

# Innovations

## Exploring Women's Economic Empowerment Through Urban Productive Safety Net Program: The Case of Gullele Sub-city In Addis Ababa

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### Abstract

*This study was done to assess the impact of Urban Productive Safety Net Program (UPSNP) on Women's Economic Empowerment in district 7 and 9 of Gullele sub-city, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The study examined economic empowerment from the point of women's access to finance through job opportunities and financial services, women's involvement in decision making process in the UPSNP structure and how women's engagement in the UPSNP has impacted the environment. Using a mixed research method of quantitative and qualitative natures, the study found out how UPSNP has contributed in economically empowering women and in bringing positive change on the urban environment at the study area. The study did also reveal that the weak link of the program, which is the negative attitude of participating women towards taking credits for livelihood development purposes. The researcher obtained valuable information from secondary materials such as books, articles, and MA theses. Furthermore, the sources are critically collected, scrutinize and analyzed and their validities are cross-checked one against the other. Finally, as a historical research, the paper is based on a systematic selection, collection and analysis of archival documents, manuscripts and secondary sources of both published and unpublished. Therefore, the paper was written based on a critical analysis of several sources and oral informants gathered from know legible people.*

**Key words:** UPSNP, Women Economic Empowerment, Environment

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### Glossary of Local Terms

**Equib:** - established by a small group of people for proving substantial rotating funding to members in order to improve their lives and living conditions.

**Idir:** - established among neighbors or works to raise funds that will be used during emergencies such as death with these groups and their families.

**Ketena:** - a subdivision under *district* and is governed by *district* council.

### Background of the study

Ethiopia's economy has been experiencing a stable growth. According to World Bank (2017), Ethiopia's economy showed broad-based growth averaging 10.3 percent a year from 2006/07 to 2016/17. Despite this achievement, significant improvement has not been recorded in the number of

people living in poverty. Findings from the first Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I), show that 23.4 percent Ethiopia's population lives below the national poverty line.

In 2015, an assessment conducted in Addis Ababa showed poverty level in the city is increasing. According to this assessment, Addis Ababa is home to 25 percent of the urban population in Ethiopia and faces significant development challenges such as unemployment and poverty estimated at 23.5 percent and 22 percent respectively (Enhancing City Resilience, 2015). World Bank's report published two years after supports the results of the assessment. The report says, from the total urban population estimated to be 21,389,276 from which female population is estimated to be 1,711,142.08 and the urban population living under the poverty line is 26.7 percent (World Bank, 2017).

The increasing level of urban poverty has made GoE to start taking steps to address urban issues with the development of strategies and policies such as the National Social Protection Policy and Urban Food Security Strategy. The National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) was introduced in 2014 and identified five integrated focus areas as strategic directions one being productive safety nets (NSPP, 2014). A 10-year Urban Job Creation and Food Security Program followed the Urban Food Security Strategy introduced in 2015, with the objective to alleviate urban food insecurity and tackle the increasing levels of vulnerability among the urban poor. As part of this, the Urban Productive Safety Net Program was launched in 2016.

The Urban Productive Safety Net Program (UPSNP) is the first of its kind in urban areas. It has a long-term objective of reducing urban poverty and vulnerability among the urban poor living below the poverty line through safety net, financial and technical support to access livelihood opportunities. As stated in the Program Implementation Manual (PIM), UPSNP is designed to respond to the unique needs, interests and capabilities of men and women to ensure that they benefit equally from the program. This is done by promoting the participation of both men and women in UPSNP decision-making structures and responding to women's responsibility for both productive and reproductive work and the differential access of female-headed households to resources (MoUDHPIM, 2016).

### ***Ethical consideration***

This study has taken due attention to ethics in planning, designing, conducting and writing of findings. Official letter from Addis Ababa University, College of Development Studies, Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development was presented to Addis Ababa Food Security and Urban Job Creation Agency, to Gullele Sub-City, to *District 7* and to *District 9* offices. All participants of this study were briefed about the purpose of the study and they were assured the information gathered will be kept confidential and they will not be harmed in any way because of participation in the research. Willingness of participants was also confirmed verbally before conducting interviews, discussions and taking photographs. This study presented the findings as it was gathered without any omission or addition.

### ***Description of the Study Area***

This study is conducted in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia which is located between 8055' and 9005' North Latitude and between 38040' and 38050' East Longitude with total land area of

54,000 hectares and an estimated population of 6.5 million as stated by World Population Review (2020).

Addis Ababa has 10 sub cities namely Addis Ketema, AkakiKality, Arada, Bole, Gullele, Kirkos, Kolfe Keranio, Lideta, Nifas Silk Lafto, and Yeka. Under each sub-city, there are *districts* and *kebeles*/districts which are the lowest units of administrations. UPSNP is being implemented at all sub cities. The highest numbers of beneficiaries of the program are at Addis Ketema followed by Gullele and Lideta sub cities. This study was conducted at *district 7* and *district 9* of Gullele sub-city which has the second highest number of beneficiaries.

Gullele, also spelled Gulele, is one of the 10 sub-cities of Addis Ababa. The district is located in northern suburb of the city, near Mount Entoto and Entoto Natural Park. It borders with the districts of Kolfe Keranio, Addis Ketema, Arada and Yeka. Gullele Sub-city has an area of 30.18 sq.km and population 284,865 and there are 10 *districts* administered under the sub-city. There are 96 pre-primary and primary schools, eight secondary schools, two preparatory schools, five TVET schools, five colleges and five universities in Gullele sub-city. There are seven health centers, 29 clinics and three hospitals (<http://www.addisababa.gov.et>).

From the 10 *districts* administered under Gullele sub-city, four *districts* were included in the first round of UPSNP. The remaining six *districts* were included in the second round of the program. Two *districts* from the first four were selected as study sites for this study.

### **Head of household**

One of the socio-demographic characteristics this study looked at was how household leadership is divided between the two genders. The finding showed there are more male-headed households than female headed households in both *districts*. From the total 296 respondents, 104 were female-headed households taking 35.1 percent and the remaining 192 or 64.9 percent were male headed households. When isolating this figure for each *district*, there are more female headed households in *district 7* when compared to *district 9*. Although the number of male headed household is higher in both *districts*, the observation, interview and informal discussions showed majority of PWs participants are women. This is because their husbands are either engaged in other income generating activities or they are not capable of participating in PW activities due to illness, physical disability or unwillingness.

When *district* UPSNP officers were asked their opinion on this, they all said that women are more vulnerable to poverty; they do not have the opportunity to get a job and also compete on the same ground as men for daily labor. According to these officers, many of the beneficiaries came from rural areas, spent some years as domestic workers and when they got older, they got married and had children. After a while their husbands left them, or they passed away; when that happened, the responsibility to look after their children fall on their shoulders and they did not have the freedom to go out and seek employment.

This opinion is also reflected by Gender and Urban Change (2013), which stated, domestic work is one of the main employment opportunities for poor urban women as well as for young rural women migrating to the cities. Parpart et. al., (2000), finding is similarly relevant which says surveys on

poverty always show that female-headed households are disproportionately represented. This is not surprising, as women earn, on average, less than men and have fewer assets and less access to employment and production resources, such as land, capital, and technology. Women also retain responsibility for domestic activities and childcare.

Interview with *district 9* key informant attests the same impression:

*Though I have not confirmed with research, estimating from my observation, in district 9 more than 70 percent of the beneficiaries are poor women. These women are living in dire situation and unlike men, they were not able to go out and engage in daily labor because they do not have the physical strength. Further to being the poorest, women are willing to do any job to improve their life and the life of their children. I have noticed men are not willing to engage in road cleaning and waste collection; they prefer daily labor, but women do not put forth preference since they want to earn income. A practical example here is when women beneficiaries give birth their husbands are required to cover their place in the PW however, husbands are not willing to do so; therefore, the amount of money transferred to that household will decrease even though the women will get her full pay (Interview two, May 2019, Addis Ababa).*

Through the informal discussion with these women, it was observed how badly they suffered from poverty and unemployment. Even if they managed to get a job it was low-wage and not enough to cover basic expenses. Head of household was assessed to see if participation of female-headed households is promoted, as it is one principle of the program. However, the findings from this study show that although many of the PW participants are women, in both *districts*, participation of female-headed households is not well promoted.

### **Marital status**

Majority of the women who participated in this study are married. From the total 296 respondents, 63.51 percent of women are married, 14.53 percent are separated, 10.81 percent are divorced, 9.46 percent are widowed and 1.69 percent is single. Further dividing this data per *district*, the number of women who are divorced and separated is higher in *district 7* (49 beneficiaries) when compared to *district 9* (26 beneficiaries). The data obtained depicts there are more vulnerable married women than all others (divorced, separated, widowed and single women) added together.

### **Household total income and expenditure**

UPSNP allows a maximum of four beneficiaries per household to participate in the program. In both *districts*, the majority of HH have four UPSNP beneficiaries accounting to 70.61 percent, followed by 20.95 percent having three UPSNP beneficiaries. The remaining 6.42 percent and 2.03 percent are beneficiaries with two and one family member respectively. This indicates majority of HH either have dependants or unemployed family members.

<b>UPSNP beneficiary number <i>district</i> Cross-tabulation</b>					
<i>District</i>	<b>UPSNP beneficiary no.</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>1 beneficiary</b>	<b>2 beneficiarie s</b>	<b>3 beneficiarie s</b>	<b>4 beneficiarie s</b>	
<i>District7</i>	5	12	44	116	177
<i>District9</i>	1	7	18	93	119
<b>Total</b>	6	19	62	209	296

Source: own survey, April 2019

MoUDH PIM (2016), states setting of wage rate in case of conditional cash payments is determined taking into account the market wage rate for similar or comparable unskilled labor. At the time of this survey the daily payment rate for UPSNP beneficiaries engaged in PW is 75 ETB and payment is made multiplied by the number of beneficiary in the HH. At this stage of the program, beneficiaries are required to work specific days in a month and spend the reaming days engaged in other income generating activities. *District 7* beneficiaries work the first 12 days at the beginning of the month while *district 9* beneficiaries work three days a week for the entire month. According to *district 7* UPSNP coordinator, this arrangement was made because many of the beneficiaries travel to nearby towns out of Addis Ababa for work and it is to support and encourage their efforts to improve their livelihood.

<b>UPSNP beneficiary in HH</b>	<b>Number of working days per month</b>	<b>Daily payment</b>	<b>Saving amount per (20%) month</b>	<b>Total payment</b>
<b>One</b>	3 days	75 ETB	45 ETB	<b>180 ETB</b>
<b>Two</b>	6 days	75 ETB	90 ETB	<b>360 ETB</b>
<b>Three</b>	9 days	75 ETB	135 ETB	<b>540 ETB</b>
<b>Four</b>	12 days	75 ETB	180 ETB	<b>720 ETB</b>

Source: District UPSNP Office

When respondents were asked their monthly total income, many preferred not to state, others said they do not know and the remaining gave figures lower than the UPSNP monthly transfer even though they said they have other source of income. When monthly total expenditure was asked, 95 percent of the respondents gave figures more than the income they have previously stated therefore, this study calculated average income rate taking the amount specified by beneficiaries for each income source. In reality, beneficiaries may earn more or less than these average rates.

The total estimated monthly income (UPSNP and other source) of respondents from both *districts*

was a minimum of 360 ETB and a maximum of 3,000 ETB. For *district 7*, the minimum monthly income was 540 ETB, which is the monthly income for household with three beneficiaries, and for *district 9* the minimum monthly income was 360 ETB which is UPSNP monthly income for household with two beneficiaries. The maximum monthly income for *district 7* was 2,800 ETB where all family members worked as daily labor and also earned pension while for *district 9* it was 3,000 ETB where all family members worked as daily laborers. The average monthly income was 1,293 ETB with *district 9* having both the minimum and maximum income-earning beneficiaries. Through this, it was identified UPSNP is an only income source for some and an additional means of income for others. For both categories the program has become their safe house because sometimes low-wage employment will be scarce.

The majority of respondents accounting to 55.07 percent have a total monthly expenditure between 1001-2000 ETB. 37.84 percent of respondents spend between 360-1000 ETB a month and 7.09 percent spend 2001-3000 ETB a month. The expenditures are food, house rent, clothing, medical treatment and school materials for children. This figure shows expenditure of majority of beneficiaries is more than their average income. Even those beneficiaries who have other source of income said their job is not regular; there are some days they get to work and other days where they are idle. This shows either beneficiaries have additional means to cover their expenses which they have not stated, or they have given overstated rates as expenditure.

**UPSNP Effect in household economy**

Women were asked if their enrolment in UPSNP has brought economic change in their life and HH. Out of the total, 94.9 percent or 281 respondents said it did while 5.1 percent or 15 respondents said it did not. As shown in table 4.4, a total of 288 respondents said as a result of UPSNP they are able to fulfill basic necessities for their family, 42 respondents said they started saving, 11 respondents said they are able to pay school fees for their children. The remaining 15 respondents said UPSNP did not bring any economic change in their life.

<b>Effect on Household Economy <i>district</i> cross-tabulation</b>					
<i>Distric t</i>	<b>Economic Change</b>				<b>Total</b>
	Basic necessities	None	Saving	School fee	
<i>District 7</i>	141	2	32	2	177
<i>District9</i>	87	13	10	9	119
<b>Total</b>	228	15	42	11	296

*Source: own survey, April 2019*

Even though 80.7 percent of beneficiaries said they have other sources of income, the findings show that 75 percent were not able to fulfill basic necessities with this income before UPSNP. This implies beneficiaries are engaged in low wage employment and UPSNP has become an essential source of income for their HH. Many of the beneficiaries were able to afford if not all some of their family and

their own needs. Similarly, Misgana (2018), and Meseret (2019) have found UPSNP has brought a positive change for beneficiaries. Misgana (2018), identified the cash transfer has significant and positive effect on the income-poverty status of the HH and it also improved the food security status of HH by increasing the number of meals taken per day. Meseret (2019), similarly found that UPSNP has improved food access of HH.

**Formal financial institution access**

World Bank global research in 2012 showed that an estimated 2.5 billion women and men – more than 50 percent of the total adult population – have no access to the types of formal financial services delivered by regulated financial institutions. In 2015, The World’s Women also stated the use of formal financial services is lower for women than men in all regions of the world; globally, 47 percent of women have an individual or joint account at a formal financial institution compared to 55 percent of men. UPSNP requires beneficiaries to open a bank account and this has helped introduce many women to bank services. It is stated on MoUDH PIM (2016), that each client opens a bank account in a nearby Commercial Bank of Ethiopia branch (or maintains the existing account) to which payments are made.

<b>Bank account service access <i>district</i> Cross-tabulation</b>			
<i>Distric t</i>	<b>Bank account access after USNP</b>		<b>Total</b>
	No	Yes	
<i>District7</i>	17	160	177
<i>District9</i>	6	113	119
<b>Total</b>	23	273	296

Source: own survey, April 2019

This study has found, 92.2 percent have a bank account as a result of UPSNP while the remaining 7.8 percent had a bank account before their enrolment in UPSNP. This shows UPSNP has helped many women to access banking services and that the 2015 report of The World’s Women applies to the beneficiaries’ status before joining UPSNP. This finding also implies there is improvement in Ethiopia’s safety net since (Holmes and Jones, 2010) and (Lumbasi, 2018) review of Ethiopians PSNP. Jones and Holmes (2010), found bank accounts are not opened in women’s name therefore, income is accessed only through husbands. Lumbasi (2018), said while both spouses are eligible for the transfers, the husbands have more access than the wives do. In the few instances where women collect the transfers, their responses showed that they only do so when their husbands are unavailable. Although informal discussions with beneficiaries and PW leads have confirmed there are cases where bank account for the transfer is opened under the name of husbands and they control the money; the participants in this study have accounts in their names showing there is an improvement in this regard.

***Women’s Involvement in Decision-making***

**Decision on income**

In Ethiopia, there has been significant improvement in the societal attitudes towards gender equality and women’s empowerment. However, challenges remain in women’s limited access to and

control of resources especially with respect to productive resources, household economy and decision-making power (Council for Development Policy, 2017).

UPSNP has created a regular income for women who did not have other means. With this income comes the opportunity of deciding what to do with it. The report of The World’s Women (2015), showed many women are excluded from economic decision making within their own households. It says in developing regions, having a job and cash income does not necessarily translate into control over the economic resources acquired. On average, 1 in 3 married women in developing countries have no say about major household purchases and 1 in 10 married women are not consulted on how their own cash earnings are spent. Although this fact may still hold true, the finding from this study indicated otherwise.

Decision on income <i>district</i> Cross-tabulation						
District	Decision on income					Total
	Family	I	I and husband	My husband	My mother	
District7	0	135	23	19	0	177
District9	3	92	19	4	1	119
Total	3	227	42	23	1	296

Source: own survey, April 2019

From the 296 women who participated in this study, 76.7 percent said they decide on the income they receive from UPSNP. Those women who account to 14.2 percent said they decide with their husbands jointly; 7.8 percent of women said it is their husbands who decide while the remaining 1.3 percent is taken by respondents who said the whole family involves in the decision (3 respondents) and 1 woman said her mother decides. These figures are an indication that there is a change in progress regarding women’s decision on the income they earn. To get further insight, similar question was raised in FGDs; the responses obtained agree with the survey findings. Except one woman all women who took part in the FGDs said they decide on the income they receive, and they all believe it is their right as they worked hard for it; *-it is my money* is a phrase repeatedly used by all. The sort of decision they make ranges from buying food items, household utensils, school materials for their children to what amount they save for *Equib*. These women said although they and many participants in UPSNP have a bank account under their names, there are a few women who engage in the public work, but the payment is made to their husbands’ accounts and they have little or no say on the income. The only women who had a different practice said she and her husband decide together and that has been the practice in her house even before she enrolled in UPSNP. She believes deciding together with her husband does not make her less empowered it rather makes her feel her husband sees her as an equal partner.

Making these sorts of decisions on the income they get have enabled women to be confident and fulfill things they believe is necessary for their family; this is an indication that women are being empowered in their household. Studies on safety nets from other countries also showed similar results. Research from Mexico’s Oportunidades program shows that giving cash only to women

increases their decision-making role in household expenditure and their financial security, self-esteem and social status. A gender audit of Brazil’s Bolsa Familia also found that women’s domestic status increased because the income received was regular, compared with other household members whose jobs and wages are uncertain (Thakur et al. 2009).

Both the survey and FGDs showed there is an encouraging change in terms of women’s decision on income. Although, there are still women who are not entitled to decide on the income they get majority of the participants of this study have been empowered as a result of the decision they were able to make. This means, further, to being an income source and a means to fulfill basic necessities, UPSNP has enabled women to take charge of their income and make decisions on it and has become essential empowering women in their household. Women’s involvement in UPSNP structure

**Targeting committee**

MoUDH PIM (2016), states that community/*ketena* targeting committee are established in each community composed of 7,9 or 11 members for ease of decision making of which 3-4 members will be women. According to the information received from the *district* UPSNP office, both *district 7* and *district 9*, have women targeting committee members taking up 4-5 seats from the total 9 members. This shows, both *districts* are working according to the PIM and also women are getting the opportunity to involve in the decision-making structure of UPSNP.

According to UPSNP *district* officials, the targeting committee members are selected by the community. Beneficiaries will be asked to identify individuals they believe will represent them, who are trustworthy, who do not discriminate and who are responsible. The office has no say in this. The same beneficiaries will also replace these committee members if they fail to deliver. This process is said to be participatory and in the best interest of beneficiaries. Women members play the same roles as their male counterparts in the targeting committee. These committee members are responsible to identify beneficiaries who are the poorest of the poor. They will rank and select beneficiaries and make the list public making sure each beneficiary fulfils eligibility criteria. The committee also regularly updates list of registered households and members to capture any change.

<b>Women in targeting committee <i>district</i> Cross-tabulation</b>			
<i>Distric t</i>	<b>Women in targeting</b>		Total
	I don't know	Yes	
<i>District7</i>	98	79	177
<i>District9</i>	72	47	119
Total	170	126	296

Source: own survey, April 2019

During the survey, respondents were asked if they are aware of women’s membership in the targeting committee. A little more than half of the respondents totalling 57.4 percent said they do not know if women are members of the committee while 42.6 percent of respondents said they are

aware women are committee members. Separating this figure for each *district*, the figure shows that *district 9* has more beneficiaries who are not aware compared to *district 7*. To clarify this, a question was forwarded to *district 9* UPSNP office and the response received implied these women may have not paid attention to the process because the targeting committee members are selected from the community by the beneficiaries themselves and the name of each committee member per *ketena* is also visibly posted in the *district* UPSNP office.

The researcher has confirmed the names of the targeting committee members are indeed posted at both *districts*. However, the reason why majority of the beneficiaries are not aware needs further investigation. Despite this, the finding confirmed women are represented in the targeting committee and they are actively performing their assigned roles. As a result of their involvement in this committee, women have gained respect, recognition, and changed the attitude of people who believe women do not have the ability to handle leadership roles.

### ***Appeals committee***

In order to manage and resolve grievances about beneficiaries' selection or any other implementation procedure, *district/kebele* appeals committees are established in UPSNP *districts/kebeles*. The number of committee members should be 7,9 or 11 for the purpose of decision making of which 3-4 members will be women (MoUDH PIM, 2016). Both *district 7* and *district 9* have appeals committees. Similar to the targeting committee, *district* officials were asked how the appeals committee is established.

Beneficiaries select individuals who are believed to be unbiased, who are responsible and can truly work for the benefit of the community. As part of the appeal committee, women members investigate appeals submitted and present findings to the committee. For example, they visit the home of non-beneficiaries who presented their appeals for enrolment and make sure the person is indeed the poorest of the poor and qualifies to be included. On the other hand, they also visit a house of a beneficiary who may be wrongly included and decide s/he is well off and should not be a beneficiary. Women chair the monthly appeal committee meetings; they present reports of works accomplished and new cases. For example, out of the six appeal committees in *district 7*, two women are chairs, two women are deputy chairs and four women are secretary of the committees.

Though it is not an individual decision woman are usually four in number in the committee so it can be said they play a great role in decision making.

Among the 296 beneficiaries asked 68.6 percent are aware of women's participation in appeals committee while 31.4 percent are not aware. Despite the lack of awareness among beneficiaries, women are actively participating in the appeals committee and playing important role in addressing issues. The presence of women in this committee has opened the eyes of other women beneficiaries that a woman can be a leader and can make decisions. Those women in the committee also experienced a change in their self-esteem and are motivated to accomplish more for the benefit of all.

Both the findings regarding targeting committee and appeals committee imply that there is awareness gap among beneficiaries; therefore, these committees need to hold awareness creation session, so beneficiaries are aware and use their rights accordingly.

<b>Women participation in appeal committee <i>district</i> Cross-tabulation</b>			
<i>District</i>	<b>Women in appeal committee</b>		Total
	I don't know	Yes	
<i>District7</i>	29	148	177
<i>District9</i>	64	55	119
Total	93	203	296

Source: own survey, April 2019

**Public work**

Another structure in UPSNP where women take decision is PW. There is 1 to 5 and 1 to 30 group leadership arrangement in PW. 1 to 5 is a subdivision in the 1 to 30 arrangements where 1 person supervises the remaining 4 during PW and lead the daily discussion after completion of work. 1 to 30 is a wider group where 1 person supervised 29 beneficiaries during PW. 1 to 5 leads will have regular discussion with 1 to 30 leads which helps in flow of information and putting forward requests of beneficiaries. PW supervisors (1 to 30 leads)are selected by the *district* UPSNP office from the beneficiaries taking into consideration their communication skill, literacy level (read and write) and their ability to coordinate together with their readiness to work.*District 7* has 58 PW leads while *district 9* has 32. From the 58 in *district 7*, 32 are women and from the 32 in *district 9*, 22 are women. These figures show women take greater number as leads implying, they are both qualified and have readiness to work when given the opportunity. It also shows there is improvement in assigning women as PW leads since Muluemebet (2010), study on PSNP that showed limited number of women in this role.

All participants of this survey were also asked if they are aware of women’s leadership in PW and 100 percent said yes. This finding agrees with the data obtained from the *district* regarding women’s participation as PW leads. As PW leads, these women are handling multiple requests from beneficiaries, they are controlling quality of work accomplished every day and balancing labor efficient tasks among beneficiaries. This has enabled them to gain experience in leadership, develop effective communication, and decision-making skill.

**Social network participation**

Social networks are groups crated by individuals to serve a common purpose and increase social relations among them. The common social networks in Ethiopia are *Equib* and *Idir*. Ayele(2003),said *Idir* and *Equib* are among the most enduring, universal, effective and relevant socio- economic informal institutions Ethiopians have created. He defines *Equib* as an association established by a small group of people for the purpose of proving substantial rotating funding for members in order to improve their lives and living conditions. While *Idir* is an association established among neighbours or works to raise funds that will be used during emergencies such as death with these groups and their families.

UPSNP has helped beneficiaries to form social network such as *Equib*. Out of the 296 women who have participated 40.2 percent said there is a social network established after their enrolment in UPSNP. Within this social network, 6 women are chairs, 4 are secretary, another 4 are treasures and 102 are members. Participants of the survey were asked if they want social networks to be established where it does not exist. 100 respondents said they want social networks to be established while 76 said they do not. In this social network, women members take the highest number.

UPSNP social network availability District Cross-tabulation			
District	UPSNP social network availability		Total
	No	Yes	
District7	85	92	177
District9	92	27	119
Total	177	119	296

Source: own survey, April 2019

Addis (2013),found women’s participation in social groups and gatherings helps them to practice decision making. Women are able to practice decision making power when they decide how to act in groups whenever there is social gatherings or religious holidays. They have their own rules and regulations to decide minimum requirement, which empowers them socially and to some extent economically and politically. Women who have participated in the survey for this study have said being part of *Equib* besides saving money to fulfill their needs has helped them to make friends and interact with people helping them to improve their social life. Having an improved social life helps these women to interact and share experiences which in turn will enable them to make informed decision in their daily life.

To understand participants ‘perception, women were also asked if they prefer women only social networks to be established. Majority accounting to 62.2 percent said they want both men and women to be members since this makes the network effective. *“The idea of social network is to help each other out in times of needs and this does not differentiate between men and women; we are equally in need”* was the believe of the respondents. Only 12.2 percent said they prefer women only social networks because it will empower women. Contrary to this, 2.7 percent of respondents said they do not want women only social networks because it does not empower women while the remaining 23 percent of respondents said it does not matter to them whether women only social network is established or not.

Those respondents who prefer women only social networks said *-women are able to accomplish anything when we work together. Even if we did not attend formal education, we have learned a lot from our lives and sharing that with one another will encourage us.” “We will have the freedom to decide on anything without the influence of men.” “Women are encouraged and dare to take responsibilities they would not take otherwise.||* On the contrary those women who said it does not empower women justify their answer as *-women do not usually get along especially when we are many in numbers, the presence of men is important to balance this out”*. The finding showed majority of the participants prefer both men and women to benefit from social networks this can be an

indication that women are equally treated and their role is recognized by their male counterparts therefore they do not want to have a separate group to exercise their rights and responsibilities.

**UPSNP benefit for women**

It is stated in the MoUDH PIM (2016), that the program is designed to respond to the unique needs, interests and capabilities of men and women to ensure that they benefit equally. As this study focuses on women, participants were asked if UPSNP is benefiting women and men equally, all 296 respondents said it is. When these women were asked what sort of benefit UPSNP has brought for them; except 7 women who said nothing the remaining 289 said UPSNP has created income, job opportunity, saving, work exemption for pregnant women, it has given them a sense of self-worth and crated opportunity for social interaction.

These responses are indications that women are benefiting from the program and these benefits are helping them to improve their life in various ways. The income is used for basic necessities, the job opportunity has opened the eyes of these women that they have the ability to work, having knowledge about saving is helping them to manage their money efficiently, participating in PWs has created an opportunity for many women to have a social interaction and pregnant women are exempted from PWs while receiving their monthly income; all these are benefits women did not have before and it is playing a role in empowering them.

Table 4.16 UPSNP benefit for women

UPSNP benefit for women <i>District Cross</i> tabulation								
District	UPSNP benefit for women							Total
	Incom e and job	Job	None	Saving	Self-wor th	Social interacti on	Work exemption for pregnant	
District 7	63	51	0	21	1	3	38	177
District9	5	85	7	8	0	4	10	119
Total	68	136	7	29	1	7	48	296

Source: own survey, April 2019

Study results from Misgana (2018) and Addis (2013) also found the same result. Misgana(2018), found that beneficiaries are able to involve in social lives such as *Idir, Equib* and visit sick neighbors, visit those who have lost their family member, visit those who have given birth, get acquainted with others through public work, get credits and buy household assets. She says this has enhanced their confidence while living among the community. Similarly, Addis (2013), said group forming for the purpose of public work activities was significant advantage of PW beneficiaries as the group has strong connection outside of the PW activities. Addis says women beneficiaries exercised social empowerment and to some extent political empowerment. They have also become active participants of social gatherings and religious holidays.

During FGDs women were asked if people have treated them differently after they have been

enrolled in UPSNP to see the benefit for women from another perspective. Participants said People used to perceive them as lazy because they used to stay at home; they did not understand finding a job was difficult for them. Since their enrolment in UPSNP these women leave home early in the morning to perform PW and people have started to encourage them and appreciate their contribution in making the neighborhood clean and green. Some women also mentioned their husbands have started taking the children to school in the morning and treating them with respect.

### **Women's Public Work Participation**

In the Federal Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency (FUJCFSA) public work guideline (2017), five feasible public works for urban areas have been stated. These are urban solid waste and environmental cleaning activities, urban beautification and greenery activities, urban agriculture, urban integrated watershed development and urban social infrastructure and services. This study wanted to know which of these activities among the women who participated in the survey are involved in to identify if women are provided equal opportunity to participate in all PW activities as well as gain diversified skills.

From the total 296 respondents, 46.3 percent said most women work on urban greenery and beautification, 43.9 percent said solid waste management, 9.5 said it is watershed management while 0.3 percent said urban agriculture. When these respondents were asked their opinion as to why many women are involved in solid waste and environmental cleaning and urban beautification and greenery activities, 53.7 percent said because it is assigned by the program, 29.4 said because it is easy for women, 12.8 said because these activities are important for the environment and 4.1 percent said because women are good in these activities.

According to the MoUDH PIM (2016), labor intensive public works sub-projects under UPSNP will support sustainable community assets and public services. The PIM also states a menu of PW appropriate for the urban areas is customized to the special environments in each of the participating cities will be provided as guidance to the communities in participating areas. The findings from the survey shows that cu has been implemented in the study areas however only 12.8 percent of the participants are aware that PWs are selected to support community assets. On this regard, PW leads and UPSNP office has to create awareness among the beneficiaries, so they understand their work is beneficial for the community. The findings also indicate the customization process to identify appropriate PW although has helped in identifying the need in a specific area, it has limited beneficiaries from gaining diversified skill through participating in the different PW activities. Therefore, it is recommended if *districts* create a mechanism of exchanging beneficiaries to help them participate on different PW activities and develop skills.

### **Skill from Public Work**

The findings of this study show that from the list of PWs category, respondents who participate in urban greenery and beautification take the first place, followed by solid waste management and watershed management. Beneficiaries have received trainings to perform these activities. Those working on urban greenery and beautification have been trained on how to plant seedling keeping a standard distance, how to water, how to prepare plantation area, how deep they need to dig, how they need to weed, and how to use the utensils. Most respondents said with the skill they got from this training they have planted flowers and vegetables at home.

Beneficiaries have also received training on solid waste management starting from the type of care

they need to take when handling solid waste such as wearing gloves, mouth guards and protective glasses. They also have been trained to segregate recyclable waste. However, some beneficiaries do not apply the waste handling procedure and have encountered health issues as a result. One beneficiary said she does not wear gloves while handling solid waste because the gloves do not give her comfort.

During FGDs beneficiaries were asked if they believe the PW they are doing have given them skills. Some of them believe they learned new skill such as how to plant seedling and with that knowledge they plant cabbage, tomatoes and green pepper at home. Another skill they mentioned to have learnt is that plastic materials do not decompose easily, and it is necessary to separate it from other wastes. These women have also learned how to make composite with vegetable peels like onion and potato. A number of these women have been using an open space in their neighborhood to grow vegetables and sell it however they were forced to stop as people kept taking the vegetables overnight. A sizeable number of women have a plan to work as gardeners after they transit to the livelihood program. All participants of the FGDs agree the most important lesson they learned is work ethic and that they have the ability to work and improve their life. It is evident from the response of the respondent that their participation in UPSNP has given them some know-how in maintaining their environment while at the same time generating some income through their engagement in some kind of green economies. However, some of these women feel these skills will not help them build a livelihood in the future. They said engaging in dry waste management, taking part in neighborhood cleaning, open drainage cleaning, separation of recyclable waste and river side cleaning does not do anything for their future. They do not want to do this for the rest of their life, rather they want to acquire new skill that will help them get better income.

Federal Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency (FUJCFSA) public work guideline (2017), states PWs are expected to bring three impacts, these are; increased income and consumption-smoothing, reduction in poverty and poverty gap ratio, and infrastructure development. The guideline states PW that increase skills and productivity of beneficiaries are encouraged but it underlines PWs are temporary job opportunities for obtaining social transfer. The findings from this study showed PWs have indeed become a temporary job opportunity for the poor however, it cannot be concluded that PWs have either increased skills or have not. But the clear truth is, PW has improved the work ethic and attitude of many of the beneficiaries.

When referring to other studies on this issue, Misgana (2018), stated UPSNP beneficiaries appreciated the contribution of the public work activities in providing skills, enhancing their work habits, and upgrading the safety and aesthetic value of the environment (clean and green physical environment).

### **UPSNP Benefit for the Environment**

UPSNP is designed in link with existing government policies, strategies and programs such as The Environmental Policy of Ethiopia (1997), The Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy (2012), Urban Development Policy (2013), Urban Solid Waste Handling and Disposal Strategy (2014), and The Climate Change Resilient Urban Green Infrastructure Strategy (2014). This link is expected to increase the effectiveness of UPSNP both in urban development and environment rehabilitation. In light of describing the contribution of women in environmental rehabilitation, this study also looked at beneficiaries' opinion regarding the benefit UPSNP has brought for the environment. All

respondents believe it has brought positive change; *-the neighborhood that used to be dirty and had bad smell is now clean, open spaces and neighborhood road sides are covered with grass and flowers, eroded places have been filled with soil and the community is now aware of the benefits*|| were opinions put forward as environmental benefits by respondents. They were also asked if they believe they have played a role in this positive change to the environment. From the total participants 99.7 percent of respondents said their labor and dedication makes them major players in the positive environmental change while only one respondent is not sure of her contribution.

#### **UPSNP overall benefit for women**

In the Program Appraisal Document (2015), it is stated that, the design process included an explicit gender focus and targets to reach 60 percent of women. It also made the number of women beneficiaries as the first indicator to measure the project development objective. Similarly, on the MoUDH PIM (2016), it is stated UPSNP has a gender sensitivity lens where priority should be given to sub projects that are assigned to enable women to participate and reducing their regular work burden and increase access to productive assets. It also states women should be encouraged to take leadership positions in public works planning whenever possible. These statements are indications of women's vulnerability in urban areas and that UPSNP is planning to address it.

As this study focused on women beneficiaries as a closing point, the study wanted to see the overall benefit UPSNP has brought for women. Women were asked to state what benefit they have gained from their enrolment in UPSNP. Majority of the respondents accounting to 76.4 percent of the total said UPSNP has given them income and job opportunity, while 17.6 percent said it has improved their livelihood, 3.7 percent said they are able to have a saving, 0.7 percent said they have hope for the future, 0.3 percent said knowledge and experience another 0.3 percent said social interaction while the remaining 1 percent said UPSNP has not benefited them. It can be concluded UPSNP is benefiting women in different aspect and when this is supported with the livelihood aspect of the program it will bring a lasting change in the life of each individual.

#### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study showed that UPSNP has contributed in economically empowering women and in bringing positive change on the urban environment at *district 7* and *district 9* of Gullele sub-city. The key findings are summarized under each component of women's economic empowerment framework used for this study.

One indicator of empowerment under power and agency is control over assets. This means women have their own source of income and women have control over how to spend cash or saving. The findings from this study have shown that women have income as a result of UPSNP and this income is regular when compared to their other sources. From the total women who participated in this study 76.9 percent said they have control over their income and they make decisions such as on what to spend and what to save. This shows women are being empowered in making decisions for themselves and their household.

According to the findings of this study, UPSNP has brought economic empowerment for women. Financial service access such as access to income, access to bank service, access to saving has been created for all beneficiaries where majority of the women did not have such opportunity before. Contrary to previously implemented productive safety net programs, with UPSNP women are

encouraged to participation in decision-making structure such as in targeting committee, appeal committee and PW. This has enabled women to use their potential, improve their self-esteem and change their attitude of feeling sorry for themselves. Women have started to make decision on the income they receive; they are able to form social networks, which has improved their social interaction, created experience sharing opportunity among them and built a culture of supporting each other in needs. UPSNP has created job opportunity and skill for women who were mainly unemployed; this is the biggest achievement of the program. Having this job opportunity has boosted the moral of these women; it has taught them they are capable to work and has given them hope for the future. Many women have a changed attitude and mind set; they are thinking of better ways to improve themselves.

With the above-mentioned benefits of UPSNP, this study concludes that women are economically empowered as they have accessed financial services and they are involving in the decision-making structure. They are also contributing toward urban environmental rehabilitation.

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