

Community conversations on animal welfare

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Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|--------|---|
| CIAT | International Center for Tropical Agriculture |
| GIZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| ICARDA | International Center for Research in the Dry Areas |
| ILRI | International Livestock Research Institute |
| SLU | Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences |

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Introduction

Many factors constrain the ability of community members to improve the welfare of their animals. Their attitude towards animals, knowledge and skills about giving care for animals, and resources and services determine the welfare status of farm animals. Addressing these issues requires engaging community members in conversations to discuss their animal welfare needs and find solutions together.

Community conversations are facilitated discussions and social learning processes among community members to help them identify and analyse their knowledge, attitudes and practices about animal welfare and discuss how these affect the welfare of their animals and their own livelihoods. This group approach creates space for dialogues and mutual learning among a cross-section of community members and local service providers leading to new understanding and community action towards improving animal welfare.

The community conversations on animal welfare were conducted in Yabello (Borana zone of Oromia region) from 18–19 October 2019 at Darito community and Menz Gera (North Shewa zone of Amhara region) on 9 October 2019 at Sine Amba community. Darito is an agro-pastoral community, while Sine Amba is a highland mixed-farming community. In both sites, community conversations engaged men and women community members (including couples and women in male-headed households), community leaders, community livestock extension agents, zonal/district livestock experts, and communications and gender experts. In both sites, a total of 95 (43 female) community members and 15 (four female) local research and development partners participated in community conversations.

This community conversation module on animal welfare is part of a series of different training modules developed under the CGIAR research program on Livestock which aims to address smallholder livestock production challenges in Ethiopia.

Process and methodology

Facilitation team alignment on the methodology and facilitation process

In both sites, the research team worked with local research and development partners. Community conversations require a team of facilitators who are familiar with the community and the facilitation process. We worked with local partners who were involved in community mobilization, co-facilitation and documentation of community conversation sessions.

In Borana zone, we worked with the Yabello Pastoral and Dryland Agriculture Research Centre and Yabello Zone Livestock Development Office while in North Shewa zone, we worked with Debre Berhan Agricultural Research Center, Menz Gera District Livestock Development Office, Women's Affairs Office and Government Communications Office.

At both sites, we had team co-learning sessions where local partners reflected on and shared their experiences with community facilitation. We had introductory team discussions on the purpose of community conversations, the process of developing the module, and the overall methodology. This included discussion on animal welfare as a global issue and recent trends in Africa in general and Ethiopia specifically to give local partners a background and motivation to engage in animal welfare conversations and follow-up actions. Then we discussed the conversation issues to make sure local partners were confident with the process and ready to co-facilitate and document community conversation sessions. We also conducted pre- and post-community conversation knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) surveys to capture changes in knowledge and attitudes due to the community conversations.

Opening and introductions

Opening is an important step of community conversations as it sets the ground for open, frank and active discussions. Facilitators invited religious leaders or community elders to open community conversations with traditional blessings and prayers. Then they explained the purpose of the community conversation and clarified expectations. The facilitation team explained that its role was to create space for community groups and facilitate the discussions helping them identify issues, analyse the root causes and develop community action plans to address the issues.

Venue and methods

The facilitation team used interactive facilitation methods including storytelling, provocative questioning and personal reflection. In Yabello, community conversations were held in an open space under a big tree which provides shade for community members. This open space arrangement invited a lot of people including children and youth to join the conversations.

At both sites, the facilitation team started the conversation through informal warm-up conversations asking people about general life situations and leading to the discussion topics. This set the stage for people to start talking freely and to build rapport with facilitators. In Yabello, community members were open, interactive and engaged actively in the conversations despite this session being their first experience with community conversation. In Menz Gera, due to previous experience in community conversations, community members were familiar with the process and were open, interactive and engaged.

Issues and main points from community conversations

Yabello: summary of community conversations on animal welfare

Session I. What is animal welfare? Why is it important?

In the community conversation, community members demonstrated basic understanding of animal welfare issues. Below is a summary of the points raised in discussions of the different questions.

Can animals be happy or sad? Do they have feelings like us? Do they suffer from physical pain? What makes animals happy or sad? How do you know when animals are sad or happy?

Community members indicated that animals have feelings, and they were able to identify conditions that make animals happy or sad. They mentioned that animals are happy when there is rainfall because they get enough feed. When there is rain, animals show signs of natural behaviours like playing with each other, making loud noise and male animals want to mate. They are sad during drought season and when they get injured. A woman participant said, 'our animals are sad and feel bad when they are emaciated, when there was no feed and water, if they are ill.' Animals can suffer from diseases or physical injuries when they do not receive treatment or support.

What does animal welfare mean to you? What is the local term for animal welfare?

In Afan Oromo, animal welfare is expressed "nageenya beeyladoo" meaning fulfilling what animals need and not to adversely compromise their feelings and rights. Community members described animal welfare to include having clean housing, timely feeding, leaving them freely in the environment, not to tie animals all the time, giving protection to animals from predators, watering them freely and keeping them healthy.

How do you describe good or bad animal welfare situations in your community?

Community members reported that animal welfare is compromised during drought due to shortage of feed and water. They described bad animal welfare situations as keeping them in dirty housing, withholding treatment, and disturbing animals by beating and yelling at them.

What are community members' attitudes towards animals? Are there any traditional customs, beliefs or sayings related to animals or their care? How are animals perceived/viewed in your community?

Community members mentioned that livestock is the main source of livelihoods, social status and respect in pastoral communities. They stated that 'we like our animals; we have no other option for living rather than our animals.' Women participants said, 'our animals are many things for us. Cows give us milk and baby calves; male bulls are used for ploughing our land. Camels and donkeys are used to carry materials like fetching water. When we sell sheep or goat, we get money to buy feed for our children.'

Borana agro-pastoral community members have connections with their animals. During the community conversations, community members explained that they "communicate" with their animals and express any feelings related to their animals especially for cattle. Participants mentioned that animals know their names and follow instructions. Men and women community members use songs to communicate and connect with their animals for different purposes.

In Afan Oromo, women sing their animals a song called “sirba”. During the community conversations, women participants mentioned that they sing the following song welcoming their animals in the evening:

*imanooyyee tiyya ilmaan galatayye
Akka ilmaan hursaa galee waatii quubsa
Ilmaan abbaa booraa abbaan dhalee situ ijoollee fura*

The song conveys that animals are the source of food and subsistence for the household. Literally, it means women give birth to children, and animals feed and nourish the children to grow.

Similarly, male community members sing their animals songs called “weedduu” during ploughing or when herding. A male participant acknowledged the value of his animals by citing the following song:

*Boora boorte boora mooyyee boora moosissee
Yaayyaa konadhee
Akka irmaanee deemtee dhoobbuu funnaan keette*

The meaning of the song is that the wellbeing and respect/status of male members of the community are due to their animals especially cattle.

It is interesting to note what men’s and women’s songs related to animals signify, indicating the different meaning these animals have for men and women. Women focus on food and household welfare while men focus on social status and prestige.

How do you benefit from improving the welfare of your animals?

During the community conversations, community members demonstrated understanding about the link between animal welfare, productivity and livelihoods. They stated that ‘when our animals are kept in proper manner and are not stressed, they give good milk and behave nicely. From our cows we get good milk; strong bulls plough land well and from a well-fed bull we get good price in the market.’

A woman participant said, ‘while milking I manage my cow calmly calling her by name and massaging her rather than beating or yelling at her. This way, my cow stops by herself for milking and gives more milk. Also, when I keep her house clean and comfortable, udder contamination will be low, and I can get uncontaminated milk.’ A male participant also said, ‘I monitor the body condition of my animals. For example, I monitor the body weight of my male goat and decide when to sale.’

Community members also mentioned the public health benefit of improving animal welfare. They explained that animal diseases such as foot and mouth disease, anthrax and blackleg kill and reduce the value of animals. They said that ‘if we manage animal diseases through vaccination or treatment, we can get better value for our animals. Keeping animals healthy also prevents diseases.’

Session 2. What are the community’s needs related to animal welfare?

What do animals need to be healthy, happy and productive?

Community members identified needs for their animals. In their conversations, they identified basic needs and behaviour of animal handlers. They mentioned that animals need good prevention and control of diseases, follow up of their movement during grazing and regular follow up against parasite infection. They also mentioned that regular vaccination and treatment of infected animals keep animals free from any disease and makes them happy. Community members mentioned that ‘animals can be happy and healthy when they get enough food, water, salt and timely treatment.’ They also mentioned animals need good housing even though they cannot meet their needs. Realizing the need but also the challenges to meet the housing needs of animals, participants said that ‘we don’t even have enough house for ourselves.’

Figure 1. Animals are kept in fences during the dry periods



In addition to basic needs of animals, community members mentioned that animals should be handled properly to be happy and feel safe. They mentioned that they handle their animals calmly and never use power. They call their animals by name, tie them by a rope and show them friendly behaviours for easy handling. Community members reported that they never beat their animals harshly and do not yell at them. They indicated that they use turura (a traditional name) to handle strong, fearful animals or heifers. Cimtuu is tied over the hind leg to make aggressive animals docile and support calves to suckle their dam. People also use kiyyo, a rope tied over the head, to handle unmanageable animals.

What would happen if these animal needs were not met?

Community members demonstrated understanding of the consequences of poor animal welfare situations. They mentioned that ‘when animal houses are not comfortable or clean, they live in dirty and soiled house, and this causes contamination and diseases.’ They also indicated that ‘if animals don’t get enough feed, they will be emaciated and don’t give enough milk.’ Other people mentioned that animals with poor nutrition cannot resist or are highly susceptible to diseases; they also do not fetch good prices in markets.

How do you observe these effects on the animals?

Community members were able to identify animal welfare indicators. They mentioned that they can observe behaviour of animals and ‘hear their voices’. They observe animal behaviour related to environmental conditions. They said that ‘animals show behavioural changes such as reduced activity and responsiveness.’ Tail biting of dogs, vocalization of animals, running or unusual behaviours and feather pecking in poultry are behaviours induced by environmental inadequacies. These abnormal behaviour patterns reflect inadequacies of the animal’s environment or bad animal keeper behaviour. Community members mentioned that behavioural observations related to feeding, drinking or resting can give insights into the animal’s feelings. They said that animals that are discomforted due to poor housing condition such as standing all night may show signs of injuries to their leg such as staggering, stopping with one leg and incoordination. Mastitis causes low milk production. Mastitis due to “evil eye” causes mammary gland swelling and red milk. Ill animals reduce their body weight. Fearful animals stay alarmed, run to other animals or stand when approached.

What are the most common animal welfare issues that affect all species of animals in this community?

In Darito, community members identified diseases, resource constraints, injuries and castration practice as common animal welfare issues that affect animals. They mentioned that human activities cause spread of animal diseases. They also mentioned that resource constraints limit their ability to improve the welfare of their animals. Animals get limited living space or uncomfortable houses because of high construction cost. People may give little attention to sick animals because of their inability to afford vaccination or timely treatment. Physical injury to the leg or body of animals will result in broken bones or bruising which causes lameness.

Another welfare issue is castration practice. Castration is performed in expectation of high market price for castrated animals with good body mass or body weight. Community members indicated that they practised closed and open castration practices. Closed castration is crushing testicles by heavy metal rods without burdizzo and anaesthesia. Open castration is performed by opening scrotum and removing the testicles using a blade without any anaesthesia. They castrate cattle at the age of four or five years. An animal castrated at five years is called Qubla. Male goats are castrated at two years. But Qorti male goats are not castrated due to their good performance for breeding purposes.

How well do you think you're meeting the needs of your animals? What are your constraints when caring for your animals?

During the conversations, community members mentioned that they have limited animal management information and knowledge. They also indicated that they face resource constraints to meet the needs of their animals. Community constraints to improving welfare of animals include shortage of feed and water, shortage of veterinary drugs and unavailability of trained service providers. Community members stated that feed and water shortage critically affect the welfare of their animals. A male participant said, 'we move with our animals long distances in search of feed and water, which makes them tired and exhausted. Our animals get water in two- or three-days intervals.'

Health-related constraints of animals were issues like unavailability of veterinary clinic, shortage of veterinary drugs, few animal health workers, and untrained community members. Community members mentioned that 'our veterinary clinic is far from our village. Animal health workers are not also available any time. They live in town and we cannot get them as we want. The veterinary clinic also lacks drugs, vaccines, materials like burdizzo castrator, chemicals and crush. So, we buy drugs from the market and inject drugs like ivermectin and oxytetracycline ourselves.' They also mentioned that vaccination for most of the diseases are not available for all animals especially camel and equine. Their animals are not regularly vaccinated for diseases like foot and mouth.

Session 3. Community action to improve the welfare of animals

Community facilitators summarized main points and issues emerging from the community conversations and asked community members to identify solutions and actions that they would like to take to address some of the issues they identified related to improving the welfare of their animals.

Table 1 Community action points

| Animal welfare issues | Actions (community/household) | Expected changes | Resources/support required |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| Feed and water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming land to get straw Harvest grass and hay making Use nugcake Pond construction and fencing for water points Keep and fence grazing lands Use communal grazing land in rainy season | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of feed and water in dry season Saving animals' lives Animals gain body weight/ become fat High milk and butter production Good income when we sell | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of pond and water draining Buy grass in shortage time Management of ranch and watershed |
| Animal health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy veterinary drugs from approved sources Monitor body condition and health status of animals Consult veterinarian when animals are diseased Vaccination Report outbreak of diseases Use traditional medicines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved health status of animals Improved livestock productivity Reduced transmission of diseases to humans Healthy and happy animals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccines Drug availability Veterinary pharmacy Animal health worker FMD do not have any treatment |

| Animal welfare issues | Actions (community/household) | Expected changes | Resources/support required |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|
| Castration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult veterinarian on how to castrate Use drugs to manage bacterial infection Diffusing tobacco over the wound Stop traditional ways of castration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No bacterial growth over the wound Castrated animals gain body weight Earn more from sale of castrated animals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-based animal health worker training on how to castrate animals Burdizzo castrator |

Follow up and sustainability

During the closing of community conversations, local partners reflected on their experience and takeaways from the discussions. They found the conversation issues relevant to their work. Local partners also committed to follow up and support community members in the implementation of their action plans.

Menz Gera: summary of community conversations on animal welfare

During the conversations, community members demonstrated understanding of animal welfare issues. What came immediately to the mind of people were the basic needs of animals such as feed, shelter and health. Upon probing, community members mentioned feelings and natural behaviour of animals. The following is a summary of main points that emerged from the community conversations.

Session I. What is animal welfare? Why is it important?

What does animal welfare mean to you? What is the local term for animal welfare?

When asked to describe what animal welfare means to them, community members readily identified basic needs of animals. They mentioned providing feed, shelter and health to describe animal welfare. They considered that animals are in good welfare when feed and water are available all year round, when there are no diseases, and when animals have clean and comfortable shelter. Women participants said, ‘the existence of an animal is its owner’ meaning it is the animal owner who provides care and protection to animals.

Upon further probing, community members demonstrated understanding that animal welfare also includes feelings and natural behaviours of animals. They mentioned that animals have feelings and that they can be happy, sad or frustrated, and they identified situations which make animals happy or sad. They were able to identify indicators of good and bad animal welfare situations.

Community members identified local terms for animal welfare. In Amharic, people described animal welfare as ‘ye’insisat dehn’net, kibkabe’ meaning wellbeing of animals or giving care for animals. Some even go beyond and described animal welfare as “animal rights”.

Can animals be happy or sad? What makes animals happy or sad?

Men and women community members described that animals become happy when they get enough feed, there is rain and they are healthy. They said that animals show signs of happiness or sadness. When they are happy, they run here and there putting their tails up, they want to play and fight playfully, they make loud voices and they need to mate. When they are unhappy, they have their head down, and they do not want to run and play. Animals are unhappy when they do not eat well, when they are sick or when they are beaten. If they are not fed well, they do not want to go to their shelter in the evening; they want to go away and they don’t allow their offspring to suckle.

Animals are also not happy when their shelter is unclean. A male participant said, 'they don't want to go to their shelter; we force them to go to their shelter. If the shelter is clean and dry, animals run to and happily enter their shelter.'

Community members also indicated that animals have needs related to natural behaviours. When asked if their animals get the chance to move and graze freely, people mentioned that their animals are in the field. A male participant said, 'it is only when we have no one to herd animals that we keep them in shelters or tether them. The animals get the chance to graze freely in the morning and afternoon when the children are around to take care of them.'

Both men and women participants recognized the need for animals to express their natural behaviours. They said that if animals are tethered or kept indoors all the time, it is not good for their health and body condition. A woman participant said, 'they become weak.' Asked about how they know the needs of animals for free movement and expressing their natural behaviour, community members mentioned that animals express behaviours, such as making loud noise; they become restless and fight one another. 'When they are released from their shelter', a woman farmer said, 'animals run freely, and they love grazing in the open'. Another woman participant said, 'when animals get refreshed, they sleep peacefully in their shelters.'

How do you benefit from improving the welfare of your animals?

Community members indicated that there is a relationship between the welfare of their animals and their own wellbeing. They mentioned that their livelihoods depend on animals and their animals also depend on their owners. A male farmer said, 'to benefit from animals, we have to take care of them. It is a give and take relationship.' Community members mentioned that good care of animals is related to animal health and productivity. A woman farmer said, 'if animals get feed and water and their shelter is clean all the time, they don't get sick and they become happy.'

Are there any traditional customs, beliefs or sayings related to animals or their care? How are animals perceived/ viewed in your community?

Community members believed that 'it is a sin not to give care for animals,' and they would be judged in heaven for cruel actions on animals. As mentioned already, they believe that 'the existence of an animal is its owner'. This demonstrated community members' understanding and moral value to provide care for animals within their capacity/ resource availability.

Session 2. What are the community's needs related to animal welfare?

In Sine Amba community, water for animals is not a problem. Community members mentioned that their animals get water freely without travelling long distances. They are happy that their animals do not get tired by walking long distances in search of water. Describing animal needs, a woman participant said, 'if it is not for not speaking, animals have similar needs and feelings like humans.'

When discussing animal needs, community members said that 'it is not only humans who need good things; animals also need good things and comfort.' Men and women participants identified feed, animal health, sanitation, castration, shearing practice and handling of animals as common welfare issues in their community.

Feed sources include haymaking, open grazing and crop residues. Community members explained that feed from available sources is not enough and they supplement local feed availability through purchases. Improved forage production experience is limited to some farmers, and community members demanded improved forage planting materials and technical support on improved forage production and ration formulation.

Animal health is another welfare issue community members identified. In the conversations, community members mentioned service provision challenges, and they demanded to have regular vaccination and deworming times. They also demanded to have an animal health post in their community.

In Sine Amba, community members indicated that they have houses for sheep, cattle and other animals. In the discussions, community members identified sanitation as a welfare issue. Though they reported that they clean barns regularly, community members stressed the need for sanitation and keeping animal shelters clean and dry. A male participant said, 'if you see dirty fleece, you can tell the condition of animal shelters.'

What are animal welfare issues related to castration and shearing practices?

Community members indicated that traditional castration practices (hitting by stone) reduce welfare of their animals by causing physical pain. They also raised concerns with ineffectiveness of castration tools. They reported that only two sheep out of nine were castrated effectively by the local service providers. They complained not only about the tool, but they doubted the competency of the service providers. Community members described the effect of unsatisfactory castration practice using a local term, "libe kula", literally meaning the sexual desire of the animal is still there.

Community members recognized that traditional shearing practice affects the welfare of their sheep. They requested improved shearing scissors and management practice.

When is moving/handling your animals easy? What is the effect of good and bad animal handling on the animal and the handler?

When asked if they beat animals, community members had heated discussions. Men and children are reported to hit and yell at animals. A woman participant said that her son once tied up the legs of a sheep and beat it. Another woman said, 'once I was driving my loaded donkey to a milling house, and it resisted to go. I called a man to help me move the donkey. He bit it harshly, but the donkey did not move. Then he stopped beating the donkey and he was sorry for my husband who has to handle the donkey.'

Women are reported to manage animals in a calm and friendly manner. They explained that animals learn and develop fear if they are beaten or yelled at. A woman participant said, 'animals run away or stop or change direction of walking when they hear the voice of children or male members of the household.' Animals know who is taking care of them, and they make noise when they see the care giver or hear their voices. A male participant said, 'animals behave like children. If I treat my son positively, he would call me father and approach me affectionately. Animals also know who gives them care and express their connection with the handler.'

Community members explained that animals need to be handled properly. If we force and handle them harshly, animals will not move, they can be injured or they may kick the handler. Community members reported death of animals such as sheep due to harsh beating. They explained that how they handle their animals not only affects the feelings of animals but also their productivity. They also mentioned that good animal handling is not only good for animals but also for the handler. When animals are handled badly, they can be aggressive and injure the handler by kicking or biting. Aggressive handling of animals also affects the emotion of handlers. A male participant said, 'I feel sorry when animals experience pain due to my bad handling.'

Though community members seem to believe that donkeys can bear physical pain, they said that all animals feel pain and they become unhappy or frustrated when they are beaten. A participant said, 'it is only stone that does not feel pain.' Animals become fearful and want to run away when they are shouted at. Asked about how they know that animals feel pain when beaten or worked hard, community members said that 'animals become fearful, they show strips on their skin when beaten, they bend their bodies, they fall on the ground, and they don't move.'

Male participants reported that ox beating during ploughing is very common, and if the ox is lazy, the beating is harsh. They even become aggressive when beating animals which don't respond. They said that, though they know that oxen feel physical pain, their focus is on finishing the ploughing. A participant said, 'it is the sunset which frees the oxen' meaning oxen are overworked throughout the day. Another participant said in Amharic, "meskerem yegedelewin lela meskerem ayadnewum" meaning a farmer who failed farming in September cannot recover in September of the next year. 'In the evening', farmers said, 'we massage the wounds or strips due to beating on the oxen, and we provide feed and water, but they don't want to eat.'

Through the community conversations, community members understood the effect of good and bad animal handling on the affective state and productivity of animals. They realized that animals need safety and relaxation in their handling and that they must be friendly to their animals and train their animals by gentle instruction rather than by physical beating of animals.

Session 3. Community action to improve welfare of animals

The facilitation team recapped the conversation process, made summary of welfare issues and the challenges community members faced when taking care of their animals. Community members identified feed, animal health, animal handling, castration and shearing practice as priority welfare issues facing the community. Then facilitators engaged community members in discussions to identify action points towards improving the welfare of their animals. The facilitation team also encouraged farmers to think of the benefits of solving these welfare issues.

Community action points agreed upon during the session are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Community action points

| Priority animal welfare issues | Action points | Change indicators |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Feed availability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely collection of grass/haymaking/crop residues • Reduce herd size • Introduce improved/irrigated forage production • Introduce improved forage seed multiplication • Improve feeding troughs • Improve grazing land management practices • Improve ration formulation of locally available feed resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased feed availability • Happy and productive animals |
| Animal health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely vaccination and deworming • Construct community animal health post • Community mobilization based on scheduled vaccination/deworming programs • Improve animal health service delivery • Improve sanitation by frequently cleaning barns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy and productive animals • Reduce cost of animal treatment |
| Animal handling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach children not to hit animals and hold family discussion about effect of bad animal handling on the feelings and productivity of animals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy and productive animals • Satisfaction of handler |
| Castration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use improved castration method • Avoid traditional castration method (stone hitting) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced physical pain • No wounds (damaged testicles) • Body weight gain of castrated animals • Better price in markets |
| Shearing practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid traditional shearing practice with knife • Use improved shearing scissors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No wounds |

Talking about their experience with community conversations, community members reflected that ‘in the past, we did not give care for animals; now there is a change. We now know the value of animals. Everyone in this community gives care, and we are happy that you gave us such an opportunity to discuss challenges and find solutions together.’ They also asked local partners to follow up on this and improve service delivery and support the community in implementing the actions.

Follow up and sustainability

At the end of the community conversations, local partners reflected on the process, engagement of participants, their takeaway from the conversations and way forward. They expressed that they learned a lot from the farmers and appreciated how much knowledge existed in the community. They were encouraged to advance this issue and committed to address some of the concerns raised in the conversations. They also promised to follow up the implementation of the agreed action points by the farmers on animal welfare issues.

Figure 2.A local partner (women's affairs office) sharing her reflections and follow-up commitment.



Process review, reflection and learning

At the end of the community conversations, the research team engaged community facilitators, note takers and local partners in reflective discussions and team learning to capture lessons, insights and experiences to inform design and delivery of other conversation sessions. The social learning process has been a powerful experience for local partners. Such an after-event reflection and insight-making session has also been instrumental to the analysis and interpretation of community conversations results.

Figure 3. After-action team reflection and learning at Menz Gera district



Local research and development partners found community conversations engaging and empowering for both community members and themselves. Compared with their own community engagement practices, they testified that community conversations have made learning stimulative and engaging for community members.

The community conversations helped contextualize the learning process and create shared understanding (understanding beyond individual learning) through social interaction and collaborative learning among community members and local service providers leading to joint actions and implementation.

Asked about whether they found the community conversations module on animal welfare useful, local partners said that 'though what we have been doing is already about animal welfare, the module helps us approach our work from a different perspective.'

Analysis of experience and lessons learned

Changing the attitudes, behaviours and practices of community members is complex and challenging. The actions of community members are influenced by several factors. Information provided by outsiders in traditional formats normally does little to influence the perspective, knowledge and practices of community members. Only telling people what to do usually does not work.

Community members must take ownership of livestock management challenges and engaging them in participatory learning processes to explore and analyse issues and collectively generate solutions in partnership with local service providers is a way to achieve this. They need to consider and discuss solutions and think through their implementation, articulating the changes that they are likely to make.

Participatory processes such as community conversations engage community members in sharing information and exploring their own attitudes and practices. This group learning process can lead to changes in attitudes and practices. Community conversations help local service providers understand the social and cultural context in which community members operate. Such understanding is vital to determine technical solutions that fit within the cultural practices and realities of community members, and to bring and facilitate lasting changes in these practices.

Local research and development partners can use knowledge from community conversations and community actions as the basis for providing continued coaching and mentoring support, thus reinforcing intentions/actions of community members to take gradual actions towards improving the welfare of their animals. Community members may be used to their local service providers just telling them what they should do. Therefore, they may initially find it difficult to openly discuss issues and come up with solutions/actions themselves. Using community conversations might seem challenging at first, but, in time, community members can develop the attitudes, skills and confidence necessary to work together as well as with local service providers to solve their own problems.

Annex I. List of participants

Yabello

Local partners

| Name | Gender | Organization | Position |
|-------------------|--------|--|----------------------|
| Adem Kumbe | M | Yabello Pastoral and Dryland Agriculture Research Centre | Researcher |
| Mebratu Melkagube | M | Borana Zone Livestock Development Office | Animal health expert |
| Adi Golicha | F | Borana Zone Livestock Development Office | Rangeland expert |
| Boru Godana | M | Yabello Pastoral and Dryland Agriculture Research Centre | Technical assistant |
| Bula Mengesha | M | Borana Zone Livestock Development Office | Coordinator |
| Halake Haro | M | Borana Zone Livestock Development Office | Animal health expert |

Community members

| No | Name | Gender | Position |
|-----|-----------------|--------|-----------------|
| 1. | Taro Jilo | M | Agropastoralist |
| 2. | Gerbole Dika | M | Agropastoralist |
| 3. | Haro Jatani | M | Agropastoralist |
| 4. | Kamale Gagnore | F | Agropastoralist |
| 5. | Kute Kalicho | M | Agropastoralist |
| 6. | Kushe Galma | F | Agropastoralist |
| 7. | Dansoye Jarso | F | Agropastoralist |
| 8. | Godana Jarso | F | Agropastoralist |
| 9. | Bati Boru | F | Agropastoralist |
| 10. | Daki Kalicha | F | Agropastoralist |
| 11. | Bonaye Jabana | M | Agropastoralist |
| 12. | Jilo Liba | F | Agropastoralist |
| 13. | Abadaso Kiya | F | Agropastoralist |
| 14. | Abadaso Jaldesa | F | Agropastoralist |
| 15. | Rufo Dera | F | Agropastoralist |
| 16. | Daki Bule | F | Agropastoralist |
| 17. | Kabale Taro | F | Agropastoralist |
| 18. | Kalo Debana | F | Agropastoralist |
| 19. | Jatani Boru | M | Agropastoralist |
| 20. | Tura Dida | M | Agropastoralist |
| 21. | Oblo Alake | M | Agropastoralist |
| 22. | Bariso Wariyo | M | Agropastoralist |
| 23. | Garbicha Abduba | M | Agropastoralist |
| 24. | Denge Alahe | M | Agropastoralist |
| 25. | Kunu Nura | M | Agropastoralist |
| 26. | Tadich Fugicha | M | Agropastoralist |
| 27. | Galma Dadasa | M | Agropastoralist |
| 28. | Galgalo Boru | M | Agropastoralist |
| 29. | Tura Bakila | M | Agropastoralist |
| 30. | Jarso Barako | M | Agropastoralist |

| No | Name | Gender | Position |
|-----|---------------|--------|-----------------|
| 31. | Wakala Tadi | M | Agropastoralist |
| 32. | Didi Kuli | M | Agropastoralist |
| 33. | Nura Barako | M | Agropastoralist |
| 34. | Diko Kucha | F | Agropastoralist |
| 35. | Daki Bute | F | Agropastoralist |
| 36. | Debalo Dinge | M | Agropastoralist |
| 37. | Galme Wariyo | M | Agropastoralist |
| 38. | Lesi Dida | F | Agropastoralist |
| 39. | Kerepe Wariyo | F | Agropastoralist |
| 40. | Sake Abduba | F | Agropastoralist |
| 41. | Guda Abagaro | F | Agropastoralist |
| 42. | Jilo Wakala | F | Agropastoralist |
| 43. | Salo Alahe | F | Agropastoralist |
| 44. | Godana Liben | M | Agropastoralist |
| 45. | Kabale Arero | F | Agropastoralist |
| 46. | Galmo Galgalo | F | Agropastoralist |

Menz Gera

Local partners

| Name | Gender | Organization | Position |
|---------------------|--------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Yifru Demeke | M | Menz Gera District Livestock Development Office | Animal health team leader |
| Mohammed Seid | M | Menz Gera District Livestock Development Office | Veterinarian |
| Tadewos Asfaw | M | Debre Berhan Agricultural Research Centre | Animal health researcher |
| Birye Debebe | F | Debre Berhan Agricultural Research Center | Enumerator |
| Fasika Teleyita | F | Kebele Agricultural Office | Development agent |
| Yeshemebet Demissew | F | Kebele Agricultural Office | Development agent |
| Dejene Legesse | M | Menz Gera District Agricultural Development Office | Head, Agricultural Development Office |
| Shumiye Berega | M | Menz Gera District Communications Office | Communications expert |
| Kimem Ashenif | F | Menz Gera District Women's Affairs Office | Office head |
| Asrat Eshete | M | Menz Gera District Livestock Development Office | Extension team leader |

Community members

| No | Name | Gender | Position |
|-----|--------------------------|--------|----------|
| 1. | Woldegiorgis Hailemariam | M | Priest |
| 2. | Girma Tilahun | M | Priest |
| 3. | Endaylalu Feredegn | M | Farmer |
| 4. | Zewdu Temalede | M | Farmer |
| 5. | Tewabech Alemayehu | F | Farmer |
| 6. | Wude Getaneh | F | Farmer |
| 7. | Shifera Erdew | M | Farmer |
| 8. | Tebikew Cherinet | M | Farmer |
| 9. | Agachew Kassaye | M | Farmer |
| 10. | Aynalem Zewdie | M | Farmer |
| 11. | Masresha Temeselew | M | Farmer |

| No | Name | Gender | Position |
|-----|-------------------------|--------|----------|
| 12. | Habtamu Negesse | M | Farmer |
| 13. | Yeshemebet Nigusie | F | Farmer |
| 14. | Yehualashet Eshete | M | Farmer |
| 15. | Yetmwork Kemechew | F | Farmer |
| 16. | Kefelegn Negash | M | Farmer |
| 17. | Melese Tilahun | M | Farmer |
| 18. | Adeferebew Woldecherkos | M | Farmer |
| 19. | Getamesay Tilahun | M | Farmer |
| 20. | Amsale Tibebe | F | Farmer |
| 21. | Yehualashet Ayalkbet | M | Farmer |
| 22. | Wogayehu Mekonnen | F | Farmer |
| 23. | Tefera Aschenaki | M | Farmer |
| 24. | Shewatek Yitnah | M | Farmer |
| 25. | Mekonnen Negash | M | Farmer |
| 26. | Zewdie Asamnew | M | Farmer |
| 27. | Debebe Tesfaye | M | Farmer |
| 28. | Tadelech Aschenaki | F | Farmer |
| 29. | Ejigayehu Abebe | F | Farmer |
| 30. | Getachew Teklewold | M | Priest |
| 31. | Birshet Aschalew | F | Farmer |
| 32. | Adefres Eshete | M | Farmer |
| 33. | Fantaye Shenkut | F | Farmer |
| 34. | Zewdie Shumet | M | Farmer |
| 35. | Fantahun Aschalew | M | Farmer |
| 36. | Emebet Arega | F | Farmer |
| 37. | Ejige Temalede | F | Farmer |
| 38. | Shimeles Kifelew | M | Farmer |
| 39. | Tesfa Tilahun | F | Farmer |
| 40. | Belayhun Mekuria | M | Farmer |
| 41. | Admassu Assefa | M | Farmer |
| 42. | Tiruye Yitina | F | Farmer |
| 43. | Zenebu Kenaw | F | Farmer |
| 44. | Beletu Tesfaye | F | Farmer |
| 45. | Abazenech Tenaw | F | Farmer |
| 46. | Sinke Bizu | F | Farmer |
| 47. | Mulat Dejene | F | Farmer |
| 48. | Belay Assefa | M | Farmer |

Annex 2. The community conversations process in pictures

A research partner facilitating community conversations in Borana



Partial view of women participants in Borana community



Community members discussing action points in Borana



Partial view of community members at Menz Gera



Annex 3. Community conversations facilitation checklist

Session 1. What is animal welfare? Why is it important?

- Do animals have feelings like us? Can they be happy or sad? Do they suffer from physical pain?
- What makes animals happy or sad?
- How do you know when animals are sad or happy?
- What does animal welfare mean to you? What is the local term for animal welfare? Explore views of men and women participants.
- How do you describe good or bad animal welfare situations in your community? Explore the views of men and women participants. [animal body condition, behavior (stall feeding vs. free grazing, tethering ...), feelings (pain, injuries, wounds, ...)]
- What are farmers/agro-pastoralists' attitudes towards animals? Are there any traditional customs, beliefs or sayings related to animals or their care? How are animals perceived/viewed in your community?
- What do you benefit from improving the welfare of your animals? [animal productivity, livelihoods, food safety, human well-being, public health, satisfaction of care givers, ...]

Session 2. What are the community's needs related to animal welfare?

- What do animals need to be healthy, happy and productive? [resources, environment, services, handling, behavioral needs (food and water, good health, shelter and comfort, rest and relaxation, companionship of other animals ...)]
- What would happen if these animal needs are not met? [productivity, health, feelings, ...]
- How do you observe these effects on the animals? [physical and behavioral signs – pain and injuries, tiredness, boredom, fecal soiling and dirty fleece (rainy/wet season, feed on offer, lying and comfort, parasite burden), ...]
- What are the most common animal welfare issues that affect all species of animals in this community? [diseases, undernutrition, animal handling, training of farm animals, shearing practice, castration (age, time, method, market preference), lamb and adult mortality (time and reason), lameness/leg injuries, wounds, mastitis, myiasis, body lesions, ...]
- How well do you think you're meeting the needs of your animals right now? Ask for a show of hands from poor to ok to very well.
- What are your constraints when caring for your animals? [services, environment, resources, lack of awareness, attitudes about animal welfare ...]
- Which of your animals are important when giving care for animals? Why?
- Who in this community are regarded as the best animal care givers? What makes these people the best care givers? [behavior of owners towards their animals, body condition scoring (when, how and why), resources, environment ...]
- How do you find moving/handling your animals easy? [hitting, yelling, scaring, ...]
- What is the effect of good and bad animal handling on the animal and the handler?

Session 3.Actions to improve welfare of animals

Community action

Make a recap of the conversation process and summarize main points and issues from the community conversations.

Invite community members to identify and agree on priority animal welfare issues

Identify small, incremental/continuous actions to improve priority animal welfare

Encourage community members to think of potential benefits of taking action to improve welfare of their animals.

| Priority animal welfare issues | Actions (household and community level) | Expected changes/change indicators | Resources/support required to implement these actions |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Action points of public service providers/local partners

- What action would you take to support community members in improving the welfare of their animals?
- How would you integrate animal welfare issues in your regular livestock extension/health activities?