

Clapping with Two Hands:

Effectiveness of community conversations in transforming gender relations and zoonotic disease risks in Ethiopia

Why community conversations?



They allow participants to: -

- identify problems, converse, engage, collaborate and come up with action plans.
- fosters equitable participation and ownership of the process by both men and women.
- increase knowledge on issues affecting them.
- create opportunities for governmental and non-governmental organisations to participate.

What makes community conversations effective?

- **Skill:** Facilitators need capacity to deliver e.g. tactics to build trust, communicate freely, manage power and gender dynamics.
- **Selection:** Facilitators were selected in each site including community veterinarians and gender focal persons.
- **Training:** Facilitators were trained in planning, building rapport, group facilitation, note-taking, monitoring, evaluation, learning and reflective report writing.
- **Support:** Technical support was provided throughout the process.



How did community conversations benefit the locals?



1. Facilitated change in knowledge, attitudes, and practices that expose humans to zoonotic diseases.
2. Men and women practiced more equitable labor sharing.
3. Men began to appreciate women's roles, workloads and position in the household and community.
4. Encouraged joint decision-making.
5. Influenced change in local structures and institutions.

Recorded changes in behaviour



Men captured while helping their wives in various household chores

Lessons learnt

- Continuous review helped analyze what was working, what was not, what needed change, emerging issues, insights and action points before and after conversations.
- Continuous reflections helped researchers, administrators and development agents to appreciate the bottom-up and multi-directional approaches for behavioral change.
- Proper documentation of the process and emerging issues aids in tracking change and take corrective action.
- Community action plans should be linked to existing interventions and budgeted for.
- Facilitators need skills to engage women especially where they are generally not encouraged to voice opinions.
- Involvement of community leaders and government officials helped to cultivate interest, trust, enforcement of action plans and scaling of the approach.
- Change was likely to happen when both husband & wife participated as they appreciated what transpired and committed to implementing the proposed action plans together.