



## TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE THROUGH SOCIAL NORMS INTERVENTIONS

### Summary

The **Feed the Future Ethiopia Value Chain Activity (VCA)**, funded through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), worked to improve agricultural productivity and the commercialization of 300,000 smallholder farmers through an inclusive value chain and market systems approach in Ethiopia's Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), and Tigray regions. As a subcontractor to Fintrac, Banyan Global utilized the **Transformative Household Methodology (THM)**<sup>1</sup> to support social norms shifts around intra-household gender relations. THM's goal is to change perceptions of household gender stereotypes, influence families to share resources and decisions fairly, and promote income-generating activities for family members. Reaching over 52,000 participants, THM has had a significant impact on Ethiopian farmers, their families, and their communities.

"THM is a best practice. Before, I believed that men's workload is always greater than women's, but the THM discussion showed the reverse is true. I learned, and my thinking is changed."

*THM participant, male, Amhara*

### Background

According to the forthcoming [Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment: Social Norms Landscaping Study](#) conducted by the [USAID Women's Economic Empowerment Community of Practice](#) and led by Banyan Global, overall transformative and relationship-level interventions have the strongest evidence base for shifting social norms and effecting changes in women's economic power and gender equality. These include household methodologies that conduct dialogues with men and women to address gender inequality and promote equitable relations and dynamics within households and communities. Within Ethiopia's food security and agricultural sectors, women and youth have limited access to resources, decision-making authority, and leadership opportunities. Though women's roles vary across cultural and agro-ecological zones, they remain marginalized compared to their male counterparts.<sup>2</sup> For example, women face limitations in access to the agricultural resources and decision-making authority needed to run their farms as profitable businesses. They are time-poor compared to men as a result of household and childcare responsibilities, leaving them with less time to spend on income-generating activities. As a result of their limited access to productive resources and decision-making authority, women achieve yields up to 35 percent lower than men despite the fact that they perform about 70 percent of farm work.<sup>3</sup> Recognizing the critical need to address social norms within Ethiopia's agricultural value chain, Banyan Global recommended, adapted, and promoted THM to create awareness of intra-household gender relations among women, men, girls, and boys.

### Methodology

Banyan Global used a training of trainers (TOT) approach to implement THM and build long-term capacity and ownership of the model. TOT participants included farmers and their families, development army (DA) representatives and their groups,<sup>4</sup> cooperatives and common interest groups, and

<sup>1</sup> Send a Cow Ethiopia developed THM in 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Feed the Future/USAID [Ethiopia Multi-Year Strategy \(2011-2015\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> UN Women's [Preliminary Gender Profile of Ethiopia](#).

<sup>4</sup> Development army group members perform similar functions as agricultural extension agents.



government employees. Trained facilitators led THM trainings across their respective regions with community groups, DA members, and employee networks. Banyan Global’s THM facilitator toolkit included a guide, activity board, counting chips, and cards with simple instructions and visual cues. This format enabled participation from people with varying educational levels.

## Findings Summary

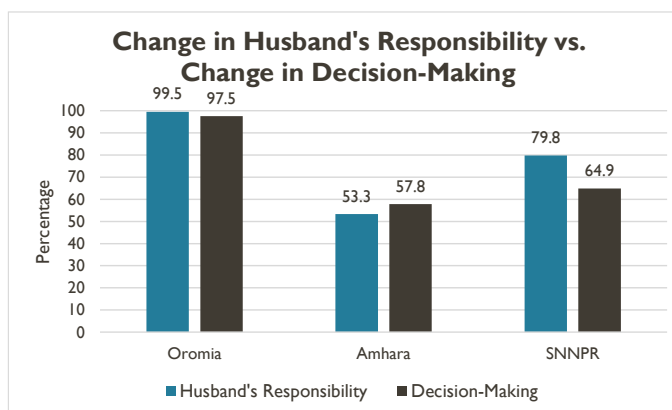
Between April and May 2021, Banyan Global’s team led a mixed-methods assessment to collect data from THM facilitators to discern household-level impact. Individuals (1,957 total, 68 percent female, 32 percent male) participated in 46 focus group discussions (see Table 1). THM’s

**Table 1. Respondents by Region and Sex**

| Region       | Female |              |       | Male  |            |       | Total        |
|--------------|--------|--------------|-------|-------|------------|-------|--------------|
|              | 15-29  | 30+          | Total | 15-29 | 30+        | Total |              |
| Amhara       | 38     | 71           | 109   | 13    | 95         | 108   | 217          |
| Oromia       | 324    | 386          | 710   | 98    | 218        | 316   | 1,026        |
| SNNPR        | 232    | 285          | 517   | 94    | 103        | 197   | 714          |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |        | <b>1,336</b> |       |       | <b>621</b> |       | <b>1,957</b> |

participatory approach fostered impactful conversations for families, leading to changes in behaviors and improvements within families and communities. The findings below highlight the proven potential of the THM approach over time:

- THM resulted in **decreased workloads** for female family members and **promoted a more balanced workload distribution** within households (including responsibilities that are traditionally associated with women’s or men’s domains).
- THM led to **changes and improvements in household decision-making**, such as including female members in conversations and in choices related to farm inputs and products sold.
- THM was **linked to improvements in women’s mobility** and increased engagement through social networks.
- THM **increased awareness** of differences in home-based responsibilities for all family members, but translating that awareness into practical changes requires additional efforts.
- In some cases, THM **improved women’s access to income**. In other instances, it was too early to tell if THM impacted women’s access to income because men’s increased contribution to household duties was only beginning to shift.



The findings from the THM data collection exercise and assessment validate shifts in social norms and behavior changes, and highlight the intervention’s effect on women’s, men’s, youth’s, and families’ resilience and farm management, contributing to agricultural advancement in Ethiopia. Applying the THM approach helps ensure that as agricultural value chains grow, women, youth, and other disadvantaged populations are able to participate in, benefit from, and feel confident in decisions that impact the economy. The findings also demonstrate powerful potential for other agricultural value chain and market systems activities.

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