

Progress Report on the “Economic and Social Women Empowerment and Protection of Women and Girls from Harmful Traditional Practices”

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General Information:

Project Title	Economic and Social Women Empowerment and Protection of Women and Girls from Harmful Traditional Practices (ESWEP)
Operational areas	Region: <i>Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR)</i> Zones, Districts, Kebeles: a) <i>Wolayta Zone: Soddo Zuria Woreda (Dalbo Atawro & Dalbo Wegene Kebeles); Damotgale Woreda (Shashogale and Washagale Kebeles)</i> b) <i>Hadiya Zone: Lemo Woreda (Soddama Mar Duncho, Andegna Homoshera, & Huletegnna Homoshera kebeles); Soro Woreda (Wesheba & Andegna Selefe Kebeles)</i>
Implementing agency:	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in partnership with the SNNPR Bureau of Women and Children Affairs, <i>Kembatti Mentti Gezzima-Tope (KMG) Ethiopia</i> and Mary Joy Development Association (MJDA).
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ACRONYMS

ESWEP:	Economic and Social Women Empowerment and Protection of Women and Girls from Harmful Traditional Practices
BoWCA:	Bureau of Women, Children, and Children Affairs
CM:	Child Marriage
FHHs:	Female Headed Households
HTPs:	Harmful Traditional Practices
H.E:	Her Excellency
IPs:	Implementing Partners
KMG:	Kembatti Mentti Gezzima-Tope
MJDA:	Mary Joy Development Association
MoWCA:	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
NGOs:	Non-government Organizations
SNNPR:	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
SRH:	Sexual and Reproductive Health
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund



I. Introduction

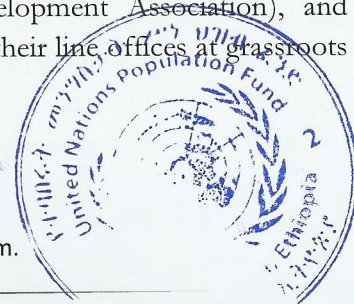
Women in Ethiopia face social and cultural challenges that undermine their human worth. Despite their numerical significance and remarkable contribution to the economic development, they are placed to the disadvantaged position with no or weak say, and yet, in spite of the overwhelmingly negative impact of different HTPs on individuals and societies, it is often justified by customs and reinforced by institutions that limit women's rights, their decision-making power, and their recourse to protection from the practice. As such, practice of Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) are both an outcome and an expression of women's subordinate status in relation to men in societies in Ethiopia. Taking this into consideration The "Economic and Social Women Empowerment and Protection of Women and Girls from HTPs" (ESWEP) project was initiated in 2016 with the objectives of empowering economically and socially the most vulnerable Female Headed Households and protect women and girls in targeted areas from HTPs. It also contributes to the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage in Ethiopia by 2025. The ESWEP project was launched and under implementation with the financial support of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

With a life-span of 16 months, the project will be implemented in nine *kebelles*¹ of four districts in the Wolaita (Soddo Zuria and Damot Gale woredas) and Hadiya (Lemo and Soro woredas) zones in SNNPR. The project will focus on empowering most vulnerable women and girls economically and socially, with a special emphasis on Female Headed Households (FHHs) between the age of 15-25 survivors of HTPs and CM; improving social and economic empowerment of the most vulnerable FHHs; increasing awareness of primary and secondary schools students on HTPs and SRH, and decreased female students dropout and increasing knowledge and response of communities on HTPs and SRH as well as enhancing the capacity of institutional and community key stakeholders at zonal, woreda and kebele levels on HTPs and SRH.

The project also aims at building the capacities of service providers for the latter to adopt norms, standards and practices leading to the provision of gender responsive services. The integration of women's social and economic empowerment with social mobilization applied in the project coupled with strong linkages with grassroots structures will form a solid ground for sustainability of the positive changes being sought.

The project will continue its interventions by implementing human rights-based, gender-responsive and culturally vested approach by involving and strengthening partnerships in the region with Government Organization (SNNPR Bureau of Women and Children Affairs), selected Non-Governmental Organizations (KMG Ethiopia and Mary Joy Development Association), and Regional Universities. Bureaus of Justice, Education, and Health with their line offices at grassroots level will also be involved in the implementation of the project.

¹ Kebele is the lowest administrative structure in the Ethiopian Governance system.



II. Brief Project Implementation Status

Despite the release of fund from the donor on the 20th of January 2017, full implementation could not advance as expected as some key preparation activities must have been accomplished before kickoff. Below are the list of activities that were accomplished.

a) NGO IP selection

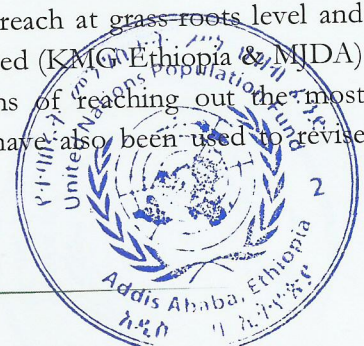
When it comes to selecting and working with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), UNFPA has a policy which requires that an advertisement be made in the media to give equal chances to all interested partners to express their interest and compete for partnership. Accordingly, UNFPA Ethiopia Country Office invited for qualified organizations to submit proposals for the implementation of its 8th Country Programme (2016-2020). The purpose of the invitation for Technical Proposals was to identify eligible non-governmental organizations for prospective partnership with UNFPA Ethiopia Country Office. Interested organizations submitted their technical proposal along with their legal status and latest annual organizational performance and audit reports.

Accordingly, UNFPA conducted an assessment based on set criterion and selected pool of partners which could be tapped whenever opportunities arise. Overview of the NGO including its mandate & governance, established technical expertise, track record of programme delivery, creativity and sensitivity to local context, control & monitoring systems, and an outline of the activities the NGO is proposing to partner with UNFPA and pursuance to human rights based approach programming, sensitivity to culture & gender equality, application of value for money, multiplier effect, and performance in previous similar engagements are some of the details looked into during the assessment processes.

UNFPA thus managed to identify and select Mary Joy Development Association (MJDA) and KMG Ethiopia as NGO partners to spearhead activities on economic and social empowerment of most vulnerable female headed households, school level interventions to empower girls, and community mobilization and awareness creation on harmful practices and sexual and reproductive health services.

b) Field level assessment of selected NGO partners

The next step taken in relation to selection of these IPs was site level verification to witness what they are doing at their operational districts and even understand the level their reputation from the right-holders' and grass-roots partners' perspective. Observing their reach at grass-roots level and talking to local stakeholders, UNFPA felt that the two NGOs identified (KMG Ethiopia & MJDA) for the implementation of ESWEP are the right partners in terms of reaching out the most vulnerable FHHs and adolescent girls. Inputs from the field visit have also been used to revise micro-plans submitted by KMG and MJDA.



c) Hiring a Programme Coordinator

As stipulated in the project document, there was a need to bring on-board the Programme Coordinator for the project. This included processes from recruitment on a competitive basis to undertaking a successful induction session at a Country Office level. The Programme Coordinator will be based in Hawassa at BoWCA Office and will be directly reporting to the gender and Human rights specialist of UNFPA.

d) Launching of project

ESWEP was colorfully launched in Hawassa, the capital city of SNNPR, on the 10th of June 2017 in the presence of the State Minister of MOWCA, Head of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, Deputy Representative of UNFPA, key sectors' Bureau heads, and other stakeholders including representatives of targeted communities.

Speaking at the ceremony, H.E. Alemitu Umod, State Minister of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, said investing in the empowerment and protection of women and girls is vital if the country is to meet the development goals set in its national development plan as well as the international development agenda. *"Multi-sectoral programmes promoting gender equality and equity, empowerment, and access to services among this segment of the population, with a special focus on the vulnerable and marginalized, will go a long way in building a strong base for the country's development endeavours,"* Woizero Alemitu added.

Mr. Rakoto Victor, UNFPA Country Representative a.i., said on his part on the occasion that the project would contribute to the economic and social empowerment of most vulnerable girls and women and elimination of Female Genital Mutilation and early/child marriage in the country. *"The approach the project applies in integrating women's social and economic empowerment with social mobilization coupled with strong linkages with grassroots structures will form a solid ground for sustainability of the positive changes being sought,"* noted Mr. Victor.

Ms. Ginevra Letizia, Head of the Addis Ababa Office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, remarked at the event that *"Italy has always been greatly committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, since a sustainable, human, economic, social, environmental and inclusive growth cannot be achieved without the recognition of women's role. That is why the ESWEP was designed to complement an ongoing project, also financed by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – the Women Economic Empowerment and Social Integration Project (WEESI), being implemented by BoWCA, in order to have a greater impact on the improvement of the lives of women in these areas"*.

Senior officials of the federal and regional government, members of communities and other stakeholders were present at the project launch ceremony.



e) Micro-plan development and review

BoWCA and the two NGOs had to prepare and submit their micro-plans for review. And UNFPA critically reviewed the micro-plans whether they really reflect the proposals submitted.

Our donor, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, is also aware of all the activities as it is updated about every progress and/or issue. Now the work plan preparation and signature is finalized, implementation will be fast-tracked and a comprehensive narrative report, including expenditure report, will be shared in the next reporting period.

