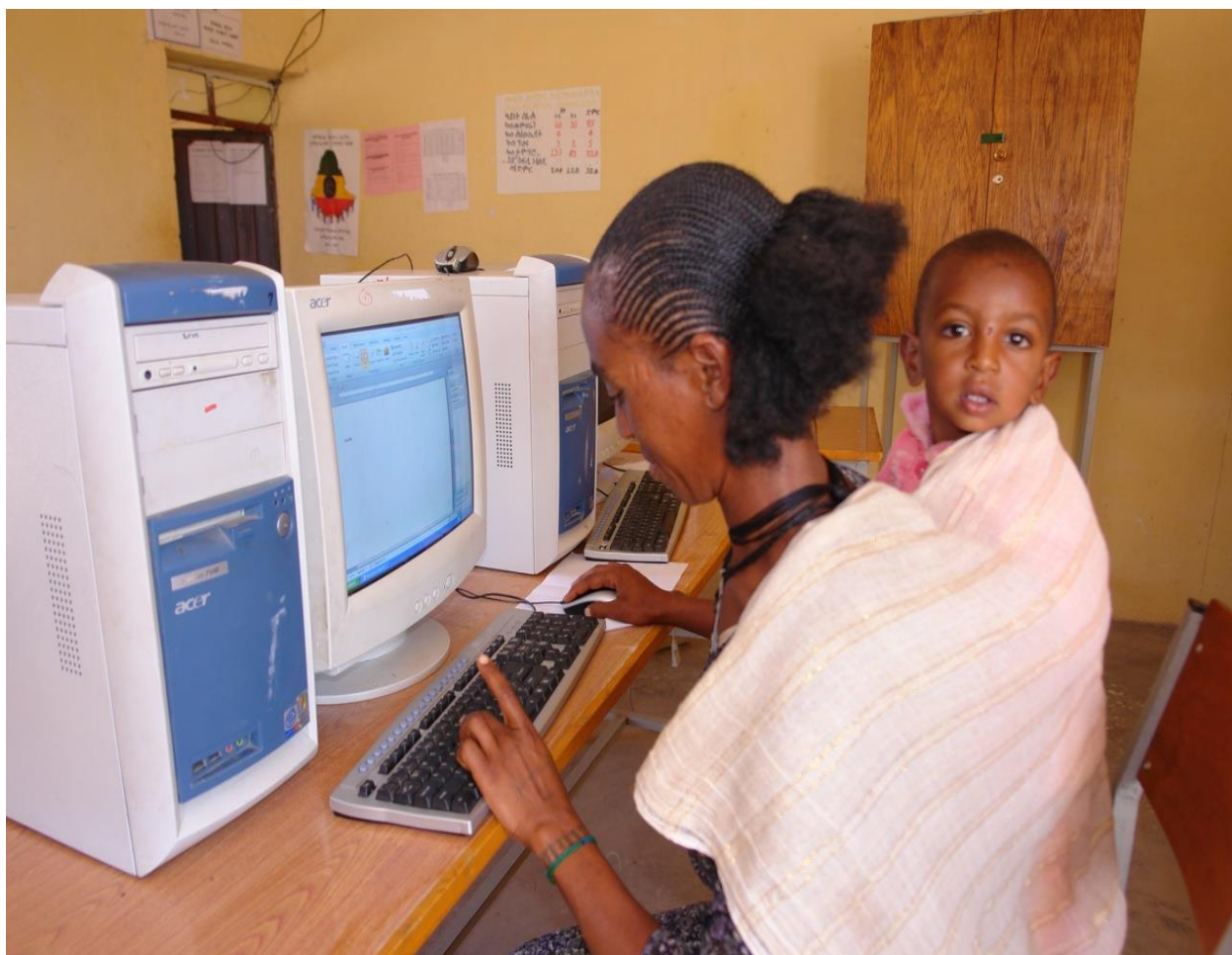


**IMPLEMENTING THE WOMEN'S GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY (W-GDP) INITIATIVE IN
ETHIOPIA
(2024-2026)**



ETHIOPIAN WOMEN'S GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY INITIATIVE

When women are economically empowered, they re-invest in their families and communities, producing a multiplier effect that spurs economic growth and contributes to global peace and stability. The Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) initiative seeks to reach 50 million women in the developing world by 2025 through U.S. Government activities, private-public partnerships, and an innovative fund. The initiative aims to enhance opportunities for women to participate meaningfully in the economy and advance both prosperity and national security. W-GDP focuses on three pillars: Women Prospering in the Workforce, Women Succeeding as Entrepreneurs, and Women in the Economy.

BACKGROUND

Despite women's numerical significance, and their remarkable contribution to the economic development, they have been placed to the disadvantaged position with no or less authority and decision making power in the control and management of resources, and in social affairs. Such inequality emanated from the

traditional norms and values adhered by the majority of community. This is even more intensified with women's deprivation from equitable participation in educational system (UN, 2014). All over the world women enjoy a little independency and equality in all dimensions. Be it economic, political and social, they are marginalized and even some times considered as non-citizens. They are still experiencing negative treatment from their family, community, administration and even from their similar sex partners (that is women). The problem is even worse in developing countries. Ethiopia is one of the developing countries where women are facing political, social and cultural challenges that undermine their human worth and dignity. They are suffering from economic poverty, social discrimination, political disenfranchisement, and cultural subjugation (Helina, 2015; UN, 2014). Different studies indicated the low status of women in developing countries in general. Lack of access to productive

resources such as land; lack of access to education, employment opportunities, basic health services, and protection of basic human rights; low decision making; violence and harmful traditional practices are some of the indicators of the socioeconomic marginalization of women in the country. Despite of the constitutional and policy provisions and commitment of government in gender equality, women in the country are denied of being prosperous, autonomous and receivers of development initiatives at all government levels. Their status in the socio-political, economic and cultural context is still undermined. Moreover, there are gaps in policy as formulated and policy as implemented to alleviate gender parity. It is in most cases related to lack of implementation of the policy, laws and constitutionally given rights of women. The existing societal practices, which favor men's interests mainly, have a negative impact on initiatives and efforts towards 2 gender equality. Because of the socio-cultural constructions and practices, women are considered to be subordinate to men and second-class members/citizens both in the family and in the society. This is greatly influenced by the existing societal institutions. In other words, the societal institutions have validated such practices (UN, 2014; Jones, et al, 2010, The Norwegian Royal Embassy of Ethiopia, 2009). This is to mean that gender parity is institutionalized in community. Therefore, a prolonged and systemic approach is required to

DURATION: 2024– 2026

ACTIVITY LOCATIONS: Ethiopia

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:
Andinet Yichalal Non-Profit
Organization/Black Voice
Matter, Business Advisory
Service Provider, Women
Owned Businesses :

eradicate such deep-rooted problems. Different policy provision has been identified to critically analyze the measures taken by government to protect basic human right of women, alleviate gender inequality and raising the role of women in political, social and economic spheres & creating business.

Ethiopian women continue to face disproportionate barriers to full economic participation. Access to finance is one of the greatest barriers to growth in Ethiopia, especially for women. USAID is building upon existing relationships to address the gender financing gap and catalyze sustainable and equitable development. The initiative will introduce financial products that meet the specific needs of women.

The Ethiopian government has been taking measures for ending poverty and accelerating sustainable economic growth as is stated in its agenda in the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) from 2015-2020. The plan was carried out with a clear objective focused on agroindustry, rural development, industrialization, social and human development, good governance and democratization (MoFED, 2010). It has been the major document in implementing the economic growth of the country which encompasses cross-cutting areas, such as gender equality and youth participation.

As Ethiopia's economy is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, there is a need to understand the discourses of women's empowerment in that context. One has to ask if this growth is inclusive or gender sensitive. Inclusive as in does it gives fair and equal opportunities for all? Does the Ethiopian economy in this regard include all stakeholders especially the marginalized one, as for example women? The problem in practice is that women's economic empowerment is still lagging behind despite the rhetoric used in the economic development discourses in Ethiopia. In 2021, Ethiopia had an overall gender gap index score of 0.71, ranking **74 out of 146 countries** globally. The same data shows that Ethiopia ranks number 42 in terms of the labor force participation, and 105 out of 144 on wage equality for similar work. Ethiopia ranks 45 out of 144 countries in women's political empowerment, and it is the 93 place according to women holding ministerial positions. The figures presented only show the quantity of the gap or disparities. The problem of women economic empowerment transcends in its qualitative nature and is not assessed from the ability of human agency.

CONCEPTUALIZING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Feminist understanding of equality underpins my analysis of what it means to be empowered for women. The term 'empowerment' is used by a wide range of social actors with significantly different ideological and political positions to denote an array of different meanings. Its loose usage, especially in the 'development lexicon' and governmental and policy-making discourses indicates its ambiguous status. Some feminist critics have questioned its usage (ibid). Kabeer argues for this very reason that empowerment needs to be scrutinized from an advocacy point of view where empowerment of women is defined from a feminist perspective and deployed in a development agenda on the basis of its intrinsic goals (Kabeer, 1999). Where choice is the main element in actualizing power, the space where one exercises one's empowered ability must be considered in a collective manner to challenge the status quo. Social relations, thus, need to be understood in terms of power relations in order to capture the meaning of empowerment. The concept of empowerment has been one of the key terms in equality work especially after the 1970's the concept got moment in many development discourses (Rowlands, 1997). However, it is one of the most difficult to work with, as no consensus has been reached on its meaning and its effectiveness. It gives policy makers and feminists both an easy and a hard task to engage with. Some find it easy because it has not been clearly

defined and it, therefore, allows for diverse interpretations and implementations; others find it hard to subscribe to the action it supposedly implies. This contradictory status of the notion as well as its contextual interpretation makes the notion of empowerment hard to evaluate it from a single focal point. What is empowerment? Empowerment has been defined in many different ways by a number of scholars and philosophers. It is both a very broad and contextual term and has no single definition. According to Kabeer (1999: 436), empowerment involves a change: "it refers to expansion on people's ability to make strategic life choice in a context where this ability was previously denied to them". One way to think about the meaning of the word 'power', which is the core of the word 'empowerment', is Foucault understands of it. For him, it is a free exercise of relationships it navigates; for there is no way one can exercise power in bondage. Power is a relational entity that exists in an exercise. It is constituted in social relationships among subjects who have a minimum extent of freedom (Rowlands, 1997). Power, says Foucault 'is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others' (Foucault, 1982:786). Power exists only when it is put into action: "A power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that "the other" be thoroughly recognized.

How does power work in empowerment? In his book *Questioning Empowerment* (1997), Rowland argues that to understand the notion of empowerment, we need to scrutinize, critically, the concept of power. Power for him can be understood in the light of four forms it takes: "power over", "power to", "power with" and "power from within". Rowland explains each of these forms in the following way:

- **Power over:** is a power control where one balances the resistance or obedience of power which deteriorates the processes of oppression.
- **Power to:** a productive power which allows free and creative possibilities to attain things without domination.
- **Power with:** communal work effort to the betterment of a whole which persevere greater outcome as a group.
- **Power from within:** a self confidence and self-esteem that is within one's own being which entails self-worth and respect which transcends to accept and respect others (Rowlands, 1997:13). Rowland's conception of power examines empowerment from power's different forms; "power over" thus gives voice and the ability to make a decision equipping subjects with self-confidence and self-reliance. It can be related it to subjects asking for capabilities and the ensuing agency they demand. Decision-making refers both to the private and the public spheres, whether it refers to participation in a political or other structural arenas. Thus, empowerment means encompassing and involving decision makers who were outside the circle of decision making and involving them to be part of the bigger circle. (Rahman, 2013). Empowerment entails a need to have the ability to make and act through decisions and to control resources and profits. In this regard, empowerment for women means a combination of change in their aspiration and achievement (agency), which is, being able to define their own life and choose to peruse their goals. In making a choice by oneself, one needs to understand the power dynamics that exists in society. Understanding issues concerning power and gender is, therefore, a first step forward in understanding women's empowerment. In 6 other words: " [E]mpowerment entails a process of change. People who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives

may be very powerful, but they are not empowered” (Kabeer, 2005:13). Choices come in different ways and are constituted for men and women in different modalities; poverty and disempowerment go hand in hand and in the case where people’s situation makes it impossible for them to make a choice, because of lack of basic needs for example, the capacity of meaningful choice is absent.

Equality has a lot to do with the concept of empowerment, for empowering, for example, women in the economic sphere without equality can lead to disempowerment rather than empowerment. Equality does not just mean equal number of men and women in a given sector, it is about power as much as it is about projects; it is about policies as much as programs. It is also about what kind of power positions are given to or taken on between men and women. In the same token, empowerment can also be understood, as Kabeer suggests, in the light of three dimensions: resource, agency and achievement:

A. Resource: which is a pre-condition not only material but various social and human resources that actualize the ability to exercise power. “It’s the ability to define priorities and enforce claims”; it is the element of decision making.

B. Agency: which is the process that encompasses decision-making. It has both positive and negative definitions positively it can resonate “power to” which refer to people’s capacity of choice and pursue their own goals no matter objection arises from others. In the negative sense of it, “power over” agency can be overriding the choice of others sometimes resulting on violence.

C. Achievement: can be understood as the outcome of resource and agency. The outcome of both can be constituted from capabilities where people actualize their potential to live the life they want. The freedom to make the choice and achieving the value of being (Kabeer, 1999)

Economic empowerment Economic empowerment is defined by DFID as “a process that increases people’s access to and control over economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets (from which one can generate an income), skills development and market information” (2012:44). Economic empowerment refers to people’s ability to make a choice in developing economically, but it needs free institutions with equal access to all. It is the power of agency and accesses to use resources which benefit better livelihood and quality of life. Economic empowerment can be defined as a “multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important” (Bayeh, 2016). It can be attained by involving the action of boosting the status of women through literacy, education, and training and rising awareness.

By contextualizing the need of women and adopting a holistic approach of involving women from different categories, economic empowerment must be perceived as the liberating element of women in bondage, which gives them a human agency to make free choice to exercise power. Donor-centered empowerment must consider context in interpreting discourses of empowerment. Economic empowerment increases women’s access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information. It is central to process of maintain benefits at all level: household, community and broader level (Bayeh, 2016). Participating in economic

empowerment has many indicators we must embark on to unbundle the complexity of the notion of empowerment. Next sub-topic will deal with the concept itself and the feminist interpretations of it.

DISCOURSE ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is a country that is striving to elevate itself from poverty and develop its economy for a better future. The country is trying to bring women's role in economics development to the forefront. Being one of the fastest growing countries economically (FDRE, 2011), Ethiopia needs to include women in this growth. However, with a cultural background of gender-based discrimination and inequalities, the number of women in the work force is still insignificant. According to the World Economic Forum (2016), the economic participation ratio of female to male was 0.60 where the wage equality gap was 0.57 and gap on legislator, senior officials and managers was 0.36. Although the government is striving to alleviate the problem at hand, it is not easy to breach the gap of low empowerment and gender pay gap (Bayeh, 2016). The government of Ethiopia has taken the economic growth in a direction of more sustainable approach with numerous indicators put into consideration. It has implemented the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), which was prepared to strategically plan the development in social and economic growth of the country. The GTP I was carried out by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) for the year 2005–2010, which was amended and carried on for the next fiscal years from 2010–2015. In the GTP I, the government was able to cover many areas of development with a special focus on meeting Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on "accelerated, sustained and broad based economic development" (MoFED, 2002). GTP I was a more comprehensive and broadly-based and was implemented in 2002. It was known as Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP). The adoption of the SDPRP was more of a donor-mandated requirement from the international organizations, mainly World Bank and IMF. The article looked at the GTP I from two perspectives of economic growth and social development. The economic growth was dated back from 1957 in recording different growth regarding different economic sectors up to the present, where a broad-based sustainable development was introduced in 2002 (Adugna, 2015). The Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction program was officially launched in 2005 and it implemented poverty reduction with different ministries and regional state governments in the country. The growth and transformation Plan had agenda on fast growth and development to accelerate growth on agriculture and advanced industry. Numbers and facts show the fast growth of the country, where the first recorded economic growth after the introduction of GTP was 10.1 percent ("GTP Main document - Vol 1 - Resources - MOFEC," 2010). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has ranked Ethiopia among the five fastest growing economies in the World (Adugna, 2015). This record was achieved during the implementation of GTP I, when opportunities of new jobs' creation and youth employment in both, private and public, sectors were achieved. Poverty reduction was high and the Human Development Index rose from 0.284 in 2000 0.435 in 2013 (ibid). Even though there was a fast growth and increases in life expectancy and better health services took place, the country maintained 14 the lowest income inequalities when the social development was not aggregated by gender and the focus of measurement of growth continued to be quantitative. The discourse on the GTP lacked a deep analysis of social element of growth, and aggregated data measuring economic growth. The gender blind assessment it presents made it difficult to know exactly what it means to be economically empowered. The scholarly literature shows that to achieve better development an incorporation of both men and women in the development sector is needed in Ethiopia. In their study on microfinance and women empowerment and role of institutions, Haile, Bock and Folmar (2012) showed that microfinance

opportunities designed for the poor helps to foster the economic growth by easily enabling access to microfinances; besides elevating the societies from poverty it has helped advance their empowerment. However empirical data in the same study revealed that the dynamics of empowerment regarding sex, class and ethnicity is very diverse. Women in the microfinance programs face different challenges and opportunities on social and cultural intake of empowerment from that of men in the same society. In some parts of the society, the idea of empowering women have been a success in such that women were able to reduce poverty at household level and were able to be make decisions and change the livelihoods of their children by improving the access to basic needs, such as food, clothing and education (ibid). Women were able to take care of themselves, and even marital conflict was reduced due to the outcome of women's ownership of assets and better income. Shared division of domestic labor was introduced at some societal settings and recognition of this division and implementation produced a peaceful interaction households. However, this very study also demonstrated the lack of empowerment the microfinance program has had for women. It shows that parts of society are double-burdened women with the domestic work load (Haile et al., 2012). Mothers who borrowed money were busy working outside the household to pay the debt while their daughters were taking the part of their mothers at home and performing the household chores, which led to girls not attending and, at times, dropping out of school. The program was also a cause of marital disputes in some cases, where wives had problems with decision-making and some were being forced to take a loan through their husbands, while the husbands spent the money and were unable to pay it back (ibid). As Ogato (2013) points out, there is a need to change the traditional structures, which are detrimental to women in a community, and this requires institutional reform. Traditionally, women have been given space only in domestic housework and to change this reality people's behavior must be influenced to protect and realize the interest of women by institutional reforms and ways of incentivizing the reform mechanism. A bottom-up approach in changing gender power relation is important in reforming institutions; equipping women and men in building the worldview of equal share of power and decision making by fostering education and awareness raising. The participation of women in development is an important element 15 and Ethiopia has recognized the importance of women's participation in development activities and remarks this participation as a building block for its future prosperity. The need to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MGD) has encouraged the government of Ethiopia to introduce different indicators of development and pressured implementers in different developmental sectors urging them to meet the target. The urgency of the MGD was highly reflected, for example, on developmental health sector on 1 Million Community Health Workers' Campaign, providing health services where there were no or few doctors available. The campaign had both, positive and negative, aspects where extension health workers were massively trained to handle uncomplicated procedure, especially in the pre-natal and postnatal stage when the community health workers or extension health officers communicated with communities and created awareness on primary health care, which the MGD were focused on (Maes, Closser, Vorel, & Tesfaye, 2015). The problem of this specific program in Ethiopia lays in funding as the country started to train large number of extension workers but did not have a sustainable budget to pay the workers. At times, there was a fear that with this many trained workers job creation could elapse into volunteerism (ibid). The majority of these extension workers are women, and an article by Maes, Closser, Vorel and Tesfay (2015), further explains that the budget for the low salary that the extension workers were paid from sometimes was deducted from the army's budget. The same article also showed that the need the government is portraying a picture of a better health care is underlining an image for the donors and NGOs which lacks empathy and concern for some categories

especially women in this case which hamper their social and economic existence. This program thus, relies on unpaid women's labor, which alienates any type of economic empowerment a women may wish for; the absence of payment deprives her of economic decision-making both at home and in the work place makes the vulnerability even worse for the majority of women in the rural part of Ethiopia. With all these challenges at hand, the discourses that are circulated by the government of Ethiopia and donors at times is the valuable work that is being done in saving lives of mothers and babies and empowerment of women in the country which goes hand in hand with work ethics; serving ones country for the better good and creating model citizens for others to copy (Maes et al., 2015). As such, the true connotation of empowerment needs to be re-examined and deconstructed at all levels. Development research on women and girls has shown that investing in women is more profitable in terms of money because women and girls work more efficiently than men, even though 70% of the World's poor are women (Shain, 2013). Women and girls have better rate of loan repayment in time and invest most of their income in their families. Because of this sort of research findings international organizations, e.g. World Bank, have deployed countries to adopt their public economic policies to what they call "smart economy" that mainstreams gender in all its aspects at all levels (ibid). As most of other Global South countries, Ethiopia has taken the path of neoliberal approach to economic development, which resulted in 16 impoverishment and marginalization women of the South. Governments adapt measurements brought to them by international organizations without really examining if they work in their contexts; this and other control mind game by big international organizations and the interest to get loans on the side of Global South governments is jeopardizing the true actualization of human agency and empowerment, especially to women and girls everywhere in the developing world.

WOMEN'S GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY INITIATIVE

Launched in February 2019, the White House-led Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative is the first-ever whole-of-government effort to advance global women's economic empowerment. W-GDP seeks to reach 50 million women in the developing world by 2025 through focusing on three pillars: women prospering in the workforce, women succeeding as entrepreneurs, and women enabled in the economy. In its first year, W-GDP reached 12 million women through a series of U.S. government activities, public-private partnerships, and the innovative W-GDP Fund.

New W-GDP Fund Programs and Partnerships Announced:

In August 2020, Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump and USAID Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick, joined by Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, National Security Advisor Ambassador Robert O'Brien and Ambassador for Global Women's Issues Kelley Currie, announced \$122 million in W-GDP Fund progress and partnerships. Highlights include:

- **\$34.6 million: W-GDP Incentive Fund** Invests in promising and creative partnerships globally with the private sector, locally-led organizations, U.S. government partners, and local host governments, with a focus on W-GDP Pillar Three. This round of the W-GDP Incentive Fund supports 16 awardees in 43 countries.
- **\$23 million: W-GDP Invest in Women Portfolio** Promotes systemic reforms in financial systems to unblock access to finance for women and assist in reducing barriers that keep private capital from participating in blended capital solutions. Works with leading partners such as Care, Deloitte, Kiva, and others to overcome obstacles to grow women-owned businesses, and supports activities that

mobilize and encourage private sector investment in women through innovative market-based approaches.

- **\$10 million: W-GDP New Partnerships Initiative** Increases women's economic empowerment in conflict prevention and recovery activities focused on issues such as at-risk and marginalized women, in Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, and the Philippines. Recovery activities will include job creation, workforce and vocational training, innovative financial tools, and access to capital, with a focus on working with new or under-utilized partners.
- **\$7.4 million: W-GDP Interagency Fund** Enables interagency partners to promote women's economic empowerment through programs highlighting their strengths and expertise:
 - Millennium Challenge Corporation: establishes a women's data lab in Côte d'Ivoire to support women entrepreneurs with technology, training and assistance in growing their companies;
 - Peace Corps: deploys basic digital literacy training to close the digital gender divide around the world; and
 - Department of State, Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues: brings together women's coalitions from Central Asia to remove restrictions on women's economic empowerment through Women's National Business Agendas
- **\$7 million: W-GDP Women's Land Rights** Strengthens women's land rights in contexts where customary systems predominate and disadvantage women in Malawi, Mozambique, Ghana, Zambia and India. Efforts will include activities to strengthen and support national and community legal and land resource governance reforms around women's land rights
- **\$5 million: Women's Economic Empowerment Global Development Alliance with USAID and PepsiCo** Builds upon a five-year, shared-value partnership that focuses on developing and demonstrating the business case for private sector investments in women's empowerment in agriculture supply chains. This work will provide women with technical and leadership skills, strengthened land rights, and income generation opportunities, while simultaneously building the capacity of local PepsiCo staff to more directly include and work with women in their supply chain.
- **\$5 million: W-GDP Grand Challenge: Women Enabled in the Economy** Addresses the problem of women's access to commercial finance, which is often restricted by barriers in laws, regulations, policies, and practices. This multi-year challenge is designed to break these barriers and facilitate women's access to commercial finance
- **\$5 million: W-GDP Microsoft Women's Digital Inclusion Partnership** Supports Microsoft's Airband Initiative, which aims to significantly increase the number of women around the world with internet coverage by July 2022, by investing in locally-owned and operated internet and communications technology companies serving rural areas in Colombia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, and Kenya.
- **\$4 million: W-GDP Women Connect Challenge (WCC) Round Three** Supports private sector-led approaches that close the gender digital divide, expand business opportunities, and empower women to reach their full economic potential in an increasingly digital world. The next round of the W-GDP WCC will focus on increasing private sector and donor investment in programs that have a target reach of one million women. W-GDP will also partner with the Reliance Foundation to create an India-specific Women Connect Challenge and incorporate the lessons of previous W-GDP WCC Rounds.
- **\$3.6 million: WE Connect International** Establishes an alliance with SAP Ariba, IBM, ExxonMobil, Procter & Gamble, and Accenture to develop the WE Community, a multifunctional and multilingual global online platform to help women-owned businesses connect with participating multinational corporate buyers.

- **\$3.3 million: W-GDP Mastercard Partnership** The W-GDP Mastercard Start Path Project Partnership improves women entrepreneurs' access to grow and scale their businesses in Colombia. The W-GDP Mastercard Micro Credit Program Partnership will empower small-scale retailers run by women in India to prosper and become part of the digital economy that will help them and their communities gain access to training and financial services.
- **\$3 million: Engendering Utilities** Scales the Engendering Utilities program to partner with new companies, continue support to existing partners, and expands to new traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as the water sector, to create tangible economic opportunities for women, including jobs, promotions, and career development.
- **\$3 million: Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs and Visa Foundation - Innovation Grant Making** Scales globally the Advancing Women's Empowerment Fund, a catalyst fund that originated in South and Southeast Asia to help close the financing gap for women-led businesses. The partnership includes a \$1 million investment by the Visa Foundation and will provide support to women entrepreneurs and help them grow their businesses.
- **\$2million:Self-Empowerment and Equity for Change Initiative**
In partnership with Johns Hopkins University, this initiative scales proven empowerment training with women entrepreneurs and employees to strengthen core skills that advance their own professional goals and provides access to resources and opportunities with companies around the world.
- **\$2 million: Women Empowered in Recycling and Waste Management** Supports women working throughout the waste recycling value chain - from waste collectors to women business leaders - to strengthen women's economic empowerment throughout USAID's global flagship program to combat ocean plastic pollution.
- **\$1.5 million: Women Powering Africa**

Scales women's economic empowerment through the expansion of the Women in African Power network, which provides women professional advancement through networking events and skills development training including internships with private sector partners in the energy sector

- **\$1.4 million: W-GDP Partnership to Train Kenyan Women Entrepreneurs in Collaboration with UPS** Helps women in Kenya launch, fund, or scale their businesses and build their capacity with a focus on training, mentorship, investment, and direct connections to American small and medium-enterprises
- **\$1 Million: Women Entrepreneurs Amplifying Ventures and Economies** Strengthens, scales, and replicates tested models for women's entrepreneurship development in Indonesia and Vietnam to reach 15,000 women. This innovative, digital, cross border programme builds on successful services created by the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women with Qualcomm Wireless Reach™ and the ExxonMobil Foundation.

IMPLEMENTING W-GDP FUND PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS IN ETHIOPIA

Over the past decade, Ethiopia has achieved high economic growth, averaging 10.7% per year, establishing the country among the fastest growing economies both in Africa and the developing world. However, Ethiopia is falling behind its peers in the area of credit to the private sector. Most growth-oriented women entrepreneurs fall into a 'missing middle' trap, in which they are served neither by commercial banks nor by microfinance institutions. High minimum loan sizes and excessive collateral requirements restrict women's

access to loans from commercial banks. Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) primarily cater to micro-firms with group lending schemes that provide very small loans. Growth-oriented women-owned enterprises are therefore starved of the investment they need to thrive.

APPROACH

The W-GDP Fund Programs and Partnerships provides finance and business support for growth-oriented women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. W-GDP Accelerate new funding to women-owned businesses from commercial banks and other investors, Introduce and scale up new product innovations in Ethiopia & Develop a strong cadre of women-owned business advisors that will provide support in the long term to women owned businesses

What can we expect from W-GDP Fund Programs and Partnerships in Ethiopia?

- Women entrepreneurs-focused line of credit operations in the world, WEDP has been recognized for its innovative and effective model of reaching women entrepreneurs.
- W-GDP has helped MFIs upscale to reach women entrepreneurs in the missing middle with larger, individual loans.
- By improving loan appraisal techniques, the W-GDP will help the country's leading financial institutions reduce collateral requirements.
- At the same time, W-GDP microfinance institutions are adopting and diffusing new techniques to reach and serve women entrepreneurs better by Introduce and scale up new product innovations
- W-GDP is introducing a strong cadre of women-owned business advisors that will provide support in the long term to women owned businesses
- Develop a strong cadre of women-owned business advisors that will provide support in the long term to women owned businesses USAID's KIM program will lead a training program for small and medium-sized women-owned businesses with little collateral. The training will help businesses access a specially designed, cash flow-based long-term loan, in conjunction with business skills development. Additionally, the program is working towards improving the enabling environment for women entrepreneurs through close engagement with the Government of Ethiopia, including the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade, and Enterprise Development. Two other W-GDP private sector partnerships are also will work in
- Microsoft Women's Digital Inclusion Partnership aims to significantly increase the number of women around the world with internet coverage by investing in locally owned and operated internet and communications technology companies serving rural areas in Ethiopia.
- Will help women in Ethiopian launch, fund, or scale their businesses and build their capacity with a focus on training, mentorship, investment, and direct connections to American small and medium-enterprises.

ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT

The Ethiopian diaspora is a vast and diverse community, with members living all over the world. The first wave of Ethiopian migration began in the early 20th century, as people fled political instability and famine. The second wave of migration occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, as a result of the Ethiopian Civil War. The most recent wave of migration began in the 1990s, as a result of the Ethiopian-Eritrean War.

Today, there are an estimated 4 million Ethiopians living outside of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian diaspora is a relatively small population of people who live outside of Ethiopia.

The largest Ethiopian diaspora community is in the United States, with 500,000 people.

The states with the highest number of Ethiopians are Maryland and Virginia.

The Ethiopian government has prioritized mapping the Ethiopian diaspora.

The Ethiopian Diaspora Policy is a document that outlines the rights and benefits of the Ethiopian diaspora. The policy also ensures that the diaspora can participate in various services and transfer knowledge and finance.

The Ethiopian diaspora has had a significant impact on the development of Ethiopia. Remittances from the diaspora are a major source of foreign currency for Ethiopia, and they have helped to finance development projects in areas such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. The diaspora has also played a role in promoting Ethiopian culture and heritage around the world.

The Ethiopian diaspora is a resilient community that has overcome many challenges. Despite the hardships they have faced, Ethiopians in the diaspora have continued to build strong communities and contribute to the development of their homeland.

Here are some of the key challenges faced by the Ethiopian diaspora:

Discrimination: Ethiopians in the diaspora often face discrimination from the host country's population. This can be due to racism, xenophobia, or simply a lack of understanding of Ethiopian culture.

Language barriers: Many Ethiopians in the diaspora do not speak the language of the host country. This can make it difficult to find jobs, integrate into society, and access healthcare and other services.

Homesickness: Ethiopians in the diaspora often miss their home country and their loved ones. This can lead to depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems.

Financial hardship: Many Ethiopians in the diaspora come from low-income families. This can make it difficult to afford housing, food, and other basic necessities.

Despite these challenges, the Ethiopian diaspora has made significant contributions to the host countries they have settled in. Ethiopians in the diaspora are often highly educated and skilled, and they have started businesses, founded organizations, and made significant contributions to the arts, sciences, and humanities.

The Ethiopian diaspora is a vibrant and dynamic community that is making a positive impact on the world. Ethiopians in the diaspora are a source of pride for Ethiopia, and they are helping to build a better future for their homeland.

Here are some resources for Ethiopians in the diaspora:

The Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC): The ECDC is a non-profit organization that provides services to Ethiopians in the United States.

The Ethiopian Community Association of North America (ECANA): ECANA is a non-profit organization that represents Ethiopian communities in North America.

The Ethiopian Diaspora Network (EDN): The EDN is a non-profit organization that connects Ethiopians in the diaspora.

The Ethiopian Diaspora Health Initiative (EDHI): EDHI is a non-profit organization that provides healthcare services to Ethiopians in the diaspora.

If you are an Ethiopian in the diaspora, I encourage you to reach out to one of these organizations for support.

The Ethiopian diaspora can play a significant role in empowering women in Ethiopia through various means:

1. **Financial Support:** Providing funding for women-led businesses, educational scholarships, and community projects can help women gain financial independence and improve their livelihoods¹
2. **Mentorship and Training:** Offering mentorship programs and skills training can help women develop the necessary skills to succeed in their careers and personal lives¹
3. **Advocacy and Awareness:** Raising awareness about women's rights and gender equality issues can help change societal attitudes and promote policies that support women's empowerment³
4. **Networking:** Creating networks and platforms for Ethiopian women to connect with each other and with the diaspora can provide valuable support and opportunities for collaboration⁴
5. **Partnerships with Local Organizations:** Collaborating with local NGOs and community-based organizations can help ensure that efforts are culturally relevant and sustainable³

By leveraging their resources, knowledge, and networks, the Ethiopian diaspora can make a meaningful impact on women's empowerment in Ethiopia.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FORUM

Andenate Yechalale nonprofit Organization, Ethiopian Diaspora, world well-known people from Entertainment, Sport, and Intellectual's in collaboration with WOMEN'S GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY INITIATIVE will organize a global forum and fund raising in three different part of the world Africa, Middle East, North America.

The main purpose of the Women's Economic Empowerment Forum is to initiate a national platform that aspires to work in spurring and supporting the implementation of policy reforms to improve women's access to economic empowerment by creating economic opportunities across the country. The significance of Economic empowerment is the foundation for enabling women's socio-political involvement, which impacts the progress of their family, community and the country as a whole.

WOMAN EMPOWERMENT EVENT Female empowerment events play a vital role in raising awareness, promoting equality, and celebrating the achievements of women.

They can range from large-scale conferences to intimate workshops. But, the primary aim remains the same: to empower and uplift women in all walks of life. Here are some thought-provoking event ideas:

It is clear that collaboration and coordination have the potential to accelerate the pace of change in women's economic empowerment through sharing information and resources, tackling common challenges, and collectively advocating and lobbying for gender-responsive policy and resource allocation.

Addressing the challenges of women from the rural area and the need to empower women at all levels that establishment of the forum is important to inclusively enable women to benefit from the economic sector.

The launch of the Women Economic Empowerment Forum is expected to contribute to boosting the economic empowerment of Ethiopian women/female youths by addressing the gap in coordinating different stakeholders.

The forum and Fundraising will be organized with the theme "Enhance Women's Economic Empowerment". The forum will take place in selected different part of the world in mid-2025. The forum brought together different participants including high-level government delegates from government Ministries and other sector offices, development partners, UN Agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), financial institutions and other stakeholders working on women's economic empowerment nonprofit Organization, Ethiopian Diaspora, world well-known people from Entertainment, Sport. Forum focused on increasing women's access to innovative financial and non-financial services and resources as well as technologies in promoting their social and economic endeavors.

DISCUSSION POINTS

We need coordinated efforts to address the economic challenges facing women and young girls in Ethiopia. That's why we established the Women Economic Empowerment Forum to share information and seek solutions,

- The need to ensure financial inclusion by providing women with access to finance and space to establish their businesses;
- Why the patriarchal social norms have prevented women from thriving in the economy.
- How to provide women with the finance and space they need to flourish.
- Why Unemployment for women is high; the women are not coming out to get registered well in the labor force data due to Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) and related challenges.
- How to Reducing the unpaid care burden on women requires innovative technologies and transformative research.
- Investing in sustainable solutions that bring real change to women's economic problems.
- Large numbers of women are involved in micro and small businesses, and they need to be supported to effectively engage in more profitable and sustainable business activities as key developmental actors.
- How to Identify and address key challenges related to loan, interest, grace period and guarantee as well as training, employment, marketing and technology that prevent women's potential to succeed in business and ensure that they are economically empowered.
- Why Women in Ethiopia still struggle to access credit and are overrepresented in the informal economy, despite their reputation for timely loan repayment. The need to prioritize women's economic empowerment and ensure that they have equal access to opportunities.

At the Women's Economic Empowerment Forum, we will work with WOMEN'S GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY INITIATIVE and other partners to identify barriers to women's participation and advancement in the economy. If we empower women economically, we empower the society and the active and committed action of all stakeholders to achieve tangible outcomes for the forum.

The forums will market exhibition for products made by women as a side event during Women Economic Empowerment Forum. The exhibition was organized with a view to creating opportunities for women in business to sell their products and network among themselves and the participants.

Representatives of government organizations, banks, micro-finance institutions, NGOs and UN Agencies also will engage in the panel discussions that will focus on policy and legal frameworks on women's access to finance, digital financial technologies and non-financial services.

WORKSHOP FOR FEMALE EMPOWERMENT FORUM

Workshops are hands-on events that can equip women with tangible skills and knowledge.

Artistic Expression Workshops

Harness the power of art! From painting to poetry, organizing workshops that allow women to express themselves artistically can be both empowering and therapeutic.

Tech Workshops for Women

With the tech industry often perceived as male-dominated, workshops that teach coding, digital marketing, or even hardware assembly can empower women to break barriers and assert themselves in the field.

Financial Literacy Workshops

Equip women with the knowledge to manage finances, investments, and savings. Financial independence is a massive step towards empowerment.

Gala Events and Ceremonies

These events celebrate achievements, milestones, and the spirit of sisterhood.

Women's Achievement Awards

Recognize and honor women from various fields for their contributions. It can serve as motivation for many attendees.

Empowerment Fashion Shows

Why not blend fashion with empowerment? Such events can promote body positivity and challenge conventional beauty standards.

Community Service Events

Organizing philanthropic events allows women to give back to the community. It encourages a sense of ownership that can further empower them.

Local and Global Collaboration Events

Collaboration is the key to empowerment. When women unite, magic happens.

Women Entrepreneur Collaborations

Create platforms where women entrepreneurs can collaborate, share insights, and build partnerships. These events can be a great way to get women business owners connected.

Cultural Exchange Programs

Empowerment isn't limited to one's locality. Global collaboration events can provide a platform for cross-cultural exchange, fostering understanding and unity.

Virtual Platforms and their Role

The digital age brings empowerment to the fingertips.

Female Networking Dinners

Promote connections, collaborations, and friendships over a warm meal. This is a great way to provide support and guidance.

The Final event for this forum is a Successful Gala Fundraising

This Fundraising event is dedicated to empowering and supporting women that can make a difference in the life of women and youth and create opportunities for a brighter future.

By bringing together a diverse group of people from different backgrounds, we aim to foster meaningful discussions, new acquaintances, including live music and exciting prizes.

We are combining the power of music and community support to raise funds.