

# ActionAid for Women economic Justice

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Ensuring **women's right** to Economic Justice; Recognition, Reduction and Redistribution of Unpaid Care Work (UCW) is one of the focus areas of ActionAid Ethiopia (AAE)'s interventions. Towards achieving this goal in all its Local Right Programmes (LRPs), AAE has been supporting **hard-to-reach women** to get organized under Saving and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) so that they can access loans, start income generation activities, and become profitable towards meeting their own and their families' needs. Since 2015 alone, AAE has organized and supported more than 37 saving and credit groups in its Local Rights Programmes (LRPs) across the country.

AAE is also a secretariat of the National Women Economic Empowerment Forum (NWEFF) which was established in October 2021 together with UN Women Ethiopia Country Office, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs; Ministry of Labor and Skills and the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations with the purpose of setting up a national platform to bring key stakeholders together for joint dialogue; sharing of information; lessons learned and best practices; models on Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) and to jointly seek

solutions for challenges facing women in the economic sector. The overall objective of the Platform is to foster stronger coordination and partnerships among pertinent stakeholders and partners who are working on the Economic Empowerment of Women.

As a follow up to this AAE collaborated with Civil Society Academy (CSA) to provide training on effective advocacy to address WEE related issues in Ethiopia with partner CSOs at national and regional level as well as women organized under SACCOs based on joint participatory context



*Women have exhibited that they can transform lives of their families with little economic and social support.*



*Dushiki, is a member of women saving and Credit Cooperative formed with the support of ActionAid Ethiopia in Semen Bench. She took a loan of 3000birr to expand her coffee seedling transplantation filed and succeeded to increase her income and livelihood.*

analysis which identified WEE stakeholders; profile of vulnerable groups; historical background for WEE; the legal and policy framework and the programs and schemes. Advocacy communication and documentation strategies were developed portraying the advocacy issues, goal, demands, strategies, the stakeholders to engage and the like.

## **National Dialogue Forum Organized**

A high-level national dialogue was organized by AAE in collaboration with Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MOWSA) and UN-Women to dialogue towards removing the challenges in the practice of organizing women only/led



Cooperatives which was one of the WEE issues that was highlighted during the launch of the NWEFF.

Current legal framework and practice in organizing and strengthening of SACCOs was presented and representatives from the regions presented their achievements, challenges, opportunities, and threats on the issue.

The major issues of dialogue were on why in practice some cooperative offices at Woreda level are prohibiting women only SACCOs from being organized and strengthened? Why does the law limit the number of SACCO organized in one locality? Why is the number of members set at 50 without considering context? Lack of coordination;

federal laws not being cascaded to regional, zonal and Woreda level administrations; regional proclamations not being amended following amendments at federal level; unavailability of systems, spaces for manufacturing and selling of products to encourage women; the federal laws not being cascaded.

A task force was then assigned from Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MOWSA), Cooperatives commission, AAE and UN Women to follow up on continued discussions on facilitation for premises for manufacturing, sales, and offices to SACCOs; organizing fora for continued engagements; consider and promote discretion of the women being organized; conduct assessments to further evidence the benefits of women only SACCOs; advocating for organization and strengthening of women only



*AAE organized TOT on Advocacy and Women Economic Empowerment to representatives and leaders of women-based institutions and CBOs.*



*Economically and socially disadvantaged women living urban areas strive to lead their lives by engaging in petty trade. ActionAid Ethiopia in Guna supports such women by giving Basic Business Skill and establishes women Saving and Credit Cooperatives with initial capital.*

SACCOs as means for equity and women economic empowerment as well as platform for enhancing women leadership and making their voices heard; placing mechanisms for consultations with relevant stakeholders on policies/legislation on draft policies before they come into force and in general work closely to achieve short-, mid- and long-term goals.

## Decent Work for Informal Women Collectives

Ensira Women Pottery Cooperative members were one of the presenters on the launch of NWEFF. On the event they shared their challenges as low-income women potters particularly relating to their work environment and lack of necessary equipment. AAE management paid a visit to the center and witnessed the indecent workplace with hazardous and fatal working conditions across the line of production. The cooperative has 300 members with widows accounting for the majority. Based on discussion with the leaders on the pressing needs of the women, different tools, wheels, tables, chairs, furnace, mills were provided for value addition and enhancing their effectiveness and efficiency besides contributing towards decent working environment for the women.

***“The conditions we are working in are very difficult for our health and safety. The chairs, tables, and other huge equipment ActionAid supported us will significantly improve our health, safety, productivity, and income”***- A member of ‘Ensira Clay Works Cooperative’ in Addis Ababa.



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