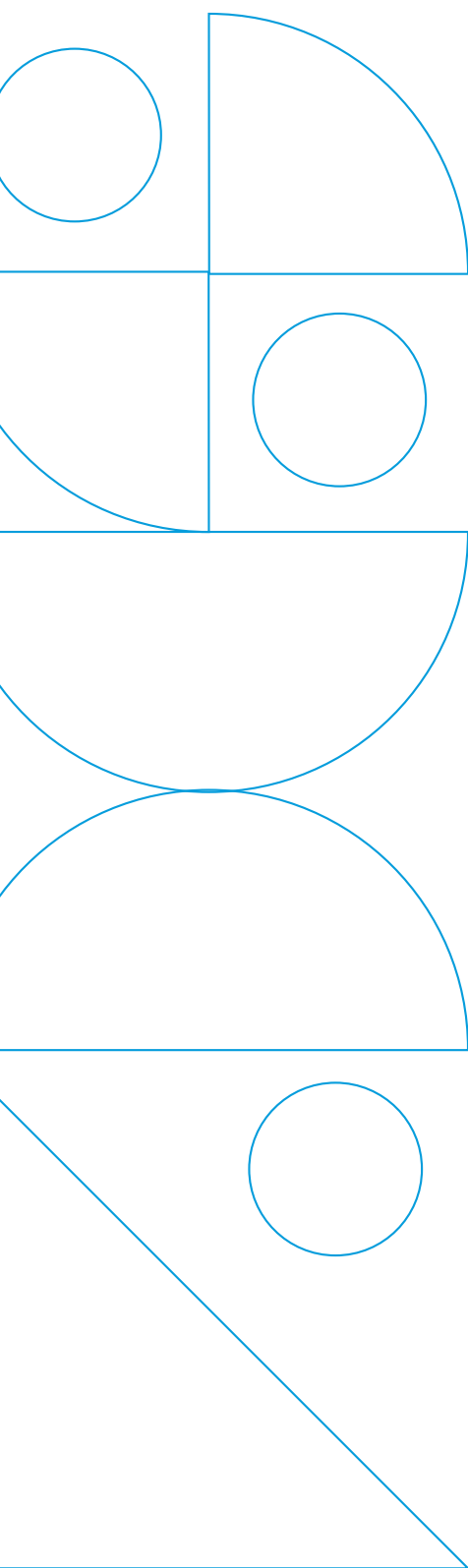




**NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2022**

A WEEKLY VIRTUAL DIALOGUE PLATFORM



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Foreword from NEWA



After the covid pandemic hit the world in 2019, people were forced to stay at home to curb the pandemic's transmission. The new norm that came at the time after the pandemic among others forced people to work from home. It was during this time that women and women groups and organizations, decided to meet online to discuss the concerns of women as Covid impacts them more. Among others GBV at home, Economic impact on women in the informal sector, Domestic workload, and the impacts of Covid on women returnees from the Middle East were some of the agendas which needed immediate discussion and response. Since then, the Gender in Focus (GIF) webinar has continued beyond the Covid agenda and time to broader agenda of gender.

We found a space to consult with each other, pinpoint our issues, collect voices and strengthen solidarity, most importantly the webinar served as an opportunity of caring for each other, as we walk together through our Gender in focus Webinar, in the last two years, we have come to uncover challenges that women and girls face beyond the ones that are commonly known, a lot of knowledge and findings and studies presented to us. As we move further women and men working on women and girls, gender equality and women empowerment have managed to attend and sometimes share their experiences and other times their opinions. Among the major agendas deliberated upon include women unpaid care work, decent work environment for women, women's peace and security agenda, gender based violence, women's political participation especially in view of recent political appointments among others.

Many of these discussions have led to actions. Technical committees were formed to strengthen advocacy work on women's political participation, based on the case that has brought a lot of concern regarding unpaid care work and the support needed for women in the formal sector media coverage was arranged by NEWA and members of the webinar were able to share information on day care services that are economically fit for women with lesser income.

The journey of the Webinar was not without a challenge though. Participation sometimes in terms of number and other times in terms of active engagement during the discussion was limited. Based on an assessment

made last year after one year of its journey, members had decided for the webinar to move out of NEWA once in a month, and for another organization to host it. Yet only few organizations have done that and most of the time the webinar have stayed with NEWA, as a lead organizer. On the other hand, members' suggestion in identifying topics of discussion was very useful in keeping momentum and relevance of agendas.

The struggle for gender equality and women rights, requires solidarity, strategic engagement, continued advocacy, linkages, and connections of efforts at different levels and more common voice. In this respect women organizations, the academia, women's right advocates, groups and organizations working on women issues need to create as much as possible common spaces that can enable them to listen to each other, lend hands and strengthen collaboration and networking. One such space is the *Gender in Focus* webinar. The webinar should not be static, need to go to the next level without limiting ourselves satisfied with what the platform has achieving so far. In this respect the webinar should bring more participants, especially those who are not yet engaged but can benefit and contribute to the agendas. Individuals or groups from academic institutions, participants from areas that are not yet represented this far both geographically and in-terms of sectors, need to cover and initiate pertinent agendas that have not been touched by the webinar, strengthen its impact through strong follow ups on decisions and recommended actions on discussions. The involvement of members of the webinar is very crucial in this regard and we look forward to a continued engagement of members and results of change in policy and implementation though coordinated advocacy effort of the group.

I would like to take this chance to forward my appreciation and gratitude on behalf of the webinar group, to the UN Women which has been a lifelong partner to the webinar, starting from its initial form *Gender and Covid*. UN women was the first organization to see the importance of the platform and offered to support by a secondment of communication person who facilitates the webinar and further by supporting the platforms annual physical meeting.

A special thank you to those who came to share their expertise, findings of studies, information, and gender issues for discussions in the Webinar.

Finally thank you to all participants who kept the conversation going and gave us hope in the power of each individual, in the struggle of all. The decision you each made, to engage in this webinar has formed, shaped, and strengthened and helped it move forward.

Thank you all.

The day is brighter....as we walk together

**Saba Gebremedhin,
Executive Directress**

NEWA

Foreword from UN Women



The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), is established with the mandate of leading, coordinating, and promoting accountability across the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and empowerment of women, globally. Such mandate translates well in the country contexts that respective country offices are instrumental in leading and coordinating various engagements of UN Women to support the government's vision to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). UN Women Ethiopia Country Office, since its establishment in 2012, has been employing collaborative partnership and joint implementation to support the Government of Ethiopia's effort in the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality.

UN Women has a strong partnership with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), that play critical roles in promoting sustainable development. In line with this, UN Women technically supports the popular CSOs dialogue and engagement platform Gender in Focus (GIF). Several CSOs, representatives of academic institutions and think tanks have been actively participating in the self-speaking GIF webinar that has been conducted for over two years. GIF, organized by NEWA, brings CSOs and women rights organizations together to tackle causes that hinder gender equality through advocacy, networking, research validation as well as resource mobilization and coordination.

Through the Gender in Focus webinar, CSOs have released press statements on emerging and current gender issues that are affecting women and girls in humanitarian settings, be it conflict related, natural hazard related such as drought as well as the health hazards as covid19 pandemic.

This has kept the conversation on gender equality and women's empowerment at the center stage of the agenda of many CSOs regularly attending GIF, enabling participants to keep up to date with the various issues affecting women in Ethiopia and inform their programmatic intervention.

UN Women has established a CSO Advisory Group (CSO AG) to increase the engagement of CSOs on rights-based advocacy taking into consideration the legal restriction they had faced to receive foreign funds and work on human rights issues including women's rights before the new Ethiopian Civil Societies Proclamation Proc.No.1113-2019. Additionally, UN Women also serves as the secretariat and co-chair of the Donor Group on Gender Equality (DGGE) established in 2002 to serve as a coordination structure and a regular dialogue platform among the international community working on gender equality and women's rights. The GIF enabled local women led organizations (WLOs), international organizations (CSOs) and donors connect and collaborate.

Through its coordination role, the UN Women Ethiopia country office works towards strengthening the accountability mechanisms for the realization of national and global commitments on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEWE). These engagements require a strengthened coordination system that will contribute to enhanced partnership, collaboration, coherence, and accountability on GEWE commitments. GIF is one of the structures that encourages collaborations and partnerships among the CSOs and the UN agencies.

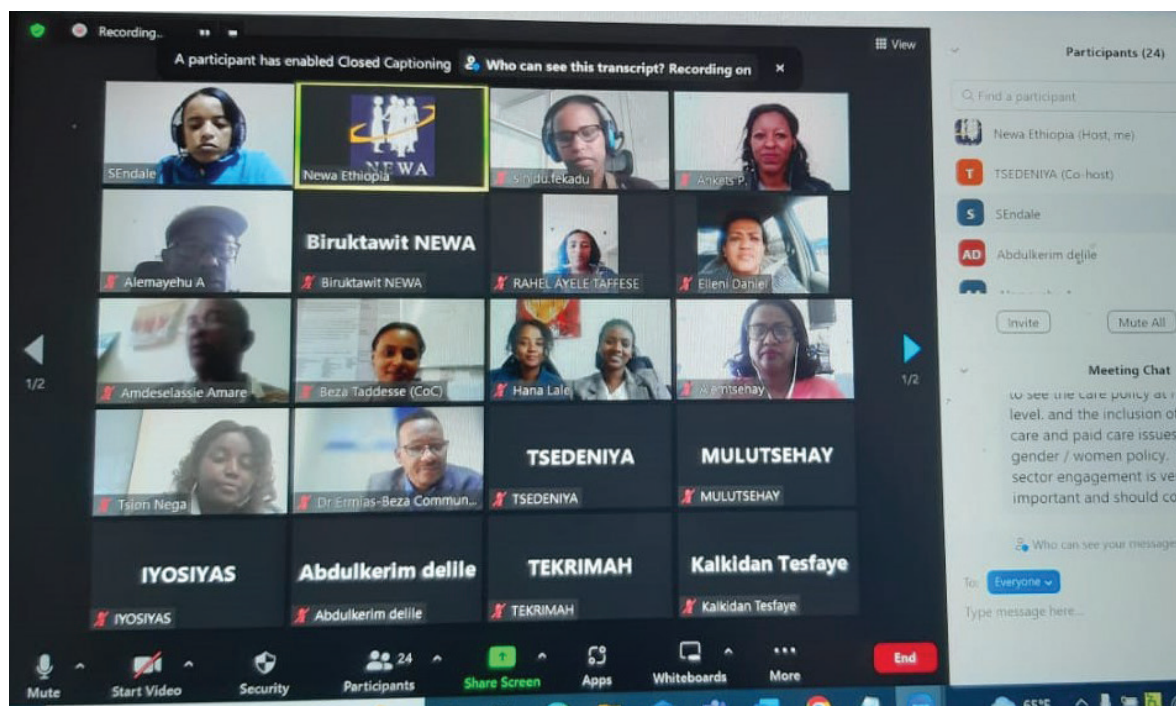
CSOs make a visible contribution to Ethiopia, including in poverty reduction, service provision, capacity-building, and ensuring the rights and well-being of women, children, and other vulnerable groups. However, the restrictive environment civil society organizations have been working under, prior to the revision of the draconian CSO law in 2019, has derailed civil society organizations of their capacity, particularly women's rights organizations, to engage in evidence-based advocacy and influence policy and decision-making processes.

It is with much delight that I highly appreciate the crucial role the GIF dialogue platform is playing in terms of connecting actors working on local, national, and international levels on GEWE and UN agencies. UN Women has a historical bond with CSOs, and they constitute its strongest constituency.

I am delighted to reiterate that commitment of a continued and strong partnership with CSOs on our noble shared mandate to advance gender equality and empowerment of women in Ethiopia.

Schadrack Dusabe
UN Women Ethiopia, Country Representative a.i.

About the Webinar



When the weekly webinar began in May 2020, it was basically to discuss how Covid 19 affected the socio-economic trends of the country. Later, it broadened and started to assess other emerging issues like gender-based violence, and discrimination against women and girls. For that matter, its previous name “Gender and Covid 19” changed to “Gender in Focus”.

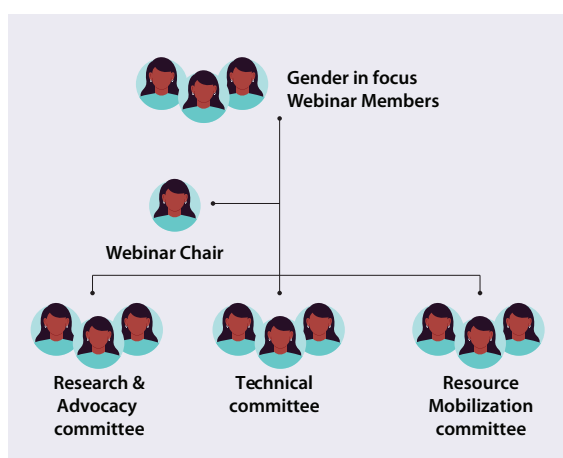
The main purpose of the webinar is networking civil society organizations, facilitating common voice and action, addressing identified problems, and facilitating linkages between grassroots and national level organizations. Moreover, it serves as a regular dialogue, advocacy, information sharing, research presentations and validation platform.

In short, it is a platform to impact change and provide safe space for actors to strategize and amplify the voice of women and girls.

The webinar convenes every Friday, chaired by Network of Ethiopian women’s Associations. The webinar discusses current and contemporary issues in light of addressing root causes of inequality and discrimination against women.

The Webinar's Structure

- The weekly webinar commences every Friday from 9:30 am-11:00 pm.
- The Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA) chairs the webinar.
- The chair is responsible to oversee the process of the weekly dialogue.
- To this effect, the chair will organize the work of the platform including assigning the agenda for meetings and assigning speakers/panelists to the meetings as necessary.
- In addition to the general assembly, the webinar has technical subcommittees for the purposes of advocacy, research development, response coordination, and budget allocation



MEMBERSHIP

The webinar is open to all civil society organizations, women's rights activists, women's movements, members of academia, development partners, and donor organizations working on women's rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment. The webinar also invites members of the community in order to hear first-hand reports on new developments that may be opportunities or threats to GEWE. As necessary, and upon agreement by the members of the webinar, the webinar may be open to members of the media, government officials and representatives, activists, and other stakeholders.

PURPOSE

The weekly webinar communes weekly to:

- Create a space for interaction among organizations/networks/associations to share ideas and facilitate partnership and collaboration.
- Actively conduct evidence-based advocacy against the prevalence of and concerns regarding gender-based violence and human rights.
- Consistently challenge patriarchal system prevailed by gender injustice that is structural in nature from policy, strategy, and legal perspective and those emerge from time to time.
- Establish a strong platform responsible and able to forecast the long-term impact of Covid 19 pandemic on gender equality and identify possible solutions to mitigate the post-COVID-19 gender equality issues as well as other emerging issues in Ethiopia.
- Facilitate meetings among the different actors, government, civil society, international organizations, UN agencies, and the academia for networking, information sharing, and resource mobilization.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations to government, development actors, civil society.
- Create strong coalition and strengthened organization to sustain collective actions among stakeholders.

Joint Statement Issued by the Webinar Members

June 2022:

Call for meaningful representation of women in the National dialogue commission.

The joint statement was issued by 44 civil society organizations to call upon the government for meaningful representation of women in the National dialogue commission.

October 2022:

Statement on peace agreement between the FDRE government and TPLF.

The statement was issued by The Gender in Focus and Network of Ethiopian women's Association, in recognition and appraisal of the peace deal between the FDRE government and TPLF under the auspices of the African union. The Gender in Focus congratulated the negotiating parties for the breakthrough they have made.

The full statement can be found here: <https://newaethiopia.org/resources/press-release/>

The Webinar's Advocacy Initiatives

'BREAKING THE PATTERN: Why Leaving women out of decision making & leadership. Women's Inclusion is not a Privilege but a Right!'



On August 05, 2022 the Gender in Focus discussed instances of the government's actions of undermining women's representation in leadership and decision making and the overall back sliding in women's representation. Leaving women out of the discussion regarding the national dialogue, leaving women out of representation from the committee that had been set up to investigate human rights violations in relation to the conflict in northern Ethiopia and making women's representation zero in the appointment of board members for the Bar association were instances discussed as cases in point.

The webinar discussed why the voice of CSOs working on issues affecting women and women rights organizations regarding women's representation are ignored. Efforts by the CSOs being fragmented and lack of coordination have been identified as a major gap. Thus, an understanding has been reached to revisit the approach CSOs are following and the need to re-strategize for a more coordinated action. And a committee to lead on the re-strategizing has been set up with members drawn from Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA), Ethiopian Women Rights Advocates (EWRA), Timran and Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Centers (EHRDC). The committee met on the 13th of October 2022 and agreed to map CSOs working on women's political participation and representation as there is a need to know who is doing what to avoid duplication and to establish a task force where members can be drawn from CSOs working on political participation and leadership following the mapping.

"Expanding Access to Day Care Centers for Working Mothers: Experiences from Public and Private Sectors"



The Gender in Focus discussed the burden of working mothers in relation to childcare on September 16, 2022. Assessment findings and experiences have been shared by the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) and Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU). According to the presentation by MoWSA, currently there are 322-day care centers (government plus private), however there are more than 1871 government offices including those at the woreda level. Thus, the figures show that what has been done is very insignificant.

The need for strong execution of what has been clearly stated in Federal Civil Servants Proclamation NO.1064/2017 chapter five regarding the expansion of day care centers in government institutions, how to expand access to day care centers in the private sector and establishing community-based daycare centers are emphasized. As the webinar agreed to conduct a one-month media advocacy on the topic of expanding access to day care centres as a follow up, radio programs have been aired on Ahadu radio FM 94.3 and Sheger FM 102.1 while articles have been published on BBC Amharic and Tigrigna(digital) outlets and Reporter Amharic newspaper. Mappings of initiatives on expanding access to day care centres have been conducted.

The need to advocate for the expansion of daycare centers in government offices, establishment of community-based daycare centers and supporting initiatives or initiating training of house maid brokers are identified as long and short term follow up actions.

Women's Peace rally and CSOs' call for peace



The webinar on September 2, 2022, discussed the planned women's peace march that was held on September 8. The webinar discussed how to better use the peace march to amplify women's concern, what messages to be crafted and what platforms to be used and the organizers of the rally, Timran and Network of Ethiopian Women Associations (NEWA) got ideas and recommendations to make objectives of the rally met. On the other hand, members of the webinar commented on the draft peace call by the Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council (ECSOC). Furthermore, the dialogue platform has been used to lobby NEWA/GIF members to sign the peace call announced by CSOs on September 06, 2022. Similarly, the platform has been used to mobilize participation for women's peace rally organized by Timran and NEWA.

As a follow up, the webinar discussed evaluation of the peace rally and planned a bigger women's peace march and digital peace campaigns to continue the peace initiative as women and children are still being disproportionately affected by conflicts and natural calamities.



Collaborations to continue raising voices for women's peace and security agenda



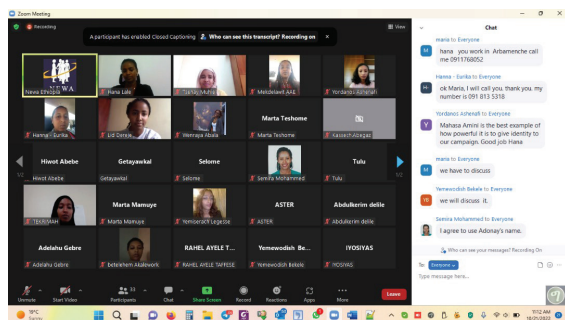
On September 30, 2022, the gender in focus webinar discussed opportunities and possible collaborations for the CSOs to continue being the voice of peace. Representatives of peace initiatives “Yeselam Enatoch” and Ethiopian Women PeaceBuilders (EWPB) network, established by NEWA have shared their experiences and discussed opportunities for collaborations among them and similar other initiatives.

Mapping of current peace initiatives (formal/informal), creating linkages between peace initiatives for example EWPB and Yeselam Enatoch, forming a coalition of fragmented peace initiatives around a common agenda i.e., peace, approaching media owners and editors to use media in peace advocacy and to request it to make its conflict reporting sensitive and responsible.



Picture - Office of the President

The State of Victims/Witnesses Protection: Pushing for Justice for Adonayet Yeheyis and many others



On October 07, Gender in Focus discussed the case of Adonayet Yeheyis, 17 who has been raped and killed by her stepfather. The webinar had the highest attendance (49) of representatives of women rights organizations, donors, and social media influencers. EWLA's legal aid team briefed participants about the case and that the association will take the case as it got the consent of Adonayet's biological father.

The gaps in the legal framework in terms of providing protection for victims/witnesses and in the execution of the law have been highlighted in the webinar. As a follow up the GIF agreed to push for strong execution of the existing proclamations while working on the gaps in the legal framework in protecting witnesses/Victims to be addressed. Also, to train law enforcement bodies like the police as there is lack of awareness. Making information regarding GBV, one stop centers and shelters for victims of GBV available on both mainstream and digital media outlets have also been identified as action points.

GBV Campaign Group planning meetings

The GBV campaign group established by NEWA in 2006 and the newly set up Gender in Focus GBV campaign technical committee held meetings to plan activities for the 2022, 16 days of activism against GBV. Digital campaigns, awareness raising events, resources mobilization for IDPs in different parts of the country and Panel discussions on GBV in the current Conflict and Emergency settings are activities among others.



November 25, 2022, Press Statement by the Campaign Group Against GBV

Gender In Focus Humanitarian Response

The GIF had mobilized resources for humanitarian support for people displaced because of conflicts in northern Ethiopia, Oromia and Benishangul Gumuz regions. The «Blanket for a mother» campaign run by Setaweeet Movement on behalf of the webinar was one good example in this regard. Similarly, this year (2022) the GBV campaign group chaired by NEWA launched a similar humanitarian response initiative named 'For my sister' to raise donations for women and children in IDPs. Senior women rights activists (GBV campaign group leaders) volunteered to directly approach (door to door) companies/ individuals to request donations while activities of the 16 days of activism against GBV will also be used to raise donations.

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NEWA

Lessons Learnt

One of the key achievements of the Gender in Focus (GIF) has been being a platform for CSOs working on women to connect and coordinate their efforts. The GIF was also instrumental in providing a forum for Women Rights Organizations (WROs) and other CSOs to address issues in a timely manner and have common stand on matters that require collective voice. In this regard responding to the plight of Ethiopian women returnees from the middle east, resource mobilization for people affected by the war in northern Ethiopia and drought in different parts of the country and advocating for peace and the protection of civilians are few instances to mention.

The alliance formed in the dialogue platform has seen the birth of policy briefs, press statements, and joint call for actions in response to the ever-changing and fragile socio-economic and political environment of Ethiopia. As a result of the weekly webinar, CSOs were able to collaborate on voicing their concerns to the government as well as other stakeholders on issues affecting women. Thus, the webinar has issued several joint statements since its start in May 2020.

The dialogues have served as an outlet for change, and a beacon of hope by becoming the voice for the many vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the society. It also created a conducive environment for information sharing, networking, research sharing, validation, and consolidated input provision particularly on research conducted on the impacts of covid-19 on women and girls, the rise of GBV in the context of conflict and emergencies, education, health, Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW), women's economic empowerment are some among others.

The webinar has been instrumental in resource mobilization by civil society organizations. 'For my sister', a donation drive launched on November 25, 2022, with the 16 days of activism against GBV to support displaced women and children because of the conflict in northern Ethiopia is the webinar group's current resource mobilization initiative.

The webinar led to the establishment of technical committees that served different purposes, mappings of CSO programs/initiatives on women political representation, peace building and women's economic empowerment among others. The mappings clearly showed gaps and opportunities for CSOs to collaborate. Over the years GIF has collaborated with several national, regional, and global actors to create linkages between CSOs and actors operating at different levels.

However, the journey wasn't a bed of roses as there was political sensitivity because of the conflicts in the country and CSOs being able to operate in such difficult circumstances and achieve success though

small, is noteworthy. Lack of active participation and commitment of members of the webinar have also been challenges.

The webinar needs to employ discussion delivery approaches that enhance participation both in terms of number and active participation. The decision to make GIF in person quarterly is one of the measures believed to address the issue of active participation.

There is a need to identify priority issues of gender and coordinate CSOs effort to respond to changing circumstances. The need to explore and implement a more effective working modality to coordinate CSOs work as there is effort duplication and fragmentation. The need to strengthen joint initiatives including advocacy events and dialogue platforms will be critical to put gender at the centre of the development and humanitarian agenda of CSOs. Engaging government bodies and media is key to building strong partnerships and strengthened advocacy respectively.

Research Presentations and Validations

The Gender in Focus has been an ideal space for research presentation and validation since its commencement in May 2020. Below are researches presented at the webinar since the last publication of the webinar newsletter in August 2021.

Action Aid Ethiopia, FAWA, FSS, Sarah Justice for All, Malala Fund Ethiopian Chapter, NEWA, Oxfam in Ethiopia, WCDI, Setaweet, UN women Ethiopia, YWCA

- Presentation on rapid assessment on Gender and Covid 19

NEWA

- Ethiopian Gender Development index

NEWA

- Baseline Survey the involvement and participation of girls and young women in a formal and informal sector in Ethiopia

Meseret Techane(PhD)

- Policy Influencing Opportunities and Challenges for Women in political participation and Decision Making

EMWA (Ethiopian Media Women Association)

- Gender Inequality in The Ethiopian Media

UN Women Ethiopia

- Findings and recommendations of the National Study on Implementation of Affirmative Action Measures in Ethiopia,

Yemserach Legesse (lecturer at ECSU)

- Representation of Women's Role in Selected Ethiopian Films: Stereotypical Contents and their Implications

Weekly Agendas

August 2021- November 2022

Date	Agenda
August 13, 2021	Policy briefs on Gender and Covid-19 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation on the research and rapid assessment conducted by Action Aid Ethiopia, FAWE, FSS, Sarah Justice for All, Malala Fund Ethiopian Chapter, NEWA, Oxfam in Ethiopia, Women can do it, Setaweeet movement, UN women Ethiopia, YWCA 2. Discussion on Key findings and Recommendations of the brief 3. Comments and Suggestions
August 27, 2021	About the Webinar- In person meeting, one year celebration of the Webinar <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion on the purpose and progress of the webinar 2. Participation and Ownership
September 17, 2021	Training facilitating by UN women Ethiopia on humanitarian aid, co-ordination cluster and budgeting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update and reflections on the training held on -September 3 and 4. 2. Discussion and Suggestion on how was the training and what is next?
October 8, 2021	Policy briefs on Gender based violence in focus <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation on the research report conducted by Solution business Consulting PLC. 2. Reflection, Clarification and Discussion on the presented report.
October 22, 2021	Disability and Gender <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussions and reflections on disability movement particular focus on disabled women.
October 29, 2021	Update and reflection on trauma management training facilitating by NEWA and Action Aid <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflection on how was the training? Feedback from trainee's and trainers. 2. Discussion on trauma, its psychological impact and the healing process.
November 5, 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposal presentation by NEWA on the 16 days of activism planned events against gender-based violence 2021 expected outcomes. 2. Comments and Suggestions. 3. Reflections on possible ways of collaboration for the activities on 16 days of activism.
November 12, 2021	Presentation and Discussion on the Pathways and policy options for Girls Education in the time of Covid-19
November 19, 2021	Panel discussion on the following topic "Investing in our future means investing in our children" <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What initiatives are in the AA children's' office currently undertaking and what areas can the civil society support the office in? 2. How to address gaps in Legislation and implementation with regards to child rights? 3. How covid-19 affected the wellbeing of children in terms of education and child labor? 4. How can civil society sector and women's right organizations work towards investigating in children? <p>Questions from participants for discussion</p>

Date	Agenda
December 3, 2021	Discussion on the celebration of the day “International persons with disability”
December 24, 2021	Presentation on Ethiopian Gender Development index NEWA 1. Discussion on the presented report
February 11, 2022	1. Presentation on a brief introduction about Women Peace and Security Agenda and United Nation Security Council resolution 1325 by UN women Ethiopia 2. Questions from participants for discussion
May 6, 2022	1. Discussion on how do we upscale peace building at community level? and, how do we strength community-based peace initiatives?
May 20, 2022	1. Presentation on Baseline Survey the involvement and participation of girls and young women in a formal and informal sector in Ethiopia conducted by NEWA 2. Questions from participants for discussion
August 12, 2022	Policy Influencing Opportunities and Challenges for Women in political participation and Decision Making
August 19, 2022	Descent Work Environment for Women!
August 26, 2022	The works of Women’s Major Groups, including the recent SDGs HLP
September 02, 2022	Gender Inequality in The Ethiopian Media, Presentation by EMWA
September 09, 2022	The Year in Review: Major Achievements and Challenges
September 16, 2022	Expanding Access to Day Care Centers for Working Mothers/Experiences from Public and Private Sectors
September 23, 2022	Findings and recommendations of the National Study on Implementation of Affirmative Action Measures in Ethiopia, UN Women Ethiopia
September 30, 2022	Collaborations to continue raising voices for women’s peace and security agenda”
October 07, 2022	The State of Victims/Witnesses Protection: Pushing for Justice for Adanayet Yeheyess and her likes
October 14, 2022	Evaluation of the September 8th, 2022, Women’s Peace March, Organized by Timarn and NEWA: Planned Follow up Activities
October 21, 2022	Discussion on the updates from the GBV Campaign group on the upcoming 16 Days of Activism 2022
October 29, 2022	Challenges Facing Women in the Banking Sector
November 04, 2022	Portrayal of Women in Entertainment Media and Advertising
November 11, 2022	Reaching at Common Understanding to Advance the Care Agenda
November 18, 2022	Final Progress Update from the GBV Campaign Group



UN Women officials visit of NEWA

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