

RIPPLE EFFECT'S POSITION ON GENDER EQUALITY

When you empower women, you empower the whole community. We aim to achieve women's empowerment through individual and collective mindset change.



Fatuma is part of the 'Sustainable Futures' project in Kenya. She is pictured here with her baby, Jay Omar

Why we must take action

Based on data from 87 countries, UN Women determined that:

- 1 in 5 women and girls under the age of 50 will have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner within the last 12 months.
- Harmful practices, such as child marriage, steal the childhood of 15 million girls under age 18 every year.
- Women do 2.6 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men.
- Only 52 per cent of women married or in a union freely make their own decisions about sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care.



Sources:

1. SDG5: Gender Equality - UN Women
2. Why Gender Equality Matters to All 17 SDGs - UN Women

We believe in addressing gender issues throughout our programs, because we know that our project, program and global goals (SDGs) will not be achieved otherwise.



**Achieve gender
equality and
empower all
women and girls**

Why is gender equality important to us?

Our vision of a confident, thriving and sustainable rural Africa can only be achieved when men and women have equal access to and control over resources, and are equally valued by society. However, the women and girls we work alongside face many challenges.



Phoebe and her community recognise the benefits of empowering women and girls - Uganda

Ripple Effect's position on Gender equality

At Ripple Effect we are contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The goal has targets covering an end to discrimination, violence, and harmful traditional practices as well as putting into practice rights on participation, leadership and decision-making, access and control of resources and sexual and reproductive health.

How we achieve mindset change in our projects

Through changing the mindsets of everyone in the community, including women and children, we can begin to live more equitably and safely together.

- We set a 65% target for female participation in our projects, and we beat it every year.
- Our work stands out because we include men and boys in our gender workshops, helping to secure their buy-in and lasting change for the women and girls in their families.
- We are unique in that our interventions begin in the home. Often organisations focus on the community, but that ignores the harmful dynamics at home that might be holding women back, such as unfair domestic workloads and gender-based violence (GBV).
- We tackle inequality household by household, and because of the depth of the intervention, we can ensure a more robust understanding of the principles of equality, setting the stage for women to take up leadership roles in the community.
- We include children so that they can observe and learn from the training, for the next generation.
- We use a research-backed tool called Transformative Household Methodology (or THM) to promote gender equality. THM was developed in-house by our team in Ethiopia and we have adopted it as an essential part of every Ripple Effect project, in all six countries where we work.

Why does gender inequality exist?

Society, culture and learned behaviours all allocate different roles and responsibilities to people in society, based on their age and gender. These result in disparities in education levels, employment opportunities and decision-making in the home and in the community, reinforcing damaging power imbalances, controlling behaviours and the status quo.



A group THM training in Dawuro, Ethiopia

How does THM work?

Using a visual tool, household members identify their different roles and responsibilities. Family members place stones or beans in a grid based on his/her workload or based on his/her access and control over resources. This tool has proven to be particularly effective in rural/agricultural contexts because it is illiterate-friendly and promotes a process that is simple and easily understood by all household members.

What topics does THM cover?

Animal management: Who is expected to care for the animals, what are the customs and traditions and how can that responsibility be shared?

Nutrition: Which family members eat more (protein rich) food? What are the customs and traditions and how can we ensure that every family member, regardless of gender, age, disability and status (widowed, orphaned etc) can equitably access a diverse and nutritious diet?

Disability: How can family members with disabilities participate and benefit equitably in the home? What are the barriers and traditions?

Decision-making: Who controls how land is used, money is spent and food is shared? How can that be shared more equitably?

Workloads: Who does the most housework, care work (especially post COVID pandemic) and farm work? What are the customs and traditions, and can families have discussions and create plans to cope by sharing the load?



**READ OUR TRAINING
MANUAL FOR THM
FACILITATORS**

Why is THM so effective?

THM doesn't offer a one-size fits all solution to gender inequality. It is a tool that facilitates discussion between family members, encouraging them to come up with their own solutions based on their specific household dynamics.

Importantly, THM includes children, helping ensure the next generation is more equal than the current one.

THM supports families to become role models for their community in gender equality.



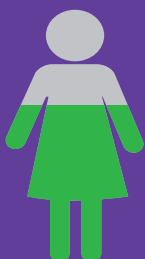
How we tackle gender-based violence (GBV)

When we begin a new project, we may find that risk factors for violence such as poverty and low education are high in many of the areas where we work. Where women are financially dependent on men, unable to provide food or basic needs for their families, and experience high levels of poverty and food insecurity, they are more vulnerable to GBV. Often men dominate decision making whilst women are over-burdened with work. Particular traditional beliefs held by some men and women are founded on negative attitudes that foster and normalize violence.

THE DATA:



Our research found that 39% of women experienced physical violence within the last 12 months, 29% sexual violence and 21% economic violence.



Our study also found that 60% of women affected by violence said it has stopped or lessened since the start of their Ripple Effect project.

Continued overleaf



36%

of women specifically experiencing physical Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) said it had stopped entirely since the start of the project, 32% said it had reduced.

The WHO estimates that **1 in 3 women** globally experience some form of violence within their lifetime. Our equivalent research found that, for our Kenyan project participants, that number was closer to 71%.

OUR APPROACH

Education

Women and girls taking part in our projects are aware of the rights and legal protection available to them. This understanding empowers women and girls to seek protection against violence.

Balancing workloads

In participating in the program, both women and men report that women's workloads are reduced. Women's confidence and involvement in decision-making increases, and they are able to earn income from agricultural activities, so they are food secure and economically empowered.

The burden of solely providing for the family is reduced for men hence reducing the triggers of violence between intimate partners.

Relationships are better, with more respect between men and women, a significant reduction in levels of physical, sexual, emotional and economic Intimate Partner Violence. A greater proportion of women take up positions as leaders within the community, cementing this progress.

Continued overleaf



Community leadership

We work with key influential people in a community such as village leaders and religious leaders to sustain the gender balance. Creating male role models in the community that have the courage to go against the cultural norms, for example by helping their wives with responsibilities that are usually considered 'women's work', can be transformational.

Community owned safeguarding

We want every community member to feel safe where they live.

Through a process of awareness, knowledge of rights and services available, risk assessment and network building, communities can strengthen their localised safety net to promote safe practices, prevent harm and report issues.

Safeguarding issues often occur because of gendered beliefs and power dynamics. Early marriage, intimate partner violence (IPV) and female genital mutilation (FGM) are all examples of a person being controlled by and harmed by others. By creating safe spaces to discuss traditional beliefs in a respectful manner and exploring the benefits of equity in the household, families can experience a mindset change that ripples out into the community.

Every family member regardless of gender, age, disability or marital status is included.



How we embed gender equality in our organisational approach:

- We are committed to equality and diversity through our Equal Opportunity and Dignity at Work Policy, our Safeguarding Policy and our Code of Conduct policy, regardless of gender (including gender reassignment), marital status (including civil partnership), sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, age or disability.
- We monitor and publicise our staff gender balance.
- We monitor our gender balance according to roles and levels leadership.
- We are working to analyse of the gender pay gap.
- We have a wellbeing team which includes dedicated mental health first aiders, services mapping resources, information sources so that all staff members have access to information and a confidential contact to talk to.
- We have flexible working hours to accommodate caring responsibilities.

OUR WORK IN ACTION:

Mihiret is a local girl who Almaz supports with healthy meals and financial contributions.

Just a few years ago, Almaz was not in a position to help girls like Mihiret. She was struggling financially and, in her words, was the "poorest in my community"

She and her husband worked with Ripple Effect to learn new farming and business skills, and balance their family workload.

Now Almaz opens her home to people who need help. Knowing what it's like to feel worried about where your next meal is coming from, she makes a point of feeding anyone who turns up.

"One boy was so affected by malnutrition; without my help I believe he would have died."

She uses her newfound resources and influence to help girls escape the cycle of poverty:

"With Mihiret, she didn't know where she was going. I bought her in so she wouldn't be kidnapped or raped. As a woman, I couldn't let this happen."

She now holds many community roles, and has been recognised by the Ethiopian government with an award for her services to women and girls, presented by an ex-president of the country.

By empowering women like Almaz in Ethiopia, the whole community benefits from her success.



Mihiret and Almaz holding nutritious avocados grown on Almaz' farm in Ethiopia

Want to read more?

- Read our position paper for [sustainable agriculture](#)
- Learn about THM with our [explainer booklet](#)
- Plan your own THM training with our [manual for facilitators](#)
- Read our research papers on:
 - [How THM can address gender inequalities](#) in food consumption and nutrition (USAID funded)
 - [The impact of Ripple Effect EASE approach](#) on levels of IPV experienced by women in Kenya (SVRI/World Bank funded)

Or [visit our 'publications' page](#) for more position papers and resources that explain our ripple effect.

**RIPPLE
EFFECT**

Learn more, grow more, sell more

