

Enhancing Women-led Community-Based Breeding Programs (CBBPs) in Ethiopia

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Capacity Development Report



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Enhancing Women-led Community-Based Breeding Programs (CBBPs) in Ethiopia

Introduction

Community-based breeding program (CBBP) is a genetic improvement program based on the local stock, local experiences and scientific methods of genetics. CBBP is a participatory genetic improvement program that considers informal and community-driven community-based organizations (CBOs). CBBP was initiated in 2009, and over 150 CBBP villages are functional, with considerable success, in Ethiopia through the engagement of research centers, universities, agricultural extension, and NGOs.

Women are traditionally responsible for caring for sheep and goats, but men usually make decisions and sales. While the original CBBP programs were theoretically open to all genders, we noticed that the involvement of women in these programs was minimal. Therefore, we started intervening through gender-targeted capacity development and transformative-action community conversations. But gender norms run deep, and we found that, in mixed-gender settings, women were unlikely to speak up or show leadership. When you put everyone together, usually, the men dominate. So, to get an idea of women's roles in breeding programs and other value generators, it's always good to consult the women separately. And at some stage, we said, 'why don't we just start a women's CBBP? Hence, we established women CBBPs in a few villages in Ethiopia starting in 2019. In doing so, we created a safe space for women to speak freely, participate in decision-making, and claim leadership and committee positions.

Women-led cooperatives are characterized by the following: Women are the drivers of the CBBP cooperatives, the members of the cooperatives are women, the leadership of the cooperatives is women, and any training and communication are made with women. Women are decision-makers in CBBPs in women-led CBBPs. The small ruminant innovations are channeled through women's groups. Hence, there is a need to establish more women-led CBBP cooperatives to exploit the inherent indigenous knowledge of women and ensure women's empowerment.

Objectives

Engage women groups in managing CBBP and improve small ruminant productivity through women's empowerment

Approaches to establishing women-led CBBPs

The first step to initiate women-led CBBP is to share and understand the role of women in small ruminant management through community conversation that combines both men and women in the household. As a result, a couple of training that involved a wife and husband were provided to orient on the purposes of women-led CBBP and the anticipated benefits in setting women CBBPs. Couple training is a common approach in agricultural extension practice to disseminate agricultural technologies in a rural setting. In doing so, the household heads, men, are convinced to allow any CBBP activity to be channeled through women. The CBBP

cooperatives are run by women that range from membership to leadership. The initiative will ensure women's participation and exploit the inherent linkage of women with small ruminant management. Having separate women and men-led cooperatives will help to compare their efficiencies and allow sharing of experiences among themselves in small ruminant management. Women-led CBBP has followed clear procedures of establishing seven women CBBP cooperatives that are functional, and four women CBBPs are being established.

Benefits of women-led CBBPs

It has been hypothesized that establishing and recognizing women-led CBBPs ensures the exploitation of women's inherent skills in small ruminant management, capturing the indigenous knowledge accumulated over the years and improving small ruminant production. This will play a role in breaking the cultural barrier and give women a chance to communicate and share ideas and views for small ruminant management. Some of the benefits are highlighted below.

- Although the impacts of the women CBBP will take some time to materialize as the program started in 2019 fully, preliminary results indicate that women in the villages were catching on to the significant economic, social, and personal benefits the program provided.
- The women's CBBP also improves women's access to technical and managerial skills, finance, agricultural inputs, services, and marketing and business networks.
- The financial boost provides women CBBP members with an opportunity for ownership and control over resources and assets, including primary products (animals) and secondary products (milk and butter).
- Many women in the project report that the greater their economic contribution to the household, the greater their involvement in household decision-making. Within the village, many women report feeling more respected now because people look at them like they are businesswomen.

Table 1. Female-led CBBP cooperatives and flock number in each CBBP cooperative

Region	District	Name cooperatives	Responsible Institution	Members of female-led CBBP
South	Doyogena	Serera Bukata CBBP	Areka research Centre	55
South	Doyogena	Lemi CBBP	Areka research Centre	50
Amhara	Fagita Lekoma	Manguda	Injibara University	130
Southwest	Bonga	Buqa	Bonga Research Centre	52
Oromia	Haramaya	Damota	Haramaya University	93

Amhara	Menz	Menz	D/Berhanu Research Centered	41
Amhara	Menz	Menz	Debre Birhan University	65
Total				486

Source: Universities and research centers (2022)

Output

Seven women-led CBBPs were organized with 486 members, and four women-led CBBPs were in the process of establishment.



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Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) is a project that helps deliver a climate-smart African future driven by science and innovation in agriculture.

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