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**DETERMINED GIRLS TO END
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the economic and social effects of COVID 19 in the country, most schools were closed, different institutions stopped giving services, and social movement was restricted. ActionAid Ethiopia with the financial support from the players of Peoples Post Code Lottery facilitated the process of undertaking Girls-Led research on the impact of COVID 19 on Girls Lives. Accordingly, 10 young girls between the age of 15 and 24 were selected in collaboration with Young Men Christians Association (YMCA). These young girls participated in a training followed by a research that took place in two sub-cities, namely, Kirkos sub-city (Woreda 03 and Woreda 04) as well as Gulele sub-city (Woreda 09 and 10).

The girls had to work hard with individuals, different governmental and non-governmental institutions to change the wrong attitude of the society they met during their research. This study that was conducted in different selected households, schools, health center, governmental institutes and police stations showed that violence against girls spiked during COVID 19 lock down.

The girls who conducted the research shared their experience and lessons they learned during the process to young girls living in the targeted sub-cities and Woredas. The experience sharing sessions were facilitated at Woreda 04 Youth Centre and Ethiopia YMCA youth centre. During these sessions the girls shared different challenges they faced and how they overcame those challenges, as well as their changes in attitude before, during, and after the study.



// My name is Kidan Tsehay. I joined the Girls-Led Research project by ActionAid Ethiopia as a consultant through competing after the job was advertisement on Ethio-jobs website. The Girls-Led Research training was prepared for three days entitled "Participatory Action Research." It included topics on definition of research, how to collect data, and who data is collected from, knowing each other, and expressing and sharing feelings. We also discussed on methods of data collection and identified data collection tools. //

"Next to this, the girls selected young peers for interview in the selected sub-cities; and we agreed on the research issues from 10 alternatives given by ActionAid Ethiopia team. We selected 3 of them, then the girls were given training and orientation on methods of reporting, communication, and issues of confidentiality.

We have seen a big difference in attitudes of the girls towards gender-based violence before and after Girls-led Research Training. Before the training, some of the girls were shy and were unable to introduce themselves and participate in the discussions, though some had self-confidence. But after the training, they changed themselves which made me very happy.

Regarding the problems we faced during data collection, some of our respondents were not focused on the main issues, for example, so we were forced to replace them with other respondents to solve those issues. The other issue we faced was that some government institutions were reluctant to give information which made our task a bit harder.

The issue of GBV is broad as we tried to identify in this research. The fact that ActionAid Ethiopia and Young Men's Christian Association Ethiopia worked on this issue gives hope to eradicate GBV. Particularly, girls and women need participation and awareness on this issue as it is very important for their sexual reproductive health right.

I believe that girls' participation and getting opportunity like this enable them to solve the problems they face and to transfer their skills and awareness they got from the training to many others to bring the change needed. Thank you!"

KIDAN
TSEHAY



Action for Gender Justice, Good Governance, and Poverty Eradication!

“My name is Nejat Fantahun. I am 19 years old and a second year accounting student. I got involved in this study through YMCA and it interested me because it dealt with girls’ issue which I want to work on in the future. This whole process of training and research has helped me plan better for my future. I live around Gurd Shola with my parents and my brothers support me in everything I do. I am very happy to be part of this study and I hope to do a better job in the future. Before conducting this study, I did not have much knowledge about the scale of gender-based violence and its victims. After we got ActionAid’s training and conducted the study, we met a lot of victims who shared their stories. During my study my parents were very supportive because they want me to develop my self-confidence.

The challenges I faced during this research were cat calling and harassment as well as people’s unwillingness to cooperate on the data collection process because of lack of awareness. I was honest and communicated all my difficulties with my family.

I have noticed so many issues with the society and realized much work is needed to solve these issues. We should help survivors of gender-based violence and help prevent GBV by creating awareness and working with schools and religious institutes. We must be voices for our sisters who survived GBV.



“My name is Marta Atlaw and am 20 years old in my senior year of high school. When I told my parents I want to participate in this research, they were very happy and gave me their blessing. I have seen a lot of change in myself since I started taking part in this study. Most people were hesitant to give us information because of their lack of awareness but after we explained to them what the project was about and its purpose, they were happy to cooperate.

Different organizations did not want to work with us saying ‘you are not going to bring any change with this study because you are very young girls,’ but we still tried our best and got the information that was needed for the study. After we had done the research, I realized that we had to work to stop GBV by creating awareness through school media educating, and empowering girls.

I also think that having a safe space for young people to report any kind of GBV they might come across would be very important. Since the scope of the problem is vast and large the change that needs to be seen in the society is not enough and more work needs to be done. The study we conducted might bring some change but there is still more work we need to do.”

Action for Gender Justice, Good Governance, and Poverty Eradication!

My name is Shalom Mekonnen and am 20 years old. I studied marketing at a technical and vocational college. When I started this research, I just wanted to go to the study site, collect the data, and go home. But as I was taking part in the study, I realized there were different very important issues I take an active role in solving them. My family really encouraged me to take part in this study. They have knowledge about gender-based violence.

Some of the challenges we experienced were cat calling and harassment in different places during the data collection process, some office personnels were hesitant to give us information and data. We solved these issues by having patience and improving our communication skills in trying to explain what our study is about thoroughly.

We have seen some changes in the communities we conducted the study on. But still the problems are vast and changing the societies attitude demands more work. In the future, I want to be influential, and I want to work in my community. I also want to teach young girls.

The message I want to convey to everyone is that we have to change our attitude towards women. We shouldn't give certain jobs to women and certain jobs to men because of their gender. So, we must teach both men and women are equal and we have to work for change.



My name is Feriha Musema. I am 20 years old and an IT student. Before I started this study, I didn't have much knowledge after I started this study my knowledge in the matter has increased. My parents have some understanding and as I told them my day-to-day activity during the time we were conducting the research, they became more aware. They also gave me some advice.

During the research some individuals had very little information while others were very informative and helped us a lot.

Some of the challenges we encountered were chat calling and unwillingness of our interviewees to get interviewed. We worked with our supervisors to solve these issues. I am very happy that I was part of this study. I have learned that I should not be a bystander in gender-based violence issues; I also realized that there needs to be attitudinal change in the society. There is a gap in the justice system when it comes to gender-based violence. I say this because I believe the perpetrators are not getting punishments that fit their crime. Every individual and all parties should feel responsible for the matter. We shouldn't be desensitized to the issue and normalize gender-based violence; we should all work together to end it.

“My name is Shewanesh Sisay. I am 16 years old and attend in grade 9 at Abiyot Kirs high school. I leave with my parents. In the future I want to be a model and poet.

The Girls-led research changed my attitude about gender-based violence, my knowledge about girls’ problem and how violence has increased. I understood that our community undermined girls in social, economic, and political arenas. Some respondents told us we were too young to do research and they didn’t believe we can make a change.

During the data collection, some young men tried to harass us, and some asked us money but as we were trained, we solved the problem and collected our data wisely. From the research, I have seen the level of my communication skills, self-confidence, GBV, and learned from the community. Joining this team has made me realize I must be a voice for girls in everything I do, and I will be. I want to be an example to my family and my friends. Thank you!”



**SHEWANESH
SISAY**



**FIKIR
TSEHAYE**

“ My name is Fikir Tshaye. I am 17 years old I live in Addis Ababa around Agona Cinema. I live with my mother and brother. I am a 10th grade student at Frehiwot high school. In the future, I want to be a doctor. I also want to change the attitude of society by doing different research like this one. Besides, I am so proud to be part of this study. I feel lucky to have been chosen. It showed me there is entity still working for the betterment of women’s livelihood and rights. It also helped me change my own attitude towards these issues.





My name is Tseganesh Hailu. I am 19 years old. I was born in Guraghe zone, Butajira town. I am studying Marketing in a technical and vocational college. I never get defeated by the challenges I face in my life. Before taking part in this study, I had no information that GBV was very prevalent in our communities. However, after I started this study, I was more aware. I also feel like I have empathy now. When I heard different stories from the girls, their happy times make me happy, and their sad times make me sad.

I didn't have much confidence in expressing myself. Earlier, I was scared to speak in front of a large crowd. After getting ActionAid's training and conducting this research, I have noticed a big change in myself. In the future, I want to help girls overcome hardship in their life.

Before this study, my family had some knowledge about this subject. Me and my sister discussed it in different occasions. The communities we conducted the study on had some knowledge about GBV but compared to the magnitude of the problem, the level of awareness among the community is very low. The fact that people, especially young people, are too uncomfortable to discuss the issue as a problem indicates the lack of awareness among society. By explaining about our study to young people and different institutions, we were able to convince them to work with us and help us collect data. We also tried to create awareness in different groups to address their wrong attitudes regarding GBV.

In the future, I want to teach girls to develop their self-confidence. I also want to help them openly discuss the issues they face to find solutions. I want to create a generation of girls who believe in themselves.



My name is Efrata Tesfay and I was born in Arsi. When I turned 6, I moved to Addis Ababa and started school. I went to Metebaber elementary school in Lideta sub city, Woreda 03. Although I had trouble making friends, I was one of the smartest kids in the school. After finishing 8th grade I spent summer time receiving training in language, business, cooking and leadership from YMCA which helped me develop my self-confidence. While I was attending my first year in high school at Balcha Aba Nefso high school, COVID pandemic broke out and we were made to stay at home, so I had to spend my time at home reading books.

After finishing 10th grade, I took cooking training for 3 months at YMCA. I love cooking and want to peruse it as a profession. After I took the cooking training, I got the opportunity to work in this research. Participating in this research has made me very confident. After my family saw the results of this study, they changed their attitude about this issue. While conducting this study, most people didn't think we could do the job because we were young. They didn't want to answer our questions and didn't take us seriously, but when we explained to them the importance of our work and the magnitude of the problem, they were more willing to help us. Some of the challenges we faced were long walks that were exhausting, and we faced issues with cat calling but we were able to win over the challenges and do our jobs. This study helped me to do some self-reflection. It helped me be wiser and stronger. I also learned that I could overcome any obstacle in my way and make my dreams come true.

The society did not have much awareness during COVID before the study. There were individuals who shared their stories with us. I have seen many problems women face every day and I want to work hard to solve them.



My name is Netsanet Daniel. I am a 9th grade student at Abyot Kirs school. I live with my mother with my sister and brother. I am very happy that I took part in this study. This study we conducted with ActionAid Ethiopia and YMCA will bring about a lot of changes for women and young girls. I believe by working on the attitude of men or violence perpetrators and creating awareness, we can reduce violence against women and young girls. I have one friend in school who tries to raise awareness about this subject amongst our peers, we discussed ways to prevent GBV.

I love my mother, she helps me with everything I do, we talk like friends and discuss everything, and this makes me very happy.



My name is Bethelhem Mohammed. I am 15 years old and I was born in Addis Ababa. I am a 9th grade student at Abiyot Kirs high school. I live with my parents. I have 3 sisters and one brother. My mother is the one raising us on her own. We had financial difficulties in the past but since my mother is hard working and strong, we were able to get out of poverty and be financially stable.

I learned a lot of things from this study. I realized I am capable of making a positive change in reducing the burden placed upon women's shoulders. My family did not understand the concept of the study and was a little scared to let me participate as I have never been on my own and far away from home. After we had our training for a few days, I was able to show my family the importance of this study. Me and the other girls started the data collection process, and I would often tell my family about the challenges we faced in the field. My family gave me great advice on how to overcome these challenges. The community is not very knowledgeable about the issue but we tried to explain to them why it's important and persuade them to participate in the data collection by giving information.

In general, I learned that I have to work further to reduce the burden on women and prevent gender-based violence. In the future, I want to do everything I can to help and educate young girls.



While the Girls are sharing their experience and present the research.



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