAT members. After the CAT training, a feedback survey revealed that 82% of CAT members felt they needed additional time to practice with the tools. Consequently, the CAT members started the PIA process in teams of four, piloting the tools with four of the WO Collective. This phase concluded with a debriefing session involving CAT members, staff, and volunteers from the WO Collective to provide constructive feedback and sharpen the CATs facilitation skills. After which, the remaining PIAs were completed by teams consisting of two CAT members and one PMT staff member.



FIGURE 4: WOS UNDERTAKING THE PIA IN ADDIS A

"During the training there was fear that WOs might not accept this process including taking it as an evaluation and refraining to give their feedback openly. During the actual PIA however, this issue was not there especially after the team give a clear background information on day one. Thus, the training in this regard was perfect and discussed and suggested solution for such a challenge."

CAT Member

Each PIA took four days for the CATs to complete with each of the WOs. This provided ample time to create a safe and inclusive environment where the WO could understand the PIA objectives and process, complete the PIA survey, engage in open discussions about the organization's strengths and challenges, identify priorities, and develop a draft of their ICDP, outlining how to address their priority areas identified in the PIA. In the first round, 20 PIAs were conducted for 20 WOs, (17 WEG/3 FRFM) involving 222 participants (140F/82M), including 183 staff members and 39 volunteers, all while adhering to COVID-19 regulations. A total of 18

(11F/7M) CAT members participated in the first round. The results and scores from the PIA tools, domains, and sub-domains were reviewed to ensure accurate data entry into the database. The process was primarily a capacity-building initiative involving various internal and external stakeholders from the WOs. The consultant and Plan International Canada team were consistently available to provide remote support and troubleshoot any issues that arose. In the second round, 28 (11 WEG/17 FRFM) WOs undertook the PIA and developed their ICDPs with support from 17 (9F/8M) CAT members.

After conducting the PIA, the PMT, with support from the consultant and the CATs, organized two rounds of validation workshops to analyze the findings and consolidate the most common capacity-building and organizational development needs. In the first round of the validation workshop, a total of 45 participants (20F/25M) from the leadership and staff of 20 WOs attended. In the second PIA validation workshop, 41 leaders and staff members (21F/20M) from 28 WOs participated. The objectives of the validation workshops were twofold:

(1) To explore and validate the main findings of the PIA survey, including identifying key results related to the weaker capacities of organizations.

(2) To reach a consensus on the main capacity areas that the project's capacity-building actions and interventions should focus on.

Please see Outcome 1100 for analysis of results under the PIA.

1st round	2nd round
Monitoring and Evaluation	Resource Mobilization
Communications and Media Engagement; and	Communications and Media Engagement;
Strategic Planning	Evidence based Advocacy

In the second PIA validation workshop, participants from WOs thoroughly discussed and identified the leadership subdomain as a fourth priority area. They justified that leadership is a critical aspect of organizational development and the foundation for the effective implementation of other capacity areas, ensuring the sustainability of WOs and management by sharing the founders' vision with internal and external stakeholders. It is important to note, that most of the WOs engaged in the second round of PIAs were young and emerging professionals who were eager to build their leadership skills.

As part of the ICDPs implementation, WOs have taken the following key actions during project implementation:

- *Developed and renewed various organizational management manuals and policies, such as the Gender Equality Policy, Human Resource Policy, and Safeguarding Policy, and translated these policies into Amharic and Afan Oromo.*
- *Developed websites and created and regularly updated social media handles.*
- *Implemented International Private Sector Accounting Standards and updated financial policies accordingly.*
- *Undertook staff development and compensation measures, including recruiting new staff for key positions such as communication, resource mobilization, and M&E, and conducted induction sessions on organizational policies for existing and new staff.*
- *Prepared resource mobilization, partnership management, and networking manuals.*
- *Developed, validated, and familiarized strategic plans with staff, stakeholders, and constituencies.*
- *Furnished offices with chairs, computer laptops, and installed information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure.*
- *Prepared volunteer management guidelines and conducted capacity-building activities for volunteers deployed by WOs, managing their experiences for YFLs who were assigned among trained YFLs.*

In subsequent years, efforts focused on developing a web-based PIA tool to enhance usability and sustainability as the existing MIS version of the PIA survey tool faced several challenges. It was not compatible with various devices, including computers, laptops, and mobile devices, and was not user-friendly. Additionally, it lacked essential features required by WOs and did not support local languages such as Amharic and Afan Oromo. The conversion to a web-based tool allowed for the continued use of the application beyond the project's lifespan and enabled the PIA tool to be used by other WOs. Additional features were also incorporated based

on comments and constructive feedback from the PMT and PIE IT teams to enhance its functionality. Key features of the newly designed web-based PIA tool include:

- *Compatibility with smartphones (iPhone, Windows phone), laptops, desktops, and tablets.*
- *Availability in Amharic and Afan Oromo, in addition to English, to address language barriers.*
- *Authorization for personnel to add, delete, update, or customize survey questions/variables, domains, and sub-domains, ensuring the system's flexibility for future scalability and sustainability.*
- *Capability for WOs to view their progress over different years from the baseline.*
- *A calendar feature in the PIA tool, enabling managers of WOs to specify a timeframe for when the survey is available to be completed.*

The project aims to ensure the tool's long-term use and accessibility for all member WOs. As such, the tool has been handed over to the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA), one of the women's WO Collectives, NEWA, for sustainable use in assessing progress. Print and audiovisual versions of the user guide were also developed and are now in use. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed among the four WO Collectives, agreeing that NEWA will take the lead in the administration of the PIA.



FIGURE 5: PIA TRAINING WITH WOS AND CATS

In Y5, the CAT roster was updated with 10 (4F/6M) new members, bringing the total to 19(6F/13M) to conduct the endline survey with partner WOs. In Y6, PMT conducted a two-day training for 6 (5F/1M) existing and 15 (10F/5M) newly deployed CAT members and 21 (11F/10M) M&E Officers of partner WOs to facilitate the end line survey by using the MIS office version of PIA. Similar to the baseline survey, the end-line survey was conducted with 48 WOs 448 total (284F/164M) participating including employees who received multi-year grants.

To use the web-based PIA survey tool sustainably, PMT were handing over for one of the women collective organizations (NEWA) by providing the User guide and supper admin account privilege that serve them to create the admin and participants' account to conduct the Participatory Institutional Assessment by using the newly developed web-based PIA survey sustainably. We have developed and signed MOU among four women collectives and PIE WVL team, which contains the roles and responsibilities of super admin (NEWA), Admin/Manager (EWLA, UEWCA and ECD) and participants' account. How to serve PIA tool for needy organizations.

Output 1112 Feminist model for organizational development, and common training modules for organizational and technical strengthening developed.

End of Project Target:	**End of Project Achievement:**
1 FMOD and 7 Org. Capacity Development Modules	1 GTMOD, 7 Organizational Capacity Development Modules, and 1 Leadership Skills Training

As a foundational component to the WVL program, and in support of the PIAP, the Gender Transformative Model for Organizational Development (GTMOD) was designed as a guiding tool that provides a concise conceptual and technical foundation for gender transformative organizational development and an overview of how that can be applied in the core areas of organizational development, which mirrors the PIA domains above. The project's GTMOD reflects the development needs and priorities of participating WOs, as well as function as a model that can be adopted beyond the project to other WOs. While the GTMOD builds on organizational development best practices, it distinguishes itself from traditional models by implicitly incorporating, and explicitly promoting feminist principles. The GTMOD was collaboratively designed to:

- *Serve as a tool for WOs to learn more about gender transformative organizational development and strengthen their ability to reflect upon how to enact feminist principles and approaches in their work.*

- *Guide the overall approach to training and coaching of the WVL project ensuring alignment with feminist principles and consistency across program activities and support. The GTMOD aims to support the project to move beyond corporate training models and one-size fits all approaches.*
- *Inform the PIAP design and implementation.*
- *Ensure an accessible, user-friendly, adaptable document that is relevant to a diversity of organizations and staff.*

The consultancy team responsible for the PIA process also facilitated the development of the GTMOD. The PMT and WO Collective identified and consulted with feminist and women's rights activists/thinkers in Ethiopia, integrating organizational development and management approaches utilized by WOs both locally and globally. This model, aligned with the project's overall approach to training and coaching, ensured adherence to feminist principles while moving beyond rigid corporate models (one size-fits-all). It provided a flexible, responsive framework tailored to the diverse operating environments of WOs, enabling them to effectively implement alternative working arrangements. Plan International Canada's Senior Gender and Inclusion Advisor and Plan Ethiopia's Gender Specialist successfully finalized the draft GTMOD through two rounds of extensive consultations with WOs, feminist thinkers, and experienced professionals. Initially named the Feminist Model of Organizational Development (FMOD), after introductory consultations with WOs, the model was later renamed the Gender Transformative Model for Organizational Development (GTMOD) to better align with the Ethiopian context. The second round of consultations provided critical feedback, proposed translation to local language and piloting strategies. Following the completion of the tool, validation and pilot testing was conducted to further refine it. The GTMOD document was printed and disseminated to make it ready for usage. It was later translated to Amharic and Oromifa local languages and disseminated in soft copy to partners working in the respective regions and uploaded to collective website for ease of access and to share more broadly. The collective website can be found here: http://ethiowomen.org/

Structured within the overall context of the GTMOD and leveraging the Core Trainers and Coaches (CTCs') existing knowledge and expertise. These modules, developed by 35 (22F/13M) CTC members in collaboration with the PMT and Plan International Canada staff, included four topics identified by the PIA: 1) Monitoring and Evaluation, 2) Communications and Media Engagement, 3) Strategic Planning, and 4) Resource Mobilization and three pre-determined modules based on the project's implementation areas: 5) Grant Management, 6) Youth Leadership, and 7) Evidence-Based Advocacy. The modules went through multiple reviews and refinements by CTCs and WOs before a consultant completed a final edit and translated the modules into local languages. Finally, the modules were printed and disseminated to WOs and newly established organizations (CTC, Antsebaraki), Minister of Women and social affairs and Authorities of Civil society organizations other stakeholders. The translated modules into Amharic and Affan Oromo languages were shared in softcopies with WOs working in the respective region and all copies are accessible through the Women collective website https://ethiowomen.org/ Furthermore, the Gender Transformative Programming (GTP) module, developed by the WVL-Ghana project, was circulated to WVL Ethiopia to benefit local WOs, with coaching opportunities created for CTCs to support WOs on GTP. A facilitation guide was also created for CTCs to enhance their training effectiveness. The facilitation guide offered tips for CTCs on creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. It covered effective communication and listening, encouraging participant involvement, time management, maintaining neutrality, and being gender-aware and inclusive and guidance on managing COVID-19 and ensuring a safe physical space for learning and interaction.

Output 1113 Training and coaching to women's organizations delivered.	
End of Project Target: 24 CTCs (20F/4M) trained. 48 WOs trained. 200 people (70F/130M) trained and mentored	**End of Project Achievement:** 43 CTCs (27F/16M) engaged in coaching and training. 96 WOs trained. 660 people (384F/276M) trained and mentored

To position WO grant recipients to successfully execute their grants, as well as build their capacity for wider grant management, financial management and grant compliance trainings and orientations were facilitated by the PMT. A total of 228 people (120F/108M) participated. These sessions provided an overview of the WVL project and outlined the project's grant management manual focused on WEG and FRFM grant management

and compliance. The training covered various financial transactions commonly conducted by partners and the respective financial documents necessary to liquidate the advances and demonstrations on how they are prepared. Practical sessions were embedded in the training so that the trainees would gain firsthand experience and exchange their insights while working in small groups. At the end of the trainings, successful discussions were conducted about the internal and external challenges WOs face to adhere to liquidation requirements and how to resolve them. A KAP survey conducted at the end of the first session revealed varying levels of grant management experience among WOs, with many struggling with proposal writing, time management, communications, and budgeting. These findings were used to help PMT and the CTCs tailor direct mentorship sessions with each WO grantee, timed with monitoring field visits.

During the development of their project plans and when faced with financial management challenges, WOs received one-on-one support through CTCs and PMT. Furthermore, the project grant specialists conducted compliance checks to provide feedback to help improve WO's financial management, documentation, and enhance reporting in line with fundamental donor requirements, standards, Government of Ethiopia (GoE) regulations, and financial and procurement procedures. Notably, a two-day training in Y4Q1-Q2 addressed gaps in financial management, resulting in improved liquidation of overdue expenses. Overall, the series of training sessions and workshops have significantly improved WOs' grant management practices, financial compliance, and reporting performance.

The identification of CTCs began in Y2 through the development of the ToR outlining the role and responsibilities, requirements, and benefits of becoming a CTC. The ToR was shared with the WO Collective and WO grantees who then nominated individuals by providing the CVs of potential candidates from their staff as well as, freelancers from their networks. The PMT also considered candidates from existed CAT members. Initial nominations included 21 (10F/11M) candidates, and the recruitment process continued into Y3, expanding the team to 30 (20F/10M) members. By the final year of the project, the CTCs grew to 43 (27F/16M) members, inclusive of some resignations and rehiring along the way to ensure availability of enough members effectively support 48 + WOs across the seven capacity development areas. The CTC members recruited in Y3-Y5 were selected from WEG grant recipient WOs, other gender experts, academicians, three young female leaders, and recommended professionals on the identified priority areas.

Beginning in Y3, the project conducted Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops with the CTCs on all seven of the capacity building modules, GTMOD, and facilitation skills guide. Refreshers and additional training were held on an add needed basis when modules were updated and to train newly assigned CTCs. Pre and post tests showed moderate to significant increases in knowledge by the CTCs, showcasing their readiness to further train WO staff:

Module	*Avg. Pre-Test Score	*Avg. Post-Test Score	Avg. Change in Knowledge
Communication and Media Engagement	N/A	N/A	N/A
Strategic Planning	56%	81%	25% increase
Grant Application and Management	48%	62%	14% increase
Youth Leadership	N/A	N/A	-
Evidence-Based Advocacy	56%	75%	19% increase
Resource Mobilization	50.9%	92.7%	36.7%
Financial Management and Compliance	85.7%	100%	14.3% increase
Monitoring and Evaluation	73%	100%	27% increase

*Average pre/post scores for participants who scored 50% or higher.

Trained CTCs in-turn trained and coached a total of 660 WO staff (384F/276M) from 96 WOs, including 265 WO staff (169F/96M) from 28 WEG and 20 FRFM grant recipients. This exceeded the project's target by 330% or 460 (214F/246M) WO staff and 48 WOs. Contributing factors for this significant increase was heightened

demand from WOs to have more capacity building support and training, as well as, staffing growth and turnover witnessed in the life of the project among WOs. The CTCs employed a range of techniques, according to their needs and priority areas, such as formal training, practical working sessions, peer learning and reflection sessions, one-on-one support, and ongoing coaching, using both in-person and remote methods. CTCs played a key role in the development and refinement of the seven capacity building modules. The English version of these modules was shared in both hard and soft copies to all 48 WOs and key project stakeholders. The translated modules into local language (Amharic and Affan Oromo) versions were also disseminated in soft copies to WOs working in the respective regions to continue using them beyond the project.

Support provided to WOs through CTCs coaching and training and results attained are summarized in the table below.

N	Capacity Development Module	Description	# of CTCs Trained	# of WOs Trained	Results
1	**Communication and Media Engagement**	Coaching and one-on-one support and orientations for 3-5 days on organizational visibility, website development, using social media and other platforms to highlight their work and visibility announcements.	6 (5F/1M) CTCs	82 (47F/35M) WO staff from 26 WOs	• 21 WOs developed communication guidelines and increased their online presence through social media platforms. • 15 WOs developed and updated their organizational websites. • 3 WOs hired communication and media engagement officer staff.
2	**Strategic Planning**	CTC team members offered coaching and firsthand support for updating and developing strategic plans, including training on participatory strategic plan development.	14 CTCs (6F/8M)	154 (88F/66M) WO staff from 20 WOs	20 WOs successfully updated and developed 3–5-year strategic plans and validated and socialized their strategic plan with their staff, boards, project participants, and other stakeholders.
3	**Grant Application and Financial Management and Compliance**	CTC and PMT provided one-on-one coaching on grant application and management, focusing on donor standards, project designing, planning, M&E, and budgeting.	8 (2F/6M) CTC	Grant Applications: 48 (28F/20M) staff from 24 WOs AND Financial Management and Compliance: 87 (60F/27M) staff from 45 WOs	• 60+ calls for proposals disseminated to all 98 WOs through WVL Ethiopia's Telegram hub. • 6 WOs successfully obtained grants from donors like UN Women and World Bank, and 19 WOs improved financial management. • PMT has provided reference letters to support these organizations in their efforts to secure funding from other donors, including NLTCDRP, Organization for Girl Adults and Advocacy (OGAA), Amaranth Farm Eco Lodge (AFEL), and AKCCD.
4	**Youth Leadership**	CTCs conducted training for YFLs, imparting leadership skills for professional and daily use. A follow-up two-day training was provided to WOs on engaging YFLs in their operations and programming to build the next generation of YFLs.	5 (3F/2M) CTCs	150 YFLs across 4 regions And 85 (57F/28M) WO staff from 37 WO	• 109 YFLs were deployed as interns, 9 recruited as officers, and some YFLs established licensed associations. • A total of 20 WOs incorporated youth leadership components to improve their youth engagement including revised/new volunteer guidelines. • CoSAP was also able to secure funds from the Mastercard Foundation and Tearfund Ireland by designing a program focusing on YFL engagement. Key takeaways from the peer learning session: • **Integration:** Incorporate YFL approaches into various projects. • **Digital Tools:** Utilize digital systems to save time and resources. • **Skill Development:** Offer platforms for YFLs to practice and improve their skills and networking abilities. • **Recognition:** Reward and acknowledge YFL efforts to maintain motivation. • **Youth-Focused Programs:** Create programs tailored to the needs of young people.

					• **Strategic Implementation:** Develop a strategy for institutionalizing, tracking, and evaluating YFL progress. • **Documentation:** Record and share YFL successes and lessons learned to inspire and guide others.
5	**Evidence-Based Advocacy**	Coaching and one-on-one support on setting and implementing advocacy agendas and influencing plans.	8 (8F/0M) CTCs	Y4: 62 (43F/19M) staff including 8 YFLs from 59 WOs Y5: 60 staff (41F/19M) from 14 WOs.	WOs showed interest in implementing evidence-based advocacy actions: • 10 WO developed EBA guidelines and prepared action plans for their upcoming advocacy work. • PFE developed a new advocacy strategy. • 641 (370F/271M) from 27 WOs implemented IEGs.
6	**Resource Mobilization**	Coaching and firsthand support by CTCs starting from the design of WOs' RMPs to implementation of their plans, training on social enterprise development and fundraising techniques, and peer learning amongst the WOs to share their experiences with international and national organizations who have the same thematic focus.	9 (3F/6M) CTCs	Y4:117 staff (66F/51M) from 48 WOs Y5: 148 staff (78F/70M) from 48 WOs AND 27 (11F/16M) participants from 24 WOs On social enterprise development	• 28 WOs developed resource mobilization plans, with significant funds and resources mobilized, such as AAWA raising 8.5 million ETB. IFSO mobilized nearly 5.7 million ETB in resources, as well as clothes, shoes, and milk to young girls and youth in shelters and rent for two shelters for a period of 6 months. • ECD completed their registration for a business license and is developing guidelines to use their business incubation center for income generating purposes, with the aim of reinvesting their profit back into their project activities. • 10 WOs have hired RM officers and assigned RM focal persons. • KMG developed a human resource manual and reassessed their organization's salary scale.
7	**Gender Transformative Program Design**	Evidence-Based Advocacy CTC teams provided one-on-one support in designing Gender Transformative project actions and revising FRFM EOIs.	5 (5F/0M) CTCs	115 (62F/53M) WO staff from 34 WOs	34 WOs incorporated Gender Transformative actions into their FRFM EOIs.
8	**Monitoring and Evaluation**	coaching and one-on-one support provided over 3 days on M&E system, logical framework, theory of change development and management, planning and preparation, data collection, and tools and methodologies.	8 (3F/8M) CTCs	115 staff (62F/53M) from 34 WOs	34 WOs improved their EOIs and M&E plans, leading to more robust project proposals.
9	**GTMOD**	A three-day workshop on GE and GT concepts, history of women's rights and feminist movements, feminist principles, application, and analysis of the GTMOD, and organizational development domains of the PIA,	19 (11F/8M) CTCs	Y4: 57 staff (43F/14M) from 46 WOs 58 (44F/14M) WO staff from 20 WOs	• Enhanced GTMOD training for female leaders and WOs, improving their understand of gender transformative organizational development. • EWLA developed a staff code of conduct incorporating the GTMOD principles. • AAWA applied a gender analysis tool with the support of CTCs; and • EWDNA and ECD developed/revised their gender policies.
10	**Leadership Skills**	Conducted by PFE consultant: topics based on the results of a needs assessment from WOs: setting their goals, mobilizing resources, and problem-solving mechanisms. The training focused on the practical needs and capacity /skill gaps of WOs to build their leadership and governance		96 WO leaders and board of directors' members (76F/20M) from 48 WOs	• WOs learned new ways to make themselves proactive leaders, foster breakthrough ideas in their organizations, understand the importance of emotional intelligence, describe effective communication and conflict management, transformative leadership, and decision-making.

		capabilities using a gender lens.			
11	**Facilitation Skills**	Help CTC facilitators: • Understand the goal of the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) project and capacity building modules. • Understand your role Facilitator, including what skills and qualities will help you be a good facilitator, and how to create safe and inclusive spaces and support participants in their learning. •Feel confident to lead engaging and empowering activities and discussions with participants and support them as they learn. •Understand basic information on COVID-19 so that everyone can stay safe while they learn.	36 (15F/21M) CTCs		These facilitation skill trainings were conducted in two rounds.

Table 10: Summary of coaching result in different capacity areas



FIGURE 7: LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN ACTION FOR WO EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS AND THEIR BOARD MEMBERS



FIGURE 6: SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TRAINING IN ACTION.

Standard planning, monitoring, and feedback collection formats were developed in Y3 and continued to be used throughout the project life by ensuring WO's engagement and participation. Using their acquired skillset under the WVL project, CTCs monitored project deliverables, provided support to, and with support from the project's MEL Specialist, CTCs designed and implemented pre and post questioner and feedback surveys, to assess the WOs knowledge uptake covered under each training and coaching engagements. PMT also monitored CTCs engagement through various forms of feedback from WOs and CTCs themselves and CTC timesheets for engagements of coaching. Key feedback from the WOs included a need for more practical training, including exercises and case studies, and suggested extending training durations. Feedback from WOs was analysed regularly by PMT and shared back to CTCs for improvement. As part of monitoring and utilizing GAC's standard indicators (e.g., # of WOs who are now using best-practice governance and management practices), WOs were provided guidance on how they can demonstrate internal capacity improvements, as well as contribute to wider results.

PMT organized a review meeting with CTCs and WOs to discuss progress, challenges and mitigation strategies and draw lessons learned from the coaching support interventions, as well as the CTC sustainability strategy.

Capacity Transformation Center (CTC), Core Trainers and Coaches registered/licensed as a CSO under the name Capacity Transformation Center (CTC) in Y5. The CTC's aim is to support the capacity of WOs through affordable rates and long-term capacity development using resources developed under the WVL project including the capacity building modules and the PIA. This will help retain skilled CTCs, sustain CTC engagement beyond the project, expand their reach beyond 98 WOs and grow as a resource hub. The establishment of the CTC serves as a sustainable strategy of the capacity building pillar of project.

Output 1114 Intergenerational engagements and leadership development facilitated between current leaders and next generation female leaders.	
End of Project Target: 10 Workshops and intergenerational dialogue sessions with 72 Young Female Leaders	**End of Project Achievement:** 14 Workshops (4 leadership workshops and 10 intergenerational dialogue sessions) with 180 Young Female Leaders

In order to invest in the next generation of young female leaders to champion WOs and continue women's rights activism in the public sphere, 180 young female leaders (YFLs) between the ages of 18-35, were identified by WOs and PMT from organizations receiving grants across the four project regions, youth forums/associations, Plan International Sponsorship Program, and university groups. The target set for recruitment of YFLs was 72, with the assumption that each year there would be an anticipated dropout of YFLs. However, the YFLs appreciated and valued their engagement in the project which resulted in no dropouts throughout the life of the project.

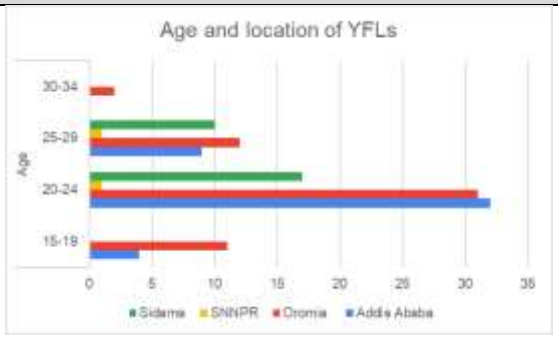


FIGURE 8: AGE AND LOCATIONS OF YFLS

Based on surveys/profiling of the YFL, the project organized a series of leadership trainings for 180 YFLs to enhance their leadership and influencing skills and knowledge. The training focused on building skills in decision-making, problem-solving, leadership styles, assertiveness, and interpersonal skills. YFLs across the four project sites were trained and were then able to cascade the knowledge they gained to other young girls in their communities.

As part of the leadership journey, YFLs had the opportunity to connect with experienced female leaders from the WOs participating in the project. This supported intergenerational engagement and introduced young women to WOs and the people behind them. The structure and agenda of the forums were determined through a survey conducted among YFLs., Key topics for intergenerational dialogues included feminism and gender equality, communication, planning and organizing, problem-solving and decision-making, innovation and creativity, interpersonal and social skills, women/girl's empowerment, GBV prevention and response, SRHR/HIV/AIDS, advocacy, voice and influencing, and girls' education. These topics were prioritized during implementation.



FIGURE 9: YFL GRADUATION FOR COMPLETION OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN HAWASSA

The project achieved notable success in conducting youth leadership and intergenerational dialogue workshops. With an initial plan to hold 10 sessions, the project ended up delivering 14 sessions across the four targeted regions under the project (Addis Ababa, Oromia, Amhara, and SNNPR). The sessions were comprised

of four leadership workshops and 10 intergenerational dialogues. The demand to increase the number of sessions reflects the project's responsiveness to emerging needs of YFL, offering additional leadership skill building opportunities. The intergenerational dialogue provided an opportunity for YFLs to learn from the leaders of WOs about Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) actions in the country and how YFLs can contribute to the GE movement. Key topics discussed included the impact of gender-based violence (GBV) on GEWE, women's and girls' rights, and the challenges faced by women's rights activists.

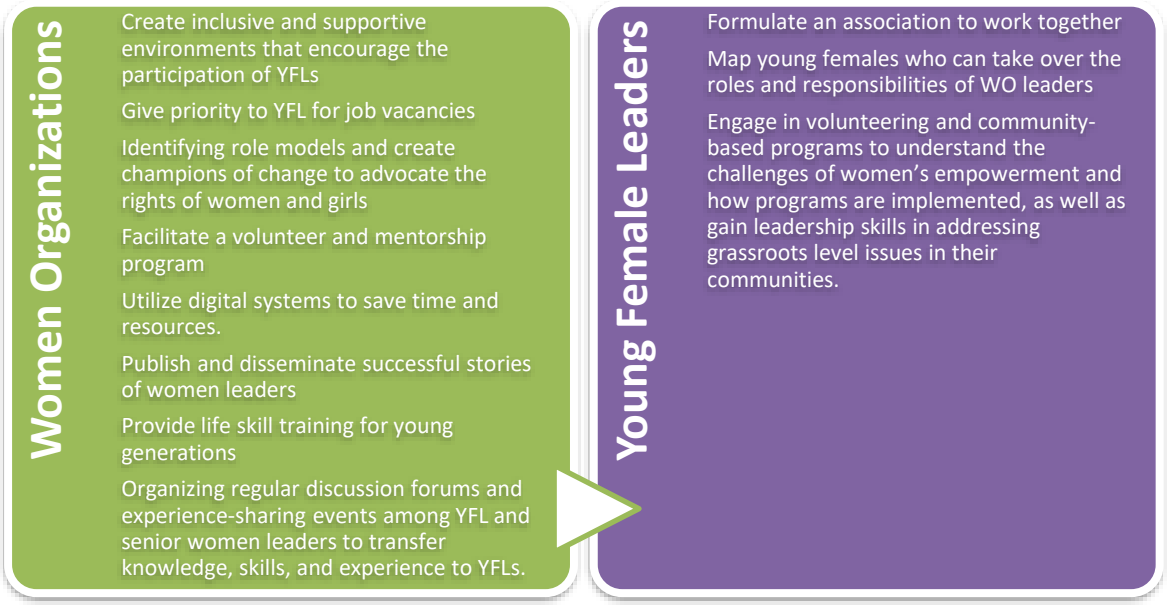
The WO panellist, Yeshimenbet Alemu, a member of the youth leadership CTC team, shared their life experiences, achievements, and challenges they faced in their leadership roles. They highlighted the importance of perseverance, resilience, and determination in overcoming challenges. It was suggested that WOs continue working on community-level programs to contribute towards GE and maximize meaningful participation of girls in programming and that they continue creating opportunities for young girls that are safe and accessible to enable girls to contribute to GE and women's empowerment.



FIGURE 10: INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE SESSIONS IN BAHIR DAR AND ADAMA

The panelists shared the progress they have witnessed in GE and women's empowerment throughout their careers. They also identified areas that still required significant improvement, such as equal representation in leadership positions, addressing GBV, and reducing discriminatory practices. The panellists discussed various strategies and initiatives that have been implemented to create and support the current young girls' movement. They emphasized the need for mentorship, capacity building, and creating safe spaces for young girls as essential to bring about change. They emphasized the unique perspectives of youth, the role of social media, the energy of young leaders and their ability to challenge norms, and their potential to inspire others. The WO representatives encouraged YFLs to advocate for inclusive policies, to challenge stereotypes, and amplify the voices of marginalized women and girls.

The workshops successfully achieved their objectives of raising awareness about the role of YFLs, sharing experiences, and ensuring the initiative's sustainability. The sustainability mechanisms, as well as suggested strategies such as developing leadership pipelines, mentorship programs, and tailored training for YFLs were discussed. The following are sustainability initiatives developed in collaboration with the YFL and WOs:



The participating WO leaders expressed their willingness and need to stay in contact with YFLs, offering mentorships and inviting them to engage with their organizations through volunteerism and internships. The YFLs provided feedback that they were inspired by the reputation of the women leaders in GEWE work and showed interest in joining the WOs. As a result of this forum, 109 YFLs received internship opportunities, and 9 secured employment opportunities. Overall, the intergenerational dialogue provided a platform for knowledge exchange, mentorship, and collaboration between current WO leaders and YFLs.





Mieraf Fekadu is a 21-year-old YFL from Hawassa, SNNPR. After completing the six-month series of leadership trainings organized for YFLs under the WVL project, she began an internship with CoC in a Research and Data Collection position in her hometown of Hawassa. Mieraf was so happy and eager to learn more about the job she was assigned and was excited about the work culture and environment. "*It is a new experience in my life to develop personal and professional relations outside of peers and families*." Mieraf also added that it is a new beginning in her life, and she strongly believes that with the exposure and experience she is getting from the internship program, she will have better employability skills and opportunities than others who do not have such exposure. "*My attitude, outlook and personality began to change as I started to be involved in the YFL training programs, and the internship is a good addition to what I have already built-up and helpful to build my future career path*."

Meskerem Badeg is a 22-year-old YFL from Hawassa, SNNPR. After completing the leadership development training under the WVL project, she began an internship role which directly related to her field of study in IT for CoC. *"There was some fear and a sort of feeling of stress at the beginning of the internship program, but through time in getting to know the staff and familiarity with department activities, I enjoyed my time and experience, and it enhanced my knowledge and skills".* She added that *"practice has paramount importance to building knowledge and skills, especially in the IT profession - I am lucky to have had this opportunity."*

Furthermore, the WVL project facilitated the participation of nine YFLs in the Youth Advisory Panel at Plan International Ethiopia. The purpose of this engagement was to actively involve young people in influencing the organization's programs and decisions that affect them and youth. The Youth Advisory Council created the opportunity for them to engage in an initiative called Girls Take Over, where female youth, including YFLs, assume leading roles in different embassies, organizations, and ministries. This initiative enables them to exercise their leadership skills, learn about leadership by becoming leaders themselves, and be the voice of the youth to create an influence.

Selam, a 24-year-old girl Ambassador, stepped into the role of German Ambassador Stephan Auer as part of the Girls Takeover

Impact Stories

Antsebaraki: After the completion of the YFL leadership training in the Amhara region, 30 YFLs established their own registered CSO. The mission of their CSO is to advocate for women's rights and empowerment, as the girls want to be change-makers in amplifying youth empowerment and engagement in the region. The name of the organization in Amharic is called "Antsebaraki" which means "envision to be a vibrant organization."

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

CoSAP: CoSAP's participation in the WVL project played a pivotal role in supporting the YFLs in diverse engagements. CoSAP focused on enhancing the YFLs' skills, involved them in various activities such as data collection, the formation, training, and strengthening of SHGs, in the use of digital saving tools, experience sharing programs, and M&E visits. Overall, COSAP replicated YFL approaches in their program and integrated them in various organization programs which led them to secure grants and build partnerships with other donors like Tear Fund Ireland, MasterCard Foundation and USAID to sustain the SHG initiative.

initiative. This unique experience held several significant outcomes and promises for the advancement of girls' rights and empowerment.

One of Selam's remarkable achievements during her takeover was her initiation of the "Girls Education in Crisis" program. She collaborated with Ambassador Auer and his team to evaluate their strategic plan, specifically focusing on its proposed human rights agenda. They jointly agreed not to overlook the pressing issue of Girls' Education in Crisis, recognizing its paramount importance. Selam and Ambassador Stephan Auer also seized the opportunity for productive discussions while traveling to a high-level meeting. Their exchange encompassed various topics concerning crises and conflict resolution, contributing to a broader understanding of the complex issues at hand.



FIGURE 11: SELAM STEPPED INTO THE ROLE OF GERMAN AMBASSADOR STEPHAN AUER AS PART OF THE GIRL'S TAKEOVER

Immediate Outcome 1120: Enhanced capacity of local women's organizations to mobilize resources	
Output 1121 Existing resource mobilization strategies of women's organizations supported.	
End of Project Target: 28 WOs and 84 (71F/13M) participants trained. 2 peer exchange events held	**End of Project Achievement:** 48 WOs and 156 (85F/71M) participants trained 3 peer exchange events held

Given the very restrictive fundraising space in previous years, WOs relied on a wide range of non-traditional resource mobilization strategies such as membership fees, buying and selling goods (small entrepreneurship), dinners and events, community fundraising, volunteerism, etc. Restrictive government legislation meant that opportunities to develop capacity in traditional Resource Mobilization (RM) approaches (i.e. proposal development) were largely not available and knowledge of funding calls remains low to non-existent. With the easing of restrictions under the new CSHA law, this presented a significant and contextually relevant opportunity. Mapping existing resource mobilization strategies and funding opportunities for WOs was a significant endeavor. After facing over six months of challenges in recruiting a knowledgeable and experienced consultant, a highly qualified all-female team of consultants was finally selected in Y3. This team was tasked with conducting a detailed mapping of RM strategies and opportunities for WOs in Ethiopia. Their responsibilities included mapping RM strategies, funding opportunities, and developing a resource mapping directory and facilitator guide. After the directory was developed, it was validated by 49 participants (30F/19M) from 41 WOs during a peer exchange platform held in Addis Ababa. This validation process focused on gender equality and women's empowerment, culminating in the creation of a resource directory booklet titled "Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Funding Donors Directory."

The directory list of potential donors focused on gender equality and women's/girls' empowerment, including details about their organizational type, thematic funding areas, websites, funding cycles, calls for proposals, key requirements, mission/vision, contact information, and other ongoing opportunities. This booklet was printed, and 500 booklets were disseminated to 98 WO partners of the project. As a result, WOs used the emails in the directory to directly communicate with potential donors and received positive responses, leading to new partnerships. For instance, Beza for Women Community-Based Development Association (BWCBDA) established a promising partnership with ELiDA through such communications and now has access to funding from donors such as USAID. Additionally, FIA successfully secured a grant from the International Red Cross, indicating "Now *we proactively communicate with prospective donors and invite them to our activities, rather than waiting for calls for proposals to be announced."*

As part of the CTCs engagement, an RM team was established with 9 (3F/6M) CTCs in Y3 with experts from WOs and professionals to develop an RM module. The overall aim of the RM module was to build the confidence and skills required by WOs to plan and conduct RM strategically and systematically to ensure that maximum returns are gained, to learn about different funding opportunities and donors' requirements, and that WOs remain true to their missions. The module focused on a range of resources, both financial and non-financial (human resources, logistics, technology, etc.) to help WOs save money and enable them to access a broader range of resource providers and opportunities. The module introduced the basics of RM, outlined different mechanisms, planning and monitoring tools and techniques, and management and monitoring strategies and gender analysis. It also included tools and exercises that allowed the project to collect data and assess the learning outcomes from the capacity building activities with the WO grantees. In collaboration with CNO and PMT, the draft module content (developed by CTC's) was reviewed, and comments and inputs were provided to the CTCs. Feedback from WOs was also incorporated to further enrich the RM module. In Y4, the RM capacity-building module was refined by newly assigned CTC team members experienced in module development, the RM sector, and knowledgeable about practical RM examples in the Ethiopian context. The refined RM module was validated among the existing RM CTC team, newly assigned RM CTCs, and PMT. The final and complete RM capacity building module was shared with the hired consultant for editorial and translation to local languages (Amharic and Oromifa). The consultant incorporated practical examples, relevant methodology and additional RM strategies/mechanisms in the context of Ethiopian laws and policies. The

English version was printed and disseminated to 48 WOs and key stakeholders and shared to 98 WOs in soft copies. The Amharic and Afan Oromo versions of the modules were shared in soft copies with WOs working in the respective regions.

The project surpassed its target of training 84 (71F/13M) from 28 WOs, instead reaching 156 (85F/71M) from 48WOs. This notable increase demonstrates the project's responsiveness to the heightened demand from WOs. Furthermore, the RM CTC team conducted a two-day training on social enterprises as resource mobilization alternatives and an additional two-day training on fundraising techniques as a resource mobilization strategy. A total of 54 WO staff (28F/26M) from 48 WOs participated in these sessions. As a result of the training, DANFE, OPRIFS, ECD and SGESDA conducted market assessments to identify profitable businesses for local income-generating activities. The PMT also conducted a three-day training on grant writing and applications as a resource mobilization strategy for 27 WOs. The training was attended by 29 WO staff members (10F/19M), 5 CTCs (1F/4M), and 4 PMT members (2F/2M). As a result, the WOs demonstrated improved grant writing skills, enhanced understanding of grant processes, and gained knowledge of tools and strategies to access and generate diverse funding sources from embassies, foundations, INGOs, and domestic resources.

The project's M&E Specialist tracked improvement in knowledge among participants, by conducting pre- and post-training tests using an online interactive survey tool (Mentimeter). The number of people scoring above 70% increased from six in the pre-test to 31 in the post-test, indicating a significant improvement in the level of knowledge among participants. Overall, at the end of the training, 51 participants out of the 52 (98%) who completed the pre- and post-tests scored above 50%.

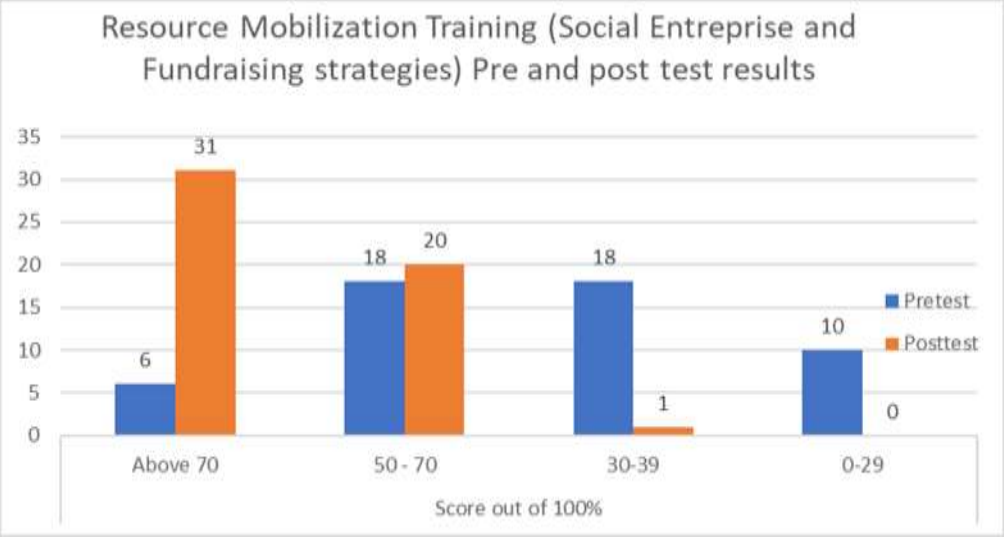


FIGURE:12 PRE AND POST-TEST RESULTS FROM THE RM (SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND FUNDRAISING) TRAINING

A total of 28 WOs developed their 2024 Resource Mobilization Plans (RMPs) in collaboration with assigned CTC teams. Meanwhile, the remaining 22 WOs have submitted their resource mobilization achievements against their 2023 RMPs. Based on the implementation of their RMPs, the following WOs were able to secure over $90,000 CAD in funding:

N.	Women's Organization	Resources Mobilized ($)
1	Amhara Women Federation (AWF)	1,440,000 ETB
2	Amhara Women Association (AWA)	495,037 ETB
3	Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO)	4,638,769.60 ETB
4	KMG Ethiopia	175,000 ETB
5	Mujujegwua Loka Women Development Association (MLWDA)	156,000 ETB (fundraising events); and 500,000 ETB (grant proposals)

6	Beza Women Community Based Development Association (BWCBDA)	150,000 ETB

A total of three peer-to-peer exchange platforms were organized for WOs. The first of which was a conference organized in Addis Ababa for 49 staff (30F/19M) from 41 WOs. The event aimed to facilitate the sharing of existing RM experiences to help WOs strengthen and implement their RMPs and activities. Three WOs, Women in Self Employment (WISE), Meseret Humanitarian Organization (MHO), and Muday Charity Association shared their experiences on RM, including strategies, income generating activity (IGA) mechanisms, legal procedures, and the challenges they faced. Participants gained insights into maximizing existing resources, assessing opportunities, and turning challenges into opportunities to enhance their resource capacities. As part of their relationship with public figures including artists, actresses, community leaders, and the diaspora community, these WOs worked diligently on their communication and media engagement, which enhanced their exposure and fundraising capacity. In addition to the conference's experience-sharing event, a one-day visit to selected CSOs (Mekedoniya, Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JeCCDO), Women in Self-Employment (WISE), and Babul Kheyir) with RM experience to facilitate learning from their RM strategies was held in Y4. The WOs were divided into four groups (each with 12 members) to visit the four CSOs. After the visits, all 48 organizations reconvened at a hotel to share their experiences with each other. Through this exchange, WOs discovered numerous locally available RM resources and learned that improved communication and media engagement is a powerful RM strategy both locally and globally. They also understood the potential to mobilize significant resources through various RM strategies without solely relying on calls for proposals from donors.

Lastly, a peer exchange platform was conducted among WOs and international organizations with 34 participants (21F/13M) from 31 WOs at PIE's office. The importance of this platform was to share experiences on RM techniques and strategies of local WOs compared to international NGOs (Orbit Health, PSI, and Reach for Change [RFC]).

- **Reach for change (RFC** shared their experience on social enterprise and presented the differences and similarities of profit-making businesses and social entrepreneurs.
- **Orbit Health** works on Transforming Healthcare through Digital Innovations and has its own hub which is called Orbit Innovation Hub aimed at incubating and accelerating 15 digital startups, subsequently creating 200 jobs (40% women), and 40 new startups across four cities. Mr. Pazion, CEO and Founder of Oribit Health, passed on his experience in social enterprise and fundraising techniques, emphasizing the scarcity of resources and donors and the likely shift to humanitarian interventions.
- **PSI** shared insights on social enterprises, including relevant legal frameworks and how civil society organizations (CSOs) can establish them as side businesses. Mr. Hailemariam advised that organizations can create income-generating activities (IGAs) by registering with the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MOTRI) and obtaining a separate Tax Identification Number (TIN) certificate. Profits from these IGAs can be reinvested into the organization's causes by reporting earnings and expenditure plans to authorities. This guidance helped WOs explore social enterprises and fundraising techniques, leading them to start their own IGAs, with examples including ECD, OPRIFS, BL, and ESD.

Output 1122 Linkages between women's organizations and relevant funding opportunities facilitated.

End of Project Target:	**End of Project Achievements:**
6 sensitization sessions; and 2 multiplatform conferences/fund forums	6 sensitization sessions; and 2 multiplatform conferences

Utilizing the logic that leadership and management skills combined with access to funding opportunities, will create a cadre of WOs that can effectively (1) build their institutional strength for strategic planning and implementation of their mandates; (2) build their constituent base and next generation of leaders by involving YFLs; and (3) create the means to effectively generate resources, the project used the resource mobilization mapping to identify relevant donors to target for sensitization sessions. In Y5, the project hosted eight events, including six donor sensitization sessions and two multiplatform conferences.

The sensitization sessions were conducted by the WO Collective via phone calls, emails, and in-person meetings with representatives from USAID, Concern Worldwide, UN Women, Pestalozzi Children's Foundation,

Ayuda and Accion, and Save the Children. During these meetings, the WO Collective leaders highlighted the efforts and contributions of WOs towards gender equality and women's empowerment, funding challenges, and the importance of localized funding, particularly for humanitarian response in the country. As a result, many of the donors attended the multiplatform conferences to engage further with the WOs.

The conferences were intended to explore and create opportunities for WOs to meet with potential donors, advocate and build partnerships among UN agencies, international and national NGOs, and local WOS/WOs to offer the most effective and efficient assistance possible to people in need, and to sustain the results achieved and contribute more to gender equality & women empowerment. It also created opportunities for 28 WVL grantees to showcase their achievements and have one on one discussions with donors in their booths. The first multiplatform conference was held in Addis Ababa from August 29-31, 2023, under the event, themed "Localization: Multiplatform Conference Linking Local WOs and GE Donors," aimed to showcase WOs' achievements in gender equality (GE) and women's empowerment and facilitate networking for future partnerships. The conference saw 331 233F/98M) participants from 21 donor agencies, 12 private sector organizations and 45 WOs. A second multiplatform conference organized by the WO Collective in collaboration with ACSO and PIE took place from February 15-16, 2024, at the Interluxury Hotel in Addis Ababa. It aimed to enhance collaboration among government institutions, private sectors, CSOs, WOs, and donors, offering WOs a platform to advocate for partnerships and funding. This event, attended by 228 (166F/62M) people participated, including 22 donor organizations, 25 WOs, and 12 private sector organizations. Key highlights included speeches from notable figures at NEWA, PIE, and GAC emphasizing the importance of local women-led organizations and collaboration. UNICEF discussed streamlining partnerships and grant opportunities for WOs, while AAWA shared their successful resource mobilization strategies, and Vision Fund Micro Finance (VFMF) presented their support for WOs and pledged to increase their outreach to women.



FIGURE 13: FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: HAREGEWOIN ASHENAFI, ECD EXECUTIVE DIRECTRESS; SABA GEBREMEDHIN, NEWA EXECUTIVE DIRECTRESS; LARA QUARTERMAN, UNICEF CHILD PROTECTION SPECIALIST; DR. FASIL NGUSSIE, DGGE CO-CHAIR; AND YELIFIGN ABEGAZ, DGGE CHAIR.

As a result of the multiplatform conferences, WOs gained experience with each other and further increased their networking opportunities with donor agencies and private sector organizations. In addition to this, WOs themselves got the opportunity to become part of other networks – for example, during the conference, BWCBDA became a network member of NEWA. Finally, the platform created a chance to strengthen the partnership with the Authority of Civil Society Organizations (ACSO), one of the leading governmental collaborators for this conference. The events were publicized by local news agencies such as Nahoo TV[26], Reporter magazine[27], Ahadu radio as well as ACSO's Communications department[28]. The WVL project team has actively shared various calls for proposals with partner WOs, aligning with their thematic areas to connect them with new funding opportunities. As a result, three WOs—Qumman Women Development Association

[26] Nahoo TV Evening News. 2023. https://www.youtube.com/live/KgL5PkztrRo?app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR27MKaWafZTjURXVcC4XhKkBxv7lUB3IaHqQCbTiiXoCiz-VSFivz7LAB4

[27] Ethiopian Reporter. September 3, 2023. https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/121937/?fbclid=IwAR3sCb3Rd64QJScZrJ9gzjEtBbJyFZHlgGzlUI4vyaO3I-U_oy78wZ2cG_o

[28] Authority of Civil Society Organizations. 2023. https://acso.gov.et/en/archives/90571

(QWDA) in the Somalia region and Women and Children's Development Initiative (WCDI) in Addis Ababa—secured funding from Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF-Africa). Additionally, Saved Generation Education and Support Development Association (SGESD) successfully passed the EoI review and due diligence steps with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) Germany.

The Packard Foundation designed a program to strengthen women-led organizations through leadership training and other interventions. Recognizing the WVL project's extensive knowledge and experience with WOs over the past four years, Packard approached the project for support in accessing WOs. In response, the WVL project shared the list of WOs and their contact information with Packard. These are some of the other efforts of the project aimed to link WOs with potential donors, contributing to the sustainability of WOs.

To enhance their visibility and attract more funding, WOs developed a collective website hosted by one of the WO Collectives members, The Union of Ethiopian Women and Children Associations (UEWCA). Several meetings were held with the WO Collective, leading to a shared understanding of the website's importance as a space to showcase the work of WOs and promotes their interests to donors and the public. The women's collective website also serves as a hub for resources mobilizations, organizational visibility information, and networking and support for women from various backgrounds. (https://ethiowomen.org/).



FIGURE 14: HOMEPAGE OF THE WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE WEBSITE

A technical/working group, including all four members of the WO Collective, IT Officers, Communications Officers, and Communications and Media Engagement CTCs, assisted in the website development. Their responsibilities included developing technical requirements, creating a ToR with website features, supporting the procurement of a consultant, organizing relevant data, and facilitating meetings with the selected consultant, PIE IT department, and the PMT. Members of the technical working group developed a comprehensive guideline to govern the user experience on the website consisting of terms and conditions of the website to perfectly administer, use properly and effectively. The WO Collectives signed an MOU ensuring the terms of the property rights agreement amongst themselves. Lastly, the website developers provided two rounds of training for 16 (7F/9M) WOs' IT and communication officers on all features of the website. During this training, participants learned to manage a WordPress Multisite website, including logging in, navigating the dashboard, managing user accounts, and editing pages using tools like Elementor. The sessions included firsthand practice, one-on-one discussions on building and editing various pages, posting content, addressing technical questions, using the Content Management System (CMS), and ensuring website security proficiency. The women's collective website was launched on March 26, 2024, at Sapphire Addis Hotel in Addis Ababa among 44 participants, (23F/21M) Global Affairs Canada, MoWSA, PMT, Women Collectives, women parliament members, Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance etc. The WO Collective and member organizations have started uploading content, including all WVL resource materials.



FIGURES 15: WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE WEBSITE MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN ACTION



FIGURE 16: WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE WEBSITE LAUNCHING EVENT

Intermediate Outcome 1200: Enhanced performance of programming and advocacy of women's organizations advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ethiopia.

Immediate Outcome 1210: Improved ability of Women's Organizations to deliver programs and initiatives to advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls	
Output 1211 Women's Empowerment Grants (WEGs) (multi-year grants) provided to women's organizations.	
End of Project Target: 28 WOs Receiving WEGs, 28 WEGs Disbursed, and CAD $2,521,027 provided to WOs	**End of Project Achievements:** 28 WOs receiving WEGs; 28 WEGs disbursed, 16 COVID-19 top-ups completed. CAD $3,061,534 provided to WOs (including CAD $286,012 COVID-19 top-up).

Lack of access to multi-year core funding for strengthening the quality, reach, and scope of programming and advocacy work had been identified as one of the major bottle necks holding back WOs in Ethiopia. To address this gap a multi-year granting scheme called Women Empowerment Grant (known as "Yesetwa Tegate" in local language) was designed as one of the three granting schemes of the WVL project.

Key Revisions to WEGs based on first cycle:

- WOs submit a concept note rather than a full proposal.
- WOs undergo a PIA before developing their full proposal.

To realize the outcomes of the project, particularly the issuance of Women's Empowerment Grants (WEG) and Flexible Response Funding Mechanisms (FRFM) to WOs, a Technical Granting and Advisory Committee (TGAC) was created in Y1 to ensure the selection and awarding process was fair, transparent, and equitable. The Technical Grant Advisory Committee (TGAC) consisted of nine members: four from the WO Collective, two independent experts (a Gender Equality Advisor from the Field Services Support Program (FSSP) and a member of the Forum for Social Studies), and three members from the WVL-Ethiopia Project Management Team (Head of Program Quality, Project Lead, and Capacity Development Specialist). The TGAC members were responsible for developing the grant application guidelines and selection criteria and reviewing and appraising the submitted Expressions of Interest (EoI) for all grants. Moreover, the grant management models (GMM), including the financial and technical monitoring framework were also developed considered the experience of, and processes employed by, other WOs and gender equality funds, such as African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Mama Cash, Star Ghana, Enough Project by European Union, among others. The GMM was developed and orientation on the manual was conducted to explain the project's grant guidelines, reporting, and compliance and financial management requirements. The manual outlined grant eligibility requirements, differences between types of grants, the pre-award and selection process, and guidelines on grant implementation, administration, and management. The process maintained a feminist approach and was undertaken with the full commitment from the WO Collective.



FIGURE 17: ONLINE GRANTS FAMILIARIZATION (Y2)

During Y1 – Y3, PMT announced and socialized calls for WEGs in three rounds. To increase applications from local and regional WOs, various platforms ranging from magazines, distribution through the WO Collective networks, PIE social media, including live question and answer periods, email socialization through a UN Women's distribution list, to using PIE's regional offices in all four targeted regions to especially reach those WOs found at the regional and local levels.

After receiving EoIs from WOs from each of the four targeted regions across the country, the pre-disbursement phase followed. This phase included procedures such as EoI reviews by PMT for eligibility, thorough evaluations, and recommendations by TGAC, due diligence assessments by PIE to gather meaningful information, assess potential risks and gaps, and tailor risk-mitigation actions accordingly, all before entering into a partnership agreement with a WO. While successful WEG applications were selected based on set criteria, WOs with unsuccessful application were provided with feedback and recommendations to apply for second rounds of funding or for an FRFM grant. Following pre-disbursement procedures and signing of agreements, 28 WEGs totalling CAD $2,775,522 in grant funds were disbursed in various installments throughout Years 1-5 to the four WO Collective partners and 24 WOs. Grant payments were made via cheque due to the Ethiopian National Bank transfer restrictions, except for the initial payment to four WO Collective partners that were made through e-transfers.

Main Reasons for unsuccessful applications:

- unable to provide current financial documentation and guidelines, including recent transactions.
- cost ratios were above the acceptable limits set by (CHSA).
- lacked transparency in terms of resource management and the use of



FIGURE 18: TGAC CONVENING TO SELECT 5TH ROUND OF FRFM GRANTEES (Y4)

As the project's implementation period was also punctuated with the COVID-19 pandemic, four WO Collective partners and six other WOs received a top-up for gender-responsive COVID-19 activities. To select the WOs for the COVID-19 funding, a request for applications was sent to all 13 Yesetwa Tegate grantees, who were active during Y2, of which 12 applied. All 12 applications were reviewed by the TGAC and six were selected based on the set criteria by TGAC members including, measures to prevent the crisis from becoming a major setback for the safety and well-being of girls and women. A total of CAD $286,012 COVID-19 top-up was disbursed thus taking the overall WEG disbursement to CAD $3,061,534.

All 28 WEG grantees were supported by PMT and CTC to revise their proposals, develop implementation plans and assign 20- 25% of their grant budget to their institutional capacity development plan (ICDP), prepared by unpacking their individual PIA self-assessment results. The WOs include activities that required more engagement and resources than areas covered by CTC training and coaching support. These included: International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) development, recruitment of capacity building personnel, the development of Volunteer Management policies, additional human resources, Financial Management, and communication manual preparation and

familiarization, website development, strategic plan revision, resource mobilization manual preparation and different capacity development training. On a bi-annual basis, PMT worked with WOs to refine their subsequent project implementation plans ahead of their partnership agreement renewals. The revisions helped WVL grantees improve budgeting for ICDPs, address capacity development priorities, enhance training, provide internships to YFLs, and strengthen M&E practices. This led to resolving financial constraints, implementing new activities, recruiting personnel, and developing financial management policies and manuals.

Operating on the idea that the WVL project is not business as usual and to ensure more coordination and understanding of the unique operating nature of the project, including the guiding feminist principles, Plan also developed an internal project operations manual that outlined revised policies and procedures around internal operations which were adapted in light of the WVL project including, due diligence, liquidation processes, financial checklists, etc.



Figure: Women Campaigning for the Enforcement of Local Land Right Laws in Batu, Oromia, and Community conversation and volunteers training by BWCBDA in Dessie



Figure: Policy dialogue with stakeholders on GE and Women empowerment in Addis Ababa and School-Based GBV Prevention and Response Guideline Familiarized to School Community

The monitoring of WO grantees during the start-up phase primarily involved virtual review meetings and in-person support. With less than a year of implementation for most grantees, annual in-person monitoring visits did not start until Y3. Priority was given to small and grassroots organizations for firsthand support to help them achieve results and build capacity. PMT held annual learning workshops for WEG recipients to discuss implementation challenges, best practices, monitoring and reporting, and resource mobilization. Peer-to-peer support was also facilitated amongst grantees based on their performance ratings, pairing stronger performing WOs with newer WOs or those who were facing challenges. Reporting requirements were supported by templates and tools introduced in Y2, with all recipients submitting quarterly financial and biannual narrative reports. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic causing some repurposing of activities, grantees continued to report and implement projects under the GE domains, impacting individuals and communities across four regions.

A Community of Practice was also established through a Telegram group for ongoing information sharing among WOs and to maintain discussions around key sustainability mechanisms including, leadership development, resource mobilization, and maintaining collective advocacy efforts beyond the life of the project.

Key Elements Necessary for WOs to Sustain Beyond the Project:

1. Maintaining a vibrant national women's movement.
2. Utilizing the project's website and organizing multiplatform events for effective communication and networking.
3. Sustain collective advocacy with tools like policy briefs to drive change.
4. Build and support coalitions, consortiums, and forums for collective influence.

Utilizing their WEGs, WOs have undertaken various programmatic activities to ensure women's empowerment and gender equality. In general, these activities revolved around gender roles and responsibilities, access to and control over resources, participation and decision making, social norms and duty bearers and institutions. Targeted activities aimed to curb gender-based violence (GBV) and foster positive masculinity were abundant. Furthermore, to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, activities such as mass awareness sessions, dissemination of social behavioural change communication (SBCC) materials, promotion and strengthening of early detection and reporting strategies, radio messaging on COVID-19 prevention and gender impacts, economic strengthening and recovery, food and non-food items (NFI) support, and staff and stakeholder capacity building were undertaken. Moreover, institutional capacity building of WOs was also enabled through the grant, enabling organizations to develop strategic plans and key policies/manuals, hire and train staff, purchase needed equipment like computers and cameras, improve their visibility, and mobilize additional resources. Additionally, all WOs as part of the agreement process signed PIE's policies on child protection and safeguarding. Those applicants that were found eligible, but not selected for granting in one round, were encouraged to re-apply in subsequent rounds.





FIGURE 1919: LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE SHARING BY WOMAN LEADERS AT HAWASSA

FIGURE 2020: PARTICIPANTS OF ETHIOPIAN WOMEN MOVEMENT BUILDING WORKSHOP HOSTED BY PFE

"When the baseline survey was conducted in our office using the PIA tool, I was worried about how we can solve a lot of capacity gaps identified by this survey without any external support and with less than 10 staff and 3 volunteers. With the coaching support of CTCs, added staff and volunteers, we were able to address our capacity gaps. Now we have 31 full-time staff and 6 volunteers. By updating our manuals and websites we were able to increase our visibility and started to attract potential donors. So, enhancing our organization's capacity is one strategy to attract more donors." – Mekdes Hailu, Executive Director FIA

The key takeaway for all WOs was the need for organizations to strengthen their organizational capacities rather than only focusing on project implementation. WOs learned that once gaps are identified, it is possible to address them. They identified that having a system and guidelines in place and strengthened capacity of staff are the main pillars for an organization's capacity development.

Key Lessons Learned

- *Despite the market inflation and financial constraints faced, WOs continued implementing their projects successfully by applying effective resource management practices.*
- *WOs should work closely with government offices and target communities in project identification, design, and planning processes.*
- *The frequent review of detailed PIPs and making informed modifications on activities and budget plans to seek approval from partners, including budget adjustments and acceleration plans, enabled smooth implementation and increased liquidation among WOs.*
- *The use of technology eased communication and documentation. In this regard, WOs mentioned internal and external communications including email and social media tools.*
- *Enhance capacity of CTCs and engagement with WOs through frequent communication, follow up and joint review and learning exercises.*
- *Capacity building training particularly for the finance department was helpful to ease the challenge with financial liquidation processes and enhanced communication.*

Please see **Annex C: GAC Standard Output Indicator Form** for a full list of all WEG distributions.

Output 1212 Flexible Response Funding Mechanism (FRFM) to address short-term funding requirements of women's organizations established

End of Project Target:	**End of Project Achievements:**
Up to 85 FRFM grants disbursed to WOs at CAD $1,004,413 and 10 COVID-19 FRFM grants disbursed to WOs at CAD $156,429 totaling CAD $1,160,842	111 FRFM and COVID-19 grants disbursed to 84 WOs; 97 FRFM grants disbursed at CAD $1,136,586 and 14 COVID-19 FRFM grants disbursed at CAD $160,046 totaling CAD $1,296,632

Besides constraints to access multi-year core funding grants, WOs also required smaller, agile and timely funds for immediate and more short-term needs relating to emerging issues, key events, and opportunities for innovation which are often overlooked by donors. Hence, the WVL project established Flexible and Responsive Funding Mechanism Grants – FRFMs (also known as 'Yemudaye grants') to address this gap.



FIGURE 21: ORIENTATION ON CAPACITY BUILDING, PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, REPORTING, AND FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE FOR FRFM GRANTEES, IN ADDIS ABABA.

The FRFM granting scheme underwent a multi-year development and implementation process. As with the Yesetwa Tegate grants, through the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) process, Plan and the WO Collective proposed and validated the scope and minimum eligibility criteria for the Yemudaye grants. Moreover, in Y1, a TGAC sub-committee was formed consisting of five members (with a quorum of 3) including the Plan Program Lead and one representative from each member of the WO Collective, to review and select applications. Furthermore, the FRFM grant's management model was outlined in the GMM, with minor updates made from lessons learned and feedback from WOs at the orientation workshop in Y2-Q4. From Y2-Y4, FRFM grants were awarded across five rounds. The call for proposals were socialized through umbrella WOs networks and forums, networks websites, zonal meetings, radio, newspapers and social media. Applications were kept open throughout the year and the TGAC sub-committee reviewed them on a rolling basis to ensure flexibility and account for the urgent nature of the requests.

Initially, the project launched a specific COVID-19 Yemudaye call in Y2-Q2, intending to respond to the gendered impacts of COVID-19, whereas the next cycle of Yemudaye grants was announced Y2-Q4. However, during this early phase only a small number of EoIs were received for FRFM grants, which was a challenge. After consultation with WOs collectives on the issue, PMT received guidance to map organizations through the WEG grantees. Accordingly, WEG grantees mapped WOs in their operation areas and widely shared the FRFM grant information. This scheme addressed the low levels of applications with 121 applications received in Y3, enabling the project to reach many WOs across Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Sidama, Afar, Gambella and Somali Region. After the EoIs were received, eligible FRFM applications were reviewed and selected by the sub-TGAC for funding. PMT conducted a physical visit assessment and audit review of WOs recommended by the sub-TGAC. During these visits, a lighter version of Plan's partner due diligence procedure was applied to each FRFM recipient. After these procedures, successful organizations signed simplified partnership agreements and received their funds accordingly, which on average was approximately $11,000 CAD per FRFM grant. Some WOs were provided with grants through a host organization, an arrangement made by PIE to support newly established WOs who did not fulfill financial eligibility criteria to directly receive grants. This action helped the organizations to establish close relationships with each other and acquire experiences in financial management and project implementation. FRFM recipients also received a similar one-on-one orientation on the GMM as WEG recipients during a pre-implementation meeting to review, discuss, and clarify key aspects of their grant and its administration. A total of 61 WOs were partnered for FRFM grants through direct agreements, while 11 were hosted by WEG grantee partners. Moreover, 11 FRFM grants were provided to WEG grantees to address specific needs such as office furnishings and equipment, capacity building training for staff, and support for IGAs. A total of 14 FRFM COVID-19 grants were given to provide PPE, awareness raising activities on the gendered impacts of COVID-19, COVID-19 prevention and food support, and economic training for women highly affected by COVID-19. In Y5, PIE entered into partnership amendment agreements with the 16 existing FRFM grant recipients aimed at facilitating the implementation of their ICDPs.





FIGURE 22: WOMEN ATTENDING ORIENTATION SESSION ON COVID-19 IN ADDIS ABABA

FIGURE 23: FOOD AND SANITARY ITEMS DISTRIBUTION AT DEBRE BIRHAN FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN





FIGURE 24: WOMEN PROVIDED WITH MOTORCYCLE BY ENG ATTENDING DRIVING TRAINING TO ENGAGE IN DELIVERY SERVICES

FIGURE 25: MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN TRAINED ON IGA IN SENDAFA TOWN, OROMIA REGION

"The concept of creating young leaders is truly big and I am surprised to see there is someone that cares to do this for the youth. Keep it up! - Training participant from Addis Ababa Bole Sub-city

Similarly, to the Yesetwa Tegate, Plan conducted orientation sessions with selected grantees on a rolling basis. These orientation sessions provided the WOs with a deeper understanding of the project, its feminist approach and objectives, and reporting and compliance requirements. Leveraging existing organizational capacity building tools and WEG resources developed under the WVL project, PMT shared simplified project management tools, and monitoring and reporting guidelines which helped support the WOs in the implementation and financial management of their grants. Throughout the life of the project, Plan maintained high-level oversight and support to promote effective implementation, financial management, and reporting of the FRFMs. All grantees were asked to submit one final financial and narrative report upon completion of their grant. Similarly, as with the WEGs, details of the FRFMs were managed and monitored through the project's Management Information System (MIS).

Through these funds, WOs have carried out a range of impactful interventions, including:

- **COVID-19 Awareness and Prevention**: Conducted awareness campaigns about COVID-19 and its prevention, distribute food and personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and handwashing supplies.
- **Skill Development**: Provided training on business and income generation skills, women's economic empowerment, and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response.
- **Support Services**: Offered support for women survivors of GBV, distributed food, and provided legal aid and psychosocial support.
- **Organizational Capacity Building**: Enhanced organizational capacity by purchasing office equipment, developing strategic plans and manuals, and delivering training to staff on resource mobilization, communication, and gender programming.
- **Communication and Marketing**: creating and/or improving organizational websites to showcase their achievements to communities, stakeholders, and potential donors.
- **Establish IGAs for Sustainable Resource Mobilization:** Develop strategic plans that are backed by needs assessments and market research that clearly define the organizations objectives, activities, M&E, networking plans, and sustainability and growth, and are endorsed by all levels of staff and the board.
- **Retain and grow staff:** Improve human resource processes including recruitment, promotions, benefits within organizational manuals that are gender transformative and transparent. Additionally, adding internship opportunities to develop the next generation of female leaders while ensuring organizations are inclusive and evolving to new and innovative ideas.

These activities have significantly strengthened both the immediate support provided to communities and the organizational capabilities of the WOs.

Please see **Annex C: GAC Standard Output Indicator Form** for a full list of all FRFM distributions.



Output 1213 Influencing and Evidence Grants (IEGs) provided to eligible Women's Organizations to support national and sub-national evidence gathering and advocacy efforts.

End of Project Target:	**End of Project Achievements:**
4 WOs Receiving IEGs and $200,140 CAD provided to WOs	4 WOs received IEGs, and $191,982 CAD provided to WOs

Recognizing their national influence and reach, convening power, and experience in women's empowerment, the four WO Collective partners each received an Influencing and Evidence Grant – IEGs (also known as 'Yeswa Demetse' locally) to lead a wider base of 20-40 WOs on a common advocacy agenda for gender equality, positioning them to deliver on the next intermediate outcome. The aim of the IEGs was to respond to WOs' challenge in building their evidence base and advocacy capacities and for the WO Collective working in collaboration with a wider group of WOs to form an advocacy platform. CTCs were engaged in the implementation of WOs' advocacy initiative to facilitate monitor the implementation of coordinated advocacy agendas, reporting templates and tools were developed in Y2 under the GMM for quarterly financial reporting and biannual narrative reports to be submitted to PIE to fulfil reporting requirements. In Y4-Q2, the four WO Collective partners signed an agreement with PIE to implement a coordinated Evidence-Based Advocacy (EBA) agenda through their IEGs. To support a sense of commitment and ownership of the vision and plan for the advocacy platform, roles and responsibilities for all group members and a shared decision-making process were outlined in each of their partnership agreements, as per the GMM. In line with this, the terms and conditions of the IEGs included reporting requirements, as well as the grant disbursement protocols established by the TGAC and PMT. Following the signing of the agreement, the WO Collective received their first instalments of their grants in Y4-Q2 and the rest in Y5Q1-Q3. The planned disbursement of three IEGs in Q2Y5 was delayed due to government delays in signing agreements, and security concerns in the Amhara region where UEWCA and ECD were implementing their activities. In Y4 and Y5, several monitoring visits were conducted on a quarterly basis to track and provide backstopping support for WOs implementing IEG plans. Even if WOs started implementing targeted agendas in their advocacy initiatives, it was observed they also faced various challenges to achieve their targets. One example was EWLA who were forced to redesign their advocacy agenda and halt any further work due to government direction until further notice because the GBV policy draft was not officially circulated by the government. The four WO Collective partners were visited quarterly, and joint discussions were held on how to accelerate their project performance and effectively collaborate with collaborator WOs. As a result of the visits NEWA, EWLA, ECD and UEWCA were able to revise their IEG plans including adjustment to influencing actions in line with the findings from their advocacy research/assessment which were conducted to generate evidence for their advocacy initiatives, and adjustments to budgets to absorb market hikes/inflation and accommodate the role of collaborating WOs. In addition, the WOs prepared acceleration plans to improve their implementation by mobilizing their internal capacities and engaging their WO collaborators. To further monitor the implementation of coordinated advocacy agendas, reporting templates and tools were developed in Y2 under the GMM for quarterly financial reporting and biannual narrative reports to be submitted to PIE to fulfil reporting requirements. Accordingly, WOs submitted their respective advocacy initiative reports as per the reporting period. In total, the four WO Collective

partners received four IEGs totaling CAD $191,982. **Please see Annex C: GAC Standard Output Indicator Form** for a full list of all IEG distributions.

Intermediate Outcome 1300: Increased effectiveness of national and sub-national women's platforms, networks, and alliances to affect policy, legal, and social change in Ethiopia that advances gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Immediate Outcome 1310: Enhanced capacity of women's organizations and networks to undertake coordinated evidence-based advocacy at the national and sub-national level	
Output 1311 Women's organizations and networks supported in coordinated evidence-based advocacy efforts.	
End of Project Target:	**End of Project Achievements:**
4 WOs Trained and 72 (61F/11M) WO Members Trained	14 WOs trained and 117 (80F/37M) WO staff trained or coached.

To facilitate WOs to set the agenda for policy and advocacy, and counter the culture of competition amongst WOs, resulting from limited resources, the project increased the effectiveness of national and sub-national women's platforms, networks and alliances to affect policy and legal and social change in Ethiopia. Utilizing the extensive knowledge and experience of the WO Collective, collective efforts were used to strengthen vertical linkages with grassroots WOs and lateral coordination amongst themselves and with other advocacy groups to define and deliver a common advocacy agenda. In developing the EBA module, efficiencies were created amongst Plan International's WVL projects in Ghana and Ethiopia, and a common capacity module was developed in a collaborative effort between both countries. This activity also built on Plan International's own global experience of strengthening influencing work in countries, as well as other organizations' (such as Oxfam) experience using evidence to inform policy and feminist advocacy. The aim of the training was to help WOs better understand strategies, content, and approaches required to influence policy makers. The module has three main sections: (1) understanding the concept of evidence-based advocacy, (2) importance of advocacy strategies, and (3) developing evidence-based advocacy strategies and implementation plans. The module was piloted in Y2, and no major changes were recommended.

The training was delivered not only to the four the WO Collective partners but 10 additional WOs, to define a common agenda and develop concrete advocacy plans based on their shared priorities. These WOs, through training and coaching, identified EBA as a critical capacity area and actively engaged in collective advocacy initiatives. Overall, the project aimed to train 72 members (61F/11M) but successfully trained 117 members (80F/3M), resulting in a positive variance of 45 participants (19F/26M). This substantial increase in trained individuals was driven by the demand for the training and it underscores the project's success in enhancing advocacy skills and capacity within the participating organizations. This transfer of knowledge augmented with a national-level workshop, led by the WO Collective during which WOs shared learnings, experiences and evidence, and mapped coordinated advocacy strategies. The training positioned WOs to develop IEG proposals, outlining a plan for how they will undertake coordinated advocacy. The project engaged 34 WOs, with 27 continuing through to its completion. The implementation of the advocacy agenda was successful, with 100% of planned activities completed and 19 actions finalized in the IEG implementation plans. Despite facing challenges such as difficulties in reaching consensus, delays in government agreements, high staff turnover, uneven commitment among partners, and unclear activity roles, the WOs made significant strides, positioning the WOs to engage with MoWSA and other relevant government stakeholders and regional feminist networks. Specific issues included the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) facing government requests to pause their advocacy efforts, and the Ethiopian Center for Development (ECD) encountering delays due to regional conflicts.

EWLA advocated for a comprehensive anti-GBV policy. Consultation meetings were conducted with stakeholders, including media, regional councils, and CSOs, to promote the policy. As a result, a draft policy is now awaiting endorsement by the Council of Ministers. EWLA formed alliances with MoWSA, UN Women, and

the European Union, and engaged the media to raise awareness of their advocacy initiative. They also sensitized 46 (29F/17M) government experts and high-level officials to influence policy endorsement.

NEWA focused on strengthening the accountability of GBV response mechanisms in the Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, and Sidama regions. To achieve the intended goal two specific objectives were set: to put in place coordinated services and to strengthen accountability mechanisms on protection, and to address GBV cases at the federal and regional levels. The main target audience of this advocacy work was the five government sector offices that have a major stake in delivering services for GBV victims (the Justice bureau, Courts, Police Commission, Health Offices, and the Women, Children, and Social Affairs office). Additionally, religious leaders and community leaders, women federations and women associations, victims/service seekers, and duty bearers were also the project's target audiences. NEWA then conducted interface meetings with 97 government officials (61F/36M) at woreda level, 98 officials (56F/42M) at zonal level, and 17 officials (7F/10M) at regional level, presenting the evidence generated through their assessment to support their advocacy actions. This led to enhanced collaboration and commitment among stakeholders, including government offices such as The Ministry of Justice in Ethiopia, courts, the police commission, health offices/health centers and women, and MOWSA, leading to improved resource allocation and response rates to GBV cases in one central location for survivors to access services.

ECD addressed gaps in GBV preventive policies in the Amhara region. ECD conducted an assessment to identify gaps in the implementation of GBV preventive policies and laws affecting women in the Amhara region. The assessment revealed that several government offices, including the Justice Bureau, Courts, Police Commission, Health Offices, and Women, Children, and Social Affairs Office, were responsible for the implementation gaps. The findings were validated with CSO stakeholders and the government offices. Following the assessment, a strategy was developed with action plans to advocate for better policy implementation. ECD held four roundtable discussions with 92 (39F/53M) participants from various sectors, identifying GBV vulnerabilities and recommending actions such as data collection, awareness creation, capacity building, and strengthening services for GBV survivors. A discussion with 35 (17F/18M) participants from relevant government offices focused on addressing the identified gaps and coordinating efforts to handle GBV cases. Through discussions with stakeholders, they arrived at actionable recommendations, resulting in the resolution of 18 previously ignored GBV cases. Additionally, social accountability tools were created to monitor the commitment of responsible actors to GBV preventive measures. and developed an advocacy strategy and action plan.

UEWCA worked to ensure inclusive and gender-responsive disaster risk management (DRM) policies. They reviewed DRM policies, organized influencing dialogues for 167 (111F/56M) donor, WO, CSO, media, and government representatives from various sectors, and conducted training sessions for 114 (67F/47M) CSOs and government representative to raise awareness of policy gaps and enhance capacity for gender-responsive humanitarian service delivery. They also published and distributed a DRM Policy Review Report and training manual. In addition, UEWCA successfully conducted 32 radio advocacy sessions across national and regional media platforms to raise awareness about the assessment's findings and advocate for inclusive and gender-responsive legal frameworks, strategies, and approaches in humanitarian actions. These efforts increased awareness and skills in gender-sensitive humanitarian response and fostered better understanding of social inclusivity in disaster management. An IEG review and learning workshop was organized with the presence of key stakeholders. A total of 21(12F/9M) participants attended the workshop which was designed to capture the learnings, challenges, and best practices of the advocacy initiatives. During the workshop it was noted that some institutions have rules and procedures on accountability mechanisms for GBV issues, and GBV reporting, and case management practices of concerned stakeholders have improved. The government sector offices were convinced about the importance of accountability mechanisms and expressed their interest in working on it properly.

Overall, the collective efforts of the WOs significantly advanced the advocacy agendas, addressing GBV and DRM issues despite challenges. By engaging stakeholders at various levels, the WOs collectively influenced policy changes, improved service coordination, and enhanced accountability mechanisms, contributing to better outcomes for women and vulnerable populations in the country. In Y5-Q2, the PMT held an EBA review and learning workshop with 14 (10F/4M) WO staff, who shared their advocacy successes, challenges, and mitigation strategies. Positive outcomes included effective experience sharing among WOs, while challenges involved forming alliances with government stakeholders, engaging collaborators, and addressing security issues. Mitigation strategies included closer collaboration with government stakeholders and continuous communication with partners. Additionally, a coordinated advocacy panel discussion was organized with EWLA, NEWA, and ECD, attended by 94 (65F/29M) WO staff. The discussion highlighted achievements like involvement in policy development and effective advocacy strategies such as consultative meetings and media briefs. Challenges mentioned included lack of coordination among WOs, funding limitations, and shifts in government priorities. Recommendations included strengthening government relationships and collaborative resource management to avoid duplication.

Immediate Outcome 1320: Strengthened cooperation and coordination between local, national, and multinational women's networks

Output 1321 Linkages between Ethiopian women's networks and regional networks and resources facilitated.

End of Project Target: 15 WOs Linked	**End of Project Achievements:** 33 WOs linked to regional networks and resources

Recognizing the stated disconnect between national women's rights networks and African regional networks such as The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Strategic Initiative for the Horn of Africa (SIHA), and the African First Ladies Association, exchanges between national and regional networks were facilitated for knowledge sharing. In order to facilitate these exchanges, the project, in collaboration with the WO Collective and CTCs, successfully conducted a comprehensive mapping of regional gender equality resources, incorporating key local platforms and network organizations. The enriched GE resource document validated and refined a collaborative process with WOs and was later finalized and disseminated to all 48 WOs under the WVL project. This initiative effectively linked Ethiopian Women's Networks with regional resources and local platforms, enhancing their capacity to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

The initial plan was to link 15 WOs with regional networks; however, the project surpassed this goal, with 33 WOs successfully linked, resulting in a positive variance of 18. This significant increase was largely due to the opportunities presented by the 5th edition of the African Women Conference held in Addis Ababa, which served as a pivotal event for engaging and connecting more WOs with regional networks.

Africa Women's Summit: In Y4, eight WOs and PMT attended the Africa Women's Summit (AWS) in Cape Town, South Africa. The main theme of the event was "Women driving impact for sustainable development in Africa". The summit included panel discussions, networking, and cultural exchanges, with participants from various sectors. Delegates from government, CSOs, educators and researchers, healthcare professionals, youth leaders, business and industry leaders, community leaders, international organizations, students and young professionals, media and journalists, philanthropists, and donors as well as men as allies participated in the event.



FIGURE 26: WOS REPRESENTATIVES AND PMT ATTENDING AFRICAN WOMEN SUMMITT

At the event, NEWA's panel discussion focused on empowering African youth, especially women, to drive community change. Mrs. Saba Gebremedhin highlighted the importance of targeted women's empowerment programs.



FIGURE 27: NEWA REPRESENTING WOS IN A PANEL DISCUSSION

Following the summit, a learning exchange with South African partners, The Great People of South Africa and Kwanele, addressed advocacy, sustainable funding, and resource management. Key takeaways included leveraging technology to prevent GBV and empower women, exploring effective fundraising strategies, and building strong stakeholder relationships for long-term sustainability.

Women Deliver: In Y5, four WO and four PMT members attended the Women Deliver 2023 conference in Kigali, Rwanda from July 17-20. The theme for the conference was “Spaces, Solidarity and Solutions” focused on advancing gender equality through inclusive and collaborative approaches. In the conference, delegates were engaged in networking with donors and various GE networks. The WVL-Ethiopia team was invited for a networking reception organized by CanWaCH which engaged diversified donors as well as international organizations based in Canada.



FIGURE 28: MEKDES HAILU REPRESENTING WOS IN A PANEL DISCUSSION ORGANIZED BY CECI

The WOs claimed that the reception allowed them to create new connections with donors as well as GE networks, influencers, global leaders, youth, and GE advocates. FIA’s Executive Directress, Mekdes Hailu, participated in a panel discussion organized by CECI, focusing on “Supporting Women’s Movements in Fragile Contexts.” She emphasized the need for localized funding to support women’s empowerment in Ethiopia and fragile settings.

Following the conference, the four WO participants formed the ‘Consortium of Women-Led CSOs’ to enhance collective impact. The consortium is in the process of registration and has outlined its bylaws, vision, and mission. They have submitted a peacebuilding concept note to Pact, aiming to strengthen their operations and attract investment through collaborative efforts.

Women and Girls Leading Against Hunger: A two-day workshop entitled "Co-create and prioritise actions to remove barriers for women and girls' meaningful participation and leadership" was organized from June 12-13, 2023, in responding to lifesaving needs and addressing the root causes of the food crisis. Dr. Bekelech Demessie Rorisa, the Executive Directress of SGDA, participated in this workshop held in Nairobi. The UN Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator, together with the United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (UNWPHF), Plan International, World Vision and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), organized this workshop to bring together representatives of WOs and female leaders from countries most affected by food insecurity as well as other key stakeholders. The platform created an opportunity for all participants to learn from the expertise and experiences of women-led organizations and to exchange with each other. A set of practical recommendations to advance local female leaders in food crisis were released to be furthered with advocacy campaigns. Two resources were shared that were referenced during the event: a policy brief by UNOCHA entitled *Gendered drivers, risks and impacts of food insecurity in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa*; and a report by Plan International entitled *Beyond Hunger: the gendered impact of the global hunger crisis*.



FIGURE 29: WOMEN AND GIRLS LEADING AGAINST HUNGER WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

Africa Women Conference


FIGURE 30: AFRICA WOMEN CONFERENCE IN ADDIS ABABA

PMT facilitated the Africa Women Conference in Addis Ababa on October 25-27, 2024, in collaboration with NEWA. The conference, which included 28 WEG grantees, focused on reviewing the economic, social, and political inclusion of women and girls in Africa's development agenda. It aimed to ensure that resources for women contribute to sustainable development across the continent and to foster valuable partnerships for advancing women's and girls' futures. NEWA's executive director delivered a keynote speech highlighting the achievements and challenges of WOs in Ethiopia, stressing the need for continued collaboration. Additionally,

EWLA's executive director participated in a panel discussion on enhancing women's leadership in Africa and received an award for their contributions.



FIGURE 31: LENSA FROM EWLA AS A PANELIST AT THE AFRICAN WOMEN CONFERENCE

4. Project Governance and Management

4.1 Governance

The project actively engaged with different stakeholders by incorporating them into a governance structure. This structure included representatives from the government, donors, and WOs, ensuring that all key stakeholders had a voice in making important decisions throughout the project's lifecycle. By fostering these collaborative linkages, the project facilitated enhanced communication and coordination among all participants, leading to more effective project implementation. The project had a diverse governance structure with distinct roles and influences. The structures include:

Project Steering Committee (PSC): This committee was organized under the principle of being inclusive and diverse and the composition of members of the PSC were presented in the PIP Terms of Reference. Participants include senior representative from GAC, the four WO Collective partners, Plan International Ethiopia, and Canada, and MoWSA formerly known as MoWYCA. The PSC met on an annual basis, with the inaugural meeting on October 3rd, 2019, and the final meeting on December 19th, 2023. The objective of the meetings was to provide guidance and strategic direction to the WVL-Ethiopia project. Their role was to review and approve key project deliverables such as the Annual Work Plans (AWPs) and progress reports. The main challenge faced by the PSC was consistent attendance from MoWSA, resulting in the project remaining anew to all delegated MoWSA participants. New leadership and restructuring in all government ministries resulted in the continuous changing of staff. The project minimized the disruption of government turnover as much as possible by sharing project summary reports and holding project updating meetings with the new staff of MoWSA upon their availability.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): To realize the outcomes of the project and ensure quality and effective implementation a Technical Advisory Committee was established in 2021. The purpose of the TAC, similar to that of the PSC, was to review the previous year's progress and challenges and to provide recommendations for the following year's work plan to strengthen initiative outcomes however at a more detailed implementation level than the PSC. Participants include four WO grantee members, four WO Collective partners, two MoWSA representatives, and four PIE WVL staff. Starting in Y3, the committee initially met quarterly and shared the latest 6-month PIP and key action points in advance of the meeting for participants to review. It was later found not feasible to meet on quarterly basis and it was jointly decided

to meet bi-annually to offer technical guidance and recommendations aimed at optimizing project implementation performance.

Technical Granting and Advisory Committee (TGAC): To achieve the goals of the project, including issuing WEGs and FRFMs, a TGAC was established to review and appraise grant applications. This committee was tasked with ensuring a fair, transparent, and equitable selection process for grants, based on the project's objectives and existing guidelines. The selection committee for the WEGs consisted of nine members, requiring a quorum of 5: with 3 representatives from Plan International Ethiopia: Head of Program Quality, Project Lead, and Capacity Development Specialist Executive Directors of the Women Collectives and two independent members from academia, private sector or other relevant organizations (1 member the Gender Equality Advisor from the FSSP and one regional member). The sub-committee for the FRFM grants consisted of five members (with a quorum of three) including the Plan International Ethiopia Program Lead and one representative each from each member of the WO Collective. The Plan Project Lead served as Chairperson, and the Plan Grants Coordinator acted as Secretary. Members were responsible for validating criteria, reviewing proposals, and providing feedback, while ensuring conflict of interest policies were followed. The TGAC operated from Addis Ababa, meeting annually for WEGs and quarterly for FRFMs, and was supported financially for administrative costs by Plan International Ethiopia. The committee remained in effect for the duration of the project and revised its ToR as needed, for example, moving from in-person only meetings to a hybrid of in-person and virtual when COVID-19 hit.

Program Management Team (PMT): As outlined in the PIP, a PMT was established in Y1. It included a total of eight positions including, the Project Lead, Project Officer, Capacity Development Specialist, Grants Coordinator, Grants Finance Coordinator, two Grants Compliance Specialists, and a MEL Specialist. By the end of the project, two additional roles had been added, a Gender Equality Specialist in Y2 and a Partner Capacity Building Coordinator in Y4, for a total of ten positions. The role of the PMT was to work in line with the feminist principles to deliver and be held accountable for the implementation and results of the project, inclusive of supporting WOs in their grant management, capacity building, network and advocacy components, and financial management and compliance responsibilities and accountability. The PMT conducted regular team meetings and engaged with the WO Collective to ensure the project activities were progressing well and any challenges were addressed effectively and efficiently. In addition, the PMT continued to engage with PIE staff from various departments including project management, finance, program quality (including technical advisors in GE and M&E), and procurement and logistics to ensure efficient implementation.

4.2 Management

Human Resources

The WVL team structure was designed to ensure appropriate management and implementation resources were in place for PIE. WVL-Ethiopia was purposefully designed as an ambitious project with significant granting mechanisms and a key learning from the project was that it did not have in place from the beginning adequate financial staffing to manage the financial administrative processes to efficiently deliver the granting as timely as desired. As such, over the course of the project, the staff structure was updated to ensure project optimization and allocation of sufficient resources to address challenges as they arose. The most notable human resource changes from the PIP are summarized below, and the final project organogram can be found in **Annex I: Final Project Organogram**

- Staffing adjustments:
  - **Gender Equality Specialist:** Through the Y2 Semi-Annual Work Plan a new position of a Gender Equality Specialist was proposed and approved. The purpose for this position was to ensure that GE was mainstreamed throughout the project and to reinforce the feminist principles of the project. It provided direct support and oversight to implementation and monitoring of the project's gender equality strategy. Having a dedicated WVL project staff

member focus entirely on gender equality ensured the successful implementation of the GE strategy.

- **Partner Capacity Building Coordinator:** Given some of the challenges in financial management of grantees through the Y4 AWP a new position was proposed. The Partner Capacity Building Coordinator joined the PMT in January 2023 and was instrumental in ensuring the capacity of partners is strengthened in program and grant related areas, and has specifically enhanced the liquidation rate through training, backstopping and handheld support to partners. In Y4, the Coordinator acted as a bridge between the program and WVL grant compliance team to ensure there was a common understanding on both sides and partners were capacitated in both areas so that their activities, financial management and documentations complied with the donor's requirements.

- Staff Turnover: Over the life of the project, there was notable staff turnover across all partners including within Plan, the WO Collective, WOs, and government stakeholders. Plan acknowledges that at times turnover within the project did contribute to delays in implementation as well as an increased workload on remaining staff and realizes there were both internal and external factors contributing to the attrition that the project team faced. Internally, Plan focused on remuneration packages and workplace culture, and externally it needed to contend with a competitive job market in Ethiopia, high inflation, and the realities of running project teams in volatile and insecure contexts. The corrective actions and strategies employed were:
  - *Revision of salary structures to provide salary increases for staff to align with the current market and inflation. This included a critical decision to base staff salaries on the Euro (as opposed to the fluctuating Birr) and increase necessary food and transport benefits.*
  - *Increasing LoE of positions that had higher-than-anticipated demands and warranted an increase.*
  - *Increasing the grade level of positions based on the role requirements and therefore attracting qualified candidates for key positions.*
  - *Using existing staff (from the project as well as from other areas of the organization – both within Ethiopia and Canada) to support during the interim while recruitment was ongoing.*
  - *Supporting staff with clear standard operating procedures in relation to safety and security (including relocating staff and suspending operations as required to fulfill duty of care obligations), collaborating with the UN and Ethiopian Department for Public Health to secure vaccinations for staff, and setting up conditions to enable staff to operate effectively in remote and hybrid environments.*
  - *WOs leveraged the flexibility within their grant budgets to address remuneration concerns and ensure they remained competitive, to mitigate against the potential of WVL trained staff leaving the organizations.*

Procurement of services: Consultants took more time than anticipated to deliver project resources required for implementation of key activities. The project experienced delays with two consultants working on the web-based PIA tool to make it user friendly and operational on multiple devices. The other consultant was contracted to refine the eight capacity building modules and translate them into two local languages (Amharic and Oromifa). It is important to consider contracts well in advance of implementing the project activity and to allow for potential no-cost extensions. Luckily, the delays did not have a significant impact on the project's implementation. The modules have been translated, printed, and disseminated to WOs. The Web based PIA tool has been handed over to NEWA based on the joint decision of the WO Collective and PMT.

Implementation

Project Launch: The launch of the WVL - Ethiopia project, originally scheduled for March 2020, was postponed to early 2021 due to COVID-19. The official launch occurred on January 26, 2021, with GAC's David Hughes, Acting Deputy Director of the Ethiopia Development Program, addressing participants virtually. Hughes emphasized the project's role in addressing poverty and gender inequalities by funding

WOs and supporting their efforts to empower themselves and advance GE. The event was attended by 60 (34F/26M) participants, including representatives from PIE, WO Collective, government, UN, local WOs, and the media, with a notable 72% of attendees from WOs. The event highlighted issues such as unequal resource distribution, harmful social norms, and poor governance contributing to women's and children's rights violations in Ethiopia. Panelists recommended supporting women's movements in acquiring skills and accessing resources to enhance decision-making and resource mobilization. The launch received extensive media coverage, including a feature in the Capital newspaper, and garnered strong support from WOs and MoWSA.

Hosting newly established FRFM grantees to implement projects: Early in the project it was noted that emerging WOs were found to not meet the project's eligibility criteria to receive funding, as often they were not able to produce audit reports because they were newly established organizations. In response to this, PIE created a hosting arrangement with larger WOs to provide grants through "host organizations" to support newly established WOs. WOs to benefit from the granting to implement activities and to gain experience in financial management with the support and guidance from the more established WOs. These nascent organizations had no direct partnership agreement with Plan International and all financial and compliance issues was the responsibility of the hosting organizations. However, nascent WOs gained access to implement their projects and learn about project and financial management from the experienced host organizations. Nine WOs accessed FRFM grants through host organizations, enabling them to benefit from the funding and capacity development.

Financial Management of Grant Funds: While the project attained 100% liquidation of granted funds by June 2024, efficient disbursement and liquidation challenged the project and required significant human resources to manage the processes. Given the number of grantees, PIE needed to adapt internal processes and policies of their standard partnership process and management to be more reflective of the needs of the WVL program (such as the volume of grants as well as the financial capacity of WOs). Management adaptations included:

a) *Temporary human resource support for the grants team was assigned at key moments of the project. This help came from the PIE finance team and CTCs.*
b) *The grants team jointly held bi-monthly grants status review meetings, PMT and leadership. In these meetings, partners at risk were identified (i.e., delayed liquidation for more than 6 months), follow-up action points were devised, and responsibilities were assigned to PMT.*
c) *In some critical instances, PIE leadership visits to partners occurred. Some of the compliance issues discussed between the PIE grants team and partners' finance teams did not reach executive leadership of WOs. These visits brought the challenges to light to the WO leaders that often resulted in positive outcomes.*
d) *Additional compliance coaching and mentoring was provided on a more one on one basis to WOs using organization specific examples to mitigate against future issues.*

Learning Sessions with WVL-Ghana: Throughout the project Plan International Canada coordinated between WVL-Ghana and WVL-Ethiopia, sharing implementation strategies, tools, and learnings. In Y5 as part of the close-out process two structured learning sessions were conducted between the two programs. Th main objectives of the learning sessions were to provide a platform for the WVL teams to learn from each other's experiences and share best practices in project implementation and working across networks, focusing on the diverse social, political, and economic environments they operate in. Recommendations were proposed to inform future programming and sustainability beyond the life of the project.

- ***Implementation Session with PMTs from Ethiopia and Ghana December 2023***

During the learning session, the WVL-Ethiopia M&E specialist highlighted key successes, lessons, and challenges under the project. Key achievements included the disbursement of over $3 million CAD in grants to 98 WOs, with notable investments aimed at addressing the gender impacts of COVID-19 and

enhancing institutional capacities. The project's thematic focus spans various areas including gender roles, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), legal aid, youth networks, and women's economic empowerment (WEE). However, challenges such as the need for WOs to better own and update ICDPs and engage stakeholders effectively have been identified. Measures to address these challenges include improving due diligence processes and enhancing local networking opportunities. WVL-Ghana reported progress similar to Ethiopia's, with over $2.5 million CAD granted to 81 Women's Rights Organizations (WROs). The project has focused on addressing gendered impacts of COVID-19, providing capacity-building training, and working across 15 of Ghana's 16 regions. Key successes include impactful programs that have seen women appointed as chiefs in patriarchal regions. Challenges faced include managing multiple grants and ensuring effective liquidation of funds. Lessons learned emphasize the importance of strong networks, media visibility, and responsive data collection. The Ghana team also noted the value of integrating feminist principles into grant management and the use of technology to support monitoring and evaluation. On the second day of the session, capacity building and partner management were discussed:

- **Capacity Building** The exchange of insights between Ethiopia and Ghana highlighted several key takeaways. Ghana appreciated Ethiopia's approach to YFLs and the intentional support for ICDPs, while Ethiopia valued Ghana's emphasis on technology and performance measurement. Both teams recognized the importance of involving local WOs in advocacy and utilizing platforms for enhanced visibility.
- **Partner Management** The discussion on partner management revealed similarities and differences in grant management practices. Ghana's approach to multi-year grants, liquidation success, and group-based advance management were noted as effective strategies. Ethiopia learned from Ghana's practices, including the use of a checklist for liquidation, and maintaining close follow-up. Both teams shared strategies for managing grant disbursements and ensuring compliance, with Ghana's approach to feminist principles and flexibility in grant management serving as valuable lessons for Ethiopia.
- **Feminist Principles and GTMOD The** application of feminist principles in grant management was discussed, with Ghana citing co-creation, agency, and collaboration as key strategies. Ethiopia shared their challenges in applying these principles, especially in contexts with stringent compliance requirements. The discussion also touched on the transformation from FMOD to GTMOD in Ethiopia.

Future actions include continued discussion via email, a recommendation for in-person meetings to enhance experience sharing, and planning for future networking opportunities. Both teams expressed interest in more frequent exchanges to further improve their programs.

- ***Collective Advocacy Session with WO Collective and Network partners April 2024***

At the Ghana-Ethiopia experience-sharing session, participants discussed the impact of the WVL project on their organizations. Panelists from Ghana and Ethiopia shared insights on scaling activities, emphasizing capacity building, adaptability, and linking organizations at various levels. They highlighted that WVL's flexibility and multi-year funding were crucial for sustainability and effective resource mobilization. Key achievements included improved organizational visibility, governance changes, and increased youth engagement. Challenges noted included the need for better resource mobilization and addressing overlooked issues. Overall, the project enhanced advocacy efforts and organizational systems, with suggestions for expanding successful aspects and addressing areas needing improvement.

Community of Practice: Initiated in 2019 a Community of Practice (CoP) was established among Canadian Implementing Partners (IPs) of WVL programs, with participation from organizations such as Plan International Canada, CARE, Oxfam Canada and Quebec, Equality Fund, CUSO, CECI etc. The purpose of the CoP was to share, learn, and reflect among IPs, as well as to highlight any common challenges, such as compliance or financial management, which could be shared collective with GAC. Many IPs found these sessions to be very informative and helped coordinate for external events such as Beijing +25. In subsequent years, the CoP was formalized and opened to all IPs of WVL programs, in Canada and abroad, and supported with funding from GAC for co-chairing responsibilities. In 2023, Plan International Canada co-chaired the CoP with Oxfam Quebec. The main CoP engagements for that year focused on supporting GAC's consultation process to inform the next phase of the WVL program. Two CoP meetings were held

in this regard to solicit practical recommendations from member organizations with the objective of shaping the programming for the next phase. During these sessions Plan International Canada and Oxfam Quebec, led group work to explore six areas of WVL programming i) Capacity Strengthening Approaches, ii) Program Management and Design iii) Feminist Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, iv) Funding Mechanisms, v) Risk Mitigation and Protection Strategies for WROs and their Leaders, vi) WROs Sustainability. From the sessions a set of recommendations was developed and validated among the CoP members and presented to GAC by the co-chairs. These recommendations were well received by GAC and were reflected in the Renewed Women's Voice and Leadership Guidance, which was shared in 2024.

Operations

Additional COVID-19 funding: In April of 2020, the project submitted a request to GAC for additional funding to provide direct funding to WOs to address the impacts of COVID-19. The funding was approved by GAC and of the $500,000, approximately 60% equating to $290,000 was disbursed to the WO Collective and WEG grantees, and $156,429 was disbursed to FRFM grants, with the remainder allocated as overhead. These funds were crucial for WOs and enabled them to respond quickly to the emerging needs of the pandemic and its impacts on women and girls in Ethiopia.

No Cost Extension (NCE): In the Y4 AWP the project requested a six-month extension, thus extending the project end date from March 28th, 2024, to September 30th, 2024. The main rationale for this was to enable WOs sufficient time to implement planned activities within their project plans and fully liquidate their funds. Plan recognized that the project faced delays in early project years due to internal and external factors, and that the COVID-19 pandemic placed an unprecedented strain on the pace of implementation, especially during the Government of Ethiopia's five-month state of emergency (April – August 2020).

5. Risk Management Tools and Analysis

Over the life of the project, the security situation in Ethiopia significantly worsened, especially in the Amhara and Oromia regions, where escalating conflicts between government forces and armed groups resulted in numerous fatalities and severe restrictions on movement and communication. This instability disrupted the operations of WOs, including PIE, necessitating stringent security protocols and relevant training to ensure staff safety. The prolonged drought and flood incidents compounded the humanitarian crisis, affecting millions and increasing the urgency for aid. These environmental and security risks, along with developmental risks such as inflation, displacement and intensified GBV due to conflicts necessitated ongoing support and advocacy for women and girls. Financial and reputational risks were managed through thorough control measures and transparent processes to maintain project integrity. Despite these challenges, proactive measures, including relocation of activities to safer areas, flexible budget allocations, and close monitoring, allowed the project to adapt and continue operations. Effective risk management enabled PIE to respond swiftly to evolving threats, ensuring project continuity and positive outcomes despite a highly volatile environment.

Please see **Annex F: Project's Final Risk Register** and mitigation measures.

6. Lessons Learned and Actions Taken, and Promising Practices

- **Continuous Investment in WO Collective Partnership and Collaboration with WOs.** The wealth of experience of WOs and their deep understanding of the local context and the women's rights movement

has been very informative and essential to guide the design and planning phases of this project. Partnering with the WO Collective as co-creators and collaborators has contributed to strengthening the fulfilment of the feminist principles and approach. It has also continued to ensure the project is designed and led to respond to their ever-evolving needs. This has been particularly useful in validating the three proposed grant mechanisms. Plan has also been incredibly appreciative of the partnership with the four WO Collective members.

- **Gender Equality Funds:** Practical lessons from other gender equality funds have been integral in shaping the WEG and FRFM grant models for the project. WVL team in Ethiopia and Ghana conducted extensive desk research and consultations with gender equality fund providers such as AWDF, Star Ghana Foundation, and Oxfam. This research highlighted the importance of adequately planning for capacity-building efforts with WOs due to their significant financial costs. Additionally, it emphasized the need to ensure sufficient opportunities for female-led organizations, as calls for grants often attract many male-led or dominated organizations. The findings also pointed out that reporting requirements can be burdensome for grantees, suggesting the need for flexibility. Lastly, the research underscored the importance of encouraging innovation by rewarding applicants who incorporate innovative elements into their proposals.
- **Group coaching**: The project adapted its approach to capacity building in Resource Mobilization for WOs by introducing group coaching sessions. Instead of assigning 1 CTC to 1 WO as previously done, the project organized group coaching sessions, with a maximum of 4 WOs attending, where sessions are held in one of the WOs. This adjustment has increased efficiency, enabling more WOs to be reached in a shorter time frame while also reducing costs.
- **Applying new learning and approaches:** PMT's exposure to regional events like Women Deliver has brought about innovative approaches in how learning and sharing workshops are organized, for example in the bi-annual and annual learning events a panel discussion on advocacy and youth engagement occurred, which served a dual purpose; a valuable addition for the project commemorating the International Day of the Girl (IDG) further emphasizing the importance of empowering young girls.
- **Realistic budgeting:** Early on it was noted that WOs perceived a successful project as conducting multiple activities with small budget, however due to this perception, many faced challenges in implementation as the activities were often underbudgeted. The project worked with WOs to adjust their budgets as needed and coached them on how to realistically present a budget. It is learned that for future interventions, ensuring WOs present realistic budgets would minimize the challenges they would face during the delivery of their projects, ensuring they could achieve planned results.
- **Harnessing the power of social media;** Utilizing social media platforms, such as Telegram, proved to be a valuable tool for continuous sharing, communication, and resource expansion for WOs involved in the WVL project.
- **Core funding:** Another best practice observed in the WVL project is the allocation of 25% of the budget specifically for organizational capacity building. WVL supported WOs in developing institutional capacity development plans following a baseline assessment. This initiative enabled these organizations to allocate 25% of their WEG grant to address their institutional capacity development needs, a provision not commonly found in other projects.
- **Promoting Localization**: WVL promoted localization by ensuring that a significant portion of the budget was directed towards WOs. Specifically, 62% of the GAC funds were disbursed to these organizations as grants, emphasizing WVL's commitment to empowering local entities and fostering sustainable development at the grassroots level.
- "**Women's Organization" nomenclature gained recognition**, influenced by WVL's efforts to recognize and promote WOs. WVL's initiatives have contributed to making this name widely accepted, as evidenced by its frequent use in calls for proposals.

List of Annexes

Annex A – Outcome Reporting Worksheet
Annex B – Outputs and Activities Reporting Worksheet
Annex C – Logic Model
Annex D – Performance Measurement Framework
Annex E – List of Partners
Annex F – Risk Register
Annex G – Communications
Annex H – Stories of Change
Annex I – Final Project Organogram
Annex J – GAC Cumulative Standard Indicator Form
Annex K – Visibility and Recognition of Activities Reporting Form
Annex L – List of Subcontractors
Annex M – Intellectual Property Rights
Annex N – Project Brief
Annex O – Project Sustainability