

**Terminal Evaluation On  
Agro-pastoralist Pastoralist  
Women Empowerment Project  
In Liben & Afdher Zone, Somali Region**

**Final Report**



*Photo: Fodder and vegetable production and marketing group in Wardir Kebele, Cherrati Woreda, Afdher zone*

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## **Acronyms**

BCD	Business and Community Development (BCD) Consultancy Service
CBO	Community Based Organizations
Coops	Cooperatives
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
GVB	Gender Based Violence
H2H	House to House
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
IFAL	Integrated Functional Adult Literacy
IGA	Income Generating Activities
KII	Key Informant Interview
LF	Logical Framework
PC	Pastoralist Concern
SCC	Saving and Credit Cooperatives
SDK	Safe Delivery Kit
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendants
WASH	Water, Sanitation, Hygiene
WASHCo	Water, Sanitation, Hygiene Committee
W2W	Woman to Woman

## **Executive Summary**

PC has been implementing integrated development and emergency programs that include water development, primary healthcare services, pastoralist education, livestock health, rangeland management, income generation and asset diversification. As humanitarian intervention, PC focuses on supporting drought early warning and response and strengthening disaster prevention and preparedness initiatives. As a cross cutting issues, intervention in the areas of gender development, capacity building for line government offices and support on promotion of action-oriented researches.

The evaluated project is entitled as "Development of the production and productivity of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist women in Liban and Afdher areas of Somali region of Ethiopia and their socio-economic empowerment to fight hunger and create resilience of the most vulnerable people. With the general objective to promote rural development and fight against hunger, the project targeted about 24,300 vulnerable women living in 3 woredas of Liban and Afdher zones. The target beneficiaries are women involved in agricultural production and livestock rearing and vulnerable to the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The major interventions are small-scale irrigation, strengthening cooperatives and improving access to water for livestock consumption and addressing problems related to gender and gender-based violence, specifically Harmful Traditional Practices (FGM). The project focuses on participatory process that involves all local authorities and institutions as active actors in the project through the approach of women empowerment that capitalizes on improving existing knowledge base and experience of the target women.

The goal of the projects is to contribute to the improvement of pastoralist women in Filtu, Charati and El-karri woredas of Liban and Afdher zones of Somali Regional State. The specific objectives are organized into four result area. The first deals with supporting integrated community based social response to multiple social & gender ailments such as HTPs and FGM while the second focused on improving socio-economic situation of pastoralists and agro-pastoralist women. The third and fourth objectives are improving WASH condition of target kebeles and provision of capacity building support for woreda level women affairs offices.

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the extent to which the expected results are achieved and the level of changes observed on the life and livelihood of target beneficiaries. The evaluation focused on assessing the extent of bringing the expected changes at individual household level and drawing useful lessons to be shared among key stakeholders. To this end, the five evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) are used in complementarity with quantitative and qualitative methodologies of data collection and triangulated approach of analysis. Review of literature and documents, KII, FGD, observation and case studies are applied as qualitative method while household survey is used as quantitative approach. Accordingly, 101 households are involved in quantitative survey while 4 FGD and 15 KII were undertaken through involving 54 people (22 men and 32 female) from Filtu and Charati woredas project beneficiaries and line government line office representatives.

The project was initiated through launching familiarization workshop to discuss on the implementation process of the project. The launching workshop was held at zonal level through participating about 50 representatives of key stakeholders. The workshop enabled to create shared understanding among different actors and collaborators. Training workshop that involved 90 participants comprising of 30 persons from the three target woredas was organized on HTP, in particularly FGM.

The training encouraged the participants to promote 'Woman to Woman' (W2W) and 'House to House' (H2H) discussions on HTP issues and practices. The trained women involved in monthly visits in sub-kebele cluster levels focusing on raising awareness on FGM and other forms of HTPs. The initiative enabled to cover about 10 clusters in the target kebeles through reaching 891 people (203 male & 688 female).

In the area of improving socio-economic situation of pastoralists and agro-pastoralist women, the project focused on establishing new credit and saving groups and providing seed money. The intervention enabled to establish three SCCs that have about 100 women members in total through mobilizing, organizing and training in the three target sites, one from Filtu and the remaining two from Afdher zones. Totally ETB 1,534,000 was provided to the groups in the form of seed capital, which is on average around ETB 6,000 per head for 225 women members in Liban in Afdher target kebeles.

In relation to improving women health services and basic education, the project focused on enhancing the literacy and numeracy skills of target women through organizing 9 Integrated Functional Adult Literacy (IFAL) groups. Literacy shades were constructed and 9 facilitators (6 from Afdher and 3 from Liban) trained to handle the teaching-learning process. Total, the initiative participated 420 women learners in IFAL process. Literacy learning centers were supported with desks, chairs and blackboards to facilitate smooth teaching-learning process. Solar panels were part of the support to encourage some women and men participate in evening classes.

To improve women health services and girls' educational participation, dignity kits were distributed to 1,200 female students in the three target woredas. The provision of dignity kits was aimed to overcome hygiene related challenges that had been enforcing pastoralist girls to drop classes during menstruation cycles.

To improve the practice Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) in supporting home-based delivery and creating linkage with health service centers in prenatal periods, the project supported the training of 60 TBAs that were selected from remote hinterland villages. Then basic delivery kits were provided to the trained TBAs to facilitate the provision of safe and hygienic services in their neighborhood. The trained TBAs have managed supporting about 85 deliveries and facilitating referral of about 11 pregnant women, and awareness creation on child spacing for more than 150 mothers. The trained TBAs also involved in anti-FGM mobilization initiative through creating about 170 volunteer women contacts in door to door services.

To enhance the opportunity of women to generate income through involving in irrigation-based farming practices, 2 cooperatives were organized and supported to engage in fodder and vegetable production and marketing. The cooperatives were organized through mobilizing 60 women members. To enhance their skills in irrigation-based production and marketing, the members involved in training related to cultivation, harvesting and storage system of various fodder and vegetable products. The cooperatives were also supported with fodder and vegetable seeds that enabled them involving in production and marketing process. The project supported the irrigation groups with hand tools, fuel and seed money to serve as startup capital.

To improve access to water during dry seasons, the project supported the construction of 2 Birkas with a capacity to hold about 400m<sup>3</sup> to facilitate rain water harvesting. The construction was associated with establishing and training women water management committee (WASHCo) for the purpose of ensuring economic water utilization and effective management of water scheme.

To improve documentation process in line partner office, 3 computers and 3 printers were purchased and handled over to women affairs offices, 1 unit from each for the target three woredas. The capacity support also includes supply of mini-media equipment such as microphones and loud speakers to women affairs office to enhance their capacity in carrying out awareness creation on FGM. The office also obtained different types of furniture to facilitate active engagement in women empowerment initiative.

## **Relevance**

In terms of relevance, the project is consistent with policy framework of the government and development approach of the implementing agency. The objectives are consistent with the needs and priorities of target beneficiaries while its design has operational coherence with ongoing development initiative. The designed addresses strategic

objectives and priorities related to food security, promotion of health and education focused priorities with particular emphasis on meeting the social, economic and health needs of women.

The main components of the project include supporting integrated community based social response under the first component and improving socio-economic situation of pastoralists and agro-pastoralist women under the second component while the third and fourth components focus on improving WASH and institutional capacity of women affairs office respectively. The implementation approach revitalizes the application of innovative approaches with needs responsive tendency to local socio-cultural system. The project targets pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities living with the challenge of climate change and sociopolitical conflict situation. Thus, flexibility and adaptability to changes in circumstances related to environment and social conflict was well incorporated in the design process.

### **Effectiveness**

The project organized 225 women and supported to engage in different income generating activities through gaining access to working capital and basic orientation and training. The seed money received by each member, even though claimed not adequate has enabled them to cover investment cost required in petty trade and engagement in micro level value chain opportunities. The project helped pastoralist and agro pastoralist women in having access to and control over economic resources and social basic services in the target area.

In this case, about two third survey respondents witnessed gained being received in improving decision making of women related to utilizing credit fund for business purpose and utilizing the income from such business operation. The level of male spouse consultation and consensus-based decision-making process is encouraging as indicated by the majority of project beneficiaries.

The project encouraged target beneficiaries to diversify source of household income from livestock rearing to alternative income generating activities through investing idle time in economically rewarding engagements. Thus, more than 75% of target women have the believe as they have involved in profitable venture, even though there is challenges in developing competitive positioning with private business owners with huge capital and long-lasting experience. In nut shell, target beneficiaries witnessed the contribution of the project in improving household food security while still maintaining subsequent investment in profitable business activities.

The effectiveness of literacy classes is measured from the level of active participation, as about 87% project beneficiaries have been active participants of literacy learning initiative. The participants indicated the prevalence of quality training materials that meets the expectation of target learners. There is trend of attitudinal change related to life skills, expressing of women's views and advocating against marginalization and abuse of rights.

The project enhanced courage and commitment of TBAs towards supporting pregnant mothers, irrespective of prevailing WASH related limitation at community level health posts. There is a positive trend of change in perception and practice related to GBV/HTP among the target beneficiaries in particular and gradual improvement among the entire community in general.

### **Efficiency**

Project implementation process was coordinated through reinforcing with regular communication, review meetings and joint monitoring exercises. Operational linkage with line government agencies and community structures was created strengthened with regular discussion and consensus building procedures. This enhanced sense of mutual cooperation while facilitating the process of building trust and shared responsibility among project staffs and line office experts.

The total budget of the project was 459,189.74 Euro or around ETB 15,247,854.54 and out of which it just over 100% had been utilized in accordance with the plan. The allocation of more fund for revolving purpose has the potential to

build local capital through supporting the creation of individual working capital and facilitating alternative investment in accordance with individual skill and experience.

## **Impacts**

Improving trend of recognizing women as essential contributor to household economy and societal change process. Thus, the target women have been actively engaging in economically beneficial activities. Women's access and control over economic assets has been in a trend of positive progress in line with gaining acceptance in household decision making process. The trend is playing a positive role in influencing follow men to appreciate the contribution of women in the process of asset building in a given household. The situation is contributing to the effort of changing the lifelong cultural attitude that overlooks the economic contribution of women.

At individual level, women are gaining business skills and confidence to negotiate within the business transaction and value chain interaction. Involvement in adult literacy classes is serving as a stepping stone towards developing confidence to negotiate on their own affairs. Engagement in income generating activities have been facilitating linkage creation between target women and business operators in local value chain.

The introduction of alternative business schemes, such as women led beauty salon and sewing is encouraging target women to learn new skills that would serve to generate income in regular trend in particular around the urban centers. The involvement of women in irrigation-based farming practice is encouraging women's involvement in vegetables and fodder production as well as marketing. This enhances the opportunity to improve income and household food security as well.

The project supported the creation of alternative income sources for FGM practitioners and this has been enhancing the attitude of fighting against the procedure of FGM and other forms of HTP. The situation has been improving the level of confidence of women towards bringing GVB and ill-treatments of women to justice system and public forums.

## **Sustainability**

The cooperatives are organized through meeting procedural guidelines. They have defined loan and repayment procedure, conflict resolution mechanism and financial control system. They collect individual and group-based saving on the top of disbursing credit on revolving fund approach. Cooperatives in the area of irrigation are putting aside money that might be used to cover repair and maintenance cost of irrigation pumps, to purchase seeds and cover costs of fuel without interruption.

This ensures operational sustainability as well potential to withstand unexpected challenges. Active involvement of line government offices, religious leaders and customary institutions in the promotion of anti-FGM practice. This tends to enhance acceptance and share responsibility towards ensuring sustainability of the introduced initiatives in the area of anti-GVB interventions.

The probability of functionality of TBAs to continue is being assured as there is operational linkage established with local level health posts. However, challenges related to hygiene and sanitation deserves further consideration



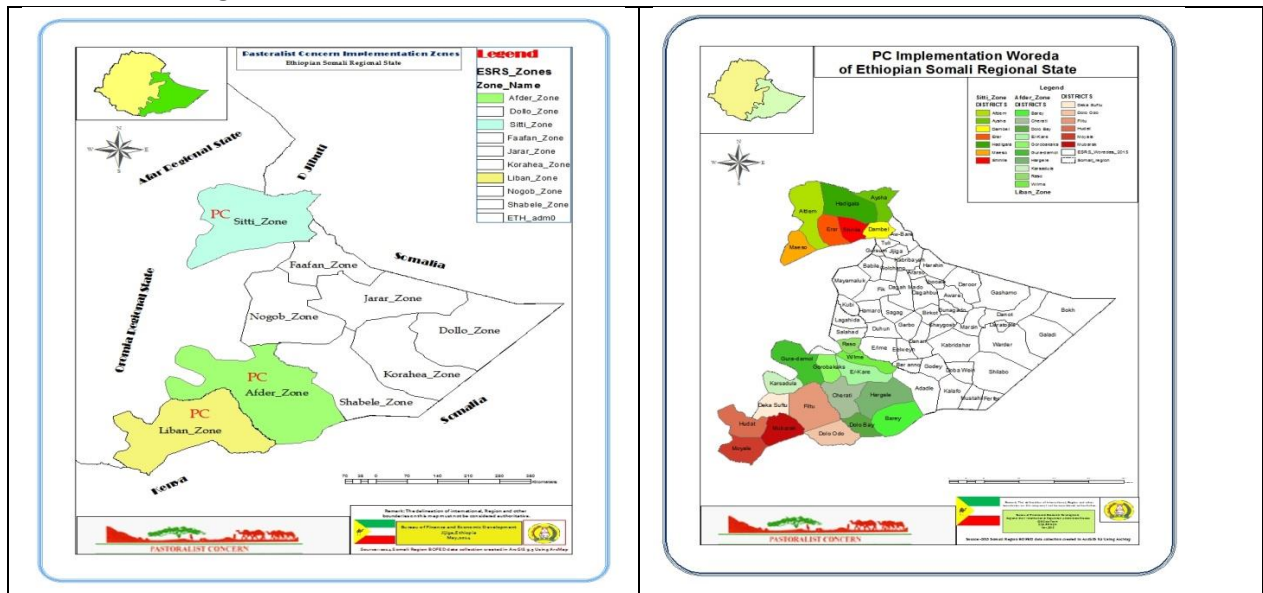
# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Brief Background of the Organization

Pastoralist Concern was established in 1995 G.C by committed elites and others who want to support marginalized pastoralists communities. The organization is non-political, non-religious, non-racial, and non-profit-making development organization and devoted to a development mission with focus on bringing on positive changes in the lives of poor and marginalized pastoralists through promoting sustainable development projects, humanitarian interventions and action orientated researches.

PC has been implementing integrated development and emergency programs that include water development, primary healthcare services, pastoralist education, livestock health, rangeland management, income generation and asset diversification. As humanitarian intervention, PC focuses on supporting drought early warning and response and strengthening disaster prevention and preparedness initiatives. As a cross cutting issues, intervention in the areas of gender development, capacity building for line government offices and support on promotion of action-oriented researches.

### Intervention target of PC



## 1.2 Background of the Program

The project is entitled "Development of the production and productivity of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist women in Liben and Afdher areas of Somali region of Ethiopia and their socio-economic empowerment to fight hunger and create resilience of the most vulnerable people. It has a general objective with focus to promote rural development and fight against hunger by improving livelihoods and reducing the vulnerability of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist women. The project targeted about 24,300 vulnerable women that are living in 3 woredas that are situated in Liben and Afdher zones. The indirect population reaches about 152,000 people, most of whom are agro-pastoralist women living in 12 target kebeles. The target beneficiaries of the project are those women involved in traditional custom of agricultural production and livestock rearing with priority to vulnerable women to the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The project focused on implementing small-scale irrigation schemes to improve productivity of crops and establishing community silos (grain store) to promote commercialization through strengthening cooperatives and unions and supporting livestock production through improving access to water for livestock consumption. The project intended addressing problems related to gender and gender-based violence, harmful traditional practices through facilitating safe spaces for women in the cooperatives and other forms of institutions. The implementation modality focuses on participatory process that involves all local authorities and institutions as active actors and stakeholders in the project.

The implementation approach to women empowerment through capitalizing on approaches that would help to improve existing knowledge base and experience of the target women. Towards such end, the focus is on organizing and mobilizing women into groups in accordance with their preferences and prevailing alternatives. The project promotes the application of holistic approach that reinforces the implementation of interrelated and interdependent activities through engaging key stakeholders such as traditional leaders, influential persons and like minded people to strengthen pastoralist forum and advocacy initiatives.

The goal of the projects to contribute to the improvement of pastoralist women in Filtu, Charrati and El-karri woredas of Liben and Afdher zones of Somali Regional State while the specific objectives include:

- **Objective 1:** To support integrated community based social response to multiple social & gender ailments such as HTPs and FGM;
- **Objective 2:** Improve socio-economic situation of pastoralists and agro-pastoralist women;
- **Objective 3:** To improve the water, sanitation and hygiene condition of target kebeles; and
- **Objective 4:** Institutional capacity building for women affairs offices at woreda level.

### **1.3 Methodology of the Evaluation**

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the extent to which the expected results of the project have been achieved and the level of changes being observed on the life and livelihood of target beneficiaries while the specific objectives of the evaluation focused on assessing the extent in bringing the expected changes at individual household level and drawing useful lessons to be shared among key stakeholders and serve as part of recommendations for future projects.

The evaluation focused on assessing, verifying and analyzing issues and questions on the basis of the five evaluation criteria, such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Concerns for program integration and complementarities are also provided further attention. The evaluation team applied both quantitative and qualitative methodologies with participatory techniques through engaging key stakeholders to share their experiences and encouraging effective learning from the process of implementing the project.

The applied methodologies include review of literature and documents focusing on project proposal, field notes, periodic and thematic reports including financial utilization reports. Key Informant Interview with one to one discussion with partner organization staff and PC project staff and direct beneficiaries of the project were held throughly. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with target beneficiaries and other community members in the area of intervention was held appropriately.

In line with, the evaluation process followed consultative meetings and discussions to understand views and perspectives of key stakeholders through triangulating findings from multiple sources

such as document review, key informant interviews made with different stakeholders at target woreda and zonal levels including representative and experts from Women and Children Affairs Office, Education Office, Agricultural and Rural Development Office, Cooperatives Promotion Office, Health Office, Woreda Administration and religious leaders as well as focus group discussions made with target beneficiaries involved in different schemes and interventions like small scale irrigation development groups, women saving and credit cooperatives and anti-HTP/FGM promoters.

As part of the triangulating process, field level data collection was strengthened with physical observation and case studies on vibrant issues and concerns. The preliminary findings from the evaluation exercise was validated at stakeholder's lesson learnt & experience sharing workshop held at Jigjiga.

The quantitative data was collected from 101 respondents that are direct beneficiaries of the project from representative locations on the basis of purposive sampling approach. The identification of direct beneficiaries for quantitative interview was made in consultation with pertinent project staffs working for PC at project operation field level. The result of the quantitative result is analyzed in triangulation with findings from the qualitative process mentioned so far.

To serve the data collection process, relevant tools were developed and reviewed prior to application at field level through orienting data collectors hired from target woredas on the basis of clearly defined criteria. The tools include Tool 1: individual interview questionnaires, Tool 2: focus group discussion (semi-structured questionnaire) and Tool-3 key informant interview (semi-structured questionnaire) as well as observation checklists.

As representative target intervention area, the assessment was made through taking Filitu woreda from Liben zone and Cherati woreda from Afdher zone out of the three-target intervention woredas. Representative sample Kebeles were identified on the basis of its appropriateness to assess project activities from the proposed methodological perspective in addressing the criteria of evaluation.

## **2. Plan and Accomplishment**

### **2.1 Component 1: Supporting Integrated Community Based Social Response**

The project was initiated through launching familiarization workshop to discuss on the implementation process of the project. The launching workshop was held at zonal level through participating about 50 representatives of key stakeholders. The workshop enabled to create shared understanding among different actors and collaborators and this was further supported through organizing awareness creation workshops for key staff and experts from line government offices.

The training workshop involved 90 participants comprising of 30 persons from the three target woredas. The training focal points of the training revolves around discussing issues and concerns related to HTP in general and FGM, early and forced marriage practices in particular. FGM practitioners and women leaders were the core participants with the intention to transform traditional practitioners to sustainable income generating alternatives that would help to overlook engagements in FGM as source of income to support household expenses.

The training encouraged the participants to promote 'Woman to Woman' (W2W) and 'House to House' (H2H) discussions on HTP issues and practices. The trained women involved in monthly visits in sub-kebele cluster levels focusing on raising awareness on FGM and other forms of HTPs. The initiative enabled to cover about 10 clusters in the target kebeles through reaching 891 people (203 male & 688 female). To reinforce the W2W and H2H initiative, community-based conferences were undertaken with the focus on discussing problems related to FGM and dowries as factors in vitalizing mistreatment of girls and spouse among the target community.

As part of the transformation initiative of FGM practitioners to alternative income source, the project purchased and distributed donkey with carts for 30 former FGM practitioners (10 per target woreda). The asset building initiative is aimed to change means of income generating to socially and economically sound alternatives from considering practicing FGM as one of income source that might lead to overlooking tendencies of considering the negative impact of the practice on the wellbeing of girls and women.

The initiative also incorporates establishing anti-FGM working groups within the target communities to systematically addressing such public health challenging phenomena in sustainable procedure. The project supported the establishment of four working group per target woreda and totally, 12 working groups were formalized inside the three target woredas. To enhance understanding, the members of established working groups were participated on awareness creation training workshops that involved about 10 persons from each of the 12 working groups. As indicated in the project report, the trained committee members have made relevant effort in reaching more than five thousand community members through creating awareness on the effects of FGM and related HTPs throughout the project period.

The community based social response intervention also focused on sponsoring International Women's Day celebration on March 8 through distributing promotional T-shirts and caps. The celebration was used to facilitate bringing together influential people including political and

community leaders to discuss with women groups on the basis of 'think equal, build smart and innovate for change'.

## **2.2 Component 2: Improved socio-economic situation of pastoralists and agro-pastoralist women**

This component focused on establishing new credit and saving groups and providing seed money and coordinating efforts to formalize credit and saving cooperative (CSC). The intervention enabled to establish three CSCs that have about 100 women members in total through mobilizing, organizing and training in the three target sites, one from Filtu and the remaining two from Afdher zones. The training was focused on business skills, documentation, cooperative management and leadership. As part of capacity building, PC supported the construction and furnishing of offices for the three organized credit and saving cooperatives.

The establishment of the group was followed with grant support to encourage members engage in alternative IGAs either individually and/or in a group-based approach. Totally ETB 884,000 was injected into the three credit and savings cooperatives in the form of seed capital. This was 33\*6000 birr for Liban and 67\*5000 birr for Afdher targets.

To encourage the introduction of alternative women-based business intervention, the project supported the establishment of beauty salon in Filtu town through mobilizing, training and organizing ten interested women. PC supported the purchase of essential equipment that enabled to start the business as a pilot in the target town.

To enhance the engagement of target women in skill based IGA, 40 women (25 in Elkari and 15 in Filtu) were mobilized and organized as tailoring service providers cooperative. The project equipped the cooperatives with 40 tailor's machines through involving selected women members in training that focused on basic skills of tailoring and associated business. The supplied sewing machines are women friendly models that are easy to operate manually by women with minimal skills. The project provided the 2 groups (beauty and tailors) with about 350,000 ETB in the form of seed capital that is used to fulfill essential equipment and start the intended business on dependable base.

### **2.2.1 Improving Women Health Services and Basic Education**

To enhance the literacy and numeracy skills of target women, nine Integrated Functional Adult Literacy (IFAL) groups were reorganized through mobilizing members of the cooperatives in nine sites, six in Afdher and three in Liban. To facilitate smooth learning process, the project supported the construction of nine shades for literacy classes and training of nine adult education facilitators. The facilitators work through gain top up payment as mechanism of motivation. The rate of top up was arranged through discussing with pertinent woreda education offices. The literacy classes are facilitated for 2-3 hours per day on the basis of interest of participating women. The initiative enabled to involve in IFAL about 420 participants until the end of the project.

As part of the promotion of adult literacy, the project supported literacy learning centers with desks, chairs and blackboards as well as solar panels to each of the nine literacy centers with the aim to enable target women participate in evening classes after minimizing/completing their daily workload. Availability of solar energy sources in the remote villages is also serving as

creating access to mobile charging facilities that could be considered as markup benefit for the cooperatives.

To improve women health services and girls' educational participation, dignity kits were distributed to 1200 female students in the three target woredas (Filtu, Charrati and Elakare). The provision of dignity kits helped target girls to overcome hygiene related challenges that might lead to minimize attendance of classes during menstruation cycles.

## 2.2.2 Training of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA)

As part of the second component, the project promoted training of TBA throughout project intervention. Accordingly, 60 TBAs were selected from remote hinterland villages and provided with basic training on safe delivery and supported with basic delivery kits that encouraged them to provide active service in their neighborhood. The TBA usually use nearby health posts to attend delivery services while involving in awareness creation exercises in relation to safe pregnancy and delivery through appreciating the importance of attending regular visit to health facilities through overcoming challenges related to distance from health service or health posts.

As indicated in performance report, the trained TBAs have managed attending more than 85 deliveries and advising the transfer of 11 pregnant women with birth complication to nearby health centers while involved in creating awareness on the value of child spacing for more than 150 mothers. The trained TBAs also advised 12 baby mothers born with eye infection to visit health centers that have facilities and professionals to handle such type of disease. On the top of their main duty, the trained TBAs also involved in anti-FGM promotional initiative through mobilizing about 170 volunteer women in door to door services.

### Type of Women Business Group and Seed Money Supported through the Project

NO	Type of new business	No. of women involved			% from Total	Seed money supported in ETB
		Afdher	Liban	Total		
1	Meat business	13	7	20	9	107,000.00
2	Small petty trade (shop)	21	9	30	13	159,000.00
3	Restaurant	3	3	6	3	33,000.00
4	Animal fattening (general livestock)	11	5	16	7	85,000.00
5	Fodder production and marketing	30		30	13	150,000.00
6	Vegetable production and marketing	30		30	13	150,000.00
7	Vegetable retailing	10	5	15	7	80,000.00
8	Beauty salon	0	10	10	4	60,000.00
9	Tailoring	25	15	40	18	215000.00
10	Multiple mini-business	14	4	18	8	94,000.00
11	Gum and incense	10		10	4	50,000.00
12	<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,534,000.00</b>

### Cooperative general repayment on saving, service charge and loan statuses and progresses

No. of credit & saving cooperatives	Credit Performance in ETB										
	Credit disbursed	# of Installment in month	Repayment per month	Amount Repaid	Outstanding credit	% of Service charge	Amount of Service charge	Service charge collected	D/f b/n Service charge collected	Amount of saving collected	% of saving to credit
Tanad	330,000	12	27,500	330,000	-	2 %	6,600	6,336	264	79,200	24
Horseed	170,000	12	14,167	170,000	-	2 %	3,400	3,264	136	40,800	24
Towfiq (Filtu)	384,000	12	33,000	384,000	-	2 %	7,920	6,336	960	118,400	20

Total	884,000		74,667	884,000	-		17,920	15,936	1,360	238,400	26.2
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### Individual repayment on saving, service charge and loan progress

Name of credit and saving cooperative	Individual Members Credit Performance in ETB								
	Amount of credit disbursed per person	# of installment in month	Repayment per installment	Amount repaid	Outstanding Balance	% of service charge	Service charge paid	saving planned	Saving collected
Tanad	5,000	12	417	5,000	5,000	2	1,152	1,800	1000
Horseed	5,000	12	417	5,000	5,000	2	1,152	1,800	1200
Towfiq	6,000	12	500	6,000	6,000	2	1,152	1,800	1200

### 2.2.3 Supporting Involvement of Women in Irrigation based IGAs

To enhance the opportunity of women to generate income through involving in irrigation-based farming practices, two cooperatives are organized to engage in fodder and vegetable production and marketing in Qordir Kebele, Charati woreda. The cooperatives were organized through mobilizing 60 women members. To enhance their skills in irrigation-based production and marketing, the members involved in training related to cultivation, harvesting and storage system of various fodder and vegetable products. The training incorporated both practical and theory-based orientation through engaging line government office experts from pertinent woreda level offices.

The organized cooperatives were supported with fodder seeds (Sudanese grass) and vegetable seeds (onions, peppers, tomatoes, watermelon, hot pepper). In addition, the irrigation cooperatives were supplied with agricultural hand tools mainly: shovels, pickaxes, hoes, wheel barrows and spraying containers as well as fuel in the initial startup period. To support the initiative of capital formation, the cooperatives were supported with seed money amounting ETB 300,000 and this fund was used to finance operational costs including land preparation and purchase of pesticides.

PC facilitated the purchase of handover of four irrigation pumps with accessories to the established cooperatives. In addition, the cooperatives were supported with essential hand tools and fuel for the pumps in the initial startup period. The cooperatives own 200 hectares of irrigable land along Web River and out of this the project supported the cultivation of vegetables and fodders on 45 hectares of land in 2020. The success of initial harvest of vegetables and fodders encouraged the two cooperatives to plan on expansion of irrigation plots to about 100 hectares of land in subsequent seasons and this will enhance their income from the irrigation scheme, as the distributed irrigation pumps will enable two to trice cultivation per annum through irrigation.

### 2.3 Component 3: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement

To improve access to water during dry seasons, the project supported the construction of rain water harvesting structures, 2 Birkas each with capacity to hold about 400m<sup>3</sup> water. The construction was associated with establishing and training women water management

committee (WASHco) for the purpose of ensuring economic water utilization and effective management of water scheme. The member of WASHco constitutes 9 and 7 members in Filtu and Charati schemes respectively.

The project also supported the distribution of hygiene materials for 175 established committees and role model families from the community. The materials include 150 Jerry can of 20-liter volume, 150 bucket, 150 hand washing cane, 750 bars of soap, and 1,500 sachets of water treatment chemical.

#### **2.4 Component 4: Institutional Capacity Building for Women affairs office**

To improve documentation process in line partner office, 3 computers and 3 printers were purchased and handled over to women affairs offices, 1 unit from each for the target three woredas. The capacity support also includes supply of mini-media equipment such as microphones and loud speakers to women affairs office to enhance their capacity in carrying out awareness creation on FGM. The office also obtained different types of furniture to facilitate active engagement in women empowerment initiative.

### **3. Key Findings of the Evaluation**

#### **3.1 Relevance of the Project**

In terms of relevance, the project is consistent with policy framework of the government and development approach of the implementing agency, which is PC strategic plan and pastoralist focused development strategies of regional government. The project objectives are consistent with the needs and priorities of target beneficiaries on the one hand and its design has operational coherence with ongoing development initiative.

The project is designed in view of addressing strategic objectives and priorities in relation to food security, promotion of health and education focused priorities with particular emphasis on meeting the social, economic and health needs of women. The project targets pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities living with the challenge of climate change and sociopolitical conflict situation. Thus, the intervention is in line with key priorities of the government and dare needs of target beneficiaries.

As indicated in the objective part, the focal area of intervention includes supporting integrated community based social response to multiple social & gender ailments and improving socioeconomic situation of pastoralists and agro-pastoralist women. It also focuses on improving water, sanitation and hygiene condition of target households and as institutional capacity building for line government offices with the intention to enhance post project sustainable continuity of the project.

The main components of the project include supporting integrated community based social response under the first component and improving socio-economic situation of pastoralists and agro-pastoralist women under the second component while the third and fourth components focus on improving WASH and institutional capacity of women affairs office respectively. The implementation approach revitalize the application of innovative approaches with needs responsive tendency to local socio-cultural system.

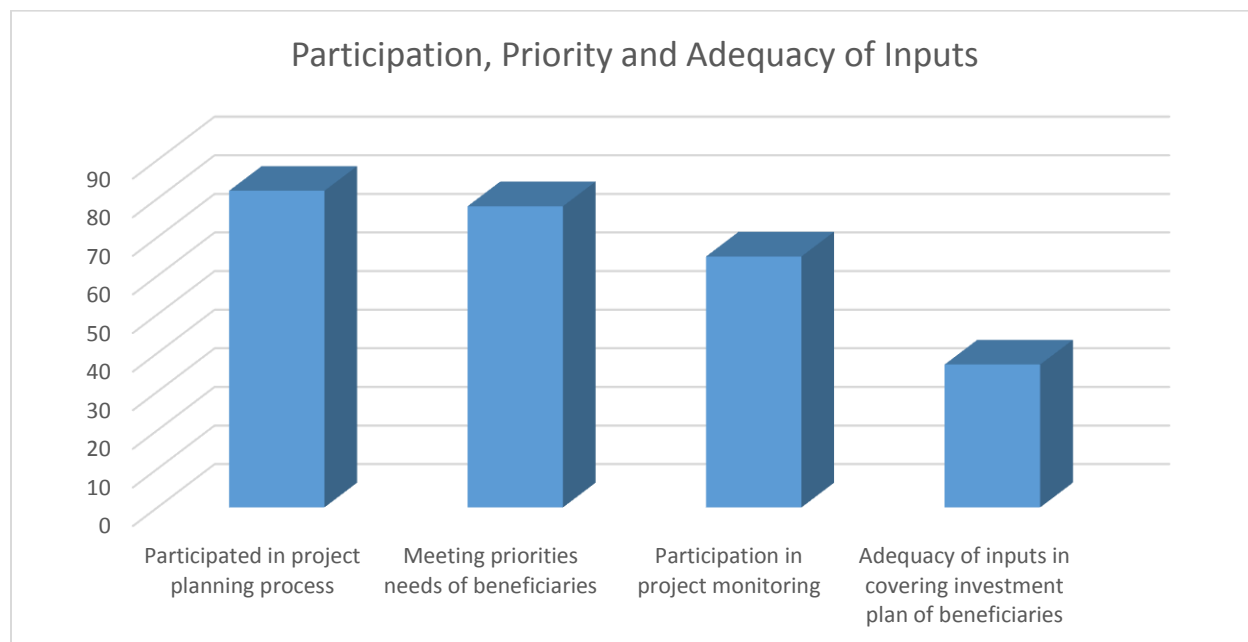
In the initial design process, adequate effort was made in undertaking problem analysis through applying appropriate project intervention logics objectively verifiable indicators. The



intervention modalities is coherent to the initial intention of the project that targeted on enhancing production and productivity of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist women in Filtu, Charati and El-karri woredas of Liban and Afdher zones of Somali Regional State and their socio-economic empowerment towards enabling fighting hunger and create resilience of the most vulnerable people. The period of intervention was designed for two years from January 2018 to December 2019 and this seemed appropriate to initiate innovative ideas that will be linked with existing functional system of key stakeholders. This is made possible through the implementation modality that involved all local authorities and institutions as active actors and responsible stakeholders in the implementation process of the project.

In terms of meeting priority needs of target community, the project focused on enhancing opportunities to access financial resource, prevent GBV & involve in adult literacy initiatives. Thus, the project addresses national and regional development strategies while meeting priority needs of the target community. In this regard, out of the total 101 respondents participated in the quantitative assessment, 77.2% of them assured the inputs that are supported through project intervention as meeting priority needs of target households.

The planning and implementation process of the project followed participatory process through involving beneficiaries and representative of line government offices in design and joint monitoring process as well. In this regard, the quantitative result indicates the involvement of more than 80% respondents in the project planning and designing process.



As revealed through the quantitative survey result, more than half of target beneficiaries have reservation on the adequacy of inputs/services received through project, in particular the amount of credit fund in covering the initial capital of expected business to be run at individual level. The participants of qualitative assessment witnessed the prevalence incorporating prevailing market values during the determination of grant fund for groups organized in the form of credit saving cooperative. The degree of flexibility and adaptability to changes in circumstances related to environment and social conflict was well incorporated in the design process in consideration of the practical situation of the environment related to drought and

conflict prone sensitivity of the target localities. The effort of initiating the project through involving key stakeholders in the launching workshop had facilitated creation shared understanding on the implementation process and active engagement in the implementation and monitoring process.

### ***Case Study 1: Role of Religious Leaders is really Relevant in anti-FGM initiative***

*Sheikh Yonus Ma'alin Hussien is a 65 old religious leader with the role to serve in the Sharia court, which involves in adjudicating personal and family cases on the basis of Islamic law. Sheikh Yonus is the member of Filtu woreda level anti GBV forum and actively involved in the promotion of the initiative.*

*He is a dedicated religious leader that has been actively engaged in propagating the true picture of Islam in maintaining women rights related to marriage and property ownership. The support of the project, as mentioned by Sheikh Yonus has enabled to reduce the practice of FGM and gender based violence in urban and suburb areas while addressing the entire community still deserves significant emphasis from all duty bearers.*

*Sheikh Yonus involved in the promotion exercise through mentioning the experience of his own daughters as learning point. He mentioned the difference he realized between infibulation and mild form of circumcision undergone on two of his daughters. The first with the server form of FGM delivered through operation and exposed to fistula cause while the second with mild form of circumcision had normal delivery in two consecutive pregnancies. The mild form of circumcision is known by the name of Sunna type of FGM and the community wants to stick to such practice through avoiding the sever stage of FGM which is known as the pharaoh type of FGM.*

*On the top of fighting the practice of FGM, Sheikh Yonus has active contribution in the provision of awareness on issues related to inheritance, forced marriage arrangements, divorce and rights to property sharing. As mentioned by Sheikh Yonus, teaching people on the proper application of the Sharia that recognizes the application of equity justice system in dispute settlement among spouses and other family members. However, the application of such principle is still under challenging situation in most parts of the rural setting, as prejudice govern instead of principles.*



*Pic 1: Sheikh Yonus discussing with the evaluation team*

### 3.2 Effectiveness

The effectiveness criterion concern shows far the project's results are attained, and the project's specific objective(s) achieved, or are expected to be achieved. The analysis of effectiveness is therefore focused on assessing the extent to which the project achieved results in terms of defined project objectives. In receiving the planned benefits, the project adequately delivered what are intended to address in general and target beneficiaries, the women and house vulnerable to FGM and other forms of HTP in particular.

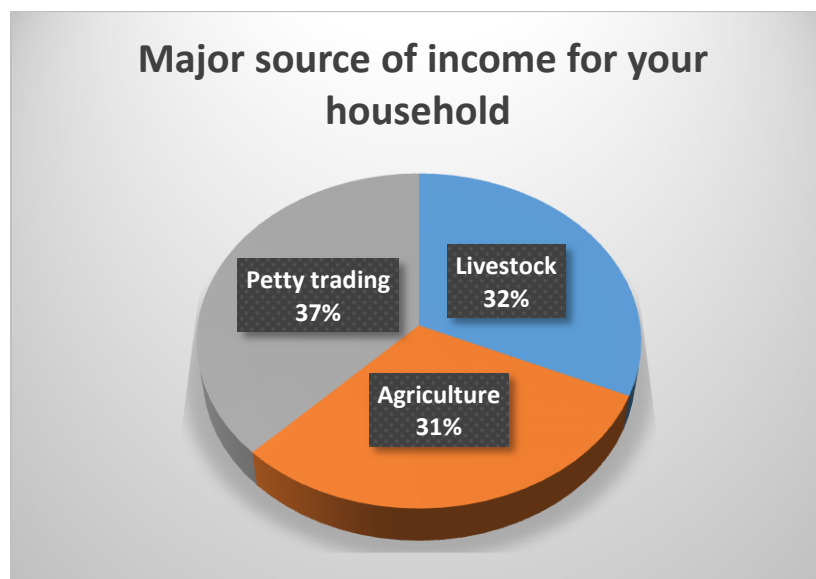
As indicated in the aforementioned activities achievements part, it is evidenced as the project organized 225 women and supported in engaging in different business activities through gaining access to working capital in the form of revolving fund. The seed money enabled each member to have access to ETB from 5000 to 6000 and this in accordance of most of respondents is not quite enough to cover the investment cost being demanded to be competitive in the escalating trend of price rise. As revealed through the quantitative result, out of credit and saving group members, almost fifty percent of them believe the limitation of loan they received in satisfying the working capital being demanded to run profitable business on individual approach. To overcome such limitation of fund, the members prefer working in group. However, mobilizing group-based engagement in petty trades like goat trading still faces with coordination related challenges, as revealed through the qualitative findings.

Adequacy of loan and Rationale of service charge		
Proportion of member paid back the loan	57	64.8%
Adequacy of loan size to run feasible business to the expected level	47	53.4%
Application of acceptable (reasonable) service charge as markup	66	75%

As one of its objectives, the project intended to increase pastoralist and agro pastoralist women's access and control over economic resources and social basic services in the target area. As identified through the assessment process, out of the total respondents, more than two third witnessed as the project helped has been improving the level of decision making power related to whether to borrow money from the cooperatives (64.4% of the total), deciding on how to use the income (66.3% of the total) and deciding on the type of business to involve in (75.2% of the total). The findings of the qualitative survey in this regard further revealed the trend of improvement in family level consultation and appreciation of women led decision making process. It also indicates the level women empowerment as most husbands started accepting the contribution of women in the overall livelihood development process.

Trend of Improvement in decision making capacity of target women	Freq	%
Women decided to borrow money from SCC	65	64.4
Women makes decision on the utilization plan of income generated from the new business in consultation with their spouse	67	66.3
Women make decisions on the business type to involve in consultation with their spouse	76	75.2

The project been helping towards increased access of pastoralist and agro pastoralist women in developing capability to control over economic resources, social basic services and their own lives in target areas. There is trend of diversifying household income sources from mono livestock rearing to two and more alternatives. The result of the quantitative assessment indicates the trend of increase in income source and type, as indicated in the graph below, the proportion of engagement in livestock rearing, agriculture and petty trade is almost evenhanded, which reflects the trend of improvement in diversifying the source of income from dependency on mono activity to at least three integrated engagements that reinforce each other. The participants of qualitative assessment indicates the benefit of the project even in utilizing idle time and economical allocation of yearly calendar for multiple tasks.



More than 75% of respondents believe as involving in profitable venture, except the loan size (44.4%) that hinders the application of maximum potential. The participants of qualitative assessment noticed the prevailing challenge in competing with private business owners that operate through allocating huge capital and expanded network. The individual capital is considered as minimal to invest in two to three markets and gain profit through covering marketing costs, in particular the ever-increasing rate of transportation fare. The promising point is that about fifty percent of cooperative members have been investing the gain they made from

involving in new business scheme to expand business and this will help them to increase their working capital in gradual scale.

Is your business profitable?			What are the major problems of your business		
Profitability of business	Freq	%	Problems of the business	Freq	%
Is your business profitable? Yes it is	66	75	Marketing	26	48.1
Do you invest the gain to expand business? Yes, I do	48	47.5	loan size, repayment time	24	44.4
				4	7.4

Generally, there is increasing trend of income being observed at group and individual member level that is leading towards continuous improvement of livelihoods of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist women in the target project area. This is ascertained from direct beneficiaries involved in key informant interviewee and focus group discussions indicating the prevalence more opportunities for beneficiaries to engage in alternative income generating activities through assessing existing potential source. The result of the evaluation indicates about 80% of target beneficiaries stated taking credit as a result of the project intervention in promoting credit and scheme that is more friendly to the pastoral and agro-pastoral women. In pre-project period, most of them were afraid of paying back the money, as the system was not encouraging and local situation sensitive.

As identified through various discussions and document review, involvement in SCC has been assisting target beneficiaries towards improving household food security. This is indicated in the quantitative result, as the allocation of profit from the business is almost proportional divided between covering household expenses and investment for business expansion (see the graph below).



In terms of the intervention focusing on improving literacy and numeracy skills of target women, 9 Integrated Functional Adult Literacy (IFAL) groups were organized involving the member of

SCC in functional literacy learning process. The effectiveness of the initiative is measured from the level of active participation in the literacy class and in this regard, out of the total respondents, 87% indicated as participating in the literacy class. In terms of reviewing quality of the teaching-learning process, out of those involving in the program, 84% indicated the prevalence of quality training materials that meets the expectation of target learners while in view of class room, still 84% indicates as the project built quality class rooms and availed relevant seats (see the table below).

<b>Participated in Adult Literacy (AL)</b>		
Participated in Adult Literacy /AL/ (out of total respondents)	88	87%
Quality of Training materials is good and above (out of those participated in AL)	74	84%
Quality of Class room is good and above (out of those participated in AL)	86	87%
Quality of chairs and tables is good and excellent (out of those participated in AL)	74	84%
Developed competency of basic reading and writing skills, as a result of participating in AL (out of those participated in AL)	72	82%
Observable changes in attitude and skills as a result of participating in AL (out of those participated in AL)	55	63%

However, as learned during the field level data collection and observation made to some of the literacy circles, the construction of adult learning classes from corrugated iron sheet and utilization of desks designed for children coupled with children focused sitting arrangement are observed as practical limitation hindering active teaching-learning process as far as recommended adult literacy classes is concerned. The competency of adult literacy facilitators in having relevant skills that are essential to facilitate adult classes is also noticed as one of the limitations deserving practical attention.

As far as the trend of development in competency related to basic reading and writing skills, as a result of participating in adult literacy classes, the respondents indicated as having learnt basic literacy and numeracy skills, as witnessed by about 82% of target respondents out of those participating in adult learning classes. However, as evidenced through observational checking during the field level assessment process, the skills being stated is far below the standard skills of literacy and numeracy recommended in official documents. The training provided for facilitators has limitation in covering all essential components and thus the application of participatory adult teaching-learning process and the standard competency testing measures faces certain limitation. Thus, what the participants of the class tried to indicate is still deserve further attention to be enriched and make participants attained the level recommended as literate citizen.

In terms of observable changes in attitude and living skills as a result of participating in adult literacy, more than 60% out of those participated in adult classes witnessed as developed relevant life skills that had not been thought of before. This is observed during the field assessment as most of the participating women became vibrant in expressing their views, expressing the level of marginalization and women's right dimension in fighting prevailing

discrimination and abuse of power to mention. At household level, the tendency to provide special support for girls' educational participation is observable changing trends being noticed among the participants of adult literacy classes.

TBA training		
Received TBA training	15	
Received standard save delivery kits (SDK)	10	
Received other training like FGM/HTP	14	

As part project intervention, the provision of TBA training was undertaken focusing on safe delivery kit (SDK). Out of the respondents, about 15 indicated as participated in basic training and started involving in supporting safe delivery. As the training incorporated FGM/HTP prevention and control initiatives, the participants indicated their active engagement in creating awareness regarding prevention of girls from undergoing FGM procedure.

One of the TBA as key informant interview indicated the courage and commitment trained TBAs have towards supporting pregnant mothers, irrespective of prevailing WASH related limitation at community level health posts. She also mentioned the limited coverage of the project in addressing target kebele alone while the neighboring communities have limited awareness and pushing the continuity of FGM procedure. The religious leader who is the woreda level task force against FGM initiative also mentioned the prevalence of conflict of interest among project coverage kebeles and non-target communities in addressing anti-FGM initiative throughout the woreda, even though there has been positive trend of change in perception and practice related to GBV/HTP among the community and households within the sphere of project coverage.

In addition to reduction trend of various types of GB, majority of respondents have the view as the situation is improving, for instance, about 88% of respondents believe that incidences beating wife is in a trend of decreasing in the target kebeles. They also believe the trend of decreasing in home-based violence, as more than fifty percent indicated the prevalence of decreasing order, with exception in the practice of FGM, as about 53% still believe the application of the practice, irrespective of various initiatives and multi-stakeholders' engagement against the procedure (see the next table).

<b>GBV Situation</b>				
	<b>Type of GBV</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Incidences of a wife being beaten by her husband	decreasing	89	88
2	Incidences of a women being beaten by someone other than her husband	decreasing	85	84
3	Incidences of rape	decreasing	89	88
4	Cases of abducted	decreasing	86	85
5	Cases of a woman being verbally abused by someone in her family	decreasing	82	81
6	Cases of a woman being verbally abused by someone outside her family	decreasing	85	84
7	Cases of a girl being forced to undergo genital mutilation	decreasing	85	84
8	Acceptability of a husband beating wife, in case she fails to complete his choices	decreasing	74	73
9	A husband beats wife, if she does not pay respect for his family members	decreasing	57	56
10	Acceptability of a husband beating wife, if she fails to grant sexual access	decreasing	57	56
11	Acceptability of a husband beating wife, if she ignores his approval	decreasing	67	66
12	Acceptability of a husband beating wife, if she questions on money he spent	decreasing	80	79
13	Parent enforcing a daughter, 18 & above to marry someone without her consensus	decreasing	76	75
14	Possibility of a girl to undergo FGM	decreasing	47	47

Even though the result of the quantitative survey, as summarized in the above table indicates the trend of promising situation, the participants of qualitative assessment including line government office representative have mentioned the prevalence of gradual improvement in GBV situation, as bringing remarkable change on customary norms and values seemed challenging than expected from the outset.



## **Case Study 2: Developing Confidence of Women**

*Harsad Saving and Credit Cooperative is one of the entities supported through project intervention in Gerar kebele, Charati woreda. In the initial instance, the women self-help group was organized under the initiative of Charati cooperative office with the capital mobilized from 34 dedicated members. The starting capital was ETB 10,200 (ETB 300 per 34 members). The project provided ETB 170,000 in the form of seed capital. This enabled the group members to utilize the capital in the form of revolving fund. The fund encouraged the members to engage in goat rearing, cattle fattening, and petty trade such as mini-shops, buying and selling of consumer goods. The group members use the fund on individual and/or mini-group base in engaging in goat trading and other feasible business activities. The revolving fund stay for 12 months and in the initial year, the loan amount was limited to be ETB 5,000 per member.*

*As expressed by one of the beneficiaries, such as Abshiro Baaf-the charlady of the group, the credit fund encouraged most members to work hard and raise individual capital in double rate up to the end of the year; for instance, Abshiro managed to increase her working capital up to ETB 10,000 at the end of the project after repaying the initial principal. This enhances the chance to take additional loan that will enable to engage in more promising business that would help to raise her capital in triple figure. On the top of this, there has been remarkable gain in business skills and exposure to multiple market interaction that is considered as added value.*

*The value of engaging in the group and individual based marketing enabled the group members to develop culture of saving in the form of individual and group-based saving. This tends to increase group capital at the cooperative level while boosting individual effort and confidence to gain more not only in terms of financial gain but also entrepreneurship skills as well.*

*As the initial loan had been returned successfully, the second installment is increased to ETB 6000 per member. The increase in weekly income and enhancing trend of confidence of women in the involvement of business has been supporting the trend of change in spouse attitude towards women's potential to manage working capital and becoming major contributor in improving household livelihood base.*

*The saving and credit group members encouraged each other to involve in adult literacy learning process. The group cohesion led to shared decision-making process on the one hand while realizing the value of literacy skills in leading business, in particular competency in taking simple financial records. As one of the participants in adult literacy indicated' in her words "it was almost five years ago in one busy market day, I approached my neighboring shop keeper to record the amount of loan my customer took in terms of goods and merchandise. But he refused pretending as dealing with his own busy customers. I was angry at the person, but there was no solution other than approaching the same person on another market days.*

*As the project introduced adult literacy learning, I stood on the front line with the vision to overcome the difficulties I had been living with. The process of learning enabled me to keep my own financial record and even assisting some of women living with similar situation. Ra'o Ma'ilin was the victim of non-literacy life skills. She managed to learn how to read and keep financial records. Thus, Ra'o appreciated the importance of participating in adult learning as it has inbuilt value to develop confidence and competency in market interaction. This is expressed in competency to use cell phones efficiently in dealing with multiple customers in the value chain.*

### 3.3 Efficiency

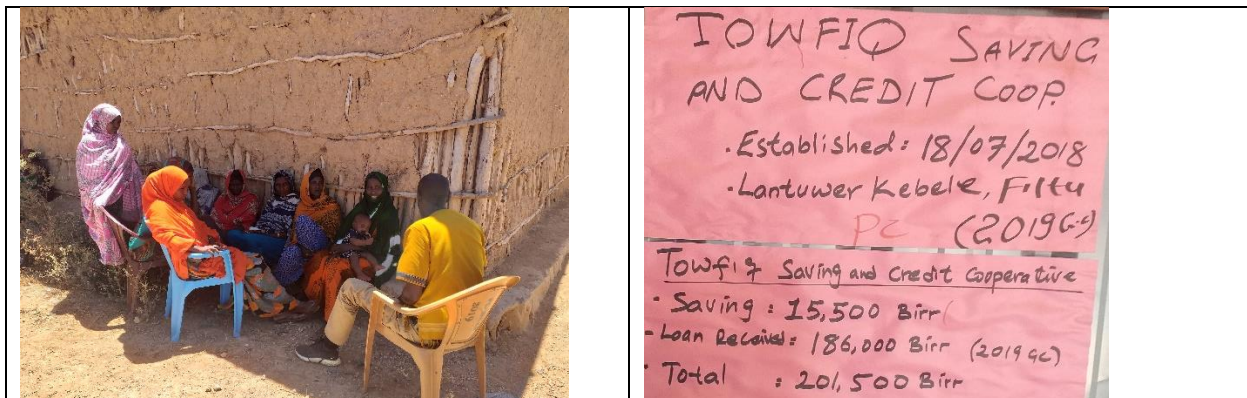
To coordinate the project in organized approach, PC assigned qualified and committed staffs at program coordination levels. The coordination process was reinforced with regular communication, review meetings and joint monitoring exercises. There has been operational linkage with line woreda and zonal government agencies and community based formal and customary structures. PC uses regular reporting procedure even if there is limitation in taking consistent records that would serve to organize in the form documentation to be shared among key stakeholders. Regular checking is not accustomed to enable adjusting activity progress with initial plan and project implementation progress report.

The implementation process had been completed in partnership with pertinent line offices and strong sense of collaboration through reinforcing joint planning and monitoring exercises. There has been mutual agreement that helped to strengthen trust-based relationships among involving parties contributing their share with sense of responsibility. Relevant staffs and subject matter experts from line government offices have contributed a great share in the implementation process towards attaining successful result through providing orientation and training for target beneficiaries and reviewing progress reports as well.

The total budget of the project was 459,189.74 Euro or around ETB 15,247,854.54 and out of which the utilization has been just over 100% in accordance with the plan. The allocation of more fund for revolving purpose has the potential to build local capital through supporting the creation of individual working capital and facilitating alternative investment in accordance with individual skill and experience.

In terms of project actual expenditure, the financial transaction was made in accordance with the plan though utilizing the total allocated fund economically and efficiently.

The analysis of project expenditure against attained result indicates the existence of economic utilization of scare resources, finance. The allocation of more fund for revolving fund is considered as one of the economic allocations of project resource towards bringing change in sustainable approach, as the fund contributes towards building local level capital formation initiative through significantly supporting enhancement of individual working capital at individual beneficiary level and enabling targeted end users to have alternative investment in accordance with individual skill and experience.



### **3.4 Impacts of the Project**

As observable impact of the project, there has been trend of recognizing women as essential group within the society that deserves dignity and respect as core contributor in community transformation. The project is leading to reduce negative perception of men on women in general and that of female headed households in particular. This is gaining further momentum, as target women vitalizing active engagement in economically beneficial activities that even enabling to cover household income with minimum assistance from male counterparts. This is contributing to the reduction of cultural stereotype that tends to associate women as dependent member in the target community in general and a given specific household in particular.

The project encouraged women to have access and control over economic assets through involving in IGAs in the form of small women-led businesses. As indicated through rapid assessment, around 70% of successful women involving in petty trades in the target project area. This started enhancing the acceptance of women in household decision making process in line with their economic contribution. The trend is playing a positive role in influencing follow men to appreciate the contribution of women in the process of asset building in a given household. The situation is contributing to the effort of changing the lifelong cultural attitude that overlooks the economic contribution of women.

The changing trend could be witnessed as most participating spouse started practicing consultation in issues related to family affairs including household budgeting that incorporates defining income and determining level of expenditures on the basis consensus building. At individual level, women are gaining business skills and confidence to negotiate with business owners through utilizing their experience of discussion in adult literacy classes and consultation process being practiced with their spouse and other family members at household level. The situation is serving as a stepping stone towards encouraging women to develop confidence on personal skills and capabilities.

As identified through the evaluation process, out of the 200 target women, 60 beneficiaries were housewives totally dependent on their spouse income without involving in any income generating activities. Their recent engagement in various business including vegetable and fodder production, petty trading, animal fattening, meat marketing and tea selling have facilitated the process of trust building. This is evidenced as target women have been gaining trust from the big business owners in taking goods through credit, which had been unthinkable in pre-project period. In this case, the project facilitated linkage creation between target beneficiaries and owners of big business in the woreda capital.

The project introduced new business schemes, such as beauty salon as alternative business to engage women with the aim to learn new skills and involve in similar business as income generating activity in particular around the urban centers, like Filtu town. The involvement of women in irrigation-based farming is also creating additional jobs for non-member women, as noticed through the involvement of about 30 women in vegetables retailing business through taking products from vegetable cooperative groups.

The target women have gained access to improved skills on irrigation management and high value vegetables production techniques. This is considered as encouraging initiative in facilitating women empowerment process. The provision of seed money to cooperative to be

disbursed to individual members is serving as stepping stone to reinforce the culture of saving individually and in a group base. The trend will enhance group and individual members potential to develop own financial capacity towards maintaining sustaining source of fund to scale up business in the future.

The project supported the creation of alternative income sources for FGM practitioners through providing donkey carts for 30 former practitioners. As immediate result, more than 15 women seeking their daughter to pass through FGM procedure were refused by the transformed former practitioners after gaining access to alternative IGAs. The confidence of women in presenting GVB cases to justice office has been in the trend of improvement, as many women are not feeling ashamed to bring ill-treatments to women affairs office with the intention to seek justice from pertinent departments.

### *Case Study 3: Reinforcing Dependency on Agro-Pastoralism*

*Awareness created on FGM/HTP among the target communities, in particular women and girls. Training was provided to community based traditional birth attendants. On the top training, seed money was provided for x-practitioners of FGM with the aim to transfer their life into sustainable income generation scheme.*

*The involvement of women in irrigation based agricultural production has been improving the attitude of male spouse to appreciate the competence of women in organizing themselves and leading group based active engagement. The males supported their spouse in farming the plots and provided guarding services during the plantation period. They encouraged their female partners to engage in irrigation-based farming practice and marketing vegetables to the nearby Charati town. The engagement increased the skills and competence of women in involving in business other than the customary gender-based roles and responsibilities. The irrigation-based engagement helped the women to increase their income.*

*The group members indicated the promising trend in generating income from vegetables production and marketing. However, they deserve intensive training on irrigation based agronomic practices that would help to enhance their group skills related to managing irrigation-based farming. The present level of skills is more of traditional in managing water, land preparation and farm planning. As the provision of technical support from relevant government offices is minimal, the group members have challenges related to underutilization of prevailing potential. This may push the women groups to operate under the influence male partners that might lead male dominance investment in ultimate trend.*

*As one of the members of the irrigation women group reflected 'irrigation-based farming and marketing practice deserves hands on job training and technical mentoring services in frequent trend. This is an introduction of a new technology like the water pump, irrigation water management and utilization of improved agricultural inputs. As most of the group members had been living in pastoral mode of life, transforming into modern irrigation-based vegetable production demands further technical support from pertinent government offices.*

*The promising opportunity is the involvement of women group members in adult literacy learning process. As the FGD participant at the irrigation site indicated, such involvement in learning process will help the group members to develop the attitude of self-confidence to learn new skills that would improve their potential towards managing the irrigation scheme. As the women come together on daily base for the purpose of learning literacy, there is an opportunity to incorporate skills-based training and sharing of experience on irrigation techniques and how to exploit potential value chains in the area of vegetables and fruits marketing.*

*The group members appreciate their involvement in irrigation-based farming practice in integration with engagement in adult literacy learning process. They have a positive attitude and prospect a bright future, as the integration of literacy with skills training opportunities will make them capable of handling the income generating scheme that is introduced through the project. The group members have involved in awareness raising related to FGM/HTP issues as well. This appreciated by the group members as having remarkable value in relieving the burden of multiple mothers and girls that have been facing gender-based violence throughout their life. The relief of such burden and other related GVBs will encourage*

*women to involve in productive engagements, and thus the future is promising, as the group members believe.*

### **3.5 Sustainability and Scalability**

The cooperatives are organized in view of working principles and guiding procedure through satisfying administrative and legal requirements. They have leadership team composed of chairperson, deputy chairs, cashier, accountant and secretary. They have defined loan and repayment procedure, conflict resolution mechanism, financial control approach and administrative protocol in line with meeting basic requirements defined in the cooperative formation guideline.

As an organized credit and saving cooperatives have been collecting individual saving and service charge on loan, the trend of ensuring sustainable operation is being facilitated start from the beginning. As practical exercise, fodder and vegetable cooperatives started saving on harvest base approach in order to put aside money that might be required for the purpose of repair and maintaining irrigation pumps, invest in purchase of seeds and afford running costs such as fuel without interruption, as well as ensure smooth operation in post phases out period. The provision of mini-media equipment for women affairs offices enhanced capacity of the offices to continue anti-FGM awareness creation initiative in post phase-out period as well.

The readiness and commitment of the local line departments have facilitated smooth implementation, as all relevant government stakeholders have involved starting from target identification, beneficiary selection, farm site demarcation, cooperative formation, beneficiaries training, constructor selection and establishment of water committees. The involvement of local women groups, elders, religious leaders have enhanced active promotion of initiatives against FGM practicing. The involvement of law enforcement organs (courts, justice office and policy department) as well as health offices in community-based awareness creation on FGM and other forms of GBV helped to enhance acceptance and ownership at community levels.

In view of policy level support, the project has a high level of likelihood to continue beyond the lifespan of the project, as the project has functional integration with cooperative promotion strategies of regional government and national framework as well. However, limitation in institutional capacity at local level may challenge operational linkage creation with cooperative promotion office and this might weaken smooth operation of the established coops in continuous trend.

The adult education curriculum will the potential to be shared among key stakeholders to scale up the initiative in various settings through overcoming challenges related to incentive payment for facilitators and overhead running costs. In terms of socio-cultural factors, project interventions are in line with acceptable local cultural norms and values, such as the arrangement of interest as service charge would help to ensure sustainable operation of SCC within the local cultural context.

The probability of functionality of TBAs to continue is being assured as there is operational linkage established with local level health posts. However, challenges related to having access to running out SDK kits and sanitation materials including scarcity of water could be feasible limitation that might hinder successful contribution.

Financial sustainability from SCC groups view point seemed strong, as the cooperatives are established through fulfilling administrative and regulatory formalities to operate as legal entity. This provides confidence to continue being competitive and self-sustaining through increasing loan size, application of alternative investment and repayment system that could enable members to engage in more profitable business scheme depending on individual capacity and business plan. This would help to enhance sense of ownership at individual group members' level and develop responsible leadership team at group level.

#### **Case study 4: - Building Blocks of Sustainability**

*The project started with inbuilt phase-out strategy early from the initial launching period. The view of Charati woreda cooperative office expert, Hasen Ali Sulub, reveals this fact. He indicates the existence of partnership-based engagement in planning and joint monitoring. Such process facilitated the process of undertaking the activities through creating active linkage with the operation of each pertinent office; for instance, in relation to organizing cooperatives the project smoothly followed rules and procedures of cooperative office. This facilitated the process of phasing out without demanding further procedure during the completion of the project. As relevant linkage has been created start from the beginning with line government office, issues of sustainability might not be a problem and concern. What is required from the line office is to build on the accumulated experience and expand the project coverage through soliciting additional fund from government and non-state actors.*

*As the intervention has enabled enhancing the level of attitude of target end users, the trend of sustainability has a strong chance of success. As the expert from the education office, Abdurahim Abdullahi expressed, there were closer attachment with the project office during the selection of target participants of adult literacy learning process. The training was provided through mobilizing pertinent experts from education office. There has been strong engagement in joint monitoring process through assigning cluster-based school supervision initiative whereby the principals involve in provision of relevant support to adult literacy facilitators.*

*The adult literacy initiative was linked with girls' tutorial class and dignity kits provision. This in particular served as a motivational element in encouraging many mothers to involve in adult literacy learning process through observing the benefits being generated from the overall intervention of the project. Thus, the interventions of project are considered by the education office as stepping stone to build up on through learning from the introduced approaches and gained experience. Abdurahim appreciated the initiative of PC as starting point to revitalize the contribution of all stakeholders, the government and non-state actors as well.*

*The introduction of adult literacy learning initiative is more contributing towards encouraging the school community to pay attention on active participation of children in formal education process while motivating parents to pay attention on educational improvement interventions, including influencing the education office to be more responsive to community level needs and concerns. On the top of this, the promotion of anti-FGM/HTP initiative through linking with school girls and provision of award for x-practitioners has been helping to propagate the message among school communities even beyond the initial coverage of the project. Thus, what the expert recommends is the importance of integrating project interventions to notice rapid trend of improvement in the life and attitude of the target community beyond the direct beneficiaries. This is considered from the partners' side as building blocks of sustainability.*

## 4. Challenges and Lesson Learned

### 4.1 Challenges

- Due to failure of rain, the population in three sites of the project intervention areas were displaced, this had affected literacy classes, Birka construction dalliance and in credit and saving groups, priority to emergency response affected timely saving repayment of loan.
- Illiteracy rate among project beneficiaries is very high, influencing the provision of training cooperative members on leadership and business skills, as the training process demand practical exercise on financial management and business plan development process that rather deserves basic skills of reading and writing.
- The local stakeholders'; particularly relevant key counterparts department are under resourced and understaffed and this affects their active contribution and involvement in relevant process and procedure of project progress.
- Inflation in double figure has affected the accomplishment of some activities that were planned two years ago on the basis the then price situation.
- Devaluation of the Birr itself have had its tolls of challenges in the seed money and constructions works which created price hikes and increased costs.
- The project coverage is planned in wide and vast targets without taking into consideration the prevailing long distances between the target woredas depending on rough road condition. This enforced the consummation of more budget for fuel and vehicle maintenance.
- The intervention area is vulnerable to droughts and other disasters and projects lacks crisis modifier or contingency plans to support unexpected challenging scenarios beyond the sphere of the initial budget. This leads to overlook responding to humanitarian crisis on the basis of critical demand from the community, which reduces courage of target community and key stakeholders to cooperate in fulfilling their roles towards proper accomplishment of the initial plan.

#### *Case Study 5: The Challenge of Trained TBAs in Providing Safe Delivery*

*Abdiye Mohammed Adan is a 47 years old traditional birth attendant. She has been serving her community as a TBA practitioner for more than ten years. During a decade long experience, she had assisted delivery process for about 100 mothers. The negative impact of FGM on pregnancy and leading to birth complication is well understood and when she notices complication, the TBA tried to inform pregnant women to visit nearby health service providing center. There they will gain access to professional advice prior to facing further complication.*

*As Abdiye mentioned, those women who passed through FGM procedure require stitching during the initial two to three deliveries. The stitching is done through the application of traditional methods prior to receiving the TBA training that was organized by PC. The training is useful in providing relevant protection and taking necessary precautions during attending birth. The trained TBAs received safe delivery kits and this facilitated the provision of service at door to door level as well as at nearby health posts.*



*Provision of service at nearby health posts, as she mentioned associated with challenging scenarios. Lack of water and sanitation materials are mentioned as the major problems that hinders the provision of safe and prompt service for pregnant mothers. In the arid and semi-arid pastoral environment, access to water is difficult and most health posts are constructed without consideration for water supply facilities. This usually found hindering maintaining hygienic delivery, particularly for those mothers coming from resource poor households with limited finance and/or relatives to support in availing the required water to keep hygiene during delivery procedure.*

*The problem of delivery bed, chairs and waiting rooms are the physical challenges on the top of water and sanitation facilities such as clean toilet, as mentioned by some of the FGD participants. The construction of health post, initially designed without including the provision of delivery services and hence lacks relevant facilities including basic hygiene and sanitation materials. As the responsibilities of maintaining hygienic delivery is mostly fallen on the shoulder of TBAs, attending delivery through maintaining the necessary hygienic procedure is mentioned as the practical challenges discouraging TBAs in most of the target kebeles.*

*As witnessed by the Filtu woreda health office, the trained TBAs are provided with safe delivery kits while the office is providing ongoing support through creating closer attachment with Health Extension Workers (HEW). Linking the operation of TBAs with nearby health centers is facilitating ongoing provision of professional advice for TBAs and HEWs while gaining access to basic materials support. The problem of toilets, water and sanitation materials is a living challenge even in the health centers as well.*

*To improve the situation, the health office is promoting team based engagement whereby health professionals involve in regular monitoring of TBAs and advising institutional based delivery while limiting the role of TBAs to awareness creation and provision follow up in pre-delivery stage. Capacity building of TBAs and HEWs is being sought by the woreda health office to enhance their involvement in referral system and application of the health extension packages that would help to minimize challenges related to hygiene and sanitation at*

*individual household levels.*



*Picture 2: Discussion with Abdiye M. Adan during the evaluation*

## 4.2 Lesson learnt

- The provision of seed money and subsequent training for members of credit and saving, has enhanced the opportunity of women to generate more income and increase financial capacity to involve in business that traditionally dominated by men. Integrating health and education program with SCC is enhances the opportunity to address multiple end users of such service with promotional exercises related to safe delivery and anti-FGM/HTP initiatives.
- The effort of empowering women started changing the perception of men towards women, and improving women position in decision making process. Functional SCC groups could serve as women rights promotional networks. This would help to mobilize collective actions to protect their individual and collective interests through providing an organized lobbying-advocacy framework starting from local levels
- Subsequent awareness creations initiatives on FGM and women rights issues has been enhancing confidence of women to be outspoken over sensitive issues related to GBV and reproductive health concerns. Creating alternative income sources for FGM practitioners was an excellent lesson to address both FGM and household income problem.
- The involvement of key stakeholder in the implementation of the project in line with community (elders, religion leader, women and youth) at different levels has enhancing sense of ownership among the target community.
- Economic empowerment of women through involving profitable business schemes helps to enhance active engagement of target women in social and political process thereby creating opportunities to have access to improved business and leadership skills.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

Project planning and implementation process followed participatory approach. The interventions focused on priority needs of target community while meeting prevailing national and regional policy frameworks. The design and conceptual approach are relevant to donor and implementing agency strategic objectives and development targets. Project management and implementation modalities are in compliance with existing structures of line government offices and sociocultural customary setups.

Project target area identification and beneficiary's selection process was undertaken in close consultation with relevant stakeholders, community structure and line government offices. Intervention in relation to capacity support to saving and credit cooperatives are done in consideration of functional line government guidelines and appropriate strategies that ensure sustainable operation of such entity with limited external support in post project period. But the wide coverage of the project influenced effective coordination while limited sharing of experience among project beneficiaries to generate best lessons for further improvement.

Drought and conflict affected regular implementation in accordance with the plan while influencing on the quality of accomplishment in minor extent. Project intervention has logical coherent and interlinking effect in attaining measurable outcomes that reinforces one another, for instance integration of support for SACCOs with adult literacy has progressive contribution in developing self-reliant community-based structures.

In terms of meeting the intended objectives and contributing to the inspired goal, the attained results are having required strength to ensure effective achievements. In this case, the seed capital supports provided to organized SACCOs have addressed working capital needs of each members and encouraged them to involve in locally feasible value chains. This has been creating opportunities to diversify household income generating alternatives through linking pastoral and agro-pastoral economy to potential markets.

The promotion of basic health and adult literacy has been contributing to enhancing trend of attitude and improving competency to keep own record and understand cell phone operation, in particular among the SACCO members that involve in direct business interactions. The promotion of awareness creation on FGM and GBV/HTP issues has been triggering changes and practices within the community in this regard. The initiative towards strengthening TBAs is improving functional support for pregnant mothers during prenatal periods, in particular.

The project piloted innovative initiatives in the area of supporting women to engage in irrigation-based vegetables and fodder production and marketing, as part of food security improvement strategy. Such effort has been bringing women to the focal point through reinforcing available opportunities to develop inner potential that would facilitate economic improvements and social empowerment in ultimate instance.

Thus, there is a promising trend that indicates likelihood of sustainability beyond the lifespan of the project. As the project was implemented in close partnership with line government institutions and local community structures, the likelihood of taking over coordination responsibilities is highly ensured.

However, project reporting and joint monitoring effort are areas with operational limitations, due to weak commitment and limited competency of government experts in this regard.

## **5.2 Recommendation**

There is a need to incorporate appropriate and well elaborated MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation Accountability and Learning) system in the project designing. The implementation process is expected to focus on redefining and reviewing MEAL components in line with baseline survey results or findings from rapid assessment. Accountability and learning framework are expected to be incorporated in joint monitoring exercises.

The initiative related to introducing alternative income source for TBAs and FGM x-practitioners deserves scaling up and expansion to other localities in target area through documenting and disseminating the achievements of the initial attempt. This could be handled in integration with WASH and adult literacy promotion initiatives.

There is a need to develop well organized training materials in the areas of revolving fund management, financial literacy, saving and credit monitoring, record keeping and business diversification. The materials could serve as working guideline for the regular operation of organized SACCOs and cooperative promotion agency to encourage provide functional support in phase-out period.

To overcome the effect of drought and conflict on livestock assets. There is a need to introduce livestock focused insurance with operational modalities more sensitive to pastoral and agro-pastoral way of life. This could be handled in integration with disaster preparedness and response priority intervention.

There is a need to design phase out strategies in proper, as part of the initial document with the aim to facilitate procedural exit and closing process through handling over relevant responsibilities to pertinent stakeholders. This could minimize over dependency of target beneficiaries, in particular the organized SACCOs. This has the potential to develop enhanced sense of ownership from target end uses while serve to reinforce government line accountability to coordinated the introduced initiative in responsible sense.

There is a need to support functional anti-FGM/GVB forums to enhance the level of influence such forums could bring on the customary structures and traditional attitudes. Functionality of such forums will assist effective promotion of collective actions towards protecting women and girls rights on the one hand while serving to reinforce economic and social empowerment of women.