

We are:



# Send a Cow Education

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# WHAT IS GENDER INEQUALITY?

It refers to the unequal treatment or perception of individuals based on their gender.

It can happen anywhere, in the street, in the workplace, in the home...

It relates to stereotypes of how we view men and women and how they should behave, for example certain jobs are seen as masculine and others as feminine.

# TRANSFORMATIVE HOUSEHOLD METHODOLOGY

Transformative Household Methodology (THM) is a tool that is used to help households understand the meaning of gender inequality and its implications on life in rural Ethiopia. It attempts to challenge traditional views.



# Can you find Ethiopia?



It is situated in the horn of Africa.



The capital of Ethiopia is Addis Ababa.

# Context – Traditional Ethiopian Roles for Women

Women play a vital role in economic and social systems in Ethiopia, both at a household and community level.

Their duties include:

- Care of children, the elderly and the sick
- Looking after livestock
- Providing children with an informal education
- Household chores and cleaning
- Harvesting and marketing agricultural Produce
- Cooking and maintaining the home





Such heavy workloads have severe consequences:

- A high maternal death rate worsened by a lack of affordable healthcare
- Complications during pregnancy
- Malnutrition and exposure to disease
- Lack of social mobility caused by high school-drop-out rates amongst girls forced to work at home
- Seasonal migration of women to urban centres and the poverty and poor working conditions that they face there

This imbalance in workload is reflected in household power structures.

Women have little to no control over resources and decision making, even family planning.

They are the weakest and most vulnerable group within their communities.





Marta, an Ethiopian farmer, said that she had so much work to do both around the house and on the farm that she would often fall ill– but have no time to see a doctor.

This mentality was being passed on to her daughter Mehmiah, who never made it to school on time or had the chance to study because of her heavy workload around the house. After school she would do her chores, her brother would play.

# So what is THM?

THM is a visual device used to demonstrate the imbalance of household relations between men and women.

It examines the relationship between workload and power by identifying the different roles and responsibilities of each household member versus their control over resources.

The objective is to promote gender awareness and equality thereby improving quality of life for women like Marta.

# How does it work?

All you need for this activity are stones or beans and sticks.

All household members sit together and build a grid with wooden sticks. Each box represents an activity or a resource.

Each person puts a stone or bean in each box they do or have on a daily basis.

They then count the number of stones, noting which gender has more of which.



Whilst it might seem simple, this device allows families to understand inequalities in the household by putting a number to it. This makes them undisputable, and is often shocking and upsetting to the men in the house.

With this new understanding, they then create a family action plan through facilitated conversation to try and even it up!





Follow up training is offered to make sure families really understand the approach of THM.

Farmers are also encouraged to take part in an experience sharing visit to Awramba in North Ethiopia.

This community is known for shared workloads between men and women. The purpose of the trip is to help farmers realise that a change in family relations is possible in an Ethiopian context, and to challenge preconceptions of the perceived shame in doing 'a woman's job'.

# Impacts of THM

THM provokes positive change both in the household and the community.

In the households that took part, women's workloads have decreased, having a positive impact on their quality of life and health.

Men are more involved in activities traditionally considered as feminine, such as childcare and cooking.

The results were gathered 9 months after the introduction of THM showing lasting change in attitudes.

Men have been trying to share their knowledge and training with others, despite facing opposition. This perseverance suggests a truly authentic shift in attitudes and beliefs.



# Why is it so effective?

- **Simplicity** – it is a visual device that illustrates inequalities yet is accessible for all family members and illiterate friendly
- **Availability** – it is low cost, replicable and only uses items that are readily available/adaptable
- **Family focussed** – it encourages teamwork from the very beginning
- **Sustainable** – participants are encouraged to create action plans and share learning with the community
- **Empowering** – the tool is intended to stimulate discussion, create awareness and allow families to decide what changes to make. It does not prescribe opinion.

*“Before the training I didn’t prepare firewood, I didn’t wash clothes and I didn’t wash my children. I have always considered such activities as women’s work and I would have felt ashamed to engage in them.”*

*“I have trained seven other families: after facing an initial resistance to change by some of them, due to deeply rooted traditional beliefs around labour division, I was able to create awareness and I am now following up the changes in my neighbours’ lives.”*



# Wider Impacts

When the problem of gender inequality is tackled, the impacts reach further than the household:

- Division of household tasks means that more girls can stay in school as they have time to study
- THM challenges food insecurity by creating more farm workers
- It puts less pressure on medical infrastructure as women will be given a chance to rest, making them less prone to illness and injury
- It reverses the attitudes being passed on to children and encourages them to question traditions and stereotypes

# Thank you!

For more information and to help girls like Merida visit our Give a Girl a Future campaign:

<http://www.sendacow.org/Pages/Appeal/>

For more resources visit:

[www.sendacow.org.uk/lessonsfromafrica](http://www.sendacow.org.uk/lessonsfromafrica)

