

# Case study

## Transformative Household Methodology, Ethiopia

Gender, targeting and social inclusion



**Case studies** illustrate the kinds of interventions (from IFAD and other development agencies) that have used household methodologies effectively, highlighting the way each methodology has worked in a particular context.

The **case studies** are “living” documents and will be updated periodically based on new experiences and feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the originators.

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# Transformative Household Methodology, Ethiopia

## Section 1: Overview of the methodology

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| <b>Name of the methodology</b>  | <b>Transformative Household Methodology (THM)</b>   |
| <b>Country/ region of implementation</b>  | THM was first used in two regions: Oromia Region and SNNPRS (Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State) in Ethiopia. It is currently being scaled up in southern Ethiopia.  |
| <b>Start/end date</b>   | Send a Cow Ethiopia (SACE) started to implement THM in 2009 and activities are currently ongoing.   |
| <b>Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology</b> | <p>SACE adapted THM from the SIDA-funded Amhara Rural Development Programme, which had applied the methodology to separate groups of men and women at community level, whereas SACE uses it at the household level.</p> <p>SACE is an NGO that works with local NGOs which act as implementing partners. SACE works on four pillars: livestock, natural resources, organic farming, and gender and social development. Gender and a family focus is one of the cornerstone values of SACE, which implies an awareness of the importance of collaboration rather than conflict at the family level.</p> <p>THM/SACE works through self-help groups of 20 members. The group members are divided into three to four cells, formed by SACE on the basis of close neighbours. Each cell consists of three to seven members. Each cell member is responsible for a specific activity such as organic farming, improved animal management or gender issues. The main purpose of the cell system is for members to support each other in farm activities, support weaker members of the cell and provide care in times of poor health.</p> |
| <b>Purpose of the methodology</b>   | The purpose of THM is to transform intra-household gender relations by improving relations between women and men, girls and boys. THM supports household members to identify their different roles and responsibilities as well as their access to and control over resources and related benefits, using the Harvard Gender Analytical Tools (activity profiles excluding community activities and access to and control over benefits) and participatory rural appraisal tools (proportional piling, wealth ranking and seasonal analysis).   |
| <b>Contribution of the methodology to wider organizational/ project goals</b>             | This methodology has contributed significantly to the achievement of SACE's goal to improve the food security of households in the project area. THM facilitates gender analysis at the household level, involving all household members and enabling them to benefit from other SACE-supported activities. It aims to combat traditional practices that negatively affect the nutritional status of mothers and children, such as providing the adult male of the household with more and better food in times of food insecurity (the mother is usually the last to eat).   |
| <b>Target group</b>   | SACE's target group is the poorest of the poor, physically disabled, female-headed households and HIV/AIDS patients.  |

## Section 2: Implementation arrangements

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| <b>Implementing partners</b>             | Project Implementing Partners (PIPs) are local NGOs that share SACE's objective of boosting food security. SACE provides PIPS with financial support and capacity-building on household gender analysis. PIPs select the THM participants following SACE criteria and implement activities. The costs are shared between the PIPs and SACE. More recently, SACE also started direct implementation of THM with communities.  |
| <b>Selection of facilitators/mentors</b> | Community development workers are hired by the PIPs and located in the villages. In the most recent activities implemented directly by SACE, volunteer facilitators have been selected by SACE from the community using criteria jointly developed by SACE, village administration and community elders. Volunteers received pocket money of US\$40 per month. Volunteers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be community members and based in the community</li> <li>▪ Have respect from the community</li> <li>▪ Be willing to serve the community</li> <li>▪ Be able to read and write</li> <li>▪ Practice farming</li> </ul> |
| <b>Training of facilitators/mentors</b>  | SACE gender and social development department staff train SACE project staff, PIP project staff, PIP community development workers and volunteers. Community development workers and volunteers are trained for three days to facilitate THM gender analysis at the group/household level. They train peer farmers selected from each self-help group who, in turn, are responsible for training their group members. Refresher trainings are provided in response to needs detected from regular monitoring and field reporting.  |

## Section 3: Use of the methodology at household level

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| <b>Step 1: Forming self-help groups</b>         | Households are identified and organized into the self-help groups with the support of community elders, <i>kebele</i> (neighbourhood) administration, volunteers and SACE project staff. Households are identified through participatory rural appraisal methods, particularly wealth ranking, using the following selection criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poorest of the poor, with priority to female-headed households, the disabled and HIV/AIDS patients. Between 50 and 70 per cent of all group members are women</li> <li>▪ Already engaged in farming for their livelihood</li> <li>▪ Acceptable to other group members</li> <li>▪ Committed to and understand and share the project's objective of poverty eradication</li> <li>▪ Honest and of good conduct</li> <li>▪ Willing to practice SACE cornerstone values</li> </ul> The groups go through various trainings, including THM. |
| <b>Step 2: Preparing for household analysis</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Among the members of a group, identify four households willing to be selected by group members to be trained and to train other group members. Selected group members become peer farmers.</li> <li>▪ Inform the head of the volunteer households about the estimated duration to conduct the analysis and agree on a convenient time for all household members to meet.</li> <li>▪ Gather locally available materials such as sticks, stones or beans that will be used for the exercise.</li> </ul>  |

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| <p><b>Step 3:<br/>Conducting<br/>basic gender<br/>analysis</b></p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sit in a circle with all the members of the household, preferably inside to avoid interruption.</li> <li>▪ Explain and demonstrate how to make a grid and pile up stones or beans inside the grid and pile proportionally to the relative size of workload, or access to and control over resources.</li> <li>▪ List the household activities by asking household members what they do. Draw grids using sticks: activities are represented on the rows and household members on the columns. Columns may be added if others are doing specific tasks.</li> <li>▪ Each activity and household member is represented by agreed symbols, such as a leaf or seed. It is important to check whether household members remember the symbols.</li> <li>▪ Separate the productive and reproductive/household activities. Also, separate the enterprises for subsistence and for cash. Use stones or beans for the analysis by asking the household to pile proportionally according to the amount of work done by each household member.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Step 4:<br/>Analysing<br/>results and<br/>action planning</b></p> | <p>The facilitator encourages household members to examine the reasons behind the results and guides a cause-effect analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why do women do certain activities? Why not men and the other way round?</li> <li>▪ What is the effect on family economy/health/education/workload balance?</li> <li>▪ Who has more access to and control over resources and benefits, and why?</li> <li>▪ What are the effects in terms of harmonious family relations, productivity, accountability, economy, etc.?</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Step 5: Creating<br/>the action plan</b></p>                      | <p>What should be done to address the findings?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Household members take the lead and suggest action items.</li> <li>▪ The content of activities and their size varies from household to household.</li> <li>▪ Facilitators should help households to develop an action plan that is self-generated and should avoid imposing solutions.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Step 6:<br/>Following up</b></p>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is always important to appreciate household decisions and help household members to stick to them by following up on the implementation of what actions they suggested.</li> <li>▪ Frequent visits to the group are required immediately after the exercise, normally on a weekly basis for the first three months, monthly intervals for the next three months and three-monthly intervals thereafter.</li> <li>▪ Community development workers or volunteers should hold regular meetings with individual households and monitor the progress within the cell whenever they meet, and with the group on a monthly basis, providing support if needed.</li> <li>▪ THM requires a reasonably long time frame for a sustainable mindset change. Therefore, after all group members have finished training on THM, they will need to have monthly group dialogues in order to monitor the progress of their action plan, mentor each other and deepen their understanding.</li> </ul>   |

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| <b>Step 7: Disseminating practices</b>        | <p>Once the facilitation is completed with the four initial households (first round of facilitation), a “snowball” method is used to disseminate the practice and similar activities are conducted with the other group members. The first four household peer farmers selected from each self-help group (20 members) are responsible for training the remaining 16 households. This means all group members are trained and develop action plans at the individual household level.</p> <p>After all group members have completed the analysis, they hold community conversations using the traditional coffee ceremony on a monthly basis. This takes place at a group member’s home in turns or at an agreed common place (for example, under the shade of a tree). During the meeting, they share experiences with implementing their action plans. It is also an important forum to facilitate learning since the capacity and ways of learning differ from one household to another. After six months, the scope of the agenda broadens to include related issues such as gender-based violence, harmful traditional practices, girls’ education, HIV/AIDS, family planning, sanitation and personal hygiene.</p> |
| <b>Average length of implementation cycle</b> | <p>Each household visit by a facilitator/volunteer requires one to two hours, while a group visit takes about two to three hours. The duration of the action plan ranges from one month to one year. The average length of time for the implementation cycle is about 12 months.</p>   |

## Section 4: Monitoring and indicators

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| <b>Monitoring process</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The cell monitors the implementation of planned activities, including the gender analysis at household level, and reports at the monthly community conversation.</li> <li>▪ The community development workers, volunteers and project staff are part of community conversations and monitor progress through a general meeting once a month.</li> <li>▪ The SACE country office monitors implementation through quarterly reports and field visits.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Indicators</b>         | <p>Indicators are developed by individual households and usually include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Joint decision-making</li> <li>▪ Equitable division of the workload</li> <li>▪ No gender-based division of labour</li> <li>▪ Ability to attend meetings</li> <li>▪ Joint vision and planning</li> </ul>  |

## Section 5: Results

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| <b>Number of beneficiaries reached/planned to be reached</b> | <p>SACE has trained 30 staff members who in turn have undertaken to using THM in almost 4,000 households, of which about 1,025 have graduated from the project.</p> |
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| <b>What are the main changes that can be attributed to the household methodology</b> | Most households that have graduated from the project showed significant changes in gender relations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Men have stopped spending money on unnecessary things such as drinking.</li> <li>▪ Men have started consulting their wife before making any decision.</li> <li>▪ Women's and girls' responsibilities for household activities have decreased and women now go to bed at the same time as other family members.</li> <li>▪ The traditional gender division of labour has been challenged: women have started ploughing land, men have started serving coffee and cooking; older men respect women and ask the children to support their mother.</li> <li>▪ Women can go to meetings freely because of more equal division of domestic workloads.</li> <li>▪ Household members eat food together and at a time which is appropriate.</li> <li>▪ There is less conflict in the households.</li> <li>▪ Girls go to school on time, do their homework and have time to study.</li> <li>▪ Household income and nutrition have improved.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Key success factors and strengths of the methodology</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ THM is simple and user-friendly. Illiterate farmers easily understand it and it is proving to be particularly effective in rural and agricultural contexts.</li> <li>▪ THM is participatory, involving all household members together, without separating men and women.</li> <li>▪ The use of stones or beans helps to immediately visualize the extent of any imbalance in workloads or control over resources, which makes husbands appreciate the contribution of women and girl children.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Challenges</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In some households, the husband tends to dominate the discussion and, as a result, women are reluctant to talk.</li> <li>▪ When implementing THM during the peak agricultural season, there is less participation or sometimes people leave the meeting before it is finished.</li> <li>▪ Since the analysis takes several hours, participants can lose interest.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>The way forward: potential improvements</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The facilitator must ensure that all household members can participate in the activity and the discussion.</li> <li>▪ Planning THM sessions during the quieter periods of the year and at a convenient time of the day for all household members is important to ensure their participation.</li> <li>▪ Since the exercise is quite long, dividing activities in two or more sessions can prevent participants from losing interest. For instance, the activity profile can be done on one day; access and control on another.</li> <li>▪ THM impact and process should be documented so as to share the information with similar organizations through networks and forums, as well as with SAC offices in different countries.</li> <li>▪ THM should be scaled up by lobbying the zonal government bureaus.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Sustainability</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The methodology is highly participatory, involving all household members. The facilitator only provides support for household members to take action themselves and to bring about attitudinal change.</li> <li>▪ Monitoring and follow-up are done by household members, using the traditional mechanism of the coffee ceremony, which ensures sustainability.</li> </ul>  |

## Section 6: Resources

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| <b>Budget and resources needed for the methodology</b> | A training of trainers for 80 facilitators, including THM training for a selected 320 households, and the collection of impact information cost US\$7,500. This sum includes travel accommodation, materials and meals. |
| <b>Resources</b>                                       | A manual is currently being developed.  |



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