



# ENDLINE EVALUATION REPORT

*Women on the Front: Promoting the Meaningful Participation and Leadership of Women in Peacebuilding Processes in Habru and Ambassel Woredas, Amhara Region, Ethiopia*

<b>Implementing Organization</b>	Empathy for Life Integrated Development Association (ELiDA)
<b>Funding Partner</b>	African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)
<b>Project Location</b>	Habru and Ambassel Woredas, North & South Wollo Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia
<b>Project Period</b>	July 1, 2023 – October 31, 2025
<b>Report Date</b>	October 2025

## Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
CBO	Community-Based Organization

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<b>CVA</b>	Citizen Voice and Action
<b>ELiDA</b>	Empathy for Life Integrated Development Association
<b>GPAH</b>	Gender in Peace Action Hub
<b>HRBA</b>	Human Rights-Based Approaches
<b>LPAN</b>	Local Peace Ambassador Network
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>WRO</b>	Women's Rights Organization

## 1. Executive Summary

The "Women on the Front" project evaluation in Amhara Region's Ambassel and Habru Woredas confirms high engagement and strategic success. The project effectively leveraged existing social capital by targeting influential women, 93.55% of whom were already members of community groups, and established sustainable platforms including Gender in Peace Action Hubs (GPAHs) and Local Peace Ambassador Networks (LPANs).

Participation in core activities was exceptionally high (96.77% in leadership training). The evaluation found profound normative and behavioral shifts: 100% of respondents affirmed that women have the right to participate in peacebuilding and that their community now values women's leadership. Furthermore, 67.74% of participants now hold formal leadership positions, and 87.1% reported feeling confident speaking in public forums.

The evaluation concludes that the project successfully embedded gender-responsive peacebuilding mechanisms, creating a sustainable model for empowering women leaders. Key recommendations include expanding geographically and increasing youth engagement.

### 1.1. Key Performance Highlights

Beneficiaries reached (vs. 1,060 target — 136% achievement)	<b>1,439 individuals</b>
Women beneficiaries	<b>984 (68%)</b>
Participation in peacebuilding & leadership training	<b>96.77%</b>
Participants now holding formal leadership positions	<b>67.74%</b>
Respondents confirming community now values women's leadership	<b>100%</b>
Participants who acquired conflict resolution skills	<b>100%</b>
Women feeling confident speaking in public forums	<b>87.1%</b>

### 1.2. OECD Evaluation Criteria — Summary Assessment

Criterion	Assessment Summary
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<b>Effectiveness</b>	Highly effective — 96.77% training attendance translated into measurable behavioral and normative shifts. 67.74% of participants assumed formal leadership positions; 100% acquired conflict resolution skills; GPAHs engaged 74.19% of participants.
<b>Efficiency</b>	Exceptional efficiency achieved by leveraging existing social and institutional capital. Local trainers minimized costs; integrated interventions avoided duplication. 100% of respondents confirmed resources were effectively utilized.
<b>Relevance</b>	Fully coherent with Ethiopia's National Policy on Women and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Targeted interventions addressed clearly defined needs across technical skills, institutional platforms, and public support.
<b>Impact</b>	Profound normative shift at community level — 100% affirm women's right to participate and leadership is valued. 67.74% of participants moved into formal leadership roles. Deep, systemic impact on gender relations and peacebuilding structures.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Robust mechanisms established: GPAHs and LPANs recognized by government actors and embedded in local governance. Mentorship models and peer networks create a self-sustaining cycle of empowerment.

## 2. About the Project

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The project "Women on the Front Line: Promoting the Participation and Leadership Role of Women in Peacebuilding in Ethiopia" was conceived as a strategic response to the persistent underrepresentation of women in peacebuilding and decision-making processes in conflict-affected areas of the Amhara Region. Implemented by the Empathy for Life Integrated Development Association (ELiDA) with support from the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), the project aimed to:

- Empower women to become influential actors in peace and security initiatives.
- Strengthen local institutions to adopt gender-responsive approaches.
- Create a culture of inclusive coexistence in targeted communities.

The project was implemented from July 1, 2023 to October 31, 2025, covering Habru and Ambassel Woredas of North Wollo Zone and selected districts of South Wollo Zone.

### 2.1. Objectives of the Evaluation

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to assess the project's overall achievements in strengthening the participation and leadership of women in peacebuilding processes. This includes measuring progress against project outcomes and indicators while examining the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the interventions.

The evaluation specifically aimed to:

- Measure progress against the project's stated outcomes and indicators, comparing them with baseline data.
- Examine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project's interventions.
- Document evidence of changes in the lives of women and girls and the functionality of established structures.
- Assess the extent to which the project contributed to inclusive, gender-responsive peacebuilding at community level.
- Generate lessons learned and best practices to inform future programming, advocacy, and policy engagement.

### 2.2. Geographic and Thematic Scope

The evaluation's geographic scope covers Habru and Ambassel Woredas of the Northern and Southern Wollo Zones of the Amhara Region. Thematic focus areas included:

- Women's and girls' rights
- Meaningful participation and leadership in peacebuilding
- Strengthening institutional accountability and community-based women's organizations

The evaluation consultancy was conducted between September 5 and October 15, 2025.

### 3. Approach and Methodology

The consultant employed a rigorous mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, to ensure a robust and well-rounded evaluation. This approach encouraged the wider participation of key stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.

#### 3.1. Study Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional design incorporating multiple complementary data collection methods:

- Desk review of project documentation and secondary sources
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with project staff, government officials, and community leaders
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with project beneficiaries
- Surveys using digital data collection tools

#### 3.2. Study Units

##### 3.2.1. Quantitative Component

The study population for the quantitative survey comprised project beneficiaries, with a focus on women and girls disaggregated by age and location. Relevant community members were also included.

##### 3.2.2. Qualitative Component

The qualitative component involved Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and document review with a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- ELiDA and Beza for Women Association project staff
- Local government officials
- Leaders of community-based women's organizations
- Other relevant community leaders

#### 3.3. Sample Size

The consultant developed a detailed evaluation methodology and tools during the inception phase. A single population proportion formula (Kish Leslie, 1965) was used to determine the total stakeholders to be sampled, proportionally assigned to each site based on total stakeholder size:

$$n = [ N \cdot z^2 \cdot p(1-p) ] / [ (N-1) \cdot d^2 + z^2 \cdot p(1-p) ]$$

Where:  $n$  = estimated sample size |  $z$  = value on standardized normal distribution corresponding to the level of significance |  $p$  = estimated proportion (0.5 for maximum sample size) |  $N$  = population size |  $d$  = selected accepted error (level of precision).

### **3.4. Data Sources**

#### **3.4.1. Primary Data Sources**

Primary data collection gathered in-depth qualitative and quantitative information to validate reports and assess project-induced changes in the lives of women and girls. Methods included:

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): Semi-structured interviews with ELiDA and Beza for Women Association project staff, local government officials, and community organization leaders, exploring perspectives on implementation, challenges, successes, and effectiveness.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Participatory discussions with selected groups of women and girls, facilitating exploration of experiences, challenges, and expectations. Sessions engaged GPAH members, Local Peace Ambassadors (LPAs), and rights-holders.
- Surveys: Standardized questionnaires administered via digital platforms to project beneficiaries, measuring changes in key outcome indicators from baseline to endline.

#### **3.4.2. Secondary Data Sources**

Secondary data provided contextual grounding for primary fieldwork. The consultant reviewed:

- Internal sources: project proposals, M&E data, annual and quarterly reports.
- External sources: national and regional policies on gender equality and peacebuilding, human rights reports, and publications from government bodies and relevant stakeholders.

## 5. Evaluation Findings

### 5.1. Respondent Profile

The evaluation engaged 31 respondents representing the full spectrum of beneficiaries and local stakeholders. All participants (100%) were located within the Amhara Region, ensuring high internal coherence. Respondents were distributed between the two Woredas: Ambassel (51.61%) and Habru (48.39%), minimizing geographic bias.

The demographic composition reflects the project's gender focus: 67.74% of respondents were female and 32.26% male. The inclusion of male respondents provides a foundation for assessing the breadth of normative change beyond the immediate beneficiary group.

### 5.2. Participation Rates

Participation data demonstrates exceptional mobilization and retention. All respondents (100%) confirmed awareness of and participation in project activities, with most attending multiple sessions:

Participated in 5–6 project activities	<b>58.06%</b>
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Participated in 3–4 project activities	<b>32.26%</b>
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93.55% of participants were already members of community associations or cooperatives prior to the project, and 83.87% were previously aware of women's inclusion efforts in peacebuilding. The project acted as a catalyst — formalizing and expanding pre-existing informal peace and leadership practices.

### 5.3. Activity Participation Breakdown

Project Activity	Participation Rate
Peacebuilding and Leadership Training	<b>96.77%</b>
Women's Rights Workshops	<b>90.32%</b>
Community Dialogues on Peace	<b>90.32%</b>
Gender & Peacebuilding Action Hub (GPAH) Meetings	<b>74.19%</b>
Advocacy Campaigns	<b>67.74%</b>

## II. Outcome 1 – Improved Capacity of Women's Rights Organizations

Outcome 1 was strategically designed to address longstanding structural limitations within Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) in the Amhara Region. Historically, WROs faced significant institutional challenges including limited technical capacity, weak organizational structures, and minimal engagement in governance and peacebuilding processes.

To tackle these challenges, the project implemented comprehensive and targeted capacity-building interventions:

- 96.77% of participants attended peacebuilding and leadership training, equipping them with skills in negotiation, mediation, and strategic planning.
- 90.32% participated in women's rights workshops, enhancing understanding of gender advocacy, policy frameworks, and institutional accountability mechanisms.
- Collectively, these initiatives directly benefited approximately 21% of total beneficiaries, creating a core cohort of highly skilled, gender-responsive leaders.

The project's interventions were fully coherent with Ethiopia's National Policy on Women and AWDF's strategic objectives. By integrating Human Rights-Based Approaches (HRBA) and Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) methodologies, ELiDA ensured community-level capacity development was directly linked to broader national gender goals. Respondents unanimously (100%) confirmed that project resources were effectively and judiciously utilized. Women leaders are now actively consulted on conflict resolution, demonstrating enhanced influence and authority within local peace forums.

### III. Outcome 2 – Gender-Responsive Mechanisms in Local Peacebuilding

Outcome 2 addressed the systemic exclusion of women from traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. The project introduced innovative institutional structures — Gender in Peace Action Hubs (GPAHs) and Local Peace Ambassador Networks (LPANs) — carefully aligned with Ethiopia's Women, Peace, and Security frameworks. These mechanisms provided formal platforms through which women could participate in decision-making processes previously dominated by men.

Respondents participating in GPAH meetings	<b>74.19%</b>
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Respondents actively involved in advocacy campaigns	<b>67.74%</b>
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Community awareness of GPAH/LPAN mechanisms	<b>77.42%</b>
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The institutionalization of GPAHs and LPANs has significantly transformed women's roles within local peacebuilding. Women now serve as mediators, facilitators, and advisors in conflict resolution. With sustained recognition by government actors, these mechanisms are positioned as permanent, sustainable structures that embed gender-responsive practices into local governance.

### IV. Outcome 3 – Increased Public Support for Women and Girls' Rights

Outcome 3 focused on transforming public perceptions to ensure sustainable, gender-equitable peacebuilding. The project employed a multifaceted outreach strategy, including partnerships with FANA Broadcasting Corporation, community dialogues, and public celebrations, to disseminate messages promoting women's leadership. These interventions engaged approximately 28% of total beneficiaries.

Survey data reveals remarkable attitudinal transformation:

Agree women have the right to participate in peacebuilding (83.87% strongly)	<b>100%</b>
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Report their community now values women's leadership (80.65% strongly)	100%
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Believe the project changed negative attitudes toward women's leadership	100%
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The project leveraged national and local media networks efficiently, ensuring extensive reach while maintaining cost-effectiveness. Established media partnerships and awareness platforms further ensure the continuity of these positive changes beyond the project lifecycle.

#### V. Outcome 4 – Increased Women's Involvement in Decision-Making

Outcome 4 advanced women's direct participation in governance and decision-making processes, aligned with Ethiopia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. The project implemented targeted interventions to enhance women's skills, confidence, and institutional visibility.

Respondents holding formal leadership positions (kebele committees, women's associations, Idirs, Ikubs)	67.74%
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Strongly agree they feel confident speaking in public forums	87.1%
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Confirmed acquisition of conflict resolution skills (77.42% strongly affirming)	100%
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The project maximized efficiency by integrating leadership training with mentorship programs, fostering peer learning and minimizing duplication of effort. Impact is evident in the visible participation of women in mediation and advisory roles, transforming local governance dynamics. Mentorship structures ensure that leadership knowledge and confidence are transmitted to emerging women leaders.

#### VI. Outcome 5 – Strengthened Community-Based Women's Organizations

Outcome 5 reinforced the role of community-based organizations (CBOs) — including Idirs, Ikubs, and cooperatives — as essential foundations for local peace and resilience. The project aimed to enhance their capacity to mediate conflicts, sustain dialogue, and advocate for women's participation.

#### Key findings:

- 93.55% of respondents were already members of community groups prior to the project, indicating precise targeting of established networks.
- Approximately 8% of total beneficiaries were directly engaged through focused, high-impact interventions.
- Efficiency was achieved by building upon existing organizational frameworks rather than creating new entities.
- CBOs are now formally linked with GPAHs, LPANs, and Champion Women initiatives, amplifying their influence and creating a sustained network of women-led peacebuilding actors.

## 6. Learning, Perceived Impact, and Sustainability

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The endline evaluation revealed overwhelming satisfaction among participants. All respondents (100%) acknowledged the importance of their participation, with 90.32% rating it as highly important.

### Key Learnings

Four transformative lessons emerge from the project:

- Deeply entrenched gender norms can be effectively challenged and reversed through visible female leadership, structured dialogue, and sustained engagement in community forums.
- Capacity-building efforts yield exponential impact when focused on individuals who already hold influence — these participants rapidly disseminate skills and norms to wider networks, accelerating social change.
- Integrating interventions across institutional, public, and grassroots levels produces a compounding effect, reinforcing systemic change and ensuring that progress in one domain supports gains in others.
- Structured mentorship and peer networks are instrumental in consolidating skills, reinforcing confidence, and promoting sustainable leadership development.

## 7. Sustainability Mechanisms

The project's sustainability design is robust and multi-layered:

- Gender in Peace Action Hubs (GPAHs) and Local Peace Ambassador Networks (LPANs) serve as enduring institutional anchors, embedding women's participation into local governance.
- Champions of Change platforms provide permanent avenues for women's continued engagement in peace processes.

- Mentorship models ensure generational continuity by training emerging leaders, creating a self-sustaining cycle of empowerment.
- Interconnected networks of empowered women create a resilient and sustainable ecosystem for gender-responsive peacebuilding.

The "Women on the Front" initiative stands as a replicable model for gender-responsive peacebuilding, demonstrating that empowered women can not only participate but lead in shaping inclusive, resilient communities across Ethiopia.

## 8. Recommendations

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### 1. Expand Geographic Coverage

Future interventions should extend beyond Habru and Ambasel Woredas to neighboring districts and regions. Expanding geographic coverage will increase the beneficiary base while testing the scalability of GPAHs and LPANs. Strategic partnerships with regional and national actors could facilitate resource mobilization and institutional support. Cross-community learning exchanges would further validate the transferability of the project's leadership, advocacy, and mentorship frameworks across different socio-cultural contexts.

### 2. Strengthen Youth Engagement

Future programs should place greater emphasis on engaging younger women and men in peacebuilding initiatives. Youth-targeted workshops, mentorship, and peer-led dialogues would complement existing structures, building a pipeline of informed, confident, and proactive future leaders. Integrating youth into existing GPAHs, LPANs, and community dialogues would enhance inclusivity, address emerging conflicts, and strengthen overall sustainability. Young participants can also introduce innovative approaches including social media-based advocacy and contemporary leadership models.

### 3. Enhance Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

To capture long-term outcomes and objectively assess behavioral and normative changes, M&E mechanisms should be significantly enhanced. Longitudinal tracking of participants — including direct beneficiaries and the wider community — will provide insights into sustained changes in leadership roles, social norms, and institutional engagement. Digital data collection tools, periodic surveys, and community feedback mechanisms should be employed to strengthen data accuracy and timeliness. Qualitative measures such as in-depth interviews and focus groups should complement quantitative data to capture nuanced insights on empowerment and decision-making influence.

### 4. Deepen Public Awareness and Media Engagement

Although the project successfully increased public support for women's leadership, significant potential remains to expand and deepen awareness campaigns. Continued collaboration with local and national media, including radio, television, and social media, can amplify gender equality and peacebuilding messaging. Targeted campaigns highlighting success stories and tangible outcomes of women-led peace initiatives can foster broader societal acceptance. Public debates, community forums, and multimedia campaigns can engage skeptics and reinforce normative change, ensuring attitudinal shifts are sustained and institutionalized.

### 5. Institutionalize Mentorship and Leadership Development

Mentorship and leadership development programs should be formalized and embedded within community structures and local governance mechanisms. Structured programs connecting experienced leaders with emerging women leaders can create a continuous feedback loop of skill transfer, confidence-building, and peer support. Embedding these programs within GPAHs, LPANs, and other local platforms ensures continuity, minimizes reliance on external facilitation, and promotes community ownership. Periodic leadership refresher trainings, peer learning sessions, and recognition of successful mentees will sustain motivation and reinforce capacity, enabling intergenerational knowledge transfer and ensuring women's leadership in peacebuilding remains a permanent feature of community governance.

## Annexes

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The following data collection instruments were developed and employed during the evaluation:

- Annex A: Qualitative Data Collection Tool (Key Informant Interview & Focus Group Discussion Guides)
- Annex B: Quantitative Data Collection Tool (Beneficiary Survey Questionnaire)