GENDERSHOPS: TRANSFORMING THE NEXT GENERATION TO REALIZE GENDER EQUALITY
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OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY:

The GenderShops initiative, conceptualised in 2016-17 by Setaweet, was developed against a backdrop of entrenched gender inequality in Ethiopia. According to the Global Gender Gap report written during the design of the initiative in 2016, Ethiopia was ranked at 109 out of 144.¹ The latest report from 2018 outlines that the ranking has fallen even further and stands at 117 out of 149 countries surveyed.² In practice, this means that women and girls continue to be denied their rights to engagement as full citizens, facing severe restrictions on their involvement in social, economic and political spheres and regularly experiencing violence and sexism in their everyday lives.

There are many projects that aim to address gender inequality in Ethiopia led by a range of local and international organisations, in addition to work being supported by the Government of Ethiopia and UN Women. These projects span many themes and seek changes at the level of attitudes and behaviours of key actors to create enabling environments where women and girls are treated as equal citizens. However to date, no project has ever attempted to discuss with young people how they become socialised in society to accept and perpetuate gender inequality and the impact and limitations this places on them.

With the 2-year GenderShops project delivered between 2018-2019, Setaweet’s aim was to directly influence young people between the ages of 11 and 18 as they evolve their views on the world. Through a carefully created curricula designed with young people and drawing on the advice of gender experts, Setaweet sought to generate transformational shifts in the mindsets and consciousness of young boys and girls so that they could reflect on their gender identities. In 2016-17, the idea for the project was warmly encouraged by key staff at the Ethiopian Ministry of Education who agreed to support the implementation of the curricula in state high schools in Addis Ababa. This support gave Setaweet the impetus to design the project and seek financial support in partnership with Womankind Worldwide.

Since the start date of the project implementation in January 2018, the context in Ethiopia has very quickly changed. The Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (ERPDF) was the dominant party and in government in Ethiopia since 1989. Their rule was widely considered autocratic and corrupt with increasingly limited space for civil society to uphold and demand human rights. Against a backdrop of financial hardship, development projects were often a way for participants to supplement their income and it had become normal practice for meeting or workshop participants to receive per diems for their attendance. This was also the case for civil servants as a way to top up low government salaries even though this was against stated government policy. After successive periods of civil unrest in the country against the government in 2017 and 2018, the ERPDF began to rethink how best to address this unrest and violence. The changes triggered a period of uncertainty around priorities for key government departments including the Ministry of Education whose senior staff became unreachable with some losing their jobs due to government change. This was not foreseen at the beginning of the project, it was assumed that the status quo would remain with key contacts working with and in support of Setaweet and the project. However, since mid-2018 when the project inception phase was complete and work ready to begin, through the appointment of Dr Abiy Ahmed to the Prime Minister position, access to senior staff at the Ministry of Education became increasingly challenging alongside a lot of staff turnover.

For the GenderShops project team, these changes meant that Setaweet had to employ an adaptive planning approach to the context. One of the biggest barriers they faced from the outset was the delegation of engagement from the central Ministry of Education office to the Addis Ababa Education Bureau.

Setaweet’s key contacts had been at the central Ministry of Education but they were now dealing with new contacts at The Addis Ababa Bureau of Education and the Gender Unit which itself was beset with staff changes as well as openly hostile to the project, the curricula and implementation process. Setaweet faced direct backlash from the Addis Ababa Bureau of Education and Gender Unit who misunderstood and misinterpreted the project and the materials and made assertions that the content aimed to encourage young people to have sex.

Without any encouragement from the Addis Ababa Bureau of Education, concerns were raised by School Administrators and Teachers who also took particular offence at the GenderShops module on healthy relationships which dealt with the topic of consent for sex and questioned why equality between men and women was important. Staff from the Addis Ababa Bureau of Education, Schools Administrators and students also demanded per diems for their engagement in the GenderShops which was contrary to government policy and contrary to what Setaweet had been told to expect by the Ministry of Education.

Trainers
In order to reach every student and teacher, Setaweet recruited and trained a strong team of 40 male (16) and female trainers (24). There was both a female and male trainer in each session of the GenderShops in each school. The facilitators or trainers-of-trainers for the GenderShop project was delivered by senior Setaweet staff and members with an average of ten years’ of experience each.

Impact and adaptations
Taken together, these challenges had a direct impact on how Setaweet was able to implement the project in terms of the number and type of schools including how to reach 10,000 students as outlined in the original proposal. Whilst working closely with Womankind Worldwide and informing the donor at key moments, Setaweet used an adaptive approach to the project implementation in order to continue with the project vision within existing budget parameters, and continue to work with key allies through the creation of a project Advisory Group. Setaweet successfully delivered the GenderShops to 2,255 students during the project. Whilst less than the target mentioned earlier, there were many contextual challenges as described in this section which impacted on the total number of those reached. However, it was clear from the outset that the GenderShops model and approach goes beyond numbers alone as a groundbreaking and innovative initiative in the Ethiopian context.

Per-Diems – In order for the workshops to proceed as planned whilst also managing the budget in order to pay per diems to students and some School Administrators, Setaweet consulted the project Advisory Group and the research partner (Addis
Continental Institute of Public Health) on whether the GenderShops could be condensed from 2 days to 1 day. There was agreement that it was feasible without negatively impacting the quality or scope of the GenderShops sessions. As a result, approval was given to use existing budget lines to make per diem payments where necessary. Importantly, not all schools and students expected or demanded them and so they were only provided when it was clear that this issue alone would be a barrier to the actual delivery of the curricula. This issue of paying per diems as a standard and common practice in the delivery of projects remains a challenge nationwide. For example, and beyond this project, there are accounts of students in other schools even asking for payments to go to sports tournaments. As such, the challenge with per diems was well beyond Setaweet’s direct control and not anticipated within the original project and budget design process. However, subsequent adaptive project planning and budgets have incorporated these expenses when necessary so that the project could continue although payment of per diems also was no guarantee of retaining the student’s attention in the sessions.

**Schools** – Due to the backlash from School Administrators and the lack of support from the Addis Ababa Education Bureau, Setaweet could not conduct GenderShops in the 2 original schools that were proposed at the outset of the project. Setaweet spent a considerable amount of time in partnership development with other schools throughout the lifetime of the project to find schools that were genuinely committed to the GenderShops and made sure students did not leave midway through them. Even where schools did show initial commitment, some backtracked when planning began and did not always ensure students participated for the whole day. This affected the consistency of the data collection process.

In addition, the intention from the outset was for Setaweet to focus on state high schools but the challenges over commitment were mostly in these schools. As a result, Setaweet explored expanding the GenderShops into a mix of schools, including both state and private schools (secular and faith based) but this did affect their potential to reach schoolchildren from the same socio-economic background.

The data used in this report is taken from the GenderShops that were carried out across 6 schools in Addis Ababa - Abiyot kirs, Dr Haddis, Menelik, Selassie, Yekatit 23 and Saint Joseph schools.

**Data collection** – The lack of commitment from School Administrators to ensure that students stayed for the whole GenderShop, contributed to a significant reduction in the number of students that could be counted in the data collection exercise. The reduction in student numbers in turn, contributed to there being a smaller and less robust sample size to work with to demonstrate progression in the consciousness of students.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Methodology:**
The design of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework (MEL) for the project was led by the Addis Continental Institute for Public Health (ACIPH). Based on their experience, they worked with Setaweet to design a series of baseline/pre-test questions (Annex 1) that students were asked to complete before they took the training. These questions directly relate to student’s existing understanding of the 7 modules covered in the GenderShops curricula designed by Setaweet. At the end of the training, the students were asked the same set of questions in order to ascertain whether there had been a shift in their understanding of the content of the GenderShops from the beginning of the day.

ACIPH provided the quantitative data results for each module and also split this information by gender. The data was provided per module and by sub-question in a bar chart format showing shifts in % terms equating to the total number of students that answered the question. This approach was chosen to enable multiple levels of analysis of the data to support understanding.
about which modules might have been the most well received and by whom (and according to gender). By looking at this data, Setaweet has also been able to draw indicative conclusions about the efficacy of the GenderShops content in some cases also.

Setaweet and Womankind reviewed the figures on each bar chart to identify and analyse indications of movement in the thinking or understanding of the students between the pre and post test. This movement was considered in line with the desired shift in conscious enquiry and direction of the particular module as designed in the GenderShops curricula.

In the analysis, there as agreement that significant shifts were understood to be where there has been a 5% or more % change up or down in the desired shift in conscious enquiry, first in the 4 positions at the extremes of the data (strongly agree/agree at one end, and strongly disagree/disagree at the opposite end). Commentary is also provided on the data in the midrange section where applicable, this is the category of neither agree nor disagree, especially where the numbers of people in this category was significant.

The commentary on every module has also been triangulated with qualitative data provided in the form of focus group discussions (FGDs) and case studies.

**Caveats/Limitations:**
Due to the challenges of gathering data as summarised in this section, ACIPH's view is that they cannot draw general conclusions from the data.

As a result, this report is based on data provided by ACIPH with analysis conducted by Setaweet and Womankind Worldwide.
GENDERSHOPS: – KEY OBSERVATIONS PER MODULE

For the purpose of this report, we selected the three key observations of student responses per question, per module of the GenderShops pre and post test questionnaires in order to highlight the main shifts, positive and negative, and areas for further exploration for projects of this kind.
MODULE 1: Stereotypical Terms/Sexism

The objective of this session was for students to understand and identify the difference between sex and gender. Through this, participants aimed to unpack how gender is constructed to identify the gender norms that are in place.

KEY OBSERVATIONS:

Positive shifts in the desired direction, especially for boys, were observed for statements 1 to 3 in particular:

(1) ‘girls like gossip’

Overall analysis:
The data suggests indicatively suggests that 17.5% of students strongly agreed with the statement at the pre-test stage whereas 9.5% strongly agreed with this at the post-test stage. This 8% shift between the pre and post-test stage represents a significant shift downwards by a number of students in the desired direction. This was also seen in the agree category of the data with 25.9% agreeing with this at the outset and 17.7% agreeing at the end. This is also a significant 8% shift in the desired direction.

Conversely and in line with this, 11.5% of the students strongly disagreed with this statement at the pre-test stage whereas 24.3% strongly disagreed with this at the post-test stage. This 13% shift between the pre and post-test stage represents a significant shift upwards in the number of students disagreeing with the statement. Also, 19.3% of the students disagreed with the statement and 30.8% disagreed at the end. This represents an even bigger change at 10% in the desired direction.

25.8% neither agree nor disagree at the pre-test stage which dropped to 17.7% at the post-test stage, representing a shift of 8% also and also indicated that more people had decided their view on this topic by the end of the training and were prepared to say whether they agreed or disagreed. Given that all the scores in the categories related to strongly agree/agree or strongly disagree/disagree have all moved in the desired direction, this shift in the neither agree nor disagree is a positive one.
Data summary by gender:
Based on a breakdown on the same data on each question by gender shown in the tables above, there is a greater reduction in boys strongly agreeing with the statement than girls from 25.2% to 14.5%. This is also the case in the agree category from 30% to 18.1%. On the other end of the spectrum, there is a closer correlation between boys and girls, with a 12% shift in the desired direction for boys and a 13% shift in the desired direction for girls. Also, there is a large shift in the desired direction for boys disagreeing with the statement, a shift from 14.4% to 31.6%, a total of 17%. For girls the shift was also large but only by 8% from 22.9% to 30.2%.

The category of neither agree or disagree has shifted in the desired direction for both boys and girls with less being in this category at the post-test stage.

(2) ‘girls love talking’
Overall analysis:
The data suggests that 21.4% of students strongly agreed with the statement at the pre-test stage whereas 9.8% strongly agreed with this at the post-test stage. This 11% shift between the pre and post-test stage represents a significant shift downwards by a number of students in the desired direction. This was also seen in the agree category of the data with 30.7% agreeing with this at the outset and 22.7% agreeing at the end. This is also a significant 8% shift in the desired direction.

Conversely and in line with this, 10.7% of the students strongly disagreed with this statement at the pre-test stage whereas 22.7% strongly disagreed with this at the post-test stage. This 12% shift between the pre and post-test stage represents a significant shift upwards in the number of students disagreeing with the statement. Also, 18.8% of the students disagreed with the statement and 29.3% disagreed at the end. This represents an 11% shift in the desired direction.

18.5% neither agree nor disagree at the pre-test stage which dropped to 15.6% at the post-test stage, representing a shift of only 3%. However, given the larger shifts in the other categories, this percentage represents a low number of students overall and the data overall suggests that the topic was well received and understood by most students as it was designed.

Data summary by gender:
Based on a breakdown on the same data on each question by gender shown in the tables above, there is a greater reduction in boys strongly agreeing with the statement than girls, 30% of boys strongly agreed with the statement at the pre-test and on 13% strongly agreed at the end. The drop for girls in this category was only 8% from 15% to 7.3%. The shifts at the other end of the data reflect a slightly different picture with more girls than boys strongly disagreeing with the data (14% at pre-test and 27.4% at the post-test stage), a shift of 13%. Boys showed a shift of only 10% between 6 and 16.6%.

GenderShops: Transforming the next generation to realize gender equality
However, the shifts between pre and post-tests in the category of disagree switch back in the other direction with more boys disagreeing with the statement between pre and post-test from 12% to 25.9% (13%) and for girls between 23 and 31% (8%). In the agree category, there is also a bigger shift for boys with 36% agreeing at the post test and only 24.9% agreeing at the end. For girls the shift is less marked between 26.2% at the beginning and 21% at the end.

The category of neither agree or disagree has increased for boys by 4% and reduced by 8% for girls.

(3) ‘girls are emotional’

Overall analysis:
The data suggests indicatively suggests that 11.4% of students strongly agreed with the statement at the pre-test stage whereas 8.4% strongly agreed with this at the post-test stage. This 3% shift is not significant in this analysis whereas the category of agree shows more signs of shift in the desired direction with 27.5% agreeing with the statement at the outset and only 20.2% agreeing with this after the training.

At the other end of the spectrum, 9.8% of the students strongly disagreed with this statement at the pre-test stage whereas 20.9% strongly disagreed with this at the post-test stage. **This 11% shift between the pre and post-test stage represents a significant shift upwards in the number of students disagreeing with the statement.** However only 26.8% of students disagreed with the statement at the outset and this only changed by 3% at the post-test stage.

Overall, it was felt that this aspect of the training was well understood although the neither agree/disagree category warrants further investigation by Setaweet as 20% of students still weren’t convinced that the statement, ‘Girls are very emotional’ is a sexist one in Ethiopia.

Data summary by gender:
The gender-disaggregated data suggests that there have been greater shifts for boys than girls against this question. There was almost no shift for girls between the pre and post-test data in the agree category (from 5.3% to 5.6%) but for boys the shift was 8% from 19.6% to 11.9%. In the agree category there was not a huge shift for girls at only 5% whereas for boys this was over 10% from 31.6% to 20.7% between the pre and post-test stage. At the other end of the spectrum, there was more shift for girls with 14.7% disagreeing at the outset and 27.8% at the end. For boys this was a smaller shift between 3.2% and 11.9% but still 8%. In the disagree category, there is a disappointing result with less girls disagreeing at the end of the training than the beginning (between 35% and 29.8%). For boys the shift is more positive with 15.6% disagreeing at the beginning and 28.5% disagreeing at the end (13%).

In the neither agree nor disagree section, there were almost identical results with 4% shifts downwards for both boys and girls.

**There was also a desired shift around the statement ‘girls are less smart’ with widespread disagreement on this.**

Overall analysis:
The data suggests that most students strongly disagree or disagreed with this statement. Whilst there is a small shift down in the data from 49.7% to 46.7% in the strongly disagree category,
this is only 3% and so not considered significant. In the disagree category, the data is positive in the opposite direction with 37.5% disagreeing with this statement at the pre-test stage and 38.8% at the end. The numbers of students strongly agreeing or agreeing with statement are very low with very little shift between pre and post-test. There as a 2% shift from 4.7% to 2.3% in the agree category but a 2% shift is not considered significant. In the neither agree or disagree section, there is a slight increase from 5.1% at the beginning to 9.1% at the end but again, this is not considered significant.

There was also a desired shift around the statement ‘girls don’t work when they get together’ with few agreeing with this.

The data suggests that most students either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement with positive increases in both categories. The strongly disagree shifts from 33.1% at the pre-test to 41.5% at the post-test. In the disagree category, it was 34.7% at the pre-test and 37.6% at the post-test. There were also positive changes at the other end of the spectrum with 5.4% strongly agreeing at the pre-test and 3.6% at the post-test. This pattern was followed in the agree category with 12.4% agreeing at the pre-test and 8.4% at the post-test stage. There was also a reduction of students in the neither agree nor disagree category.

What the students say:

Winta is a female student from Selassie school. She is all about the support (affirmative action) given to girl students in schools, she believes it is helpful to them because they have a lot of workload at home and not enough time to study. She mentioned that since women have a lot of work to do that limits them to not achieve their full potential.

LEARNING/POINTS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

The remaining data in the module was less clear about desired shifts and reflects how certain stereotypes in Ethiopia are easier to breakdown that others. Also it was noted that in Ethiopia there is a general lack of challenge to gendered stereotyping across most aspects of society.
MODULE 2: Privileges In School Life

The objective of this session was to identify and analyse the privileges that result from the construction of gender in Ethiopian society. Setawet asked participants to form a line and ask them to step forward according to different gendered conditions. Participants were asked to take one-step forward if they identify with what is being said by the trainer such as “If you have never been touched inappropriately”, “If you have never cooked or cleaned after school or on weekends”, “If you have no disability”. As part of the exercise they are told to think about it as a race so that they can see how each privilege is allowing some to progress and go one step forward while others might be held back.

KEY OBSERVATIONS:

Positive shifts in the desired direction were observed for statements 3, 5 and 8.

(3) ‘Girls are lucky to be touched even if they don’t want it’

Overall analysis:
The data reflects positive shifts in views around this question. There was an increase from 17.5% of people strongly disagreeing with this statement from the outset and this raised to 24.3% after the GenderShops. There was also a jump from 19.7% of people agreeing with the statement before and 25.9% afterwards. There is also positive data at the other end of the scale with 33.9% agreeing with this from the outset and only 24% afterwards. Also 17.6% strongly agreed with this before and only 12.2% afterwards. Whilst there was a slight increase in the neither agree/nor disagree category, this was only by 2% and so is limited in significance. Overall the desired shifts were seen.

Data summary by gender:
The difference in gender statistics reflect that more boys and girls strongly disagreed with the statement after the GenderShops (7% increase for girls and 6% increase for boys). There was a more significant increase after the GenderShops of girls disagreeing with the statement from 12.9% to 23.4% (11%). Whilst there was not such a big shift in this aspect for boys, the numbers disagreeing with the statement were very high at 28% before and 29% afterwards. On the opposite end, 38% of girls agreed with this statement and this dropped by 12% to 25.2 % afterwards. Similarly, 22.9% of girls strongly agreed with the statement at the beginning and only 12.9% agreed at the end. Boys reflected a similar shift with 28% agreeing at the outset and 21% at the end. The data suggests a 1% increase in boys strongly agreeing with this statement during the post-test but this isn’t considered significant.

Overall this data confirmed that the desired shift occurred.
Overall analysis:
The data reflects positive shifts in the desired direction with 42% agreeing with this from the outset dropping to 28.3% after the training. There were also positive shifts in those strongly disagreeing with the statement from 8.1% to 13.8% (5%) and disagreeing with the statement (from 15.9% to 23.8% which is - 8%).

Data summary by gender:
A review of the gender-disaggregated data suggests that more boys than girls were impacted by this topic. 4% of boys strongly disagreed with this question at the beginning and 13% disagreed with this at the end (a shift of 9%). 13.2% of boys disagreed at the beginning with 25.9% disagreeing at the end (a shift of 12%). There was less shift in these categories for girls. There was also a significant drop in boys agreeing with this statement between the beginning and end of the training from 48.4% to 27.5% (21%). For girls the shift was also large between 47.6% and 34% (13%). Overall this data suggests that boys were more impacted than girls on this topic.

(8) ‘The places girls can go are not limited’
The data shows that both boys and girls disagree with this statement reflecting that the issue of unequal freedoms for boys and girls is understood to some extent although there was a reduction in both sexes disagreeing with the statement after the training, from 41.2% to 34.3% in girls and from 41.6% to 35.2% in boys. There was a also a static change for both insignificant changes (less than 5%) in changes of both girls and boys agreeing or strongly agreeing less after the training had taken place.

What the students say:
The positive changes are validated by interviews from students who took part in the training. Kaleab also mentioned an experience where his sister was being verbally assaulted by a man from their neighborhood and he remembers that his father had to get involved to stop the man. At the time his sister was being verbally harassed he said he took it personally and that it made him realise how offensive it is to girls. ‘I never wish this to happen to anyone, even when my friends do it now I tell them that it’s not cool, and I ask them how they would feel if that happened to their sister.’

Kaleab Yohannes, male student – “I love my sisters, my mother and my father the same way, I love them all equally. But outside of the house the way that they are treated is different. Outside of the house the boys and girls are treated differently and most of the times the boys get better treatment than the girls. It has helped me highlight more on the issue after the training, but they [my parents] gave me those values before the training.”
LEARNING/POINTS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Certain aspects of the module may require more exploration by Setaweet although sharing aspects of gender privilege is very complex and very few are actors are addressing this.

(1) ‘Boys are not expected to help out in the house chores’
The data wasn’t necessarily expected. The expectation was that most students would agree that boys are not expected to help out in the house chores. Even after the training, the figures didn’t really change to more students agreeing with the statement which suggests either Setaweet may need to relook at how this aspect of the curricula is delivered and/or attitudes to who should help out in the home are less gendered than previously realized.

(8) Boys have more time to study than girls
The gender-disaggregated data suggested that the disagreement was higher for girls at a 10% reduction and 5% reduction for boys. There was a 5% increase in girls strongly agreeing with the statement but this was only related to 6% of the girls overall. For boys there were even less boys strongly agreeing with the statement at 4.1% after the training of boys overall. The data suggests that more attention could be given to this area in future trainings.
MODULE 3: Gender Stereotyping

The objective of this module was to look closely at how gender is the role and responsibility assigned to boys and girls by the society. It is this socialisation that is informed by different things including family, society and the media. Gender evolves with society over time. Gender roles may also differ from one community to another. This shows us that gender is a socially constructed role.

KEY OBSERVATIONS:

(1) **Girls are generally more limited in what they can do.**
This data suggests that there was strong disagreement about this statement from all students with increase of 8% from the beginning of the training to the end that strongly disagreed. Those disagreeing remained almost the same within the 36% range. There was also a drop in those agreeing and strongly agreeing with the statement although the shifts are less significant under 5%. This suggests both girls and boys think they can easily have the same roles in society.

(2) **Boys are natural leaders than girls**
This data suggests quite strongly that both boys and girls think that boys are more natural leaders. However, the training has caused some shift in those agreeing with this with 37.2% of boys agreeing at the beginning and 26.9% at the end, and 39.7% of girls agreeing at the beginning and 31.9% at the end. There was almost no shift in the strongly agree category from before the training to after in both groups but it is noticeable that more girls were in this category overall (28.2%) compared to boys at 17.6%.

(7) **Girls are shy and have low self-confidence**
The data suggests that there have been positive shifts in the desired direction for this question. Girls showed the biggest shifts in strongly disagreeing with this from 21.2% to 29.4% (8%) with boys showing a shift of 5% from 15 to 20%. There was also a positive shift in less people agreeing with the statement amongst both boys and girls, with the biggest drop amongst boys from 19% to 12% (7%). It is to be noted that 25% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and so, whilst the shifts are positive, more work may need to be done to shift views on this aspect.
What the students say:
The positive changes are validated by interviews from students who took part in the training:

Yabsera Sisaye, student - As he puts it in an example his sister and girls from the neighbourhood can’t play outside due to work in the house *

Yabsera was one of only 5.7% of boys who strongly agreed with this statement

Yodit, a student in Menelik said, “I am motivated to participate more - I have some writing skill and I want to use that skill to be more involved.”

LEARNING/POINTS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Certain aspects of the module may require more exploration by Setaweet although, as noted above, there is a general lack of challenge to stereotyping in Ethiopia which hampers progress.

(5) Girls are more decent
It was felt that this aspect was not well understood by all. The data here suggests that the students might have been unsure of this question as there were high degrees of those neither agreeing or disagreeing and an increase in this category from the beginning to the end of the training (from 31% to 38% which is -7%). There was also a drop in girls agreeing with the statement from 36.2% to 28.2% (8%) which may suggest that they had a greater understanding that notions of decency should not be gendered.
MODULE 4: Healthy Relationships

The objective of this session was to inform participants about healthy relationships that are empowering, based on consent and free from violence. The aim was that participants would understand relationships as partnerships that uplift one another.

KEY OBSERVATIONS:

1. *When a girl says ‘no’ it doesn’t necessarily mean ‘no’ it just means try harder*
   
The data suggests a fairly consistent pattern that the issue of consent has been understood by an increasing number of students. There was a noticeable shift amongst boys disagreeing with this. Those strongly disagreeing shifting from 11.6% to 16.1% and those disagreeing from 22.4% to 29%. Whilst this is positive, there were 33.2% of boys neither agreeing nor disagreeing in contrast to 18.1% for girls. This requires more investigation.

2. *A boy is allowed to beat his girlfriend if she does something wrong*
   
There was strong disagreement on this statement from both boys and girls although 30% more girls strongly disagreed than boys. (62.4% for girls and 32.8% for boys).

3. *A girl can be beaten by her boyfriend if she makes him feel jealous*
   
Generally, all students disagreed with this statement reflecting that violence is not acceptable. Both girls and boys strongly disagreeing increased from 25.3% to 37.1% for girls and 14.4 to 20.7% for boys. The percentage of boys strongly agreeing with this reduced from 10% to 5%.
What the students say:
The positive changes are validated by interviews from students who took part in the training:

Selam Goshu, Student – “I have learned a lot from the workshop, it has taught me that I can make decisions on my own without being pressured from anybody no matter who pressures me. When there is a relationship between a boyfriend and a girlfriend and the boy is pressuring me for sex, I now know I can say no.”

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Trainers
The FGD with GenderShops trainers confirmed that there were longer discussions on consent and healthy relationships than other sessions and modules.

The trainer Luam said - ”Some students were arguing that, Abel, the character from the story that the students had to read, hit his girlfriend because boys get jealous and he got jealous because he loved her. There was a long discussion among students as a few argued that jealousy justified his attack on his girlfriend Meron while the majority argued against it."

The trainer Henok said, “During the coffee and tea exercise we were trying to teach them about consent during sexual relations. During this session some of the students were initially shy to share their thoughts while some were loud and confident about their responses. We used substantial amount of time on this part of the training as the student were actively engaging.”

Luam also said, “When we first started with the coffee and tea exercise with questions such as if your friend came over to your house and you made tea for her and she said no would you force her? All the students were pretty straight forward with their answers yes or no but when we brought the same question to sexual relations they took their time responding as they were shy with each other and they didn't want their classmates to make fun of them about their answers.”

LEARNING/POINTS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION
A large part of this module covered the topic of consent which is difficult to convey in Ethiopia whilst acknowledging that it is a contentious issue in most contexts. Whilst there was some positive shifts, some aspects of the module may require more exploration by Setaweet to help ensure that the topic is fully explored and understood.

(4) Girls who say yes to sex can change their mind at any time
Most students agreed or strongly agreed with this statement although there was a significant reduction in boys agreeing with this after the training from 44% to 32% (12%). This is a negative shift and more analysis is needed on this.

(5) Sometimes girls want to have sex even when they say “no.”
Girls disagreed with this statement although those strongly disagreeing did drop between 36% and 29%. The boys seemed somewhat unsure how to answer the question with 32% neither agreeing nor disagreeing before and after the training. This suggests the topic was complex and requires more sessions to convey the core ideas, mainly to boys.
MODULE 5: Beauty Stereotypes And Ideals

The objective of this module was to explore standard ideals of beauty for boys and girls in Ethiopia. Media images often present stereotypical images of men and women (popstars, those in the entertainment industry and on TV) where there are toned men of a certain ‘clean look’ and women who look classically Ethiopian – more curvaceous with smooth black hair. Images rarely show different kinds of women such as those with dreadlocks or different skin tones. There are also very few images of women or men with disabilities.

Images of men and women shown in the GenderShops

KEY OBSERVATIONS:

The data in this section was varied and generalisations were not possible to conclude. However, the main observation from the module was confirmation that fixed stereotypes and notions about beauty ideals remain prevalent for boys and girls in Ethiopia.

What the students say:

Some positive changes are validated by interviews from students who took part in the training:

Selamawit Mariame, Student - From now on she sees that beauty is different from one person to another and that women should not depend on their beauty alone.

Eyelusalem, student “We are all beautiful. It’s the society that puts the unwanted pressure of standards on us.”
LEARNING/POINTS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

The topic is mostly about stereotypes which are difficult to change as noted above. The part of the curricula that this covers therefore requires more exploration. In particular, it may be useful to have a closer look at the diversity of images shared with students for this module.
MODULE 6: Girls Only Session

The objective of this module was to explore and create sisterhood among girls. This is because the lack of solidarity among women removes or reduces the existence of a support system. Often women, instead of supporting each other, are the biggest critics of each other and can play an active role in perpetuating negative gender stereotypes and behaviours. Therefore, by teaching sisterhood to girls, the module aimed to highlight how a support system can uplift women and help them to advocate for each other.

**KEY OBSERVATIONS:**

(1) **Girls are not supportive**
Most girls either strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement.

(2) **It is better for girls to be friends with boys than girls**
Most disagreed with this statement which indicates the level of importance they place on female friendships.

**What the students say:**

*Eyelusalem, student - Since all her friends are guys she used to think all girls did was gossip but the story about sisterhood has really made her rethink the relationship she has with girls.*
The trainer Luam mentioned that, “Sisterhood was great as it made the girls go back to grade six and seven and relive their experience, the story made them realise that they should take a minute and think of what our actions might do to others.”

**LEARNING/POINTS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION**

Single sex sessions given to students were particularly popular offering a safe space to inquire about what it means to be a boy and girl without interference from the other group. Setaweet concluded that the topic and module content for the sisterhood session was relatable to girls (e.g. the use of text from a popular Ethiopian blogger).

However, a number of girls chose **neither agree nor disagree section** in questions 2,3,4,5 which highlights the need for more investigation around confidentiality, jealousy and competition between girls.
MODULE 7: BOYS ONLY SESSION

The objective of this module was to explore and deconstruct harmful ideas about masculinity with high school boys, one of the biggest challenges in trying to achieve gender equality. The idea of masculinity places a burden on men to be/act a certain way. The idea of masculinity or what it means to be “a real man” defines a particular standard and role for men which promotes gender inequality. In addition, men who do not display such characteristics are harassed and undermined which affects their self-confidence. Therefore, this session aimed to challenge the prevalent notion of masculinity and encourage students to become more comfortable if they do not confirm to the stereotype.

KEY OBSERVATIONS:

(1) ‘A boy who cries is not a boy’
There were positive shifts in the desired direction with 17% strongly agreeing at the outset, rising to 28% after the GenderShop although there was a 5% decrease in boys disagreeing at the end. There was also a positive reduction in boys agreeing with the statement from 16% at the beginning to 6.2% at the end.

(4) ‘Boys should not be afraid of anything’
The data shows positive shifts in all categories with an increasing number of boys strongly disagreeing and disagreeing with the statement. Whilst 15.5% agreed with the statement at the end there was a big reduction in boys strongly agreeing with the statement at the end from 20.4% to 7.8%.

(6) ‘A boy should fight to defend himself or loved one’
21.8% of students strongly disagreed with this statement and 33.7% disagreed with this statement. There was also a 5.4% reduction in students strongly agreeing with this statement.

Excerpt from the GenderShops booklet

Boys breaking out of the mental and literal ‘man box’ of what it means to ‘be a man’ in Ethiopia.
What the students say:

Abraham Samuel, student: “My most favorite part was when there was a box and we had to write what being a man meant and breaking out of the bad ones in terms of being very masculine. My thoughts have changed about this [gender roles]. We don’t talk about it [gender equality], and we should talk about it more. I have talked to my friends about what I learned in the training. When I see a man insulting woman I will try and teach them what I have learnt from the training because they need to learn about that and I will try and do my part by telling and sharing what I have learned.”

Kaleab Yohannes, student: “My second favourite part was we got a box and I had to be in the box. I had a sticky note and on that sticky note I had to write what it is that boys do. I would put the sticky note on the box. Everyone was told to raise their hands if they thought it was correct and they did. One of the quotes on the sticky notes was 'boys don’t get scared'. So I asked them if they’re never scared they should jump out of the window and everyone put their hands down because they were all scared to jump out the window. The point that I was trying to make when I said that was that boys can’t always be the same way. We are always told that boys shouldn’t cry but boys are emotional too and they do cry and it is okay to cry.”

One of the trainers Freddy also commented that boys found the man box exercise very powerful. No one had also heard of terms like toxic masculinity. In school Yekatit 23, Freddy said that boys expressed their views that societal problems have been imposed on them and they were keen to share their experiences of this with other boys.

Dagmawi Bruck, student Dagmawi learnt that boys must have good manners and good self-esteem, boys should respect girls, girls are not any lesser than boys.

LEARNING/POINTS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Single sex sessions given to students were particularly popular offering a safe space to inquire about what it means to be a boy and girl without interference from the other group. The session on toxic masculinity was very powerful for the boys with comments like ‘This needs to be discussed with other boys.’ and ‘First time to discuss this powerful exercise.’

The data suggests that more analysis should be done of the following aspects:
CONCLUSION

As a result of contextual challenges and necessary adaptation in the delivery of the project, Setaweet delivered the GenderShops training to 2,255 students. Whilst this is less than the original 10,000 target, the project has not only drawn attention to key challenges in delivery but also the complex challenges in the context, and views about development work and gender relations both of which remain core priorities for Setaweet and Womankind.

In a context with such ingrained gender inequality and the absence of deeper levels of enquiry into the systemic causes and impact of gender inequality, Setaweet has succeeded albeit in a small way to bring something transformative and groundbreaking to Ethiopia with 100% original, contextualised content.

Overall learning:
As noted above, there have been some positive shifts in most of the modules presented in the GenderShops project. Overall, certain trends stand out:

- **Boys have demonstrated more positive shifts than girls have overall.** Due to the framing of many of the questions which sought to highlight the levels of gender inequality towards women, this is a positive trend.
- **Consent is a complex topic and needs more exploration.** Whilst aspects of consent were understood, on the whole the topic requires more time and in depth discussion.
- **Stereotypes.** Whilst some are easier to identify and address than others, this topic remains a complex one in Ethiopia and requires more attention.
- **Violence.** There is a suggestion that the topic of intimate partner violence, threat of violence for girls and sexual harassment are not condoned by either sex.
- **Single sex sessions.** Each of the single sex sessions were considered very powerful for each group allowing a level of analysis that would not have been possible with a mixed group. Sisterhood was the most popular session for girls and boys reflected the power of their group work which allowed discussion on toxic masculinity for the first time.

Next steps:
As a result of the learning from the GenderShops project, a review of the content, data collection and analysis and delivery will take place by Setaweet. More training and research will need to be conducted to provide proof of concept for further uptake but the changes in the institutional environment with the appointment of the President Sahle-Work Zewde is also an opportunity for subsequent work and follow up especially for gender in the education system and when key personnel and civil servants are in place and relationships re-built. The President in particular has already committed to a flagship project of Safe and Inclusive Universities and her office is working to understand why there are so many failures in the education system regarding girls.
Recommendations:

- Ensure that boys and girls have equal access to good-quality education, equal rights and opportunities to successfully complete schooling and in making educational choices;
- Review and where necessary adapt school and early childhood education curricula, teaching and school practices to eliminate gender discrimination and stereotyping;
- A realistic budget is set aside annually, specifically to develop and support equalities initiatives including gender equality.
- Inclusion of gender training to key staff in ministries of education and gender. Awareness of equality issues and legislation, and commitment to promoting equality (including gender equality) forms part of the framework.
- Introduce a new compulsory subject, Gender Education, aimed at developing a social and political understanding of gender in students’ lives, as part of the official school curriculum (for both girls and boys) at the post-primary level in all state schools. This standalone curricula area will create a stronger impetus for incorporating gender in the classroom.
- Curriculum and teaching materials for post-primary levels should be developed by in collaboration with civil society working in the area of gender and education, and having past experience of developing and implementing curricula content and practices.
- The challenges with implementation has meant that embedding the learning in the gender clubs has been difficult. Therefore it is recommended that a proper link or structure between Ministry of Women Children and Youth and the gender clubs within schools, so that the clubs can have some authority. The ministry could closely follow and support the activities of the gender clubs to have a lasting impact among the students as well as the school administration.
- Government school teachers have to take a mandatory one or two month courses every summer, after school is out to update themselves on their teaching approaches. Hence we recommend that gender classes be part of this summer courses in order for them to give gender sensitive teachings to their students.
- Enhanced partnerships are developed between public schools with potential stakeholders such as government ministries (Ministry of Women Children and Youth and Ethiopian Ministry Of Education), inter-governmental organisations (UN and AU), international NGOs (Save the Children and PACT) and local NGO’s such as (Young Women Christian Association)