PHOTOVOICE, 2017
ABOUT TESFA & PHOTOVOICE

TESFA: TOWARDS IMPROVED ECONOMIC AND SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS, 2017

How would you feel if you were to wake up one morning and realize that you are 15 years old, married, have a child that needs your care and support, have become financially dependent on your husband, and have household chores that you are solely responsible for and living in rural town in the Amhara region of Ethiopia?

A study conducted by the Population Council and UNFPA in 2009 showed that the Amhara region had one of the highest early marriage rates in the country. Forty-eight percent of girls were married by the age of 15, which led to have problems regarding their sexual and reproductive health, education and financial stability. Working on these issues not only changes the lives of the girls but also the community.

Towards Improved Economic and Sexual Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls-TESFA empowers the disadvantaged ever-married adolescent girls economically and sexual and reproductive health services. The project is implemented in rural areas of South Gonder in the Amhara region where most of the adolescent girls face many health related, financial and social problems. TESFA project has occurred in several phases since the start in 2011. TESFA is currently implemented in Farta Wereda of South Gonder in the Amhara region, and it is funded by the Johnson and Johnson Corporate Contribution and the implementation started in 2015 and will end on December 31, 2018. The current phase of TESFA aims to address 3,000 ever-married adolescent girls were involved in the project.

CARE believes that involving the community in every step of the implementation of a project is critical in bringing a positive multi-level change. As many of the other projects in CARE Ethiopia, TESFA uses Social Analysis and Action approach to identify and change the social norms that negatively affect the wellbeing of adolescent girls. The adolescent girls are given trainings on sexual and reproductive health issues and life skills and economic empowerment through Village Saving and Loan Associations.

Imagine your life just as you had done earlier, but this time, consider the potential impact of TESFA. Try to picture how TESFA could positively change your life. This photovoice document, by allowing the girls to capture moments in their lives through photos, tries to highlight some of those changes brought on by TESFA for the girls and the communities.

Esther Watts
Country Director
ABOUT PHOTOVOICE

Photovoice is a qualitative research method that is used to collect data using pictures. The main aims of photovoice is to enable people to express the community’s strength/weaknesses, to capture and reflect knowledge about critical issues and to reach policy makers through photographs\(^3\). This photovoice aimed to capture the changes that the TESFA project has brought in the lives of the adolescent girls based on the girls’ perspectives.

TESFA PHOTOVOICE

The current phase of the TESFA project is implemented in 11 kebeles of Farta Wereda of South Gonder, in the Amhara region of Ethiopia. To document the changes that the TESFA project has brought into the lives of its participants, 16 adolescent girls from ages 15 to 22 years old living across five kebeles were selected to participate in the photovoice project. Each girl received training on the aim of photovoice, as well as on how to use a digital camera to capture the changes that the TESFA program has brought about in her life and her community. Consent was obtained from each participant. Pictures were taken by the girls during the months of December (2017) and January (2018). Once each girl captured 20 photos, the CARE Ethiopia team captured captions that provided explanations for the pictures. The photos and the captions were coded. Then the data were categorized into thematic areas. The selected pictures with the captions were compiled as a report. The mean age of the girls was 19.25 with a range of 15 to 22 years.

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1 The Adolescent Experience in-depth: Using Data to Identify and Reach the Most Vulnerable Youth People, Population Council & UNFPA, 2009.
2 “Tesfa” means “Hope” in the Ethiopian language of Amharic
“This is me and my mother. Before the TESFA project, we did not discuss the issue of family planning, but now we discuss about the advantage of family planning. So I am advising her to use it.”

Abebech Dessie

Before TESFA, it was not common to discuss contraceptive use with elder women, as having multiple children was considered a valuable asset.

“I had no idea what family planning was. Now, I use contraceptive to avoid unplanned pregnancy. The picture shows my husband, my 3 year-old-child and me. My husband and I discuss and decide our family size. We are now happy.”

Ehetenat Kassie

“As you can see in the picture, I am with Social Analysis and Action group member. She advised me to take contraceptives 45 days after giving birth.”

Ehetenesh Mekuanent
“I knew nothing about family planning previously. I convinced my mother-in-law and husband so that I can use family planning. As you can see in the picture, I am holding my appointment card of family planning. I can freely use family planning now.”

Fiker Yerega

In many cases within the community, husbands and in-laws resist and do not allow girls to use family planning.

“This is a picture of my son, husband and I. We planned our family, so we are happy.”

Habtam Nega

“This is a picture of my friend’s daughter. I advised my friend not to give birth before her daughter gets older because I know that she will suffer if she gets pregnant now. So now she and another 10 friends of mine are using family planning because of my advice.”

Habtam Eshete

Before TESFA, many married girls did not have friends or social connections to support one another.
“I just took an injectable contraceptive at the health center. I take it every three months. I use contraceptives because I want to avoid unplanned pregnancy.”

Mosobua Kasse

“I am taking an injectable contraceptive at the health post. I had no clue about family planning use and was afraid to be seen while taking one. So, I gave birth when I was 13 and 16 years old. Thanks to TESFA project, I now know the importance of family planning and I am not ashamed of using it.”

Neter Molla
“This is my mother-in-law, me and my neighbor with her child as seen in the picture. We had no awareness about family planning and even if adolescent girls wanted to use family planning, our mother-in-laws would not let us use any. But now my mother-in-law is a member of Social Analysis and Action group. So, my mother-in-law and I are advising my neighbor to use family planning because it has been 6 months since she delivered her baby.”

Tesfa Meles

“I am at the health facility for my pre natal care follow up. I advised my friend about family planning use and she came along with me to use family planning.”

Tsedal Desse

“I did not know about family planning method before TESFA project, but now I know the types and started using one. I give advise to my friends to use family planning methods”.

Yamrot Dires

The importance of contraceptive use is not well known by adolescent girls and even going to health center is a challenge due to their limited mobility.
“In the picture, I am with my mother. My mother used to give birth every 2 years. She did not use any family planning method. I advised her and she is now using contraceptive.”

Yeshiye Dires

“I am at my pre natal care follow up at a health facility, as seen in the picture. When I had my first baby, I did not go to a health facility. Now, I am attending pre natal care appointments and planning to deliver at a health facility.”

Tsedal Desse
“I am building a new house made of a metal ceiling. I bought the land with 12,000 birr ($440USD) and the materials with 10,000 birr ($366USD) by selling groceries. I feel satisfied with myself.”

Yitatek Kinde

Building a house is a major accomplishment for Yitatek, as there is a common belief that women are not capable of doing this.

“ My father use to give me money but now I am giving it to him.”

Yeshiye Dires

“I am making Mesob (a traditional box used to hold injera). I sell this type of handicrafts and now I have 6,500birr ($238USD) and I am planning to use this money to start another business”.

Yeshiye Dires
“Before TESFA, I did not have any sheep. But then, I started to save and took a loan. Using the money I got, I started to engage myself in different businesses, so I bought a sheep with 1,500 birr ($55USD). Now, the sheep gave birth so I have another asset.”

Yamrot Dires

“Using different income-generating activities, I am building a new house made of a metal ceiling.”

Tesfa Melese

In the area where Tesfa lives, people commonly live in thatched houses, typically owned by husbands. Having a house made of metal ceiling is a sign of wealth that was previously unthinkable for a woman.

“These are the sheep that I own. I rear and sell sheep. I took money from our group savings and started selling cereals. Using the profit that I have made, I invested in sheep. I have now managed to return the loan and my total capital is 10,000 birr ($366 USD).”

Tesfa Melese
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

“In the past, I could not afford to buy onions and oil so I would not make wot (sauce). Now, I can afford it so I am chopping an onion to prepare wot.”

Simegn Destaw

“I am standing next to piles of sacks of grain. Previously, me and my husband had no food to eat. I took a loan and started a cereal business. I buy cereal during cheaper seasons and sell it when it gets expensive. This picture shows the sacks of grain that I stored to be sold in the future.”

Simegn Destaw

“I used to ask money from my husband but now I am able to make money by myself. I now give money to my husband.”

Neter Molla
“I am now involved in different kinds of income generating activities. I sell different kinds of goods. I am seen as a role model to the community.”

Mosobua Kasse

“I now can afford to buy school materials by myself and attend school freely.”

Mikre Sisay

“Thanks to TESFA project, I now own a calf that I bought with 2,500birr ($92USD).”

Mikre Sisay
“This is my mother. I initiated my mother to start her own business. She now sells potatoes and makes money out of this business.”

Mikre Sisay

“This used to be the house that I lived in. I have an onion farm. With the money that I had from the farm, I bought a land with 14,500 birr ($531USD). I am now building another house.”

Habtam Eshete

“This is my new house that I am building. I feel so proud that I am living in a house made of iron ceiling.”

Habtam Eshete
“This is a picture of me holding my saving accounts. Previously, I knew nothing about saving but now I have two saving accounts in Amhara Credit and Saving Institution and the Commercial Bank.”

Habtam Nega

In this society, saving is not a common practice. Women typically do not have their own income, let alone their own money to save.

“I used to beg money from my husband. I now have 19,000 birr ($696USD) capital from my restaurant and different income generating activities. I now give money to my husband.”

Habtam Nega

“I bought 3 sheep with 2,000 birr ($73USD) and one gave birth. I sold the lamb with 1,700 birr ($62USD). Now, two of the sheep are pregnant. If I want to sell my sheep, I will have an estimated birr of 4,400 birr ($161USD).”

Fiker Yerga
“Before I joined TESFA project, I had no idea what profit and loss were and what type of goods have high demand by the community. I now know this and own a shop. I have 50,000 birr ($1,831USD) stock in my shop.”

Ehetenat Kasse

“I took a loan and bought salt. With the profit that I had, I then bought hens and sheep. I now own 3 hens and 6 sheep. I did not own sheep before and I am now the owner of these assets.”

Dasash Getachew

“I sell goods from my home, since the market is far. I am the first person to sell goods from home in the area. This idea came to me when I took trainings of the project. My capital now is 9,563 birr ($350USD).”

Abebech Desse
“I bought a piece of land and sow seeds of vetch. I sold the vetch and with the money that I had, I bought this cow that you see in the picture.”

Tsedal Desse
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
“This is me with my friend. We now discuss about problems in our community like early marriages and how to prevent it. We share the experiences that we have among ourselves and to the community.”

**Abebech Desse**

Discussing and sharing ideas, even among friends is not a typical activity among young women in the community.

“I am standing next to my mother-in-law. She is a member of Social Analysis and Action group. Previously, we barely talked, but now we talk about many things. She advised me to vaccinate my child.”

**Ehetenesh Mekuanent**

Before TESFA, it was unimaginable to have open discussion with one’s mother-in-law.

“My mother-in-law and me are on our way to church. I used to be scared of calling her by her name, let alone go to church with her. Now that my communication skills have improved, I communicate with her freely. We now are living in harmony.”

**Fiker Yerega**
“I used to be scared of my husband. I was even scared of looking at him. But now, I can freely talk to him and we are on good terms.”

Fiker Yerega

“I used to be scared of my mother-in-law. I did not even call her by her name let alone discuss with her about family planning. Now, we discuss about many things, including family planning. She even reminds me the dates of my appointments to take family planning method.”

Tesfa Meles

“Before, I would not call my husband by his name and would not eat with him. We now solve our problems by discussion and we live in harmony.”

Tsedal Desse

In this community, many wives are afraid of their husbands and having a discussion together was rare. As seen in the picture, the wife is feeding her husband. This is considered a sign of respect and love in the community.
“In the picture, I am reading the discussion manual from TESFA project. I want to show that I attend meetings of the project twice a month.”

**Ehetenesh Mekuanent**

Before TESFA, it was unacceptable within this community for a woman to go out from her home and attend meetings freely.

“I am wearing *netela* (a piece of cloth like a scarf) to go to church by myself. Previously, I would not be allowed to go to the market or other places. Now, I can move freely from place to place.”

**Fekir Yirga**

“This picture was taken while I was on my way to the market. I now can move freely to sell my products at the market.”

**Habtam Eshete**
“I am on my way to the market. Previously, my mother and my ex-husband used to do the shopping for me. But now, I can go by myself without anyone forbidding me.”

**Simegn Destaw**

In the Amhara region, women are typically required to ask permission in order to leave their homes to go to the market or even to attend church.

“Here I am wearing *netela*. I wore it because I am on my way to church. Previously, I could not go to church without asking my husband for permission. This picture shows the freedom that I have to go to places.”

**Tsedal Desse**

“As you can see in the picture, I am packing my product to sell it in the market. Only guys were allowed to go to the market place but now I can go by myself and sell my products.”

**Yeshiye Dires**
“This is me at the field processing the farm product. This used to be considered as a man’s job but I am doing it now.”

Abebech Desse

In this community, there are different roles given for husbands and wives. When they are seen engaging in other roles, it is typically considered shameful.

“I used to wash my husband’s feet but now he does it by himself.”

Dasash Getachew

“I used to fetch water from the nearby water source by myself. Now, my husband fetches water for me.”

Dasash Getachew

Historically, only women engaged in household activities, taking care of their children at home and fetching water even while carrying their babies.
“As you can see in the picture, my husband is sweeping the floor. This was my responsibility before, but now he helps me.”

Dasash Getachew

“This is me washing my husband’s feet. Previously, no matter how tired I was, it was my responsibility to wash his feet at the end of the day. But now he washes his own feet.”

Ehetenat Kassie

“My husband is baking injera. Previously, he would not dare to even look at the dish, even when the dish was burning. But now, he supports me in doing the household chores.”

Ehetenat Kassie

A husband baking injera demands courage and attitudinal change. Before, helping in what was considered “women’s work” would be shameful.
“Processing farm products used to be considered as a man’s job but now I am handling it. This picture shows that I can now do what used to be considered as only a man’s work.”

Fiker Yerega

“This is my husband washing clothes. Previously, when he came to our house, he would get angry if I did not do the household chores. But now, he helps me in taking care of household chores.”

Fiker Yerega

“This is my husband baking injera (flat bread). When I attend meeting or go to places, my husband bakes injera.”

Habtam Nega
“Here, my husband is washing his feet. Previously, I had to wash his feet even if we both were working the whole day and tired. Now, he washes his feet by himself and helps me in doing household chores.”

Habtam Eshete

“My husband is making a dough. Not only is he making dough but not ashamed of doing it.”

Neter Molla

“It was my responsibility to take care of my children. But now as you can see in the picture, my husband is washing our child.”

Neter Molla
STRUCTURE: GENDER ROLES

“My husband is baking injera. Previously, he would not help me in any kind of household chores. But now things are different.”

Neter Molla

“My husband is making coffee, as you can see in the picture. Previously, when I was pregnant and was unable to make coffee, he would beg other girls in the neighborhood to make coffee for us. Now, he is the one who makes coffee for me, my family and even the neighbors.”

Neter Molla

“Mowing was the assigned role for men. Women were expected to handle household chores only. But now, I mow the field as seen in the picture.”

Simegn Destaw
“In the picture, my husband is holding our baby. Previously, when our baby cried, he would tell me to take care of him. But now, he helps to take care of our baby too.”

Tesfa Meles

In this region, men typically do not devote time to their children because they do not consider it their responsibility.

“My husband is sweeping the floor as seen in the picture. My husband supports me with doing the household chores while I attend meetings.”

Tsedal Desse

“Previously, I had to cook, bake injera and hold my baby at the same time. My husband never helped me but now he is baking injera, as seen in the picture.”

Tsedal Desse
“Since I am pregnant and I cannot kneel down and work. My husband is sweeping the floor and handling the cow’s dung.”

Tsedal Desse

“Before, if a man went into the kitchen to prepare or serve food, it was considered a shameful act. My mother-in-law was not comfortable when my husband helped me around in the house, she used to call him names. But now, I convinced her and she is comfortable when he even serves her food.”

Tsedal Desse

In this region, men doing “women’s work” is considered unacceptable across the society, particularly among in-laws.

“In the picture, my husband is making a dough. He helps me in taking care of household chores.”

Tsedal Desse
STRUCTURE: GENDER ROLES
“I am reading a poem in the picture. During TESFA project discussions, we had a discussion on the talents that we had. Then, I realized that I had a talent of writing poems. Now, I write poems and read it during our meetings. I am now confident and able to make a speech in public gatherings.”

Abebech Desse

“I used to be scared of eating in front of my husband. But now, I even eat with my customers and this has helped me to have lots of customers.”

Habtam Nega

Presenting oneself in a public place with many people is scary for many girls in this community, particularly because tradition suggests that girls should eat secretly.

“I bought an onion seed and sow the seeds on the farm. I expect to get 8,000birr ($293USD) from it. I now have confidence and able to decide by myself.”

Yitatek Kinde
“Previously, I was not allowed to make coffee if my husband and mother-in-law were not at the house. Even when my friends came, I would not dare to make and serve them coffee. Now, I can make coffee whenever I want to.”

**Ehetenesh Mekuanent**

Before TESFA, young married girls were not allowed to make decisions on their own, even in the absence of their mother-in-laws or husbands.

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“These are my cows. Before, I had no say on the resources that me and my husband had. When he wanted to sell cows, he would not discuss it with me. But now, he talks to me before selling anything. I now participate in decision making.”

**Fiker Yerega**

In this region, decision-making power typically lies solely in the hands of the man, particularly related to assets.

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“In the past, we women had no say on the resources that we owned. Now, me and my husband work together and decide equally.”

**Tesfa Meles**
“I would not go to church with my husband previously because I felt that I was inferior. But in this picture, we are on our way to church. I am very happy with what the TESFA project has brought into my life.”

Dasash Getachew

I am standing next to my husband in the store that we own. Previously, I would not dare to talk to him let alone stand next to him because I was scared of him. But now, things are good between us and we discuss everything.”

Ehetenat Kassie
“This is me with my little sister in the picture. I was married at an early age and forced to stop my education. When my family arranged a marriage for her, I interrupted the marriage by showing the consequences of early marriage with her and my family. Since then, I supported her financially and now she is a second year college student.”

Abebech Desse

Adolescent girls in this region often get married at an early age and stop their education. Since this is a common practice, it is difficult to stop.

“My sister was about to get married while she was 15 years old and a grade 6 student. I was married at an early age, so I convinced my mother not to get my sister married. I told her that I would tell people the problems that I have faced due to early marriage and how my life was ruined because of that. Then, the arranged marriage was cancelled and I am so happy that I was able to stop my sister’s marriage.”

Dasash Getachew

“My family arranged a marriage for my little sister while she was 13 years old. I convinced my mother and sister to cancel the marriage by letting them know the consequences of early marriage. Then, the marriage was canceled and my sister continued her education.”

Fiker Yerega

Parents often force their children to get married during their childhood without looking toward their futures.
“This is Mulu Ade. She is 13 years old. Her parents arranged a marriage for her at this age, but I talked to her mother and convinced her not to get her daughter married. The girl’s marriage was cancelled and now she is a student. I am very proud to stand and act against early marriage.”

Habtam Eshete

“This is Meleshw Asmamaw. She is 16 years old and grade 8 student. I heard that she was going to get married. I talked to her and told her the consequences of getting married at an early age like dropping out of school, the risk of having fistula and becoming economically dependent. Then she cancelled the marriage.”

Mikre Sisay

“My family arranged a marriage for my little sister at the age of 6 years old. I was married at the age of 8. I told my sister and my family what I had to go through. I had to drop out of school and got divorced. So, I convinced my sister and my mother to cancel the marriage.”

Yeshiye Dires
UNINTENDED RESULTS: HEALTH

“In the picture, I am getting out of the toilet. Previously, we had no toilet and we used open defecation. It is unacceptable for a woman to defecate during the day time. Now, we have toilet so I do not need to wait for the night time to defecate.”

Abebech Desse

“I now know the importance of personal hygiene. As you can see in the picture, I am washing my son’s face.”

Ehetenat Kassie

“It is prohibited for women to openly defecate during the day time. After discussing this problem, we built a toilet and now I am using a toilet during the day time.”

Neter Molla
Photovoice: TESFA

“Photovoice: TESFA”

“I am holding a washing plate in the picture, to show that we now wash our hands before eating meal.”

Semegn Destaw

“In the picture, I am standing next to the toilet. We used to defecate openly before TESFA project. After TESFA, we realized the importance of a toilet and we built one.”

Yeshiye Dires
UNINTENDED RESULTS (EARLY MARRIAGE AND HEALTH)
“I am a group facilitator of the TESFA group. I write the group’s saving and loan and our experiences on the notebook that I am holding.”

Ehetenesh Mekuanent

In this region, girls are not allowed to build relationships to engage in different activities, especially as leaders.

“My communication skills have improved and now I am health development army leader. I am in charge of facilitating discussions among 39 members of the health development army. We discuss the importance of family planning, antenatal care follow ups, protection of women’s rights and implementation of health extension packages.”

Yamrot Dires
Founded in 1945 with the creation of the CARE Package®, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. CARE places special focus on working alongside poor girls and women because, equipped with the proper resources, they have the power to lift whole families and entire communities out of poverty.

Our more than seven decades of experience show that when you empower a girl or woman, she becomes a catalyst, creating ripples of positive change that lift up everyone around her. That’s why girls and women are at the heart of CARE’s community-based efforts to improve education, health and economic opportunity for everyone. We also work with girls and women to promote social justice, respond to emergencies and confront hunger and climate change. Last year CARE worked in 94 countries and reached more than 80 million people around the world. To learn more, visit www.care.org.