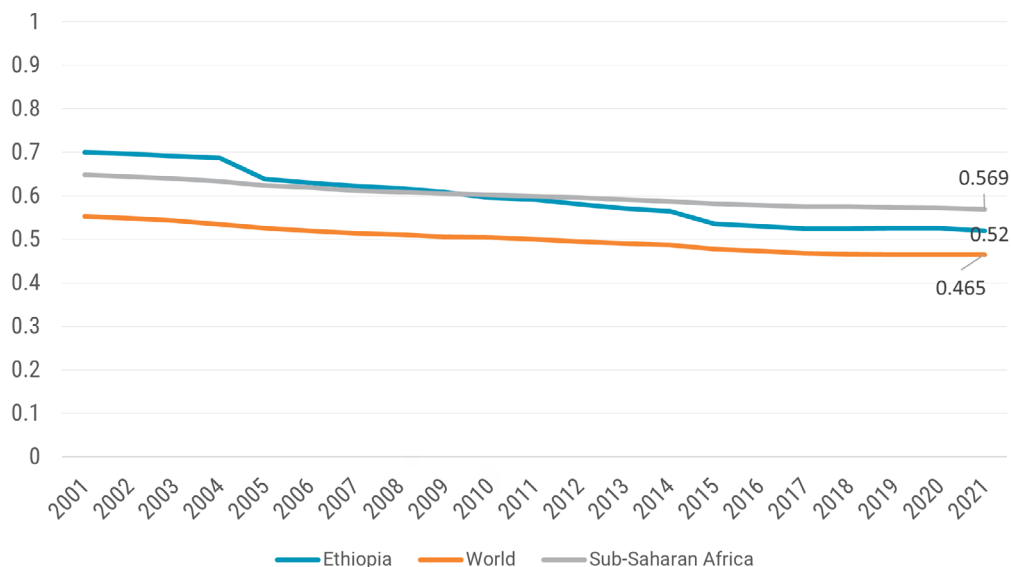


## Gender analysis: roles and needs in humanitarian crises

### OVERVIEW

Over 28 million of Ethiopia’s population are in need of humanitarian assistance because of continuing conflict and natural hazards, including drought and flooding. Among the population targeted in the latest Humanitarian Response Plan from February 2023, 23.2% were women, 22.8% were men, 27.0% were girls, 26.9% were boys, and 17.6% were people with disabilities (OCHA 28/02/2023). Conflict and natural hazards are affecting all population groups, but underlying sociocultural and economic conditions differently affect their ability to deal with these shocks.

Figure 1. 2001–2021 Gender Inequality Index



Source: UNDP (accessed 18/10/2023)

Note: this index measures gender inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market dimensions from 0 to 1. A high gender inequality index value shows greater inequality.

### About this report

**Aim:** this report considers the impact of conflict and natural hazards on the gender roles and dynamics, as well as gendered activities and needs of Ethiopia’s population. Deep-rooted sociocultural and economic factors define gender relations in Ethiopia, and there is a lack of up-to-date research on how current crises worsen existing disparities. This report can provide a starting point for future in-depth research at the regional level within Ethiopia.

**Methodology:** this report uses a comprehensive secondary data review of key literature from international organisations and academic institutions. This was supplemented with key informant interviews with gender specialists, covering health, gender-based violence (GBV), and protection.

**Limitations:** although gender norms vary between regions, localised gender norms are not covered in detail. Consequently, organisations would need more granular research to shape their programmes in a specific region or zone. Rural and urban differences also apply. Adopting an intersectional approach was difficult given limitations within existing data and information on certain population groups, such as people and children with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ community. Because of criminalisation of homosexuality and the continued restrictions on the expression of diverse gender identities in Ethiopia, there is little information available on the LGBTQ+ community and how they are affected by humanitarian crises in the country.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Key messages.....	2
Legal and policy framework .....	2
Socioeconomic and political gender norms .....	2
Livelihoods and workload .....	4
Income generation and control of assets .....	4
Decision-making .....	4
Community-level participation .....	5
Migration and freedom of movement.....	5
Protection risks and gender-based violence .....	5
Female genital mutilation .....	5
Child protection .....	6
Polygamous, early, and forced marriages.....	6
The gendered impact of conflict .....	7
Socioeconomic and political gender norms .....	7
Protection risks and gender-based violence .....	8
The gendered impact of drought .....	8
Socioeconomic and political gender norms .....	8
Protection risks and gender-based violence .....	9
The gendered impact of floods.....	10
The gendered impact of crises on access to humanitarian assistance and services .....	10
Humanitarian assessments .....	11

## KEY MESSAGES

- Findings from a national-level gender analysis remain indicative, given that gender norms vary greatly between regions.

### Legal and policy framework

- The dual legal system and the differences between formal and customary laws in the country affect GBV victims' access to justice.
- There is limited to no accountability during conflict, particularly in the case of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV), because of the breakdown in both formal and informal structures. Fear of retaliation also limits reporting.

### Socioeconomic and political gender norms

- Women spend large amounts of time on unpaid tasks. Data compiled between 2010–2019 shows that women spend 2.9 times more on unpaid domestic and care work than men.
- Conflict creates temporary shifts in labour division, but it is unclear if this is long-term. The evidence from northern Ethiopia highlights blurred boundaries between men's and women's domestic tasks with the easing of local customs and changes in family composition.
- Drought is likely to have created and continue to create longer-term shifts in labour division, particularly as the droughts over the years worsen and more families transition out of pastoralism. Overall, women spend more time carrying out unpaid household activities, as observed during the 2020–2023 and 2015–2016 droughts.
- When women earn their own cash, they are more likely to make their own decisions or jointly with their husbands, increasing agency over decision-making and asset control. During drought, women's capacity to earn is undermined by an increase in unpaid tasks and livestock management, limiting their ability to generate income.

### Protection risks and GBV

- Conflict parties use sexual violence to target the reproductive capacities of individuals and communities. Less strategic applications of conflict-related SGBV also occur during village raids, where it can be an act of opportunism.

- Protection and GBV risks are heightened during conflict and drought, including the risk of engaging in negative coping strategies (survival sex, begging, and selling ESNFI), primarily to purchase food.
- Post-conflict, the number of recorded GBV cases tends to increase because of improved coverage by humanitarian organisations and increased service provision.
- There is limited information on the gendered impact of flooding, particularly distinctions in vulnerability levels and displacement risk for differently gendered household heads.
- Overall, it is unclear how humanitarian crises, such as conflict and drought, undermine the overall progress in the reduction of child/early marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and SGBV because of limited systematic data collection.

### Humanitarian assessments

- Within Ethiopia, there remains a lack of comprehensive multisectoral assessments carried out countrywide, and the systematic integration of a gender lens in assessments remains limited.

## LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

According to Article 25 of the Ethiopian constitution, *“All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection without discrimination on grounds of race, nation, nationality, or other social origin, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, property, birth or other status.”* (GoE 21/08/1995)

Within the national parliament, 41% of members are women, and there has been a gradual increase in women’s representation and participation in regional and local admin-level councils (CARE 09/01/2021; IPU accessed 19/10/2023; Demo Finland 18/01/2023). Even though representation remains largely nominal, there are few women in leadership positions, affecting overall decision-making and the ability to influence legal and policy decisions (Chatham House 03/08/2022).

Ethiopia has also ratified international treaties, including but not limited to:

- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- the Convention on the Political Rights of Women
- the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

(OHCHR accessed 28/09/2023; AU 16/10/2019; UNTC 30/10/2023)

Despite good progress, the implementation of these treaties beyond ratification has not been comprehensive (CEDAW 18/12/2017). Implementation could be improved by outlining the specific rights of individuals, adopting an intersectional approach, and refine administrative mechanisms in the investigation of violations (UN Women 01/2022; UN Women accessed 29/09/2023).

Within national laws, the penal code punishes GBV, including FGM, and child marriage (the legal minimum age for marriage is 18) (GoE 09/05/2005). In 2019, the Government of Ethiopia established a national road map to end child marriage and FGM, identifying key strategies and interventions to be implemented between 2020–2024 (GoE 14/08/2019). GBV survivors can seek justice through groups such as the police, clan leaders, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, and Shari’a courts (CARE 09/01/2021; DAB 09/01/2021).

That said, the dual legal system in Ethiopia and the differences between formal and customary laws, including the family code, affect access to justice (OHCHR 18/12/2017; GoE 04/07/2000). Such mechanisms often prioritise peace, sometimes at the expense of the survivor, disproportionately affecting women and girls, particularly in GBV cases (USAID 11/2019 a; USAID 06/2019; CARE 02/08/2018). For example, to preserve their and their family’s honour, some women are forced to marry their male rapist (Engender Health 02/2022). With rape cases in Somali region, it is commonly the community elders and rarely the police that mediate the crime (CARE 09/01/2021; Engender Health 02/2022). Recently, regional bodies on the prevention of and response to violence against women and children have been established in Somali and Oromia regions, and these bodies hope to implement national strategies and work alongside local customary laws (UN Women 27/12/2022).

Generally, legal frameworks around NGO and civil society organisation (CSO) activities have affected those working on rights-based issues, including gender-transformative programming and advocacy (ALNAP 01/02/2020; PRIF 07/2017). The 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation forced a number of organisations to stop their operations, affecting gender mainstreaming on related issues. The 2019 CSO Proclamation lifted some of these restrictions and allowed CSOs and local NGOs to expand their work, but there remains a long way to go regarding their engagement in humanitarian response. Organisations still risk being dissolved if their work is perceived as “contrary to law or public moral” (USAID 11/2019 a).

## SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL GENDER NORMS

### Livelihoods and workload

75% of the Ethiopian workforce is within the agricultural sector, with 96% of rural households engaged in either farming or livestock (USAID accessed 03/10/2023; WB 18/12/2020). As at 2021, 72.3% of women ages 15 and older were part of the workforce, compared to 84.7% of men (UNDP accessed 18/10/2023).

Ethiopia's labour division falls along gendered lines. It is evident across studies that men tend to control crop and livestock management, while women are responsible for time-consuming tasks at the household level (UNDP 22/09/2022; USAID 11/2019 c). Women also undertake various farming tasks despite not self-identifying as participating in farm-related activities (Future Agricultures 01/01/2014). Within pastoral households, these tasks include feeding and grazing, watering, milking, and the daily management of cows, including treating sick and vulnerable animals (CGIAR 12/2018; GAGE 27/05/2022). Within farming households, women carry out weeding, harvesting, and transporting farm inputs to the field, among other related tasks (FAO 2019). Women also manage dairy-related activities, including making butter and cheese. Given that women are expected to take care of sick animals, they are more likely to catch zoonotic diseases (UNDP 22/09/2022).

Men are responsible for tasks considered culturally rewarding, such as livestock control and management, animal sales, and crop production (CGIAR 09/2016). During peak cropping periods, men tend to undertake most of the heavy labour, including ploughing, sowing, and threshing, which involve working with oxen (Future Agricultures 01/01/2014). For tree crops, their tasks include land clearing, tilling, and pruning (FAO 2019). Other tasks include daily labour, construction, trading, and driving (CARE 09/01/2021).

Women, on the other hand, spend large amounts of time on unpaid tasks. Data from 2013 shows that women spent approximately 19% of their day on unpaid domestic and care work compared to 7% for men (WB accessed 18/10/2023). This work includes fetching fuel, wood, and water for their homes and caring for their household, limiting the time they can spend on generating income (UNDP 22/09/2022; Oxfam 11/12/2017; GAGE 27/05/2022). It also reduces the time women have to sleep, relax, and manage their health and education needs, resulting in a higher prevalence of acute malnutrition, illiteracy, and sickness (UNDP 22/09/2022; CGIAR 09/2016). During crisis events, the number of women's unpaid tasks increases exponentially.

### Income generation and control of assets

Men have a greater opportunity to generate more income given the division of labour, agency, access to decision-making, labour opportunities, education, agricultural inputs, and financing (USAID 11/2019 c). As at 2021, the gross national income per capita among women was USD 1,944, as compared to USD 2,774 for men (UNDP accessed 18/10/2023). Income-generating activities that women engage in are primarily small-scale farming, selling khat and vegetables, and poultry production (UNDP 22/09/2022; CARE 09/01/2021).

Social norms heavily influence the control of assets. For example, under Xeer customary laws in Somali region (the code of conduct established to settle disputes and social order), women are not entitled to control or inherit assets (UNESCO accessed 28/09/2023; CARE 09/01/2021). In Afar, livestock is allocated primarily to male children at birth, giving them an unfair advantage in future investments or in the event of shocks, with the gender gap increasing over time (USAID 11/2019 c; GAGE 27/05/2022). In the Warsa tradition of Afar, the brother of a dead husband inherits his assets and widow (USAID 11/2019 c).

Studies suggest that women are trusted to save money but are largely unable to decide how to spend it independently of their husbands unless they earn their own cash, in which case they are more likely to make their own decisions or jointly with their husbands (USAID 11/2019 c; UNRISD 25/07/2016; CARE 09/01/2021; DAB 09/01/2021). As per a study conducted in Afar, Oromia, and Somali, 45% of women who earn more than their husbands make the decisions about how to spend the money, compared to 11% of women who earn the same as their husbands (DAB 09/01/2021).

### Decision-making

Decision-making in Ethiopia also falls along gendered lines, whereby men are responsible for strategic decisions, including livestock management and those related to the community, while women can influence household-level decisions, including food choices (USAID 11/2019 c). Men continue to make decisions around land use and management, agricultural yields, crop planting, harvest timing, and revenue (UN Women 12/10/2022; CARE 09/01/2021). This is despite the nationwide land certification programme advancement in the past 20 years, allowing millions of women to acquire land use certificates, meaning the advancement is not representative of better tenure or increased decision-making for women.

According to 2016 data, 71% of married women made decisions either alone or jointly with their husbands related to visiting family, relatives, and friends, making major household purchases, and determining their own healthcare (CSA 07/2017; WB accessed 18/10/2023). Women's education level and employment have a positive impact on their ability to influence

household decisions (USAID 11/2019 c). The type of decision made is also reflected in risk perceptions, where men are more concerned with affecting income, while women will mitigate for the practical needs of the household, including water and health (UNDP 22/09/2022; CARE/Mercy Corps 23/09/2021).

### Community-level participation

Men dominate customary institutions and are responsible for community-level planning and control of communal natural resources along clan and subclan lines. Women's priorities are often not reflected and systemically disregarded (USAID 11/2019 c). In Borena and Kereyu zones in Oromia, for example, customary leaders are elected every eight years through the *gadaa*, but the system remains largely patriarchal, with male leaders electing the decision makers (USAID 11/2019 c; Helvetas 10/11/2022). In Somali region, women are expected to stay at home but can join some networks and associations related to social issues, depending on whether a man delegates a woman to engage in public spaces (CARE 09/01/2021). Women's participation is generally low given the burden of unpaid household tasks, illiteracy, and their self-perception of leadership skills, as well as a need to ensure reproductive and productive roles (USAID 11/2019 c; FAO 2019).

### Migration and freedom of movement

Migration drivers are multifaceted, including conflict, climate change, and employment search (IOM 14/06/2023). The total number of internal migrants within Ethiopia is difficult to obtain given the informal routes they take. Women are, in general, less likely to migrate given their restricted freedom of movement, social barriers, and, on average, less education, reducing their chances of finding employment (UNDP 22/09/2022; UN Women 11/2014). Freedom of movement becomes more and more restricted as adolescent girls age, in contrast to adolescent boys where freedom of movement becomes less restricted (Presler-Marshall et al. 05/09/2023).

Internal migration is more feasible for men since they have greater freedom of movement and access to local seasonal employment (DIIS 26/05/2023). When men migrate, women are left responsible for the livestock and crops, along with other household responsibilities (UNRISD 25/07/2016). Within households, there remains a limited understanding as to whose decision it is to migrate, where to migrate to, and when to return (USAID 11/2019 b). Evidence suggests that in Somali region, male heads of households decide on pastoralist mobility, with women doing the work to prepare to move (REF 01/2023). In Afar, the *adda* process includes only men who decide when and where to migrate (USAID 11/2019 c).

Women's overall lack of local employment opportunities means that they often see migration to Saudi Arabia and Djibouti as domestic workers as a viable option, made possible through community and family networks (DIIS 26/05/2023; GAGE 27/05/2022; Al Jazeera 17/04/2023). Women can see migration as a way to break out of societal norms; control their movement; and escape forced marriage, intimate partner violence, and becoming a source of support for those remaining in Ethiopia. That said, migration also implies a series of protection risks (DIIS 26/05/2023). There is evidence that migrants suffer at the hands of their employers, with continued reports from Saudi Arabia and Yemen, along with the risks of human trafficking, GBV, harsh conditions, exploitation, abuse, and arbitrary killings (UN Women 11/2014; Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016; IOM 14/06/2023; HRW 21/08/2023). Ethiopian migrants often return with very little money and support; sometimes, they are in a worse situation than when they first left (ACAPS 16/11/2021).

## PROTECTION RISKS AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Domestic violence, FGM, forced marriage, threats of violence resulting in fear (psychological distress), and sexual violence are all forms of GBV, with drivers differing from one region to another (UN Women 11/2014). In Somali region, for example, religious beliefs and patriarchal attitudes legitimise GBV. Financial instability, a lack of livelihood opportunities, and limited women's empowerment also contribute to the practice (Engender Health 02/2022). Along with the health consequences of GBV, considerable social effects include community rejection and being regarded as unfit for marriage (KII 05/2023).

Across Ethiopia, survivors often do not report the crime given a lack of access to their rights and knowledge of reporting mechanisms, the lack of implementation of penal codes, and the social stigma associated with reporting or being considered a victim (UN Women 23/05/2022 and 23/09/2022; USAID 11/2019 a; Protection Cluster 23/06/2022; CARE 09/01/2021; Engender Health 02/2022; Govt. UK 01/11/2022).

### Female genital mutilation

FGM has been illegal in Ethiopia since 2015. Traditional female cutters are the main perpetrators of FGM, with men supporting the practice (Engender Health 02/2022; GAGE 24/08/2022). It is unclear how much the penalisation of the practice has decreased or how humanitarian crises, such as conflict and drought, have undermined its progress (GAGE 27/05/2022). Regional prevalence figures from the Ethiopian Government's 2016 Demographic and Health Survey continue to be used in advocacy documents, particularly for Afar and Somali regions, despite being outdated (CSA 07/2017).

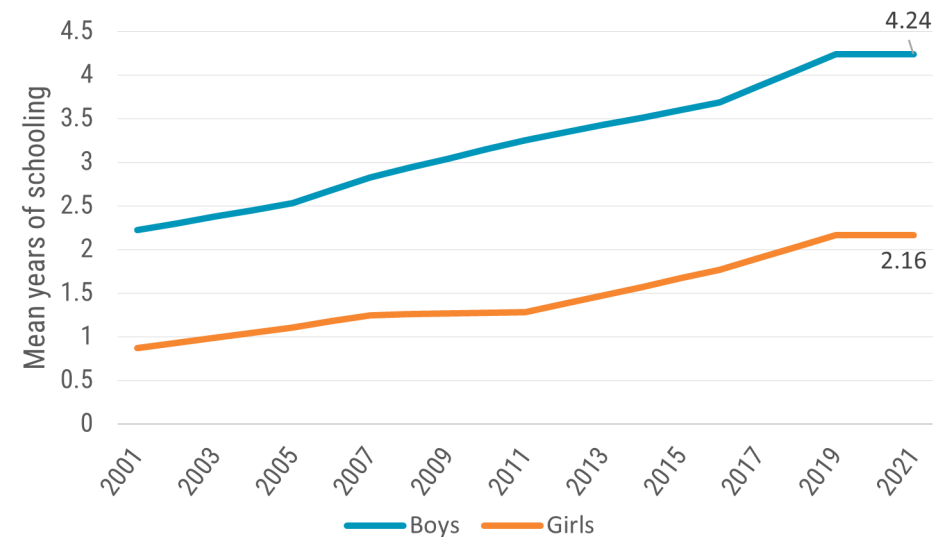
Within regions, there are differences in FGM prevalence, with normative and empirical reasons that shape why one area is likely to have higher rates over others (CARE 09/01/2021; GAGE 27/05/2022). For example, in South Gondar zone, Amhara region, there is evidence of social sanctions being imposed on parents refusing to circumcise their daughters (CARE 15/09/2021). A comparative study conducted in Afar and Somali regions found that caregivers in Somali were, on average, less aware of FGM laws than in Afar (GAGE 24/08/2022).

## Child protection

Child protection concerns in Ethiopia include early and forced marriage, school dropouts, child labour, family separation, and a lack of access to education, GBV, and child protection services (Protection Cluster 28/10/2022). The lack of access to education continues to be heavily gendered. There are few female teachers and mentors for girls, and the sociocultural norms are a greater barrier to accessing school for girls than boys (UN Women 11/2014). Specific barriers for girls include a lack of segregated WASH and latrine facilities, household chores, a lack of menstrual hygiene products, and limited safety walking to and from school (GAGE 24/08/2022). Long distances to schools and a lack of drinking water, teachers, and schooling materials are barriers to school attendance for both boys and girls. As shown in Figure 2, the mean number of schooling years is considerably greater for boys as compared to girls.

Ethiopia's child labour rates remain high, where boys are more likely to engage in income-generating activities, while girls usually focus on household chores. The number of hours spent increases in the event of a shock. Boys are more likely to generate income by migrating to urban areas to work as shoe shiners, porters, or construction workers, while girls tend to work as domestic or sex workers, increasing their vulnerability as these jobs tend to be hidden from the public (UNICEF/CSA 15/12/2020). There are few recent studies on the gender-specific risks of these jobs, with most studies outlining the generic implications (USAID 11/2019 b).

Figure 2. Mean years of schooling in Ethiopia



Source: UNDP (accessed 18/10/2023)

Note: the average number of completed years of education between 0–15 years.

## Polygamous, early, and forced marriages

Early and forced marriage research has largely focused on Afar and Somali regions, given the high rates in these regions, in part because of family codes that do not outlaw the practice (GAGE 27/05/2022 and 24/08/2022). There are differences across the two regions though. In Afar, girls are often forced to marry their cousins or men much older than them. In Somali region, girls are forced to marry soon after puberty but are entitled to choose whom they marry (GAGE 27/05/2022). Child marriage acts as an additional barrier to school access (GAGE 24/08/2022). Generally, children in urban areas marry at 14–15, on average, compared to 12–14 in rural areas (Protection Cluster 09/10/2023).

Humanitarian assessments include concern over the vulnerability of women in polygamous relationships and children in polygamous families. There remains a lack of recent data on the prevalence of polygamous relationships in the different regions (Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016). Children of polygamous marriages are at greater risk of experiencing marital conflict, distress, family violence, and disruptions. There is also evidence that women and girls in polygamous

households are more likely to experience different forms of GBV, including intimate partner violence (Ahinkorah 12/01/2021).

With respect to the land registration process and control of assets, women and children from polygamous marriages may not be protected in cases of death or divorce (UN-Habitat 2008; Tesfay 23/01/2018). For example, in Afar and Somali regions, women are unable to legally register or certify land under their spouses (CARE 09/01/2021). Compared to the first wife, later wives tend to be disproportionately affected in the event of the death or divorce of the husband, as they face the uncertainty of whether they would be able to keep any of the land (UN-Habitat 2008).

## THE GENDERED IMPACT OF CONFLICT

In existing research and assessments, the gendered impact of conflict is primarily discussed through the lens of negative coping strategies, heightening protection risks, and increasing GBV. The focus is also mainly on women in IDP camps. There are significant information gaps about the broader and more nuanced gendered impacts of conflict on different population groups, including longer-term shifts in decision-making, alternative income-generation strategies, and overall changes in sociocultural gender norms.

**Table 1. Displacement resulting from conflict and tension as at June 2023**

	BOYS (0–14)	GIRLS (0–14)	YOUTH BOYS (15–17)	YOUTH GIRLS (15–17)	MEN	WOMEN
Conflict and tension	491,959	506,961	119,075	116,755	480,320	493,085

Source: IOM (11/08/2023)

Note: these figures exclude Tigray.

## Socioeconomic and political gender norms

### Livelihoods and workload

During the conflict in northern Ethiopia, men reported a blurring of boundaries between men's and women's domestic tasks as local customs eased and women became heads of households as men fought, families split, or there was limited work for men in IDP camps (NRC/OCHA 26/07/2022; CARE/Mercy Corps 23/09/2021). IDP women in Tigray in April 2021 reported spending over 11 hours on unpaid tasks with no alternative livelihood sources (CARE 04/04/2021). A rapid gender analysis after the conflict in Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' region highlighted similar trends in displacement sites, whereby competition over resources meant that men were involved in water and firewood collection and obtaining healthcare (CARE 02/08/2018 and 04/04/2021).

### Income generation and control of assets

As income generation becomes more difficult in times of conflict, the negative strategies that women are more likely to employ increase compared to men. During conflict, women's childcare responsibilities tend to increase, and access to informal livelihoods and food becomes more difficult. This increases the risk of engaging in coping strategies, primarily to purchase food (IRC 03/05/2021). For example, evidence from Tigray highlights that more women-headed households are food-insecure compared to men-headed households (WFP 21/03/2022). Women, as a result, employ a range of strategies, including sex for survival, begging, and selling NFIs (CARE 02/08/2018; Protection Cluster 23/06/2022). Sexually exploitative relationships between displaced women and host communities in Tigray have emerged, a practice that has not been observed previously (IRC 03/05/2021; Govt. UK 01/11/2022).

Men's coping strategies are begging, stealing, selling firewood, engaging in daily labour if available, and migrating internally (CARE 04/04/2021). Conflict in West Guji kept adolescent boys from engaging in income-generating activities, increasing their reliance on humanitarian aid (KII 05/2023).

The long-term impact of these strategies on shifts in gender norms is unclear.

### Decision-making

Conflict can cause shifts in decision-making, but the extent to which this applies to Ethiopia and whether conflict has created a long-term shift are unclear. It is also difficult to compare how quickly these shifts take place and how they isolate the specific conditions under which they have emerged. The conflict in northern Ethiopia has highlighted the increasing split in decision-making around asset spending, although further evidence is limited (NRC/OCHA 26/07/2022; CARE/Mercy Corps 23/09/2021).

## Community-level participation

Women's inclusion as part of the peacebuilding process and conflict mitigation strategies is limited, despite efforts from organisations working at the local level in peacebuilding, mediation and diplomacy, including working with women customary leaders (USAID 11/2019 c; UN Women 26/04/2023; KII 06/09/2023). For example, there was no woman signatory to the November 2022 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Tigray People's Liberation Front and the Government of Ethiopia (UN Women 26/04/2023). This means that women's perspectives are underrepresented in peace talks and transitional frameworks despite conflict heavily affecting them (UN Women 26/04/2023; REF 01/01/2023). Women's roles and abilities to influence their husbands and brothers during conflict, including whether or not they should fight, remain largely unexplored (UN Women 26/04/2023).

## Protection risks and gender-based violence

### Sexual gender-based violence

Conflict parties use sexual violence to target the reproductive capacities of individuals and communities. There are also cases of the less strategic application of conflict-related sexual violence, as in village raids where it can be an act of opportunism (UNGA 14/09/2023; EHRC 11/03/2022; Govt. UK 01/11/2022).

Evidence from Afar, Amhara, and Tigray shows that armed groups and forces target, torture, and sexually and verbally assault women and girls through rape, gang rape, and sexual mutilation (UNGA 14/09/2023; EHRC 11/03/2022). Most reports indicate that women and girls of childbearing age, pregnant and elderly women, wives, and widows have been targeted (Govt. UK 01/11/2022; UNGA 14/09/2023). These events occur in refugee and IDP camps, within detention camps, and during village raids. Boys, men, and elderly men are forced to watch and participate and, upon refusal, arbitrarily executed (Govt. UK 01/11/2022). Men and boys in detention facilities and villages are also subject to torture, including sexual beatings and humiliation (Govt. UK 01/11/2022; UNGA 14/09/2023; EHRC 11/03/2022). Boys are also subject to forced recruitment, with evidence of parents stopping their sons from attending school out of fear of recruitment (Jones et al. 27/09/2022).

In other conflict areas, such as in western and southern Oromia and Benishangul Gumuz, there are continued reports of various armed groups using sexual violence as a weapon of war (UNGA 14/09/2023). Men are more likely to be subject to physical violence by armed groups and forces (KII 05/2023). There are few reports on the impact on people with disabilities. Those with physical impairments are particularly at risk because of their limited capacity to escape (Govt. UK 01/11/2022; CARE 04/04/2021).

There is limited to no accountability since both formal and informal structures break down during conflict, and fear of retaliation limits reporting (KII 05/2023; IRC 03/05/2021; Govt. UK 01/11/2022; CARE 04/04/2021; UNGA 14/09/2023). Even as conflict has largely subsided in northern Ethiopia, there remains limited accountability or justice, with continued reports of rape and violence against women and girls even after the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, including in the disputed areas of Tigray (DW 02/07/2015; The Guardian 25/08/2023; Africans for the Horn 10/07/2023). After conflict, as in northern Ethiopia, the number of reported GBV cases increases given increased access and improved reporting mechanisms. At the same time, returnees within the community become the main perpetrators of SGBV, unlike at the height of the conflict when armed people are the main perpetrators (KII 13/10/2023).

## THE GENDERED IMPACT OF DROUGHT

During drought events, an overall loss of livelihood opportunities (livestock and farm products) affects families, resulting in reduced purchasing power, produce, and access to markets and increased rates of school dropout and child labour (USAID 11/2019 b; Oxfam 11/12/2017). Drought-specific gendered impacts on livelihoods are not fully understood, including whether it affects women-headed households more.

**Table 2. Displacement because of drought and climate as at June 2023**

	BOYS (0–14)	GIRLS (0–14)	YOUTH BOYS (15–17)	YOUTH GIRLS (15–17)	MEN	WOMEN
Drought and climate	271,845	286,812	66,026	60,249	239,229	231,675

Source: IOM (11/08/2023)

Note: these figures exclude Tigray.

## Socioeconomic and political gender norms

### Livelihoods and workload

The increased impact of drought and subsequent decline in activities reduce men's work but rarely results in them taking on the additional tasks women become responsible for (UNDP 22/09/2022; CARE 31/03/2016; UNRISD 25/07/2016). Women are generally unable to push their husbands to take on more housework and have limited to no power to negotiate the labour division (CARE 09/01/2021). Women spend more time carrying out unpaid household



activities, as observed during the 2020–2023 and 2015–2016 droughts, including fetching water, feeding the household, and collecting fodder and firewood. The death of livestock and limited resources increase the time taken for these tasks threefold (UN Women 23/05/2022; USAID 11/2019 c; Oxfam 11/12/2017; UNRISD 25/07/2016; USAID 11/2019 b).

Men and boys are expected to migrate with the remaining livestock to look for water and pasture. Along with dealing with existing household tasks, women stay at home to take care of the sick and vulnerable livestock until worsening conditions force them to travel to IDP camps (USAID 11/2019 b; Oxfam 11/12/2017; CARE 31/03/2016; Protection Cluster 28/10/2022). In Somali region, it is becoming increasingly common for women to manage livestock as men seek labour opportunities in urban areas (REF 01/2023). In the Hamar community in southern Ethiopia, women also take on additional herding responsibilities (SOS Sahel 2007; UNDP 22/09/2022; CARE 31/03/2016).

An increase in unpaid and livestock management tasks limits the ability of women to find alternative income-generating sources, exposing them to greater economic insecurity (UN Women 23/05/2022). Those who engage in income-generating activities spend even less time on their health or childcare responsibilities (Nutrition Cluster 29/09/2023).

### Income generation and asset control

Overall capacity to respond to drought and natural hazards correlates with the ability to make personal decisions over household assets. Women are more reliant on natural resources given their limited access to financial resources, meaning drought and natural hazards are more likely to affect them (UNDP 22/09/2022; UNRISD 25/07/2016). Education also increases their ability to deal with negative situations (UNRISD 25/07/2016). There is evidence in Afar that husbands allowed their wives to engage in cash for work during the 2015–2016 drought, provided that they did not go far and speak with other men by themselves (Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016).

During drought events, both men's and women's debt levels tend to increase, particularly for purchasing food, but it is unclear who is disproportionately affected and who has greater access to community support (USAID 11/2019 c; Oxfam 11/12/2017). In pastoral households, there is limited evidence of the gendered differences in food security between men-headed and women-headed households (USAID 11/2019 c; FEWS NET 02/2023).

### Community-level participation

In the event of shocks, such as drought, women's participation in public spaces dramatically decreases given the additional burden of dealing with the shock, while men's participation stays fairly stable (USAID 11/2019 a).

## Protection risks and gender-based violence

### Gender-based violence

During drought events, resources become more scarce, and women are forced to travel further, exposing them to higher protection risks (UN Women 23/05/2022; Protection Cluster 28/10/2022; Nutrition Cluster 29/09/2023). According to the Meher assessment conducted after the 2016 drought, violence against women and girls increased in this period (Oxfam 11/12/2017; Oxfam 01/04/2017). To avoid queues at water points, for example, some women and girls collected resources alone at night, exposing them to protection risks (CARE 31/03/2016). Overall, it remains difficult to carry out a comparative analysis of GBV trends across several drought periods given the lack of systematic data collection.

Tension and pressure also increase over natural resources and land claims, with growing competition over resources (USAID 11/2019 c; CARE 31/03/2016; USAID 11/2019 b; Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016). This can lead to conflict, but there is limited understanding of exposure to violence, particularly of men and boys, in pastoral and agropastoral settings.

Men's psychological impact and the burden they face when unable to provide food and income for their family are commonly referenced in humanitarian assessments, with reports of suicide, increased alcohol and substance abuse, and increased risks taken on migratory routes (CARE 31/03/2016; KII 06/2023; Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016; Nutrition Cluster 29/09/2023).

### Child protection

There are mixed findings on child and early marriage in times of drought depending on geographic areas and sociocultural norms. The practice serves as a strategy for poorer households and, in the event of shocks, is an opportunity for some families to reduce the number of dependents. Bride payments are also an income opportunity (UN Women 23/05/2022).

Overall, a lack of adequate baseline data undermines systematic analysis (CARE 31/03/2016; GAGE 27/05/2022; Wilson Center 30/09/2022). There is anecdotal evidence that in Somali region, the 2016 drought conditions reduced cases of early marriage, as men were unable to pay dowries (Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016). In contrast, a June 2022 analysis found that, on average, child marriages had more than doubled in the drought-affected areas of Ethiopia (UNICEF 29/06/2022).

Girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school to support their families in household tasks, including fetching water, while boys drop out of school to travel with men in search of pasture or to obtain informal jobs in major towns (Oxfam 11/12/2017; Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016). A lack of and inability to buy school materials affect both girls and boys and their school attendance (CARE 31/03/2016).

## THE GENDERED IMPACT OF FLOODS

There is limited information on the gendered impact of flooding, particularly the distinctions in vulnerability levels and displacement risks between differently gendered household heads (iMMAP/Protection Cluster 31/03/2023). There is a lack of information on the gendered impact of the recent flooding in Gambela, which displaced thousands (Crisis24 20/09/2023). The September 2022 flooding resulted in high displacement rates, with displaced women and girls reporting concern over attempted rape and early marriage within IDP sites and communal buildings (Protection Cluster 28/10/2022).

## THE GENDERED IMPACT OF CRISES ON ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

**Access to humanitarian assistance** has been shown to be dependent on setting. Women-headed households within displacement camps are more likely to receive humanitarian assistance than those headed by men. On the other hand, outside camps, women-headed households are less likely to receive humanitarian assistance given their distance to distribution points and restricted mobility. Pregnant and lactating women, people with disabilities, and children are often prioritised for food distribution, but restricted movement limits access to distribution points (USAID 11/2019 b). Women in rural areas reported lacking adequate information on registration and distribution point locations during the 2015–2016 drought (Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016). Several studies are concerned with women's vulnerability in polygamous marriages, as humanitarian assistance is often delivered on a per-household basis. This means that if the man is the recipient, he can decide who gets the support; in times of crisis, the husband may favour a certain family (USAID 11/2019 b; CARE 31/03/2016; Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016).

**Access to information**, including through telephone networks, is crucial for decision-making during crises, and women are particularly disadvantaged as they have overall less access to information than men (AI 11/08/2021; iMMAP/Protection Cluster 31/03/2023). Men in Afar and Somali regions are twice as likely to have a mobile phone and, generally, have greater access to information given their role in decision-making (USAID 11/2019 c). The lack of telecommunications in areas of active conflict exposes populations to additional vulnerabilities, including the inability to find humanitarian services, food distribution points, and safe travel routes, as well as maintain communication with community and family members (AI 11/08/2021; iMMAP/Protection Cluster 31/03/2023). Similarly, women have less access to traditional information-sharing networks. For example, in Afar, men have greater access to the traditional communication platform *dagu*, which provides awareness of current issues, areas of conflict, and early warning information (CARE/Mercy Corps 23/09/2021).

**Access to education**, particularly in conflict-affected areas, continues to be an issue. There is evidence that even with conflict subsiding, girls are particularly less likely to enrol than boys given overall safety concerns. Conflict and drought also have economic impacts, with students' inability to travel to school and buy school materials leading them to spend their time instead in income-generating activities or household chores (Jones et al. 27/09/2022). As at July 2023, there were 1.5 million and 1.7 million girls and boys, respectively, out of school. This is a considerable reduction compared to July 2022, when 2.3 million and 2.2 million girls and boys, respectively, were out of school (Education Cluster accessed 16/10/2023). This decrease can, in part, be attributed to the decline in conflict in northern Ethiopia and the alleviation of drought. Out-of-school children are at greater risk of exploitation and participation in harmful coping mechanisms (Nutrition Cluster 29/09/2023).

For more information, please refer to the ACAPS report on the Horn of Africa: impact of drought on children.

**Access to WASH facilities** and latrines in IDP sites and within host communities is limited by the lack of sex-segregated latrines, insufficient lighting, limited privacy, a lack of water, and unsafe locations (USAID 11/2019 b; Oxfam 11/12/2017; UN Women 17/11/2022). All of these contribute to women not using WASH and latrine facilities and instead increasingly relying on rivers, wells, and springs, all of which are unsafe and increase the chances of contracting waterborne diseases. Trips to these water sources also expose women and girls to different forms of GBV. Women and girls often report a lack of dignity kits, with the situation worsening at the height of conflict in Tigray as the blockade intensified (NRC/OCHA 26/07/2022).

**Access to and the capacity of health facilities** are extremely limited in the event of shocks, resulting in a lack of equipment, trained staff, and supplies (Engender Health 02/2022; USAID 06/2019; CARE 04/04/2021; Health Cluster 04/09/2023). Ethiopia's conflict has resulted in the looting, destruction, and occupation of facilities by armed groups and government forces (REF 01/01/2023; EHRC 11/03/2022). For example, in Tigray, out of 853 facilities, only 2% remained intact following conflict, with 86% partially damaged, according to data collected between May–June 2023 (Health Cluster 04/09/2023).

Overall maternal mortality rates are likely to increase with the growing incidents of GBV and child marriage, limited access to health facilities, a lack of human resources, and damaged health facilities (Protection Cluster 09/10/2023; KII 13/10/2023). There was a 22% reduction in maternal mortality between 2000–2011, with the 2021 rate at 401 deaths compared to a world average of 225 per 100,000 live births (UNDP accessed 18/10/2023; WHO accessed 19/10/2023). The conflict and drought in northern Ethiopia are likely to have undermined the overall progress in this matter. As per a 2019 study, rural areas, particularly Afar and Somali regions, have the lowest coverage of antenatal support and skilled care (UNICEF 04/2020).

The gender of the staff is also important, and in a community where there are more male health workers, women's health-seeking behaviours may be affected (KII 06/2023).

**Access to food and nutrition** affects the whole household, but children under three and men are often prioritised for food intake, followed by boys and girls, while women eat last because of social norms (Oxfam 11/12/2017; CARE 31/03/2016 and 09/01/2021; UNRISD 25/07/2016; NRC/OCHA 26/07/2022). The lack of food intake for women leads to health complications and other issues, including malnutrition and general weakness that can cause miscarriages and complications during childbirth, particularly during drought (UNRISD 25/07/2016). In Borena zone of Oromia, non-pregnant, non-lactating women are more vulnerable than pregnant and lactating women who had given birth 49 days prior, as they are initially prioritised for food intake (KII 06/2023).

Children are particularly vulnerable to droughts, as observed during the 2016–2017 drought. Food during this time was in the form of grains, but the lack of mills meant that children could not eat the food, and a lack of water meant that food could not be mixed for easier ingestion by children and the elderly (Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016). According to national-level data collected between 2000–2016, the prevalence of stunting, wasting, and being underweight was higher among boys compared to girls, irrespective of age (BMC 19/10/2023). Less time is spent on childcare as women spend more time on unpaid household tasks and income generation, which can affect children's nutritional status. It can also affect women's nutritional status because of the increased energy spent (Nutrition Cluster 29/09/2023). In Borena zone, the elderly are completely deprioritised from food intake, with elderly women in particular lacking support (HelpAge 14/06/2022; KII 06/2023). As men migrate, they gain greater access to food outside of the home (Oxfam et al. 16/09/2016).

**Access to GBV support and reproductive care** is limited given countrywide conflict and drought. There are continued cases of GBV, resulting in unintended pregnancy, HIV cases, and other sexually transmitted infections (UNFPA 19/05/2022; Govt. UK 01/11/2022; CARE 04/04/2021; UNGA 14/09/2023). GBV survivors in Ethiopia are referred to one-stop centres, with reports of survivors having to walk further to find these after seeking support in health facilities or posts. While one-stop centres provide comprehensive health, psychological, and justice support, they also tend to push survivors to seek legal assistance, even if they are only seeking health support (KII 13/10/2023). There is often very limited follow-up if and when a service is provided (USAID 06/2019).

GBV perception also influences whether victims seek assistance and the types of assistance offered. For example, sociocultural norms in Afar do not define FGM as a form of GBV, so people treat it differently, although services are available (KII 13/10/2023). A study on healthcare workers and their GBV perception highlights clear differences in understanding from region to region. For example, health practitioners in Amhara were found to have a narrower definition compared to those in Oromia (USAID 06/2019).

## HUMANITARIAN ASSESSMENTS

Within Ethiopia, there remains a lack of comprehensive multisectoral assessments carried out countrywide, as well as limited assessments with gender-specific indicators (USAID 11/2019 b; CGIAR 09/2016; KII 13/10/2023). Even when disaggregated data is collected, a gender lens is not consistently integrated into the analytical process but instead included on an ad hoc basis or tagged on (KII 13/10/2023). This does not provide a full or nuanced understanding of events' impact on different population groups, including changes over time (UN Women 26/04/2023). Accordingly, areas for further research include analysing assessments and analysis reports, their methodologies, and the extent to which they apply a gender lens. This is particularly important given that heads of households tend to be men, with their views represented in final results.

An area of particular focus is the lack of systematic data collection on GBV and protection risks, in part because of the sensitivity surrounding the topic (Protection Cluster 06/10/2022; UNFPA 12/12/2022; KII 13/10/2023). This makes it difficult to identify trends and changes over time. For example, qualitative evidence clearly suggests that GBV rates spike during crisis events, such as intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 pandemic in urban areas (DIIS 11/08/2020). Other examples include violence and GBV against men and boys (USAID 11/2019 b).

Lastly, the extent to which humanitarian programmes are perpetuating negative social norms is not consistently assessed. Most post-distribution monitoring and evaluation focuses on whether humanitarian aid has been delivered instead of reflecting on contextual indicators, such as the way in which it was delivered.