

## **Development outcomes of diversified gender trainings for stakeholders in Scaling-up Pulse Innovations for Food and Nutrition Security (SPIFoNS) Project in Southern Ethiopia**

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### **Abstract**

Scaling-up Pulse Innovations for Food and Nutrition Security (SPIFoNS) Project was a development oriented action research conducted by Hawassa University, Ethiopia and University of Saskatchewan, Canada. One of the purposes of the project was to attain women empowerment by increasing their participations in pulse agriculture and nutrition interventions. Diversified gender trainings were designed to achieve the empowerment development outcome. Qualitative and quantitative data collection were carried out to measure and explain the different outcomes. The findings indicate that women visibility has increased by half after the interventions. Similarly, women started to get access and control of household resources, which were supposed to be exclusive domain of the men in the communities. This development research made it clear that social norms are flexible if they are followed by appropriate intervention strategies. A joint venture between development practitioners and academia has immense potential to transform gender norms in communities.

**Key words:** Pulse Innovation, development outcome, women empowerment, Diversified gender trainings, gender norms

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The research project entitled, “Scaling Up Pulse Innovations for Food and Nutrition Security in southern Ethiopia”, a project jointly run by faculty members from Hawassa University (HU) and University of Saskatchewan (U of S) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. The collaboration between Hawassa University (Ethiopia) and the University of Saskatchewan (Canada) goes back to 20 years.

The project was a research for development project funded by International Development Research Center (IDRC) and Global Affairs Canada through the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF). Its aim was to apply a pulse crop-centred strategy to enhance food and nutrition security in southern Ethiopia. The strategy involved using pulse innovations as an entry point to facilitate system change towards food and nutritional security of rural households.

The project had agronomic, gender and nutrition programs to implement its strategy. A consortium of partners including International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), Farm Radio International (FRI), World Food Program (WFP), and Southern Region's Bureaus of Agriculture (BoA) and Health (BoH) participated to address its main and specific objectives. The General objective was to catalyze large-scale positive change in food and nutrition security in southern Ethiopia by scaling up pulse-crop innovations to reach 70,000 farm households. Its specific objectives are to : develop sustainable pulse production and associated seed production and delivery systems in 15 districts of SNNPRS; identify, test and promote various scaling-up/out approaches and incentives for wider impact; expand use of pulses in household-level food preparation and commercial production of pulse-cereal complementary foods; create capacity and improve women farmers' access and control over resource to enhance their participation, productivity, income and nutritional status; develop and facilitate tailored communication strategies and innovation platforms for policy action in scaling-up of pulse innovations; and develop and expand the capacity of partners in integrating agriculture and nutrition.

This article primarily addresses how the gender program was implemented to attain the big development objective set by the project through gender mainstreaming. The gender integration component of this CIFSRF project has focused primarily on operationalizing the gender strategy, which was developed and approved in 2015 [1]. Though gender program is a cross cutting issue to address women participation in both agronomic and nutrition programs, working on the agronomic program has been found to be women strategic

need to solve women pertinent empowerment and gender equality problems. In addition, the nutrition program was primarily designed to involve women to address malnutrition on women and their children.

## **II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVE**

To create capacity and improve women farmers' access and control over resources to enhance their participation, productivity, income, and nutritional status

### **2.1 Outcome objectives**

- enhanced women knowledge, skills and participation in pulse agriculture and nutrition
- Improved pulse food consumption
- increase women income and livelihood
- Improved women empowerment in pulse agriculture and Nutrition: Autonomy, Decision making, status, power, access and control

## **III. METHOD**

Intervention Strategies focus on designing different gender trainings for different stakeholders in the project areas. Three main categories of stakeholders were identified for gender training. The first was direct implementers often government employees such as government officials and workers who had been working in different levels of SNNPR structure such as Bureau of Health, agriculture and Natural Resource and Women and Children structure. The second group was Project Steering Committee, which supervised the implementation of the project, composed of top officials from Region and Federal Government Institutions, Private companies and NGOs directly and indirectly affiliated to the project. The third group was community members in each project sites. Depending on the type of stakeholders, gender trainings were designed to achieve gender outcome objectives.

For first group ( implementers), the basic concepts of gender, gender relation, women empowerment and gender equality. These contents have been substantiated with international and national findings that show how gender mainstreaming becomes more important for sustainable household livelihood. In this regard, more than 400 government implementers from Women and Children, Agriculture and Health sectors of the SNNPR got trainings.

The second group, in addition to the aforementioned training contents, was provided progressive gender activity reports at regular meetings and workshops arranged by the project using power point presentations. The presentations were supported by farmers' days' and occasional field visits. During the implementation period, two gender workshops (inception and evaluation) were attended by more than 100 participants representing diverse institutions.

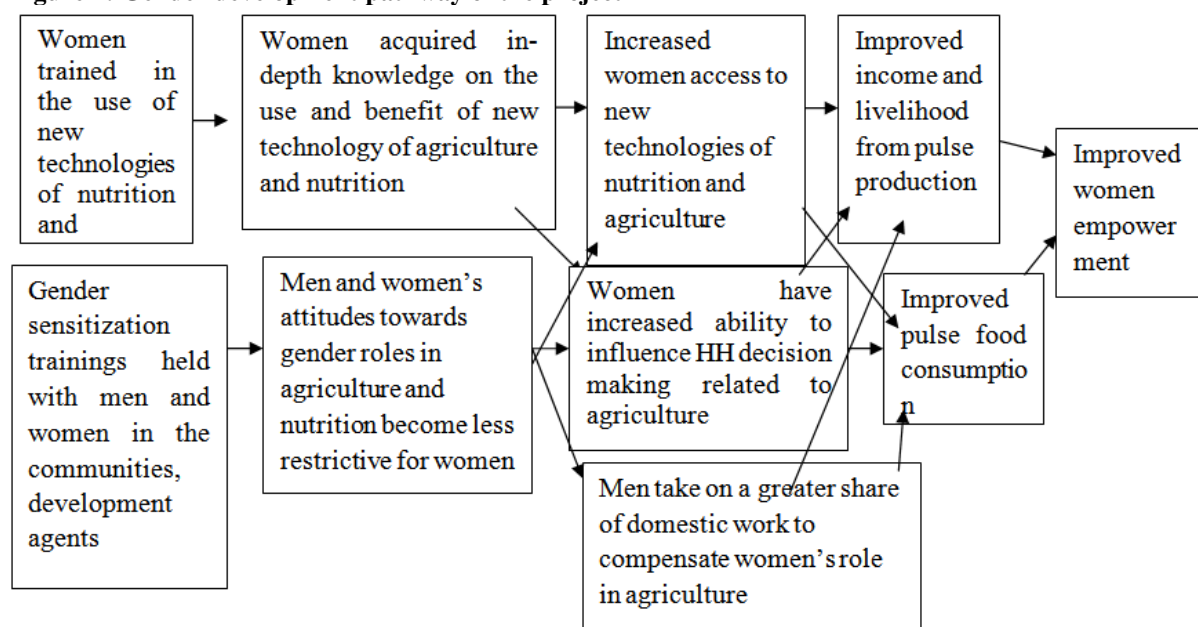
The third categories of stakeholders were community members in the project sites. A training draft manual entitled, "Gender Equality for Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security: A Manual for Gender Experts to Teach Local Development Practitioners and Community Members", was prepared. The general themes of the manual focus on gender equality in relation to agricultural productivity, household wealth creation and peaceful family life. Trainings were delivered to huge numbers of people (youth, women and men) before and during pulse seed distribution, before and after community meetings, at farmers' day, and during soil and conservation campaigns. It is estimated that more than 8000 community members, in 44 project Kebeles, got training about importance of gender equality. Capacitating and supporting experts from cooperatives, agriculture, and women and children offices on business modelling in establishing women cooperatives.

Qualitative data were collected through field visits, key informant interviews and reflections after delivering the trainings. In addition, quantitative data were collected from two project Kebeles. The first one was that a Kebele which was included while gender training program began. Another one was a control Kebele, where the project started its activities before the gender training program became functional. Qualitative data has been thematically analysed and quantitative data have been descriptively presented to see changes after interventions. Monitoring and evaluation were integral parts during the implementation of the project. Successive Gender trainings on women empowerment and gender equality were given for the implementers (DA, agricultural focal persons, health extension workers, health officials, etc).

## **IV. THEORY OF CHANGE**

The model of change has been developed from the the gender training workshop entitled, "A IDRC Workshop: Gender Integration in Agriculture and Food Security Programmes" held in Nairobi, 7-11 June 2016 [2].

**Figure 1: Gender development pathway of the project**



Source: Adapted from social development direct, 2016

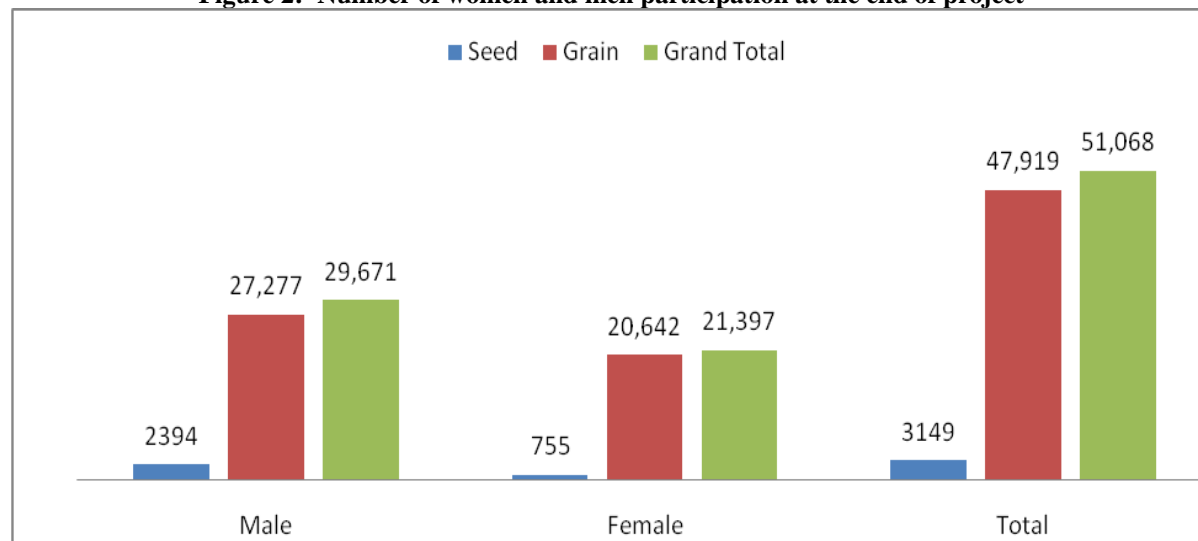
## V. RESULT

Multifaceted gender trainings have brought quantitative and qualitative changes. The first change occurred during the implementation of the project was increased number of women who have got access to new technologies (agricultural inputs and pulse food preparation).

### 5.1 Increased women participation

Since 2015 to 2018 (three year) the participation of women who participated in the pulse agronomic practices (seed production and grain for domestic purpose) has significantly increased [2]. The figure below shows that of the total number of participants (male and female) w out of a total of 42 % female participant total number of participatnts who participated grain production accounted 43 % ; while who involved in seed production was 42%. Generally, of the particpats women accounted participated 43 %.

**Figure 2: Number of women and men participation at the end of project**

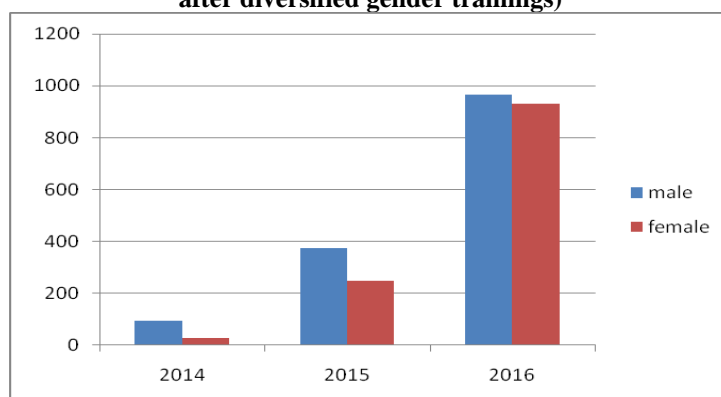


Source: Project technical report,2017

However, to assess how the diversified gender training have brought about increased women participation two The gender trainings had been started after one year implementation. The project started in very few kebeles where they had long history of the project working before this project started.

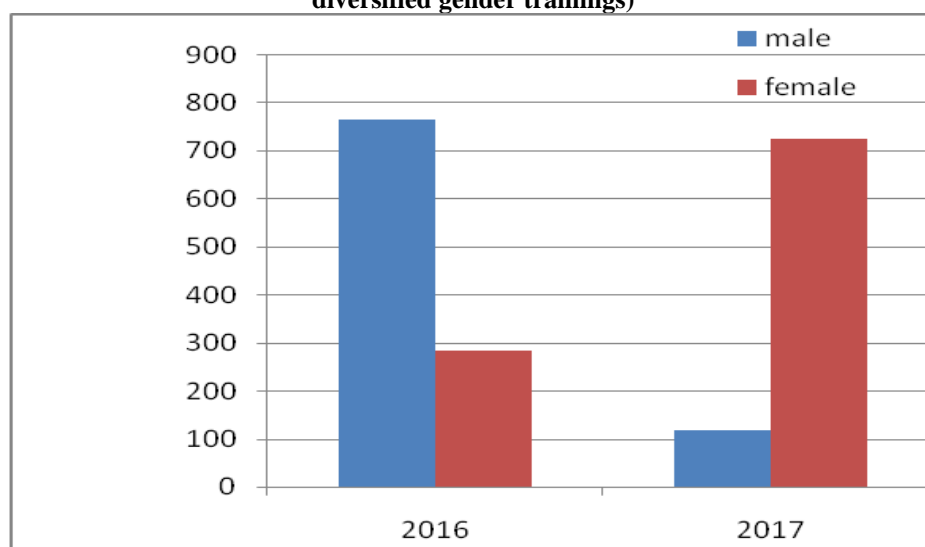
Men and women attitudes towards gender roles in agriculture and nutrition became less restrictive for women so that more women involved in the seed and green production in Sodo before the first gender raining conducted in 2014. This Woreda had been the field experimental and demonstration site before the SPIFoNS project started its scaling up its pulse technologies to other project sites in the region.

**Figure 3: Number of men and women participants' seed and grain production across years (before and after diversified gender trainings)**



Source: Sodo woreda agriculture and natural resource office records

**Figure 4: Number of man and women participants in seed and grain production across years( after diversified gender trainings)**



Source: Dore Bafano Woreda agriculture and natural resource office records

Kebeles were selected participation measure the effect of diversified training in increasing women participation in Community teaching about the importance of gender equality for rural households at (water and conservation site, meeting, farmers' day and seed distribution places). During the implementation period the project continued to expend its scale up to other Woredas of the region. One of which was Dore Bafano. This project Woreda included at the end of the project, nearly equal proportion of men and women participated in the The introduction of agricultural and nutrition technologies have helped to improve their participation in high market value crops to increase their incomes and consume protein based for better health for women and their children.

## 5.2 Improved pulse food consumption

The gender training helped women to participate in the agricultural technologies assisted to feed their children and their household members for pulse foods. Most of the malnutrition in the area is associated with lack of knowledge about the importance of nutrients in some grain. Lack of the availability of sufficient grain make them restrict to process protein rich food for their consumption. During the monitoring, I randomly visit what women are doing after the received seeds. With the help of development agent, I happened to visit after

harvesting haricot bean who participated in 2 kg grain production. A woman below stated her agricultural performance as follow:

**Figure 5: Field Photo showing that a woman kept haricot bean seed for next cultivation season.**



This woman name is Melawi Wachamo. She lives in Konsorie Arkie Kebele of Boricha Woreda. she is 25 years old. She has only one boy. she has got 16 kgs. she used 8 kg when haricot bean was in green pod. The seeds in the bag is the one that she has kept for the next agricutral season. It is about 8 kgs. In explaining the process of cultivation, she says, " I got land and plant it. My huasband contributed labor to plant the seeds. " She was also asked to explain the difference that it brought on her life, she says, " I develop a sense of ownership. I can sell and consume what I want ." She plans to cultivate more in the coming season.

An increase in participation of women in new agricultural training came through gender trainings provided for agricultural development agents to open up to consume and produce pulse foods for their children and other household members. Women life chances are not only influenced by age-old community norms, but also development agents who have pervasive roles in the places they are assigned to work. Participating resource poor women in the development activities helped to absorb food security problems. Another woman expressed as:

The name of this woman is Aliya Woliesa. She also lives in Konsorie Arkie Kebele of Boricha Woreda. She is 30 years old. She has only one child. she got a total of 10kgs. she consumed 4 kgs when the haricot bean was in green pod. She has kept 6 kgs haricot bean seeds in her mother's house for fear of theft. She said, "We have very small plot of land so that it is very difficut to expand it."



**Figure 6: Field photo taken out of woman house after interview ( Jan, 2017)**



Though difficult to expand the given plot of land, agricultural intensification with new and early matures nutrition crops, which have also high market value pulse crops, become very important to reduce maternal and child malnutrition in food insecure areas. Pulse foods have related to protein deficiencies. Women personal experience

This woman name is Dinku Edilu. She lives in Sidamo Dikicha Kebele of Boricha Woreda. She is 25 years old. She has two children. The left side of the picture shows that the boy who was under the nutrition intervention program. The right side of picture indicates amount of haricot bean seeds that she has kept for next agricultural season. I got 30 kg from 2 kg haricot bean. she used 25 kg of it. She fed my children. I have kept this to sow it in the coming season. I learned how to plant it. She utilized 25 kgs. She was also asked to explain the difference that it brought on her life, she says, " before, it was him to take it to the market and sell it. He saved the money from the sales of the haricot bean. However, now, this intervention helps me to feed my children." She has an intention to grow more in the next season. Participation increased women knowledge and skill on the use and benefit of new technologies of agriculture and nutrition.

**Figure 8: Field Photo showing that the woman kept 5 kgs haricot bean seeds for cultivation( Jan 2017).**



During the distribution of 2 kg haricot bean, women were told to keep some amount of seed for the next cultivatin season. They were also told to be supervised how much they were effective in the way that they applied the technology. At monitoring priod, after one season harvest, we happened to observe and took pitures how much they were doing. Almost all women who got improved haricot bean seeds became successful to cultivate and keep them. they kept in a pot near cooking areas to protect form insect infestation and spoilage. They were happy to show what they did. Participation increased women pulse crop production and consumption at household level and started to saved seeds for next agricultural season.



### 5.3 Diversified women income

**Figure 9: Field photo showing that haricot bean has been equally procured for better pulse consumption and income at Dore Bafano Woreda (Jan, 2017)**



when women and men are equally involved, they develop self-reliance and promote decision making about what is Consumed and sold.

### 5.4 Enhanced women decision making power

The multi-faceted training approach eventually brought more qualitative changes observed in the society. Several elders and local officials were expressing the importance of gender trainings after the ends of the community teachings, meetings and farmers' days. They stressed the crucial roles of women for household life. They showed the commitment to participate women in the development processes undertaken in their localities. It is true that husbands are willing to respect their wives in the claim for equal access and control of household resources mainly land and harvested crops.

**Figure 10: Field Photo showing that woman commitment to make use of created opportunities (Jan, 2017)**



Woman narrative described as follow:

This woman name is Netsanet Kamila. She lives in Konsorie Arkie Kebele of Boricha Woreda. She is 29 years old. She has three children. The left side of the picture shows that the boy who was under the nutrition intervention program. The right side of picture indicates amount of haricot bean seeds that she has kept for next agricultural season. It is about 10 kgs. According to her, she utilized 5-6 kgs haricot bean when it was in green pod. In explaining the process of cultivation, she says, "I asked my husband to give me my land to plant the seeds. He gave me the land. He assisted me while I was planting." She was also asked to explain the

difference that it brought on her life, she says, " I develop a sense of ownership. Now, we use and decided together."

The woman was very enthusiastic to engage in the production of haricot bean through the created conducive environment by the project. Women had information that the project and the government are working hand in hand to support women efforts in agriculture and nutrition activities. Accordingly, they persist to claim to access and control of household resources equally.

The gender training that brought significant change in the project sites was to influence access and control of household land. Increased women equal access and control to new technologies of agriculture with men increased their ability to influence HH decision making related to agriculture. While we were monitoring the outcomes of the project during the cultivation season, we came to identify that almost all women who got seed took share of land for pulse production. A woman photo presented below one of the women who participated in the grain production in Dorie Bafano Woreda witnessing that how women exercised to gain power to influence important household decision in the communities.

**Figure 11: Field photo showing cultivated haricot bean from the share of household land in the Dorie Bafano Woreda (August, 2017)**



In most cultures, women are rarely consulted in the production, consumption and exchange of household agricultural products. As women got improved seeds, their husbands were in agreement to share a decision that to divide household land meant for maize production into maize and haricot bean.

Gender trainings have much effect on the youth than other sections of the population. Gender norms have become very much less restrictive to participate women equally with their husbands. Youth have strong vision to accumulate wealth through hard work. They have potential to help each other and motivated to produce more.

**Figure 12: Field photo showing youth are more receptive to work together**



The right picture is Bezunesh Erimias. She is 22 years old. She has one child. She got 15 kgs. The right side of the picture is Bezunesh with her husband. They live in Bonuya Cherie Kebele of Boricha Woreda. She has kept 8kgs of haricot bean for the next agricultural season. She utilized 7 kgs when it was in green pod.



Pertaining to cultivation, she says, " I put seeds and fertilizer while my husband prepared rows." She was also asked to explain the difference that it brought on her life, she says, " I have a feel ownership. I can sell it to the market or consume at home. Before, it was him to decided on it." She has an intention to grow more in the next season.

#### 5.6 Improved and diversified women and men incomes

People have learned that equal participation of women in agriculture results in surplus production. A man and woman had participated in 2 kg grain production. Untapped women resources can be used to produce surplus production. The man says, "From 4kg, we got more than 100 kg. We use it some amount for food and the remaining for sell."

**Figure 13: Field Photo showing surplus production ready for market**



Diversified women income though producing economically high price pulse crops (haricot beans and chickpea).

## VI. DISCUSSION

The history of development with regards to gender passed through different phases. It has gone from exploitative relation to Accommodating and then Transformative stages. The transformative stage requires to critical examination of gender norms and dynamics, strengthen or creates systems that support gender equality and strengthens or creates systems equitable gender norms and dynamics.

Gender problems are complexes of economic, political, social and cultural factors that require multi-faceted approaches to untie their complexities. "Focus on economic and social life through the provision of seeds and agricultural, nutrition, and value chain education does not help in transforming the deeply seated exploitative gender structure." [3]. They, rather, suggested, planning and implementing participatory gender analysis and gender sensitization programs became very crucial factor to understand and transform exploitative cultural norms in realizing women empowerment.

Recent years, different social and behavioral change models and theories are used to bring about desired behavior in development practices. One of them is Social-Ecological Model(SEM). Because of its multi-levels understanding and comprehensive integration approach, the model has been adapted to change behavior in the fields of health, agriculture, gender, and other areas. Trainings that go with audience interest get acceptance for behavioral changes. Social-Ecological Model(SEM) framework recognizes that behavior change can be achieved through activities that target four levels: Individual, interpersonal (family/peer), community and social/structural [4]. Designing diversified trainings to different stakeholders, in light of this model, have become relevant to explain gender norm changes occurred in the project life time.

Delivering gender awareness trainings at farmers' days, soil and conservation activities, meetings and new technology dissemination get better acceptance among community members. Elders reflected community members' wrong perception about the importance of gender and happy to cooperate to change it after social occasions. In a natural social settings where farmers are working and gathering, conducting awareness creation attracts more people attention than in other formal institutions. Moreover, it was mentioned that professionals from universities got better acceptance in delivering gender trainings than experts working in government

offices. People used to understand gender as political agenda that threatens males' power in different walk of life. Monologous type of gender training that often preaches power difference between sexes induce resistance and rejection. Instead, gender trainings were designed to contextualize how gender equality contributes for agricultural productivity, wealth creation and peaceful family life of a household. These gave more social space for development actors to increase women participation in the due course of implementation.

Synchronizing gender trainings to different stakeholders produced synergy to influence change at all hierarchies of the society. Structural problems facing women are social constructions subjected for change. Community members, project staffs, employees of government and steering committee members were getting trainings while the project was under implementation. These created better understanding for women low levels of participation in agriculture and nutrition interventions to raise their roles in the project. It was found that characteristics of the trainer also has effect on norm change. In rural communities, where patriarchy is most prevalent, men dominate social scene. The male trainers who have internalized gender equality and enjoyed its benefits provide personal witness to influence norm change. Changed cultural norms allowed women to move in the social hierarchies.

The prerequisite for empowerment is participation [5]. Quantitative data collected from project sites on the participation of women in grain and seed productions increased more than half after the introduction of gender awareness trainings given to all the stakeholders. Increasing women participation to access and control of household by overcoming gender restrictive norms made substantial difference in people's quality of life. If women had the same resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30% raise agricultural output by 2.5-4% and reduce hungry people by 100-150 million [6] Similarly, qualitative data collection through in-depth interviews with women participated in the project indicated that women able to raise pulse harvest by half from small quantity of grains. Increased participation boost women's access to food for household consumption as well as provide opportunities for generating much needed income for the purchase of other household needs [7]. Diversified trainings given for the stakeholders allowed women participation to understand, question and resist structural constraints to empower themselves.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Development project has to give equal attention for men and women. Recognizing gender as a right and development issues, the IDRC developed a gender strategy document to be implemented in any of the project in developing countries. In this regard, gender program became an integral parts of scaling-up Pulse Innovations for Food and Nutrition Security (SPIFoNS) Project in Southern Ethiopia. The purpose of the program was to integrate gender issues in both in pulse agronomy and nutrition programs to enhance women participation, productivity, income, and nutritional status. The program developed gender transformative approach focusing on designing diversified trainings adapted to different stakeholders.

Diversifying gender trainings reduced stringent social norms that restricted women from participations. Multi-faceted trainings have brought about inter-mediate outcomes: increased women participation in pulse agronomic practices, enhanced pulse consumption and diversified incomes. These trainings, as integral parts of development research, gave opportunities to meet both gender pragmatic and strategic needs. Women were able to participate in pulse crops like chickpea and haricot bean to meet their daily nutritional requirements and diversified their incomes. The overall effects were to enhance women claims over access and control of household resources to influence decisions.

Gender trainings provided the development path to transform gender norms at household and community levels. The study points that development research has great potential to bring about wider and bigger gender outcomes for future interventions. Comprehensive approach to target norm change should be the hallmark of development intervention. However, wider areas of project implementation, short project life span and few social scientists involved in delivering gender trainings remain a challenge to institutionalize outcomes.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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