



# *The Missing Links in empowering women to adapt climate change experiences from Afar region, North-eastern Ethiopia*

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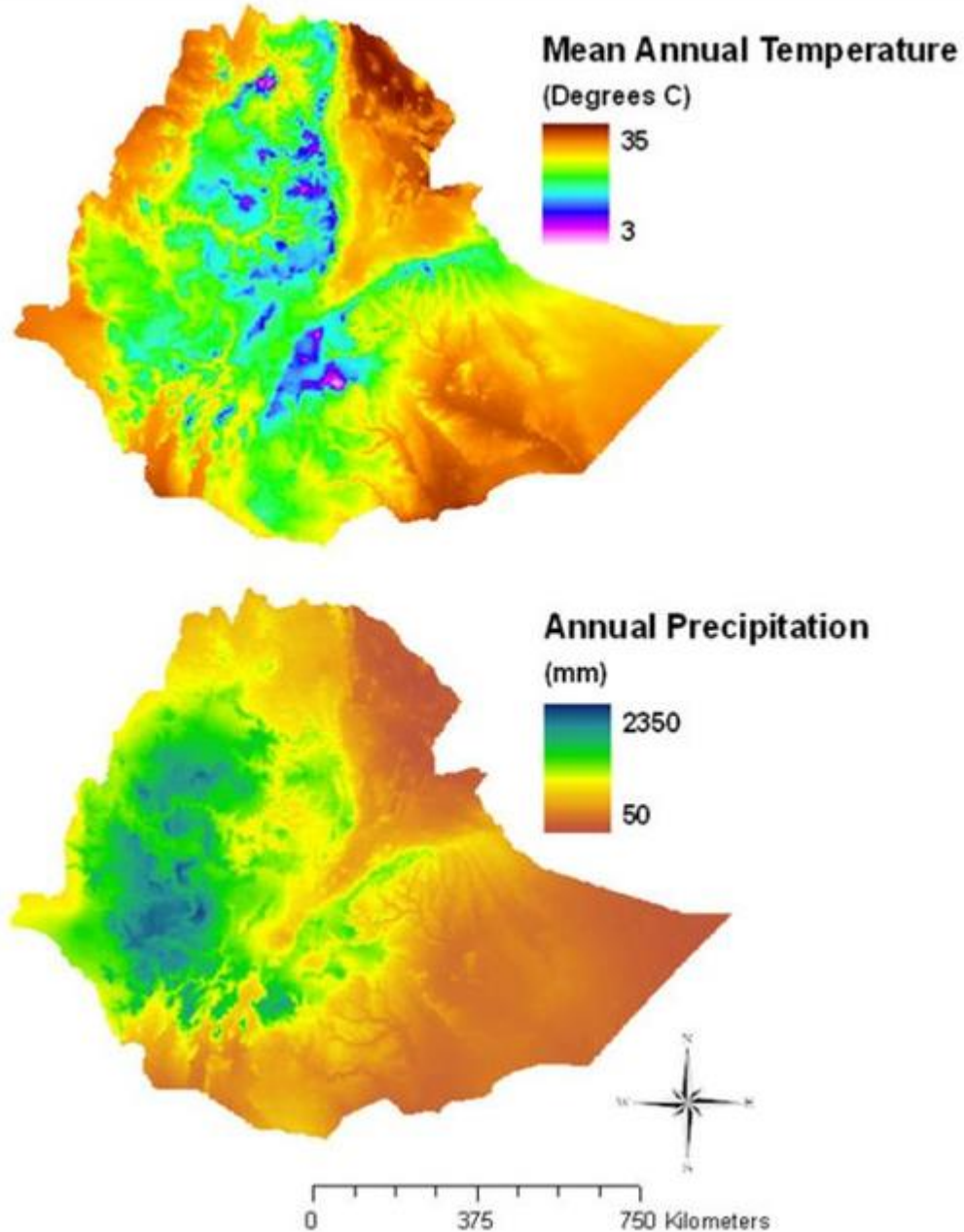


# Methodology

- ▶ Data collection
  - ▶ Institutional mapping
    - ▶ Interview held with development partners in the Afar region
  - ▶ Interview with household heads
  - ▶ Focus group discussions
  - ▶ Desk review
- ▶ Analysis
  - ▶ Descriptive and explorative
  - ▶ Content analysis



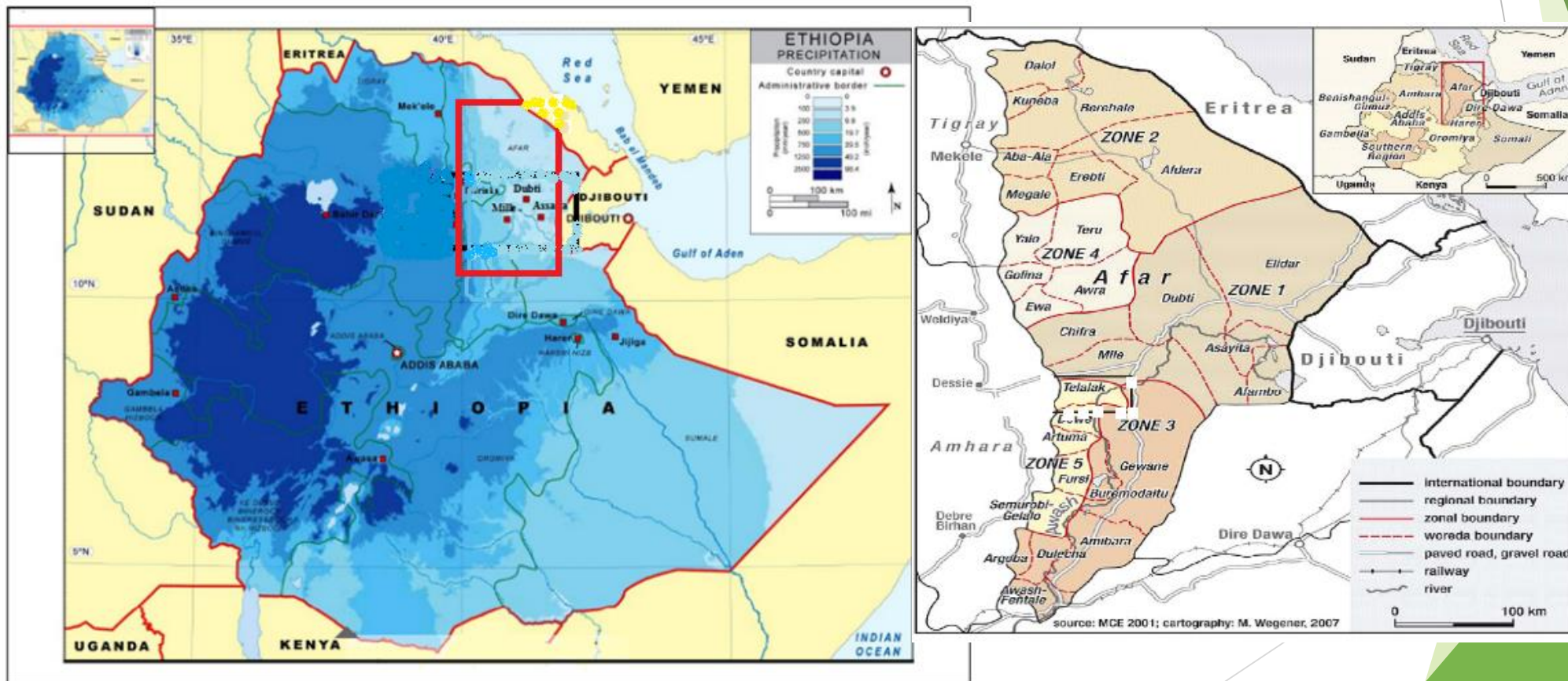




- ▶ Between 1960 and 1990 there were ten floods, but between 1990 and 2014 there were 46 reported flood events.
- ▶ Between 1960 and 1990 there were six droughts, but between 1990 and 2014 nine drought events were reported and they are occurring at more frequent intervals, approximately every two years.
- ▶ In 1965, about 1.5 million people were affected by droughts, but the number has increased over time; in 2003, about 13 million people in Ethiopia were drought-affected.



# Study areas





# Results

- ▶ *Experience of climate change*
  - ▶ **100% of our respondents** think that climate is changing and in fact is getting worse over the years.
  - ▶ According to our survey results, the most important climate change indicators in the study areas are:
    - ▶ increasing temperature, severe drought, loss of agro biodiversity,
    - ▶ loss/disease of livestock, wind storms, and diseases.
- ▶ Especially, drought is so severe that it occurs every year leading to the **loss of the vegetative cover** of the region and thereby destroying the livestock-based livelihood of the pastoral communities.





## Awareness climate change

- All (100%) of the study respondents affirm that intensity and frequency of drought has increased which in turn has led to a complete or significant loss of the vegetative population in the study areas. The livestock population of the pastoral communities has, as a result, declined significantly



## *Vulnerability status of women vs. men*

- ▶ women, children, and the elderly are most affected by climate change. 91.5% are in favor
- ▶ community cannot move from place to place at times of shock rather women have to assume even **greater workloads to provide for the family including caring for children, the elderly and sick, and weak livestock.**



- ▶ When severe drought occurs, men travel long distances in search of water and pasture for the cattle, leaving children and women back at home. This **leaves women with the burden of taking care of everything**
- ▶ **the cultural burdens:** women in many rural societies have no access to or control over productive assets such as livestock and land







## Cont . . .

- ▶ Our FGDs have revealed that:
  - ▶ Resources like land and cattle are controlled by men but women can only sell milk, leather and allocating for their family's daily consumption.
  - ▶ Women have less participation in alternative income generation as they are not allowed to move outside their locality.
  - ▶ Even though the Afar women have no control over resources, they have a greater role in the family life.
    - ▶ Fetching water and collection of firewood from far areas in the burning desert temperature, preparation of food and giving care and support for children, old aged people and patients, and construction of *dibora* (a typical Afar house) are daily routine workloads of pastoral women.



## Young girls while fetching water



# Table of gender constructs

Variable	Gender		Time spent
	Female	Male	
Division of labour			
Milking	/		Daily
Selling milk	/		Daily
Selling of other animal products e.g. skin	/		Weekly
Collecting firewood	/		Daily
Fetching water	/		Daily
Food preparation	/		Daily
Cleaning of the surroundings	/		Daily
Purchasing of food	/	/	Weekly/monthly
Caring for children, the sick and the old people	/		Daily
Grazing of animals	/	/	Daily
Selling of animals		/	Depends
Participation in public works (PSNP)	/	/	Often women
Resource ownership			
Household income		/	
Cattle		/	
Livestock products (milk, ghee, skin, hide)	/	/	
Land		/	
Decision making			
Children's education		/	
Visiting health facilities		/	
Expenditure/income		/	
Buying food for daily and future use		/	
Size of the herd to be kept		/	
Selling and buying animals		/	
Purchase of household assets		/	
Marriage		/	
Migration		/	
Use of land		/	
Engagement in income generating activities		/	

- Of the **12 activities** listed, **67%** are a women only to do list (division of labour)
- Of the **four critical resources**, **75%** are controlled by men (resource ownership and control)
- Of the **12 decision making issues**, **91.7%** of the cases are decided by men only (decision making power)
- women, children, and elderly are the most vulnerable groups according to **91.5%** of our respondents. However, **63.2%** of the respondents believe that men are also highly vulnerable



# Gender constructs of the pastoralists - women's vulnerability

- ▶ Infrastructure issues: There are reported cases that women have to travel over 200 km (e.g., (eli'*de-ar* woreda) to the place where aid is distributed and this has resulted in that men falsely claim that the women are their wives and take the food aid in their name.
  - ▶ This is mainly attributed to the fact that women can no leave their areas/villages to such long distances allowing men to take advantage of.
- ▶ There are also cases where men who have more than three wives may take the aid in the name of their wives but often may have to stay with one of their other wife in town without even sending none of the food aid to their wives in the remotest areas of the woreda.

# Lack of drinking water drives more women to longer distances to fetch water

- ▶ women have to travel more than 4 hours of round trips in walking minutes for more than 3-5 days per week.
- ▶ In areas where water is too scarce the government of each woreda has to distribute drinking water using water tankers especially to the remotest under serviced areas.
  - ▶ This scheme is not as such pro women in the remote areas as the water tankers will distribute only to the accessible parts of the woredas and those who come first (those close by and men) will have to take the water leaving most women far from the access road without water.

## *Selling of animals and decision over the income and expenditure*

- ▶ the role of **selling animals is a men to do list**
- ▶ the decision making power over the **income and expenditure from the sale of these livestock and other valuables is subject to men.**
- ▶ As men go to town to sell their livestock, they may not come back for fairly long period of time staying with one of their other wives elsewhere.
  - ▶ And the income from the sale of the livestock may end up with the other wife who do not even own the livestock while the other wife may not get a dime, according to the women FGDs.



## *Early marriage of school girls*

- ▶ Education is positively correlated with increased adaptive capacity of households
  - ▶ Higher education - enhanced livelihood opportunities
- ▶ Most girls are not required to continue their higher education as they don't have to move out side their villages (improvement is there)
- ▶ When they reach the age of 12-14, they are forced into an arranged marriage (more severe area)
- ▶ They are considered better off when they are married
- ▶ This limits women's long term adaptive potentials

## *Leadership role in social organization and traditional institutions of governance*

- ▶ Women have **Two voices/tones** - according to the FGDs women are required to have two tones: one when they speak in front of their husbands and the other while outside their household.
  - ▶ Soft - while interacting with men or council of elders
  - ▶ Loud - while in their household
- ▶ This might hinder them from accessing institutional capitals that can be used to adapt climate risks

## *Coping strategies?*

- ▶ Sale of livestock, reducing meals, eating less preferred food and purchase of crops from market (consumption related), safety net are the main adaptation strategies.
- ▶ the main livelihood provider is productive safety net while livelihood diversification is highly curtailed due to continuous severe drought
- ▶ Vegetative and livestock loss is especially severe in Berahle woreda, largest recipient of productive safety net transfers in Afar region



# Coping strategy

- ▶ Some people migrate toward pasture and water sources or engage in petty trade, and also wood collection for selling.
- ▶ Women have the capacity to properly manage the available food in the house.



# *Are aids sustainable or empowering?*

- ▶ 92.4% of the respondents believe that the current conservation structures are of little value where there is no rain that can be saved
  - ▶ “we work for nothing . . .” is a common notion among the FGD participants
  - ▶ Most of the FGD participants think that migration is no longer an option for adaptation to climate change
- ▶ Construction of schools, health facilities, water wells, are felt to be important for a long term adaptation

Sheik Mohammed Ali Deressa, a 55 year old local elder from Dimtu kushet (Dareraytelliganda area) of Lela-Ala kebele, captures it all:

- *“40 years back our family (parents) used to have more than 300 goats and over 15 camel heads which provided for most of our livelihood needs. As children we used to drink milk every day even when we were on the fields looking after the goats, we often eat meat every week and we were happy. All of our village was covered with various species of trees (e.g., maderto, dawayto, heda, hebela, kusra, garsa, alayto, gaboyta, sereka, gabu, sulumto, merka’etu, daguh, tuka, etc which were nutritious for human and animal consumption) bushes, and grasses (e.g., sakayto, bukayto, gorub, e’lili, elayto, sikaya, ale-garsa, endadsiri, sidi). Our livestock had plenty to feed and plenty to give to our family . . . as we were totally dependent on them”*



Asya Mohammed Fereda is a 50 year old widowed single mother (from dimtu kushet, 25 North West of Berahle woreda) who become responsible to provide for the family of 10 following the death of her husband.

- She regretfully thinks that “everything is gone due to recurrent drought and we have to walk an average of 3-4 hours round trip to fetch water and 2-3 hours of roundtrip to collect firewood, no livestock & milk, and we have to provide for the family on top of the culturally domestic workloads. What can we do, this is God’s will”

The narrative story above reveals the extent of women’s dependence on the local vegetative population directly or indirectly

## recommendations

- ▶ Combining climate change adaptation with economic empowerment of women creates a window of opportunity for building mutual synergy on the path to poverty reduction and development.
- ▶ Ensure that distribution points are as close and accessible to beneficiaries as possible (distance should be no more than 10 km, Sphere Standards).
- ▶ The number of food distribution centres have reached **128 in 2015 compared to 18 in 2010.**
- ▶ Ensure that the distribution arrangements (time, place, schedule, size and weight, etc.) do not discriminate against vulnerable or marginalized groups
- ▶ Community ownership of water supply projects - other than bolstering efforts to increase access to safe potable water supply
- ▶ Use influential project stakeholders as advocates for addressing GBV, HTP and early marriage, such as religious and community leaders

Thank you  
the team, the pastoralists, & Administrators

