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Gender Analysis Report

MAKING SENSE OF GENDER NORMS AND BEHAVIORS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS
GIRMA PROJECT—NIGER

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Acronyms

ADC	Community Development Assistance
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DEMI-E	Développement pour un Mieux-Etre
EDC	Education Development Center
FFP	Food for Peace
HFL	Harmonious Family Life
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IRH	Institute for Reproductive Health
MCQ	Multiple Choice Question
PWD	persons with disability
SBC	Social Behavioral Change
TOC	Theory of Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIAMO	Via Mobile
WARO	West Africa Regional Office

Executive Summary

Introduction, Research Questions, and Methodology

The Girma program—meaning 'dignity, prestige, and growth' in Hausa—is funded by the United States Agency for International Development/ Food for Peace (USAID/ FFP) and implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its partners—Education Development Center (EDC), Community Development Assistance (ADC in French), Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) at Georgetown University, Via Mobile (VIAMO), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and Development for Well-being (DEMI-E in French). This 5-year multisectoral program aims to improve and sustain food and nutrition security with gender responsive and transformative approaches in approximately 600 communities across 11 communes in the Magaria and Dungass departments of Zinder, Niger.

Girma conducted this gender analysis to meet evidence gaps directly relevant to the program's theory of change in order to refine its implementation strategies and approaches. The gender analysis has 5 research objectives:

1. To better understand the root causes and motivations of targeted **gender norms and behaviors**, including male-dominated decision-making patterns and early, child, and forced marriage, in addition to those outlined in research questions below.
2. To estimate levels of perceived **Intimate Partner Violence** prevalence, identify the root causes and effects of IPV, as well as key influencers and emergent practices for prevention.
3. To better understand **intrahousehold gender and power dynamics** to contextualize project interventions for various household types and members.
4. To identify main barriers, opportunities and emergent practices for promoting the active and transformative participation of **women and youth in the public sphere**.
5. To further investigate **women's role in households' livelihood systems**, including their access to and control over productive resources (i.e. land, money, animals, labor, inputs and time), and how this influences livelihood strategies and outcomes.

This study used a mixed methods approach using SenseMaker as the core method for data collection combined with survey questions. In addition, after an initial round of primary analysis, information gaps were explored during collective interpretation workshops with focus groups of male and female respondents, project staff, and local stakeholders. CRS took several measures to avoid causing harm to staff or respondents in line with World Health Organization guidelines (WHO, 2001) and obtained approval from the Nigerien Ministry of Health's Ethical Board to conduct the study.

The sampling strategy first estimated a statistically representative sample of households in Girma's target zone, and secondly developed an intentional sampling strategy. The gender analysis targeted various respondent groups, including women and girls (with findings disaggregated by age group: 15–17 year-old adolescent girls; 18–30 year-old young women; and 31+ year-old adult women) as well as individuals that influence women's and girls' lives, called in this study "influencers." Among women and girls, the interest groups were first wives in polygamous households; other wives in polygamous households; wives in monogamous households, and adolescent girls aged 15–17. Influencer interest groups were first wives in polygamous households; mothers-in-law; female heads of households; adult men; religious leaders; and community leaders. The analysis also targeted a specific number of respondents in the three prominent socio-linguistic groups in Girma's target zone—Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri—in order to identify similarities and differences between them. The resulting total sample was N=941 of which 52% were conducted in Dungass and 48% in Magaria, resulting in a statistically representative sample of the households in the eleven communes where the Girma target zones are located. In addition to those interviewed using the SenseMaker-based collection tools, 172 participants contributed their insights during collective interpretation focus groups.

Findings

One set of data collection tools asked women and girls to share a recent experience in which decisions were made that had an impact on their lives, in order to analyze gender-related norms and behaviors relayed through their stories. Stories shared by adolescent girls (age 15–17) mostly involved decisions about their education and marriage (63.4%), while for slightly over 75% of young women (up to age 30), the main decisions in their experiences related to spousal and family relations (35.4%), health and nutrition (28.1%) and to a lesser extent marriage (12.2%). For adult women, the main decisions in their experiences relate to health and nutrition (35.2%), to some extent spousal and family relations (22.7%), but more than for the other age groups to agriculture and livelihoods (19.5%) and domestic and care work (10.9%). This suggests that the types of decisions that affect girls' and women's lives evolve through their life cycle. Influencers, meanwhile, spoke mostly of decisions about marriage and/or spousal and family relations (78%), with 11% discussing decisions related to boys' and girls' education and 9.7% on decisions related to health and nutrition, likely revealing their sphere of influence.

Gender Norms:

Male dominated decision-making: Married women consistently indicated that their husbands are the most influential persons in their lives, and that they have more influence on decisions that affect them than women do themselves. Women and influencers also indicated that problems with husbands (as opposed to women's co-wives or in-laws) triggered physical, emotional, or economic effects, and women did not rank husbands in their top three most trusted sources of information. Unmarried girls indicated that their fathers (followed by their mothers) hold the most influence over decisions that affect them. Thus, as girls marry, they transition from a situation in which their fathers dominate decisions that affect their lives to their husbands' dominance in decision-making.

Women, girls, and influencers have internalized patriarchal gender norms. The vast majority of women and girls indicated a large level of personal agreement (as opposed to community support) with the belief that men have the right to correct his wife and children and that women must be submissive, and 57.9% found the need of a woman to be submissive as relevant to their story. Almost half of women and girls acted based on the belief that a man has the right to correct his wife and children and that it is a woman's responsibility to make their marriage work. Influencers also indicated high levels of personal belief with the three norms, though slightly less than women and girls, indicating that their actions were more influenced by their community's belief system. When these findings were disaggregated by socio-linguistic group, no notable difference was observed.

Girls' education: Only 9.2 percent of female respondents had accessed formal education as compared to 15.3 percent of male respondents, and 3.3 percent of female respondents continued into high school as compared to 6.3 percent of male respondents. While girls in collective interpretation workshops expressed their unhappiness with not going to school, some narratives told by girls spoke of their own volition to drop out.

Girls and influencers had highly contrasting responses when asked about the effects of decisions related to girls' education. While influencers most often felt that the decision taken was the best for the girl, girls' responses were very dispersed, but the median indicates her belief that the decision hindered her potential.

All respondents indicate that fathers, followed closely by mothers, were involved in the decision taken related to girls' education and hold the most influence, and that adolescent girls and other household members influenced the decision in fewer cases. Grandmothers had a variable level of influence over girls' education decisions. These findings were validated during collective interpretation workshops as adolescent girls reinforced the importance of having their parents' support to go to school, but they also highlighted the importance of the own girl's willingness to study and succeed. Adolescent girls indicated that their peers and friends are their most trusted sources of information for education-related decisions in 61.5% of cases, followed by their mother and father

in 38.5% and 19.2% of experiences, respectively. One possible emergent practice identified from the narratives is brothers' advocacy on behalf of their sisters to continue their education, suggesting that while lobbying fathers—the primary decision makers—is important, brothers (i.e. boys in general) could also be an influential target population for girls' education.

Women and girls and influencers have different perspectives on the factors that lead to girls' dropout. From women's and girls' perspective, the decision to stop girls' education is mainly based on the belief that girls do not need to study, while influencers highlighted girls´ security as the most prominent reason for girls' drop out, followed by a fairly equal importance between the cost of education and the belief that girls do not need to study.

While only 5.5 percent of women and girls and 9.3 percent of influencers shared an experience that involved keeping a girl in school, both respondent groups shared that an important factor that contributed to that decision was the belief that girls' education is important. For influencers, the need to ensure girls' economic wellbeing was a contributing factor, as was teachers' encouragement (though of less importance). Other contributing factors respondents gave for continuing girl's education was having a school near their house; having good school infrastructure (materials used to build the schools, water supply, pharmacy) and being equipped with supplies; having school canteens; ensuring the quality of education by having enough and qualified teachers, and having support from community structures. Results show that while most adolescent girls would like to go to school if there is one close to them, influencers value a larger range of factors.

Early, child, and forced marriage: With respect to the prevalence of child marriage (the term preferred by Nigerien government officials), 67.3% of women and girls (N=563) reported getting married when they were 15 or younger, 23.3% when they were 16 or 17 years old, and only 9.4% were 18 years or older. In other words, 90.6% of women and girls married before the age of 18. Among the three sociolinguistic groups, slightly more Fulani reported women and girls who were married when they were 15 years old or younger (74.2 percent), while no significant differences are observed between Hausa and Kanuri.

Findings disaggregated for decisions related to girls' marriage show that influencers almost always felt that the decision taken was the best for her, while girls' perceptions were quite dispersed but leaning towards also considering that the decision taken was the best for her.

Women, girls, and influencers said that the most relevant causes for early marriage was to conform with tradition and respect religious precepts. Respondents diverged on the importance of other factors, with influencers giving more importance to girls' development of physical attributes, starting to attract male attention, and the prevention of pregnancy outside of marriage. Women and girls also gave importance to the fact that they were starting to attract male attention, but also the desire to strengthen family alliances, conform to her peers, and not dishonor her family. Findings also suggest that adolescent girls' lack of decision making power and lower social status as unmarried girls also present push factors into marriage. This shows that while girls' marriage is rooted in long-standing traditions and norms, there are a variety of factors that come into play for each individual involved. Girls' narratives suggest that these push factors are more influential for those living unhappily in their homes.

According to women and girls, fathers—followed closely by mothers—have the most influence in girls' marriage-related decisions, and brothers (23.9%), uncles (17.4%) and the future husband (17.4%) also influenced marriage-related decisions to a lesser extent. Influencers agreed that mothers and fathers are the top two influencers (71.7 and 71.2%, respectively), as well as uncles (46.2%) and brothers (41.3%). At the median, grandmothers had very little influence, but the responses are very dispersed showing high variability on a case by case basis. Adolescent girls' and women's influence were also very dispersed, but at the median they had not only influence in less experiences shared, but their level of influence was much lower than that of her parents. The majority of women and girls (58.7%) indicated that their trusted sources of information related to marriage were their peers

or friends, followed by their mother in 37% of cases. Their third most frequent trusted source of information was their brothers (15.2%).

Only 4.8 percent of experiences shared by women and girls and 6.7 percent of those shared by influencers related to the decision to delay girls' marriage, suggesting that this is not a common practice. When women, girls, and influencers were asked to input on the relative importance of three factors that contributed to the decision to delay girls' marriage, they gave most importance to concern for her physical/psychological health, followed by prioritizing her education and the need for her work (either with household chores or productive activities). Analysis of women's and girls' narratives show that experiences related to marriage decisions are varied and multi-faceted, and that there is a complex relationship between a girl's marriage and education. While it would be overly simplistic to say that girls' school dropout leads to their marriage, collectively the narratives do seem to suggest that if a girl stays in school her marriage is delayed.

IntraHousehold Dynamics

To better understand intrahousehold gender and power dynamics to contextualize project interventions for various household types and members, considering their social position and socio-linguistic group, this section provides a deeper analysis of how decisions are made in households and the level of influence that girls and women have in the decisions that impact their livelihoods and wellbeing.

Influential persons: While the dominance of husbands' and fathers' influence on women's and girls' lives is clear, this study also sought to understand the relative importance of influencers external to the household on decisions that affect women and girls. Approximately one-third of women and girls indicated that persons outside of the household influenced the decision made in the experience they shared. These individuals were religious or traditional leaders (imam, adhan, marabout) in 9.9% of cases, community leaders (mayors, village heads, representatives of the heads, notables, members of the village development committee, elected communal councilors) in 8.9% of cases, and peers or neighbors in 7.2 percent of experiences shared. Influencers mentioned the same individuals, adding public education agents in 6.5 percent of cases.

Factors that contribute to women's and girls' influence: Many women and girls did not report on any factors that contributed to their influence in decision making processes, suggesting low levels of agency. Among those who did, the most frequently cited factors were their age, being married, and the number of children they birthed. Despite these findings, some emergent practices can be observed that Girma could support: from women's and girls' perspective, support from her parents and family in general positively contributed to their influence, and from the perspective of influencers, women's and girls' capacity to provide for her children and herself contributed positively to her influence.

Differences in decision-making power between monogamous and polygamous households: While women in both monogamous and polygamous households report that their husbands have the highest decision-making power, women in monogamous households reported husbands' decision-making power to be higher than women in polygamous households. Correspondingly, married women in polygamous households reported having a slightly higher level of influence in decision-making than women in monogamous households. Unmarried adolescent girls in polygamous households also reported having a higher level of influence in decision-making than those in monogamous households, though influencers reported the reverse to be true.

Unmarried adolescent girls: While unmarried adolescent girls in all sociolinguistic groups perceive themselves as having less influence than their mother, father or grandmother, Kanuri girls perceived a higher level of their own decision making power than Fulani girls, whereas Hausa girls indicated having the lowest decision making power of the three socio-linguistic groups.

Mothers-in-law: Mothers-in-law were found to have variable levels of influence, suggesting that their influence depends on a case by case basis. Medians show that overall, their influence is the highest in decisions related to domestic and care work, health and nutrition, and spousal and family relations, but less influential in decisions related to agriculture and livelihoods and the management of household finances.

Grandmothers: Unmarried girls reported that their grandmothers' level of influence in the decisions they shared was variable, though on average lower than that of her mother and father and higher than the girl herself. As per the medians reported, Kanuri and Fulani girls reported higher levels of their grandmothers' influence than Hausa girls.

Female headed households: While women express the difficulties incurred by heading a household alone and do not view it as a desirable situation, all respondents agreed that female household heads (who most often head households because their husband has migrated or because they are widowed) have more decision-making power than women in households headed by their husbands or another male family member, since the management of the family is now her responsibility. Some respondents also cited that in the case of migration, husbands leave granaries locked for use upon their return, indicating that women's decision-making power over household food and seed reserves remains limited in her husband's absence.

Spousal and family relations: One of the unexpected findings of this study was the large number of stories from respondents related to decisions about spousal and family relations, which accounted for 21.9 percent of the experiences shared by women and girls and 26.4 percent of the experiences shared by influencers.

Findings suggest that cooperation among co-wives in polygamous households is limited. Although women and girl respondents in polygamous households cite that co-wives were involved in decision-making in 59 percent of the experiences shared, co-wives still play a restricted role in decision-making as compared to husbands, other males in the household and mothers-in-law. When co-wives *are* involved, women, girls, and female influencers perceived that co-wives typically supported their own interests, while male influencers were much more likely to believe that co-wives acted in the interest of the woman or girl.

Fewer first wives report their co-wife's involvement in decisions (56.5%) than women in other positions in the household (64.4%), indicating that first wives have slightly more decision-making power than subsequent wives. When disaggregating by socio-linguistic group, the median of Hausa women's and girls' responses shows that their co-wives' influence is almost null, while Fulani and Kanuri women and girls reported that their co-wives have a higher level of influence in decisions made.

In collective interpretation workshops, all groups of female respondents referred to tension among co-wives as a major reason for limited cooperation. Women described types of problems co-wives encounter, including inequitable treatment by their husband, uneven distribution of food, disagreements in cohabitation practices, misunderstandings, and "anarchy in land distribution" when the husband is absent. Other identified triggers of conflict between co-wives were related to power relationships, such as the monopolization of the home, taking of positions among co-wives, jealousy, and first wives' influence in decision making. Possible factors to reinforce cooperation between co-wives include sharing and acting fairly on information, being involved in decision making, and commitment from their husband to assist wives in an equitable manner.

The data suggest that most wives are generally unhappy in polygamous relationships and do not typically cooperate to fulfill household needs, but rather act as more independent "wife-children" units. As evidenced in the livelihoods section below, the practice of polygamy can even put downward pressure on households' food security, as women reported not wanting to generate large harvests on family plots for fear of adding another wife. The data also show that influencers are either unaware of—or unwilling to admit to—lack of harmony among their wives.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

All respondent groups perceived that violence against women is present in their villages to a large extent, with influencers indicating even more prevalence than women and girls themselves, although there were individuals from both groups of respondents who reported no violence at all. 74.7 percent of women and girls and 81.7% of influencers perceive that women and girls are affected by either economic, physical or emotional violence, with women and girls reporting that the most prevalent type of violence is emotional, followed by almost equal levels of physical and economic violence. Influencers also believed that emotional violence is the most common in their villages but give more importance to economic violence than women and girls, and less importance to physical violence. Some respondents also spoke of violence against women in their narratives.

Respondents reported that direct causes of violence include women "lacking respect" and/or disobeying orders, even if it's to find food for their children. Indeed, women, girls and influencers indicate large levels of agreement with the norm that women must be submissive. Another likely underlying cause for violence against women is acceptance of the norm that a man has the right to correct or discipline his wife and children, which the great majority of women, girls, and influencers personally believe. Discussions in collective interpretation workshops also revealed how entrenched acceptance of violence against women is among both men, women, girls, and religious and community leaders.

When asked what triggers violence against women in collective interpretation workshops, poverty was raised as the most frequent cause, with respondents explaining that a lack of resources creates "frustration and anger among men and impatience among women." Many women also expressed examples of economic violence they face, such as husbands taking their assets without their consent, presumably due to a husband's lack of resources. Women also said that asking husbands for money can result in violence.

Women and girls also raised polygamy and/or the courting of other women as a trigger for violence, presumably when their wife demonstrates their disagreement. Men did not speak of this as a trigger of violence, either showing a lack of awareness or unwillingness to speak about it.

A review of respondents' narratives found that other triggers of conflict between husbands and wives included decisions around girls' education, marriage, and overall lack of communication and uncoordinated decision making between spouses. The same review suggested that connectors between husbands and wives could be communication and joint decision making as well as a husband's commitment to help his wife. Similarly, when the study explored characteristics of non-violent men, both influencers and women and girls found a combination of being open to dialogue and having trust in their spouse, as well as having a high level of self-control, as characteristics of non-violent men, with influencers putting more emphasis on open dialogue. Most women also found that non-violent men have high levels of patience, while others cited that fear of God and a sense of responsibility were also important characteristics.

Community and religious leaders seem to have an extremely influential role around the practice of IPV, and women also cited mothers-in-law as being able to help reduce IPV by "advising their sons to live in harmony." While men are clearly agents of change as the most frequent perpetrators of violence, it's not clear to what extent they influence each other on this question of IPV.

Women's and Girls' Agency

This study also attempted to determine the extent to which women were able to react to the decisions made on their behalf. While women and girls, at the median, felt that to some extent they did what they could to stop what was affecting them, the median of influencers' responses shows their strong belief that women and girls could not do anything to stop it. This result was the same when filtering women's and girls' perspectives for

decisions related to spousal and family relations, while from the perspective of influencers, women and girls have a higher level of capacity to stop decisions related to spousal and family relations as compared to the cumulative of all decision types. When filtering by decisions related to girls' first marriage, women, girls and influencers perceive that women and girls could do much less to stop this decision as compared to decisions related to spousal and family relations. This supports the findings above that adolescent girls have much less influence on decisions that affect them, which were mostly related to their marriage and education, as compared to older women, whose stories were much more frequently about spousal and family relations.

Women and girls reported not reacting to situations in their narratives due a combination of factors, the greatest being the fear of being separated from their children, followed by fears for their physical wellbeing, and to a lesser extent the economic consequences. In relation to social sanctions, women and girls mostly fear losing their social status, followed closely by damaging their family honor and to a much lesser extent being excluded from their communities. 52.7 percent of women and girls responded to the question related to conforming to social norms as compared to 42.8% of women and girls who responded to the question related to their and their children's well-being, which suggests that women and girls have more fear of facing social sanctions than of having her own well-being affected or being separated from her children. However, women's desire to be with their children was frequently described as an influential consideration in women's narratives related to spousal and family relations, while risk of social sanction was not. This harm to women's well-being and the social sanctions they face perpetuate their low levels of agency and thus the continuance of the inequitable gender norms studied.

Slightly more than half of women and girl respondents indicated being able to react to their situation based on one or a combination of the following factors: her self-esteem, knowing her rights and/or having her own source of income. Women, girls, and female influencers all reported that women's and girls' self-esteem was the most important factor, and to a much lesser extent knowing their rights and having their own source of income. Male influencers perceived that women's and girls' self-esteem and knowledge of their rights was equally important, followed by having their own source of income.

Livelihoods

Main sources of income: Both males and females reported that their main source of income is agriculture, however, 80 percent of males reported this as their main source as compared to 41 percent of females. Women thus have more diverse sources of income, their second most important being small commerce (14.5 percent), though this is not an important source of income for men (0.9 percent). Examples given by women of their small businesses include agro-processing activities such as transforming peanut and sesame to produce oil; food preparation and sales; and trading. Fulani participants also cited sales of milk and dairy products, while Kanuri participants also cited making crafts (mats) that their husbands sell. The third most important source of income for women is livestock (9.9 percent) while it is second most important for men (8.5 percent). Seventeen percent of women had no source of income, presumably relying on their husband to provide for the household's needs, and 0.8 percent rely on begging, making them extremely vulnerable. Also, only female respondents (1.4 percent) mentioned remittances as an income source. Female-headed households also face limited access to land, and it is a usual practice to ask their sons to migrate to send remittances for daily needs, migrate themselves, and/or start a small IGA.

The main trigger for migration is economic (poverty in general, food scarcity, lack of employment opportunities, and lack of financial resources for marriage-related expenses). Even though men, women and youth migrate, migration is most common among adult and young men. When women migrate, it is typically because they have no other option to provide for their children. Internal migration to other regions of Niger is the most frequent location cited, though people also migrate to other countries in the region, Nigeria being the most common, and some further abroad such as Saudi Arabia.

Respondents' main income sources were confirmed in the collective interpretation workshops, supporting the hypothesis that women have less and less access to agricultural land given land scarcity, as well as the traditional role of men to be farmers and fill their families' food needs. These findings suggest that a programming focus on improving agricultural and livestock productivity and access to markets is justified for both women and men, but women will also benefit from support to strengthen their off-farm entrepreneurial activities.

Women's actions and experiences to improve livelihoods: When women were asked to share a recent experience in which they tried to improve their household's food production or income, more than one third of women either gave examples of continuing to cultivate their plot of land or take care of their animals as per usual practice, or made no attempt to improve their food production and/or income. 22.9 percent of women reported starting an agribusiness activity and 19.4 percent an off-farm activity. Fewer women implemented practices to improve their crops and/or livestock productivity or established a market garden.

When asking women about the effects of their actions on their household's food availability, dietary diversity, revenue from agricultural production, and revenue from IGAs, overall, findings indicate that only experiences from IGAs had positive impacts. This is likely because women's narratives about on-farm activities typically revolved around factors that were outside of their control that incurred poor harvests, such as poor soil, drought, and pests. Moreover, the narratives make clear that those women who diversified to off-farm IGAs as an adaptive strategy, after facing crop losses in past years, have seen positive changes in their income from these activities and feel that now their economic situation is much better.

When disaggregating by socio-linguistic group, Kanuri women were slightly positive about their experiences' impact on food availability and income from agricultural sales, while Hausa and Fulani women reported very negative impact, and Kanuri women were also more positive about the effects of their experiences on food diversity. While slightly more young women overall self-signified their experience as negative as compared to adult women, young women also reported having more positive outcomes than adult women with off-farm IGAs, even though less young women reported having them as compared to adults.

Use of income: Most women (between 73 and 87 percent) indicated that they used most of their income for basic staple foods, health expenses (between 64 and 85 percent of women), and social events (between 39 and 56 percent of women). Young women much more frequently indicated buying animal products while adult women more frequently indicated using revenues in preparation for their daughter's marriage (most likely because they have more daughters closer to marrying age).

There were also various differences when disaggregating by socio-linguistic group: fewer Kanuri women purchased fruit, vegetables, and animal products than Hausa and Fulani but indicated spending more of their income on those products; Kanuri women indicated spending the most in preparation for their daughters' marriage whereas Fulani women indicated that this was a minority of their expenses; and Fulani women used more of their income on water and hygiene products. Women's use of income shows their important contributions to meeting households' food needs, which is also an indication of households' poverty and low food production since this is seen as men's role. It also reveals women's prioritization of social events and their important role in preparing for their daughters' marriage.

Women most frequently indicated that their husband made the strongest contribution to household income, with a large number indicating that women's income was an important contributor, and that as children age so do their contributions. This is in line with men's cultural roles as providers of household food needs, as well as their corresponding control over the family's agricultural production.

Access to and control over productive assets and services: The gender analysis gathered information on women's levels of access to and control over productive assets and services, including land, money, equipment

and tools, time, services, and labor, and also assessed their mobility and market access. Women most frequently indicated using their own plot of land (81 percent), financial resources (77 percent), time (62.2 percent) and labor (53.5 percent) to improve their food production and/or income, suggesting these are the assets women are most easily able to access, while their access to equipment, tools, and operational services is severely constrained. At the same time, these resources upon which women rely are insufficient for improving their livelihoods, as women cite they are unable to meet even their daily basic needs. Women indicate that the biggest constraint to their access to resources is generally their simple scarcity, though a large number of respondents combined scarcity with not having support from important people to access them, and some indicated not being authorized to use them.

- Land: While 41 percent of women said agricultural production was their main source of income, 81 percent selected land as a resource they used to improve their food production and/or livelihoods. In collective interpretation workshops, women reported that they access land primarily via their husbands and that it is insufficient to meet their needs. Women reported that they are able to make decisions over how to use the plot they are allocated, including how to use the harvest from their own plot, but men are still the customary and legal owners of land and decide how it is distributed. Women reported never having complete control over land, since in the case of his death the land goes to his children, and in the case of divorce, the woman no longer has access to land via her husband. Women also indicated that their lack of control over their husband's/ family plot—on which they work several days a week—including harvest from the family plot, put downward pressure on production. One example given was women not investing work on the family plot so as not to have enough production that would allow the resources to add a co-wife to the household. Another example given was not investing in soil fertility on her plot of land (allocated by her husband), since men often rotate the plots and change women's land allocation. These have major implications for households' ability to reach stable and diversified livelihoods and to achieve food and nutrition security, two sub-purposes of Girma. At the same time, the fact that 81% of women reported using land to improve their household's food security indicates their continued reliance on this resource.
- Financial Resources: As with land, most women (77%) indicated using money to improve their food production and/or income, showing that they rely on capital to improve their livelihoods. There were mixed findings over women's control over the capital used, with some indicating a relatively large level of control and some a relatively low level. While all women reported having control over how to use sales revenue from their income generating activities, in collective interpretation workshops, women also cited that when men sell women's production and/or livestock on their behalf they would not give 100% of the revenue back to women, indicating limits to women's control.
- All women reported having high levels of decision-making power related to their IGA, including what type of IGA to carry out; how to manage it; how to sell; and how to use their sales revenue, with only very small differences between socio-linguistic groups. When disaggregating between young and adult women, responses indicate that more adult women have an off-farm IGA, but there is no difference over the level of decision-making power by age group.
- Women rely on capital to improve their livelihoods, then, while not always having control over it. At the same time, the amount of capital women have is generally very small and not only inadequate to meet their daily needs, but also insufficient to have significant impact as an investment in their livelihoods.
- Equipment and tools: Only 6% of women reported using tools and equipment as part of their actions to improve their household's income/ food production, showing that women have very low access to this type of resource. Presumably this is an indication of households' poverty, revealing a situation in which neither men nor women have access to tools and equipment, with women's access being even more restricted. Findings were mixed over women's reported levels of control.

- Time and Labor: Findings related to women's access to and control over their time and labor show that women used these resources to improve their livelihoods and/or income (53.5 percent of women used labor—with no differentiation between family or hired labor, and 62.2 percent of women used time), and they believe they have a good level of control over them. While responses were mixed over the extent to which women have sufficient time available for their activities, the sum of responses suggest that women's time is insufficient to perform their productive and reproductive activities. Women indicated that they use a combination of strategies—working longer hours and/or asking for support from household members—to have time for their productive activities, with the median leaning towards asking family members for help. Among household members, daughters and sons help the most (with collective interpretation workshops indicating possible differences between socio-linguistic groups over whether girls or boys help more), followed by their husbands, and to a lesser extent by co-wives in polygamous households. Women also indicated that their time availability affects their childcare practices and productive activities.
- Services: Women's access to services is constrained. The most frequent service women accessed were loans (74.7 percent of women), while only 7.8 percent accessed technical assistance; 2.8 percent accessed transportation/ processing/commercialization services, and training opportunities were almost nil (0.9 percent). At the median, women reported that the loans were somewhat sufficient, though the type of credit to which they were referring is unknown, and answers were dispersed along the slider. When filtering responses, members of informal savings groups reported higher levels of access than non-members, though still indicated that the credit was not as much as was needed. While the few women who accessed technical assistance indicated that it was somewhat sufficient, the few women who accessed training opportunities or operational services (transportation, processing, and commercialization) considered that this significantly hindered their productive activities.
- Mobility and Market Access: We asked a number of questions to ascertain women's freedom of movement and explore implications for their health and livelihoods. Women reported having almost full authority to visit the health center, while they face more restrictions to leave the house, attend a training, or go to the market. A high concentration of women cited lack of resources as the major constraint to their movements, though this was frequently in combination with their husband as a limiting factor. The relative importance of these two limiting factors may change with the location or the activity women want to undertake; for example, women may not need husbands' authorization to access health centers as much as they do resources, while husbands' authorization to leave the house may be more important than having the resources to do so. There were small differences between socio-linguistic groups: Kanuri women reported slightly more freedom to visit the health center but also slightly more restrictions to go to the market. In collective interpretation workshops, Fulani adolescent girls described having freedom of mobility, while Kanuri girls expressed needing permission to go out as opposed to their brothers.
- Regarding access to markets, while women indicated that having the authorization to sell products outside of their home was a barrier, they more frequently indicated that achieving the volume necessary to negotiate was a bigger constraint. Nevertheless, most women indicated that they sold their products at home, while their daughters sell slightly more often outside of the home. While a minority of sons sell on their mother's behalf, they do so outside of the house, and husbands almost always sell in the streets or markets. 44.7 percent of women said they sold their products themselves; 25.8 percent said their daughters sold on their behalf, 17.1 percent said her husband did, and 6.9 percent said her sons. The data show differences by socio-linguistic group: Fulani respondents tend to sell outside of their houses more often, while Kanuri women mainly sell at home. Hausa and Kanuri daughters sold at home and also outside, while Fulani daughters, sons and husbands sold almost entirely outside of the home.

Women's Livelihood-Related Resilience: Most women (60.8 percent) followed a vulnerable livelihoods pathway, suggesting that at the moment of sharing their experience, they were in a worse position than before their experience took place. Only 3.2 percent of women recounted a prosperous pathway, in which they advanced

from feeling vulnerable and unprotected before the experience to having many opportunities to progress after the experience. As discussed above, this is likely related to the fact that many women shared experiences related to their livelihoods that were out of their control, such as poor soils, droughts, and pests that resulted in poor harvests.

Gender and the Rural Public Sphere

Participation: Knowing that women's participation and influence in community structures—particularly governance structures—is low in Girma-targeted communities, this study sought information to design strategies to increase it. Results of our analysis verify that women's participation in community structures is very low: 82.5 percent of women and 63.4 percent of men indicated not being a member of any type of community structure. Of those who were members, women were most frequently part of a savings and loans group, followed by a very small number who were part of a farmer group and an even smaller number in Village Development Committees. Men were most frequently part of decentralized school management committees, followed by Village Development Committees and then farmer groups. Almost one third of influencers (29.4 percent) reported being part of a community organization, with a fairly even distribution between Village Development Committees, farmer groups, and decentralized school management committees. More adult women participate in community structures as compared to young women, regardless of the structure; however, more young women reported holding leadership positions as compared to older women. Men appear be hold positions of president and vice-president more often, while women seem to be treasurer more often than men. Differences among sociolinguistic groups include more Hausa women reporting participation in community structures in general, which appears to come mainly from their membership in savings and loans groups as well as farmer groups. Less Fulani women report participating in community structures than Hausa and Kanuri.

Benefits: Women most frequently indicated joining community structures because they wanted to receive associated benefits, and most also said they maintain their participation because they are observing tangible results. When asked in an additional triad how they benefit from their membership, the strongest patterns focused on women's developing strong relations and influencing decisions, followed by gaining recognition to a lower extent. It is important to note that the majority of responses refer to participation in SILC groups and less to the other community structures.

Choice and Voice: Most women indicated that they had freedom of choice over the role they played in the structure, with little difference between socio-linguistic group. However, when filtering by the type of community structure, women indicated being most able to choose what role to take on in health and WASH-related structures, and least able to choose their role in governance structures.

At the median, women feel that they can express their needs and interests better in health and WASH-related community structures and in their SILC group, but less in governance structures and farmer groups. This is understandable as it is in line with gender norms—women generally have greater influence in health- and WASH-related themes—and because SILC groups are typically women's affinity groups and thus viewed as a safe space for women to gather and talk.

Barriers to Participation: While male and female respondents assert that there are few community structures in general, thereby constraining women's participation, men also opined that women often didn't know of their existence. Other constraints men and women cited to women's participation included women not knowing how they could benefit and women's exclusion by their husbands as well as community and religious leaders. Women said other constraints include women's high workloads; physical distance to meeting locations; and a lack of resources to join savings groups. Adolescent girls' participation in community meetings is a custom that community members are not used to, with some saying that it is "poorly seen."

Recommendations

This study confirmed the importance of addressing the gender norms identified during Girma's program design to not only increase gender equality and female empowerment, but also to contribute to Girma's aims of improving households' food security and nutrition status. These norms include entrenched and internalized norms around male-dominated decision-making coupled with women's submission, which is linked to IPV, as well as child marriage norms. The gender analysis also revealed links between girls' education and child marriage that are important to address.

***Social Behavior Change**:* Two major avenues of Girma's SBC approach include Harmonious Family Life (HFL) and working with religious and traditional leaders to foment community dialogue. The study confirmed the need for Girma's Harmonious Family Life program to address a lack of communication and decision making between spouses, which it found to trigger conflict. It also confirmed the need to work with religious leaders as part of its approach, given how many norms are rooted in community members interpretation of religion and how influential religious and community leaders are.

These two approaches should be part of a broader socio-ecological approach to social behavior change, since the gender analysis highlighted the varied role all layers of the community play in the continuation of these norms. In other words, while men—primarily husbands, religious leaders and community leaders—are primary decision makers, uncles, brothers, and women and girls themselves (including grandmothers and mothers-in-law) also perpetuate gender norms and enforce social sanctions.

Assuming that the HFL approach is already at maximum capacity, Girma should consider including several themes in its approach to working with traditional and religious leaders to initiate community dialogue. These themes could include:

- the benefits of the household working together as a team, including sharing household resources for all household members' productive activities, the distribution of tasks, and increasing women's voice in decision making
- the effects of polygamy on conflict and food security
- women's submission: how women and girls can share their views and perspectives without being seen as disrespectful
- women's fear of being separated from their children and the lack of alternative arrangements
- women's mobility
- women's control over personal earnings when men sell on their behalf
- the importance of girls' (and boys') education
- delaying girls' marriage for her health and wellbeing; increasing awareness that physical maturity does not equal cognitive maturity; and adolescence is a phase of transition to adulthood
- effects of adolescent girls' lack of social status
- the benefit women and all community members can derive from diverse and inclusive participation and representation

Education: In addition to asking religious and community leaders to include the importance of education as one of their themes, Girma could also work with positive deviants who believe that girls' education is important, as well as target teachers as part of its outreach, since their encouragement and engagement was important

to influencers. Because school proximity, quality infrastructure and supplies, and quality of education was also important to influencers, Girma should seek to complement its education-related SBC interventions with additional education programming.

Child marriage: The sum of Girma's interventions to delay child marriage should equal a broader girls' empowerment approach, encompassing not only SBC related to the need to continue education and delay marriage, but also how to foster respectful and open communication between girls and their family members without being labelled disrespectful. In addition to raising this as a community dialogue theme through its work with traditional and religious leaders, this could be a potential topic for Girma's grandmother inclusive approach. The GrowUp Smart curriculum can include an analysis of child marriage drivers for girls, as well as talk frankly about the realities of marriage. Girma can also build girls' income generation skills and expose them to options beyond child marriage such as via women who have delayed their marriage with positive effects. Girma should also consider how to reach adolescent boys and unmarried young men with SBC efforts to delay marriage.

IPV: In addition to the above, other actions Girma should take to combat IPV is imparting women's right to a life free of violence, and information on what constitutes violence, to program participants. Girma could also consider a positive deviance approach in which nonviolent men, the characteristics of whom were explored in the gender analysis, are engaged to promote respectful relationships and non-violent behavior in their communities.

IntraHousehold Dynamics/ Polygamy: Findings suggest that polygamy is an important but also extremely sensitive topic; as such, Girma can consider including it as a theme of community dialogue via its SBC approach with religious leaders. At a minimum, Girma should design its programs to take a Do No Harm approach, examining the potential of its interventions to increase tension or conflict between spouses and co-wives and designing interventions to take into account "mother-children units," or each wife in a household. Girma should also seek resources to study what effects the program has on the practice of polygamy and any positive or negative consequences of polygamy on gender relations and households' food security and nutrition.

Livelihoods: The study also confirmed the need to support to women's and girls' livelihoods—both on- and off-farm. Having a livelihood strengthening strategy for women should not preclude supporting households' overall livelihoods (i.e. agricultural production), not only to avoid backlash against women, but also to take a holistic approach to improving families' and communities' well-being.

Girma should study and consider both on- and off-farm opportunities that women may pursue, and particularly seek to link women to training opportunities and services, support women's access to markets, and design interventions considering women's current restrictions of movement. Girma should also seek to improve women's control over land; increase their time availability and monitor time use and effects; increase women's access to equipment and tools; increase women's access to and control over capital; and increase women's business skills. This is complementary to SBC themes outlined above on the benefits of the household working together as a team, including sharing household resources for all household members' productive activities, the distribution of tasks, increasing women's voice in decision making, and the effects of polygamy on households' wellbeing and livelihoods.

Public Sphere: Girma will either strengthen or create a diverse set of community organizations, creating additional opportunity for women's and adolescents' participation and representation. Girma's SBC strategy should include discussing the benefit women and all community members can derive from diverse and inclusive participation and representation, though it must also ensure that women observe tangible results from their participation in these organizations. Traditional norms discourage women from speaking in front of men publicly, so significant thought and attention need to be devoted to devising strategies for creating a climate in which

women express themselves and men listen and respond appropriately. Girma must also take care in promoting women into leadership positions since having unqualified women representatives could backlash. This validates the importance of Girma's planned initiative to build women's leadership skills, as well as its literacy courses, which potential women leaders should attend as part of a leadership development program. That women's low education levels were found to be a constraint to their participation in community structures also validates the recommendation that the program include SBC to encourage girls' education to aid women's leadership development in the long run. Distance to meeting locations must also be deliberately planned and agreed upon to ensure equitable access for all community groups.

Staff training: Girma should also hold Unconscious Gender Bias Trainings with all staff as well as increase staff awareness on the gender approaches Girma will undertake.

Do No Harm: Given the sensitivity around many themes above, and in general changing norms and behaviors, Girma must undertake do no harm analyses for all its interventions before implementation, and devise and implement deliberate monitoring mechanisms to observe and immediately course-correct if any negative backlash or consequences occur.

Introduction

The Girma program—meaning 'dignity, prestige, and growth' in Hausa—is funded by the United States Agency for International Development/ Food for Peace (USAID/ FFP) and implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its partners—Education Development Center (EDC), Community Development Assistance (ADC for its acronym in French), Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) at Georgetown University, Via Mobile (VIAMO), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and Développement pour un Mieux-Etre (DEMI-E). This 5-year multisectoral program aims to improve and sustain food and nutrition security and develop resilience capabilities among extremely poor and chronically vulnerable households in approximately 600 communities across 11 communes in the Magaria and Dungass departments of Zinder, Niger. This multisectoral project leverages CRS' and partners' experience to deliver an evidencebased, locally appropriate, integrated package of interventions that builds local capacity, strengthens servicedelivery systems, increases accountability, and reduces structural, cultural and genderbased barriers to change.

Achieving gender equality is a goal in itself, as well as a catalyst for achieving other development outcomes. Therefore, in addition to a range of health, nutrition, and livelihoods interventions, Girma will implement a number of gender responsive and transformative approaches that include the Harmonious Family Life program; social behavior change (SBC) approaches for the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV), especially child marriage and intimate partner violence (IPV); functional literacy and numeracy training, especially for women and girls; promotion of time and labor-saving strategies; women's and girls' leadership building approaches; increasing women's and girls' access to resources and asset building; and supporting women's community involvement and representation in local government.

Change is influenced by many factors: people's behaviors; individuals', households' and communities' capabilities; social and institutional norms; historical precedence, private practices, and public policies. Complex processes hinge on changes that are unpredictable, cause–effect relationships that are not straightforward, and where progress is determined by ongoing and emerging efforts. Truly understanding such change processes is often only possible in retrospect, as outcomes cannot be predicted accurately. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes that strategies and projects require constant refinement and revision, encouraging adaptive management to effectively steer through complex and dynamic contexts, and as they seek to influence social change or innovate to discover solutions (USAID 2018).

The Girma program was thus dedicated to refining and implementing its program design during its first year with the goal of providing CRS and partners the opportunity to better understand and adapt the original proposal to the local context, applying principles of learning and adaptive management to its engagement with the communities, learning from these interactions, and using the information to refine its theory of change (TOC) and inform effective adjustment of Girma's implementation approaches to achieve the highest impact possible.

As part of this process, this gender analysis was conducted to gather information to meet evidence gaps directly relevant to the program's TOC. Many information gaps related to attitudes, behaviors, and influential factors needed to refine Girma's SBC approaches; others related to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics within various types of households (especially polygamous and female-headed households), barriers to women's participation in community structures; and women's contributions to—and barriers to improving—households' livelihoods. In addition, while existing studies have collected many gender-related findings specific to the Hausa

socio-cultural group, there are comparatively few findings specific to the Kanuri and to some extent the Fulani, who are prominent in Girma's target zones. To fill this information gap, CRS purposefully targeted these three socio-linguistic groups to examine similarities and differences, as described further in the sampling strategy section below.

The gender analysis had the following objectives, linked to the research questions outlined in Table 1:

1. Gender norms and behaviors. To better understand the root causes and motivations of targeted gender norms and behaviors and identify key influencers and emergent practices that could reinforce gender-transformative norms and behaviors. Norms the research focused on were male-dominated decision-making patterns and early, child, and forced marriage, in addition to those outlined in research questions below.
2. Intimate partner violence. To estimate levels of IPV prevalence, identify the root causes and effects of IPV, as well as key influencers and emergent practices for designing appropriate prevention and mitigation measures.
3. Intrahousehold gender dynamics. To better understand intrahousehold gender and power dynamics to contextualize project interventions for various household types and members, considering their social position and socio-linguistic group.
4. Gender and the rural public sphere. To identify main barriers, opportunities and emergent practices for promoting the active and transformative participation of women and youth in the public sphere.
5. Gender and household livelihood systems. To further investigate women's role in households' livelihood systems, including their access to and control over productive resources (i.e. land, money, animals, labor, inputs and time), and how this influences livelihood strategies and outcomes.

Table 1. Research objectives and questions

1. Gender norms and behaviors: To better understand the root causes and motivations of targeted gender norms and behaviors and identify key influencers and emergent practices that could reinforce gender-transformative norms and behaviors.
1.1 What are the root causes and motivations for existing gender-related norms and behaviors and related social sanctions and rewards?
1.2 What individuals and social structures have the greatest influence over target participants' norms and behaviors?
1.3 What emergent practices can be reinforced to promote gender-transformative norms and behaviors, and how have target norms and behaviors evolved over time?
2. Intimate partner violence: To better understand intrahousehold gender and power dynamics to contextualize project interventions for various household types and members, considering their social position and socio-linguistic group.
2.1 How prevalent is IPV in project-targeted zones and what are the root causes and effects of IPV?
2.2 What individuals and social structures have the greatest influence over the uptake (or reduction of) IPV?
2.3 What are emergent and effective IPV prevention and mitigation measures that the project could promote?
3. Intrahousehold gender dynamics: To better understand intrahousehold gender and power dynamics to contextualize project interventions for various household types and members, considering their social position and socio-linguistic group.
3.1 How is decision-making power distributed among household members per household type, especially in polygamous families that are Kanouri and Fulani?
3.2 What factors contribute to the person´s level of decision-making power?
3.3 What key life events (e.g. migration of men or women, parenthood, marriage, etc.) trigger changes (increase or decrease) in household members' power and how?
3.4 How do different household members cooperate (or not) to fulfill household food, income, and other basic needs?

4. Gender and the rural public sphere: To identify main barriers, opportunities and emergent practices for promoting the active and transformative participation of women and youth in the rural public sphere.

4.1 How do women and youth participate in community organization structures and to what extent do they influence decision-making processes?

4.2 What are the main barriers for women's and youth's active participation in community organization structures (including VDCs, CDCs, WUAs, COFOS) and what are the opportunities for promoting it?

5. Gender and household livelihoods system: To further investigate women's role in households' livelihood systems, including their access to and control over productive resources (i.e. land, money, animals, labor, inputs and time), and how this influences livelihood strategies and outcomes.

5.1 What are men's, women's and youth's contributions to household livelihood systems, including remunerated and non-remunerated work, how do they use their income and with what implications for households' food and nutrition security?

5.2 What access to and control over productive assets do women and youth have and what factors influence their access and control?

5.3 How do access to and control over productive resources influence women and youth livelihood strategies (investments, decisions and practices) and with what outcomes?

5.4 What are emergent practices or opportunities for reducing women´s (and others´) workloads and improving their livelihoods?

Methodology

Research methods

This study used a mixed methods approach using SenseMaker as the core method for data collection, combined with some survey questions that were added to the data collection tool to help meet research objectives around women's participation in the public sphere and household livelihood systems. In addition, after an initial round of primary analysis of SenseMaker collected narratives and self-signification data, information gaps were identified by the research team and filled during collective interpretation workshops with groups of male and female respondents, key informants and local project stakeholders.

SenseMaker is a complexity-aware method that is based on respondents' personal narratives to access contextualized information and data. SenseMaker enables users to gather and analyze large numbers of experiences from people, shifting the power of interpretation to the respondent and away from the evaluator. Nuanced insights into respondents' experiences can be revealed through visual data pattern analysis, statistical analysis and text analysis. This enables a better understanding of the elements that influence gender dynamics, which move in different directions and makes causal relations difficult to assess.

To summarize, the SenseMaker method has key features that are explained briefly below. For more detailed information, see Guijt et al. 2018.

1. **Uses a narrative as the entry point**. The SenseMaker method was developed based on the recognition that people make sense of the world around them through stories about their experiences. Therefore, the starting point for the method is the narratives that people share about a specific experience related to the topic of inquiry that reveals what is important to them. Narratives are triggered by a predesigned, open-ended question called the 'prompt question', which is intended to enable respondents to share factual experiences important to them, rather than to generate evaluative statements or opinions. The narrative is not a lengthy account of the experience, but rather a selective and focused account of what happened.

2. **Facilitates self-interpretation of experiences**. Once a respondent has shared their experience, they are asked follow-up questions called 'signifier questions' that facilitate further reflection and interpretation of the experience. This self-signification process reduces the influence of the external evaluator or researcher during the analysis and provides additional layers of information about the experience shared by the respondent. Self-signification is an essential quality of the SenseMaker method, making the design and testing of signifier questions as important as the design of the initial prompt question. The instrument containing the prompt question, a set of signifier questions, a set of socio-demographic questions, and a set of collection protocol questions is called a 'signification framework' that is the tool used for data collection.

3. **Encourages respondents to deliberate over and nuance their responses**. The way respondents are asked to provide their answers encourages nuanced and deliberative responses. These signifier questions that are core to the SenseMaker method are 'signifier MCQs', 'slider,' 'slider with stones,' 'triad,' and 'canvas with stones.' (see Box 1) for a more detailed explanation of these core SenseMaker follow-up questions). The nature of the questions requires respondents to think before answering, encouraging them to take time to reflect, which is less common in conventional surveys. Questions are designed explicitly to reduce the potential for respondents to give socially desirable or "gamed" responses.

Box 1: Key SenseMaker Signifier Question Definitions, excerpted from Gujit et. al. (2018)

Signification framework	The core SenseMaker instrument, equivalent to a survey instrument. Includes a prompt question, a story title question, a set of signifier questions, and a set of sociodemographic and collection protocol multiplechoice questions.
Signifier question	Core SenseMaker questions used to capture layers of meaning additional to the narrative. Types of signifier questions: Multiple-choice, triad, slider, slider with stones, and canvas with stones.
Slider	A core SenseMaker question, wherein respondents are asked to signify what happened in the experience they shared by placing their response on a line between two extremes.
Slider with stones	A core SenseMaker question, wherein respondents are asked to signify what happened in the experience they shared by selecting options relevant to their experience, called 'stones,' and placing them on a line between two extremes.
Triad	A core SenseMaker question that uses an equilateral triangle with element labels on each corner to understand the relative importance of three different elements of a single concept in the experience shared by the respondent in their narrative.
Canvas with stones	A type of signifier or followup question, wherein respondents are asked to signify what happened in the experience they shared by selecting different options, called 'stones,' and indicating where they lie on a twoway matrix of interrelated continuums, representing different elements of a concept.

4. **Allows inclusion of many voices at scale and the hearing of differences**. Unlike other qualitative methods, SenseMaker enables the inclusion of many voices—hundreds and sometimes thousands—at scale. A large number of narratives is captured, making it possible to listen to diverse perspectives on the same issue, disaggregate data to compare subgroups, and—when proper sampling strategies are used—enables the use of statistical tests and the making of inferences. Valuing each person's experience means there is no biased selection of 'best' stories or champion examples. With SenseMaker, all voices count—whether it is the voice of a project participant or a non-participant, whether it is a woman, man, youth, elder, or someone better or worse off. In addition, if rigorous statistical sampling techniques are used, a large enough sample will be collected, and the sampled voices will be representative of the population, allowing for statistical comparisons between different groups of respondents.

5. **Empowers respondents as they reflect on their experiences**. When facilitated well, SenseMaker has the potential to raise awareness among the respondents, and empower them through selecting, sharing and making sense of their experiences. During many SenseMaker studies, respondents were systematically asked how they felt while sharing and signifying their experiences. This post-interview question showed that SenseMaker made it easier for respondents with varying levels of literacy to participate. It helped them to reflect on the experiences they shared in a way that created an awareness of their assets and capabilities, as well as their achievements. Their reflections generated lessons they said were useful for similar situations in future, and at the very least, people appreciated the opportunity to be listened to.

6. **Values weak signals as important for adaptive management**. SenseMaker-based analysis can easily generate dominant patterns and tease out means and medians in data. But it also values individual experiences and outliers. Weak signals can help to identify aspects of a situation that can provide opportunities for innovation or support to reach positive outcomes (emergent practices). But they can also indicate challenges or problems that need to be addressed or reduced before they escalate. This feature differentiates the SenseMaker method from others and is fundamental to supporting adaptive management.

7. **Combines qualitative and quantitative data through visual pattern, text and statistical analysis**. Qualitative and quantitative data are analyzed together to complement each other and gain better insights. The SenseMaker software enables an agile analytical process that moves between the text, visual patterns of multiple responses, and statistical analysis. Strong patterns with large visual clusters of responses can

be spotted quickly, as can weak signals, or outliers, with direct access to the underlying narratives to further enhance interpretation and contextualization of the observed patterns.

8. **Reframes indicators and direction of success**. SenseMaker-based analysis and findings, or sensemaking, can provide a complementary way to frame indicators and targets, in terms of the desirability of certain kinds of narratives and visual patterns. For example, targets may be identified thus: "Through the program, we would like to see more stories or responses like this ..., and fewer like that ..." Some organizations have started to use the key signifier questions as alternative indicators for monitoring and reporting program progress.

Research process

The gender analysis team followed the data collection and analysis process outlined below.

Step 1: Literature review

The gender analysis began with a literature review to gather additional information related to the research questions in the zone of intervention, which complemented the review conducted during Girma's initial design. The gender analysis team used this information to assess the extent to which the research questions remained relevant and to focus data collection on the identified evidence gaps.

Step 2: Reference Group Mapping

To inform the sampling strategy and the design of data collection tools, particularly those related to gender norms and behaviors, the gender analysis team used literature review findings and staff's contextual knowledge to identify reference groups by mapping target groups and social networks of influential persons for each of the gender-related behaviors targeted for change. This mapping was used to identify the voices that needed to be heard in order to respond to the research questions. This information was then used to inform the design of the stratified sampling strategy for data collection and analysis, as well as the collection tools developed for each group of interest.

Step 3: Development of the analytical framing

The analytical framing is the bedrock of a quality SenseMaker process as it guides the design and analysis process. Selecting, adjusting or developing the analytical framework is particularly important in SenseMaker as it is a method oriented toward unpacking concepts, assumptions and perspectives. Because it is less about asking direct questions, the selection, adjustment or development of the concepts and then relationships between them is a critical step in preparing for the SenseMaker process.

Using Girma's theory of change and gender equality-related objectives, the analytical framing developed for the study was informed by CRS' draft Global Gender Strategy Conceptual Framework (CRS, 2019); USAID's Gender Domains (USAID, 2017), IFPRI's Pro-WEAI framework (Malapit et. al, 2019); and the Women and Girls' Empowerment Framework (van Eerdewijk et. al 2017) and is described in the next section.

Step 4: Design of data collection tools

CRS held a design workshop with the gender analysis team, and additional thematic CRS and partner specialists to design the data collection tools. The workshop was facilitated by the gender analysis team's SenseMaker experts (CRS' Senior Technical Advisor (STA) for Research and an independent consultant) and resulted in the design of three collection tools or signification frameworks.

Two of the designed tools focus on assessing gender behaviors and rules, intrahousehold gender dynamics and IPV (research questions and objectives 1-3), with one tool designed to interview women and girls and the other for different groups of interest given their influence in women and girls' agency and lives. These two tools mirror each other, allowing analysis of the same issues from each perspective. The third tool focused on assessing

gender in household livelihoods systems and the rural public sphere (research questions and objectives 4 and 5) and was applied to adult women. The design of the three tools was framed by the analytical framework referenced above.

The collection tools, which include the prompt question, follow-up signifier questions and socio-demographics multiple-choice questions (MCQs) were accompanied by a facilitators' manual that included guidance for prompting the narratives from respondents and facilitating the self-signification process, as well as for conducting the research in a locally-adapted and respectful manner and for administering a proper consent protocol and inclusion of ethical considerations.

Step 5: Ethical consideration and Niger Ethical Board Approval

Since respondents included minor girls ages 15 -17 years old, and the interviews included sensitive topics such as early marriage and IPV that could pose some risk to respondents' safety, once the data collection tools were designed, CRS sought approval from the Nigerien Ministry of Health's Ethical Board. However, while CRS explored community and gender-related norms around IPV and early marriage with the different interest groups (adolescent girls, women, men, community and religious leaders and other influencers), this gender analysis did not explicitly ask them to share their personal experiences with GBV.

To avoid causing any harm to staff or respondents, CRS developed clear procedures and protocols to ensure the protection of respondents' confidentiality; that privacy was maintained during data collection; informed consent was gained from respondents; and referrals were provided if necessary. CRS established the following measures and protocols using the World Health Organization guidelines (World Health Organization, 2001):

1. Facilitators who conducted interviews received specific training on ethical considerations and were provided with instructions on how to deal with sensitive questions and responses, as well as how to provide referral information if needed.
2. Before starting the interviews in each community, CRS staff met with community leaders to provide information on the study and its objectives, explain who was going to be interviewed and how the interviews would be conducted. CRS staff responded to their questions and concerns and obtained their approval before beginning.
3. Only one individual per household was interviewed to ensure that only one respondent per household was aware of the specific questions asked, and interviews were carried out in a quiet setting selected by the respondents themselves for security and privacy.
4. All three collection tools included three consent questions. First, after explaining the purpose of the interview, facilitators explained that the data collection was voluntary, anonymous and that confidentiality would be maintained, and respondents were given the option to opt out at any time during the interview. Second, before asking the prompt question, respondents were asked for their consent to record an audio of the interview, and the interview was not recorded if they did not give consent. Third, after respondents shared their experience as a narrative, they were asked for consent to share their narrative, and if they didn't give consent, their narrative was not included for interpretation in this report nor shared in any event organized to share the study findings.
5. An application for approval from the Nigerien Ministry of Health's Ethical Board was submitted together with collection tools, and the Girma Gender Lead presented the study design to this board, responded to all questions received, and gained their approval before the start of the collection phase.

Step 6: Prompt question testing and initial field testing of the collection tools

After the design workshop and receiving training on how to facilitate the data collection using the SenseMaker method, the gender team tested the prompt questions with CRS staff. This testing informed a revision of the prompt question and the finalization of the first full draft of the designed tools for field testing.

The first full draft of each of the three tools was then tested in Zinder by the WARO Technical Advisor for Gender Equality and the Girma Gender Lead with the support of local project staff. This testing was fundamental to raise important issues and ideas for improvement and informed a second full draft of the designed tools. In preparation for the collection phase and with the full second drafts of the collection tools, the STA for A&L worked with the Independent Consultant to set up and test the digital collection sites for data collection in preparation for the start of the collection phase.

Step 7: Facilitation of the collection process

The collection phase started with a one-week training workshop for the facilitators that collected the narratives and facilitated the self-signification process. The workshop focused on ensuring that the facilitators: (a) understood the research purpose, learning questions and analytical framework; (b) had a working knowledge of the SenseMaker method; (c) were fully familiar with the collection tool and had practical experience in its quality application; and (d) followed the ethical protocol in place during the collection process. In addition, during the facilitators training, a field practice was conducted in the implementation zone that also served as a final user-testing of the collection tools. This training workshop was facilitated by the Consultant in collaboration with the Girma Gender Lead, Social Behavior Change Advisor, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Assistant, and Administrative Officer.

The feedback received by the facilitators and Girma participating staff from this final user-testing of the collection tools, especially in relation to the use of language and cultural contextualization, was used to conduct a final critical revision of the three collection tools. After making all necessary revisions in the paper and digital versions of the tools, the Consultant conducted a two-day refresher training for facilitators to ensure that they were ready to start the collection process. The collection process was then supported and supervised with the Girma MEAL Assistant during the whole period of data collection which had a duration of four weeks, in closed communication with CRS STA for A&L Research, who troubleshoot all technical problems encountered with the use of the digital platform and provided remote data quality assurance support.

Step 8: Primary analysis

Once the collection process was finalized, primary analysis was led by CRS's STA for A&L Research and the Consultant in collaboration with other members of the gender analysis team. Primary analysis took an exploratory approach to provide a bird's eye view of findings to describe and understand the main characteristics of the data. It involved characterizing respondents but focused on presenting responses visually in the form of plots and graphs to identify dominant patterns and outliers, and to identify needs for disaggregating responses and key variables to do so. This was done by: (1) using visualization tools (plots and graphs); (2) quantitative techniques (summary statistics with some basic level of disaggregation, and correlations among selected variables); and (3) reading and analyzing sets of narratives from different groups of respondents and any text that had been entered in the 'other' field of the MCQs. The sets of narratives for analysis are extracted by filtering them using MCQs or are drawn by selecting responses from dominant clusters or from outliers. Primary analysis also allowed the gender analysis team to identify remaining information needs for further exploration in collective interpretation workshops.

Step 9: Collective interpretation workshops

With all primary analysis findings documented in PowerPoint presentations, collective interpretation workshops were conducted with different purposes and interest groups. This included: (a) groups of key respondents who were also project participants; (b) key informants who represented local stakeholders; and (c) Girma CRS and partner staff. As short description of these activities follows.

Collective interpretation and further information gathering with groups of key respondents

A series of five collective interpretation workshops were conducted with key groups of respondents from Magaria and Dungass, each one with a duration of 6 hours, which included a total of 90 female and male participants. The first two workshops were conducted with adult women in polygamous households (first wives and wives in other positions in the household) and monogamous households, and women head of household. Among these women, there were many that were also mothers-in-law and grandmothers. The third workshop was conducted with adolescent girls also from monogamous and polygamous households, and the fourth one with male influencers included adult men from monogamous and polygamous households as well as adult men who are community and religious leaders.

These four workshops also included female and male participants from the three main sociolinguistic groups—Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri- who were organized in sub-groups to ensure that the collected perspectives were differentiated also by these groups to consider sociolinguistic-specific norms and behaviors. As participants were divided in groups by sociolinguistic groups, except for the fourth workshop with adult men and male influencers, discussions in each group were facilitated in their respective language by Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri facilitators who were assigned based on their command of the local languages. This ensured that none of the participants were in disadvantage based on their spoken language abilities.

The visual patterns generated during primary analysis were used to visualize the findings with participants, engage them in discussions, and interpret them collectively. Analyzing the findings with groups of respondents does not only improve the depth, quality and robustness of the analysis process but also gathers project participants´ and key local stakeholders' insights to inform strategic project decisions. These discussions were all documented by the team that facilitated this process under the guidance of the Consultant.

Collective interpretation and reflection with key Girma implementing staff

Once the findings from primary analysis were complemented with those from collective interpretation events with key respondent groups, a three-day collective interpretation workshop was held with 44 key Girma implementing staff including the Governance, Integration, Agriculture, WASH, Nutrition and MEAL Leads; the SBC, Literacy, Harmonious Family Life and Youth Officers; ten Community Coordinators; and selected facilitators who collected the data. Collectively analyzing and interpreting the findings with Girma field staff not only enriched the analysis and interpretation process, but also provided an opportunity for staff to reflect on implications of these findings for the program's theory of change and implementation strategies. This activity ensured that the staff who will be using the findings in their daily work, and those who need to make strategic decisions, were actively involved in the research process.

Collective interpretation and further information gathering with key local stakeholders

Collective interpretation events with 38 key local stakeholders that included mayors, regional government officials and imams, as well as the facilitators who collected the data, provided an opportunity to include those whose voices were left out during the collection process to continue filling information gaps and dive into specific issues of interest to respond to the research questions. These events included local authorities, governmental institutions, local organizations, farmer organizations' leaders and local organizations. Collectively discussing the findings with these key project stakeholders not only allowed to gather new layers of information, but also aimed to facilitate learning with those who can act based on the findings. Talking through what findings mean with different stakeholders, and the implications for action, helps to shorten the distance between findings and their uptake by intended audiences.

Sharing and reflection during Girma pre-culmination workshops

Documentation from the above collective interpretation workshops with the different interest groups enriched and complemented the findings from primary analysis, which were then shared in a series of four thematic

workshops that were organized for each corresponding Girma sub-purpose—livelihoods, health & nutrition, social cohesion & governance, and the foundational sub-purpose on women, youth and PWD empowerment- to inform the refinement of Girma´s theory of change and programmatic approaches. This also provided an opportunity to collectively interpret and reflect on the findings with Girma leadership to make strategic programmatic decisions.

Step 10: Comprehensive analysis

Once the findings from primary analysis and collective interpretation workshops were documented, comprehensive analysis was conducted to further explore the data and answer research questions in a comprehensive manner. For this purpose, comprehensive analysis used a more structured (focused or guided) approach than primary analysis. Based on identified needs, this analysis included:

- The recategorization of the type of decisions involved in the experiences shared based on respondents' self-signification that included many unexpected responses in the "other" option free field. These types of decisions were then used to disaggregate the analysis when relevant.
- An in-depth analysis of groups of collected narratives selected from observed patterns of interest to better understand and contextualize respondents' answers to the different questions.
- While writing the report, as new questions for further inquiry emerged, comprehensive analysis focused with specific disaggregation and filtering of the findings.

Analytical Framing

Analytical framing is the bedrock of a quality SenseMaker process. It guides the entire design and sensemaking process. Deciding on the analytical framing is good practice for any evaluation or assessment and is a must for a research process. It is particularly important in SenseMaker as it is a method oriented more toward unpacking concepts, assumptions and perspectives. Because it is less about asking direct questions, the selection, adjustment or development of the concepts and the relationships between them is a critical step in preparing for a SenseMaker process.

For this study, different conceptual and analytical frameworks informed the analytical framing used to design the collection tools for this study, including CRS' Global Gender Strategy Conceptual Framework (CRS, 2019); USAID's Gender Domains (USAID, 2017), IFPRI's Pro-WEAI framework (Malapit et. al, 2019); and a conceptual model of Women and Girls' Empowerment produced by KIT Gender and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (van Eerdewijk et. al 2017). However, it was customized to address the gender analysis research questions and to align with Girma's TOC.

For this study, **gender** refers to "the socially constructed differences in roles, responsibilities, rights, relationships and identities of females and males that are defined by a given society and context. The concept of gender is different in each culture. Gender identity determines how females and males are perceived and how females and males are expected to behave in a given context" (CRS, 2019).

The framework, in its schematic form, is presented in Figure 1. **Women and girls' agency and resilience** is at the heart of the framework. Women and girls' **agency** is defined as "the ability of women and girls to pursue their goals by having the power to express their voice and make choices, and by having opportunities to access and control resources and services, free from violence and retribution" (adapted from van Eerdewijk et. al 2017). Women and girls' **resilience** is defined as "the capabilities of women and girls to cope with, learn to adapt to, and transform norms and behaviors in response to shocks and stressors, to follow resilient and ascendent pathways that contribute to their integral human development (adapted from Gottret et, al 2019).

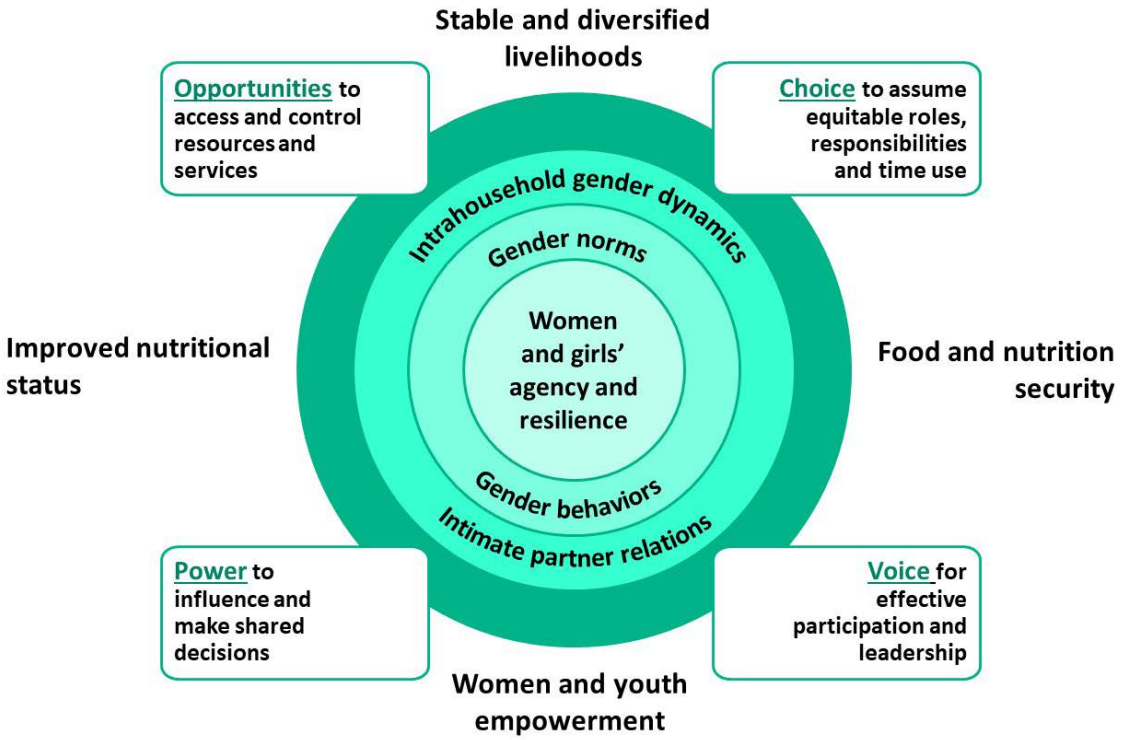
Following CRS' Global Gender Strategy (CRS, 2019), the framework highlights four expressions or dimensions of women and girls' agency:

1. Expansion of **choice** around roles, responsibilities, time use, and participation
2. Having the **power** to influence and make shared decisions
3. Having a **voice** for effective participation and leadership
4. Having **opportunities** to access and control resources and services

Taken from van Eerdewijk (2017), **choice** is defined as "the ability of women and girls to make and influence choices that affect their lives and futures"; and **voice** is defined as "the capacity of women and girls to speak up and be heard, and to shape and share in discussions and decisions—in public and private domains—that affect their lives"

van Eerdewijk (2017) relates **power** to women and girls' choice and voice by stating that "expanding women and girls' choice and voice engages directly with how power operates in their lives", and power relations shape women and girls' disempowerment and disadvantages, as well as their access to **opportunities** and wellbeing.

Figure 1. Analytical framing used for the gender analysis



The framework also recognizes that **systems**—in this case defined as the **gender norms** that regulate **gender-related behaviors**, mediate intrahousehold gender dynamics and intimate partner relations, and therefore affect women's and girls' choices, power, voice and opportunities—impose limits on their agency or foster it. However, only women's and girls' level of agency allows them to engage with the **systems** (gender norms and behaviors) that affect their agency to influence changes over time.

Following the Girma TOC rationale, the analytical framework assumes that when women and girls have choice, power, voice and opportunities they will be empowered, having more control over their lives and futures; and that empowered women and girls are the foundations for achieving the program sub-purposes. Thus, it includes the four dimensions of impact that align with Girma's sub-purposes: (1) improved nutritional status, (2) stable and diversified livelihoods, (3) food and nutrition security, and (4) women and youth empowerment.

Collection tools

The above analytical framing informed the design of the collection tools that in the SenseMaker method are called a 'Signification Framework'. A signification framework consists of (1) a prompt question that invites respondents to share a concrete experience that they have lived through and is asked to all respondents, and (2) a predefined series of questions, or 'signifiers,' that enable respondents to give additional layers of information about their experience. To respond to the research questions, the gender analysis targeted various respondent groups, including women and girls as well as the other household or community members that influence the decisions and actions of women and girls, who will be called "influencers." To be able to hear these different voices and at the same time gather information to respond to the five groups of research questions, the team decided to design three tools for the first phase of primary data collection, which are described below.

Tool 1: Women and girls' perspectives on gender norms and behaviors and its influence in their agency

This tool was developed to respond to the research questions under the gender analysis objectives 1–3. Therefore, it was designed to collect data on: (1) gender norms and behaviors, (2) intimate partner relations and (3) intrahousehold gender dynamics, including how women and girls engage with these systems (gender norms and behaviors) and how these aspects influence women's and girls' agency. This tool was applied to (1) first wives in polygamous households; (2) other wives in polygamous households; (3) women in monogamous households; and (4) adolescent girls aged 15-17 years old.

Since agency relates to voice, power, choice and opportunities, the prompt question was designed to elicit narratives related to decisions that were made for women and girls and had an impact on their lives. The prompt question used was:

> ***Please share a recent experience where another person made a decision that had a significant impact on your life. What happened? What was the decision? Who was involved? What were the results (positive and/or negative)?***

The design also included a set of follow-up questions to facilitate respondents' reflection about the experience shared, providing additional layers of information about the experience, which is referred to as the 'self-signification' process. The table in Annex 1 lists the core SenseMaker follow-up questions used and shows their alignment with the analytical framing elements and dimensions of change.

In addition to these core SenseMaker follow-up questions 20 MCQs focused on respondent characteristics: sex, age range, household/concession manager (village chief, religious leader, none); level of disabilities (vision, hearing, mobility, cognition, body care, communication), sociolinguistic group, religion, type of household (monogamous, polygamous, woman-headed), marital status, number of co-wives, position in household (first, second, third, fourth wife), highest level of formal education, participation in community structures, most important community structure, position in the most important community structure, main source of income, Department (Magaria, Dungass), Commune, distance to the Nigerian border (near, far), distance from the Departmental Capital (near, far), interest group (first wife in polygamous household, other wife (not first) in polygamous household, women in monogamous household, adolescent girl, adult men, women head of household, mother-in-law, religious leader, community leader). The collection tools also included protocol questions to help track key aspects of collection (time and location, respondent ID or survey ID, facilitator ID), and to ensure all necessary consent protocols for ethical collection.

Tool 2: Influencers' perspectives on gender norms and behaviors and its influence in women and girls' agency

This tool was developed to deepen the analysis for responding to the research questions under the gender analysis objectives 1–3 by gathering information on the perspective of influencers, both internal and external to the households, on the same themes as tool 1. These influencers include: (1) first wives in polygamous households, (2) mothers-in-law, (3) women heads of household, including widowed and divorced women as well as those whose husbands have migrated, (4) adult men (husbands, fathers, grandfathers, and male peers), (5) traditional leaders, and (6) community leaders; all important interest groups who influence gender norms.

As with tool 1, the prompt question was designed to elicit narratives related to decisions that were made for women and girls and had an impact on their lives:

> ***Please share a recent experience where you were involved in a decision that affected the life of a girl or a woman. What happened? What was the decision? Who was involved? What were the results (positive and/or negative)?***

Because this tool gathered similar information as tool 1, but from the perspective of influencers, the core SenseMaker follow-up questions mirror those used for tool 1. It also includes the same 20 MCQs focused on respondent characteristics, as well as the same protocol question to help track key aspects of collection and to ensure all necessary consent protocols for ethical collection.

Tool 3: Gender in livelihood systems and participation in the rural public sphere

This tool was developed to respond to the research questions under the gender analysis objectives 4 and 5: gender and the public rural sphere, and gender and household livelihood systems. Thus, it was developed with a focus on assessing the four dimensions of women and girls' agency: (1) opportunities to access and control resources and services, (2) expansion of choice to assume equitable roles, responsibilities, time use and participation, (3) voice for effective participation and leadership; and (4) power to influence and make shared decisions; and how these dimensions of agency influence the achievement of the four Girma program sub-purposes. This tool was applied to the following groups of women: (1) first wives in polygamous households; (2) other wives in polygamous households; and (3) women in monogamous households.

Since the main purpose of this tool is to assess the interface between gender and livelihoods, the prompt question was designed to elicit narratives related to efforts women made to improve their households' food production:

> ***Please share a recent experience (positive or negative) in which you attempted to improve your households' food production and/or income. What did you do? What obstacles have you faced and what have you done to overcome them? Who helped or what helped? What were the results (positive and/or negative)?***

The Table in Annex 2 lists the core SenseMaker follow-up questions used and shows their alignment with the analytical framing elements, dimensions of change and desired outcomes. In addition to these core SenseMaker follow-up questions, this tool includes the same 20 MCQs focused on respondent characteristics; as well as the protocol questions to help track key aspects of collection and to ensure all necessary consent protocols for ethical collection, as explained before.

Sampling strategy

As explained above, the gender analysis targeted various respondent groups, including women and girls as well as other household or community members who were hypothesized to influence the decisions and actions of women and girls, called in this study "influencers." For sampling purposes, the sampling frame included all households in Girma's eleven targeted communes in the Departments of Magaria and Dungass, Zinder Region. According to the Girma program's estimates, these eleven communes have 261,845 households, 202,797 (77.4%) in Magaria and 59,048 (22.6%) in Dungass; with a total population according to the 2019 Census of 1,210,443 inhabitants.

The sample strategy followed two steps. The first step involved the estimation of a statistically representative sample of households in Girma's target zone, and the second step an intentional sampling to ensure a minimum sample size of 70 interviews per interest group, which is a good practice when the SenseMaker method is used for ensuring that there are enough observations from each interest group, or sub-group, to be able to observe and differentiate patterns among them. A detailed explanation of each of these two steps of the sampling strategy is explained below.

Step 1: Estimation of a statistically representative sample

To interview a representative sample of households in Girma's target zone, a two-stage cluster design with a systematic selection of households was used (Stukel and Friedman, 2016), meaning that first villages were randomly selected (first stage) and then households were systematically selected in each village (second state). This sampling approach was used because at the time that this study was conducted, the Girma project had a comprehensive, complete and up-to-date list of all villages in the eleven Communes, but did not have a comprehensive, complete and up-to-date list of all households in these villages.

Given the selected sampling approach, the sample size was determined using the following formula for calculating the initial sample size ($n_{inicial}$) for the estimation of indicators of means was used:

$$\text{Initial sample size} = n_{initial} = \frac{N^2 * z^2 * s^2}{(MOE)^2}$$

where:

N = total number of households

z = critical value from normal probability distribution.

s = standard deviation of the distribution of beneficiary data.

MOE = margin of error. A value of 0.07, or 7% error was used, which means an accepted +7 and –7% error in the estimated values.

Using a value of z= 1.96, meaning a 95% confidence that the estimated value in the sample is equal to the value for the population; a standard deviation of 0.50 which assumes the maximum possible variation for discrete variables given that this estimate was not available; and a margin error of 0.10 or 10%, which means a maximum accepted error in the estimated value from the sample of +10 and –10% with respect to the value for the population, the initial sample size was calculated at N=385.

Since the calculated sample size was 0.15% of the population ((385/261,845) *100), an adjustment for a small population (finite population correction) was not necessary as this is only done when the calculated sample size is 5% or more of the population. However, an adjustment for the design effect due to clustering was needed since a two-stage cluster design was used, and an adjustment for anticipated individual non-response was also done.

The first adjustment was needed because survey respondents within a cluster, in this case within a village, are likely to share similar characteristics in relation to some (or all) of the indicators of interest. When this happens, the amount of new information that each new interview respondent provides from within the same sampled cluster is less than that of a new respondent using a systematic sampling design. Thus, this was needed to reach the targeted level of precision in the findings. In the event that there are no previous surveys to use as a reference, a longstanding rule of thumb is to use a design effect due to clustering (denoted by $adj_{designeffect}$) of 2, when one level of clustering is used as was the case in this study, thus this was needed to get to an adjusted sample size of N=770.

The second adjustment done relates to the anticipated individual non-response (denoted by $adj_{non\text{-}response}$) as it was expected that some of the individuals selected for the interviews will be unreachable, unavailable, or unwilling to respond to any or all of the interview questions; this is called individual non-response. To ensure that the targeted number of respondents actually completes interviews despite individual non-response, the initial sample size is pre-inflated by multiplying by the inverse of the expected response rate so that the resultant sample size after fieldwork is as close as possible to the targeted initial sample size. If no past information is available on non-response rates, a generally accepted rule of thumb is to assume an estimated response rate of 90%–95%. That is to say, if a response rate of 95% is assumed, then the sample size should be multiplied by $adj_{non\text{-}response}$ = 1/0.95. Thus, an anticipated response rate of 90% was assumed given that the Girma staff had by then already established relationship with project participants. Using this second, the final sample size was calculated at N=854.

Step 2: Intentional sampling to ensure enough interviews for each interest group

In addition to applying the above sampling principles, an important aspect that needed to be considered for this SenseMaker process is the desirability to have a large enough number of respondents of each sub-group of interest. This is important as sensemaking relies greatly on visualizing patterns of responses, and this may not be possible if there are very few responses for one specific sub-group. In addition, comparing visualizations between two groups with a different number of responses may be difficult. For example, a histogram (resulting from responses to a slider signifier question) for a sub-group with more responses will have higher bars than a histogram from another sub-group with fewer responses; or a dominant pattern in a triad signifier question for a sub-group with more responses will have a higher density of dots than a dominant pattern for another sub-group with fewer responses.

Thus, in SenseMaker, the primary driver for sampling design is the need to ensure a sufficient number of stories to allow for a meaningful visual pattern analysis across all levels of priority disaggregation or subgroup of interest. For any disaggregation or voice of interest, a minimum of 60 to 80 stories is recommended for effective pattern analysis. One of the important comparisons this assessment aimed to make was among the three prominent socio-linguistic groups in Girma's target zones (Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri) given the above-referenced data gap on gender-related findings specific to the Kanuri and to some extent Fulani, as well as some variation in cultural characteristics and livelihood strategies (see Table 2 for a description of the key characteristics of each of the three sociolinguistic groups). This was important to test whether the differences among these three groups influence gender-related norms and behaviors, and therefore require differentiated gender-related intervention approaches and strategies.

Table 2. Key characteristics of the three predominant sociolinguistic groups in the Girma project target zones (Sousa, 2018)

SOCIOLINGUISTIC GROUP	DESCRIPTION OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS
Haousa	The Hausa ethnic group is the largest in Niger, and the majority of the population (54.1%) belong to this group. The Hausa are one of the largest ethnic groups in all of Africa and are scattered across West Africa, making up the majority of the population in Nigeria and Niger. The Hausa people in Niger speak the Hausa language as part of the greater Afro-Asiatic family, and also speak French, English, and Arabic. Most Hausa people live in small towns and mostly raise livestock, work as farmers and conduct trade. The horse is a major symbol of the Hausa people, as it is closely associated with the aristocracy and their equestrian-based culture.
Fulani	The Fulani ethnic group is the fourth largest in Niger, accounting for 9.2% of the population. The Fulani people are found in 21 different countries ranging from Gambia all the way east to Ethiopia. Nigeria has the most Fulani with about 7 million, while Niger in comparison has the fourth most with 1.5 million. The major languages that the Fulani people speak are several variants of Fula, which is part of the Niger-Congo language group, as well as Arabic, English, and French. The major religion of the Fulani is Islam, and they follow a distinct code of conduct referred to as "pulaaku". The Fulani are a mostly nomadic trading people that herd various animals like cattle and sheep across the dry hinterlands that they occupy and are the largest nomadic ethnic group on Earth. In recent years, across most of the area they roam, they have come into heightened conflict with the settled farmers over land use and crops.
Kanuri	The Kanuri ethnic group is the fifth largest in Niger, accounting for 4.6% of the population. Most of the Kanuri ethnic groups are found in Nigeria, with the rest being found in Chad, Niger and a small number in Cameroon. The major language of the Kanuri people is the Kanuri language, which is part of the Nilo-Saharan language family. The Kanuri people in Niger are found in the southeastern area of the country, where they make up most of the area's sedentary population.

The other important criteria for intentional sampling was to ensure that at least 70 interviews were collected for each interest group, identified for each of the three collection tools designed, as listed in the collection tools section. Based on these two criteria, which is having enough interviews for each socio-linguistic group and for each interest group, A summary on how the sample size was intentionally distributed to achieve the intentional sampling and compares what was planned with what was achieved is included in Appendix 3.

Despite the challenges associated with getting the planned number of interviews for each socio-linguistic group and interest group, the field teams were able to achieve a sample size that was near enough to what was planned. Thus, for Tool 1 a total sample size of 288 women and girls was planned and a sample of 292 was achieved; for Tool 2 a total sample size of 432 influencers was planned and a sample of 432 was achieved; for Tool 2 a total sample size of 216 was planned and a sample of 217 was achieved. In addition to the number of Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri who were interviewed and listed in Appendix 3, six influencers from Tool 2 and six interviews of adult women from Tool 3 self-signified as belonging to the Tuareg sociolinguistic group.

The resulting total sample was N=941 of which 52% were conducted in Dungass and 48% in Magaria, resulting in a statistically representative sample of the households in the eleven Communes where the Girma target zones are located. 79% of the interviews were collected near the Nigerian border and 77% near the departmental capitals of Dungass and Magaria. Because facilitators did not interview more than one individual per household, the number of interviews conducted is equal to the total number of households interviewed.

Based on the combination of a representative and an intentional sample, the resultant composition of respondents by tool and gender is included in Table 3, and by tool and group age in Table 4. Each respondent was interviewed with one tool only; no household was questioned more than once with any tool from this

study. As planned, tools 1 and 3 were only applied to women, and tool 2 was applied to both women and men, achieving a representative sample of women and men (48% women and 52% men). This aligns to the 2019 census data that report 49% men and 51% women in Magaria, and 50% men and 50% women in Dungass. Therefore, the sample of influencers can be properly disaggregated by sex as considered necessary for the analysis of the findings.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by tool and sex

SEX	TOOL 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE		TOOL 2: WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INFLUENCERS		TOOL 3: GENDER IN LIVELIHOOD SYSTEMS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE RURAL PUBLIC SPHERE		ALL	
Women	292	100%	208	48%	217	100%	717	76%
Men			224	52%			224	24%
Total	**292**	**100%**	**432**	**100%**	**217**	**100%**	**941**	**100%**

Table 4. Distribution of respondents by tool and age range

SEX	TOOL 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE		TOOL 2: WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INFLUENCERS		TOOL 3: GENDER IN LIVELIHOOD SYSTEMS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE RURAL PUBLIC SPHERE		ALL	
Adolescent (15–17 years)	82	28%	0	0%	2	1%	84	8%
Youth (18–30 years)	82	28%	35	8%	77	36%	194	21%
Adult (31–60 years)	128	44%	299	69%	134	61%	561	60%
Elder (>60 years)	0	0%	98	23%	4	2%	102	11%
Total	**292**	**100%**	**432**	**100%**	**217**	**100%**	**941**	**100%**

With respect to age range, tool 1 was applied to a sample of N=82 adolescent girls (28% of the total sample) giving a sufficient number of responses to disaggregate analysis between adolescent girls and women, and even between adolescent girls, youth women and adult women. As expected, the distribution of the sample of influencers by age (collected with tool 2) includes a smaller number of youths, a larger number of adults and a large enough sample of elders (N=98) to allow for the disaggregation of findings between adult and older adult influencers. Finally, tool 3 was applied to youth and adult women with a large enough sample of each group to allow for disaggregated analysis as needed.

Characteristics of respondents and their households

Given that the whole sample (N=941) is representative of the households in the Girma target zone and all tools included the same socio-demographic questions, the data for this section of the tools was combined to provide a description of the respondents in order to contextualize the analysis of the findings.

Household characteristics

To have a representative description of households in the Girma target zone, only data collected with tools 1 and 3 was used and is the basis for the findings presented in this section. This is because the intentional sampling made to hear the voices of influencers (tool 2) makes it not representative of all households in the Girma target zones as it has a larger percentage of community and religious leaders' households, which may have distinctive characteristics and influences their percentage in all the sample.

As shown in Table 5, there is a larger number of respondents in the sample who self-signified their households as polygamous (61.7%) than monogamous households (38.3%); and most household heads are neither village chiefs nor religious leaders (90.8%). While the presence of polygamy is not a surprise, since first wives and co-wives were intentionally sampled, it is likely that the percentage of polygamous households in the sample is larger than that of the population in the Girma target zones.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents by type of household and type of household head (tools 1 and 3; N=509)

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTIC		TOOL 1		TOOL 3		BOTH TOOLS	
N		%	N	%	N	%	
Type of household	Polygamous	168	57.5	145	66.8	313	61.5
	Monogamous	122	41.8	72	33.2	194	38.1
	Missing data	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.4
Type of household head	Village chief	7	2.4	6	2.8	13	2.6
	Religious leader	8	2.7	26	12.0	34	6.7
	Neither one nor the other	277	94.9	185	85.3	462	90.8
Total		**292**	**100.0**	**217**	**100.0**	**509**	**100.0**

For tool 1 and tool 3, no respondents classified their household as female-headed, which is reinforced by the reported marital status of female respondents who, with the exception of one widow, were either single or married. 88.1% of adolescent girls were single as the gender analysis team intentionally sampled unmarried adolescent girls, while 99.5% of adult women were married (see Table 6).

To further explore the extent and causes of the existence of female-headed households, the marital status of the sub-sample of women in female-headed households, intentionally sampled among influencers (tool 2), was analyzed (N=80) showing that the majority of these women were widowed (78.8%), 11.2% were still married and the other 10% were either divorced (6.2%) or separated (3.8%).

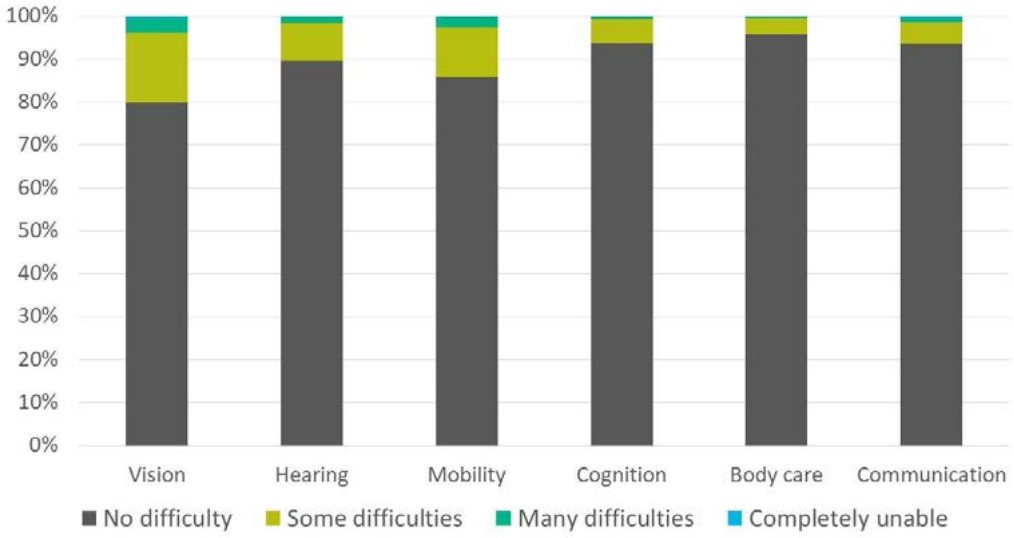
Table 6. Distribution of respondents by age range and marital status (tools 1 and 3; N=509)

MARITAL STATUS	ADOLESCENT GIRLS (15-17 YEARS)		ADULT WOMEN (18 YEARS OR OLDER)		ALL THE SAMPLE	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	74	88.1	1	0.2	75	14.7
Married	10	11.9	423	99.5	433	85.1
Widowed	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.2
Separated	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Divorced	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	**84**	**100**	**425**	**100**	**509**	**100**

To better understand the situation of these female-headed households who are assumed to be more vulnerable, additional information was collected from respondents during the collective interpretation workshops. Per respondents, the most numerous type of female headed households are those in which men have migrated for either a short or long period, which are likely captured in the "married" category of Table 6 above. These are followed by widow-headed households, of which there are a significant number. Single/ never married women are practically non-existent, and divorced women-headed households are also fewer in number, presumably because they re-marry.

In addition, some married women also become household heads when their husbands live with some type of disability, putting additional stress on their already vulnerable livelihoods. However, among this study's respondents, the percentage of people living with disabilities is not very high, nor is the level of disability (see Figure 2). Vision is the most predominant disability followed by mobility and hearing.

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents' households living with people with different levels of disabilities, by type (tools 1, 2 and 3; N=941)



Most polygamous households in the sample have two wives (69.7%), followed by three wives (11.7%), and only

1.4% have four wives. Again, since the study intentionally sampled co-wives, these statistics are most likely not representative of the target population; per the 2012 Demographic and Health Survey in Niger, 68.9% of women in Zinder reported not having any co-wives, while 27.5 reported having one co-wife and 3.6 percent reported having two or more (2012).

In addition, 17.1 percent of respondents who self-signified their households as polygamous reported that their household has only one wife. This raised questions during primary analysis, and interpretation by experts, since this was not an expected response. In collective interpretation workshops, implementing staff and facilitators explained that it is usually clear for the spouses if a husband has the intention to form a polygamous or a monogamous household, and that in either case, polygamous households start with one wife. This highlights that having one wife is not necessarily equivalent to being a monogamous household, as some households with only one wife self-signified their households to be monogamous, while other self-signified as polygamous. This key feature of the SenseMaker method that facilitates self-interpretation of the experiences, reducing the expert intermediation and influence during the analysis, proved to be very important for this analysis.

Of the women interviewed who self-signified their households to be polygamous (N=294), 95.9% were adult women (18 years or older) and 6% were adolescent girls (15-17 years old). Among the adult women, there was an almost equal percentage of first and second wives (48.9% and 46.8%, respectively) and a low percentage of third wives or fourth wives; while among adolescent girls, 58.3% were single and the rest were already married, being both first or second wives (see Table 7).

Table 7. Distribution of women and girls' respondents from polygamous households by the position they occupy in the household (tool 1 and 3, N=294)

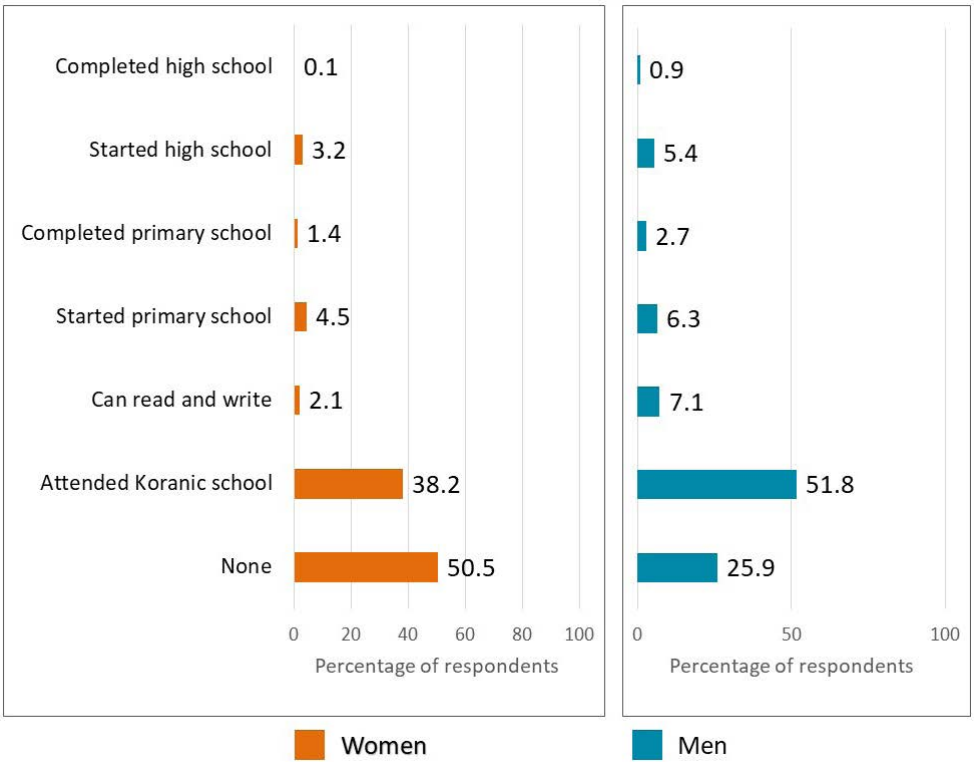
MARITAL STATUS	ADOLESCENT GIRLS (15-17 YEARS)		ADULT WOMEN (18 YEARS OR OLDER)		ALL THE SAMPLE	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
First wife	1	8.3	138	48.9	139	47.3
Second wife	4	33.3	132	46.8	136	46.3
Third wife	0	0.0	11	3.9	11	3.7
Fourth wife	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	0.3
Single	7	58.3	0	0.0	7	2.4
TOTAL	**12**	**100**	**282**	**100**	**294**	**100**

Level of formal education

The findings show that respondents to all three tools have low levels of education. Forty five percent of respondents have not attended any school and could not read and write; 41 percent have attended Koranic school, which is not an indication of their literacy level; and an additional 3 percent could read and write but have not attended any school. If we add to this population those who have either started or finished primary school (6.6 percent), it comes to 95.6 percent of the population who have not started secondary school. No respondent indicated having attended a technical or vocational school nor a university. Respondents' low education levels make the use of adult education methodologies and proper facilitation a must during program implementation strategies.

Disaggregating education data by sex (see Figure 3) shows a significant gap between the level of females' and males' education. While 25.9 percent of male respondents had no formal education and are illiterate, 50.5 percent of female respondents had no formal education; and 51.8 percent of males had attended Koranic school as compared to 38.2 percent of females. In addition, only 9.2 percent of female respondents had accessed formal education and 3.3 percent continued into secondary school; while 15.3 percent of men had accessed formal education and 6.3 percent had continued to secondary school.

Figure 3. Level of formal education by sex (tools 1, 2 and 3, N=941)

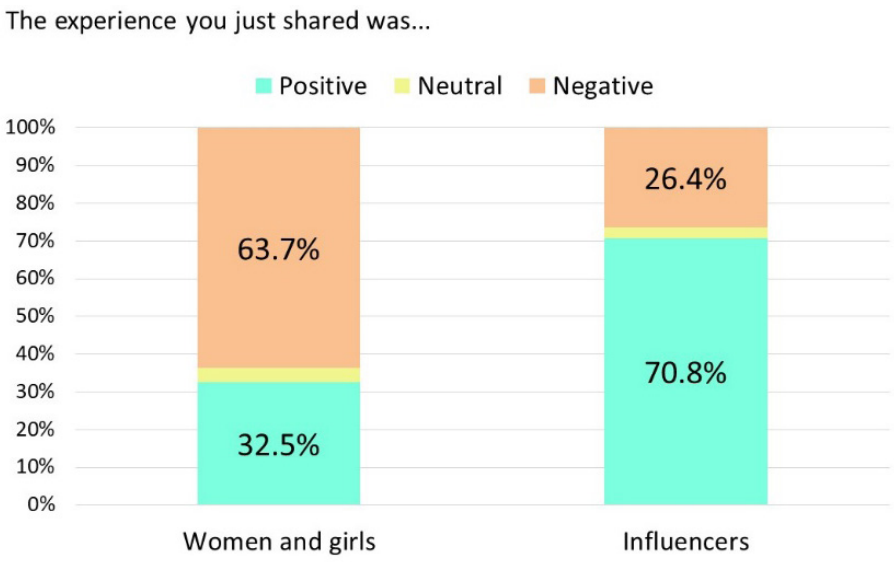


Findings

As explained in the Collection Tools section, tools 1 and 2 were developed with a special focus on understanding gender norms and individuals' levels of influence that mediate intrahousehold relationship dynamics and can lead to IPV. As such, the prompt question aimed to place women and girls in a recent experience in which decisions were taken that had an impact on their lives, with the aim of observing and analyzing gender-related norms and behaviors relayed through women's and girls' stories.

After each respondent shared their experience through a short narrative, they were asked whether that experience was positive, neutral or negative. Figure 4 shows how respondents self-signified their experiences and the differences between the responses of women and girls and those from influencers. Almost two thirds (63.7%) of women and girls felt their experiences were negative, while more than two thirds of influencers (70.8%) considered their experiences to be positive. Only a few of both groups considered their experiences to be neutral.

Figure 4. Type of narratives as self-signified by women and girls (tools 1 and 2; N=724)



To explore further the differences among the narratives self-signified as positive, negative or neutral, one of each of these narratives shared by unmarried adolescent girls (15-17 years), young women (18-30 years) and adult women (older than 30 years) were selected randomly and are shared in Table 8. The stories shared by adolescent girls involved mainly decisions about their education and marriage, with the positive narrative being about the decision to delay marriage, and the negative experience was to take the girl out of school and marry her. The neutral narrative was mainly related to an exogenous event (the illness of her mother) that forced her to drop out of school and her resulting loss of motivation to continue her education.

Table 8. Women and girls' narratives by type of experience

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE
Adolescent girls (15–17 years)	**My life as a young girl** I was living in Jajeri when my mother passed away. My father's little sister brought me here to live with her so she could take care of me. I have to do many chores here, I have to fetch wood, do the laundry and go to the mil. Last year a friend of mine wanted to marry me. When my tutor asked for permission to my biological father, he said no as he considered that am too young, and that my boyfriend just has to wait until next year. I feel this was a positive decision because I don't feel ready to get married despite my current situation.	**Didn't want to go back to school** I dropped out of school to help my mother with the housework. It was when I was in second grade when my mom got sick. I'm the oldest in my family. At first, I just did some chores around the house and then I went to school, but when my mother gave birth, her condition worsened. Everyone thought she was going to die. I decided to leave school and took care of a lot of chores. When she had recovered, my father told me to go back to school, but I didn't want to. One day he even hit me, but I couldn't think about studying anymore.	**I would rather go to school** I studied until 6th grade, but I had to stop because of the distance to get to school and the fact that all my other friends with whom I was studying had dropped out. I used to be a good student. All my friends have got married over time and now that I have been out of school for 2 years, my parents want to marry me. I don't want to get married and if I would have the opportunity to go back to school, they wouldn't think of marrying me. I even asked them to go to the school to see if they can arrange for me to be taken back so that I can continue studying. It's negative for me. I prefer school to marriage.
Young women (18–30 years)	**We all must give in** I lived with my husband for years. I got sick, a disease that lasted. I went to the hospital and was treated many times. My husband was at Magaria for other things and I was alone, so I preferred to go back to my parents. When my husband was back, we wanted to return to live together again, but when my father-in-law heard the news, he got angry and told his son to divorce me. My husband said no, that this was not the right decision, and that he couldn't do that. My father and I calmed down the situation, and my father took me back to my husband's house. In the end, the result was positive, I am healthy again and I live with my husband.	**Baouta's life** I was sick when I was in first grade and my mother's brother took me out of school for health reasons. After my recovery my mother went to Mecca and left me with my stepmother. My stepmother caused me a lot of pain. I was the one who did all the housework because she only has sons, and she was not grateful. My father would not talk to her about me, he always told me that suffering has an end. One day my mother sent the money for me to join her in Mecca and I was there for 4 years. When I returned my father and his brothers decided to marry me despite my mother wanting me to go back to Mecca, and that I didn't want to get married because I didn't like the person that they wanted me to marry, but someone else. Since my mother trusted one of my father's brothers, she accepted the marriage and I also accepted to please them. The results were positive as I am still married and running my household.	**My fate** I'm the first wife in my household. When I first became pregnant, I delivered by caesarean section and had a baby girl. But she didn't live long, she died two years later. Her loss had traumatized me and since then I hadn't had the chance to get pregnant again. My in-laws then started talking to my husband about this problem and asked him to take a second wife, which he did. When this second wife came, she had given birth to a boy. Since that time, I had become the deceitful one. My co-wife provokes me to see if I will react because she knows that she has a child, and as soon as I speak my in-laws start asking my husband to divorce me because I cannot give birth.

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE
Adult women (31 years or older)	**Because she likes me** My son and my co-wife's son had a fight when neither I nor my husband were there. My co-wife was there, and she let them fight because she knows that her son is bigger than mine. When I came back my co-wife and I started to argue because of this. When my husband arrived, he asked what had happened and I explained it to him. He said that they are children and that we shouldn't pay attention to that, and that if we leave his house, the children will stay because they are his children. We started arguing with him when his sister-in-law intervened to tell me to stop and think about my children. I stopped arguing because I know that she likes me, otherwise she wouldn't come and tell me to stop.	**Misunderstandings** My husband used to hurt me and one day when I was in this situation, I couldn't handle it anymore and left his house. I went to my brother's house. From there, I went to see the village chief in person to explain the problem to him and decide that enough is enough and I couldn't go back to my husband's house. But after listening to my whole story, my brother called my husband to warn him and draw his attention to the fact that the problem should not be repeated. They had made the decision that I should go back to my husband's house to be with my children. My husband made a commitment not to repeat this behavior. We are together now with our children and without any problems.	**The wrong initiative** Last year my eldest son decided to go on an exodus, and he had no money. I was obliged to sell my cart including the cow to give him pocket money and to pay for his transportation. Today it has been exactly one year, and I don't know anything about him, nor has he sent me anything. Before his departure I was doing my business with the cart and I didn't want him to go, but as his father had the last word, he ordered me to let him go. Today I have no right to complain. I am worried if he would ever come back even if he didn't come with any money, I must not lose my eldest son and the cart both at the same time.

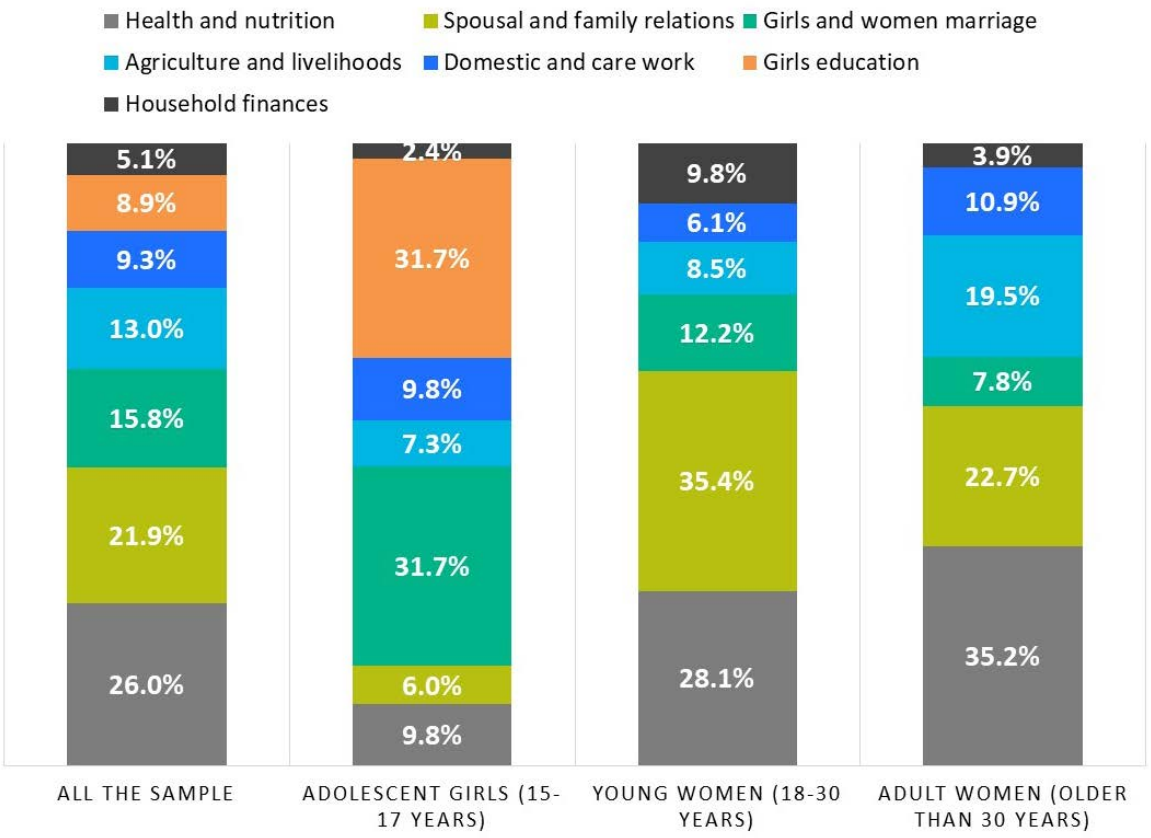
The narratives shared by young women add another type of decision related to spousal interactions and extended family relations, and the extent to which women need to compromise to maintain their marriage and remain with their children. While in the narrative self-signified as positive, the husband understood the health issues that his wife faced and supported her to the point of contesting his own father, in the experience self-signified as negative, the husband and his family showed no empathy for the woman's mental and physical health. In the experience self-signified as neutral, the woman accepted the decision of her family to marry a person she disliked in order to please them.

Adult women's narratives also involved decisions related to spousal and co-wife relations but add another type of decisions about their children, showing the extent to which women need to compromise. In the story self-signified as positive, the woman's sister-in-law helped her deescalate a conflict so she wouldn't have to leave her children behind, while in the story self-signified as negative the woman had to obey her husband in allowing her son to migrate and sell her main productive asset to pay for his journey. The experience self-signified as neutral involved a woman who suffered abuse at the hands of her spouse but had the agency and support of her brother to contest the situation and end the violence.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of narratives by the main type of decision involved in the story by age group as selected by women and girls. Following the initial pattern shown in narratives presented above (Table 8), the main decisions for almost two thirds of adolescent girls' experiences related to their education and marriage (63.4%), while for slightly over 75% of young women, the main decisions in their experiences related to spousal and family relations (35.4%), health and nutrition (28.1%) and to a lesser extent marriage (12.2%). For adult

women, the main decisions in their experiences relate to health and nutrition (35.2%), to some extent spousal and family relations (22.7%), but more than for the other age groups to agriculture and livelihoods (19.5%) and domestic and care work (10.9%). This suggests that the types of decisions that affect girls' and women's lives evolve through their life cycle.

Figure 5. Main type of decision involved in women and girls' experiences (tool 1; N=292)



To further explore differences among the narratives self-signified as positive and negative, one of each of these narratives shared by influencer groups (religious and community leaders, adult men, mothers-in-law, first wives and women head of household) were selected randomly and are shared in Table 9. These narratives suggest that influencers are often involved in decisions on girls' and women's marriages and spousal and family relationships. Influencers' positive experiences involve outcomes in which they were able to keep the woman in her husband's home and with her children, and negative stories recounted no other option but to accept divorce. This may explain in part why influencers self-signified a larger proportion of the experiences shared as positive, as from their perspective, it seems that keeping marriages together is always a positive outcome, while for women and girls this may not be the case.

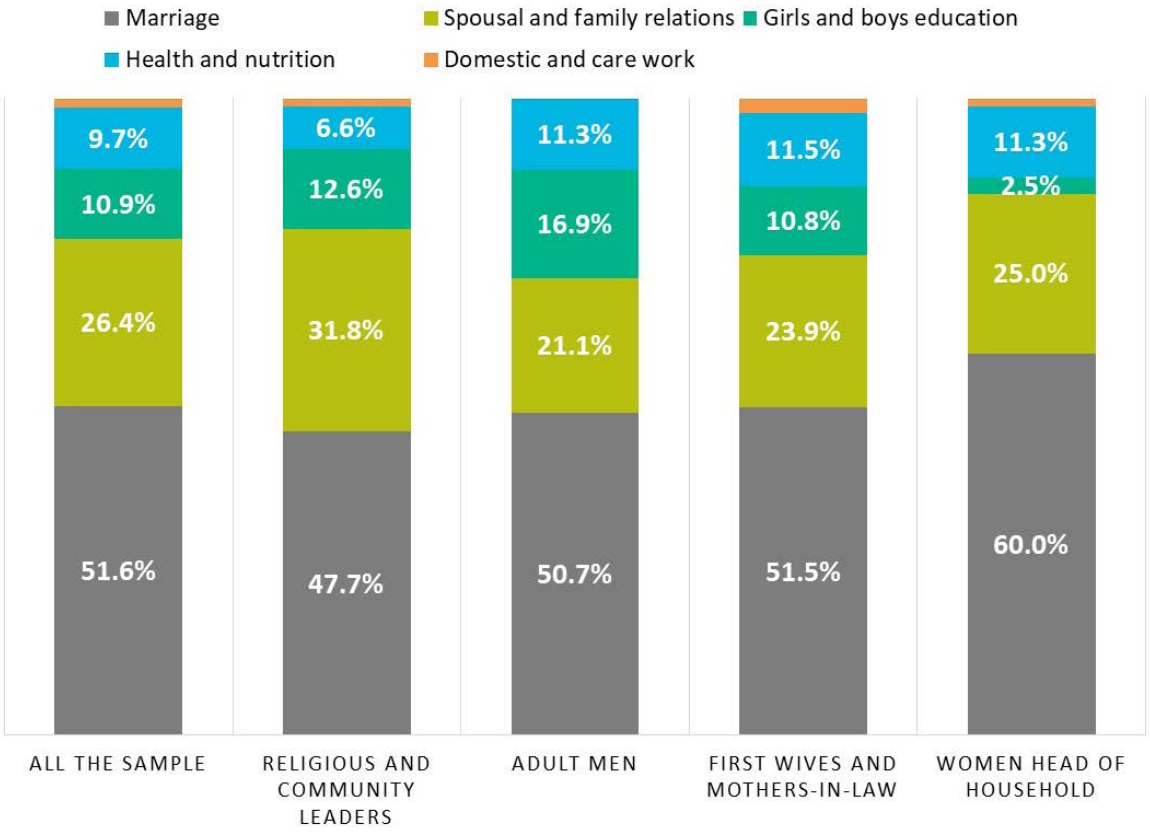
Table 9. Influencers' narratives by type of experience

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Religious leaders	**Sound advice for the bride and groom** As a religious leader, I am very involved in giving advice of all kinds, especially on marriage and reconciliation of couples. When there is a marriage project in progress, I try to analyze whether the husband can maintain his household well or not. When one of my granddaughters wanted to marry a boy that I did not appreciate, I opposed the marriage, advising her to better wait to get married, she accepted and rejected the suitor. This year, at the end of the harvest, we will see if she finds a good match to marry her. Unfortunately, it happens that some people do not listen to my advice and they end up regretting their stubbornness.	**A blast** My little sister married a gentleman and endured two years of suffering and hardship without informing the family. While in this situation, she had two children, but when the suffering became enormous, she came to the house to explain the problem. The husband was unable to provide a good home for his wife, and she could barely find food to eat with her children and had to come to her family house to look for food. When the problems got worse, her parents worked with me and my little brother to find a solution. We summoned the husband to the district chief's house without a favorable outcome. We decided to break the marriage bond by accepting his divorce. She was divorced and then remarried.
Community leaders	**Patience in marriage** A woman had come to me to ask for a divorce from her husband. At that time, I was with the canton chief of Dungass. With him we had called the marabouts to go to the woman's house and tell her parents that we would try to reconcile them. That's how we had started to calm the woman down by giving her advice so that she could reverse her decision. Advice after advice, she finally agreed, and we informed her husband that she was going to return to his house. The husband did not want to divorce because he loved his wife. Now she is in her happy home.	**Forced marriage and divorce** The sister of my first wife was forced in a marriage with her own cousin. The year she was married it was fight after fight until she was separated from her husband. The girl's father agreed to the divorce because the father of the newly married man is also the girl's uncle and it was necessary to avoid problems. After she was divorced, her father asked me to take her into my home because she could no longer live with her father. She has been living in my house for three months and since she came to us, she has had a new suitor, but she refused to marry him. She has been doing her little doughnut business and continues to live with us.
Adult men	**Forbidden to take a girl out of school to marry** My neighbor's daughter was studying and was in seventh grade when her parents wanted to marry her. The girl was brilliant in class, though. By word of mouth, the story was circulating in the village. When I heard about it, I decided to find a solution for the girl. I approached the school principal so that we could forbid this marriage for the good of the girl and even her family. We started by going to sensitize the parents, after several explanations her parents decided to let her continue her studies. Now she is in high school and we hope that she will be a civil servant in the future.	**Marital conflict** When I was young, I saw my wife walking on the street and I stopped her, we talked a little bit and that's when I decided to marry her. I sent my older sister to apply for the marriage, and her parents accepted the dowry. We got married and have been married now for two years without having a child. One day she decided to go back to her parents thinking that I was the one with the problems. Then, we decided to go to the hospital for the test and found that I am in good health. After that, every time I talk to her, she gets angry easily, and I'm really uncomfortable with her all the time, and still have her living in my house.

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Mothers-in-law	**The story of patience in marriage** Whenever my daughter-in-law had problems with her husband, my son, I intervened to reconcile them. My daughter-in-law will come to me and tell me problems, and I would always advise her be patient. Similarly, I would call my son and tell him to behave well towards his wife, and that he should stop all his bad behavior, and seek peace in his home. I did not consult anyone, and my daughter-in-law has complete respect and esteem for me, which is why she accepted what I had always said and all my advice. They are together today without any problems.	**An uneasy wife** One of our daughters often comes to complain about her husband, because she and her children don't have enough to eat, nor new clothes, let alone nice things for her house. Because she has 6 children, I always give her advice to stay in her home, because it is the consecutive bad harvests that are the cause of all our problems. No one is spared, and she cannot leave her children alone. With the help of the village chief, we have always managed to keep her in her home.
First wives	**Reconciliation** There is a woman who is in our village, she was brought from a neighboring village, and she chose me as her mentor called "ouwan rana" in Hausa. They had problems with her husband because of his night-time behavior, you know us women with our jealousy. She came to see me to say that she was tired and was going to leave him. I advised her to be patient, stay in her house and that it will pass. I put her in front, we went to her house to meet her husband, and I advised them together. She accepted my advice and they are there now in peace.	**Return to her husband's house** My eldest daughter has a co-wife who took over everything in the house, and her husband completely lost interest in her, he left her without food with her four children, without clothes, without anything. When they started to have problems, I tried to solve them every time. She endured everything until he stopped sharing the bed with her. It was at that time that she packed her luggage and left, but despite all that was going on, her father and I decided that she should go back to take care of her children. She agreed to return, but unfortunately the husband decided to divorce her without asking for or assessing the danger that those children might be in. She is now with us, her children are with the husband, and we don't have any news about them as they are in a village that is far from here.
Women head of household	**Useful decision** Last year I got involved on the marriage plans for one of my granddaughters in getting her parents to give up their plans for a forced marriage. One night she came to tell me what was going on, and I told her to calm down. The next day I went to their house to meet her father, her mother and herself to tell them to let her make her choice because she will stay with her husband and not someone else.	**The story of divorce** At the beginning of the rainy season, my little sister's daughter who is married to a polygamous man divorced her husband. She had a co-wife that was the first wife and she monopolized everyone in the house. The husband couldn't say anything, he couldn't even hold his child when my niece's gave birth or buy things for the child for fear of his first wife. She felt abandoned, so she packed her bags and came here to my house. Observing the seriousness of the situation, I went to meet her parents and her brothers in person, and we talked about it. Finally, we decided to accept what she wants, that is, divorce. He divorced her after three sessions with the village chief, and she is going through her period of divorce now at her parents' house.

Figure 6 shows the distribution of narratives by the main type of decision involved in the story as selected by influencers and by type of influencer. Validating the initial analysis of influencers' narratives above (Table 9), 78% of the experiences relate to decisions about marriage and/or spousal and family relations, 11% to decisions related to boys' and girls' education and 9.7% to decisions related to health and nutrition. Experiences that involved decisions about domestic and care work were minimal, though were more often shared by female influencer respondent groups than male. Other slight differences by influencer respondent group include that religious and community leaders shared a higher proportion of stories related to spousal and family relations, while adult men shared a higher proportion of experiences that relate to decisions on boys' and girls' educations, showing their important role in this type of decision. Also, more adult men and women shared experiences that relate to health and nutrition decisions as compared to religious and community leaders.

Figure 6. Main type of decision involved in influencers' experiences (tool 2; N=432)



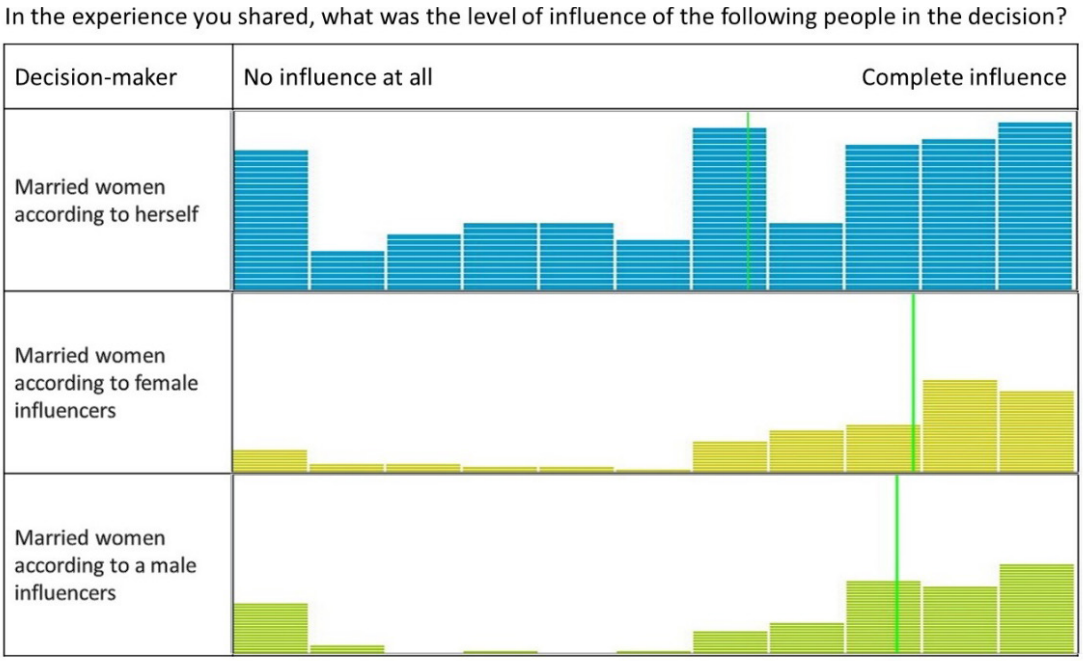
Comparing Figures 6 and 7 (types of decisions relayed by women and girls as compared to influencers) shows that women and girls spoke of a larger variety of decisions as compared to influencers, who mostly spoke about a decision related to a girl's or woman's marriage and/or spousal and family relations, showing that community and religious leaders are less involved in decisions related to households' livelihoods, health or nutrition.

Gender norms and behaviors

Norms and behaviors related to male dominated decision-making

To explore who influences decision-making processes and how much, women and girls and influencers were asked about the level of influence that they and other household members had in the decisions shared in their experiences. Figure 7 shows the perceived level of influence of married women in decision-making from their perspective, and from that of male and female influencers, showing that women and girls perceive themselves as having less influence than influencers consider that they have. In addition, responses from women and girls are very dispersed showing a high variability of their perceptions.

Figure 7. Level of influence of married women from their own perspective and that of female and male influencers (tool 1, N=205; tool 2, N=248)

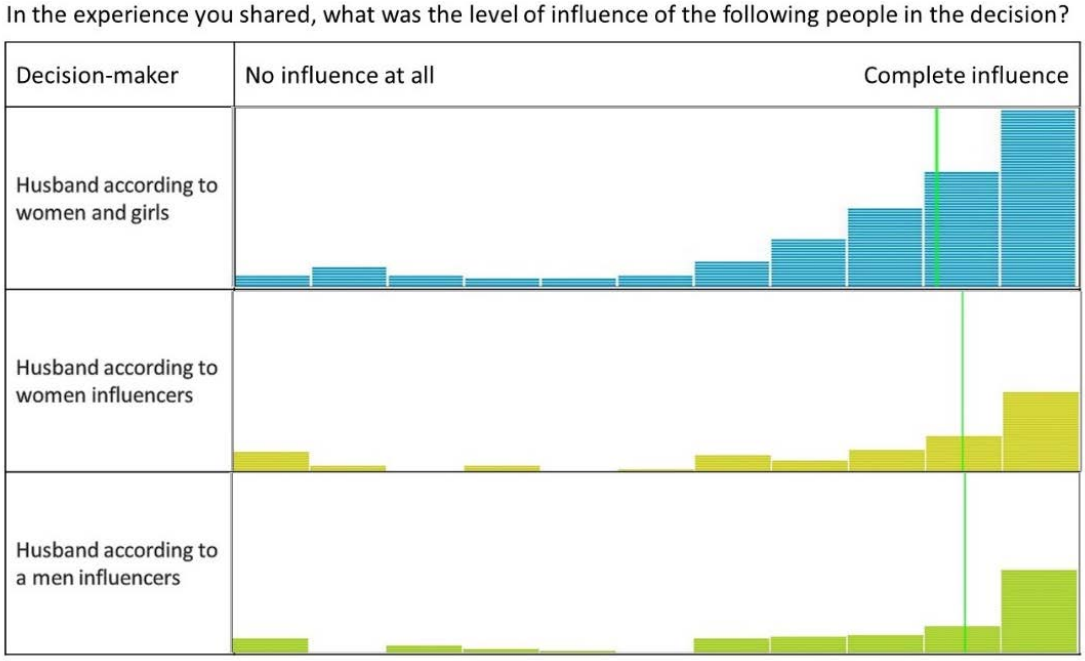


Unmarried women's and girls' own perception of their influence in decisions that affect them is even lower than that of married women, but also very dispersed. During collective interpretation, adolescents in particular spoke how married women gain status and respect in their communities as compared to unmarried girls, likely affecting their agency and influence in decision making processes as well as their desire to marry early (see child marriage section for more information). Influencers themselves do not perceive differences in the decision-making power between married and unmarried women and girls (see Figure 8).

On the other hand, as can be shown in Figure 9, the perceived level of husbands' influence in decision-making is higher and responses from women and girls and influencers are consistent. Married women overwhelmingly and consistently indicated that their husbands are the most influential persons in their lives and have more influence on decisions that affect them than they do themselves. Influencers' responses on husbands' levels of influence were consistent and agreed that husbands have more influence in decisions than their wives.

Figure 8. Level of influence of unmarried girls from their own perspective and that of women and men influencers (tool 1, N=205; tool 2, N=248)

Figure 9. Level of influence of husbands from the perspective of married women and girls and that of women and men influencers (tool 1, N=183; tool 2, N=214)



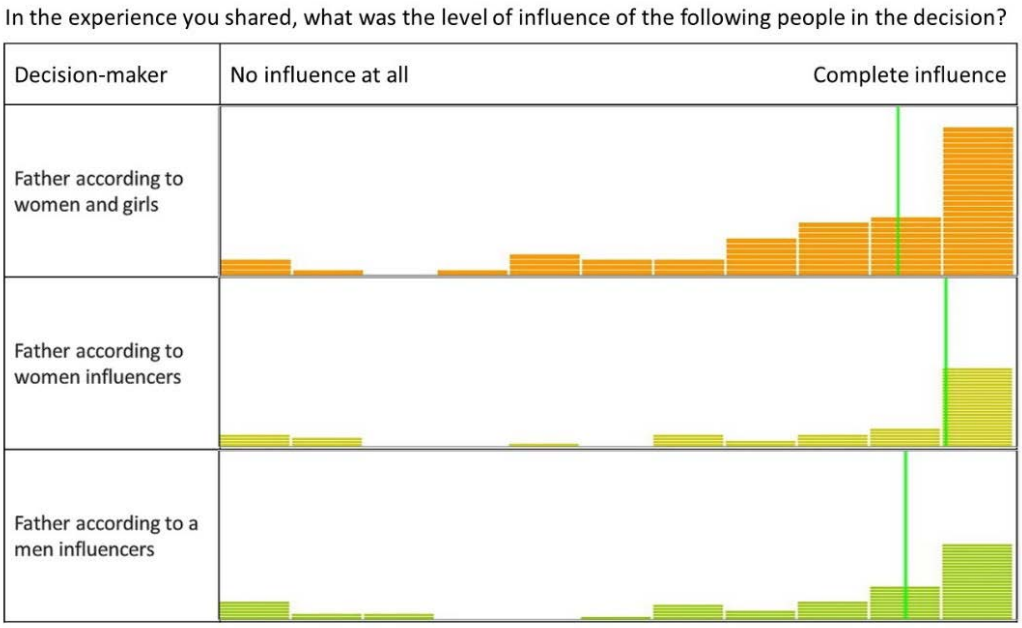
The extent to which husbands are able to dominate their wives' lives can be demonstrated in the following story, told by a married woman between the age of 36–40:

I'm the man of the house now

I've lived with my husband for over twenty years and we have ten children. But it is me who takes care of these children with what I earn from selling my agricultural products. I have brothers who are civil servants in town who can help me, but my husband refuses to let me go to them to ask for their help. As for the money he makes, he spends it on himself and other unmarried women in the village without worrying about his family who is in need. I have exhausted all my efforts and don't know how to bring my husband back to reason. This is the problem I am facing, that of being mother and father in the home.

For unmarried girls, the same pattern can be observed about their fathers who also have a high level of influence in the decisions that affect them, both from their own perspective and from that of female and male influencers (see Figure 10). Thus, as girls get married, they transition from a situation where their fathers have a high level of influence in the decisions that affect them, to a situation where their husbands dominate decision-making.

Figure 10. Level of influence of fathers from the perspective of unmarried girls and that of women and men influencers (tool 1, N=79; tool 2, N=111)



To ascertain support for gender norms that underlie male domination, respondents were asked to indicate whether they acted based on the specific gender norms in the experience they shared, and to indicate the what extent they personally agree with each of these norms in relation to the level of community support for them. As shown in Figure 11, if respondents did not agree with the norm but acted on it, they would place their dot at the extreme right indicating community support for the norm, whereas if they acted on the norm and agreed with it they would place their dot to the extreme left. The specific gender norms included in this question were:

1. A man has the right to correct/discipline his wife and children
2. It is the woman's responsibility to make the marriage a success
3. The woman must be submissive

Table 10 shows the number and percentage of women and girls and influencers who selected each of these response options, meaning that they acted upon each of these gender norms in the experience they shared. These results show that almost half of women and girls acted based on the belief that a man has the right to correct his wife and children, and that it is a woman's responsibility to make the marriage work. An even a higher number (57.9%) found the need of a woman to be submissive as relevant to their story. Less influencers acted upon the first two beliefs, but they equally acted under the belief that women must be submissive.

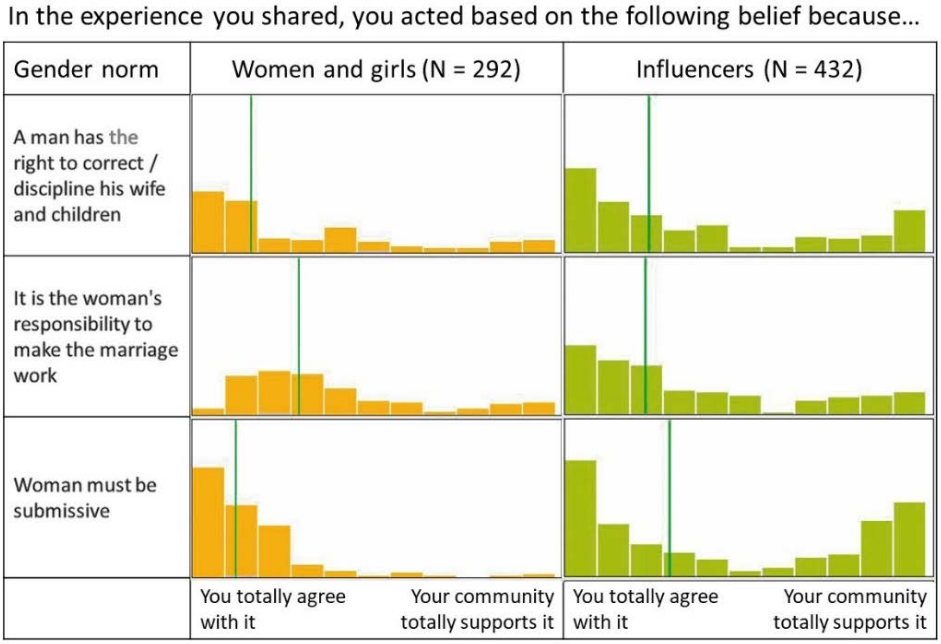
Table 10. Percentage of respondents who acted in their experience based on gender norms that support male domination

GENDER NORM	WOMEN AND GIRLS WHO ACTED BASED ON THE NORM		INFLUENCERS WHO ACTED BASED ON THE NORM	
	N	%	N	%
A man has the right to correct / discipline his wife and children	137	46.9	189	43.8
It is the woman's responsibility to make the marriage work	138	47.3	183	42.3
Woman must be submissive	169	57.9	252	58.3

As shown in Figure 11, women and girls indicated personal agreement with all three norms, demonstrating their internalization of a male dominated culture. With regards to the belief that a woman is responsible to make her marriage work, there is slightly more influence from the community, but the median line is still located towards the left side of the slider (median = 0.29, compared to 0.16 and 0.12, respectively). When these findings were disaggregated by socio-linguistic group, no notable difference was observed.

Influencers also indicated high levels of personal belief with the three norms, though tended to think that their actions were more influenced by their community's belief system as compared to women and girls. A difference between women's and girls' responses and those of influencers is regarding the social norm that women must be submissive: this belief seems to be more deep-rooted in women´s and girls´ personal belief system as compared to influencers, where the median indicates a larger source of community support for the norm.

Figure 11. Level of agreement with gender norms that underlie male domination, disaggregated by group of interest



Norms and behaviors related to girls' education

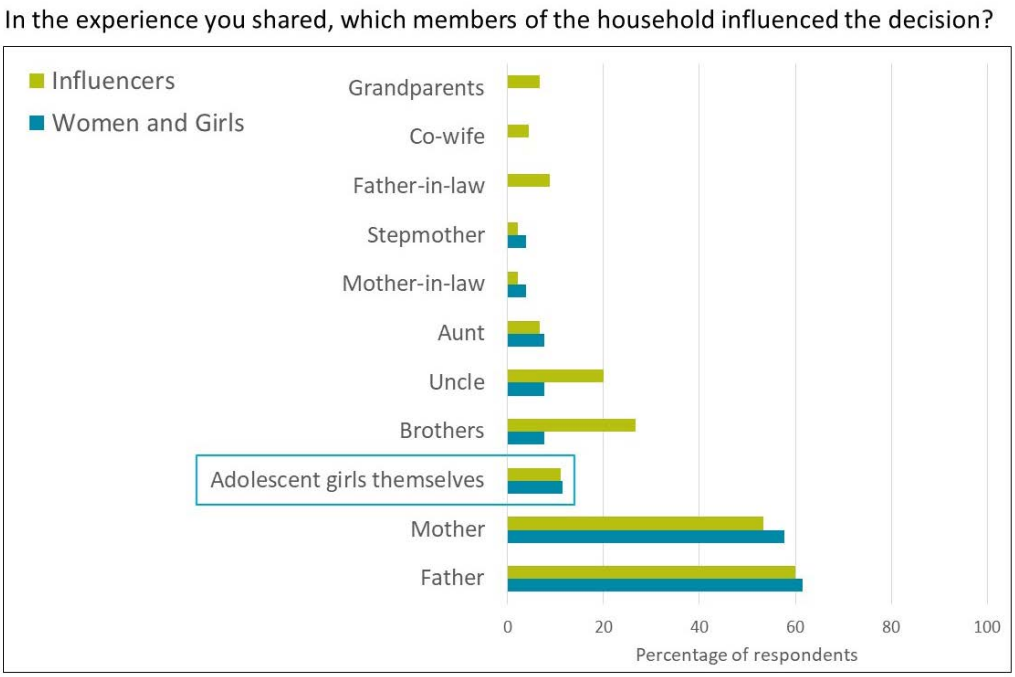
Given the importance that girls' education has not only to prevent child marriage but as the foundation for the future well-being of women and their children, the gender analysis devoted attention to understanding girls' education levels and factors leading either to their drop out or their sustained attendance in school. As discussed above, unmarried adolescent girls most frequently spoke of decisions related to their education (31.7%) or marriage (31.7%) in their narratives, demonstrating the importance they place on education-related decisions in their lives. Nevertheless, results show that 58.1 percent of the unmarried adolescent girls interviewed (N=74) have never gone to school. The other 41.9 percent have started school, but only 1.3% completed the first three years of primary school, and 5.4% the six years of primary school. In addition, only 17.6% continued into secondary school but given their age (15-17 years) none have finished. However, when the entire sample of girls and women is analyzed, none of the respondents finished secondary school. If this trend continues, most of the adolescent girls interviewed will most probably not finish high school either.

Influencers on decisions related to girls' education

In collective interpretation workshops, Hausa adolescent girls expressed their unhappiness with not going to school, saying that while they were happy to help their parents with household chores, they feel dissatisfied because they want to be educated, speak French and are limited because they are not educated. This desire certainly varies, as at least some stories told by girls spoke of their own initiative to drop out. Responses from women and girls and influencers to the question on which members of the household influenced the decision, disaggregated for decisions related to girls' education, reinforce what was shared by adolescent girls during collective interpretation workshops, indicating that fathers, followed closely by mothers, were involved in the decision taken in most of the experiences shared, and that adolescent girls and other household members only influence the decision in fewer cases (see Figure 12).

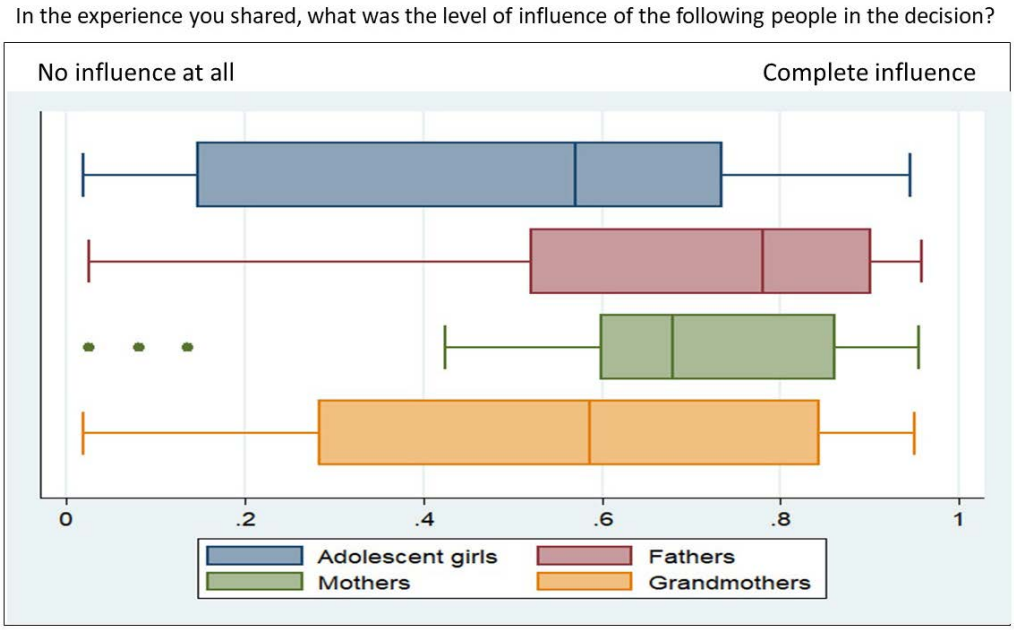
In addition, combining the responses from women and girls and influencers (N=71) indicates that in 36% of the cases the decision was taken only by the father, in 31.4% only by the mother, and in 32.6% of the cases was a joint decision between parents; and that adolescent girls only were involved in the decision in 9% of the experiences shared. These findings were validated during collective interpretation workshops as adolescent girls reinforced the importance of having their parents' support to go to school, but they also highlighted the importance of girls' own willingness to study and succeed.

Figure 12. Household members who influence decisions related to girls' education (tool 1, N=26; tool 2, N=45)



To add a layer of analysis on influencers in decisions related to girls' education, respondents were also asked to indicate the level of influence that different household members had in the decision from "no influence at all" to "complete influence". Results from adolescent girls (see Figure 13) show that fathers are the most influential, followed by mothers. Grandmothers had some level of influence, but the responses varied significantly, while adolescent girls not only had an influence in fewer experiences shared, but their level of influence is lower than that of her parents. To complement this information, when adolescent girls were asked about their most trusted sources of information for decisions related to education, 61.5% indicated they were their peers and friends, followed by their mother and father in 38.5% and 19.2% of the experiences shared, respectively.

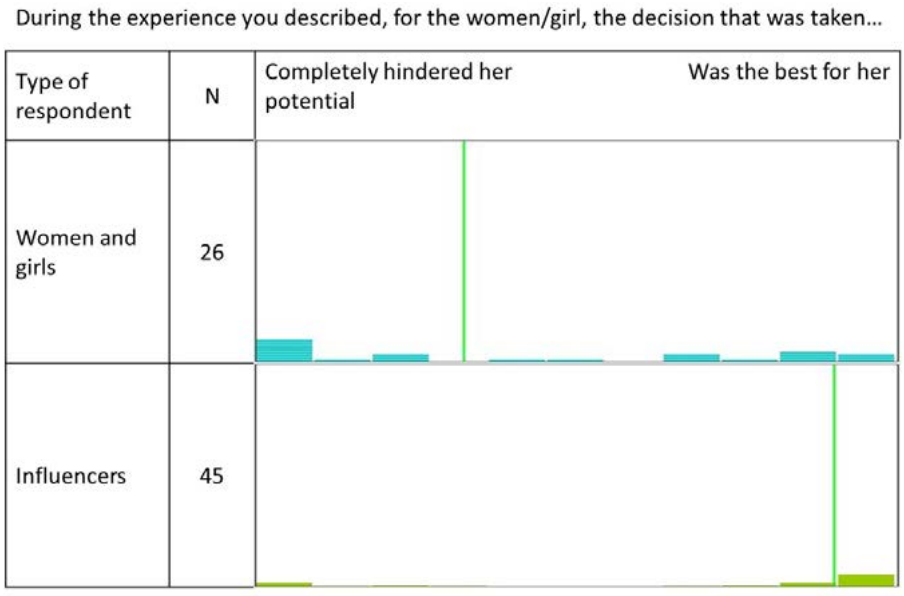
Figure 13. Household members level of influence in decisions on girls' education from the perspective of the girls involved (tool 1, N=26)



Impact of decisions related to girls' education

To assess the impact of decisions made, women and girls and influencers were asked to what extent they consider that the decision that was taken "was the best for her" or "completely hindered her potential." Findings disaggregated for decisions related to girls' education show highly contrasting responses between those of the girls involved and those of influencers (see Figure 14). While influencers have a dominant perspective that the decision taken was the best for the girl, with only a very few outliers who believe that it completely hindered her potential, the perception of the girls themselves is very dispersed in the slider, but the median indicates that girls felt that the decision taken hindered their potential to some extent.

Figure 14. Impact of decisions related to education on women and girls, by type of respondent



Factors that led to girls' dropout

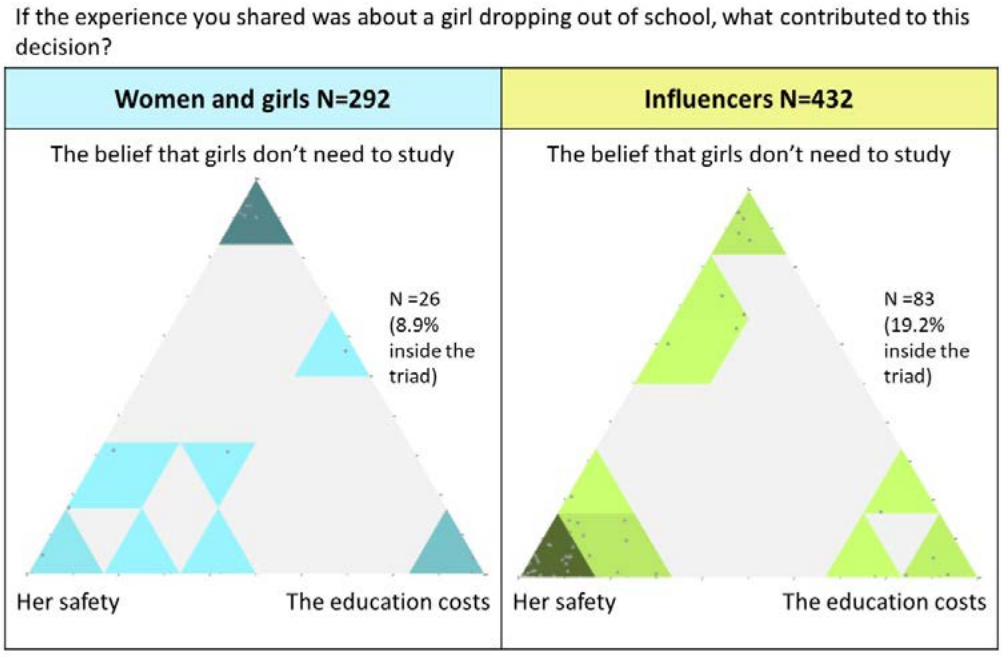
To understand the causes for girls' school drop-out and their relative importance, women, girls and influencers were asked to reflect on three factors in particular that contributed to this decision: her safety, the belief that girls don't need to study, and education-related costs (see Figure 15). Only 8.9% of women and girls responded to this question, which is expected since two-thirds of girls have never gone to school. All respondents indicated that a combination of factors was at play. In terms of the relative importance of these three reasons, from women's and girls' perspective, the decision to stop girls' education is mainly based on the belief that girls do not need to study, followed by the cost of education and the concern that families have for their security.

From the perspective of influencers, 19.2% shared an experience that involved a decision to stop girls' education, but the relative importance that they gave to these three factors was different from women and girls. Influencers highlighted girls´ security as the most prominent reason for girls' drop out, followed by almost equal importance between the cost of education and the belief that girls do not need to study.

Security concerns were discussed during collective interpretation workshops, in which respondents clarified their concern is related to children's safety during their long walks to and from distant schools. Families who value their children's education and have a tutor (usually relatives) in the city may send their daughters to live in their homes so they can continue their studies.

Girls also shared how their parents are concerned for their safety; Hausa adolescent girls said that their parents advise them to keep quiet and avoid provocations, that they pray for them before they leave the house, and/or accompany them if possible. Fulani adolescent girls shared their view that customary chiefs must ensure that security is provided throughout the village, as they are the ones who know their villages best. Kanuri adolescent girls recommended that parents must pray to protect their daughters, sensitize them to have safe behaviors once they leave their house, and advise them to take care of themselves and avoid making a mistake that will dishonor the whole family.

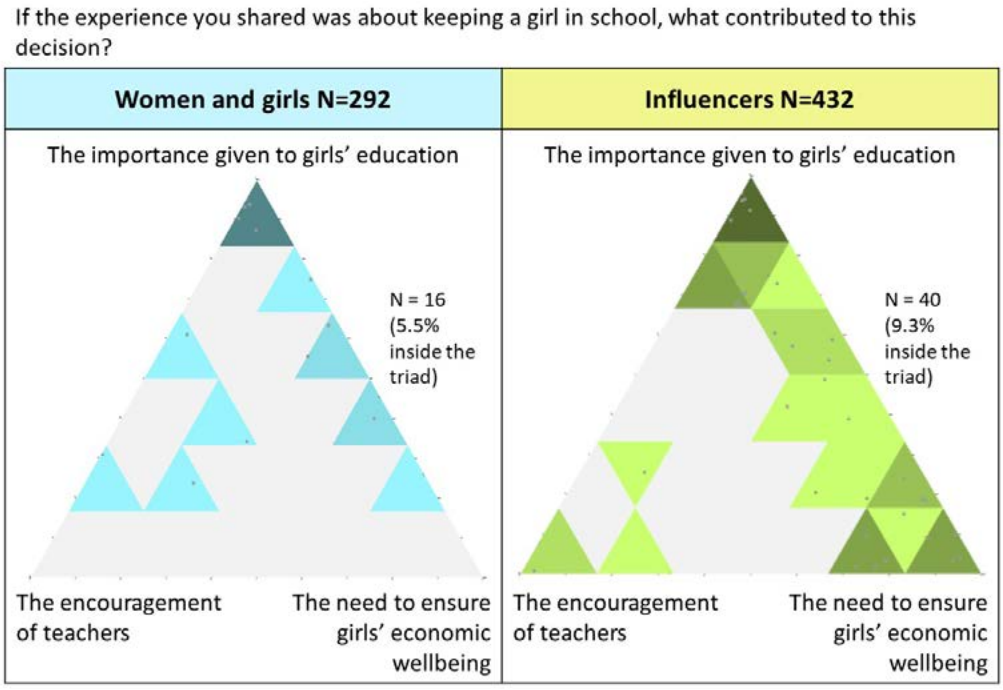
Figure 15. Reasons for stopping girls' education, disaggregated by type of respondent



Factors that contributed to keeping girls in school

To identify positive deviants, the study attempted to highlight cases in which women's, girls', and/or influencers' stories related to a decision to continue a girl's education, and the factors that contributed to that decision. Only 5.5 percent of women and girls and 9.3 percent of influencers shared an experience that involved keeping a girl in school. Both groups of respondents—women and girls as well as influencers—shared that the most important factor was the belief that girls' education is important. For influencers, the need to ensure girls' wellbeing was also an important contributing factor and to a lesser extent for women and girls. The encouragement of teachers was also a contributing factor, but of less importance (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Reasons for keeping girls' in school, disaggregated by type of respondent



A review of influencers' narratives who cited the importance of girls' education was conducted to identify any common characteristics or emergent practices Girma could amplify. Influencers' stories affirmed their belief in the importance of girls' education as well as positive influence from teachers to continue. One possible emergent practice identified from the narratives is brothers' advocacy on behalf of their sisters to continue their education, suggesting that while lobbying fathers—the primary decision makers—is important, brothers (i.e. boys in general) could also be an influential target population for girls' education. This is demonstrated in the following story:

The story of my sister's school

One day I had made the decision to enroll my sister in school. Before her enrolment I had explained the situation to our father and mother. Since her enrolment, the girl continued her primary education until she obtained her CFEPD. Afterwards the girl had gone to college to continue her studies at the CEG of Maidamoussa, but when in the 4th class the onset of her menstruation completely showed her that she did not want to study and finally she was expelled and an old man married her. That decision was negative for her.

In addition, at least four influencers spoke of the Primary School Completion Exam (in French the *CFEPD - Certificat de Fin d'Etudes du Premier Degré*) as a landmark for the girl to take (and hopefully pass) during her schooling. While the goal is certainly that girls continue their education through secondary school and university, given such low education baselines in the zone, a possible entry point to increasing girls' education could be encouraging parents to at least enroll girls (and boys) until they test for and ideally pass the Primary School Completion Exam. Indeed, one influencer used this benchmark in negotiation with a girl's parents in the story below. This story also highlights the importance of passing the exam to continue girls' schooling and delay their marriage, which should be a focus of education programs.

Wan da baya da tchaw (bad thing)

There was a girl from my village who was in primary school. At the time she was 13 years old. She had reached the fifth grade. When she had to sit for the 6th grade exams, her parents asked her teacher to exclude her from school because they wanted to marry her. The teacher refused to expel her or to allow the marriage, including me. I had gone to tell her parents to wait until she got her CFEPD because if you married her at that age and she was studying it was a problem. So, in consultation with the village leaders (the village chief and the imam), they accepted our decision to let her take her CFEPD exams for the 6th grade. Finally, she took the CFEPD. She was not admitted. After she failed, we married her. She was satisfied with her lot and lives in her home.

Another influencer's story also highlights what community members could perceive as the risks of educating girls: one girl who has obtained some level of education has refused uneducated suitors. Girma should keep this in mind as they develop their risk mitigation plan, to ensure there is no such backlash to girls' education as it could be seen as risking traditional marriage practices.

To further identify concrete actions that could be taken to influence girls' education, an additional MCQ was used for respondents to identify other contributing factors. Figure 16 shows the percentage of respondents—women and girls, and influencers- who chose each one of the options and added other ideas in the open-ended "other" option.

The most frequent factor women and girls cited (62.3%) was having a school near their house[1], which was also rated high by influencers (41.7%). This is surely related to both groups' concern for girls' security as discussed above, as well as the fact that many girls did not attend any school at all, and the costs of sending girls to a school far away. In addition to having a school near the village, respondents cited the need to improve schools' infrastructure (materials used to build the schools, water supply, pharmacy) and ensuring that they are equipped with necessary supplies.

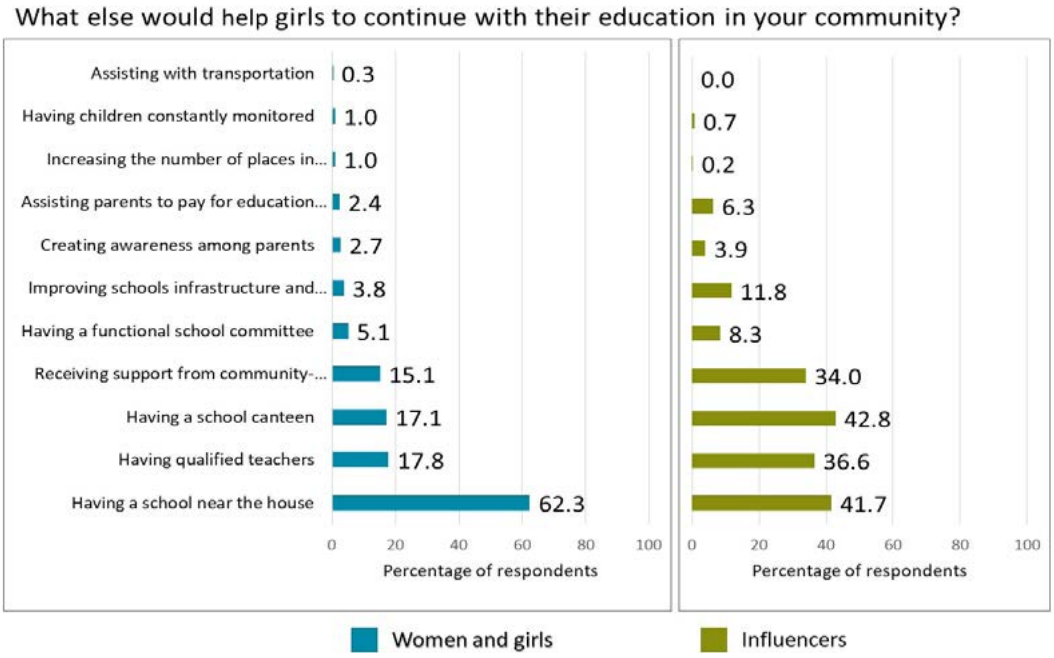
Other incentives that were important for both women and girls and influencers were having school canteens where children can access proper meals (17.1 and 42.8%, respectively), ensuring the quality of education by having enough and qualified teachers (17.8 and 36.6%, respectively), and having support for the schooling of the children from community structures (15.1 and 34%, respectively).

These results show that while most adolescent girls would like to go to school if there is one close to them, influencers value a larger range of factors. To influence parents to enroll and keep their daughters in school, it is important to ensure that schools are in or close to communities, that they are in good condition, provide

1 Based on field observations, the average distance to primary schools is likely 6—7 kilometers.

a meal for students, have the necessary supplies, are safe, and that teachers are qualified to ensure a good quality education. Girma could also work with positive deviants who believe that girls' education is important, especially for ensuring their wellbeing, who could serve as role models and influencers for those who believe that girls' education is unnecessary.

Figure 17. Incentives for keeping girls in school disaggregated by type of respondent (tool 1, N=292; tool 2, N=432)



Norms and behaviors related to women and girls' marriage

Gender norms related to marriage practices and specifically "child marriage", which is the term preferred by the Nigerien government, have a profound impact not only on women's and girls' agency and wellbeing but also that of her children. Given its significance as a constraint to food security and nutrition, the gender analysis devoted attention to estimating its prevalence as well as exploring root causes, motivations, social sanctions and rewards.

With respect to the prevalence of child marriage, Table 11 shows the percentage of women and girls who got married within three different age ranges. These results show that two thirds of women and girls (N=563) reported getting married when they were 15 or younger, one fourth when they were 16 or 17 years old, and only 9.4 percent were 18 years or older when they got married. In other words, 90.6 percent of women and girls married before the age of 18. Among the three sociolinguistic groups, slightly more Fulani reported women and girls who were married when they were 15 years old or younger (74.2 percent) and the lower percentage who got married at 18 years or older (6 percent), while no large differences are observed between Hausa and Kanuri.

Table 11. Women's and girls' age of marriage differentiated by sociolinguistic group

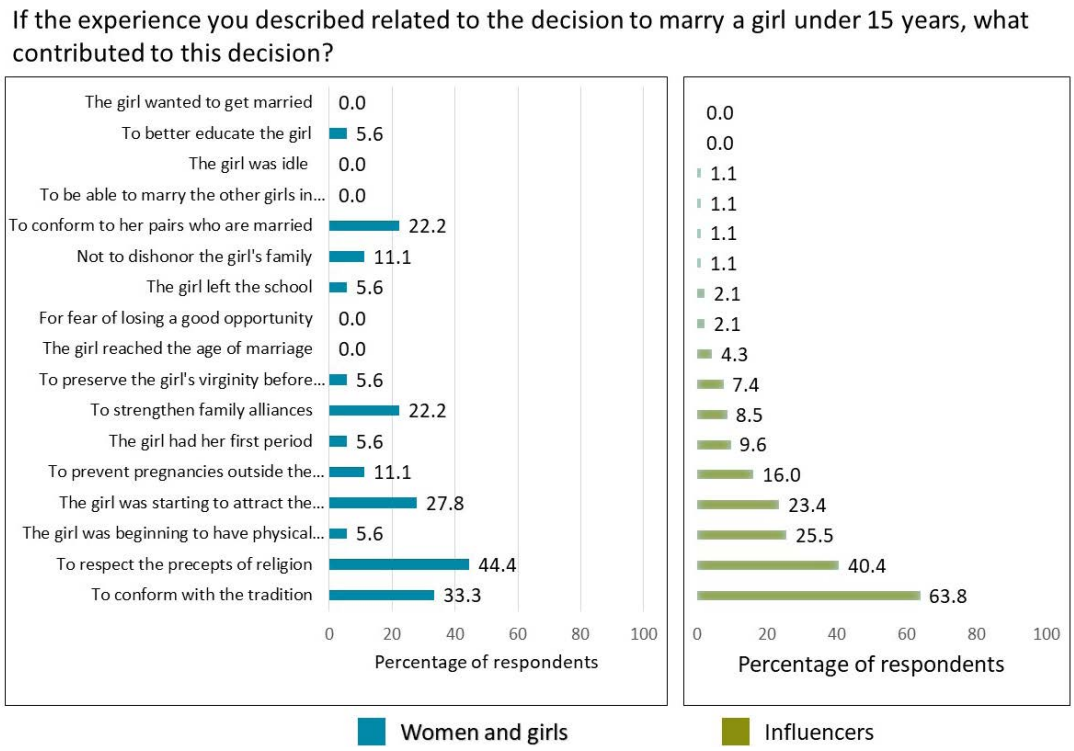
AGE OF MARRIAGE	FULANI		HAUSA		KANURI		ALL THE SAMPLE	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
15 years old or younger	135	74.2	107	61.8	133	65.5	375	67.2
16–17 years old	36	19.8	45	26.0	49	24.1	130	23.3
18 years old or older	11	6.0	21	12.1	21	10.3	53	9.5
TOTAL	**182**	**100.0**	**173**	**100**	**203**	**100.0**	**558**	**100.0**

Root causes of child or forced marriage

Given this very high rate of child marriage, the first thing that needs to be understood is underlying causes. Figure 20 shows the responses about what contributed to this decision from women, girls and influencers who shared an experience that involved the decision to marry a girl under 15 years of age.

Women, girls, and influencers said that the most relevant causes for early marriage was to conform with tradition and respect religious precepts—with influencers giving even greater importance to tradition—which are inter-related and rooted in social norms. Respondents diverged on the importance of other factors, with influencers giving more importance to girls' development of physical attributes, starting to attract male attention, and the prevention of pregnancy outside of marriage. Women and girls also gave importance to the fact that they were starting to attract male attention, but also the desire to strengthen family alliances, conform to her peers, and not dishonor her family. This shows that while girls' marriage is rooted in long-standing traditions and norms, there are a variety of factors that come into play for each individual involved.

Figure 18. Factors that contributed to child or forced marriage, disaggregated by type of respondent (tool 1, N=18; tool 2, N=432)



Women's and girls' narratives as well as collective interpretation workshops suggested that adolescent girls' lower social status as unmarried girls also present a push factor into marriage. For example, in collective interpretation workshops, while Kanuri girls said their obligations increase when married, since girls need to care for their husbands as well as do housework, most girls (Fulani and Hausa) described married women as having more value and being more respected, and Hausa girls said they "acquire a certain grandeur and respect" as opposed to unmarried girls who still "live under the orders" of her parents. Fulani girls also spoke of married women's social status, saying, "she has more value, she can attend certain ceremonies (baptism, death), she can do household chores that an unmarried girl cannot do, she has her own home." These push factors into marriage are likely more influential for girls living unhappily in their homes, such as this girl's story (age 15–17) demonstrates:

I have no luck in life

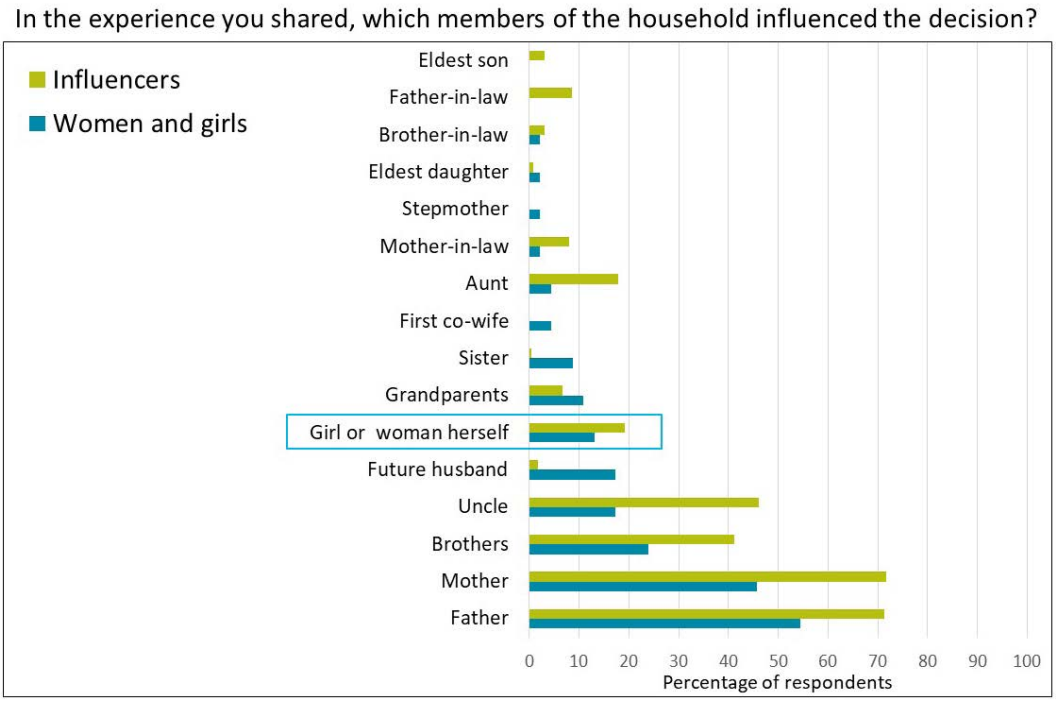
I lost my father five years ago; he fell from a tree and broke his hip. My mother then remarried another man, with whom she has three children. Since my father died, I have not had a stable family and life. Sometimes I am with my grandparents who only make me do all the household chores, sometimes I am with my mother whose children of her co-wives only insult me and ask me to go home. So, I decided to get married in order to find stability in my life, but my mother, my uncle and my grandmother refused on the pretext that I was still young and that I should still wait. Their decision affected me a lot because I know that I will suffer more, being like this without a fixed home.

Influencers on decisions related to marriage and their impact

Responses from women and girls and influencers to the question on which household members influenced the decision, disaggregated for decisions related to marriage, shows that according to women and girls, fathers (54.3%), mothers (45.7%), brothers (23.9%), uncles (17.4%) and the future husband (17.4%) influenced more decisions, while girls and women only influenced their marriage decision in 13% of the cases. Influencers agreed that mothers and fathers are the top two influencers (71.7 and 71.2%, respectively), as well as uncles (46.2%) and brothers (41.3%). Influencers also included girls as influential in the decision in 19.3% of the cases (see Figure 19).

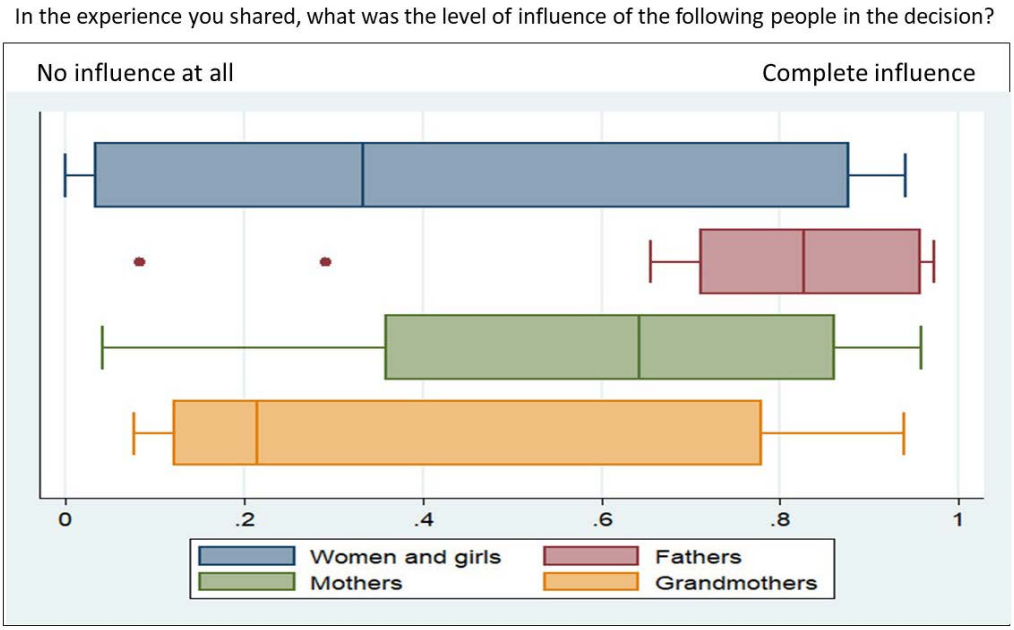
In addition, combining the responses from women and girls and influencers (N=269) indicates that in 20.5% of the cases the decision was taken only by the father, in 19.3% only by the mother, and in 54.7% of cases it was a joint decision between both parents, showing a higher percentage of experiences with joint decision making related to marriage than to education. In addition, adolescent girls and women only influenced their marriage decision in 18.2% of the cases.

Figure 19. Household members who influence decisions related to girls' and women's marriage (tool 1, N=46; tool 2, N=223)



To add a layer of analysis on influencers in decisions related to adolescent girls' and women's marriage, respondents were also asked to indicate the level of influence that different household members had in the decision from "no influence at all" to "complete influence". Results from adolescent girls and women (see Figure 20) reinforce above findings that fathers are by far the most influential, followed by mothers. At the median, grandmothers had very little influence, but the responses are very dispersed showing high variability on a case by case basis. Adolescent girls' and women's influence was also very dispersed, but at the median they had not only influence in less experiences shared, but their level of influence was much lower than that of her parents. To complement this information, when women and girls were asked for their trusted sources of information related to child marriage, the majority (58.7%) listed their peers or friends, followed by their mother in 37% of cases. Their third most frequent trusted source of information was their brothers (15.2%). This gives important information on how to target SBC efforts for prevention of child marriage.

Figure 20. Household members level of influence in decision on girls' marriage from the perspective of the women and girls involved (tool 1, N=46)



The stories below show two cases of girls being influenced by her peers to marry:

My marriage has been cancelled (girl age 15–17)

My father took me out of primary school, saying that studying is not a priority for a girl and that her place is at home to do housework. Last year, I had therefore told my suitor to send his family to make my marriage proposal to my parents. When they came, my father made them understand that I was still young and that he could not give me in marriage, even though my friends had started to marry. This decision hurt me a lot, because I knew I could manage a home unlike what my father believed.

Continuation of a Girl's School (male influencer)

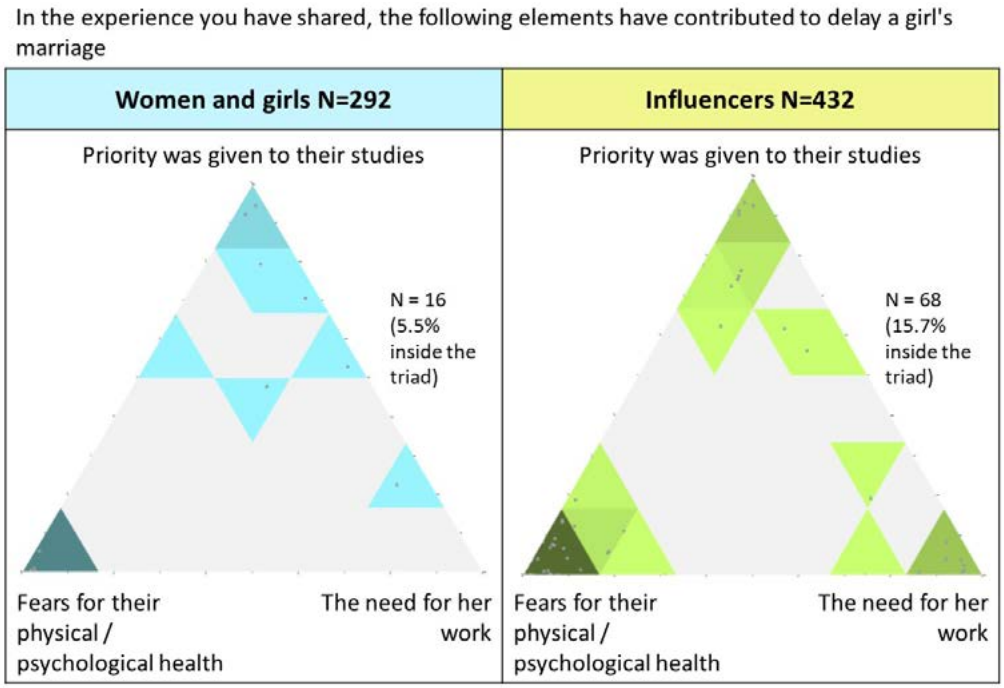
I have a daughter who's in 5th grade. This year, she wanted to drop out of school at the beginning of the school year so that she could get married, because many of her friends got married and some even had children. Her mother and I categorically refused, I insisted a lot a lot that she continue studying and that she would continue as far as possible, because she could gain a lot from continuing her studies. Her teachers supported me, and I am confident that she will go back to school next year.

Factors that contributed to delaying girls' marriage

Only 4.8 percent of experiences shared by women and girls and 6.7 percent of those shared by influencers related to the decision to delay girls' marriage, suggesting that this is not a common practice. Nevertheless, a better understanding of these experiences could identify emergent practices that Girma can amplify to contribute to the reduction of child marriage.

When women, girls, and influencers were asked to input on the relative importance of three factors that contributed to delaying girls marriage in their experience, they gave more importance to fears for girls' physical/ psychological health, followed by prioritizing education, and to a lesser extent the need for girls' work (either with household chores or productive activities). Influencers also indicated that fear for girls' physical or psychological health had the highest relative importance, followed almost equally by the importance given to their studies and the need for labor (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Reasons for delaying girls' marriage, disaggregated by type of respondent



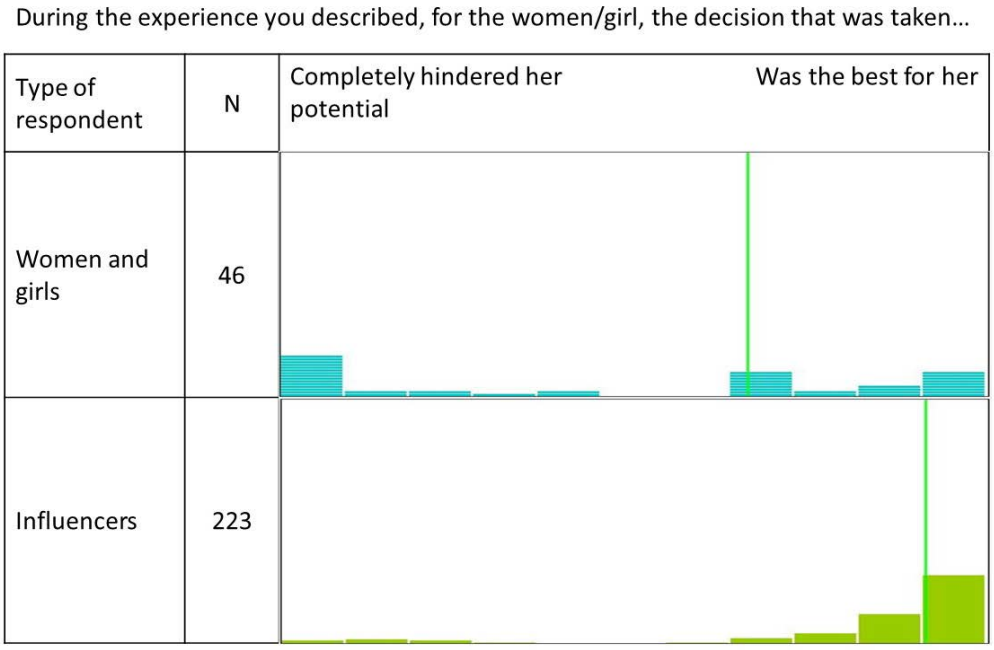
This story was told by one girl, age 15–17, who indicated that her parents delayed her marriage for fear of harming her health:

> **I am young**
> I had a lot of [male] friends who visited me. Last year one of them came to my parents to ask for my hand. I loved him so much. But my father and my mother decided to delay the marriage because I am too young. They told him to come back later when I grow up. It is a positive decision because they are my parents.

Impact of decisions related to women and girls' marriage

To assess the impact of women's and girls' marriage-related decisions, a slider-type question was used for respondents to determine the extent to which the decision "was the best for her" or "completely hindered her potential." Findings disaggregated for decisions related to women's and girls' marriage show that influencers have a dominant perspective that the decision taken was the best for the women or girl, with only a very few outliers who consider that it completely hindered her potential (see Figure 22). Women's and girls' perception, however, is very dispersed in the slider, but the median is towards the right side, indicating that they also consider that the decision taken was the best for her to some extent.

Figure 22. Impact of decisions related to marriage on women and girls, by type of respondent



To identify threats to act upon, or emergent practices that could be amplified, some narratives of women and girls and influencers who considered that marriage-related decisions hindered the girl's or woman's potential were extracted and are included in Table 12. These narratives reveal that experiences related to marriage decisions are varied and multi-faceted. They also show that there is a complex relationship between a girl's marriage and education, and while it would be overly simplistic to say that girls' school drop-out leads to their marriage, collectively the narratives do seem to suggest that if a girl stays in school her marriage is delayed.

Table 12. Selected narratives from respondents who considered that the decision related to marriage in their experiences hindered women and girls' potential, by type of respondent

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	NARRATIVE
Adolescent girl (15–17 years old)	**FATE** The boy that I am supposed to marry in 2 months' time is in jail for fighting, he beat another man badly, and that beating has caused him trauma. My parents want me to dump him for someone else, but I love him much more than the others. At the moment there is a cousin chasing me, but I am not interested in him at all. My parents have made their decision not to allow me to marry the boy who is in jail and will never go back on this decision.
Adolescent girl (15–17 years old)	**A DECISION WAS MADE AGAINST MY WILL** I had a suitor with whom I have been together almost for a year, but he never said anything about marriage. At home, I was pressured all the time, but I was ashamed to tell him to marry me because I knew he couldn't afford it. Last month my parents invited him home and asked him to send his dowry because they were tired of his useless coming and going. They told him to leave me alone if he couldn't afford to marry me. I cried a lot when I heard this, because we loved each other, and I knew that I would never see him again after what my parents had told him because he could not afford to marry me. That's how I lost the man of my life.
Adolescent girl (15–17 years old)	**A FORCED MARRIAGE** I'm less than 15 years old, my parents had proposed to me to marry a cousin I didn't like. I did everything I could to get him to leave me alone because I would disrespect my parents by telling them that I don't agree with their choice, but he refused to give up this marriage. When my suitor had informed my parents of my actions, they scolded me and made me understand that they would never accept someone else as a son-in-law. I am therefore obliged to accept him and follow my destiny despite the hatred I have towards him.
Young woman (26–30 years old)	**ABANDONMENT** Before, I was full of ambition, I was doing my studies without any problem, reached eighth grade, I had to continue to get my high school degree when my paternal grandmother opposed to me continuing my studies simply to give me in marriage to a cousin. I really regret because I could not do anything and my parents neither. She made her decision alone and her decision was irrevocable so no one can make her change it.
Young woman (26–30 years old)	**LIVED SUFFERING** I was married and I am now divorced. I was 17 years old when my parents' house went to Mecca. I had many suitors, but one day my grandfather decided with my uncle and father to celebrate my marriage with one of his acquaintances whom I never saw or knew. I ran away from him every night, and when my parents caught me, they insulted me a lot and hit me. A few days later I let myself be caught by the Saudi authorities and I came back to Niamey. I had suffered a lot before I got a loan to return to my compound. I still have the after-effects of this forced marriage.
Female influencer—Women head of household (51–60 years old)	**CHOOSING A HUSBAND TO STRENGTHEN THE FAMILY BOND** Two years ago, I decided to marry my little girl to a husband of my choice to strengthen the bonds between the two families. For this I had informed her, the boy and his parents. After the marriage the girl went back to the house and back to her husband's home a few times to show me her discontent, and finally the marriage ended as she was divorced, she was not mature enough. This decision was negative for us and for the girl too.
Female influencer—Mother-in-law (61 years or older)	**PROBLEM** My daughter was going to school, but she was expelled. I didn't know the circumstances, but I had been told to look for money for her to continue, but her father was not there to help, so I didn't have the means to keep her in school. She had a few suitors, but we were not accepting them as she was studying, but that was not the case anymore, so a decision was taken with her uncles, and she was given in marriage. She is now together with her husband.

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	NARRATIVE
Male influencer—Adult man (51–60 years old)	**IGNORANCE** When our school was founded in 2004, we counted the children of school age. I enrolled my children and my granddaughter. My wife was against enrolling the little girl in school because according to her, she is not our daughter. I decided to enroll her because for me there is no question of leaving the children at home without doing anything as long as we have a school near our house. That's how she studied until she obtained her primary school degree and went to high school. In high school, she studied until the 4th grade. Unfortunately, she was expelled due to her lack of dedication. In fact, her friends started to marry and influenced her. So, she stopped studying and at the end of the year she got bad results. With the advice of her parents, we gave her away in marriage. So, she's currently at her husband's home.
Male influencer—Community leader (51–60 years old)	**SCHOOL GIRLS AND DIFFICULT MARRIAGE** One of my daughters went quite far in her studies, unfortunately, she did not pass her exams, and had to drop out of school. Since then, she has had no activity, and instead of getting married, she refuses all the suitors who have come forward, because as a literate girl, she needs a husband who has studied. When she gets tired of looking for a literate man, she will be forced to marry the one who shows up. For the time being, I have to accept the situation because as village chief, I have to take charge of everything, set an example, take advice and give it, because everyone and the whole village depends on me.

Intrahousehold dynamics

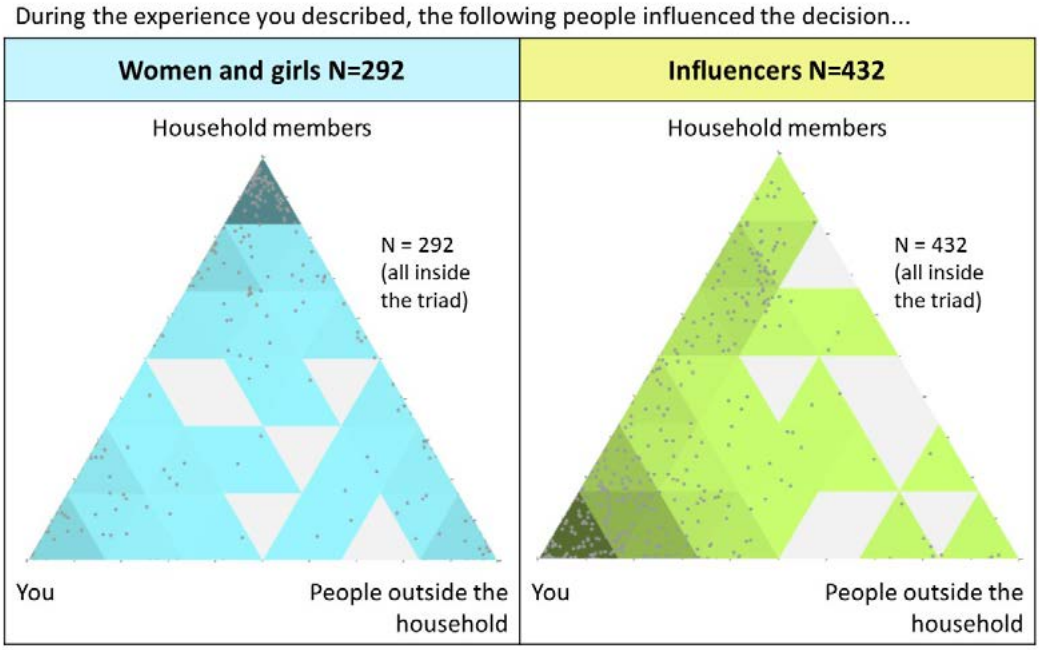
To better understand intrahousehold gender and power dynamics to contextualize project interventions for various household types and members, considering their social position and socio-linguistic group, this section provides a deeper analysis of how decisions are made in households and the level of influence that girls and women have in the decisions that impact their livelihoods and wellbeing. Previous findings showed a strong pattern of male dominated decision-making, where girls transition via marriage, usually at a very early age, from a household where decisions are dominated by her father, with a lower level of influence than her mother; to a situation in which her husband, and to some extent her in-laws, dominate the decision-making process.

This section also provides insight on factors that positively and negatively contribute to girls' and women's agency (voice, choice and power) to influence the decisions that affect them and their children, and whether and how women collaborate with their spouses and co-wives in polygamous households. Moreover, it takes a deeper look into those experiences that were self-signified by respondents as related to decisions on spousal and family relations, looking at main influencers and their impacts.

Intrahousehold decision-making

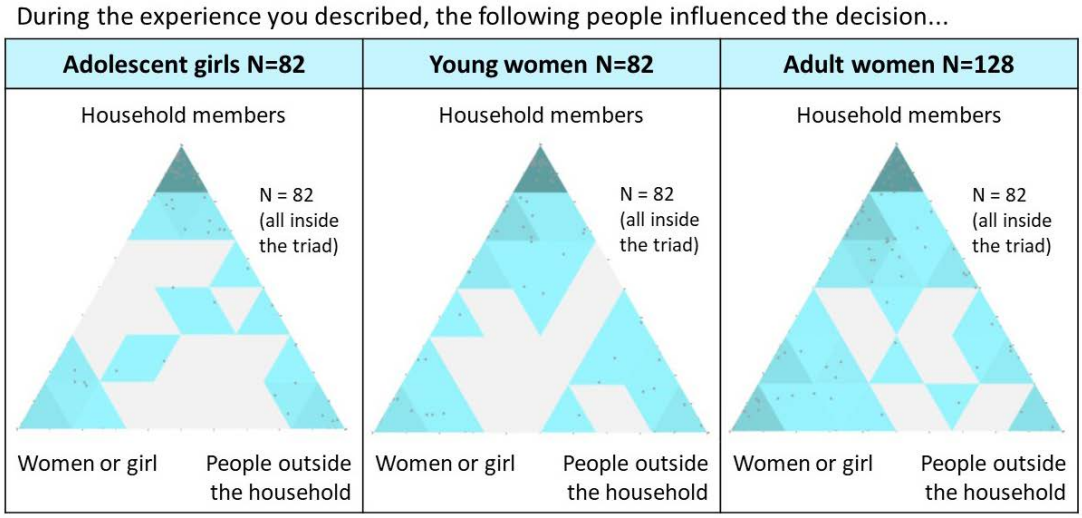
A first layer of analysis on intrahousehold decision-making involved assessing the relative influence that women and girls had on decisions in the experiences shared compared to other household members and non-household influencers. The initial findings show that from the perspective of women and girls, other household members have a dominant position in decision-making, and that even If they feel they do have some level of influence (many responses are inside the triad) their relative influence is much less. With respect to outside influencers, women and girls also consider that they have influence but lower than that of other household members and to some extent the women themselves.

Figure 23. Relative decision-making power of women and girls in relation to other household members and outside influencers



When these findings are disaggregated by girls' and women's age group (see Figure 24) an important difference can be observed in their relative level of influence as girls transition into young and adult women, which increases as they get married, become mothers and later in life grandmothers and mothers-in-law. However, even when women become older and more influential, they still have a lower level of influence than other household members. These findings validate those discussed in the gender norms and behaviors section.

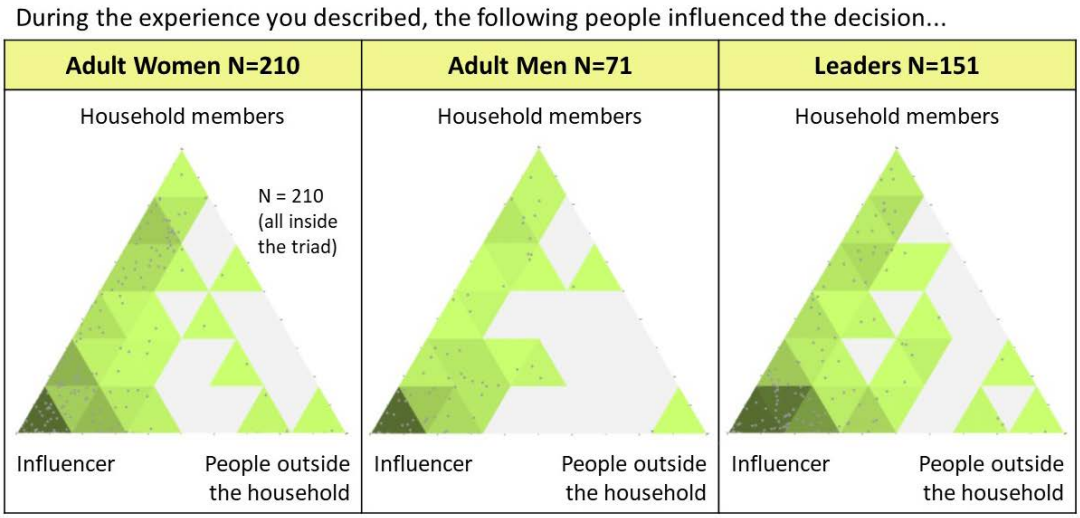
Figure 24. Relative decision-making power of women and girls in relation to other household members and outside influencers, disaggregated by age group



With respect to the perspective of influencers, they perceive themselves as dominant decision-makers, as expected, but to some extent sharing their decision-making power with other household members. In addition, they don't see a strong role for people outside the household in intrahousehold decision making and dynamics. To better understand the perspective of influencers it is important to disaggregate these findings by type of influencer since this is a mixed group that includes women household members (mothers-in-law, first wives and women heads of household), men household members (adult men) and traditional or religious leaders and community leaders that, depending on the experience shared, could have acted as household members or as people outside the household.

The disaggregated findings in Figure 25 show that all influencer groups perceived themselves as dominant in the decisions that affected girls or women in the experiences they shared, but important differences can be observed. Women influencers, despite their perceived dominant role, feel that they have shared the decision-making process with other household members and to some extent with people outside the household. Adult male influencers perceived their role in the decisions made as more dominant and expressed sharing that role with other household members to a lower extent, and to an even more limited extent with people outside their households. This also validates the findings described in the section on gender norms and behaviors that concluded that gender norms and behaviors rooted in society promote a strong male-dominated decision-making process in households.

Figure 25. Relative decision-making power of "influencers" in relation to other household members and outside influencers, disaggregated by interest group



To further investigate who are the people outside the household that influence household decision-making, women and girls and influencers were asked which people, groups or organizations outside the household influenced the decision made in the experience they shared. For 66.5 percent of women and girls (two thirds of them) this question did not apply because nobody outside their household had influenced the decisions they shared. The other third of women and girls mentioned religious or traditional leaders (imam, adhan, marabout), community leaders (commune heads, village heads, representatives of the heads, notables, members of the village development committee, elected communal councilors), peers or neighbors in 9.9, 8.9 and 7.2 percent, respectively.

On the other hand, for only one third of influencers this question did not apply (33.1%), but they mentioned the same people outside the household as influencers, including religious or traditional leaders (37.3%), followed

by community leaders (34.7%) and peers or neighbors (18.8%). In addition, they also included public education agents in 6.5 percent of the experiences shared.

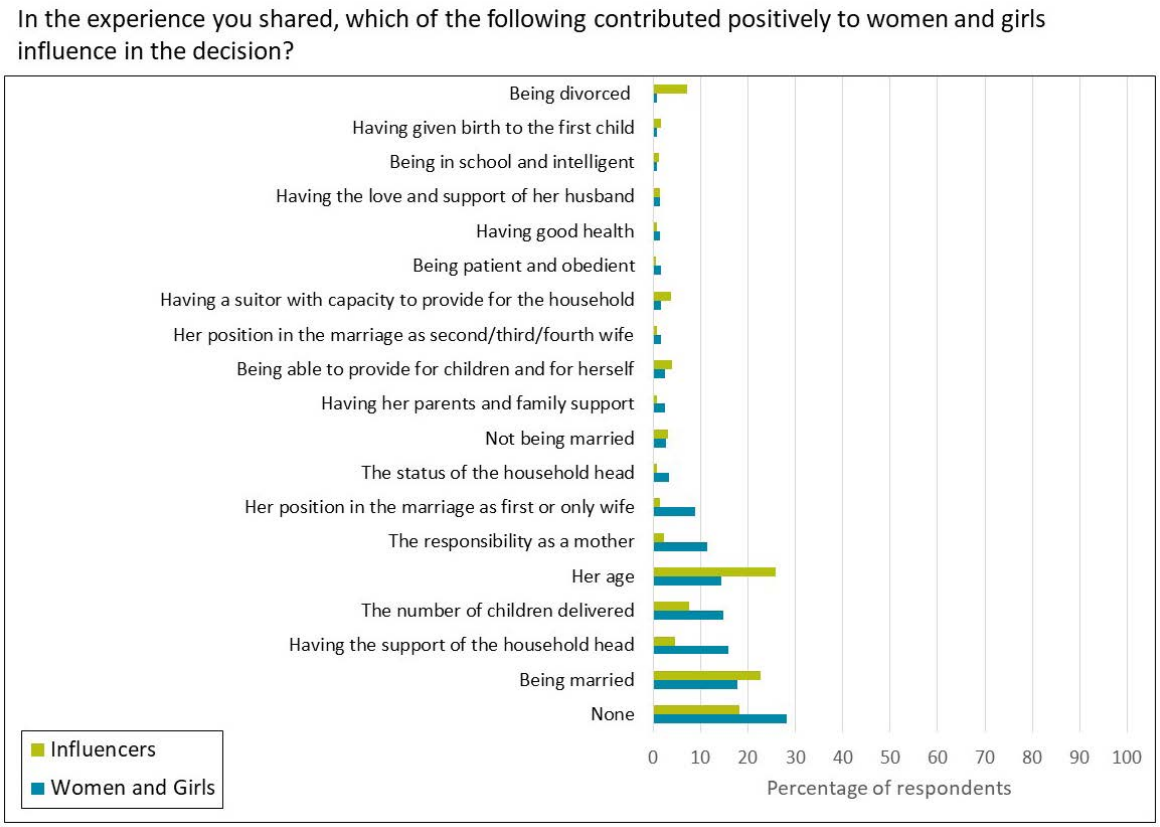
Factors that contribute positively to women's and girls' power in decision-making

To identify factors that contribute positively to girls' and women's influence, they as well as influencers were asked about the factors in the experiences shared that contributed to women's and girls' influence in decision making. As shown in Figure 26, for 28.1% of women and girls nothing contributed positively to their level of influence, underlining low levels of women's and girls' agency. The most common factors cited by those who responded to this question were age, being married and the number of children delivered.

These findings were further explored and corroborated during collective interpretation workshops, where respondents confirmed that women gain more decision-making power when they are married. One group of Hausa women said, "a married woman can make her own decisions ," and Hausa and Fulani adolescent girls said that "before marriage, you are regarded as immature," and after marriage, "one takes into account what a married woman says, especially as it concerns the family. Married women have great value in the eyes of the community." This demonstrates a push factor for early marriage as discussed above, which can also induce incentive for school dropout, creating a vicious cycle of low levels of women's and girls' voice, choice and power.

Despite these findings, some emergent practices can be observed that Girma could support. From women's and girls' perspective, support from her parents and family in general positively contributed to their influence, and from the perspective of influencers, women's and girls' capacity to provide for her children and herself contributed positively to her influence in decisions.

Figure 26. Factors that positively contribute to women and girls' decision-making



Another issue that was explored in collective interpretation workshops was the level of influence that female heads of households have. Although women prefer that their husbands stay to work and raise their children together, they shared that they cannot oppose men's migration when they are unable to provide for their household's basic needs. When men migrate, besides the separation, women reported being worried for their security as well as the risk of contracting diseases, including those that are sexually transmitted.

Although women and men find migration to be undesirable, all participants (male and female) agreed that female heads of households have more decision-making power than women in households headed by their husbands or another male family member, since the prime decision-maker is now absent. As stated by Kanuri women and girls, "all decisions are made by the wife as the management of the family is her responsibility," while religious leaders expressed that "as long as her husband is in the house, women don't have total decision-making power, they just take orders from their husband." They shared that "the female head of household enjoys more autonomy in her movements than the married woman," and one group of Kanuri women shared that female household heads can make decisions on how to educate their children or give their children up for adoption, as well as decide on how to spend their income and whether to trade or work abroad. At the same time, Kanuri women mentioned that when their husbands migrate, they usually leave seed reserves in their granaries to use when they come back, suggesting that women do not control all household assets even in their husbands' absence.

Differences in decision-making power among sociolinguistic groups

To evaluate if the level of influence of **married women** in decision making, relative to other influencers in their household (husband, co-wife and mother-in-law), differ among sociolinguistic groups, findings were disaggregated and are shown in Figures 29 and 30 from the perspective of the women themselves and of influencers, respectively. This disaggregation shows that for married Hausa and Fulani women, their co-wives, at the median, had less decision-making power than them; while married Kanuri women perceived that their co-wives have equal influence than them. However, there is no difference in the perceived level of influence of married women among sociolinguistic groups. All women perceive that their husbands have dominant decision-making power, but small differences can be observed among sociolinguistic groups as Hausa women perceived that their husbands have a more dominant role in decision-making, followed by Kanuri and Fulani women. In addition, all three groups of women assign their mothers-in-law a higher level of influence than they have. Influencers' perceptions are similar among sociolinguistic groups, except for Hausa influencers who consider co-wives' influence to be almost null, while Fulani and Kanuri influencers consider that co-wives have a small level of influence.

Figure 27. Level of influence of different household members from the perspective of married women, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group

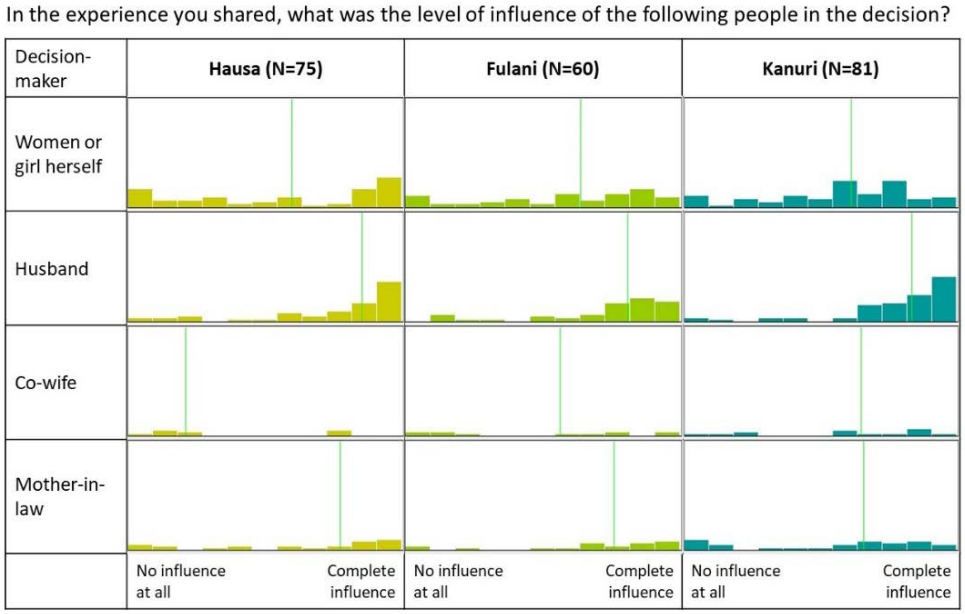
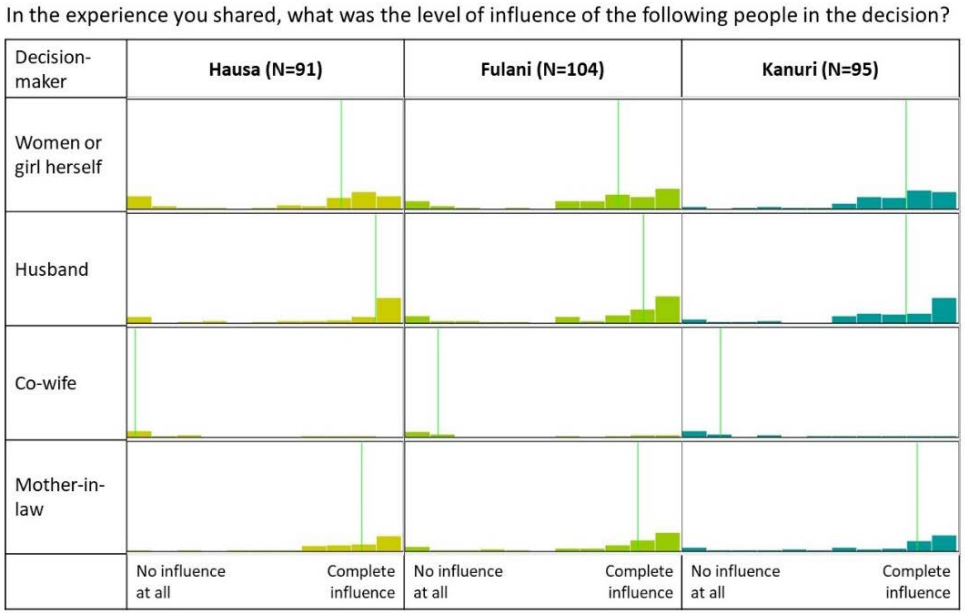
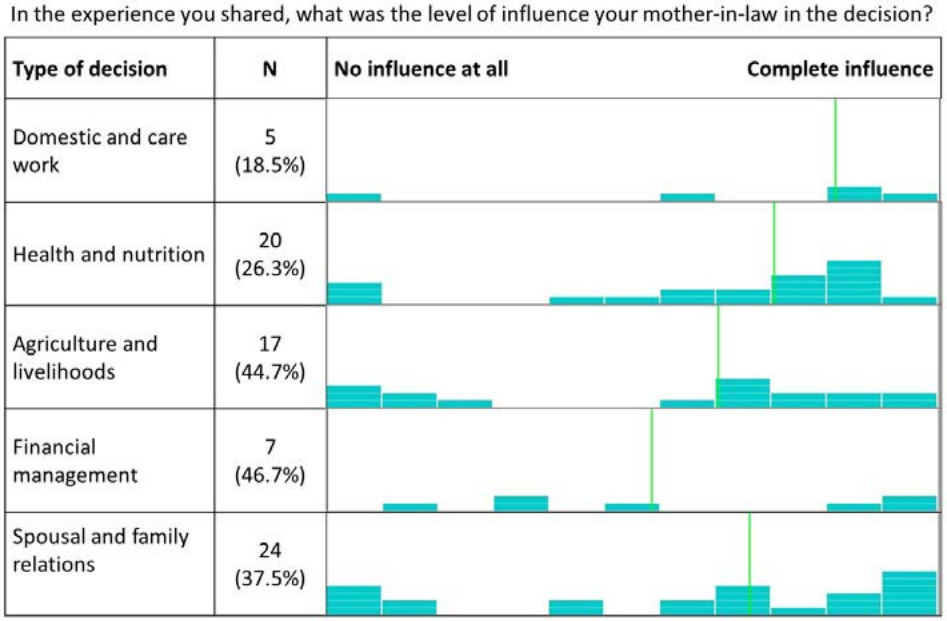


Figure 28. Level of influence of household members from the perspective of influencers, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group



To further explore the role of **mothers-in-law** in decision-making, their perceived level of influence was disaggregated by type of decision (see Figure 30). These findings show that the level of influence of mothers-in-law varies by type of decision, being more influential in decisions related to domestic and care work, health and nutrition, and spousal and family relations, but less influential in decisions related to agriculture and livelihoods and the management of household finances.

Figure 29. Level of influence of mothers-in-law from the perspective of married women, disaggregated by type of decision (tool 1, N=217 who are married)



Results on the level of influence in decision-making of **unmarried girls** in relation to other decision makers in their household (father, mother and grandmother), disaggregated by sociolinguistic group are presented in Figures 31 and 32, respectively; both from the perspective of the girls themselves and of influencers. This disaggregation does not change the fact that in all sociolinguistic groups unmarried girls perceive themselves as having less influence than their mother, father or grandmother, but Hausa girls perceived their level of influence, at the median, lower than that of Fulani girls, and Fulani girls lower than Kanuri girls. Girls from all three sociolinguistic groups consider their fathers are the dominant decision-maker, with this dominance stronger according to Hausa girls, followed by Fulani and Kanuri. The same pattern can be observed for mothers among the three sociolinguistic groups, who girls consider to be the second most influential HH member. **Grandmothers**, according to girls, have some level of influence, but less than their father and mother.

Figure 30. Level of influence of household members from the perspective of unmarried girls and women, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group

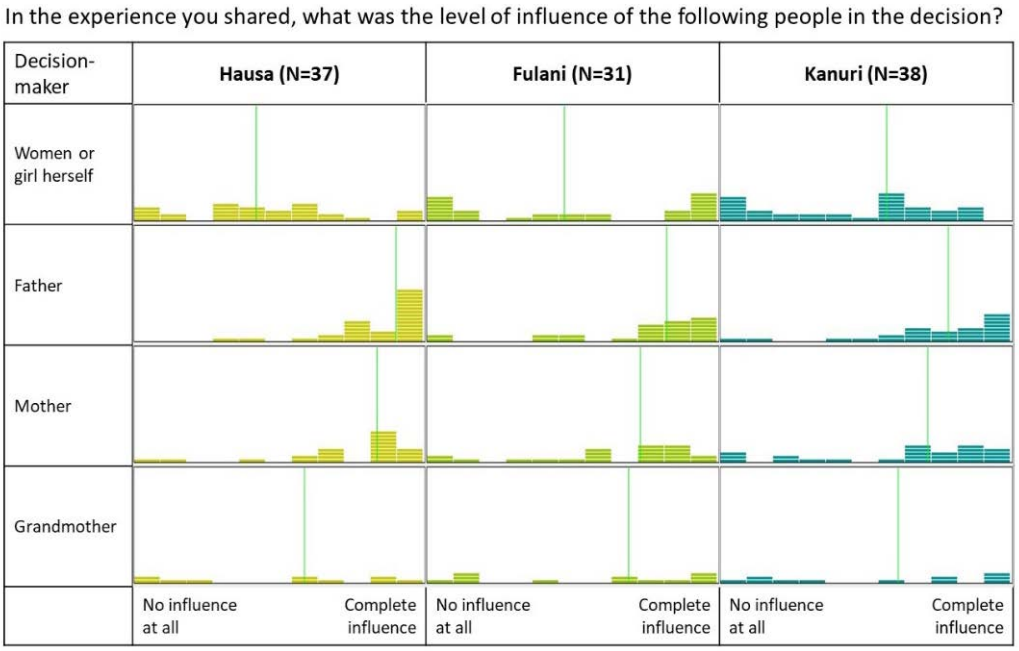
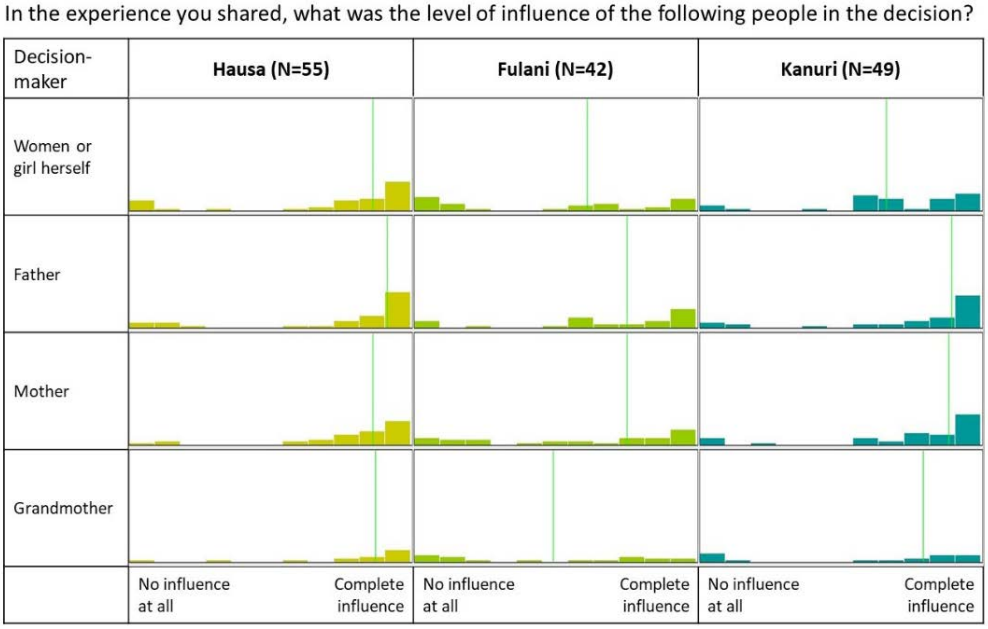


Figure 31. Level of influence of household members from the perspective of influencers disaggregated by sociolinguistic group



Hausa influencers agree with Hausa girls on the high dominance that fathers, followed by mothers, have in decision-making, but they perceived that grandmothers and the girls have a much higher level of decision-making power than perceived by the girls themselves. On the other hand, Fulani and Kanuri influencers believe that grandmothers had lower influence in the experiences shared than the girls themselves but agree with girls on the level of influence that girls had in the experiences shared. In addition, Hausa influencers perceived that Hausa girls had a higher level of influence than what Fulani and Kanuri influencers believe it to be. Kanuri influencers give a lower level of influence to fathers, mothers and grandmothers in their experiences than that given by Hausa and Kanuri influencers.

Differences in decision-making power between monogamous and polygamous households

To evaluate if the level of influence of married women and their husbands in decision-making power, analyzed in the introduction section of the findings (Figures 8 and 10), differ between monogamous and polygamous households, findings were disaggregated and are shown in Figure 33 for women and in Figure 34 for husbands, both from the perspective of the women themselves and of influencers. This disaggregation does not change the fact that in both types of households, women and girls perceive themselves as having less influence than influencers believe, showing differences among the experiences shared.

However, a small difference can be observed between monogamous and polygamous households, showing that married women in polygamous tend to have a slighter higher level of influence in decision-making than women in monogamous households. This may be explained by the fact that in a polygamous household, the husband spends less time with each wife and their children and subsequently has less control or influence over them. Consistent with previous findings reported and those presented in Figure 34, both the women themselves and influencers consider that husbands have a high decision power in both type of households, but they reported it to be higher in monogamous households.

Figure 32. Level of influence of married women from their own perspective and that of influencers, disaggregated by type of household

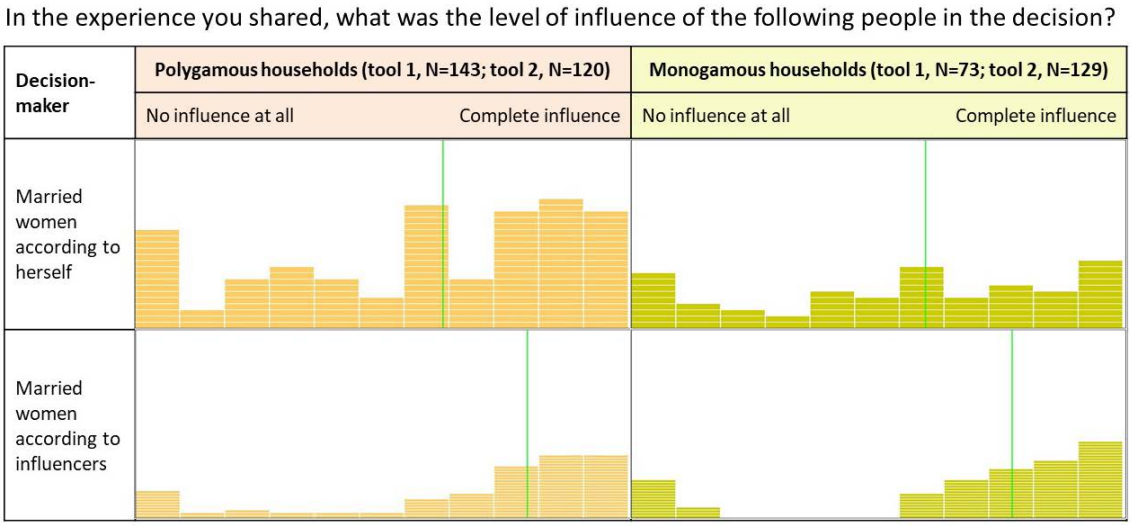
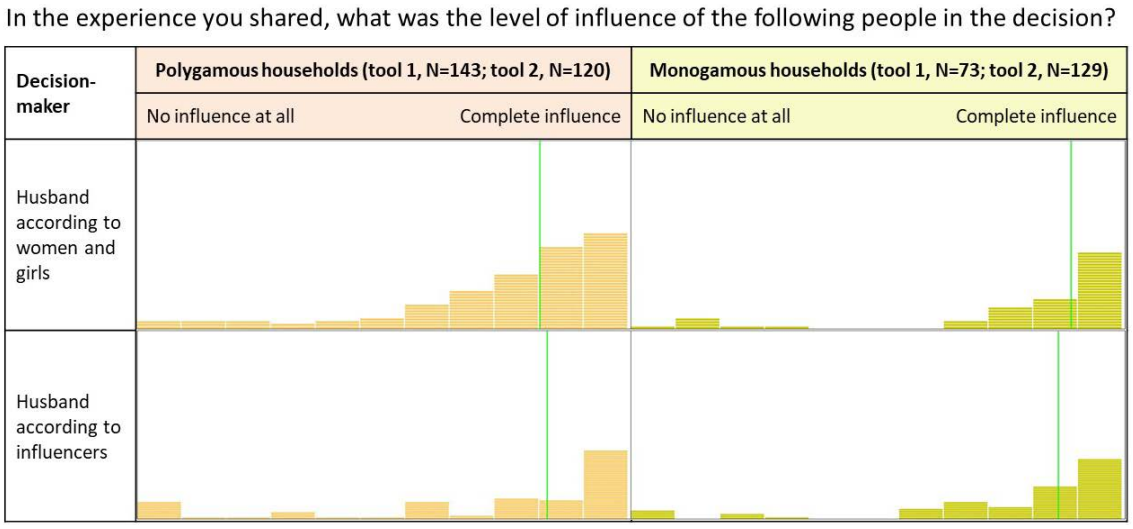


Figure 33. Level of influence of husbands from the perspective of women and girls and that of influencers, disaggregated by type of household



Results on the level of influence in decision-making for unmarried girls and their fathers disaggregated by type of household is presented in Figures 35 and 36, respectively; both from the perspective of the girls themselves and of influencers. This disaggregation does not change the fact that in both types of households, unmarried girls perceive themselves as having less influence than influencers consider that they have. However, a difference can be observed between monogamous and polygamous households, showing that girls in polygamous households have a higher level of influence in decision-making than girls have in monogamous households. These results are consistent with those of married women, showing that women and girls have more decision-

making power in polygamous households. In addition, as in previous findings reported and those presented in Figure 36, both the women themselves and influencers consider that husbands have a high decision-making power in both type of households and no significant difference can be observed between polygamous and monogamous households.

Figure 34. Level of influence of unmarried girls from their own perspective and that of influencers, disaggregated by type of household

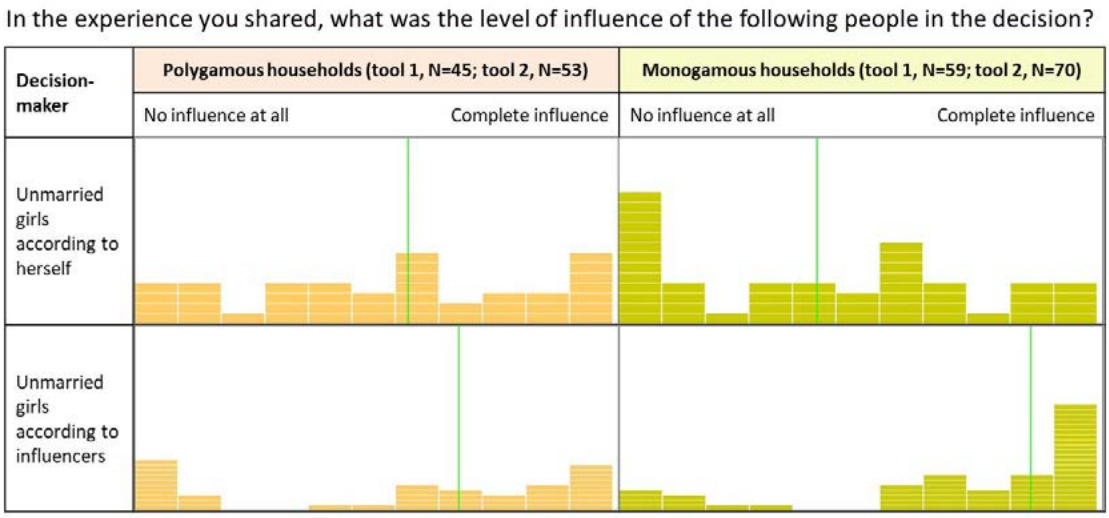
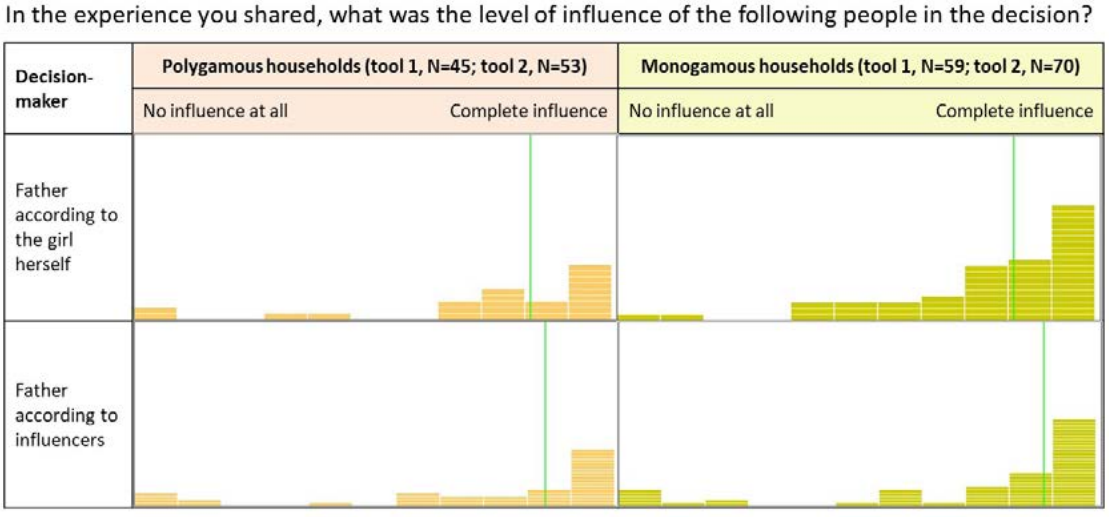


Figure 35. Level of influence of fathers from the perspective of unmarried women and girls and that of influencers, disaggregated by type of household



Spousal and family relations

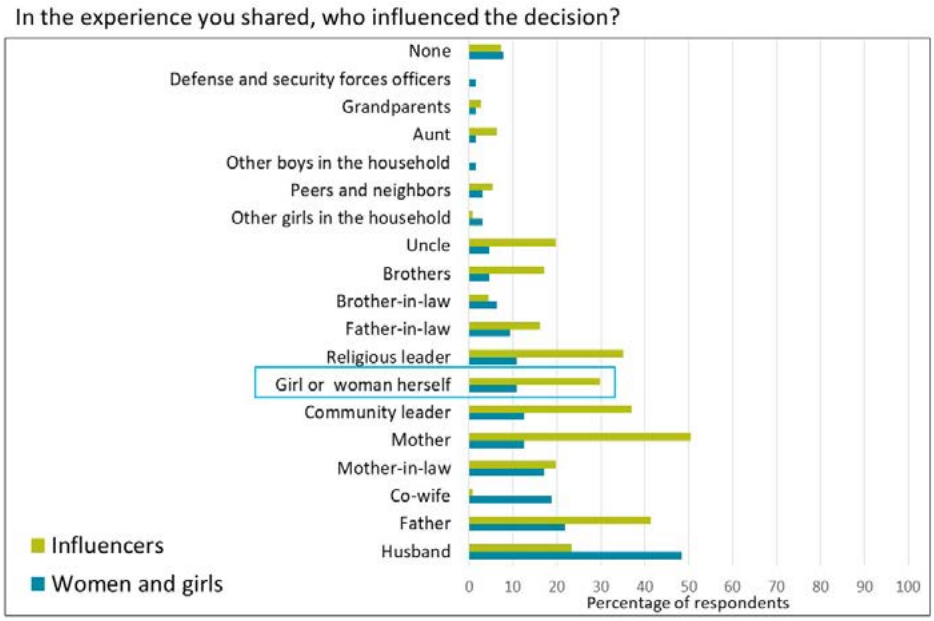
One of the unexpected findings of this study was the large number of stories from respondents related to decisions about spousal and family relations, which accounted for 21.9 percent of the experiences shared by women and girls and 26.4 percent of the experiences shared by influencers (see Figures 5 and 6 above). As

these types of decisions are a core part of household dynamics, a deeper analysis of spousal relations and an assessment of the level of cooperation among co-wives in polygamous households is included in this section.

Influencers on decisions related to spousal and family relations and their impact

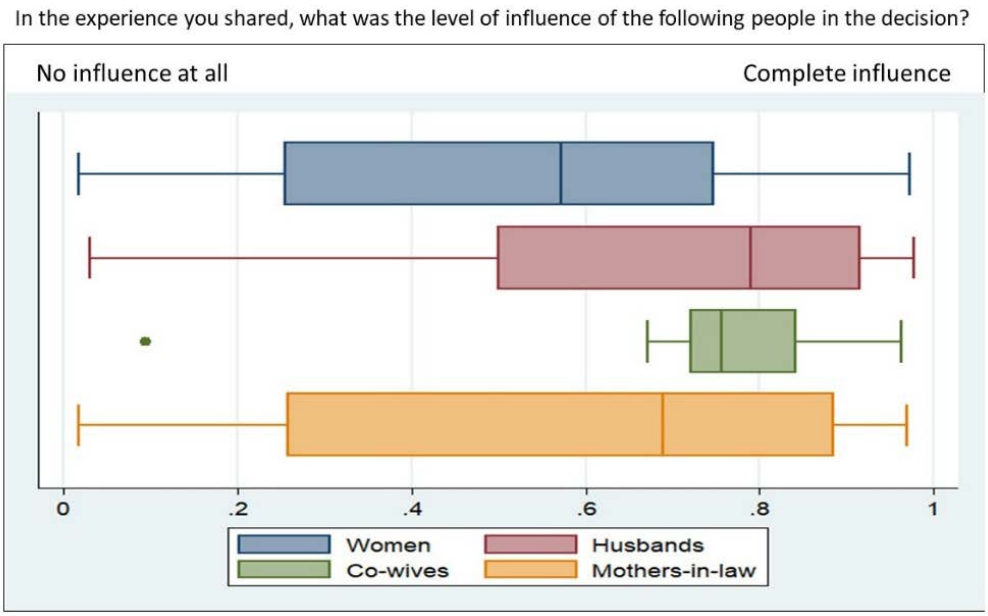
As shown in Figure 37, responses from women and girls and influencers to the questions on which members of the household and which people outside the household influenced the decision, disaggregated for decisions related to spousal and family relations, show that according to women and girls, husbands (48.4%) are the main influencers, followed by fathers (21.9%), co-wives (18.8%), mothers-in-law (17.2%) and mothers (12.5%). Different from decisions related to girls' education and marriage, people outside the household such as community and religious leaders (12.5 and 10.9%, respectively) also influence these types of decisions, while girls and women only influenced these decisions in 10.9% of the cases. Influencers listed similar key influencers, but gave more importance to mothers (50.5%), community and religious leaders (36.9 and 35.1%, respectively), fathers (41.4%), and the women and girls themselves (29.7%).

Figure 36. Household members and people outside of the household who influence decisions related to spousal and family relations (tool 1, N=64; tool 2, N=111)



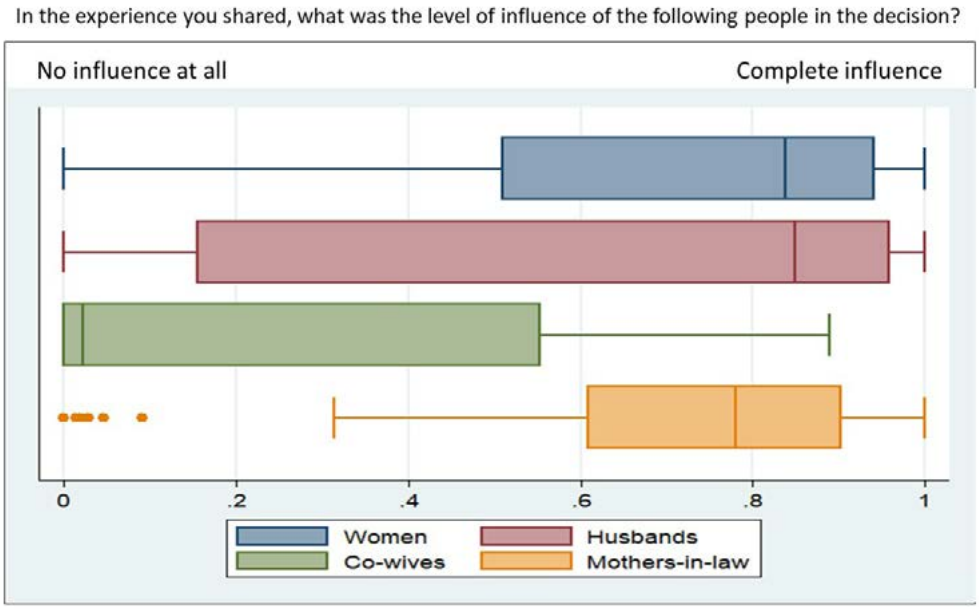
To add a layer of analysis on influencers in decisions related to spousal relations, respondents were also asked to indicate the level of influence that different household members had in the decision from "no influence at all" to "complete influence". Results from the perspective of married women (see Figure 38) show that husbands are the most influential, followed by co-wives. Mothers-in-law also have influence and more than the women themselves, but responses are very dispersed showing a high variability on a case by case basis. Married women's influence is not only less than that of other household members, but also very dispersed, showing a high variability among women's perceived level of influence.

Figure 37. Household members' level of influence in decisions on spousal and family relations from the perspective of the married women involved (tool 1, N=64)



Responses from the perspectives of influencers are shown in Figure 39. At the median they coincide with women in the dominance that husbands have on decisions related to spousal relations, but their responses are more dispersed showing varied perspectives. On the other hand, they consider that the women themselves and mothers-in-law have a higher level of influence in this type of decisions, and that co-wives' level of influence is almost null.

Figure 38. Household members level of influence in decisions on spousal and family relations from the perspective of the influencers involved (tool 2, N=111)

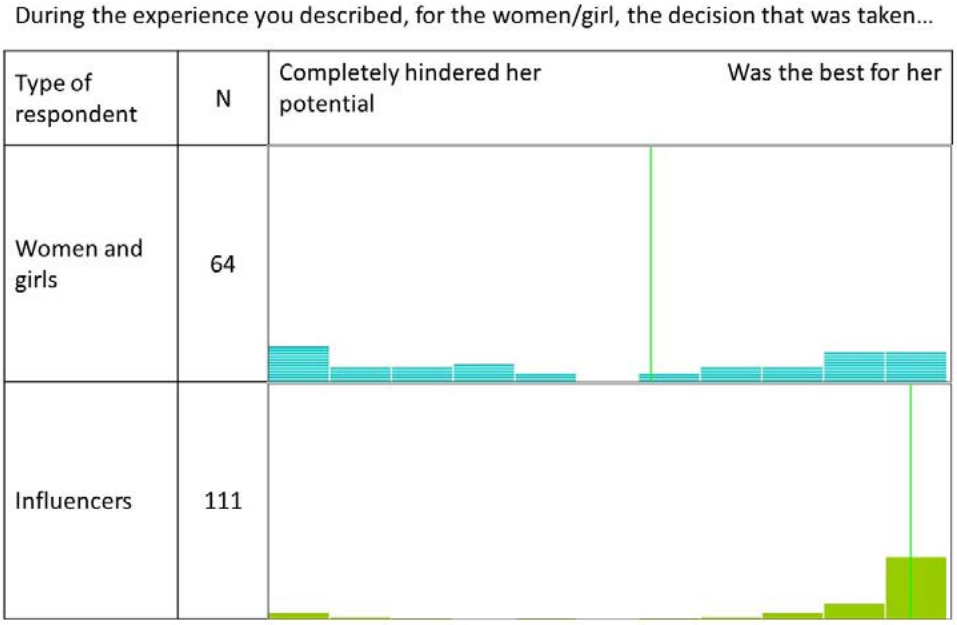


Impact of decisions related to spousal and family relations

To assess the impact of decisions related to spousal relations, a slider-type follow-up question was used for respondents to determine the extent to which the decision "was the best for her" or "completely hindered her potential" (see Figure 40). Findings show that while influencers have a dominant perspective that the decision taken was the best for the women or the girl, with only a very few outliers who consider that it completely hindered her potential, the perception of the women themselves is very dispersed in the slider, showing that some consider that to some extent the decision taken was the best for them, while others consider that it hindered their potential.

Figure 39. Impact of decisions related to spousal and family relations on women and girls, by type of respondent

The narratives presented in Table 13 below give some insight into the types of decisions women and girls and influencers gave for this decision category, which are a random selection based on their position either on the



extreme right or left of the slider, indicating whether the respondent felt the decision completely hindered the woman's/ girl's potential or was the best for her. Many women's stories in this decision category were related to co-wife relationships, which are not presented in Table 13 but rather discussed in more detail below, while influencers focused mostly on stories of relationships between husbands and wives.

Table 13. Selected narratives of women, girls and influencers related to spousal and family relations differentiated by whether the decision completely hindered her potential or was the best for her

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	COMPLETELY HINDERED HER POTENTIAL	WAS THE BEST FOR HER
Woman/ Girl	**REGRET** Before we lived in peace and harmony with my parents. I was 10 years old at that time. Just a short time later my parents separated, and after the divorce, my mother left my father's house and remarried another man, and since then our life changed because our mother's new husband has a different vision of us who are his children, he mistreated us as we were three children, to feed us was the worst loss of his life as he had no children with our mother, so he felt we were fools. My mother was taking care of us and from a very early age I started going to the city to look for work, just to have something to support my mother to help her take care of us. It's been two years since he went on an exodus to Nigeria without sending us a single shipment. Life is very expensive for us and we have no source of income.	**MISUNDERSTANDING** I had a problem with my husband. He almost always wronged me. When I was in a situation I couldn't handle, I left his house. I went to my brother's house. From there, I went to see the village chief in person to explain the problem to him and decide that enough is enough and I couldn't go back to my husband's house. But after listening to my whole story, my brother called my husband to warn him and draw his attention to the fact that the problem would not be repeated. He had consulted our neighbor. They had made the decision that I should go back to my family to be with my children. The husband made a commitment not to repeat the behavior. We are together now without any problems with our children.
Woman/Girl	**A DISRESPECTFUL SON-IN-LAW** I have a married daughter with two children, the problem is that her husband has no consideration for us who are his in-laws and my daughter who is his wife. He can go a year without coming to say hello. Nor does he take care to inform his wife, that is my daughter, of what he does, since he can travel without her knowing about it. And when I share this concern with my son-in-law's parents, they make me understand that their son is still young, while he is making my daughter and grandchildren suffer day after day.	**MY SUCCESS** My joy today, for 20 years of marriage I have never exposed to my parents a problem that concerns my home, he [my husband] respects me and I respect him, I love him, and he loves me. Today, it is my great pride, at the time when he wanted to marry [a second wife], people were pushing me to revolt but I understood that they want to destabilize my home so I did not listen to anyone, I acted according to my happiness and that of my children. So, I will never make a fuss with my husband as long as he respects me as first wife.
Woman/Girl	**A COMPLICATED SISTER-IN-LAW** I have been living with my sister-in-law since my husband married me and whenever there is an event that concerns the in-laws, she informs everyone except me. My in-laws then accuse me of being reticent and of ignoring everything that concerns them, because I believe that I am self-sufficient. So, one day I asked her about her attitude towards me. My sister-in-law had made me understand that she did not inform me, because it was a waste of time for her and I do not consider anyone in the family, so I cannot be present at everything that concerns the in-laws. It hurt me, because I didn't expect that from her and she had smeared my name all over my husband's family.	**REFUSAL OF CO-WIFE** A few years ago, my husband wanted to make me a co-wife and I didn't accept it. I then asked for a divorce, especially since my husband was even violent. After some time, I married my current husband. But here too, I had to marry a man who was already married, so I am the second wife. My current husband and I currently have three boys. Fortunately, I am at peace with my co-wife.

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	COMPLETELY HINDERED HER POTENTIAL	WAS THE BEST FOR HER
Woman/Girl	**MY LIFE AWAY FROM MOTHER** My siblings and I had been separated from our mother by my grandfather, after her divorce with my father. The day my parents divorced; my grandfather decided that my mother would not go with any of his grandchildren to live with another man. We were separated from her to come and live with my grandfather. Year after year we were helpless, and the worst part was that my maternal grandmother hated us and our father, maybe because of the suffering that her daughter (my mother) endured. My older sister had given birth and had suffered a lot, she was not there for her. We sometimes went to see my mother in the next village, under the mockery of her husband's children, which discouraged us.	**RECONCILIATION** Three weeks ago, my husband brought some cassava to cook that he is going to sell at the market, so I went to his field to make wood. I was putting the pot down when my husband found me and wanted to hit me with a slice of tree, just because I took the wood from his field. I stepped aside. I told him there must be other reasons why you're acting like this. If it's because of my money that you took away, you should know that even if you kill me, you will pay back the money to my family. After we talked, he finally said he doesn't want me anymore, he is fed up. He told me to go home, and he divorced me. I went back to my parents' house and my uncle sent his Galadima (representative) to talk to my husband. He showed Galadima the wood that I had removed. He couldn't help but want to hit me. He told him that he couldn't live with me anymore. When my uncle heard, he said that I wouldn't go back to his house. That same night, he [my husband] went around to see my uncle and told him that Galadima and I had lied to him. Finally, he begged my family. I asked my family to forgive him, to take cola and to do the fatiya (marriage renewal) and in the end I came back with my husband. It is a negative experience, but I have to come back to take care of my children.
Influencer	**STORY OF AN ILL PERSON** (FIRST WIFE, AGE 41–50) Last year, my husband's little sister was sick, and she left her husband's house. When she arrived here, we asked her to return, that she has to stay at her husband's house for treatment. When she returned, the husband told her to come [here] to her parents' house to seek treatment. She spent four months here, coming in to receive treatment without him [her husband] coming to see her. When she recovered her health, he came to look for her, but she refused to go back. He spent a month coming and going back and forth. We and her parents, aunt and uncles influenced her to change her mind and return to her husband's house willingly. She agreed to go back, but unfortunately, they had a problem again, she came back [to our house] more than a month ago and I don't think she will return to her husband this time.	**THE STORY OF HAJARA** (FIRST WIFE, AGE 36–40) My daughter was married years ago. But a few years ago, she was at our home because of a problem with her in-laws. Her husband's brothers had chased her out of the house. She spent a year with us. Luckily last year, her husband came to negotiate for her to return home. Us parents informed the other family members. We made a reconciliation and they are now together.

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	COMPLETELY HINDERED HER POTENTIAL	WAS THE BEST FOR HER
Influencer	**FATE IS INEVITABLE** (FIRST WIFE, AGE 51–60) My daughter is marrying a man next door. The latter left the girl pregnant and went on a rural migration. The girl is not living in good conditions, and she asks for things and her mother-in-law doesn't finds it normal. The girl left and came to us. I went to see the village chief to discuss the girl's fate and what the husband's parents should do to take care of her while she is pregnant. They said they would rather get a divorce than pay what we demand. That's how my husband and I decided to agree to a divorce. Now she lives with us.	**COMPROMISING TO BRING A DIVORCED WOMAN BACK TO HER HOME** (MALE VILLAGE CHIEF, AGE 41–50) This is about a woman who was divorced from her husband. She had decided to remarry, and I had heard the story. I went to her house to give her some advice. I made her understand that with three children with her husband, if she remarried with another one how would her children become. They will stay at their father's house without anyone to take care of them and she won't be able to bring them to live in her new home. She had accepted my proposal to return to her husband's home. Her uncle and I had gone to see the husband to inform him of the proposal to bring the woman back among his children and he accepted. We took turns advising them. Now they are back together again and are living happily.
Influencer	**DIVORCE, MEDIATION AND PREGNANCY** (FIRST WIFE, AGE 36–40) There's one of our daughters who divorced her husband, he's the one who initiated the separation. He categorically refused any mediation. Her parents, especially her mother, tried everything, they came to our house several times, but her husband refused to take her back. She came back to us with an early pregnancy. After the birth of the child, the father organized the baptism of the child, but he didn't even come. I asked my daughter to resign herself to finding another partner. I hope god will bring him to her.	**DESIGNATION IN THE PROCESS OF A MARRIAGE** (MALE AGE 36–40) A year ago, a divorced woman in our village wanted to marry a man she had chosen but her parents did not want that man. She came to me and asked me to intercede with her parents so that they would accept her choice. I approached her father by involving his child (the girl's older brother) to convince them, especially since she has lost her mother. Thanks to the mediation I conducted, I was able to convince the father; she is currently living with her husband and they already have a child.
Influencer	**FORCED MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE** (MALE RELIGIOUS LEADER, AGE 61 OR OLDER) There's a divorced girl at my house, she's been living there for three months. She was forced into a marriage with her own direct cousin. And after a year of marriage, there was a fight. She separated from her husband. The girl's father then agreed to the divorce because the father of the newly married man is also the girl's uncle and it was necessary to avoid problems. Her father then asked me to take her into my home because she is the daughter of my first wife. I agreed because she could no longer go live with her father. Since she came to us, she has had a new suitor, but she refused to marry him. She has been doing her doughnut business and continues to live her life with us.	**DIVORCE** (HAUSA MALE AGE 41–50) I used to live with two women, and an illness had caught me that had exhausted all my resources. During this time, my second wife had said that she could no longer stay with me and that she wanted a divorce. As I was in bed, I couldn't do anything, and she went to see the village chief to say she wanted a divorce. The village chief had asked me if I would grant her a divorce and I said there was no point in preventing it because she didn't want to stay any longer. The divorce was granted, and she had her divorce papers. But we had four children together and a few months later God restored me to health, and I married another woman to replace her.

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	COMPLETELY HINDERED HER POTENTIAL	WAS THE BEST FOR HER
Influencer	**MY NIECE'S STORY** (MALE RELIGIOUS LEADER, AGE 61 OR OLDER) There was my niece. She had been in love with a gentleman since childhood. But she had married another. After a few years in Libya, he had returned to the village. They agreed with my niece to get married when she already had children from another husband. When the marriage ended, they went to Nigeria together as migrants. There the situation had become complicated between them. The daughter said that the husband did not treat her well. The problems were getting worse and she had decided to leave to return to the village. When she arrived, we consulted the other members of the family in order to make a decision. The husband was summoned and finally allowed to provide the marriage termination certificate written by me, her uncle.	**MARRIAGE RECONCILIATION** (MALE AGE 61 OR OLDER) This is a problem between my daughter and her husband. I don't know what caused the problem, but when she came [to me], I approached her grandmother to find out what to do. We decided to give her some advice so she could go back to her home. I gave her some wise advice and she took it. That's how she went back to her home. Now she is at home with her husband in peace.
Influencer	**UNWANTED PREGNANCY** (MALE RELIGIOUS LEADER, AGE 41–50) There was a woman in this village who had a problem with her husband. She had divorced her husband. Then the men started dating her and eventually she got pregnant. She had contracted an unwanted pregnancy. So I decided to gather the village marabouts in front of the village chief to forbid baptisms. This decision was motivated by the fact that if we baptize children conceived out of wedlock, it might encourage people to have children out of wedlock but with this measure taken, people will think twice before committing this act. Now she lives in shame with her family with child.	**THE STORY OF MY FAMILY** (FEMALE HOUSEHOLD HEAD, AGE 51–60) I have a daughter-in-law who's in our concession. Whenever there's a problem with her husband, I give her advice to be patient. You know, in married life, there's no shortage of problems. Not long ago, when faced with a problem, I exposed it to the neighbors and together we advised my daughter-in-law to stay and leave it alone. She accepted and life goes on.

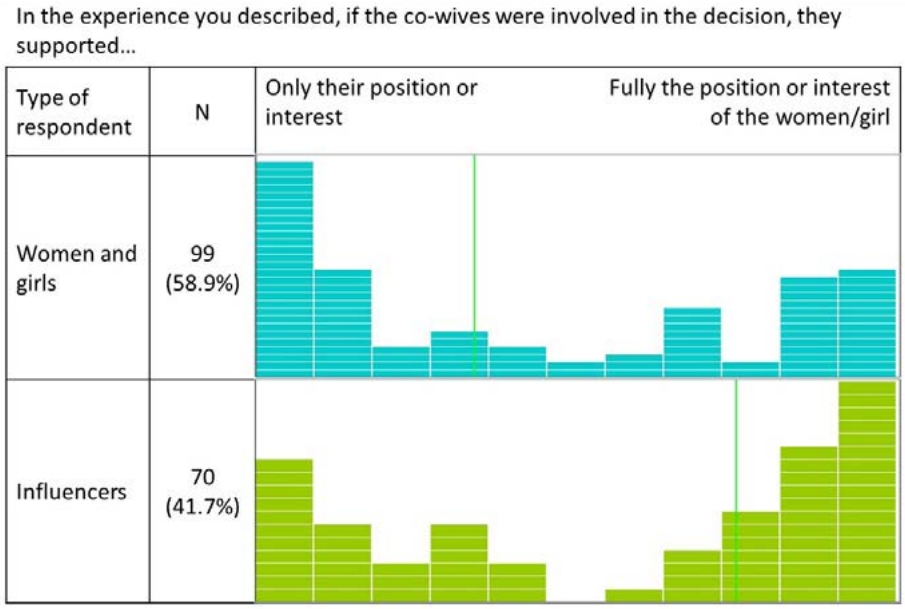
Co-wives' collaboration in polygamous households

To understand the extent of household members' cooperation, particularly among co-wives in polygamous households, women and girls and influencers were asked the extent to which co-wives acted in their own interests rather than that of the woman or girl in question, in the experiences in which co-wives were involved in decision-making. Findings show that co-wives were involved in decision-making in 59 percent of the experiences shared by women and girls in polygamous households, and 41.7 percent of the experiences shared by influencers in polygamous households (see Figure 41).

In addition, when co-wives are involved, the perception of the women and girls and that of influencers on the extent that co-wives mainly supported their own position or interest or that of the women and girl involved are contradictory. While women and girls are more likely to consider that co-wives acted to a greater extent in their own interest or position (median=0.33), influencers were much more likely to believe that co-wives acted in the interest of the woman or girl (median = 0.74). However, it is important to note that responses are very dispersed and tend to cluster towards one or the other side of the slider.

These findings, together with those shown in Figures 33 and 35 above, seem to indicate that influencers' interpretation of women and girls agency is somehow "ideological", stating that they have more influence in decision-making than they have or agree to have, and that they cooperate more with each other than they really do.

Figure 40. Perspective on the level of collaboration among co-wives when they were involved in the decision by type of respondent



To further analyze whether the level of cooperation among co-wives varies if the experience shared relates to a first wife vis-à-vis other co-wives (second, third or fourth), responses to this same question from women and girls were disaggregated by the woman's or girl's position in polygamous households (see Figure 42). This disaggregated analysis shows that fewer first wives report their co-wives being involved in the decision that affected them (56.5%), compared to the percentage reported by women in other positions in the household (64.4%); however, the extent to which the co-wives of first wives vis-à-vis other wives support only their position or interest is the same for both groups of respondents.

To analyze if there are differences between male and female influencers, their perceptions on the level of cooperation among co-wives is disaggregated in Figure 43, showing that female influencers' opinions coincide with women's and girls' perceptions, and it is male influencers who are either unaware of—or unwilling to admit to—lack of harmony among their wives.

Figure 41. Perspective on the level of collaboration among co-wives when they were involved in the decision by the women or girl position in polygamous households

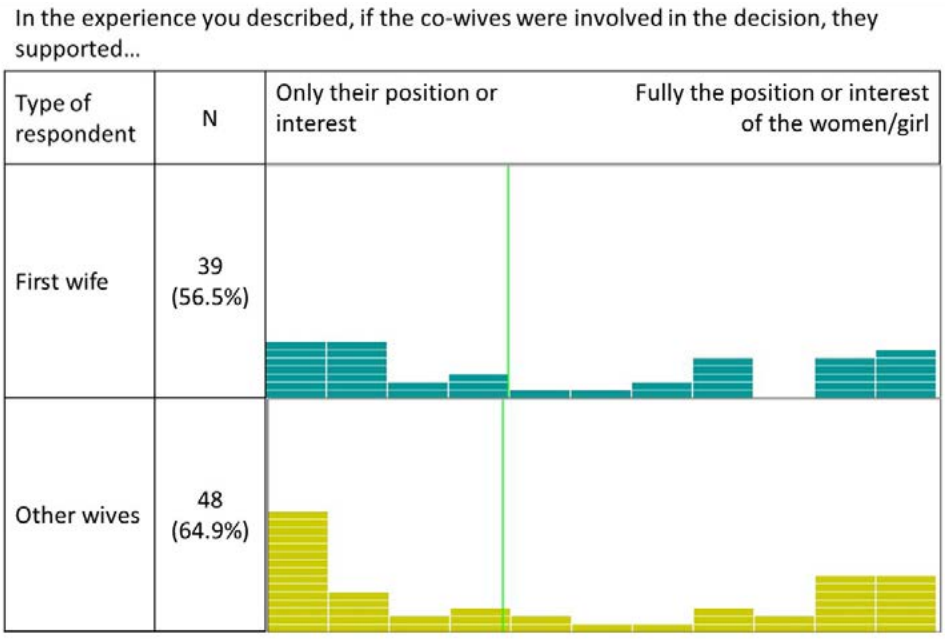
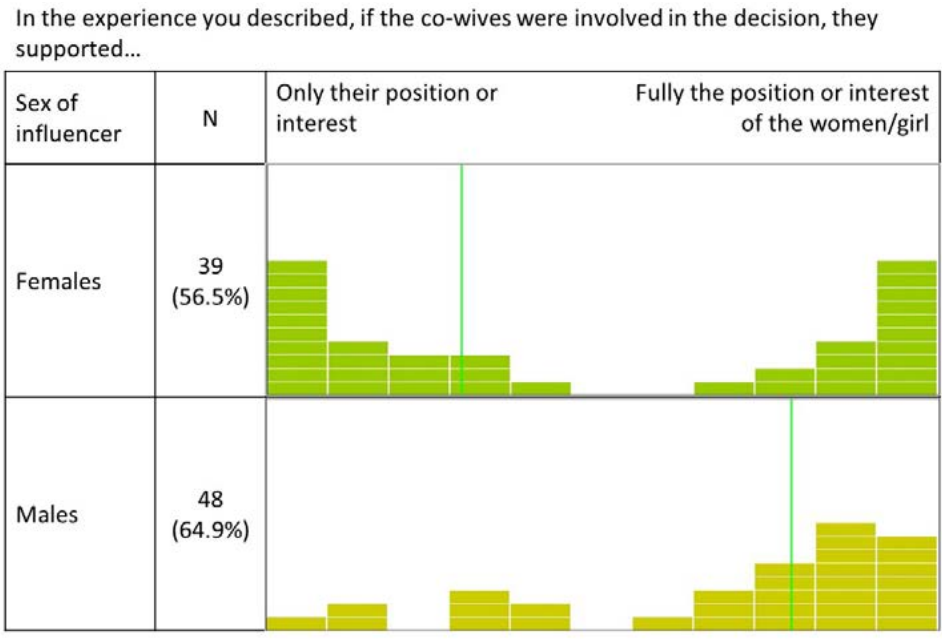


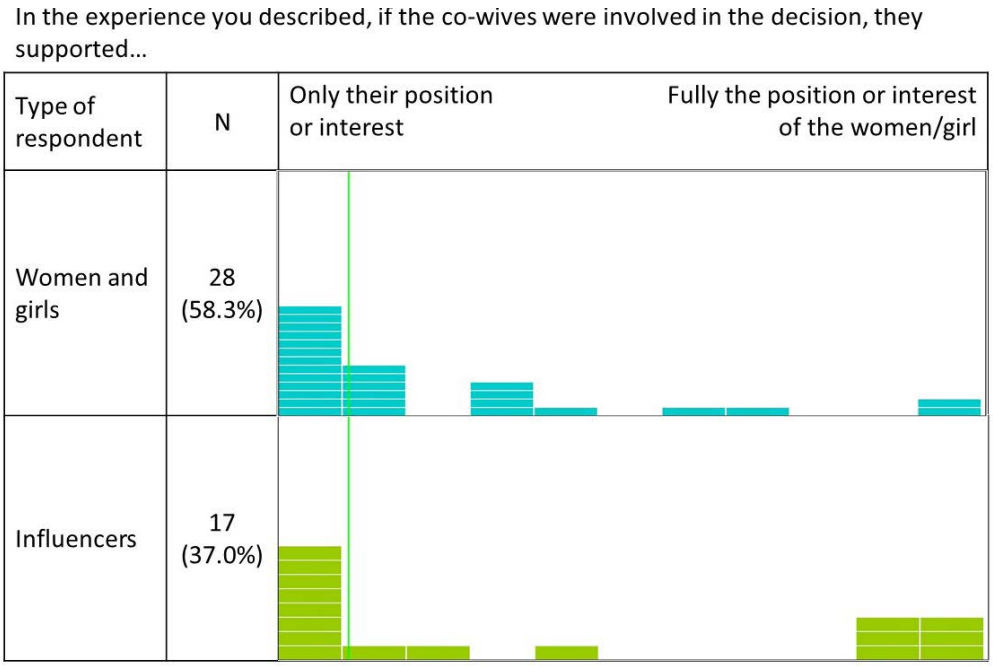
Figure 42. Influencers perspective on the level of collaboration among co-wives when they were involved in the decision by influencers' sex



To better understand the level of influence that co-wives have in spousal and family relations in polygamous households, responses to the question on their level of collaboration with the woman or girl involved in the decision was disaggregated to only include this type of decision (see Figure 44). In line with the above findings on the role and influence of co-wives in decision-making, 58.3 percent of women and girls reported co-wives

to be involved in decisions related to spousal relations compared to the 58.9% reported for all the sample (see Figure 41 above), showing no significant difference, and only 37 percent of influencers, which is lower but not very different than what they reported for all the sample (41.7%). However, different to the pattern observed for the entire sample, both respondents agree that in experiences related to spousal and family relations, co-wives don't collaborate and mainly support their own position and interests, although there are some outliers among influencers that do believe that cowives fully support their co-wife's position or interest.

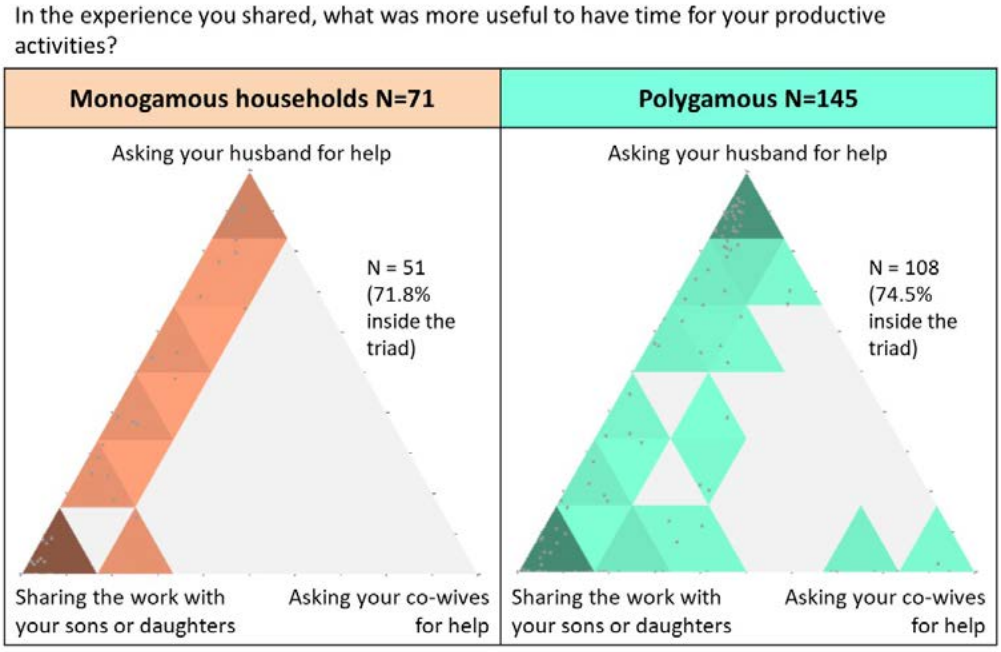
Figure 43. Perspective on the level of collaboration among co-wives in decisions related to spousal and family relations by type of respondent



In another question used to assess intrahousehold cooperation that was used in tool 3, for both monogamous and polygamous households, women were asked what was more useful for them to free time for performing their productive activities: sharing the work with their sons or daughters, asking their husbands for help, or asking their co-wives. Figure 45 shows the results disaggregated for monogamous and polygamous households. In the case of monogamous households where women don't have co-wives, 71.8 percent of women responded to this question, suggesting that the other 28.1 percent of women did not ask for help either from their daughters/sons nor their husbands, assuming all the workload. Women who did ask for help in the experiences shared preferred to share their workload with their sons or daughters rather than ask their husbands for help.

In the case of polygamous households, 74.5 percent responded to this question, again suggesting that an important percentage of women (25.5%) assume all the workload without asking for help. Those women who did ask for help also preferred to share the workload with their sons or daughters than asking their husbands for help, but asked their husbands for help more often than women in monogamous households. The least indicated option for women in polygamous households was to ask for help from their co-wives, again reinforcing low levels of cooperation (see Figure 42 above).

Figure 44. Women strategies to liberate time for productive activities



To explore further this low level of collaboration among co-wives, participants in collective interpretation workshops were asked why they believe women do not tend to ask co-wives for help to free time for their productive activities. Women from all sociolinguistic groups referred to tension—"misunderstanding and jealousy"—among co-wives as a major reason. Participants were also asked to share sayings or proverbs to get more insights on gender-related norms and behaviors, a few of which were related to women's disdain for their co-wives: "*My co-wife throws insults at me, I throw insults at her"; "I am sweeping away the traces that my co-wife's footsteps have left on the ground",* which is meant to show how much women do not want to see their co-wives; *"Look at the way she ties her loincloth, she looks like a cat walking, her husband really didn't have a wife"* as a phrase that shows disdain for co-wives, but also for sisters-in-law or cousins-in-law.

While women gave examples in collective interpretation workshops of how co-wives can cooperate to meet food and other household needs, it seems that full cooperation between co-wives is rather rare, or at least unlikely. Women described different types of problems co-wives encounter that include inequitable treatment by their husband, uneven distribution of food that does not take into account the number of children each co-wife has, disagreement in cohabitation, disobedience, misunderstandings, and anarchy in land distribution when the husband is absent.

Table 14 includes a selection of narratives shared by women who describe conflict between co-wives. Triggers they found were related to power relationships, such as the monopolization of the home; taking of positions among co-wives; jealousy; influence from first wives in decision making; misunderstandings; failure to assist a person in danger; and abandonment of the family. Possible connectors—or factors to reinforce cooperation—between co-wives, again based on review of the narratives, included acting fairly on information; sharing information; being involved in decision making; and having commitment from their husband to assist wives in an equitable manner. This analysis suggests that most wives are generally unhappy in polygamous relationships and do not typically cooperate to fulfill household needs, but rather act as more independent "wife-children" units.

Table 14. Selected narratives of women who described their relationships with their co-wives in the experiences shared

My co-wife and mother-in-law are accomplices I have eight children with my husband, including four boys and four girls. It is my boys who support my husband in the difficult daily tasks. So, to thank them, my husband occasionally buys them clothes as a gift. One day, my co-wife told our mother-in-law that we don't like her children because they are girls, and that my husband considers my children more. While I too have daughters, to whom my husband does not give gifts regularly. So, my mother-in-law and my co-wife came to tell me that I was the one who influence all my husband's actions and gestures, and that I had bewitched him. I cried that day, because I had never done what they accused me of, and since that day my mother-in-law has looked at me negatively.
Loss I lived with my husband in peace, he had his herd of cows and goats, we did small commerce with what we managed to milk, I used to prepare butter every day, we led a normal life within our means. One fine day he decided to take another wife, and even before the wedding he spent a lot of money, he did not listen to me and did not follow my advice. Little by little he sold his animals to bring the money to his in-laws and to celebrate the wedding. Another expense was the sale of some cattle because after the wedding, since the arrival of the young bride, she was suffering from a disease related to evil spirits. This period was the beginning of the real expenses because at that time for each consultation he had to run from left to right to look for money or sell a goat, today he has nothing, and we have no source of income.
An unbalanced home I am the first wife, I have seven children, four of whom are girls, only one is married. Since my husband remarried more than twenty years ago, I had lost my status and my place as a woman in the household. All I do is endure and do what she [my co-wife] dictates to me, despite the fact that I am older than her. This year, she and my husband had taken me away from field work, claiming that I am no longer useful doing these kinds of jobs. I insisted a lot on farming even if it was only for this year, but my co-wife refused. Now it is my children who are doing their best to support me.
The trials of life I am the second wife in my household, I got along well with the first wife and we shared everything together. I even called her big sister or Hajjiya to enhance her. One day her older sister made her understand that she was naive by doing everything and sharing everything with me. Since that day my co-wife has distanced herself from me and changed her attitude towards me. When I cooked, she didn't eat, and she prevented her children from eating the meals I prepared. My husband was no longer allowed to even feed me properly when she is present. I could barely get what I could put under my tongue. So, I went into petty trade so that I could feed myself and my child. Now everything is confusing between myself and my co-wife, and nobody cares about the other.
Good decision My co-wife and I used to cook together and eat the same dish. But each time when it's her turn to prepare, the food is insufficient. The children don't get full. It had become a habit for her. I informed our husband, he didn't believe me, and the same problem continued. I took my luggage and went to my parents' house. I told my father what was happening. After discussion with my father, my husband made the decision to share the food with us, to separate the preparation of the dishes that each of us prepares for herself and her children. This is a positive result.
Sharing millet We're four households in our compound. My husband and his brothers. One day we had a violent quarrel over sharing millet for dinner. The wife of the eldest son in the compound refused to give me the equal share that was rightfully mine in proportion to the number of children I have. It almost came to a head when my husband's little brother intervened to calm us down. He had then repaid his way to call our father-in-law. My husband had migrated to Nigeria. Our father-in-law demanded that the millet be divided into two parts: two households had to share half of the millet between them. Since that day the problems have diminished.

I'm in trouble with my co-wives
I was with my co-wives in the same concession and our husband is in Algiers by migration. One day we were pounding millet when I made a thoughtless remark to my husband's third wife. She took it badly and involuntarily we dropped our pestle at the same time. It touched our lower abdomen. She was pregnant and started insulting saying that I wanted to kill her. She went to the commune to inform the police, who locked me up for 2 days and then 3 days. I am free now on condition that I pay 100.000fCFA+10.000Nera fine. Every day my co-wives provoke me in relation to this fact. But in my home, I never had any problem with my husband.

I am proud to be
One day, my co-wife and I had a fight. She had indirectly insulted me, which I found inadmissible. I reacted and I didn't like our husband's reaction. I understood that it was as if he had supported her. As a result of this, my husband and I separated. A few days later, the husband and my mother-in-law came to my house to see my father and console me for coming home. My father consulted my mother to make a decision. They decided I should go back to my home because of my children. This happened. And now, now I'm alone in the home, the co-wife is no longer there.

My husband's support
I live with my co-wife and my husband. It so happens that she and our husband are frequently in conflict. So, she is always coming and going back and forth to her parents' house or to her husband's house. In the big [extended] family, they have started whispering that I am responsible for these actions. People thought I put a spell on her so that she wouldn't stay in the home. Luckily our husband dispelled the doubt by explaining to the whole family that I had nothing to do with it, that my co-wife has a bad temper. He asked the family to never accuse me falsely again, which is positive because I have had peace.

3 marriages, I aspire to a better life
I am in my third marriage, and for a long time I was accused of hurting my co-wife with the hoe. At my third marriage I was a newcomer and when I wanted to prepare food for the family, my wife with the support of my mother-in-law sabotaged my food. She said that my little pot would not be enough for everyone. She poured the water and put her pot on the fire. It was my turn to do the same and that's when the insults started, and we came to blows. Our husband chased us away, then he called his first wife back. After two months when he learned that I was pregnant, he went to negotiate with my parents, they refused to listen to him. It was his brother who came back to renegotiate my return. We gave in. After wise advice, our husband took drastic measures on any future fights. My mother-in-law continues to give me a hard time, sometimes I give in by running away, sometimes I keep myself under control.

It's a difficult home
I'm the second wife, my husband and I were married four years ago, and I have only one child. At the beginning of our marriage everything was going well, but when his first wife noticed this, she did everything she could to put us in conflict because she knew that it was a marriage that was not based on a solid and reciprocal love relationship because I did not love him, he loved me. When I raised this problem to my in-laws, they made me understand that I am not patient and that I want to put the family in conflict. So, I am obliged to be patient and pray to the good Lord to help me overcome this difficult ordeal.

A difficult co-wife
It's my co-wife who's getting me into trouble. It is this year that my husband married her, but since she arrived, she can't stand my eldest son, as soon as he opens his mouth, she hits him. because of this, we even had a fight once, which caused me to leave the house for days. For a few days, she also had a fight with our husband, and despite all the old people who went to mediation, she refused to come back. Since then, we finally have peace and quiet at home.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

One of the purposes of this study was to assess the extent to which IPV is perceived as a common practice in the Girma target zone, as well as explore how the gender norms and behaviors discussed above affect the practice. This is important information for identifying root causes and effects, as well as threats and emergent practices, for designing appropriate prevention and mitigation measures.

Perceived level of IPV

To assess the extent to which respondents perceive prevalence of IPV (as well as gender-based violence more broadly) in their communities in a manner that would not pose harm, women, girls and influencers were asked to indicate, to their knowledge, what is the level of violence against women in their village, placing their response on a slider between two extremes: "violence is present everywhere" (value of 0) and "there is no violence" (value of 1). As shown in Figure 46, both women and girls, and influencers to a higher extent, at the median (0.39 and 0.32, respectively) indicated that violence against women is present in their villages. Nevertheless, there are individuals from both groups of respondents who perceive that there is no violence at all in their communities (see responses in the extreme right of the slider).

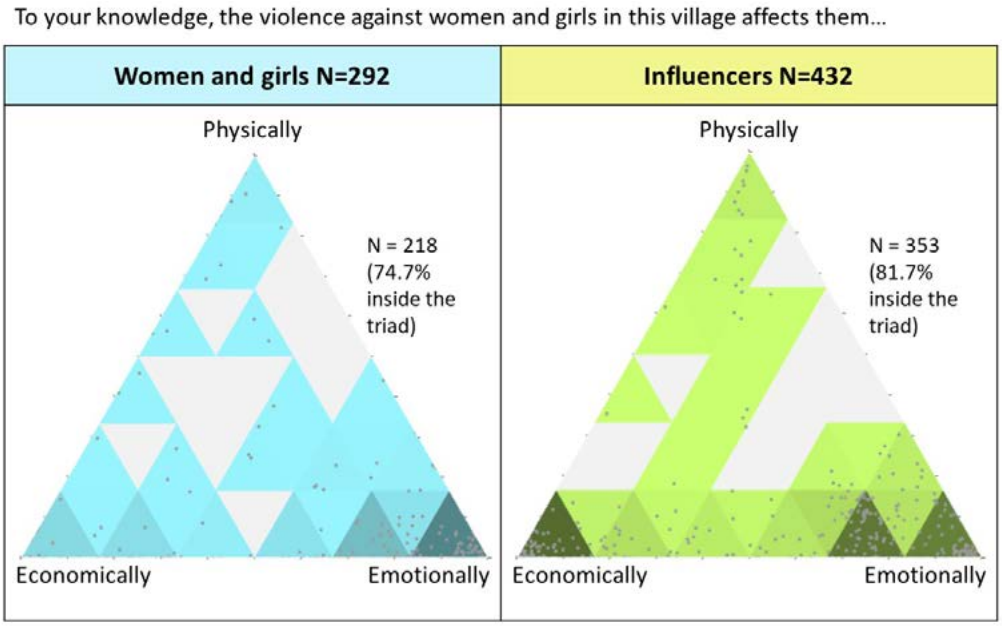
Figure 45. Perception on the level of violence against women by type of respondent

To add a layer of information about violence against women, the above question was followed by another in which respondents who perceived that there is violence in their villages were also asked to reflect, based on their knowledge (not the specific experience shared), to what extent this violence against women affects them economically, physically or emotionally. Results in Figure 47 shows that 74.7 percent of women and girls, and 81.7% of influencers perceive that women and girls face at least one of these three types of violence (their responses are in the triad).

Women and girls believed the most prevalent type of violence against women is emotional, followed by almost equal levels of physical and economic violence. Influencers also believed that emotional violence is the most common in their villages but give more importance to economic violence than women and girls, and less importance to physical violence. This validates previous findings shown in Figure 46 in terms of the existence

and extent of violence against women in the Girma target zone, but gives more emphasis to emotional violence without precluding the existence of economic or physical violence, since any dot inside the triad indicates a combination of these three types of violence.

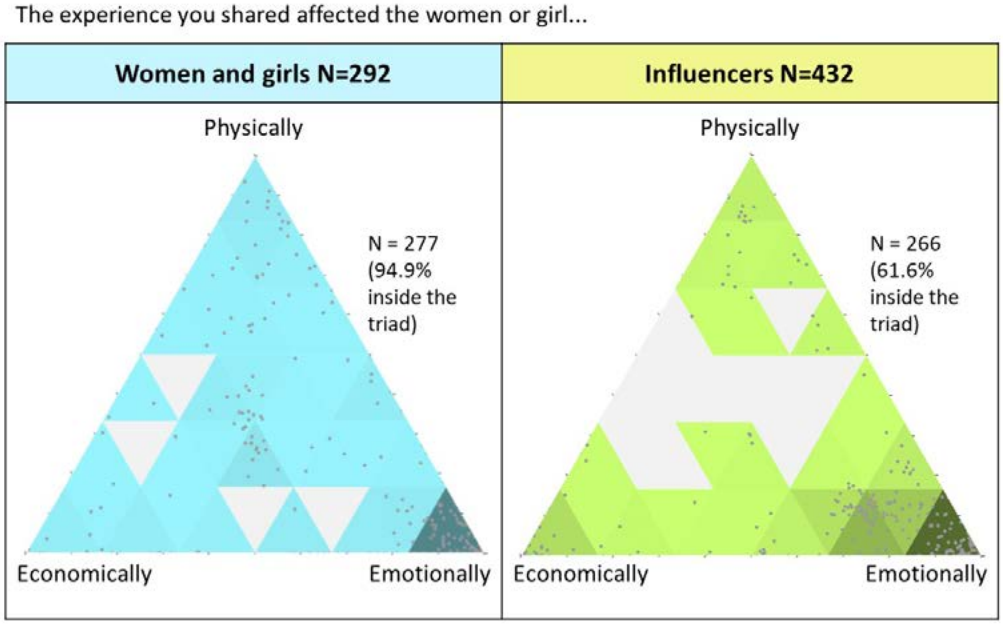
Figure 46. Perception on the types of violence against women by type of respondent



As these results are based on the opinion of respondents, and not necessarily tied to real-life experiences shared by respondents, findings from another question that asked in a more general manner whether, in the experience shared, the women or girl was affected by the experience emotionally, economically of physically, is also analyzed here to triangulate the findings (see Figure 48). Almost all women and girls (94.9%) responded to this question, meaning that in most of their experiences they were affected by at least one of these aspects.

The response pattern shows that women and girls were most often affected emotionally (some only emotionally as some dots are in the right corner of the triad), while at least 43% indicated experiencing some combination of emotional, economic and physical effects (dots that are not in the right or left corners, or the lower line of the triad). Fewer influencers reported that women and girls were affected in any of these manners (61.6% responses are in the triad as compared to 94.9% of women and girls), but they agree that women and girls were most affected emotionally, while they give more importance to the economic effects than the women and girls themselves, and almost the same importance to physical violence.

Figure 47. Effect of the decisions shared in women and girls' wellbeing



In line with the above results, the majority of the narratives from women and girls recounted personal experiences that affected them emotionally, but there are also stories that explicitly mentioned physical violence, such as the story titled *"Misunderstandings"* in Table 8 above from an adult woman (31 years or older) or the story title *"The suffering of my life"* in Table 15. However, many of the narratives show implicit connotations of a mix of emotional and physical violence such as the one called *"Punishment"* and *"One time only,"* also in Table 15. While these narratives only mention that the husband "scolded" them, they also use other words such as "he became furious... and sent us back to our parents' house," or "I got angry and went back to my parents' house", which could indicate emotional and/ or physical violence. In addition, influencers—particularly religious leaders—spoke of some cases of physical violence against women (see also Table 15).

Table 15. Selected narratives from respondents who explicitly and implicitly shared experiences of physical violence, by type of respondent

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	NARRATIVE
Young woman (26-30 years old)	**THE SUFFERING OF MY LIFE** I am in my second marriage and I had a stroke. When my husband married me, he was recently widowed and was left with five children. When he married me, the children did not easily accept me in their house. As for my mother-in-law, she only saw and accepted what her grandchildren said. They despised me. In the fields I hardly have the right to harvest something to fulfill my hunger. At home they hit me as well as their father (my husband) under the influence of my mother-in-law. I had to inform my uncles and brothers. We ended up going to the authorities who ruled in my favor. After that, we moved a bit far from my mother-in-law's, and my husband brought his children their share of food. And I stayed in my compound. I had three miscarriages from being traumatized by the memories of my previous life. Whenever I remember my heart beats hard.
Young woman (26-30 years old)	**PUNISHMENT** My co-wife and I were supposed to be gone to work in the mill. We took too long to go, but it was beyond our control. Our intention was to prepare the meal, so it was going to be ready when we return. Our husband had gone to a christening ceremony in the village and came back. As soon as he entered the house, he started to scold us, and he became furious. He didn't expect to find us at home, but rather in the field as agreed. He told us to go back to our parents' house. At night, he met my father and gave him an explanation. He apologized to my father. The final decision was for me to return home. That's negative.

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	NARRATIVE
Young woman (26-30 years old)	**ONE TIME ONLY** My co-wife went on vacation to her parents. She left her only child with me. When she returned, the child told her that I didn't feed him. Without checking the words of her child, she took it out on me. She informed our husband who believed her. And he scolded me. I got angry and went back to my parents' house. A few days later he followed me. My parents advised me to go back to my husband, to be patient and submissive. It is a positive decision because since that day my husband has not reacted badly.
Male influencer–Religious leader (41-50 years old)	**PROHIBITION TO DIVORCE A WOMAN BY A COMMITTEE OF WISE MEN** Once we had a complaint from a woman who had been beaten by her husband. The complaint had reached the village chief and the elders decided to break up the marriage. I called the woman to find out if this was what she wanted; she told me she didn't want a divorce because she loved her husband. I had called the village chief at a distance to inform him of the wife's decision. So, we decided to intervene to prevent the divorce. Then a decision was taken to fine the husband with 5,000 francs. The husband had paid the fine but personally I gave him his money so that he could take better care of his wife.
Male influencer–Religious leader (51-60 years old)	**FORBIDDEN BY ELDERS TO DIVORCE A WOMAN** We once had a complaint from a woman who was beaten by her husband. The complaint had reached the village chief and the elders decided to break the marriage. I called the woman to find out if that's what she wanted, she told me she doesn't want a divorce because she loves her husband. I called the village chief to tell him about the woman's decision. So, we decided to intervene to prevent this divorce. The decision was made to fine the husband 5,000 francs. The husband paid the fine, but I personally gave him his money back so that he could take better care of his wife.

When respondents answered that the experience shared affected the women or girl emotionally, economically or physically, a follow-up question was whether this situation was triggered by her husband, co-wife(s) or in-laws or a combination of them. The responses from women and girls show that the situation was triggered at least by one of these people in 39 percent of the cases (responses in the triad), and when this was the case, her husband was the person that triggered this situation most frequently, followed by her co-wife(s), and her in-laws to a lesser extent (see Figure 49). Influencers indicated that these individuals triggered emotional, physical or economic effects in only 29 percent of the experiences shared but gave an even higher level of importance to the relations between husband and wife, and much less to in-laws and co-wives. This level of response from women and girls and influencers triangulates well with the fact that 21.9 and 26.4 percent of the experiences shared by women and girls and influencers, respectively were related to decisions about spousal and family relations.

To further assess to what extent these narratives related to decisions about spousal and family relations showed a different pattern in the way that they affected women and girls (see Figure 48 above), responses to the question on whether the experiences shared affected women and girls emotionally, physically or economically were filtered for those respondents who self-signified their experience as related mainly to a decision about spousal and family relations (see Figure 50). The resultant pattern in the responses of women and girls shows a stronger predominance of emotional effects and a lower predominance of economic or physical effects than the non-filtered pattern that includes all responses; while the pattern from the responses of influencers shows a lower predominance of emotional and economic effects, and a higher predominance of physical effects.

Figure 48. Household members who triggered problems that affected women and girls, differentiated by type of respondent

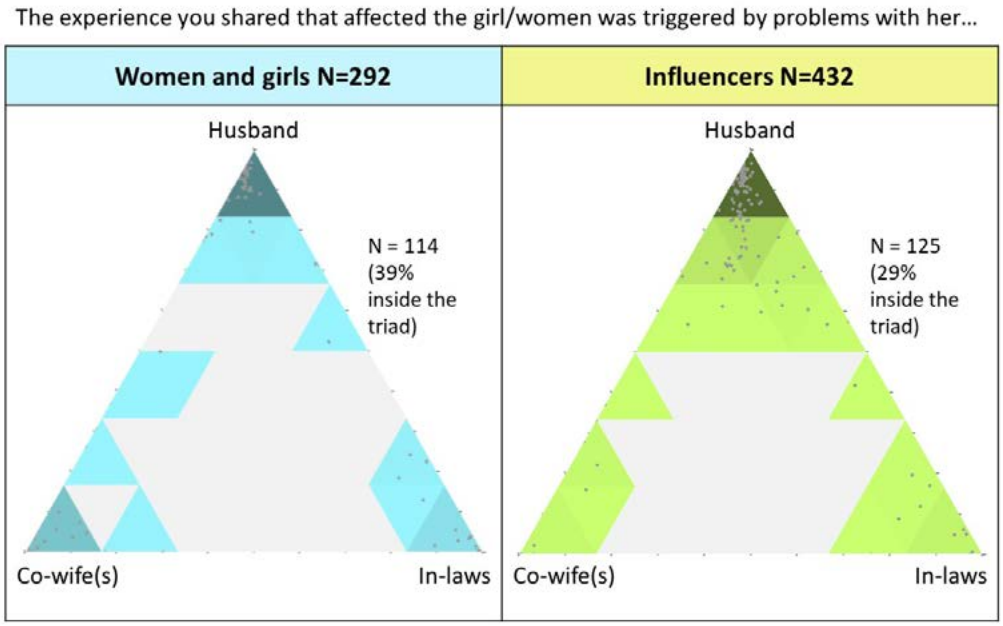
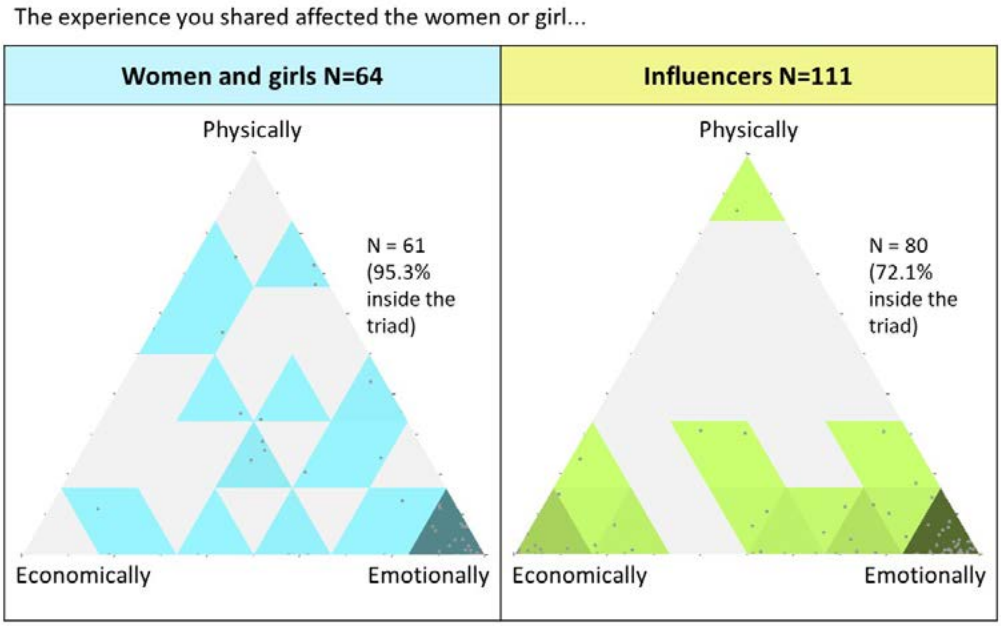
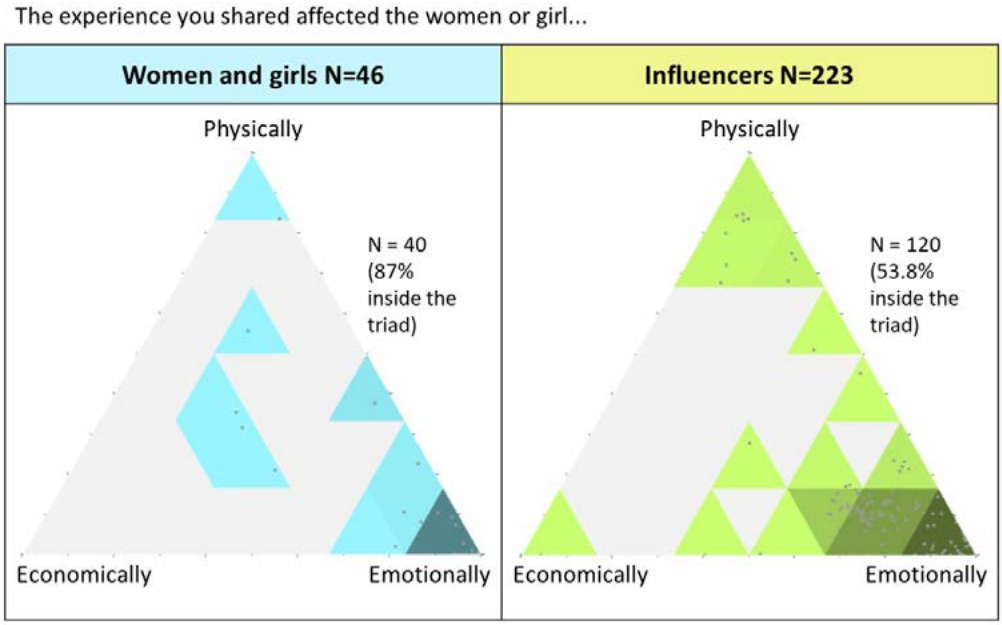


Figure 49. Effects of the experiences shared related to spousal relations in women and girls, differentiated by type of respondent



Finally, responses to the same question on how the experience shared affected women and girls emotionally, physically or economically were filtered for those respondents who self-signified their experience as related mainly to a decision about girls' or women's first marriage (see Figure 51). A lower percentage of women and girls and of influencers considered that women and girls were affected in any of these manners when the experience shared was mainly about a decision related to marriage than those who shared an experience related to spousal relations' decisions. However, the resultant pattern in the responses of women and girls and influencers shows an even stronger predominance of emotional effects than those of experiences related to spousal decisions; followed by higher physical effects according to influencers and the same according to women and girls; and lower economic effects according to both groups of respondents.

Figure 50. Effects of the experiences shared related women and girls' marriage, differentiated by type of respondent



Causes of violence and influencers

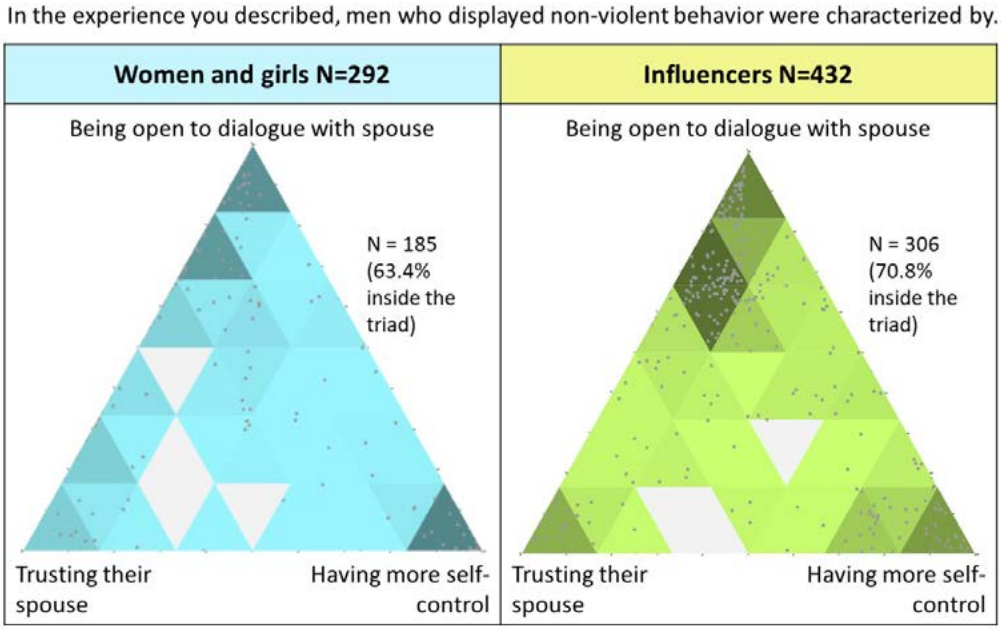
This study attempted to identify characteristics of non-violent men, both linked to respondents' stories and based on respondents' general opinion. As shown in Figure 52, 63.4 percent of women and girls and 70.8 percent of influencers consider that non-violent men are characterized by being open to dialogue with their spouse, having self-control and/or trusting their spouse. Women and girls gave almost the same importance to all three characteristics but gave a slighter higher importance to being open to dialogue with their spouse(s). Influencers also gave importance to three characteristics, but more than women and girls to being open to dialogue with their spouse than to the other two characteristics.

When asked about other characteristics of non-violent men, besides the three mentioned above, 63.7% of women who responded to this question opined that patience was key, followed by fear of God and sense of responsibility (48.3 and 45.2%, respectively). Among influencers, 50.2% responded that patience was also the most important factor and 45.2% that a sense of responsibility was key. In addition, 45.8% of influencers and 31.8% or women and girls believe that men who can provide food for their families tend to be less violent.

Insights collected during collective interpretation workshops show that community and religious leaders have a very influential role around the practice of IPV. Women also cited mothers-in-law as being able to help reduce

IPV by "advising their sons to live in harmony." While men are clearly agents of change as the most frequent perpetrators of violence, it's not clear (from this study) to what extent they influence each other on the question of IPV.

Figure 51. Characteristics of non-violent men



Discussions in collective interpretation workshops also showed how entrenched acceptance of violence against women is among both men and women, with Hausa girls saying that "women's character" invokes violence from men against women, and community leaders suggesting that women should be trained to respect their husbands as a measure to reduce violence. Other reasons respondents gave during collective interpretation workshops for high levels of violence against women include poverty and resource constraints, courting other women, male-dominated norms and women's submission, and differences in opinions when making decisions related to children.

Poverty was raised as the most frequent cause of violence against women, with all respondent groups (men, women, adolescent girls, community leaders, and religious leaders) mentioning its relevance. For example, some Hausa women explained that poverty and lack of resources creates "frustration and anger among men and impatience among women." Men said women's jealousy can trigger violence, for example if they envy things their neighbor has that their husband isn't able to provide. Many women also expressed examples of economic violence they face, such as husbands taking their assets without their consent, which are also presumably due to a husband's lack of resources. Women also said that asking husbands for money can result in violence.

Women and girls also raised polygamy as a trigger for violence. Kanuri women and Fulani adolescent girls said that men courting other women as they look for a new wife causes violence (presumably when their current wife demonstrates their disagreement), and Hausa adolescent girls emphasized how men reject first wives when a new one is added. As in answers from influencers above, men in collective interpretation workshops did not speak of this as a trigger of violence, either showing a lack of awareness or lack of willingness to speak about it.

Another cause was raised more tangentially around the norm—tied to community members' interpretation of Islam—that women must be submissive and obey their husbands, and that men have the right to discipline them

if they are not. For example, adolescent girls cited that women may be beaten when she disobeys an order, even if it's searching for food for their family, which intersects with the cause around poverty. As discussed above, community leaders also cited women's "lack of respect" as a cause of violence.

A review of narratives found that several kinds of decisions triggered conflict between husbands and wives, especially those about keeping girls in school or withdrawing them; child marriage, including daughters' lack of Involvement in the choice of their spouse, opposition to early marriage, and forced marriage; and the involvement of extended family members in decision making.

Measures to reduce violence against women and girls

The gender analysis team used the collective interpretation workshops to gather additional insights on what could help reduce violence against women in the communities. All groups of participants suggested that both men and women should be sensitized against violence and that community and religious leaders had an important role to play. Male participants proposed that community leaders organize meetings to discuss these issues and propose and enforce solutions, while religious leaders could preach sermons on the topic. They also suggested that leaders sensitize parents on the importance of educating children and for husbands to support their wives to develop small businesses, to have their own sources of income, and to facilitate reconciliation between spouses and families.

Fulani girls also said community leaders should sensitize men on women's value and the respect they should have for them and their children, while adult women said community leaders can punish, sensitize, and advise. Hausa women also asked that community leaders be impartial in their conflict resolution role. Unfortunately, community leaders also recommended training women in respecting their husband, which would reinforce gender inequality and male domination, reinforcing the need to target community and religious leaders with sensitization on gender equality before supporting their leadership role on sensitization in the community.

In keeping with the finding that poverty is a major trigger for violence against women when men are unable to fulfill their traditional gender role as provider for the family's food and other economic needs, many suggestions from respondents on how to reduce violence were related to supporting men's livelihoods. Many adult Kanuri and Fulani women said men should be supported to be able to provide for their families, as well as pray to God for improved agricultural conditions, and some Kanuri girls suggested economic support would improve the situation. Community leaders also suggested that Girma help men provide for their family, and Fulani women, adult men and community leaders also cited girls' education and literacy center provision as important to help reduce violence against women.

Interestingly, while women emphasized supporting men's livelihoods, adult men and religious leaders did not suggest supporting men's livelihoods as a measure to reduce violence, but rather suggested that Girma should help women become self-sufficient and grow their economic capacity (perhaps to relieve financial pressure on husbands). This is an opportunity to grow beyond traditional gender roles that prescribe men to "provider" roles and women to domestic work (though women certainly make significant contributions to household's food security and nutrition, as presented in the Livelihoods section below).

Women's and girls' agency and resilience

So far, this report has assessed gender norms and behaviors, especially as they relate to women's and girls' decision-making power, spousal and family relations, and IPV; and the effects this has on women and girls emotionally, physically and economically. This section examines additional components of women's and girls' agency—namely their ability to react to decisions made on their behalf and their resilience.

Women's and girls' agency

One of the questions designed to assess women's and girls' agency asked respondents to what extent women who were affected by the experience shared (emotionally, physically and/or economically) "did everything they could", or "could not do anything" to stop the decision and/or the situation that affected them (see Figure 53). The perceptions between women and girls and influencers are different. While the women and girls themselves, at the median, feel that to some extent they did what they could to stop what was affecting them, the median of influencers' responses shows their strong belief that women and girls could not do anything to stop it. However, the responses from both groups are very dispersed with few responses in the middle.

To narrow down the analysis to only those experiences that were related to spousal and family relations, which have shown to have a strong emotional effect on young and adult women, and to some extent economic effects (see Figure 50 above), responses for this question were filtered to include only experiences related to this type of decision (see Figure 54). There is little difference between the perceptions of the women and girls on their agency for this decision type as compared to the entire sample; however, from the perspective of influencers, women and girls have a higher level of capacity to stop decisions related to spousal and family relations as compared to the entire sample that includes all decision types. It should also be noted that the responses of both groups are dispersed and tend to be on one side or the other, but much less in the middle, showing variability in women's and girls' ability to react to the decisions made.

This same response was also filtered to include only those experiences that related to a decision about women and girls' first marriage, which have shown to have an even stronger emotional effect on women and girls and to some extent some physical effects (see Figure 51 above). The results show that women and girls as well as influencers perceive that women and girls could do much less to stop what affected them when the decisions were related to marriage than when they were related to spousal and family relations.

Figure 52. Level of agency of women and girls to stop what affected them from their own perspective and that of influencers

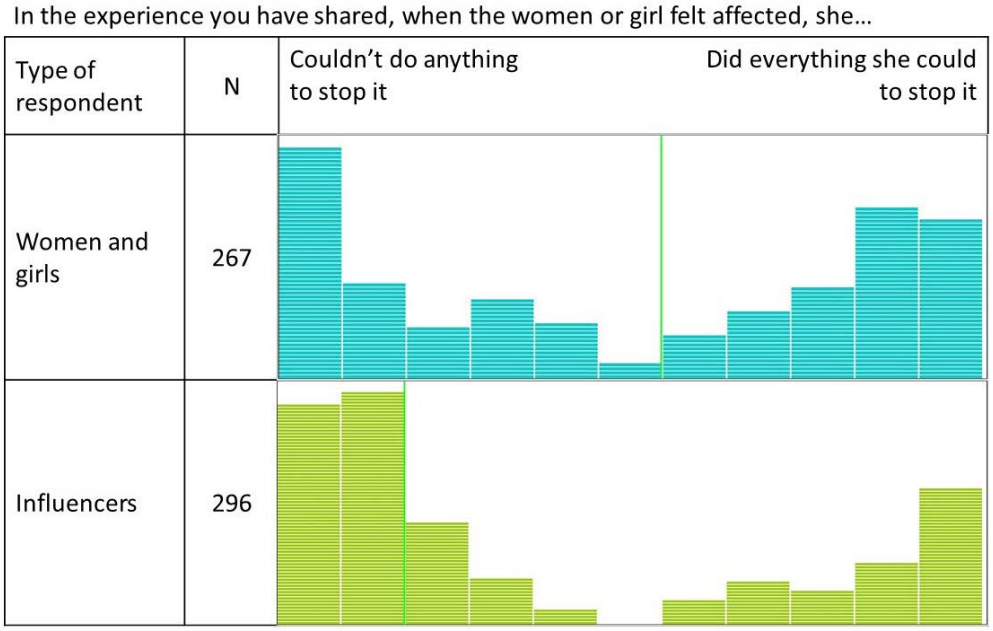


Figure 53. Level of agency of women and girls to stop decisions related to spousal and family relations that affected them from their own perspective and that of influencers

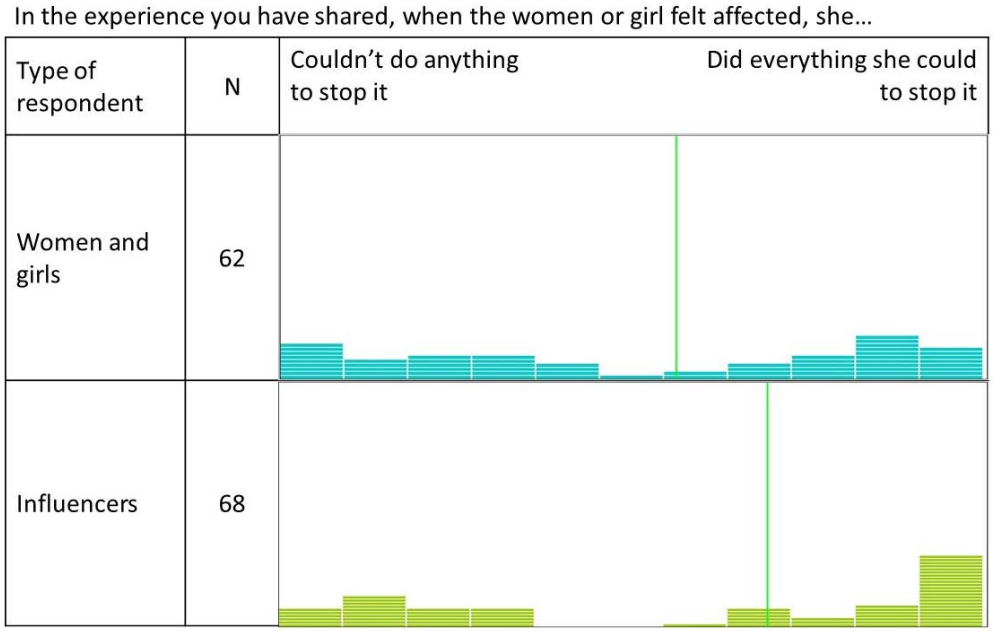


Figure 54. Level of agency of women and girls to stop decisions related to their first marriage from their own perspective and that of influencers

Factors that affect women and girls' agency

To better understand why women and girls' capacity to act, or react, when they felt affected emotionally, economically and/or physically was low in the experience they shared, women and girls and influencers were asked to what extent they did not act because of fear of being separated from their children, having their physical wellbeing affected, and/or facing economic consequences, all related to her children and own wellbeing. As shown in Figure 56, 125 of the 277 who reported being affected either emotionally, economically or physically in the experiences shared (45% of the experiences) and 42.8% of all the sample didn't act because they feared any or a combination of the above consequences, the greater fear being separation from their children, followed by that of being affected physically and less by economic consequences. This desire to be with their children is also frequently described in women's narratives related to spousal relations, and is cited as a frequent point of consideration in reuniting women with their husbands.

To explore other causes for women's lack of action when being affected by emotional, physical and/or economic violence, women and girls and influencers were asked to what extent they did not act based on the fear of losing her social status, being excluded from her community or damaging her family honor, all related to conforming to social norms and beliefs (see Figure 57). Interestingly, a higher percentage of respondents responded to this question than to the previous one (52.7% of women and girls compared to 42.8%; and 40.3% of influencers compared to 22.2%). This suggests that women and girls have more fear of facing social sanctions than of having her own well-being affected or being separated from her children. In relation to social sanctions, women and girls mostly fear losing their social status, followed closely by damaging their family honor and to a much lesser extent being excluded from their communities. For influencers, the major fear of women and girls is damaging their family honor, followed by losing their social status (an opposite order than responses from women and girls), and in line with women and girls' responses, to a lesser extent the fear of being excluded.

Figure 55. Causes for women and girls lack of agency to stop IPV related to women and children wellbeing

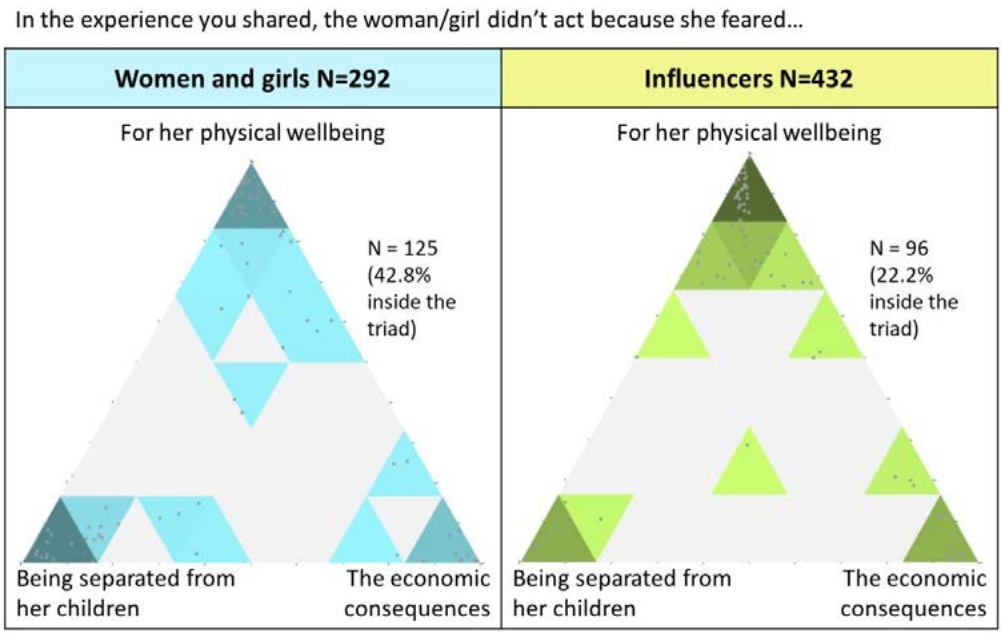


Figure 56. Causes for women and girls lack of agency to stop IPV related to conforming to social norms

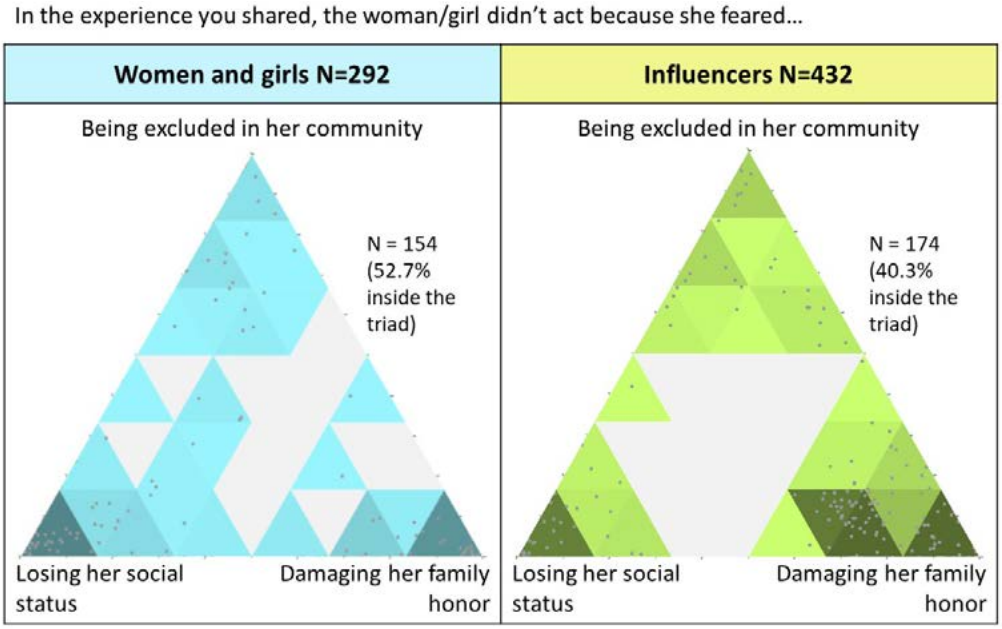
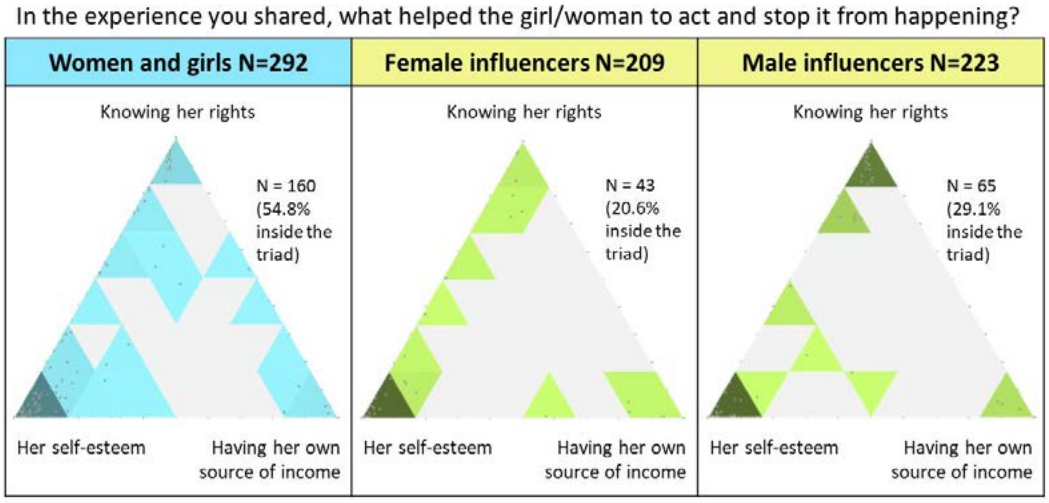


Figure 57. Women and girls coping mechanisms from the perspective of women and girls, female influencers and male influencers

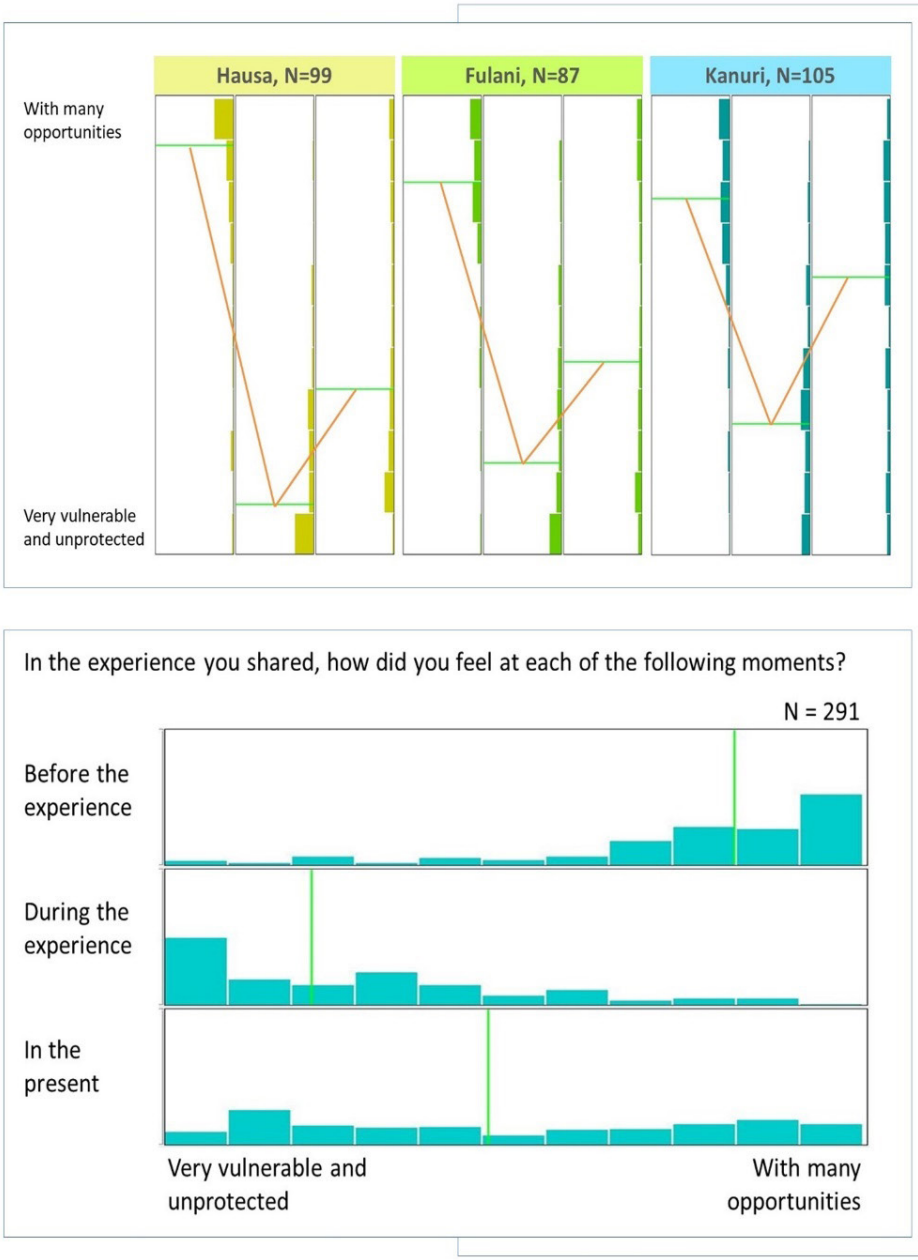


Coping mechanisms

To identify attributes that helped women and girls react to the decision they shared and prevent it from happening again, women, girls and influencers were asked to indicate the relative importance of the following factors: her self-esteem, knowing her rights and/or having her own source of income. Figure 58 shows the pattern of responses for women and girls, as well as for female and male influencers. 54.8 percent of the women and girls responded to this question (their dot is in the triad), showing that a little more than half of the women and girls were able to act based on one or a combination of these three attributes. Women and girls, and

female influencers, coincide in that what helped the most were women's and girls' self-esteem, and to a much lesser extent knowing their rights and having their own source of income. On the other hand, male influencers perceived that women's and girls' self-esteem and knowledge of their rights was equally important, followed by having their own source of income. Moreover, only 20.6 and 29.1 percent of female and male influencers responded to this question, showing that they perceived that fewer women or girls had at least one of these attributes to be able to act and stop the situation that affected them.

Figure 58. Pathways followed by women and girls as a result of a decision that was made for them that significantly impacted their lives, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group



How to read the histogram

The height of the bar graphs (in the illustration below) represents the number of women and girls who responded about their experience at the points indicated on the graph (before, during, and at present). The green line represents the median, with 50 percent of participants' responses to the left of the line and 50 percent to the right. By filtering this graph by sociolinguistic group, rotating the graphs, and connecting the median lines, the orange pathways were drawn.

Women and girls' personal resilience

Women's and girls' perceptions of the pathways they followed in the experiences shared about a decision that was made for them that significantly impacted their lives —that is, the trajectory between feeling very vulnerable and unprotected and feeling they had many opportunities—were categorized into three pathways:

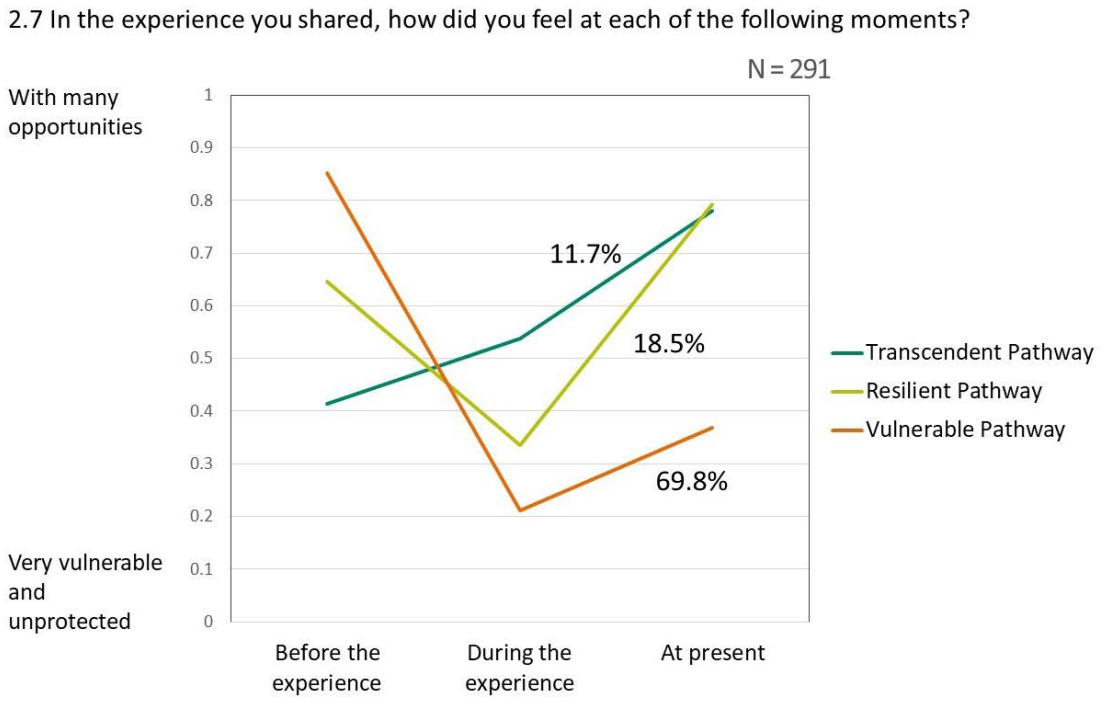
An ascendant pathway: Women and girls perceived that they had been able to progress from feeling vulnerable and unprotected to feeling they had many opportunities as a result of decisions made that impacted their lives.

A resilient pathway: Women and girls faced a situation in which a decision was made for them that made them feel more vulnerable and unprotected but perceived that they had recovered and rebounded to their original situation or to a better one.

A vulnerable pathway: Women and girls faced a situation in which a decision was made for them that made them feel more vulnerable and unprotected and perceived that they had not been able to recover, or were in the process of recovery but had not yet reached the level they were on before.

To assess the personal resilience of women and girls to the experiences shared when a decision was made for them that significantly impacted their lives, a slider with stones was used to help them reflect on how they felt at three different moments—before the experience, during the experience and in the present—and place their responses along a continuum from feeling "very vulnerable and unprotected" to feeling they had "many opportunities." Figure 59 shows that at the median (see the green lines in each histogram), women and girls had a steep fall during the experience, then started to rebound, but were then in a worse situation, therefore they had followed a vulnerable pathway (illustrated by the orange V shaped pathways in the upper part of the figure).

Figure 59. Pathways followed women and girls as a result of the decision that was taken for them and significantly impacted their lives

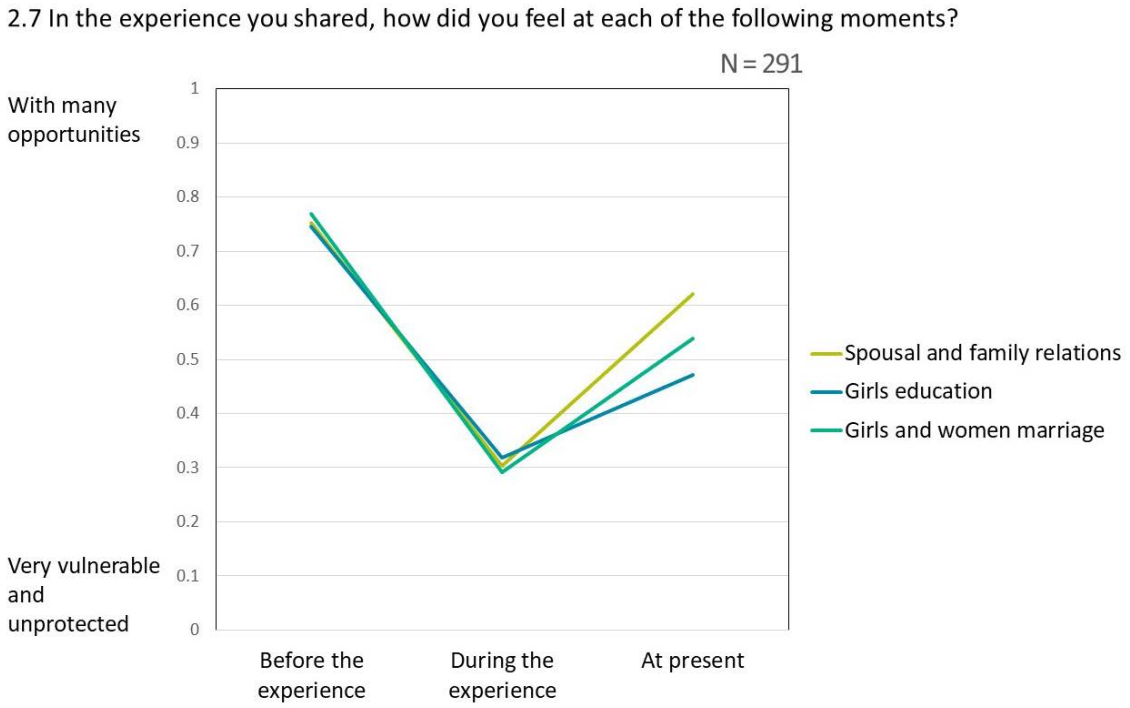


When the pathways are disaggregated by sociolinguistic group (see the three graphs in the upper part of the figure), we can observe three differences. First, Hausa women and girls perceived that they started from a less vulnerable situation than Fulani and Kanuri women and girls, while Kanuri women and girls perceived that they have started from a more vulnerable situation. Secondly, Hausa women and girls felt that they had a steeper fall than Fulani and Kanuri women and girls, while Kanuri women and girls perceived that they have had the least steep fall. And thirdly, Kanuri women and girls not only had the least steep fall, but they also rebounded more than Hausa and Fulani women and girls. During collective interpretation workshops, these findings were shared with CRS and partner staff, as well as with local stakeholders, who felt that Kanuri people may have a stronger sense of solidarity. However, this cannot be confirmed with the available data.

To further analyze the differences in the pathways followed by women and girls, the three types of pathways described above were plotted (Figure 60). The findings show that 69.8 percent of women and girls experienced a sharp fall into feeling more vulnerable and unprotected and only partially recovered, following a vulnerable pathway; 19.8 percent had a less steep fall and were able to rebound better, following a resilient pathway, and only 11.7 percent were able to advance from feeling vulnerable and unprotected to feeling they had many opportunities, and therefore followed an ascendent pathway. This shows that most of the women and girls in the Girma target zone followed vulnerable pathways.

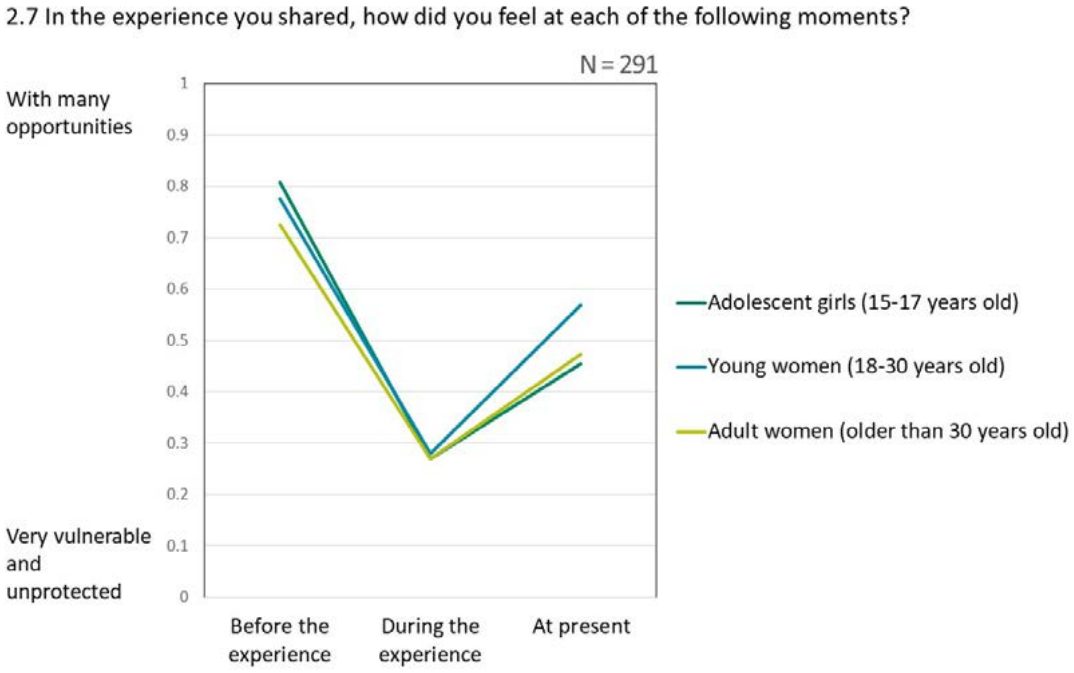
To explore the characteristics of those who followed vulnerable pathways and contrast them with those who followed resilient and ascendent ones, women's and girls' pathways were differentiated by decision type (see Figure 61). These results show that at the mean, girls were less able to rebound in experiences related to decisions about their education, followed by experiences related to their first marriage, and were able to rebound more, but still to a more vulnerable situation, when the experiences were related to spousal and family relations.

Figure 60. Pathways followed by women and girls as a result of the decision that was taken for them that significantly impacted their lives, differentiated by type of decision



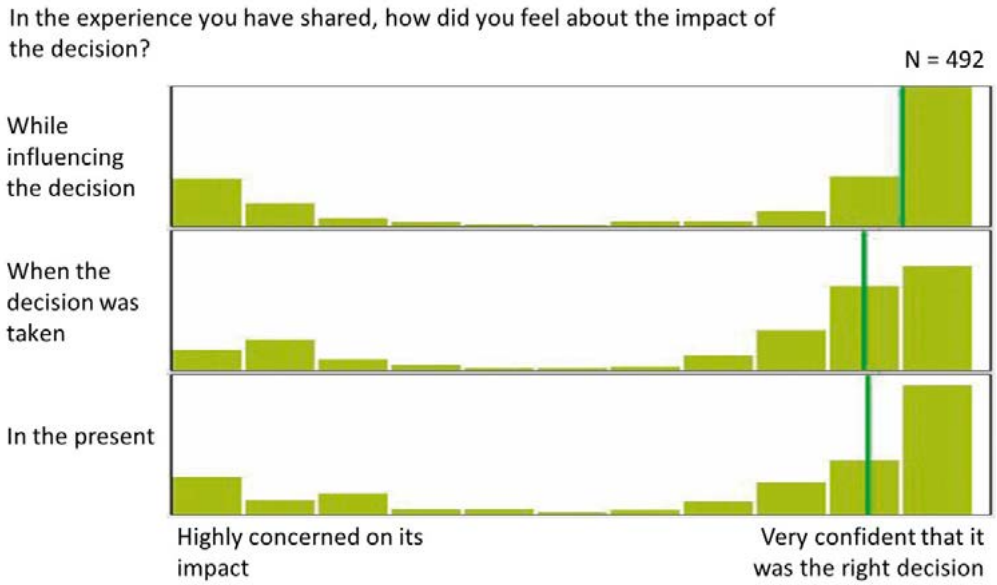
To further analyze differences in the pathways among adolescent girls, young women and adult women, pathways were also differentiated by age group (see Figure 61). These results show little difference at the mean between adolescent girls and adult women; however, young women, while still vulnerable at the mean, were able to rebound more than adolescent girls and adult women.

Figure 61. Pathways followed by women and girls as a result of the decision that was taken for them that significantly impacted their lives, differentiated by age group



For influencers, a slider with stones was used to asked how they felt about the impact of their decision in the experience shared in three moments, while influencing the decision, when the decision was taken and at present, between "highly concerned about its impact" and "very confident that it was the right decision". The results show that at the median, influencers tend to be very confident that their decisions are the right ones, despite the results presented above that women and girls, at the median, feel that these decisions made them feel more vulnerable and unprotected and that they couldn't fully recuperate from them (see Figure 63). However, the level of confidence decreased somewhat between the time when the decision was made and at the present moment. Also, there are influencers in the left side of the slider, showing that some influencers were concerned about the impact of their decisions.

Figure 62. Influencers' perceptions on the impact of their decisions on women and girls



When this information is disaggregated by the sex of the influencer (see Figure 64), female influencer responses have the same pattern than those of male influencers, but the median is slightly more towards the left, showing that they are still very confident that their decision were the best for the girls but less than male influencers; however there are more outlier responses in the left side among female influencers.

To further analyze differences in influencers confidence in their decisions, their perceptions were disaggregated by decision type (see Figure 65), showing that in experiences where the decision was related to girls' education and first marriage, influencers' perception at present was still that it was the right one, but the level of confidence while saying that is lower than when they were influencing the decision, and when the decision was taken. On the other hand, for decisions related to spousal relations, the level of confidence at present is higher than while influencing the decision and while it was taken. In other words, the only decision type in which influencers had increased confidence at the present moment as compared to when the decision was made was related to spousal and family relations.

Figure 63. Influencers' perceptions on the impact of their decisions on women and girls, differentiated by sex of influencer

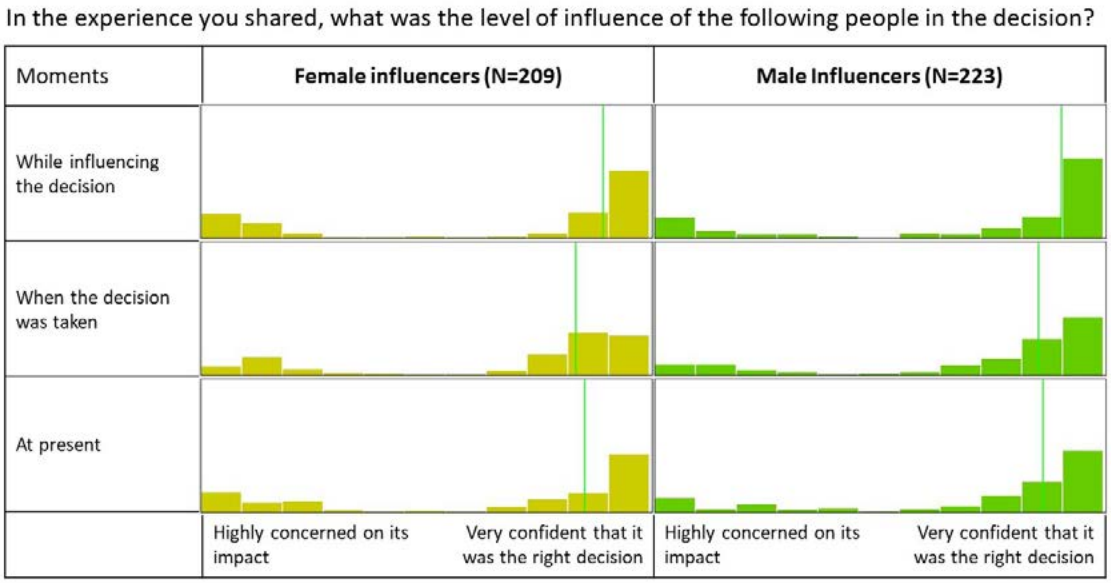
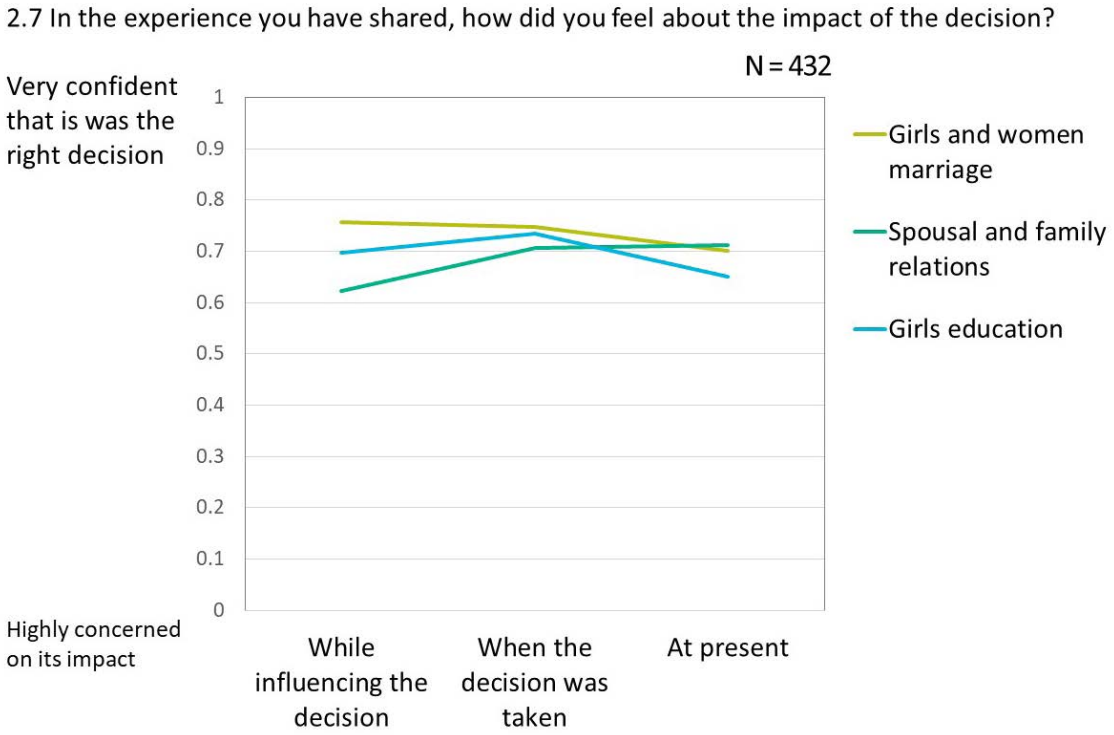


Figure 64. Influencers confidence in the decisions made, differentiated by type of decision



Gender and livelihoods

After analyzing the complexity of gender-related norms and behaviors that influence aspects of women's and girls' agency and maintain structural gender inequality, and the effects they have on spousal relations and intrahousehold dynamics, this section analyzes (a) gender norms and disparities around women's access to and control over assets, resources and services (i.e. having opportunities per the study's analytical framing), as well as (b) factors that influence their access and control (i.e. having choice), and (c) findings on women's contributions to households' livelihoods, food security and nutrition.

Main income sources

To contextualize this analysis on gender and livelihoods, the sociodemographic data collected from 941 female and male respondents shows agriculture as the main livelihood in the Girma target zone (Figure 65) for both men and women, however the percentage of men whose main source of income is agriculture (80%) is double that of women (41%). The significant lower percentage of women whose main source of income is agriculture was confirmed by respondents in collective interpretation workshops, who attribute this to women having less access to agricultural land given land scarcity in general, but also because social norms relegate land as male-owned property given their traditional role as farmer and providing for household needs. Moreover, during collective interpretation workshops, Hausa women identified a saying that supported this way of life and connected it to their understanding of religion, which states *"Allah ya gadama ma maza noma, ba mataba"* and means "*God has inherited farming to men not women*."

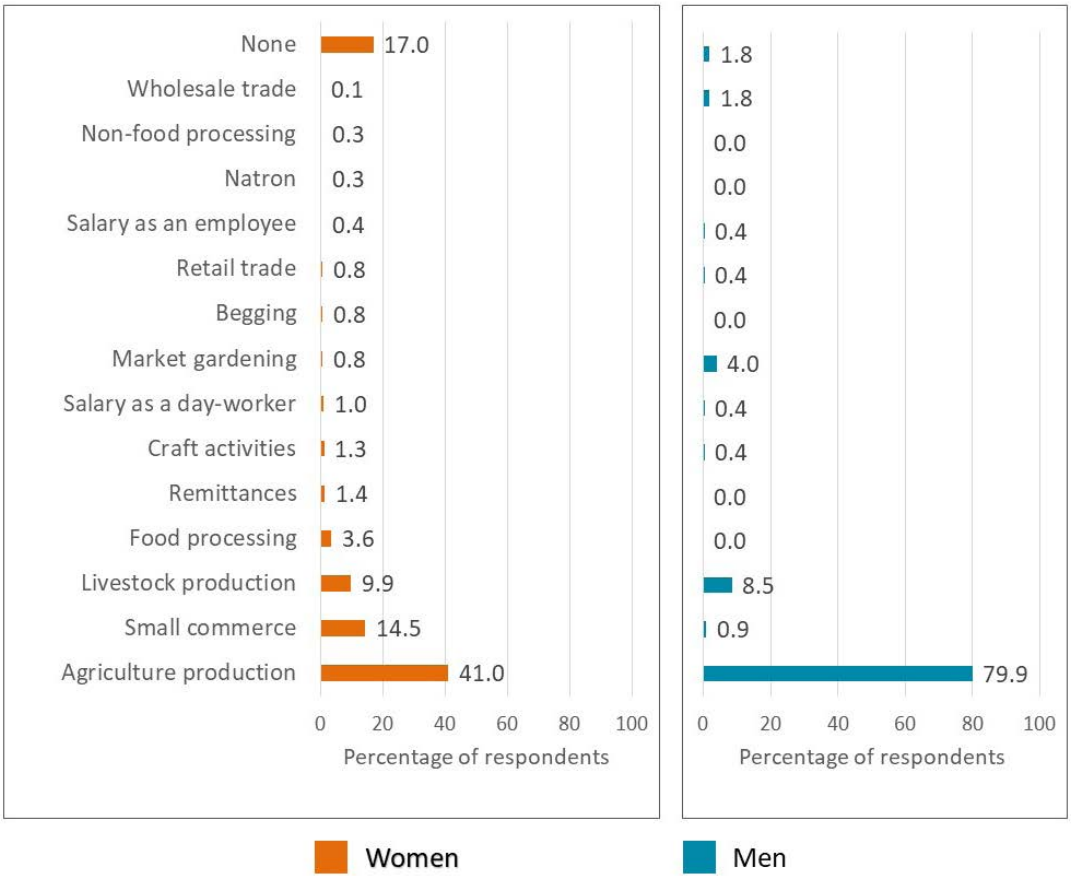
A likely result of norms that relegate agriculture as a predominantly male domain is that women have more diversified sources of income, with their second most important being small commerce (14.5%), though this is not an important source of income for men (0.9%). The third most important source of income for women is livestock (9.9%) while it is second most important for men (8.5%), and for women their fourth most important source of income is food processing. When asked in collective interpretation workshops about the types of small businesses women run, participants listed agro-processing activities such as transforming peanut and sesame to produce oil; food preparation and sales including pastry (doughnuts, cakes), kopto—a main dish made of moringa, foura—millet fermented in water and milk, shinkafa—a thick rice pudding; and trading (palm tree fruit, water, wood, straw, condiments, lettuce, cabbage, moringa). Fulani participants also cited sales of milk and dairy products, while Kanuri participants also cited making crafts (mats) that their husbands sell. Thus, a programming focus on improving agricultural and livestock productivity and access to markets is justified for both women and men, but women will also benefit from support to strengthen their off-farm income-generating activities (IGAs).

It is also important to highlight that 17 percent of women reported having no source of income, presumably relying on their husband to provide for the household's needs, and 0.8 percent rely on begging, making them extremely vulnerable. Also, only female respondents (1.4 %) mentioned remittances as an income source. The issue of migration was discussed during collective interpretation workshops, leading to the conclusion that the main trigger for migration is economic, including poverty in general, food scarcity and lack of financial resources to marry in the case of young men, or to celebrate marriages in the case of families of young women. The main root causes mentioned were the limited access to arable land, the loss of crops due to climate conditions and the lack of employment or other income-generation opportunities. Even though men, women and youth migrate, migration is most frequently practiced by adult and young men, and when women migrate it is mainly because they have no other option to provide for their children. Internal migration to other regions of Niger is the most

common, but people also migrate to other countries in the region—Nigeria being the most frequently cited—as well as countries in other regions such as Saudi Arabia.

Participants in collective interpretation were also asked about the main sources of income of female-headed households. Hausa and Fulani women said that female-headed households also faced the constraint of limited access to land. Kanuri women explained that female-headed households could ask their sons to migrate and use the remittances to meet daily needs, start a small IGA, or migrate themselves to Nigeria to work as day-wage labor in cowpea, sorghum, pepper or chili pepper production.

Figure 65. Main sources of income by sex (tools 1, 2 and 3, N=941)

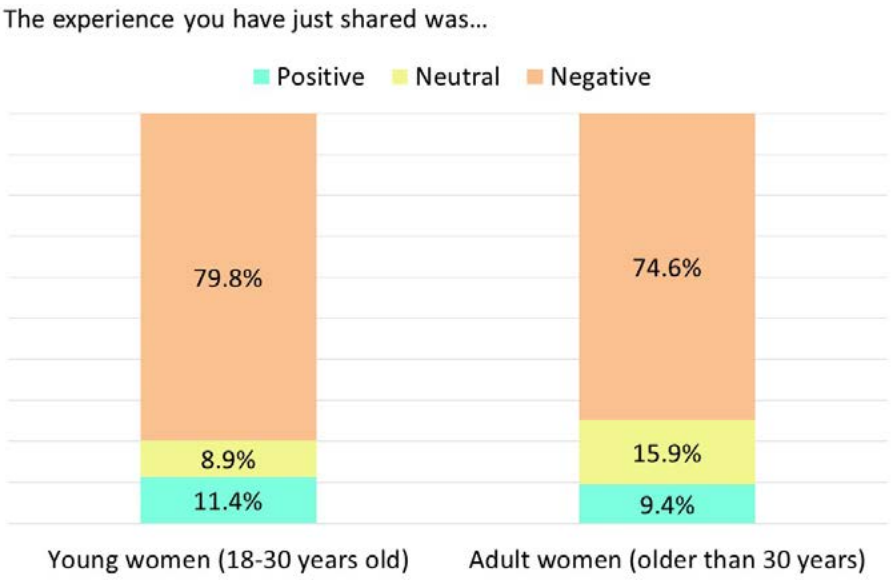


Women's actions and experiences to improve their livelihoods

This analysis is mainly based on responses obtained using Collection Tool 3 that was developed to respond to the research questions under the gender analysis objectives 4 and 5: gender and household livelihood systems and gender and the public rural sphere, respectively. As such, the prompt question aimed to place young, adult and elderly women in a recent experience in which they attempted to improve their households' food production and/or income, with the aim of observing not only what contributions women make to households' livelihood and food security systems, but also analyzing how gender norms and intrahousehold dynamics impacted their capability to develop their livelihoods.

After each respondent shared their experience through a short narrative, they were asked whether that experience was positive, neutral or negative. Figure 67 shows how respondents self-signified their experiences and the differences among young, adult and elderly women. More than three quarters of the experiences were self-signified as negative (79.8 and 74.6% for young and adult women, respectively), being higher among young women; while more young women considered their experiences positive (11.4%) than adult women (9.4%), mainly because more adult women consider their experiences as neutral (15.9%). The percentage of negative experiences prompted with tool 3, which included experiences in which women tried to improve their households' food production and/or income, was higher than the percentage prompted with tool 1, which presented experiences in which decisions were made for a girl or woman that impacted their lives. This shows that on top of the limitations that gender norms and behaviors imposed on women and girls, they also faced the same challenges as men to improve their food production and/or income.

Figure 66. Type of experiences as self-signified by young and adult women (tool 3, N=217)



To further explore differences among the narratives self-signified as positive, negative or neutral, one of each of these narratives shared by young women (18–30 years) and adult women (older than 30 years) were selected randomly and are shared in Table 15. Positive narratives from young and adult women involved diversified livelihoods that not only included different crops and livestock production, but also diversification into off-farm activities and small businesses. Neutral narratives involved crop failures, due mainly to pests, animal diseases and climate conditions, however, both households were able to cope through husbands' employment opportunities and wives' employment.

Negative stories involved crop failure due to climate and pests, and livestock death due to diseases, but households had no other sources of income and therefore, they had to work as daily labor and/or migrate. None of these stories involved situations that were caused by gender norms and behaviors, but by shocks and stressors that affected women and men equally. What made a difference between positive, neutral and negative experiences was the extent to which households had other employment or off-farm sources of income, and for women specifically, having an off-farm small business.

Table 16. Young and adult women narratives related to efforts for improving food production and/or income by type of experience

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE
Young women (18-30 years)	**MOTIVATION AND INTEREST** The main livelihoods activities of my household are agriculture, livestock and petty trade. The obstacles encountered in these activities are agriculture, which is threatened by crop pests and low soil fertility; livestock breeding, which is threatened by diseases that result in the death of the animals. However, I also have a small business, I started processing cowpeas, and are also extracting groundnut oil, which is difficult because I used the purely traditional method. I would like to have a machine that will make our tasks easier. The results of all these activities are very positive because they allow me to satisfy the needs of my household.	**TODAY AND TOMORROW** We were fine before, but there were years when agricultural production was not good. This is due to climate change and crop pests that have a direct impact on agricultural production. We didn't have enough food for the household as we had no other activity apart from agriculture. Thus, we started raising animals of our relatives so that in the end we have a few animals. My husband is a marabout, the people of the village come to him for a traditional healing consultation, and it allows us to satisfy the needs of the household. We thought that if our agriculture production problems persisted, he would have end-up leaving, but the results from his practice are positive.	**MISFORTUNE** The last rainy season we suffered a lot. We had our first rain in the fifth month of the year, so we sowed our field. The millet grew and started coming out of the stalks when the rain stopped for days. When the rain came again, we planted where the first seedlings didn't grow. It continued to rain until the end of the season. Unfortunately, the harvest was very bad, and we consumed it in a few days. My husband had to leave the village to go to Nigeria to work as a laborer. It is from there that he sends us money to buy food. I go to the bush to pick "jiga" leaves to prepare and eat with the children, while we wait for him to send us money. The day I bring a lot, I sell the rest to get some money.
Adult women (31 years or older)	**YEAR OF JOY** Last year our field produced a lot of millet, beans and sesame, the yield was very good. After the harvest we sold the beans and sesame to satisfy our needs and we even married our daughter with the income from the sale. I approached my husband to start a small business and he supported me. After a few months of trading in the market, I even bought two goats with the profits.	**THANKS TO GOD** We were fine before. We were in Nigeria. I had everything a woman needs. My husband was a caretaker and was able to meet the food needs of our household; there were even those who wanted to be like me. While we were there, my husband's brother managed our family field, but one day he died, and we had to return to the village. My husband and his brothers cultivate one family field and share it with each other. However, the household is growing and the products from agriculture do not cover our needs. This leads us to a situation of food insecurity. Therefore, he still must return to Nigeria after the harvest, to fetch and send us food. In the meantime, I sell milk to buy some condiments to prepare the sauce to accompany the meal. He is getting old and nobody is helping him; we only have girls.	**CULTIVATION DIFFICULTIES** Out agriculture production was under attack by pests, and last year we had a scarcity of rainfall that led to a drought. Beans and even sesame were affected. Our animals died because of the water problem. The stock from our production only lasted five months. We had to take day-wage labor in other people's fields and often had to go begging. My sons went on the exodus to send us money. we didn't have animals. Fortunately, the people supported us until the situation was stable. During this time, one family member had died.

When women were asked about the measures that they took in the experiences they shared to improve their food production and/or their income, the first thing to highlight is that more than one third of women either made no attempt to improve their food production and/or income, or gave examples of continuing to cultivate their plot of land or take care of their animals as usual (see Figure 67). 22.9 percent of women reported starting an agribusiness activity and 19.4 percent an off-farm activity, which validates findings on the main sources of income of women (see Figure 66 above). To a lesser extent, women also implemented practices to improve their crops and/or livestock productivity and established a market garden.

Figure 67. Actions taken by young and adult women to improve their food production and/or income (tool 3, N=217)

Access to and Control Over Productive Assets

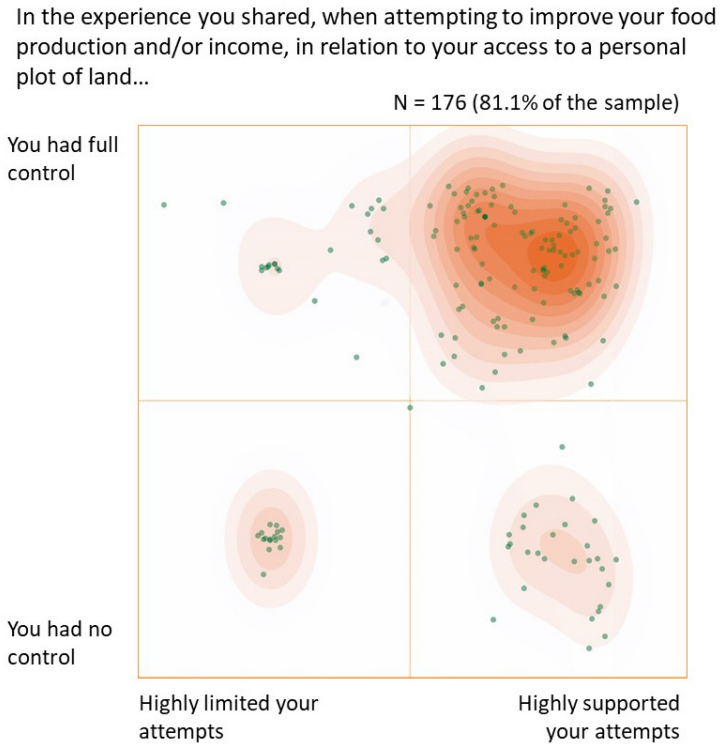
One of the key dimensions of gender equality relates to women's access to and control over resources and services and the effect this has on women's livelihood capabilities, with broader implications for households' and communities' food and nutrition security. This study used a canvas with stones to assess women's levels of access to and control over personal plots of land; money; equipment and tools; time; and labor. Respondents indicated the extent to which each resource helped or limited their attempts to improve their food production and/or income in the experience they shared, as well as the extent to which they had no control versus full control over its use.

Land

81 percent of women reported using their personal plot of land to improve their food production and/or income, supporting the finding above that women continue to rely on agriculture production for their livelihoods. Respondents also indicate having some level of control over this resource, as evidenced by the dominant number of responses in upper righthand quadrant of the canvas (see Figure 68). This finding challenged the gender analysis team's assumptions, and therefore, was further discussed during collective interpretation workshops. Female participants confirmed that they often have access to a personal plot of land, primarily via their husbands, but women from all socio-linguistic groups indicated that their land is insufficient, which validates the responses plotted in Figure 69 that are not in the extreme right area "highly supported your attempts," with the dominant pattern nearer the center and slightly towards the right extreme (median = 0.68).

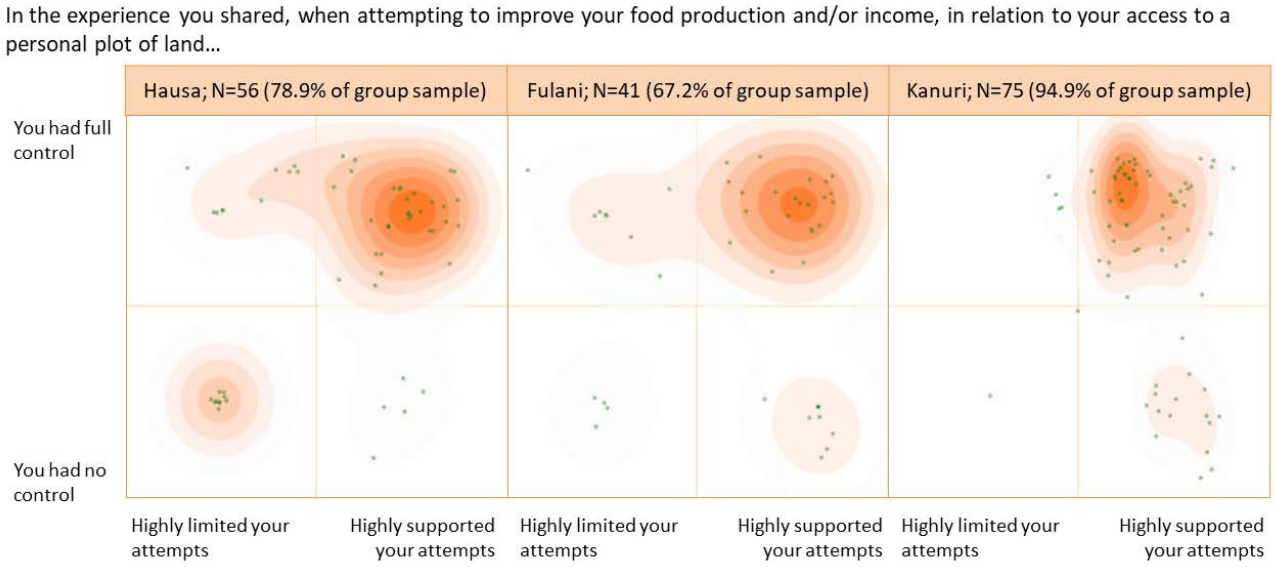
When these findings are disaggregated by sociolinguistic group (see Figure 69) some differences can be observed in relation to women's access to land (the x or horizontal axis). Hausa women's responses are more dispersed in the "access" axis with a weaker pattern, but still important, towards the "highly limited your attempts" extreme (median = 0.65), while Kanuri women's responses are more concentrated but with a median that is similarly towards the right extreme than that of Hausa women (median = 0.68). On the other hand, Fulani women seem to have slightly better access to land (median = 0.71). When exploring the topic of access to land in collective interpretation workshops, Fulani and Kanuri women spoke of inheritance inequalities, with Fulani women saying, "women do not have full access to land; from inheritance sharing, women receive half of what men receive; their income is always earmarked to meet daily needs, which prevents them from having the capital to buy a field." One group of Kanuri women also said they'd like to work the land but their ability to do so is restricted because it's "all in the hands of men."

Figure 68. Women's access to and control over their personal plot of land (tool 3, N=217)



With respect to women's control over land resources (the y or vertical axis), discussions during the collective interpretation workshops show that for women, having control meant being able to access a personal plot of land that was allocated to them, where they can make decisions over how to use it, including the use of the harvest from this plot. However, women were clear that men still are the customary and legal owners of land and decide how it is distributed. Moreover, women said they have no decision-making power over their husband's land, even after his death, because it then belongs to their children. In the case of divorce, the woman must leave her husband and her assigned plot of land. Disaggregated findings by sociolinguistic group (see Figure 69) show no major differences among the groups in relation to women's control over their personal plot of land, being slightly higher among Kanuri women (median = 0.75) compared to Hausa and Fulani women (median = 0.73).

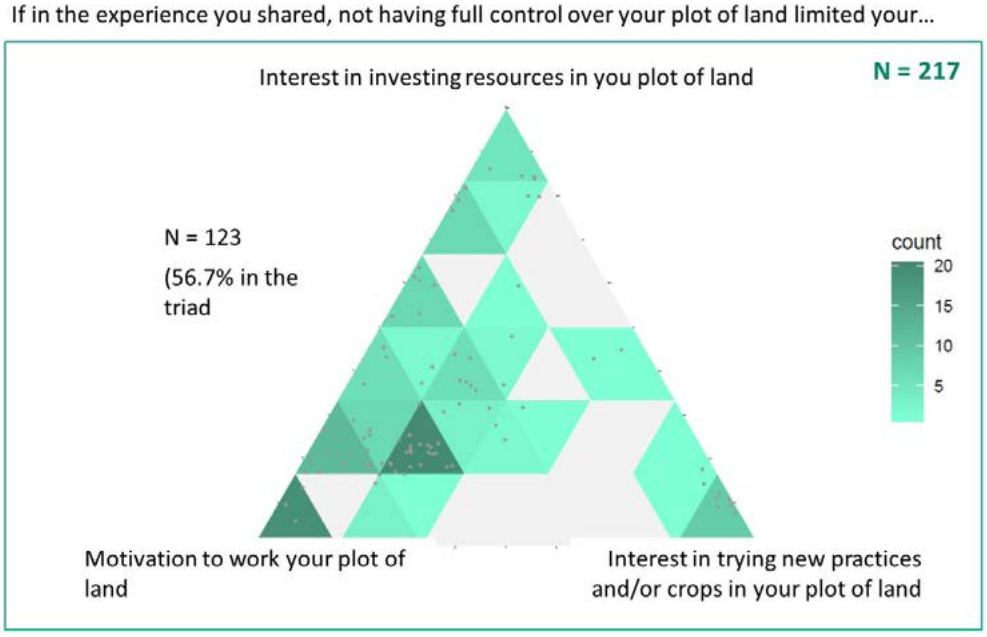
Figure 69. Women's access to and control over their personal plot of land, by socio-linguistic group (tool 3, N=217)



Based on global evidence that women's lack of control over land affects their investments, decisions, and practices, a triad was used to ask respondents to indicate whether their lack of control over land affected their motivation to work their plot, their interest in investing resources, and/or trying new practices and crops (see Figure 71). 56.7 percent of women responded to this question, meaning that the rest did not perceive they lack control over their plot of land and/or none of the three options applied to their experience. For those women to which this question was relevant, they responded that their lack of control over land mostly affected their motivation to work, and to a lesser extent their interest to invest in their plot of land, with the least relative importance given to their interest in trying new practices and/or crops.

To further explore these responses during collective interpretation workshops, participating women were asked why their lack of control limited their motivation to work the land. Fulani women shared that women are scared to invest in family plots because if this leads to a good harvest, the husband may add a wife to the household. Kanuri women explained that their husbands may change the plot of land they assign to their wife after she has invested in restoring the soil and improving its fertility, which is a disincentive for women to invest in their assigned plot of land. Hausa women said they do not have much motivation to work on their family plots because they belong to everyone; thus, they prefer either to work their personal plot of land or to work as paid labor on others' plots.

Figure 71. Effects of women lack control over agriculture land



In sum, the above findings show that most women access land to perform their agricultural activities, but the land is insufficient, and while women make decisions related to how they use their land and resulting harvest/income, husbands retain ultimate control as those who assign plots to their wives. These findings, coupled with other disincentives to women's investments in improving food production and/or income (the husband taking another wife or taking away from their wife(s) land that has been restored), may have a major effect on households' ability to reach stable and diversified livelihoods and to achieve food and nutrition security, two sub-purposes of Girma.

Financial resources

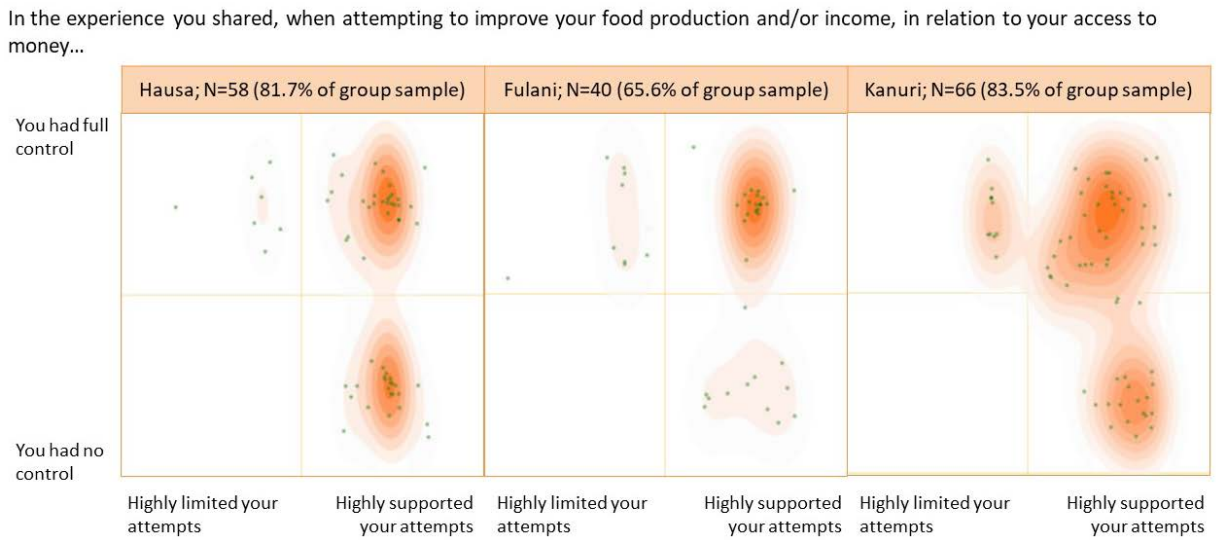
As with land, most women (77%) accessed "money" (the term used in the signification framework) in their efforts to improve their production and/or income, and most of them considered that this highly supported their attempts (dots in the right side of the canvas that includes 84% of those who respond) with only some outliers (16% of those who responded in the left side of the canvas) (see Figure 72). Even though a large proportion of women indicated using financial resources to improve their production and/or income, this does not indicate the amount of capital used. Indeed, during collective interpretation workshops, women shared that their financial resources are insufficient. One group of Kanuri women said that without a lot of agricultural production they are unable to pay for livestock (i.e. have a lack of capital), and a group of Hausa women mirrored this, saying they have a lack of means to practice sheep fattening. Two groups of Fulani women also alluded to lack of capital, saying their money was always used to satisfy daily needs.

In relation to women's control over money used to improve their production and/or income, there are two dominant clusters in the canvas: one group of women who perceive that they have a relatively high level of control over its use (66% of those who responded), and another that perceives a relatively low level of control (34% of those who responded). These mixed findings could reflect the source of the capital. For example, if the financial resources are a woman's own earnings, she generally has a high level of control over it (as evidenced by below findings related to women's IGAs in Figure 74), whereas if the money comes from some other source, she may have less control over its use. In addition, in collective interpretation workshops, women cited that when men sell women's production and/or livestock, they would not give 100% of the revenue back to women, indicating limits to women's control over at least some sources of her capital.

Figure 72. Women's access to and control over financial resources (tool 3, N=217)

When these findings are disaggregated by sociolinguistic group (see Figure 73) no major differences can be observed in relation to women's access to financial resources (the x or horizontal axis), though Kanuri women's responses are more dispersed and their attempts to improve their production and/or incomes seems to be somehow more affected by their access to financial resources. However, important differences can be observed in relation to women's control over financial resources (the y or vertical axis). While Hausa and Kanuri women's responses show two clusters of women who perceived very little control over financial resources (40% and 32%, respectively), a much less dominant cluster can be observed among Fulani women (18%).

Figure 73. Women's access to and control over financial resources, differentiated by sociolinguistic group (tool 3, N=217)



This study also investigated women's level of decision-making power (a proxy for control) over various aspects of their off-farm income generating activities (IGA). When women were asked about the type of decisions that they were able to influence in the experience shared, and their level of influence in these decisions, around 60 percent of women responded (see Figure 74). All women reported having high levels of decision-making power related to their IGA, including what type of IGA to carry out; how to manage their IGA; how to sell; and how to use their sales revenue.

When disaggregated by sociolinguistic group (see Figure 75), differences are negligible, but there is a higher percentage of Kanuri women who responded (68.4%), indicating their ownership of an off-farm IGA, and their reported level of decision making power is slightly higher than that of the other sociolinguistic groups. When the same findings are disaggregated between young and adult women, there is a higher percentage of adult women who have an off-farm IGA, but there is no difference on the level of decision making power between these two groups over use of income from these activities (see Figure 76).

Figure 74. Women's level of influence in decision-making on off-farm income-generating activities (tool 3, N=217)

In the experience you shared, what was your level of influence over the following decisions?

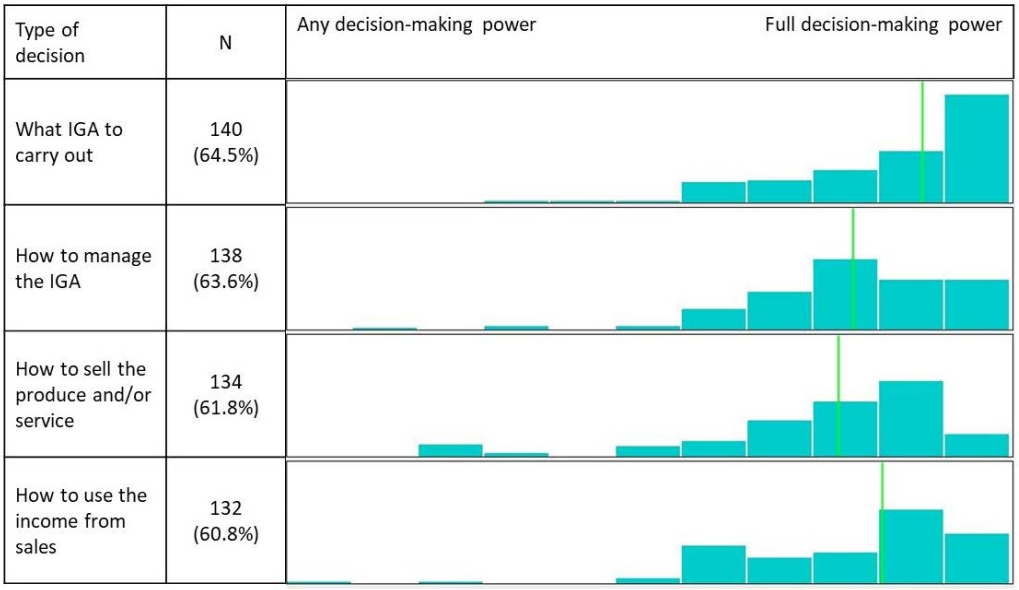


Figure 75. Women's level of influence in decision-making on the use of revenue from off-farm income-generating activities, differentiated by sociolinguistic group (tool 3, N=217)

In the experience you shared, what was your level of influence over the how to use the income from off-farm income-generating activities?

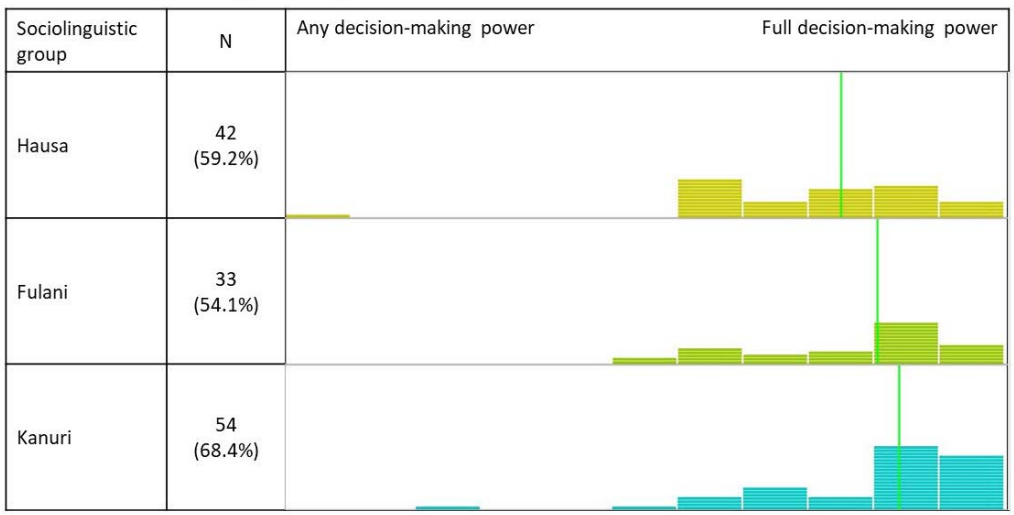
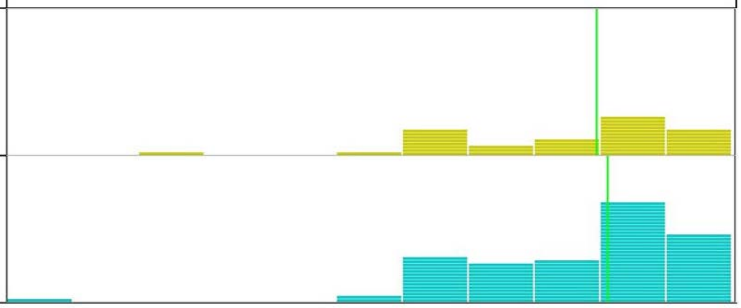


Figure 76. Women's level of influence in decision-making on the use of revenue from off-farm income-generating activities, differentiated by age group (tool 3, N=217)

In the experience you shared, what was your level of influence over the how to use the income from off-farm income-generating activities?

Age group	N	Any decision-making power — Full decision-making power
Young women (18-30 years old)	38 (48.1%)	
Adult women (>30 years old)	94 (68.1%)	



These findings show that more than three quarters of women used financial resources to improve their food production and/or income, showing that they rely on capital to improve their livelihoods, and that women indicated having almost complete control over income from her IGAs. However, the income women generate from their agriculture activities and off-farm IGAs is insufficient to meet their daily needs, and therefore they have no surplus to reinvest to improve their livelihoods.

Equipment and tools

Only 6 percent of women selected equipment and tools as a resource they accessed while attempting to improve their production and/or income, showing that women have very low access to this type of resource. Presumably this is an indication of households' poverty, revealing a situation in which neither men nor women have access to tools and equipment, with women's access being even more restricted.

Of those twelve women who indicated having accessed equipment and tools, about half indicated that this resource limited their efforts to improve food production and income and that they had very little control over them. The other half indicated the opposite; that equipment and tools helped improve food production and income and that they had control over the resource's use.

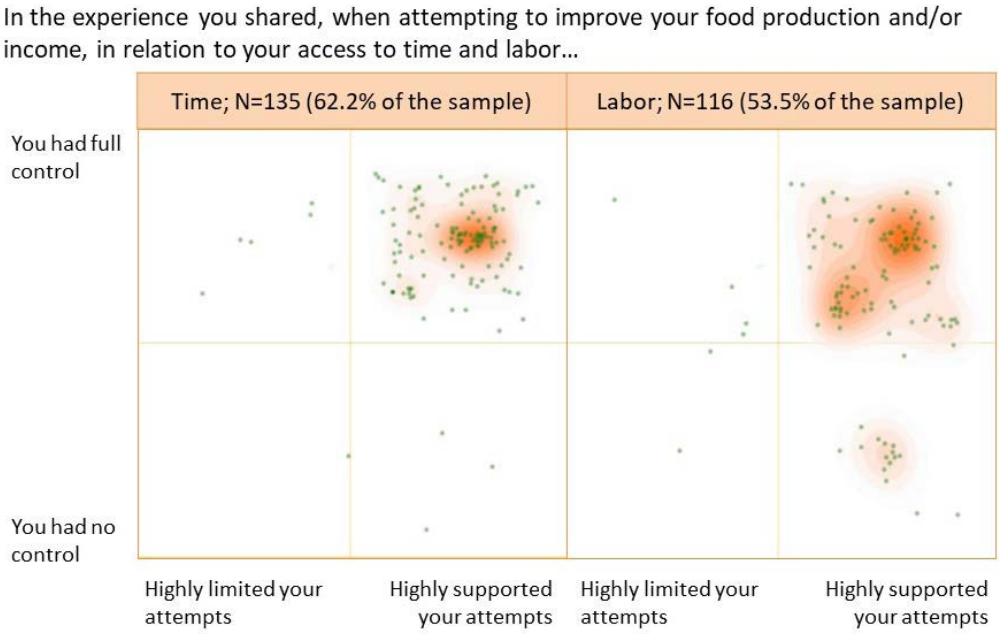
Time and labor

An important issue that has gained more attention during the last years in agriculture and livelihoods programming is women's time availability and competing needs to carry out productive vis-a-vis reproductive work. Moreover, when the time dedicated to these activities becomes excessive, it leaves no time for proper rest and/or leisure. Thus, it is important to assess women's time use, availability, as well as control over her time. Women's access to and control over labor, which in most cases involves family labor but could also involve hired labor, can affect women's time availability. In their response to the canvas with stones question to assess access to and control over resources (see Figure 77), 62.2 percent of women selected time as a resource they used to improve their food production and/or income, and most said that this resource greatly helped their efforts and that they had control over it (93% of responses are in the cluster in the upper right quadrant of the canvas).

With respect to access to and control over labor, with no differentiation between family or hired labor, 53.5 percent of women said that they accessed labor in their attempt to improve their food production and/or income. Women indicated that this labor supported their attempts to improve their production and/or

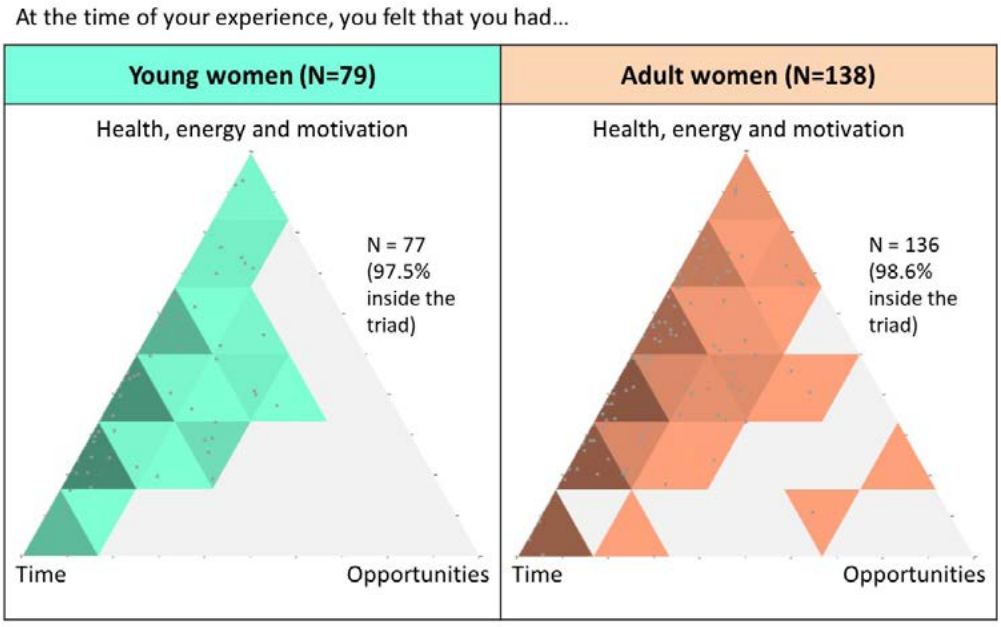
income. However, women's level of control over labor (median=0.63) is lower than their control over their time (median=0.73).

Figure 77. Women's access to and control over their time and labor (tool 3, N=217)



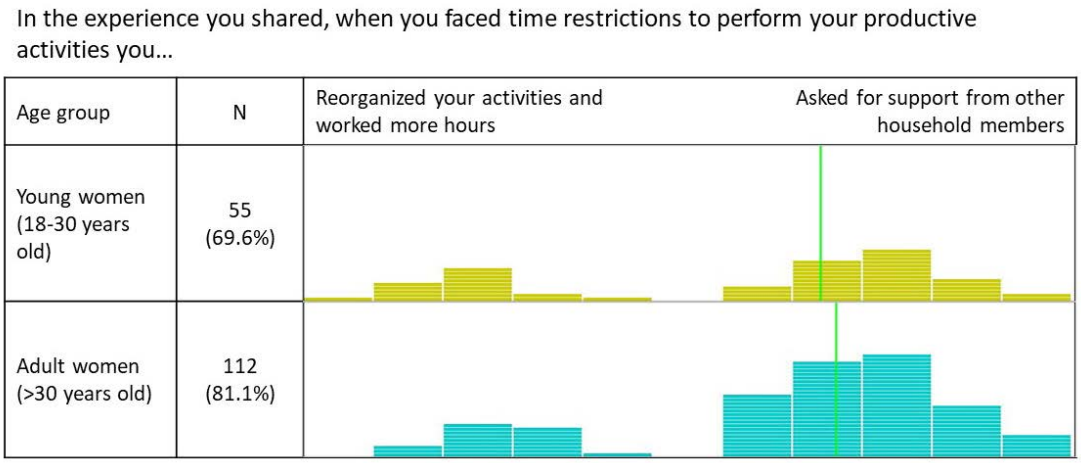
To further explore women's capabilities to improve their production and/or income, a triad was used to assess what women felt they had more of: time; health, energy and motivation; and/or opportunities. Findings disaggregated between young and adult women (see Figure 78) show that both age groups felt they had a combination of time with health, energy and motivation, while indicating that what they lacked was opportunities. However, more adult women than young women perceived that they have larger levels of health, energy and motivation in relation to time, and an outlier group of adult women perceive that they also had more opportunities in the experience shared than time or health, motivation and energy.

Figure 78. Women's capabilities for attempting to improve their production and/or income, disaggregated by age group



While women indicated having time available and control over it, this does not mean that it is enough to perform all the needed productive and reproductive activities nor have time left for rest and leisure activities. To better understand how women managed to have time for their productive activities, they were asked to what degree they reorganized their activities and worked longer hours and/or asked for support from their household members (see Figure 79). 69.6 and 81.1 percent of young and adult women answered this question, indicating that they faced time restrictions to perform their productive activities. While both young and adult women use a combination of both strategies to perform their activities, the median leans towards asking for help from other household members (median = 0.68). There is almost no difference between the way young and adult women responded (a median for young women of 0.67 compared to 0.68 for adult women), nor major differences between sociolinguistic groups (Hausa median = 0.67; Fulani median = 0.67; and Kanuri median = 0.69) or type of households (monogamous median = 0.68 and polygamous median = 0.69).

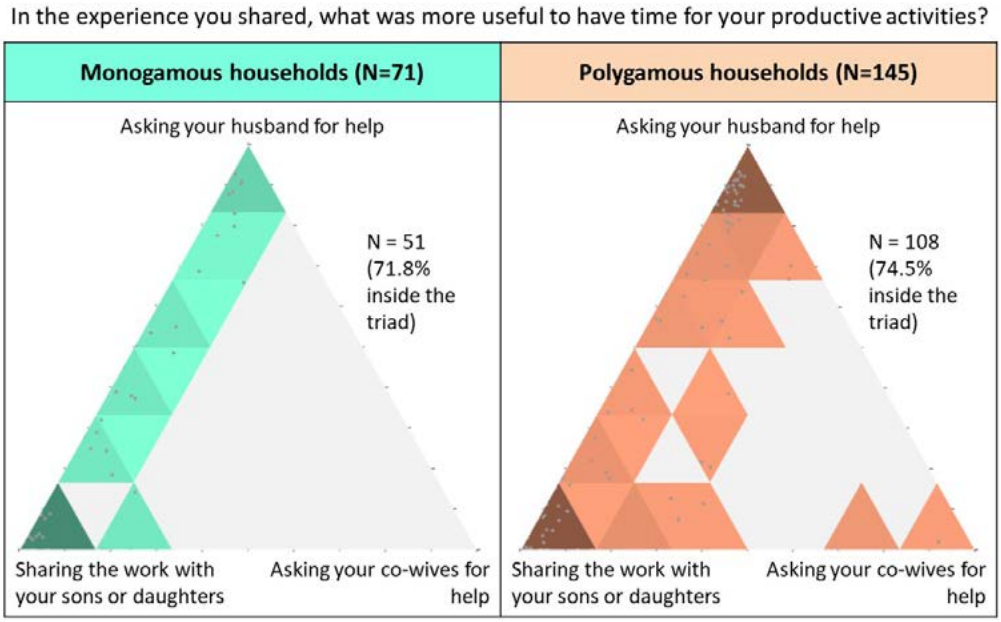
Figure 79. Women's reliance on other household members to support her productive activities, disaggregated by age group



To further explore to which household members women turned for help with their productive activities, a triad follow-up question was used to assess what was more useful for women to have time for performing their productive activities: sharing the work with their sons and daughters, asking their husbands for help, and/or asking their co-wives for help in the case of polygamous households. Findings, disaggregated by type of household (monogamous vis-à-vis polygamous), are shown in Figure 80, showing that women in monogamous households find it much more useful to share the work with their sons and daughters than to ask their husbands.

Perceptions of women in polygamous households are split among those who believe that it was more useful to share the work with their sons and daughters and those who found it more useful to ask their husbands, while most—with exception of some outliers—agree that asking their co-wives for help was the least useful. The latter reinforces previous findings that show a low level of cooperation among co-wives in polygamous households (see sub-section on spousal and family relations under the intrahousehold dynamics section).

Figure 80. Women's strategies to have time for their productive activities, disaggregated by type of household



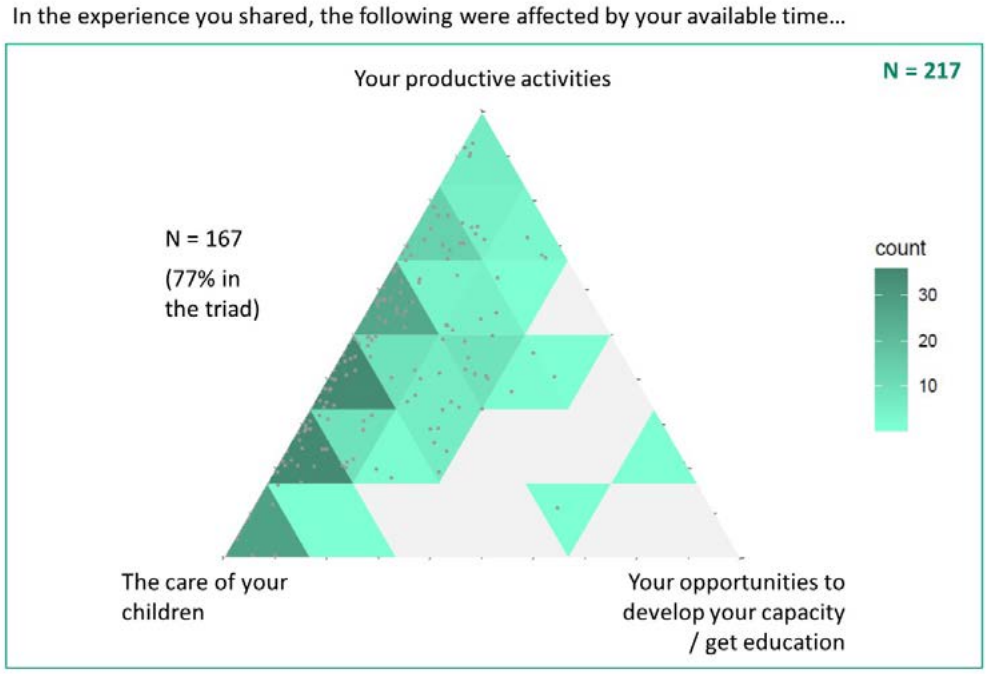
During collective interpretation workshops, these findings were shared with women participants who were asked to share which children—boys and/ or girls—they asked for help. Hausa women said they ask girls for help more than boys, partly because they need help with domestic chores (which is culturally a female responsibility) and partly because girls are more apt to be willing to help. Fulani and Kanuri women said they ask girls and boys to help with the same tasks, while another group of Fulani woman said they ask children who are seven years or older to help with household chores, and their young sons (age 20–25) for financial support.

In collective interpretation workshops, adolescent girls of all socio-linguistic groups expressed not having enough time, saying that they're under orders of their parents, or if married, under the orders of their husbands: "Our time depends on our parents; they direct our lives and we obey them. Being married too, we are under the husband's orders, there is no total freedom." When explaining the reasons for this, adolescents explained that: "It is our religion that teaches us obedience so we cannot do anything without our parents' permission."

When adolescent girls were asked to describe their activities from the time they get up until they go to bed, they described undertaking household chores (e.g. sweeping, preparing meals, going to the mill, making beds) and working in the fields, and some described gathering firewood and water, praying, and spending time with friends. A Kanuri adolescent girl described her day in the following way: "As soon as I wake-up, I pray, I go to draw water, wash the dishes, prepare food if there is enough to prepare (condiments and rice or millet flour). As there are no more field jobs now, I only do housework. After all my work, I put on make-up and go for a walk with my friends for a few hours and we only come back from the public square when we are sleepy."

Women were also asked in a triad whether their time availability affected their productive activities, childcare, and/ or opportunities to develop their capacity/ get an education (see Figure 81). Seventy-seven percent of women responded to this question, indicating that it was relevant to their experience, responding that their time availability mostly affected their childcare practices followed by productive activities. Very few responses can be observed towards the bottom right corner that corresponds to opportunities to develop their capacity or get an education, which could mean that these opportunities were not available and thus irrelevant to their response, or that they had a lower level of importance.

Figure 81. Effects of women's time constraints



In relation to time use, during collective interpretation workshops women and girls were asked what they would do if they had more time. Hausa women and adolescent girls said that they would prioritize income generating activities, while Kanuri women said they would spend more time teaching, advising, and guiding their children. Adolescent girls said they would study, go to school, and visit friends, among other activities, while adolescent Fulani girls said they would prioritize self-care, which they defined as making themselves beautiful, preparing nice meals for their husbands, taking care of their children, studying, visiting friends and relatives, and taking more time for their daily prayers.

Findings related to women's access to and control over their time and labor show that women used these resources to improve their livelihoods and/or income (53.5 percent of women used labor—with no differentiation between family or hired labor, and 62.2 percent of women used time), and they believe they have a good level of control over them. While responses were mixed over the extent to which women have sufficient time available for their activities, the sum of responses suggest that women's time is insufficient to perform their productive and reproductive activities. Women indicated that they use a combination of strategies—working longer hours and/or asking for support from household members—to have time for their productive activities, with the median leaning towards asking family members for help. Among household members, daughters and sons help the most (with collective interpretation workshops indicating possible differences between socio-linguistic groups over whether girls or boys help more), followed by their husbands, and to a lesser extent co-wives in polygamous households. Women also indicated that their time availability affects their childcare practices and productive activities.

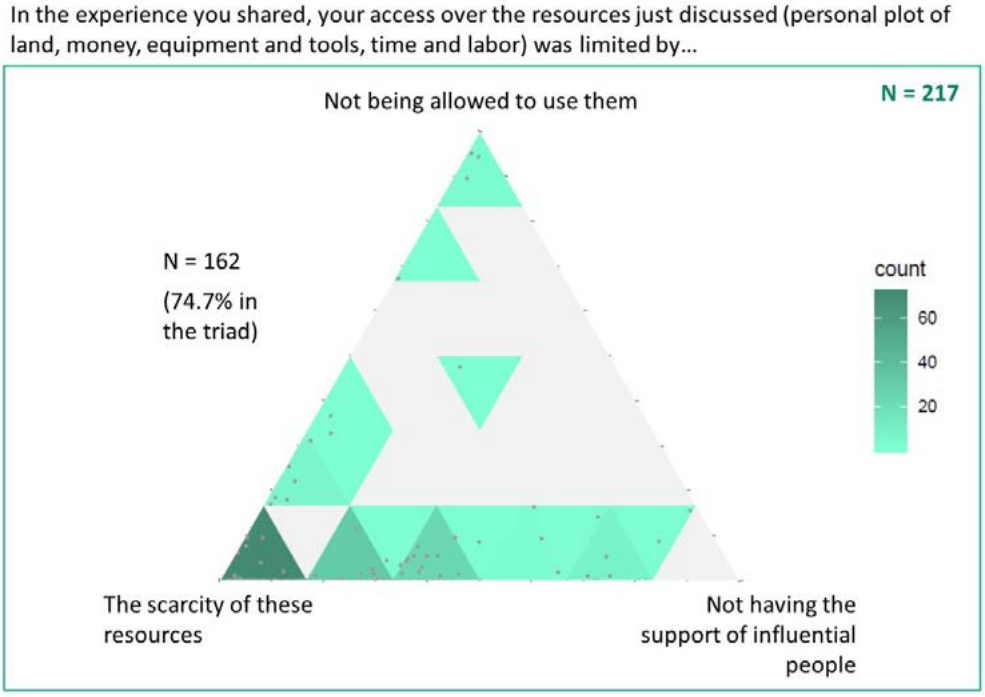
Factors that limit access to resources

To identify the factors that limited women's access to resources in the experiences they shared, a triad follow-up question was used to ask women if their access to the resources discussed above (personal plot of land, money, equipment and tools, time and labor) was limited by the simple scarcity of these resources, or because they were not authorized to use them, or by not having support from influential people. 74.7 percent of women

responded to this question, meaning that for three quarters of women at least one of these for factors limited their access to these resources.

Women most frequently indicated that the most limiting factor was the scarcity of these resources, presumably related simply to households' poverty, though gendered constraints of not being authorized to use the resources and not having support from influencial persons also played a role for some (see Figure 82). Therefore, women not only face the same challenges as men to access vital resources, but also face limits that gender norms impose that further complicate women's efforts to improve their production and/or income.

Figure 82. Factors that limit women access to over resources

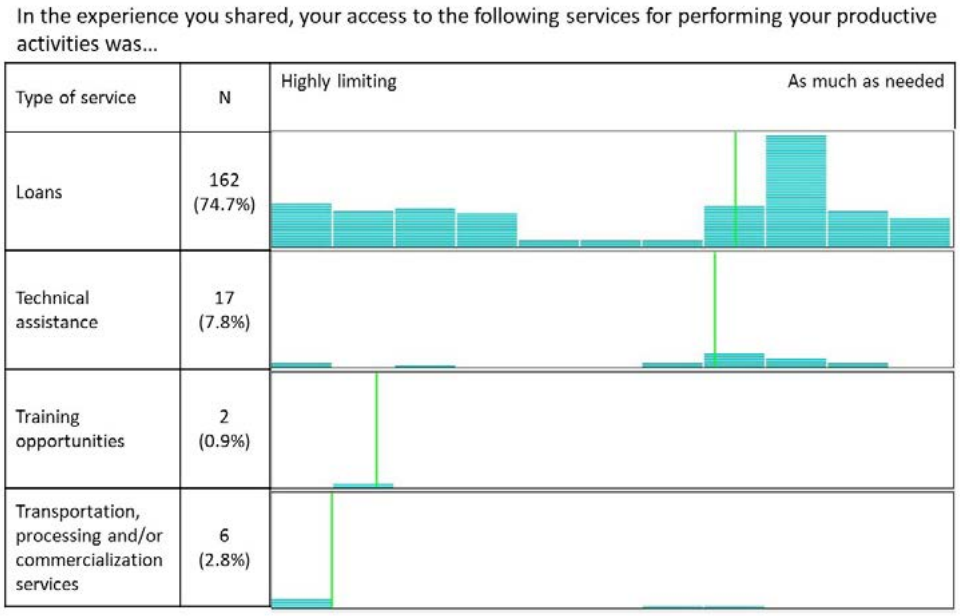


Access to Services

Access to relevant financial, technical and operational services is important to undertake new or improved livelihood endeavors; therefore, women were asked whether they have accessed loans, technical assistance, training opportunities, and/or operational (transportation, processing, commercialization) services in the experience shared, and to what extent their lack access highly limited their productive activities in one extreme to accessing as much as needed in the other extreme (see Figure 83). 74.7 percent of women reported accessing loans, which was by far the most accessed service, and their median level of access leaned slightly towards the "as much as needed" extreme, though answers were quite dispersed (median = 0.68).

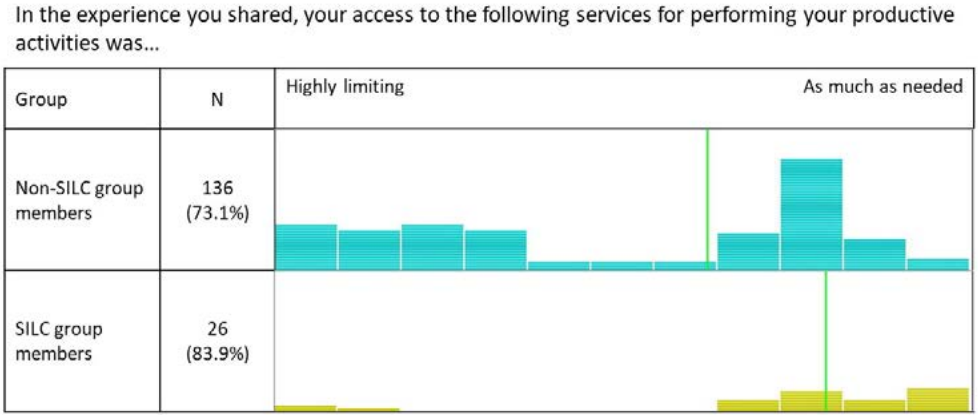
Technical assistance was only accessed by 7.8 percent of women, and at the median, those who accessed it indicated that it was somewhat sufficient (median=0.64). Almost no women accessed training opportunities or operational services (transportation, processing, and commercialization), and the few who did considered their lack of access to significantly hinder their productive activities. These responses reinforce previous findings that women mainly report lacking opportunities that could be derived from technical assistance, training opportunities or other operational services (see Figure 82 above).

Figure 83. Women access to financial, technical and operational services



With respect to women's access to loans, it is important to identify what type of loans women are referring to, such as formal lines of credit from microfinance institutions, or informal credit from local lenders, friends, family members, and/or Savings and Internal Loan Communities (SILC), the latter being the most probable source. Indeed, when focusing on the 31 respondents who are members of a SILC group, 26 of them (83.9%) reported to have accessed loans in the experience shared, and their responses lean more towards having sufficient access (median=0.78) than those of non-members (median=0.66), though their access is still not as much as needed (see Figure 84).

Figure 84. Women access to loans disaggregated by membership in SILC groups



Mobility and Market Access

Women's freedom of movement is fundamental to their agency in general and has important implications for their livelihoods, public participation, health and that of their children. Thus, women were asked about the extent to which they have total freedom to leave their house, go to the market, attend a training, and visit a

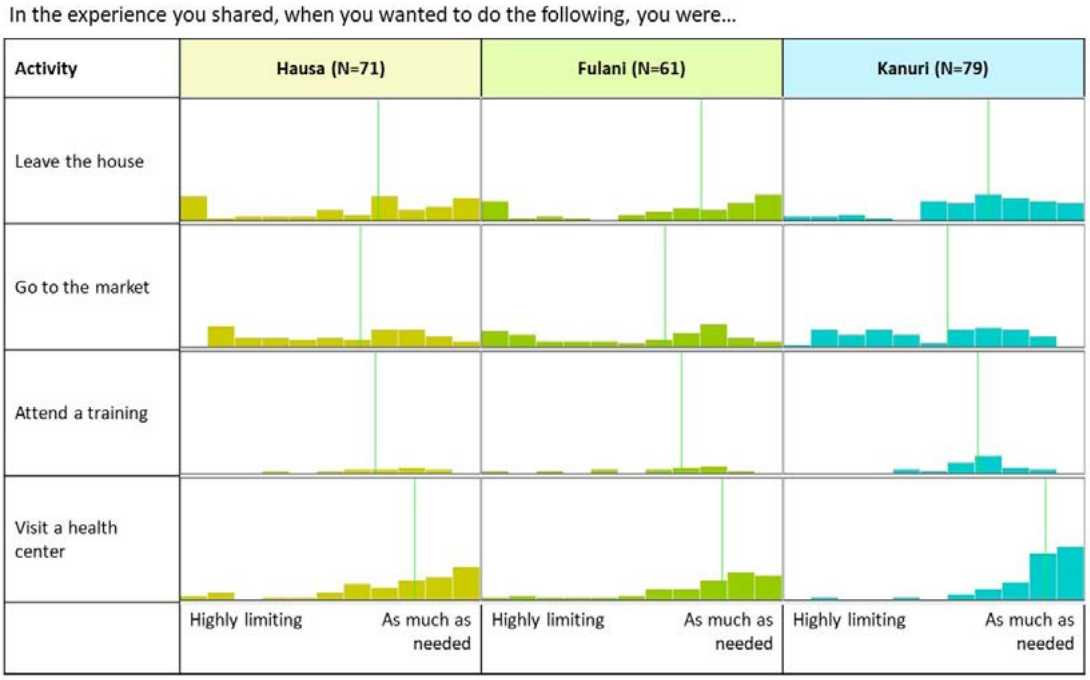
health center during the experience she shared, or whether they were completely forbidden from doing so. For most women, leaving the home (99.5%), going to the market (94%) and visiting the health center (100%) was relevant to their experience, while only 23 percent of women indicated that attending a training was relevant to their experience. As shown in Figure 85, at the median, women reported having almost full authority to visit the health center (median = 0.83), while they face more restrictions to leave the house (median = 0.68), attend a training (median = 0.64) or to go to the market (median = 0.57).

Disaggregated analysis by age group shows that, in general, adult women's movements are slightly less restricted than young women's, but the biggest difference is in their freedom to go to the market, for which young women have more limitations (median for young women = 0.42 while for adult women = 0.58). As for adolescent girls, in collective interpretation workshops, Fulani adolescent girls described freedom of movement: "When you are an adolescent you have time for leisure, going to school, on the day of the celebration you can go to a nearby village to attend the festivities, attend the wedding of your friends even if the wedding will take place in another village, you can walk around as you wish." Kanuri girls, however, said they needed to ask permission to go out as opposed to their brothers, who went out when and for as long as they like.

Figure 85. Women's freedom of mobility, disaggregated by age group

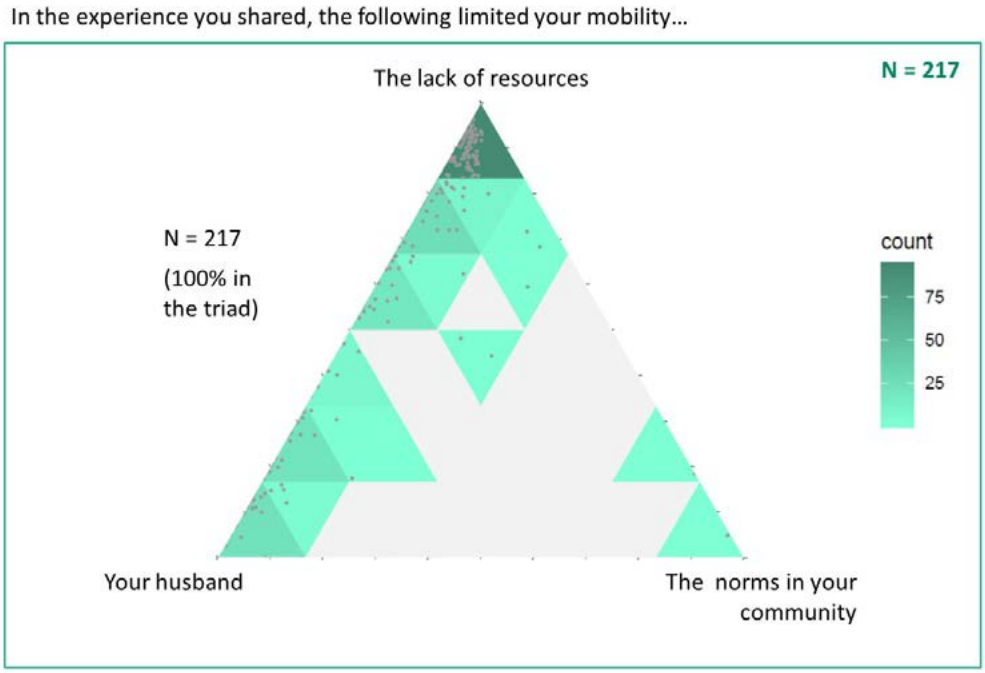
When findings on freedom of mobility are disaggregated by sociolinguistic group only slight differences can be observed (see Figure 86). Kanuri women indicated having slightly more freedom to visit the health center (median = 0.87) than women of the other sociolinguistic groups but also report slightly more restrictions to go to the market (median = 0.54). On the other hand, Fulani women seem to have a slightly more freedom to leave the house (median=0.72) than Kanuri (median=0.67) and Hausa (median=0.65) women.

Figure 86. Women's freedom of mobility, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group



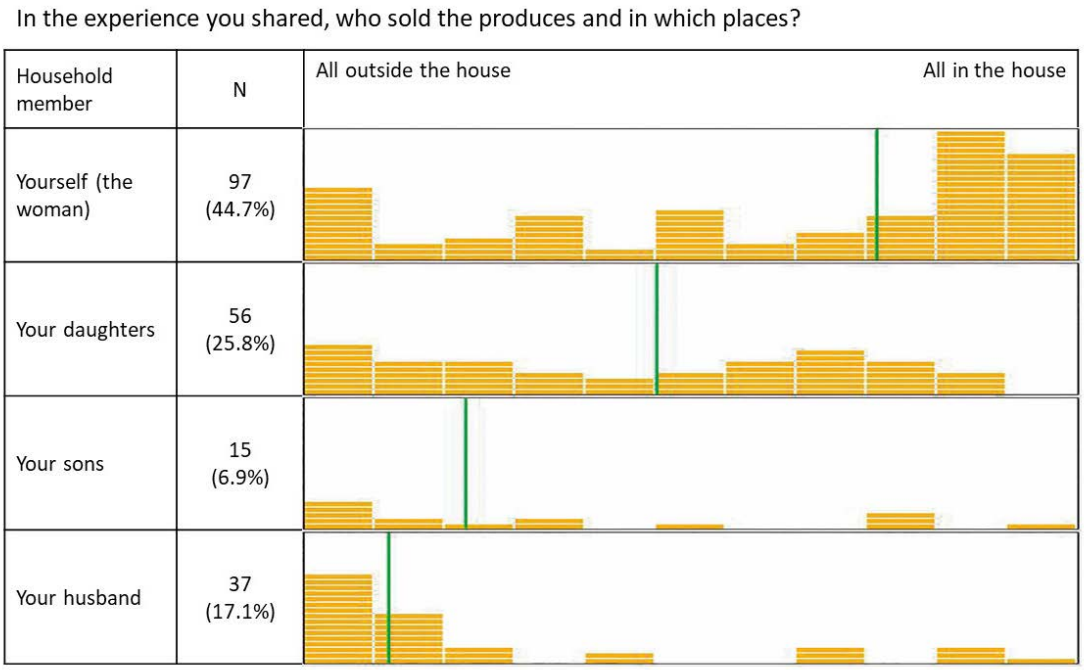
To further understand the relative importance of factors that are assumed to restrict women's freedom of movement in the experiences shared, a triad follow-up question was used (see Figure 87). A high concentration of responses (around 43%) can be observed in the lack of resources corner, showing that this was the major constraint that women faced to move freely, though this was frequently in combination with their husbands as the second most important factor that limit their movement. The relative importance of these two limiting factors may change with the location or the activity women want to undertake; for example, women may not need husbands' authorization to access health centers as much as they do resources, while husbands' authorization to leave the house may be more important than having the resources to do so.

Figure 87. Factors that limit women freedom of mobility



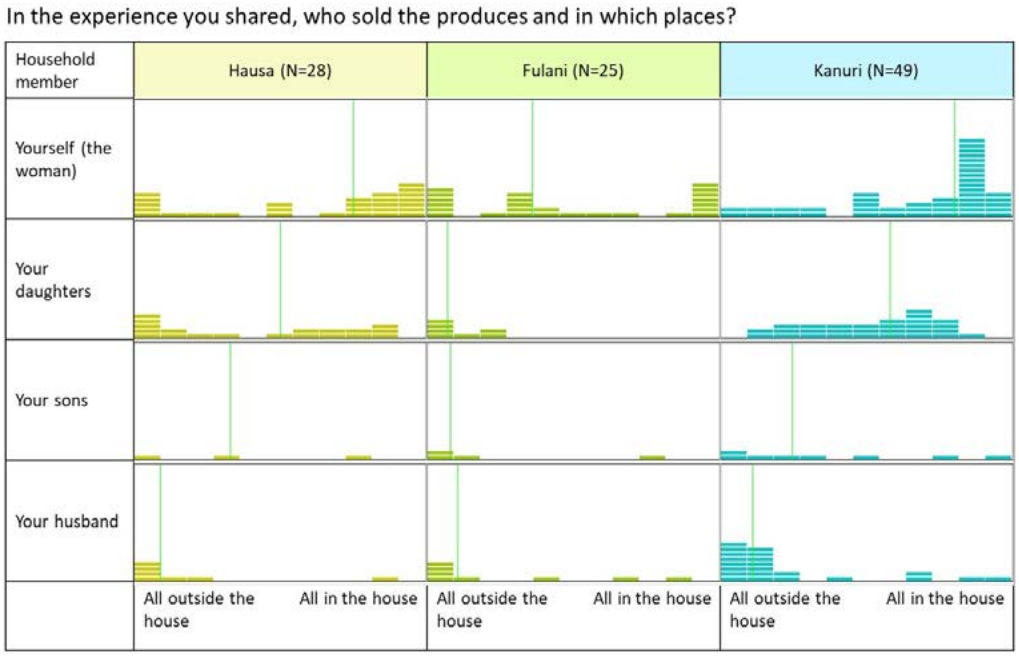
To further explore how women's mobility restrictions affect their capacity to sell their agricultural produce or IGA products, responses to the question on which household member sells women's products can be visualized in Figure 88. 44.7 percent of women reported sell their own goods, mainly from her home, suggesting a lower level of contact with buyers and therefore less access to market information. Women also rely on their daughters, more than on their sons, to sell their products (25.8 percent indicated that daughters sell on their behalf as compared to 6.9 percent for sons) and they seem to have more mobility, selling, at the median, half of the good at home and half outside the home. On the other hand, 24 percent of women depend on their husband (17.1 percent) or sons to sell their goods outside their house, and as discussed previously, when it is the husband who does the sale on women's behalf, they often keep part of the money. When these findings are disaggregated by age group, results suggest that younger women tend to sell a higher proportion of their goods outside the house.

Figure 88. Household members' involvement in selling women's products (tool 3, N=217)



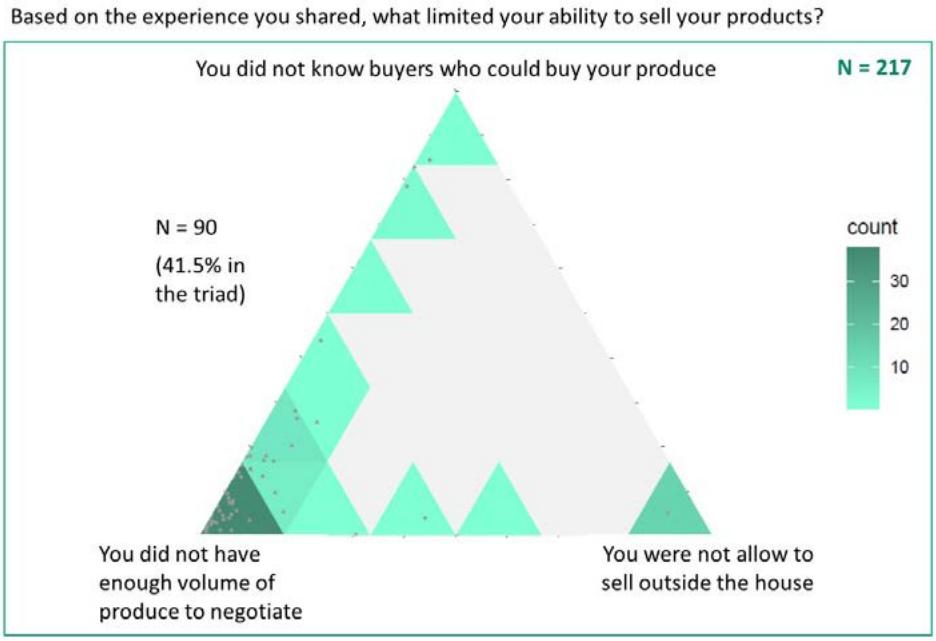
These findings, disaggregated by socio-linguistic group, show that Fulani women sell more outside of the house, while Kanuri and Hausa women sell mainly at home (see Figure 89). Also, the daughters of Hausa and Kanuri women sell their mothers' products both at and outside their home, while Fulani daughters, sons and husbands sold almost entirely outside of the home. During collective interpretation workshops, CRS staff raised that women's ability to sell their goods in the market may vary depending on the type of market, since it is taboo for women to attend livestock markets for example, and markets held during the evening or into the night are more difficult for women to attend.

Figure 89. Household members' involvement in selling women's produce, differentiated by sociolinguistic group (tool 3, N=217)



To further explore how women's mobility constrains their ability to access markets for their products, women were asked to indicate in a triad the relative importance of not having authorization to sell outside of the house, not knowing buyers, and not having enough volume to negotiate (see Figure 90). Women reported that their most important constraint for selling their produce was not having enough volume (around 72% or responses are in the lower left corner of the triad), while not having the authorization to sell their products outside of their home was also a constraint but much less important, and not knowing buyers was even less important.

Figure 90. Factors that constrain women's access to markets

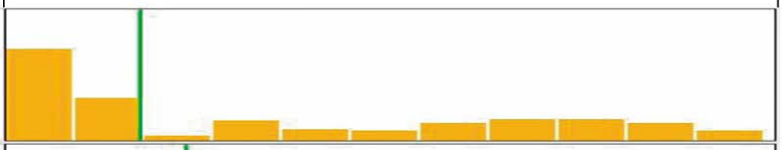


Contributions to and implications for households' livelihoods, food, and nutrition security

To assess the implications that the experiences shared by women had on their household's livelihoods and food and nutrition security, they were asked about the extent to which their experiences generated positive or negative changes in food availability, diversity of the food consumed, income from selling agricultural production, and income from IGAs (see Figure 91). Almost all respondents (98.6%) said their experiences generated changes on their food availability and on the diversity of food consumed (88.6%) and that these changes were negative; while only 27.6% said that their experience affected their income from selling their agricultural production but the changes were also negative. On the other hand, 37.3% of women said that the experiences shared generated changes in their income from IGAs but that these changes were somewhat positive. This roughly matches the categorization that respondents did of their experiences shared into positive, neutral and negative (see Figure 67 above).

Figure 91. Livelihood outcomes of the experiences shared

The experience you shared, generated changes (positive or negative) in...

Livelihood outcomes	N	Very negative ... Very positive
Your food availability	214 (98.6%)	
The diversity of the food you consume	190 (87.6%)	
Your income from selling your agriculture produce	60 (27.6%)	
Your income from your IGAs	81 (37.3%)	

When these findings are disaggregated by sociolinguistic group, important differences can be observed especially between Kanuri and the other two groups. Figure 92 shows that all Hausa and Fulani women responded that the experience shared affected their food security negatively, while 96.2% of Kanuri women reported at the median that their food availability had a slightly positive change though their responses are very dispersed along the slider. Figure 93 shows that 91.5 and 91.8 percent of Hausa and Fulani women, respectively, reported changes in their food diversity and that these changes were negative, even more so among Fulani women. On the other hand, only 79.7 percent of Kanuri women reported changes in their food diversity, and that these changes were somewhat negative, but less negative than those reported by Hausa and Fulani women.

Figure 92. Changes in food availability, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group

The experience you shared, generated changes in your food availability that were...

Sociolinguistic group	N	Very negative — Very positive
Hausa	71 (100%)	
Fulani	61 (100%)	
Kanuri	76 (96.2%)	

Figure 93. Changes in food diversity, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group

The experience you shared, generated changes in the diversity of the food you consume that were...

Sociolinguistic group	N	Very negative — Very positive
Hausa	65 (91.5%)	
Fulani	56 (91.8%)	
Kanuri	63 (79.7%)	

With respect to income from the selling of agricultural produce, 36.6 and 36.1 Hausa and Fulani women reported changes, respectively, and that these changes were quite negative, while only 12.7 percent of Kanuri women reported changes but somewhat positive (see Figure 94). On the contrary, changes in income from off-farm IGAs were somewhat positive for all three groups, but more Kanuri women reported changes in income from off-farm IGAs (49.4%), followed by Hausa (33.8%) and Fulani (24.6%) women (see Figure 95).

Figure 94. Changes in income from agriculture produce sales, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group

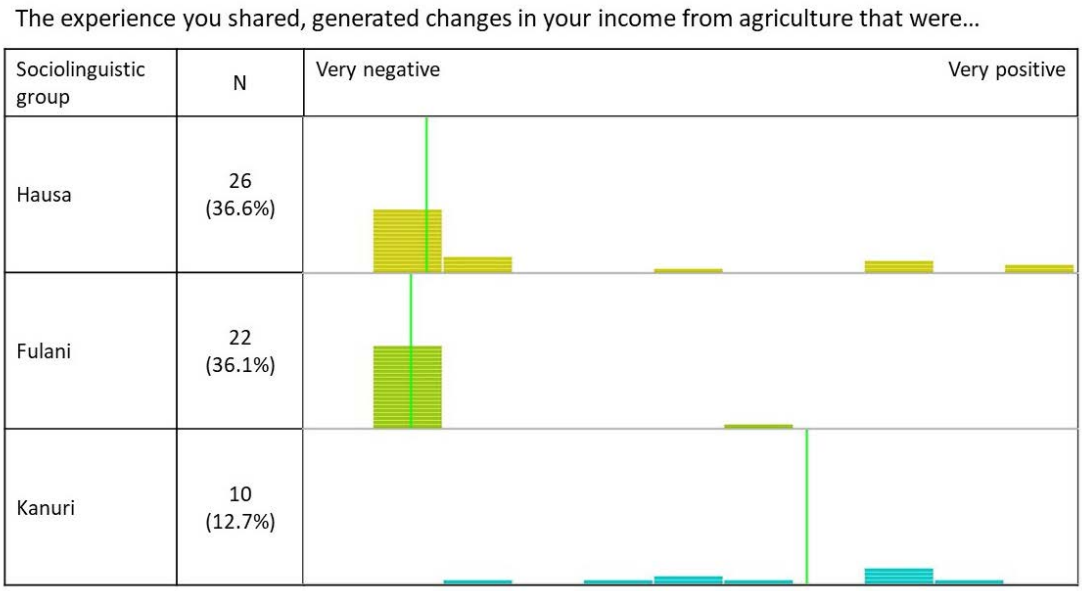
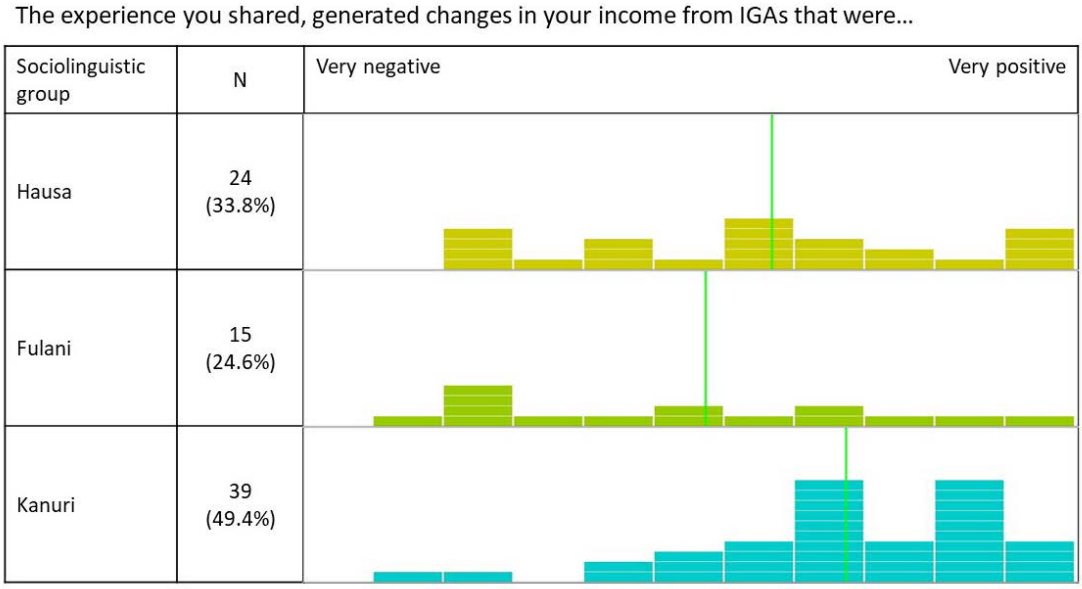


Figure 95. Changes in income from off-farm IGAs, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group



When livelihood outcomes are disaggregated by age group (see Figure 96), the same percentage of young and adult women reported changes in their food availability (98.7 and 98.6%, respectively), but, at the median, these changes were more negative among young women (median=0.13) than among adult women (0.32). No differences can be observed between these two groups in changes in diet diversity nor in income from selling agriculture produce. With respect to changes in income from IGAs, the percentage of adult women who reported having changes (44.9%) is higher than that of young women (24.2%), however young women reported having more positive changes (median=0.84) than adult women (median=0.63).

Figure 96. Livelihood outcomes of the experiences shared, disaggregated by age group

Going back to the narratives shared by respondents help explain the reasons women reported negative changes in food availability, diversity, and income from agricultural production (see Table 17). Women's narratives related to agricultural activities reveal that women typically spoke about factors that were outside of their control, such as poor soils or drought and pests that led to poor harvests, explaining why they found the outcome of their efforts to be negative. Moreover, these crop losses forced women's husbands to sell their livestock and/or market gardening produce to buy basic staples such as millet, affecting negatively the diversity of the food that households had to consume.

On the other hand, these narratives also reveal how women, together with their husbands, were able to cope with these shocks and stressors by migrating, finding off-farm employment, starting off-farm IGAs, and/or taking credit. Moreover, the narratives make clear that those women who diversified to off-farm IGAs as an adaptive strategy, after facing crop losses in past years, have seen positive changes in their income from these activities and feel that now their economic situation is much better.

Table 17. Narratives related to changes in four different livelihood outcomes that resulted from the experiences shared related to women attempts to improve their production and/or income

Women who indicated negative changes in their food availability	**HUSBAND'S EXODUS** The rainy season of the year was not good anywhere. Some have had a little, others have had nothing. We didn't harvest beans. I had 5 cups of sesame that I sold to buy millet. We had a little millet. The quantity was not enough to put in the grainary (grenier). Besides, we ate it all before the harvest. Millet had become very expensive. The cup sold for 500 Neira. Me, my co-wife, the children and my husband left for Nigeria. Our husband worked as a hairdresser to buy us food. I worked in households (sweeping, washing kitchen utensils and clothes) to receive money and buy food. It helped us eat.	**WE SUFFERED** During the winter season two years ago, when it rained, we sowed. After this first rain, over two weeks went by without rain. The millet already started to die. When it rained a second time, it was sown again where the millet did not grow because of the poor soil. The millet sprouted and we did the first plowing. It was a long time before the third rain felt. When the third rain came the millet already suffered and could not recover. This is what made our rainy season fail. My husband went to Nigeria for 5 months to work in the rice fields as a laborer to send us money. I used to take peanut from the shopkeeper to produce oil and cake to sell. It didn't work well. I sold my goat to start preparing and selling pancakes. This is how we got through this difficult time.	**HUNGRY** During the rainy season two years ago, we sowed, and it continued to rain regularly. The millet started to grow grains, but the insects attacked it to destroy it. Even when it rained, the millet couldn't recover because it was already destroyed by insects. This year we have harvested very little. My husband practiced market gardening. He planted cassava, sugar cane and squash. The money from the sale of sugar cane, squash and cassava is used to pay for food. Often cassava is prepared at home for eating. I wove the mat to sell and the money is used to buy food. I also went to households to grind millet and receive money or millet in return.
Women who indicated negative changes in their food diversity	**UNBROKEN** Last year's during the winter season we sowed up to 6 times, but the harvest did not yield as expected. The millet has grown to the ears but there were no grains on the ears. This is God's will. And it is not because of lack of rain since this season it rained a lot until houses collapsed. We sold all our livestock to buy food. All our resources were exhausted. I took a credit of 8,000 FCFA to buy groundnuts which I process into oil and cake to sell. Our husband grew vegetables. He produced cassava and beans. This market gardening activity helped us a lot to find food.	**YEAR OF SUFFERING** Two years ago, when the first rain felt we planted but some kind of insects dug up what we buried in the ground. There was no lack of rain, but it was the insects that didn't let what we sowed to grow. We harvested so little that we did not put anything in the silo (grenier). This year the millet cup sold for 600 Neira. My husband repaired motorcycles to buy us food. I took credit to start selling doughnuts. It's my daughter who goes from hamlet to hamlet to sell the doughnuts. That's what allowed us to endure this situation until the next winter [planting] season.	**SAVE WHO CAN** Three years ago, we had a very bad farming season. We sowed several times before the seeds grew. And even then, it wasn't everywhere that the seedlings grew. When the rain stabilized, we did the first and second ploughing. Not every field was able to harvest something. Some fields yielded little while others yielded nothing. Some families harvested the equivalent of a month's worth of food, others ate everything before the harvest. My husband wove mats to sell and buy food. Often, he would also go into the bush to cut wood to sell. I worked in the fields and I was paid in kind (millet) that I bring home to eat. That's how we managed to find food.

Women who indicated negative changes in their income from agriculture produce sales	**NATRON SAVED ME** In our village for the last 5 years we have had very bad rainy seasons. During the winter two years ago, we didn't harvest anything. There is rain, but the soil is very poor. Our husband manages to bring us food. He grows vegetables and often works for someone who pays him. I used to weave mats to sell. I also fetch natron from the pond that I bring to the Limandi market to sell and buy food. This is what allows us to find food until the next rainy season.	**WIDESPREAD SUFFERING** Two years ago, we had a bad winter season. It rained and we sowed. Everything grew and we did the first and second ploughing. The rain stopped when the millet started to grow grains. After a few days the rain started again. In the end, the millet did not produce much grain, but the beans produced some. We ate what we harvested for 4 months. Our husband is in Nigeria to work and send us money. I used to go into the bush to pick the leaves of "yadia" or "kaoutchi" that I prepare to sell to Magaria. With the money I buy food.	**POVERTY** It's the story of the winter season from two years ago. The first rain felt, we sowed millet, beans, sorghum. After we sowed it went 50 days without raining. So, what we sowed was spoiled. When the rain came back after the 50 days, those who still had seeds were back in the field to sow more millet, sorghum and beans. Those who didn't have all the varieties of seed planted 2 seeds. The seedlings grew and the first ploughing was done. The second ploughing was done when the rain stopped. The harvest did not yield anything. The men left in exodus. Men left us women with the children to fend for ourselves while we waited for them to send us money to buy food. We sell the cattle to buy food.
Women who indicated positive changes in their income from off-farm IGAs	**YEAR OF HUNGER WHERE I SOLD MY GOAT** I remember three years ago that our field did not produce well. We had almost nothing, I was not at all happy with the situation. We received food assistance from the government. After my husband went on an exodus, I sold my goat to start doing small business in the village. Now I'm not in the same situation as before. I do my business and it works well.	**YEAR OF OUR CATTLE'S SALE** About three years ago, if I remember correctly, we went through a very difficult situation, never known in my life. It was the year 2016 when our field did not produce well, the harvest was not good. The yield was very low. We only harvested ten bundles of millet and considering the size of our household, that didn't get us anywhere. I started to make donuts to sell and my husband sold his cattle to buy a motorbike to do motorcycle taxi. Now our situation has changed; it's nothing like before.	**WHO WILL YOU TELL** It has been two years since we had difficulty meeting our food needs due to the poor harvest of the year. When the harvest started there were birds that invaded our fields, they left nothing. The little beans we had we ate in a short time. Since I am a breeder, I had to give my husband a goat to sell so we could pay for our food. Also, I took my children to the bush to remove moringa and sell at the market. Now we don't live in the same situation anymore.

Use of income

To further explore women's contribution to their households' livelihoods, food security and nutrition, they were asked to indicate to what extent they spent their earned income on a variety of expenses. Figure 97 presents the findings related to the use of income for the purchase of three different types of food: basic staples (i.e. millet, maize, rice, sorghum), vegetables and fruits, and animal products (i.e. eggs, milk, meat) disaggregated

by sociolinguistic group. 79.7 percent of women used a large share of their income to buy basic staple foods, showing that their production is not enough to feed their household and therefore are net buyers of this type of food, and this percentage is even higher among Kanuri women (87.3%) than among Hausa (77.5%) or Fulani (73.8%) women. On the other hand, only 13.8 percent of women use their income to buy vegetables and fruits, and 15.2 to buy animal products. Moreover, Hausa and Fulani women who use their income to buy these products use a very small proportion of it for these purchases, especially for vegetables and fruits. On the other hand, only 5.1 and 10.1 percent of Kanuri women buy vegetables and fruits, and animal products, respectively, but they invest a higher proportion of their income than Hausa and Fulani women on this.

Figure 97. Women's use of their earned income to buy food, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group

Figure 98 presents the findings related to the use of income for health prevention (safe water and hygiene products) and treatment (health-related expenses). These findings show that a low percentage of women (12.9%) spent their earnt income on safe water and hygiene products, while a larger number (71.4%) spent on health-related expenses. The percentage of Kanuri women who spent their income on safe water and hygiene products is much lower (2.5%) and these women also spent a lower proportion on this, while there is a higher number of Kanuri women who spent their income on health-related expenses (84.8%) but the proportion among women of the three sociolinguistic groups is almost the same.

Figure 98. Women's use of their earned income to in health prevention and treatment, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group

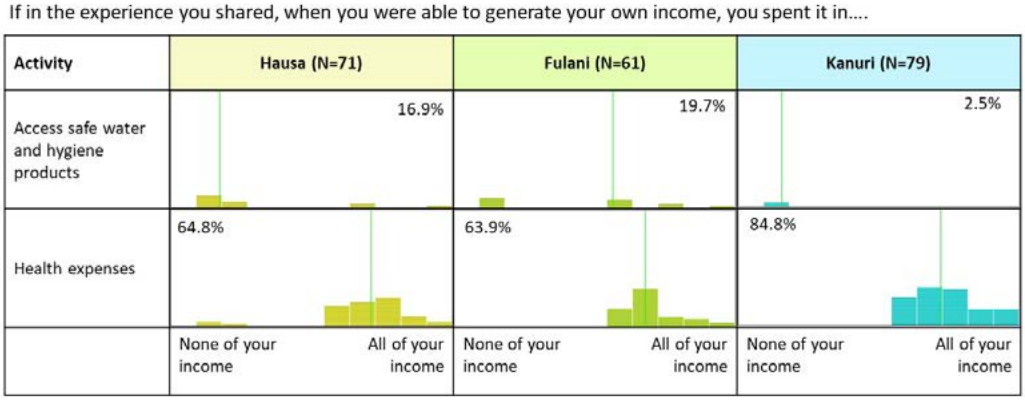
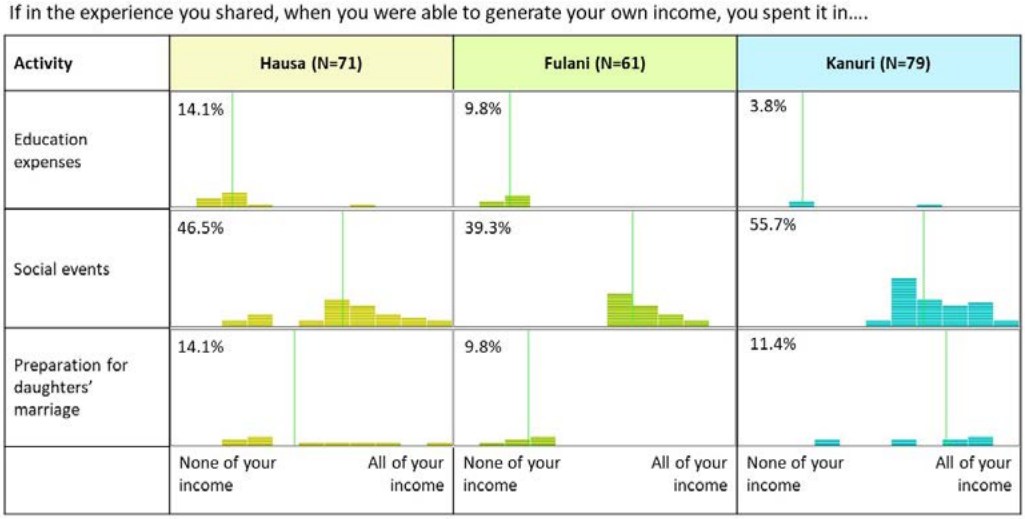


Figure 99 presents the findings related to the use of income for education expenses, social events and daughters' wedding expenses. These findings show that a low percentage of women (9.7%) used their income for education expenses, while a larger number (47.9%) expended on social events, and 12.4 percent used income for expenses related to preparation for their daughters' marriage. The use of income for education expenses is low among the three sociolinguistic groups, but there is a much lower percentage of Kanuri women who spent their income in education (3.8% compared to 14.1% among Hausa and 9.8% among Fulani women). Also, women from all sociolinguistic groups spent a large proportion of their income on social events, but the percentage is highest among Kanuri women (55.7%) than Hausa (46.5%) and Fulani (39.3%) women. In addition, the proportion of income spent by women on daughters' marriage preparation varies among sociolinguistic groups, being much larger among Kanuri women, followed by Hausa and Fulani women, which could suggest varying marriage practices. Investigating this further would be important to identify whether incentives to marrying earlier vary by sociolinguistic group.

Figure 99. Women's use of their earned income in education expenses, social events and marrying their daughters, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group

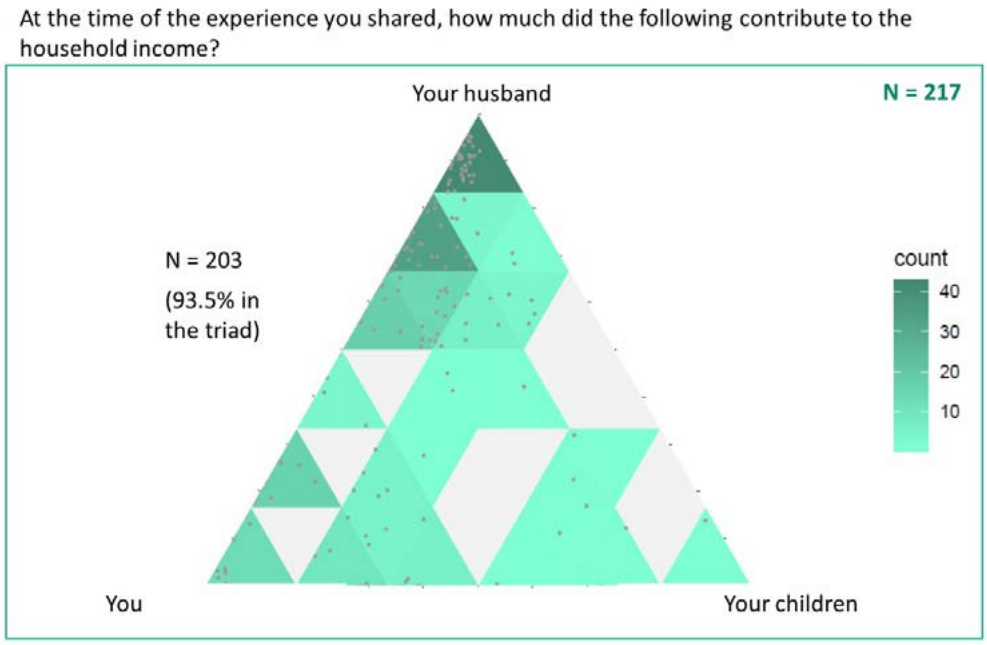


As another means of assessing the degree to which women contribute to their household's livelihoods, women were asked to indicate the degree to which they, their husband, and their children contributed to the household's income at the time of the experience they shared. Findings in Figure 100 indicate that husbands made the strongest contribution to household income, while women are also an important contributor, but less than their husbands. This is in line with men's cultural roles as providers of household food needs, as well as their corresponding control over the family's agricultural production. As respondents aged, the contribution of their children to household revenue grew, presumably because as their children grow older so do their contributions to household income.

Women's use of income indicates their important contributions to meeting households' basic food needs as demonstrated by the amount of money they spend on staples, which is likely also an indication of households' poverty since this is typically men's role (meaning agricultural production is insufficient to cover the families' food needs). Indeed, in collective interpretation workshops, Hausa women said that whether men provide food or not, women have to manage to ensure children are fed: "Women must roll up her sleeves and undertake activities to help her husband nourish the family," and Fulani women said if women didn't contribute, family members may go days without eating. "Husbands can leave the house, wives, and children, so women would

have problems and be obliged to figure out how to feed their children." At the same time, some women said, "If the wife is to remain in the roles that the Muslim religion confers on her, i.e. to stay in the home, do nothing and wait for the husband to bring food on his own, nutrition and food security for the household will be difficult to achieve." Fulani women said that women may work, beg, or borrow money for household food security**.**

Figure 100. Household members' contribution to household income



Women's livelihood-related resilience

Women's perceptions of the pathways they followed in the experiences shared on their attempt to improve their production and/or income —that is, the trajectory between feeling very vulnerable and unprotected and feeling they had many opportunities to progress—were categorized into three pathways:

A prosperous pathway: Women perceived that they had been able to progress from feeling vulnerable and unprotected to feeling they had many opportunities to progress as a result of their attempts to improve their production and/or income.

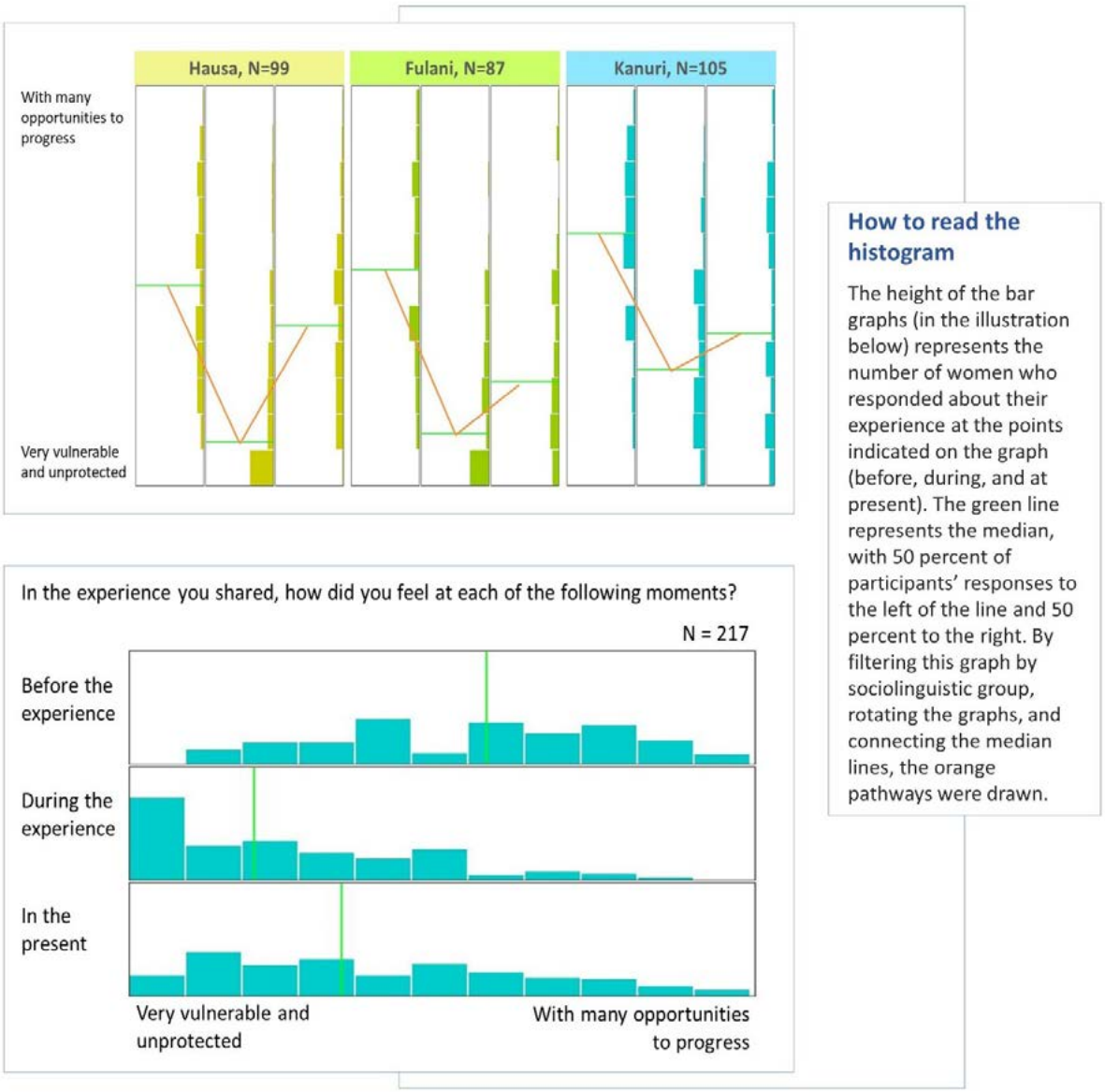
A resilient pathway: Women faced a situation in which their attempts to improve their production and/or income made them feel more vulnerable and unprotected but perceived that they had recovered and rebounded to their original situation or to a better one.

A vulnerable pathway: Women faced a situation in which their attempts to improve their production and/or income made them feel more vulnerable and unprotected and perceived that they had not been able to recover, or were in the process of recovery but had not yet reached the level they were on before.

To assess women's livelihood-related resilience, a slider with stones was used to help them reflect on how they felt at three different moments of the experience they shared — before the experience, during the experience, and at the present moment — and place their responses along a continuum from feeling "very vulnerable and unprotected" to feeling they had "many opportunities to progress." Figure 101 shows that at the median (see the green lines in each histogram), before the experience occurred, women started at a medium to low level, experienced a fall during the experience, and though they indicated a rebound at the present moment, they were in a worse situation than when they had started. In other words, women followed a vulnerable pathway, as illustrated by the orange V shaped pathways in the upper part of Figure 101.

When the pathways are disaggregated by sociolinguistic group (see the three graphs in the upper part of the figure), we can observe three differences. First, Kanuri women perceived that they started from a less vulnerable situation, followed by Fulani and Hausa women. Secondly, Fulani women had a steeper fall, followed by Hausa and Kanuri women who had almost the same fall. And thirdly, even though Hausa women started from a more vulnerable situation, they were able rebound much more than Fulani and Kanuri women, although all three groups followed a vulnerable pathway.

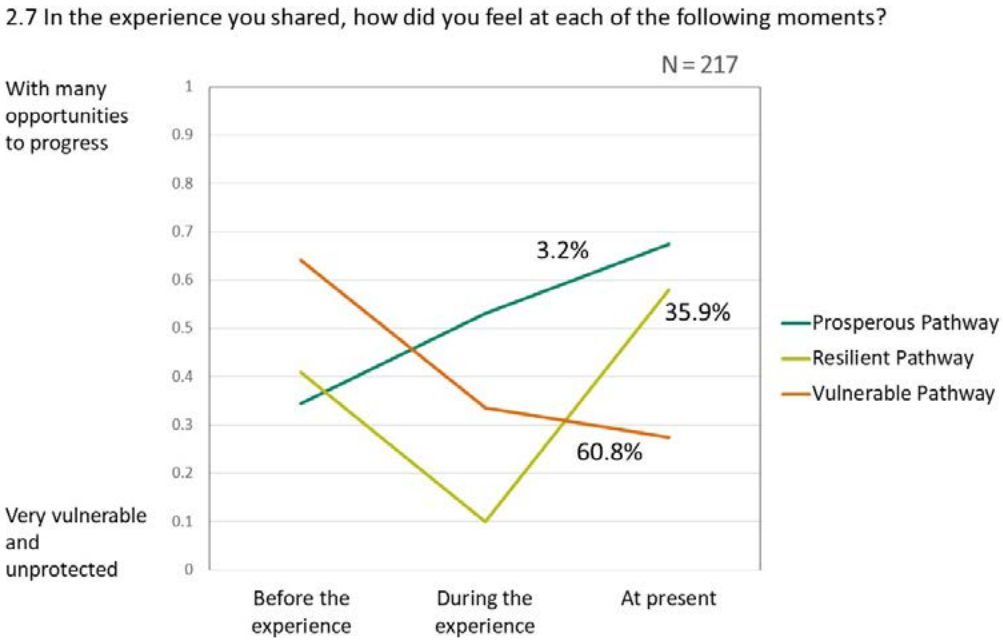
Figure 101. Pathways followed by women as a result of their attempts to improve their production and/or income, by sociolinguistic group



To further analyze the differences in the pathways followed by women, the three types of pathways described above were plotted (Figure 102). The findings show that 60.8 percent of women experienced a fall into feeling more vulnerable and unprotected and only partially recovered, following a vulnerable pathway; 35.9 percent also had a similar fall, starting from a more vulnerable situation, but were able to rebound better, following a resilient pathway, and only 3.2 percent were able to advance from feeling vulnerable and unprotected to feeling they

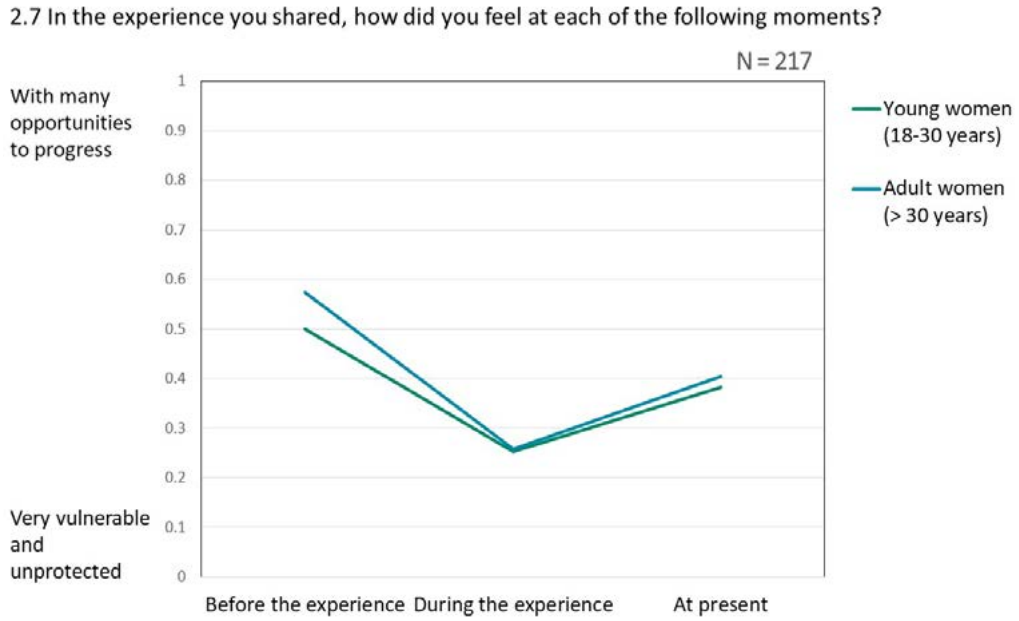
had many opportunities to progress, and therefore followed a prosperous pathway. This shows that most of the women in the Girma target zone followed vulnerable pathways. As discussed above, this is likely related to the fact that many women shared experiences related to their livelihoods that were out of their control, such as poor soils, droughts, and pests that resulted in poor harvests.

Figure 102. Pathways followed by women as a result of their attempts to improve their production and/or income



To further analyze differences in the pathways between young and adult women, pathways were also differentiated by age group (see Figure 103). These results show little difference at the mean between young and adult women; however, young women, at the mean, started in a more vulnerable position, but were able to rebound almost the same as adult women.

Figure 103. Pathways followed by women as a result of their attempts to improve their production and/or income, differentiated by age group



Gender and the Rural Public Sphere

Knowing that women's participation and influence in community structures—particularly governance structures—is low in Girma-targeted communities, this section includes analysis of the main barriers, opportunities and emergent practices for promoting the active participation of women and youth in the rural public sphere. This is an important input to identify strategies that Girma can use to expand women's choice and strengthen their voice in the public sphere, building components of women's agency and effective leadership.

Women's participation in community structures

Results from the analysis of data collected with the three tools (N=941) validates that women's participation in community structures is very low, as 82.5 percent of all women interviewed responded that they don't participate in any type of community structure as compared to 63.4 percent of men (see Figure 104). Of those respondents who indicated being members of community structures, women were most frequently part of an informal savings and loans group, such as SILC (9.2%), outweighing men (0.4%). In all other community structures, there are less women participating than men. After SILC, the second group with more women's participation are farmer groups (4.6%), followed in third place by the Village Development Committee (CVD for its acronym in French) with 3.6 percent of women. Men were most frequently part of Decentralized School Management Committees—CGDES for its French acronym—(14.7%, as compared to 1.4% of women), followed by the CVD (10.7%), and farmer groups (8.9%). Data from only influencers (Tool 2, N=432) show that more influencers participate in community structures (29.4%), mainly in the CVD (8.8%), farmer groups (8.6%), and CGDES (8.2%).

When this data is filtered only for women respondents and disaggregated by sociolinguistic group, important differences can be observed among these groups (see Figure 105). Firstly, more Hausa women report participating in community structures in general (29.3%, compared to 11.7% of Kanuri and 14.1% of Fulani women). Secondly, the higher percentage of Hausa women who participate in community structures are part of SILC groups (18.7%) and farmer groups (8.4%). On the other hand, less Fulani women report participating in CVDs (1.9%) than Kanuri (4.8%) and Hausa (4.0%), as well as in the other community structures (COGES and CGDES).

In addition, when this data is filtered only for women respondents and disaggregated by age group, it can be observed that adult women participate more in community structures (23.2%) than young women, and this is consistent for all the different types or organizations (see Figure 106).

Figure 104. Participation in community structures, disaggregated by sex (tools 1, 2 and 3, N=941)

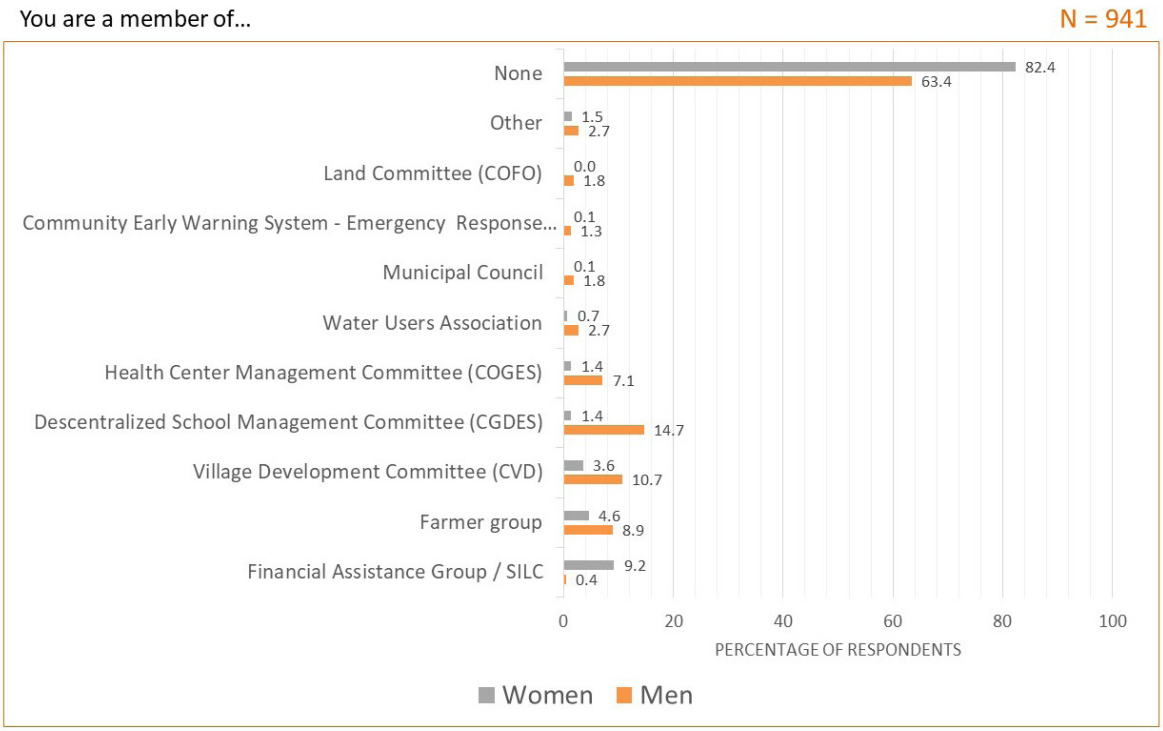


Figure 105. Women's participation in community structures, disaggregated by sociolinguistic group (tools 1, 2 and 3, N=941)

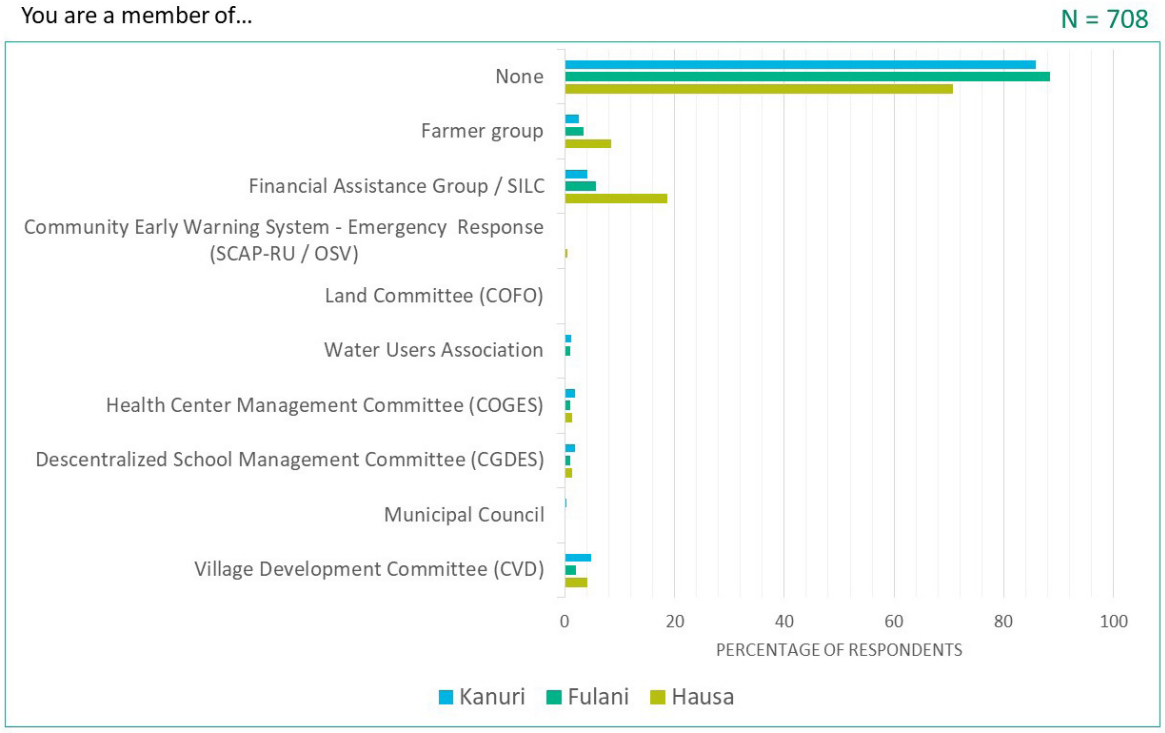
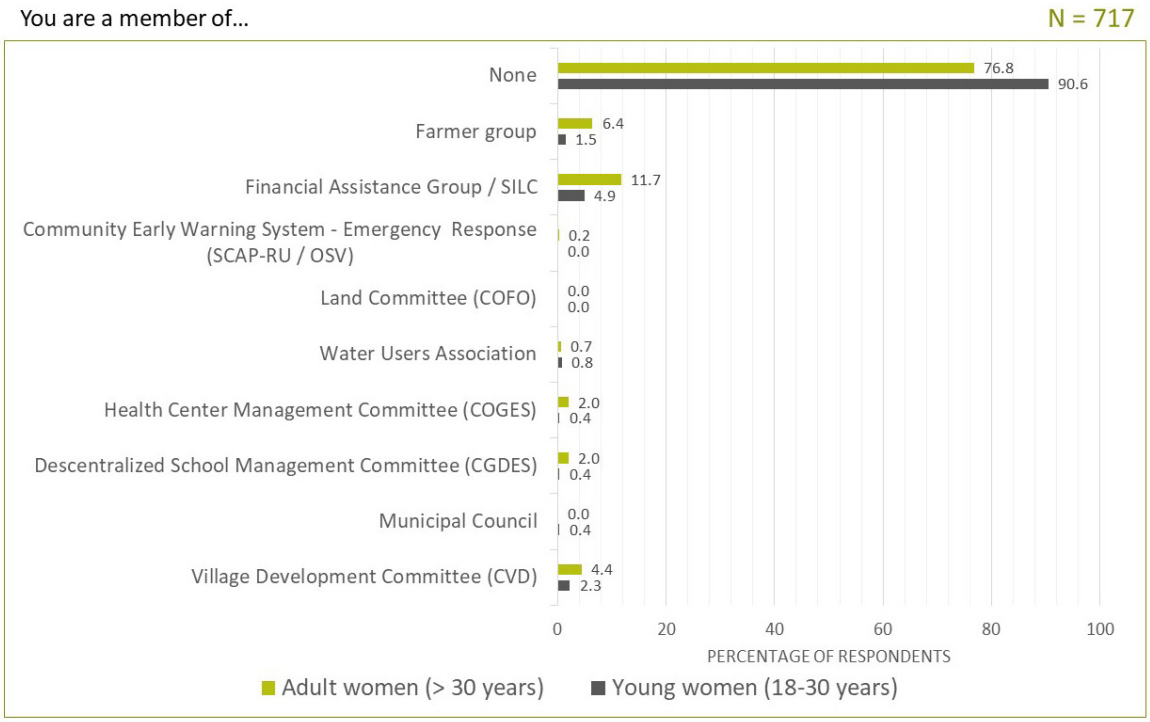


Figure 106. Women's participation in community structures, disaggregated by age group (tools 1, 2 and 3, N=941)



When respondents were asked what position they held in the community structures that they valued the most, more women (61.1 percent) than men (37.8 percent) cited their role as members, while more men cited leadership positions such as president (31.7% of men compared to 5.3% of women) or vice-president (8.5% of men compared to 3.1% of women), suggesting that more men than women hold these senior positions as opposed to reflecting the value placed in these positions (see Figure 110). Interestingly, 10.7 percent of women selected treasurer as compared to 3.7 percent of men, again, likely reflecting that women often hold these positions because they are regarded as trustworthy.

Once this data is filtered to include only women respondents who participated in community structures (18.2%), and disaggregated by age group (see Figure 111), it can be observed that more young women held positions in community structures, especially that of treasurer (20% of young women as opposed to 8.6% of adult women.

Figure 110. Position in the most important community structure, disaggregated by sex (tools 1, 2 and 3, N=941)

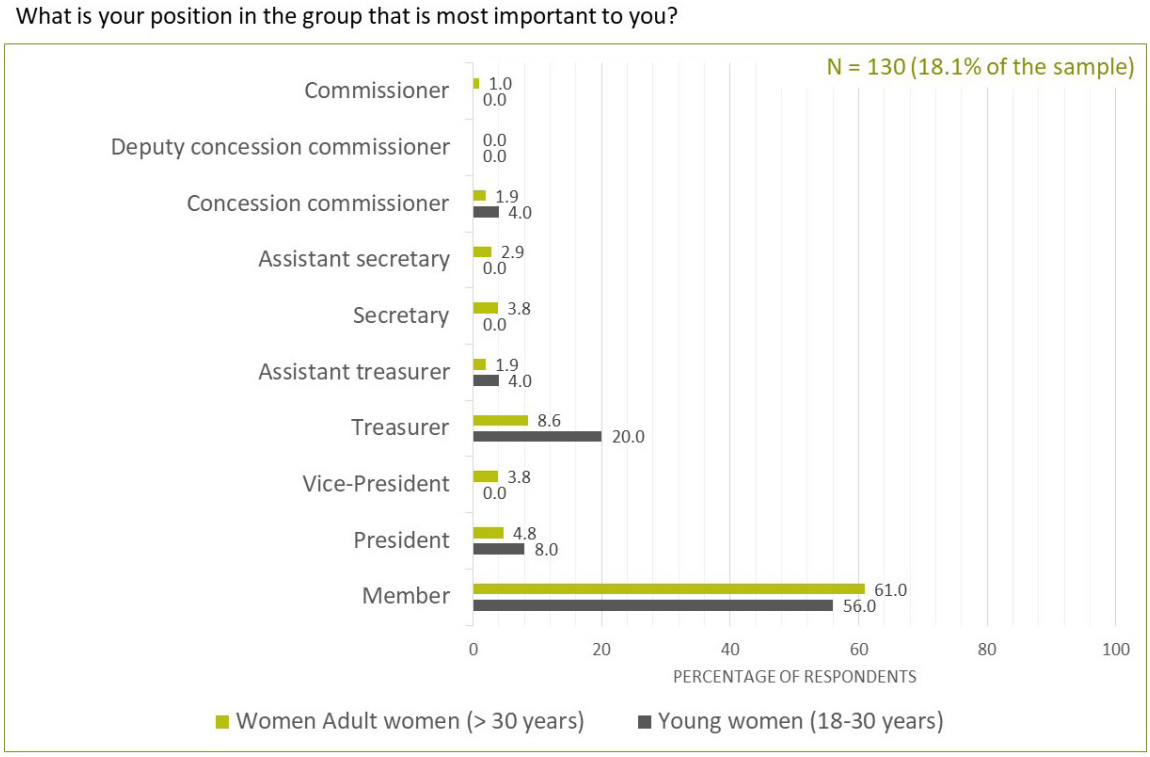
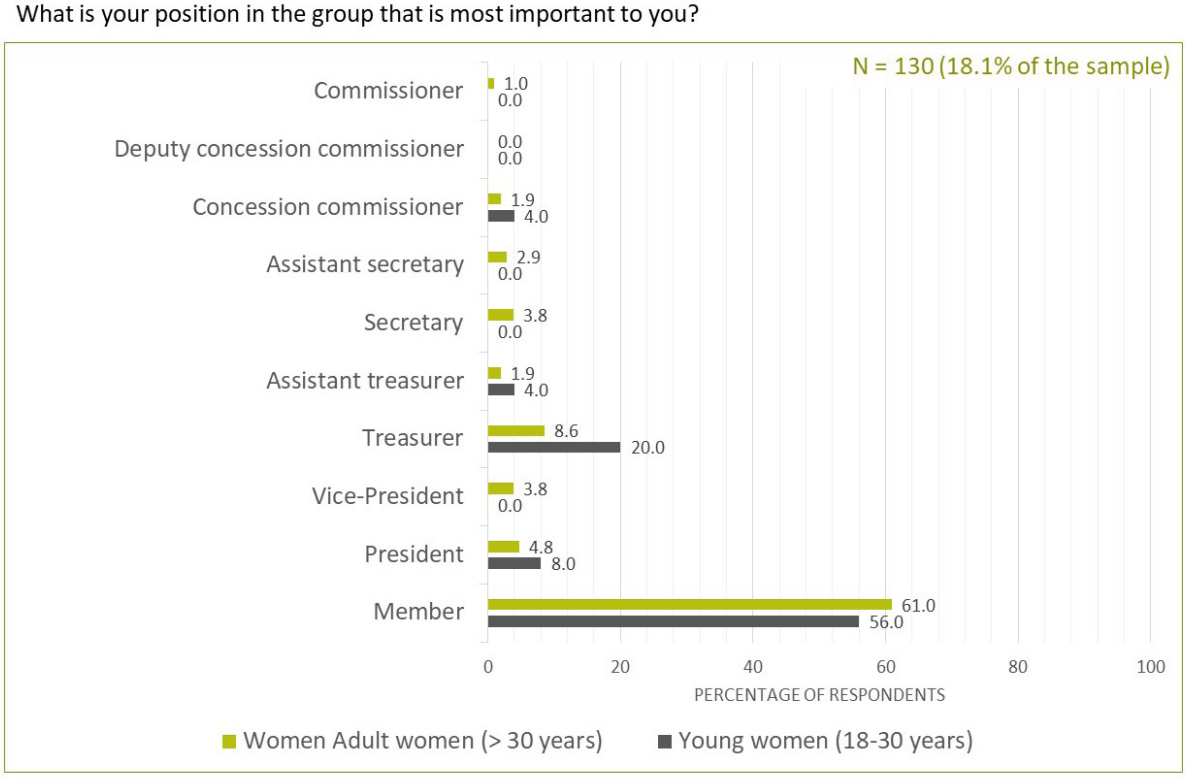


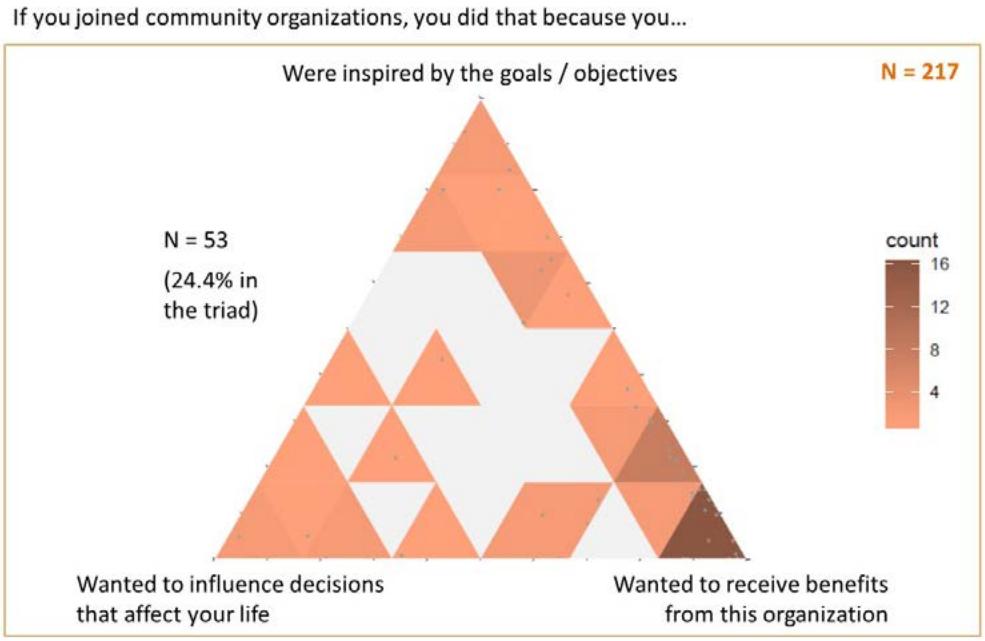
Figure 111. Women's position in the most important community structure, disaggregated by age group (tools 1, 2 and 3, N=941)



Women's benefit from community structures

In addition to the above analysis on participation in community structures that was conducted with data collected with the three tools from 941 women and men, other questions were included in tool 3 that were applied to 271 young and adult women to get additional layers of information on women's participation in community structures. To better understand the motivations that led women to participate in these structures, a triad follow-up question was used to ask about the relative importance of three different reasons to join (see Figure 112). The 24 percent of women who participate in community structures responded to this question, showing that at least one of the three reasons in the triad applied to their experience. Women indicated that their dominant motivation was to receive benefits by joining the structure, followed by being inspired by the structure's goals or objectives, and to a lesser extent their interest to influence decisions that affect their lives. These responses seem to correlate with women's primary membership in savings and loans groups, which arguably provide more tangible benefits for their members.

Figure 112. Women's motivations for joining community structures



To assess how women benefitted from their participation in community structures, another triad follow-up question was used to assess the relative importance of three types of benefits. 20.7 percent of women, less than the 24 percent who participated in community structures, entered their response in the triad meaning that they have perceived at least one of the included benefits. The findings presented in Figure 113 show that developing strong relations and influencing decisions, with a dominant cluster in this corner, were the most important benefits perceived, followed by gaining recognition to a lower extent. It is important to note that 59.6 percent of responses refer to participation in SILC groups and less to the other community structures.

Finally, another triad follow-up question was used to assess what keeps women motivated to actively commit to their organization and maintain their participation. 22.6 percent of women, less than the 24 percent who participated in community structures, entered their response in the triad meaning that at least one of the three reasons were relevant to their experience. The findings presented in Figure 114 show that the dominant reason was observing tangible results, followed by the other two reasons: that their points of view were valued and that decisions were transparent and informed. As in the previous triad responses (see Figure 115), more than half of the responses refer to participation in SILC groups, again suggesting that women observe benefits from their participation in this structure.

Figure 113. Women perceived benefits of participation in community structures

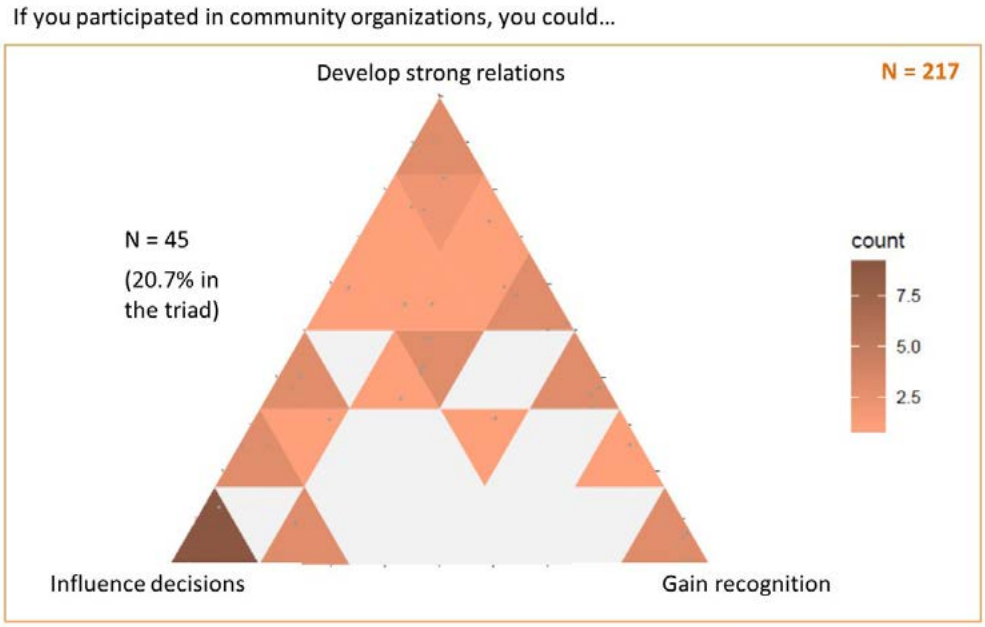
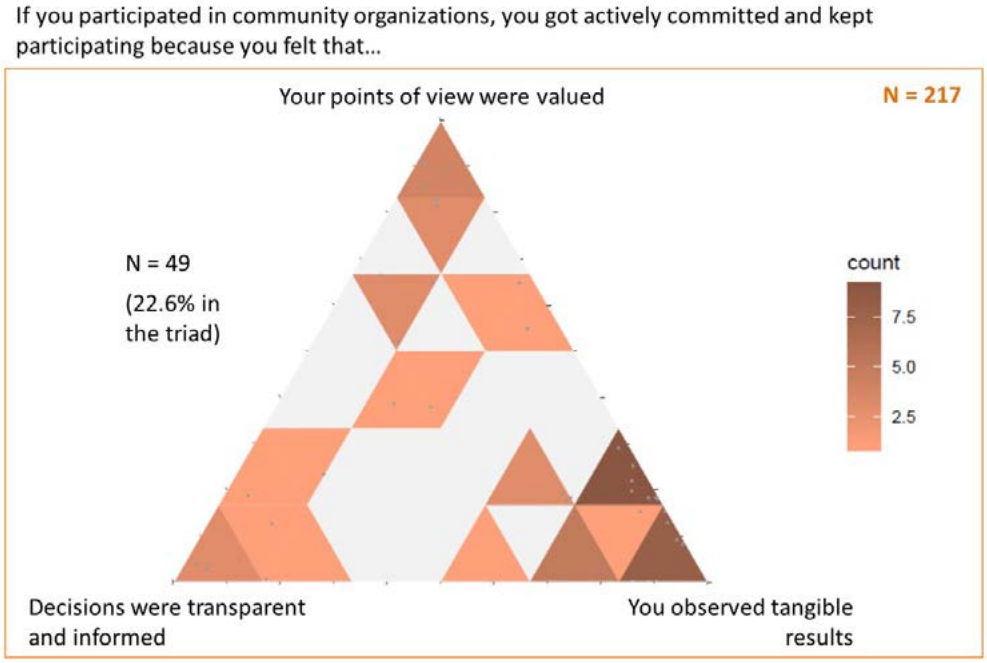


Figure 114. Women reasons for keeping committed to participate community structures

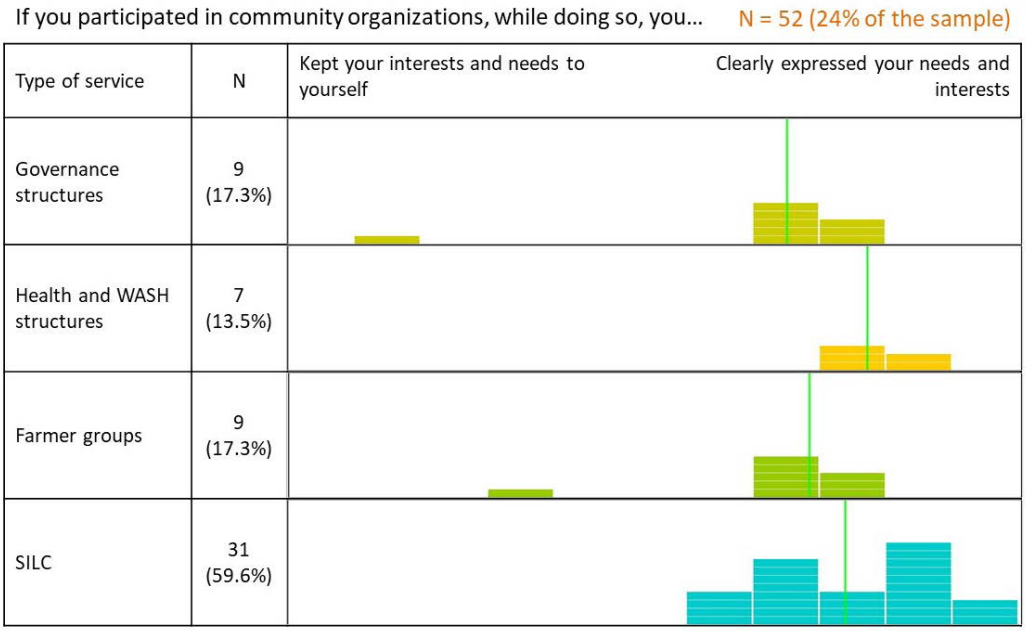


Women's voice and choice in community structures

To explore women's voice in community structures, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they clearly expressed their needs and interests on one extreme or kept their interests and needs to themselves on the other extreme. The 24 percent of women who participated in community structures and responded to this question, at the median (0.74), perceived that to some extent they were able to express their needs and interest. When this

finding is disaggregated by the type of community structure in which they participate, some minor differences can be observed (see Figure 115). Women, at the median, feel that they can express their needs and interests better in health and WASH-related community structures and in their SILC group, but less in governance structures and farmer groups. This is understandable since this is in line with gender norms—women generally have greater influence in health- and WASH-related themes, and because SILC groups are typically women's affinity groups and thus viewed as a safe space for women to gather and talk.

Figure 115. Women's voice in community structures

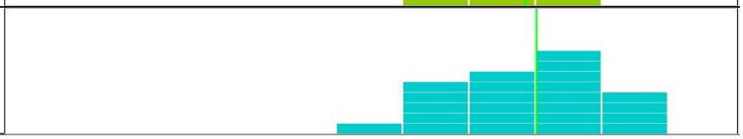


To explore women's choice in community structures, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they were able to choose to do what they found interesting, on one extreme, or if they were given roles that did not interest them on the other extreme. 18.9 percent of women responded to this question, which is less than the 24 percent who participated in community structures, showing that not all the women who participated in these structures was given a role. At the median (0.71), respondents perceived that to some extent they had the freedom to choose to do what they found interesting. When this finding is disaggregated by the type of community structure in which they participate, some minor differences can be observed (see Figure 116): women, at the median, were most able to choose what role to take on in health and WASH-related structures, and least able to choose their role in governance structures.

Figure 116. Women's choice in community structures

If you participated in community organizations, while participating you were...

N = 41 (18.9% of the sample)

Type of service	N	Given roles that had no relevance	Able to choose to do what you found interesting
Governance structures	7 (13.5%)		
Health and WASH structures	4 (7.7%)		
Farmer groups	7 (13.5%)		
SILC	24 (46.2%)		

Barriers to women's participation in community structures

Only 26.7% women responded to the question on what limited women participation in community organizations. The most frequent response (15.2%) was that no organization existed, or that they did not know of any organization. The second most frequent response (4.2%) was that they did not have authorization to join, and only 1.8% percent of women responded that they didn't have the cash or in-kind contributions needed to join. Other responses, but with only two responses each, were that their religion (Islam) did not permit their participation, and that they had too much livelihoods-related work to do.

These answers were generally verified in collective interpretation workshops. When it was explored whether the main barrier for women's participation in community structures was that these do not exist, or if women do not know of their existence, women participants' most frequent response was that it was a combination between very few community structures but also that women are not permitted to join. Contrary to women, all male participants in collective interpretation workshops did not cite the lack of community structures as a barrier, but rather said that women often do not know about the existence of these organizations.

Participants in collective interpretation workshops mentioned other reasons for women's limited participation in community structures. First, according to all groups, women usually do not know how they could benefit from their participation. Some women also shared that their illiteracy kept them from understanding what is happening during the meetings, and that others' tardiness to meetings results in "disinterest."

When women were asked which people or groups believe that women should not participate in community structures, 88 percent responded as non-applicable, suggesting that they do not know of any people of groups who opposed to their participation in community structures. Among those who responded, 8.3 percent indicated that religious leaders oppose women's participation, followed by 5.5% who mentioned the men in their households, and 1.4% community leaders. It is important to note that the three most important groups of people who are opposed to women´s public engagement are men.

This was validated in collective interpretation, as both women and men spoke of women's exclusion from community structures. Hausa and Fulani women said that "certain husbands prevent their wives from joining" as well as community leaders who cited "men's selfishness." Men agreed that some women do not have their husband's authorization to participate in community structures, while community leaders also cited religion and tradition as barriers to women's participation. Fulani women cited that women are not asked to participate in community meetings but rather that they can play the role of "observer," during which they can listen but not share their opinions.

Fulani and Kanuri women add that women's high workload also prevents them from attending meetings. One group of Kanuri women said they sometimes send children to the meeting in their place who report back to them. The physical distance to meeting locations was also cited by women as a barrier to participation, and/or not having their husband's authorization to leave their house. Several respondent groups (women and community leaders) also cited the lack of resources as a barrier to joining savings groups.

With respect to girls' participation, women shared that it is not usual for them to participate in community structures or meetings and that that "girls do not have the right to participate." Moreover, they shared that adolescent girls' participation is "poorly seen" (*mal vu*) by the community, and religious leaders cited that parents fear the shame of girls' participation. In addition, Fulani women said that both girls and boys are "ignored" during community meetings.

To encourage women's inclusion in community structures to give the choice to participate and a voice, particularly in governance structures, Girma could increase women's awareness on the existent community structures, their role and importance for the community, and the benefits of participating in them. At the same time, Girma could also target male influencers, who are cited as a key barrier for women participation in community structures. At the same time, as Girma plans to promote many and diverse community structures, special attention needs to be placed in relation to women's workload, but also not to create conflict in spousal and family relations. As women also highlighted that community structures promoted by other programs were not sustained after the end of the external support, it will be important to have strategies in place to ensure their sustainability so that women see benefits of their participation beyond the life of the program.

Implications and Recommendations

Gender Norms and Intimate Partner Violence

This study confirmed the importance of addressing the gender norms identified during Girma's program design to not only increase gender equality and female empowerment, but also to contribute to Girma's aims of improving households' food security and nutrition status. These norms include entrenched and internalized norms around male-dominated decision making coupled with women's submission, which is linked to IPV, as well as child marriage norms. The gender analysis also revealed links between girls' education and child marriage that are important to address.

Male dominated decision making, women's and girls' submission, and IPV

Men's decision-making power is accompanied by his traditional role to provide for all household needs, which is tied to interpretation of Islam. Indeed, women holding men to this standard was cited as the cause of many cases of divorce and conflict—including violence—in marriages. Even though most women undertake activities to contribute to their families' food security and income, this is done out of necessity because husbands are not able to cover the families' needs, and not necessarily because they see it as desirable. The internalization that men should provide for their families'—particularly women's and girls'—needs is tied to women's and girls' submissive role. Girma's SBC strategy must **engage religious leaders in dissemination**, and one **theme should be around the benefits of the household working together as a team**, valuing contributions from all household members, be it with productive activities or domestic and care work. The aim is that this will not only encourage women to look positively on the opportunity to earn increased income and use it for family needs, but also encourage men to help with domestic and care work and support women's and girls' livelihood initiatives.

Girma should also consider including the **theme of submission as part of its SBC approach**, which community members generally translate to mean women's obligation to respect their husbands in all things. This is a very sensitive norm that needs to be treated with care, as it is linked to community members' interpretation of the Koran and thus a religious as well as a socio-cultural issue. Girma can work with religious and traditional leaders, as well as husbands and wives in the Harmonious Family Life program, to explore how women can share their views and perspectives with their husbands, i.e. have respectful and open communication, without being seen as unsubmissive or disrespectful. The same theme should be introduced on girls' interactions with her parents and elders as one effort to improve girls' voice in various decisions that affect her life, but particularly her education and marriage. The aim is to foster respectful and open relationships within families—husbands and wives as well as girls and their parents—without infringing on anyone's rights. Given the sensitivity of this norm, Girma should pilot the subject with a small group first and monitor whether the success of the theme as well as whether there are unintended outcomes (e.g. increased violence against girls and women) as they increasingly voice their perspectives.

In line with this theme, the study found that other triggers of conflict between husbands and wives include an overall lack of communication and/or uncoordinated decision making between spouses, while connectors between spouses and a characteristic of nonviolent men is being open to dialogue. This **reinforces the need for Girma's Harmonious Family Life program**, which focuses on strengthening the couple relationship in large part by increasing communication and joint decision making. Because conflict was reportedly triggered by a lack of communication, the HFL program would in theory reduce IPV by increasing communication. In addition, the HFL curriculum includes a session on violence in households as a more deliberate and targeted effort to reduce IPV.

Girma should also consider establishing post-HFL support group structures for spouses continued sustained support for each other's' behavior change.

In addition, because the vast majority of respondents believe that men have the right to correct/ discipline his wife and children, Girma should **impart women's right to a life free of violence, and information on what constitutes violence**, to program participants. If the scope of the project allows it, Girma could consider extending this to children's rights as well, since some adolescent girls spoke of beatings and corporal punishment in their narratives.

Girma could also consider a **positive deviance approach in which nonviolent men**, the characteristics of whom were explored in the gender analysis, are engaged to promote respectful relationships and non-violent behavior in their communities.

Another norm that supports women to stay in unequal and/or abusive relationships include the frequently reported **fear of being separated** from their children, since customary law cites that as of age 7 children are to stay with their father[2], or upon remarrying women's husbands do not want to provide for them, or because women do not have the means to provide for them on their own. The lack of a middle path, such as joint custody and/ or financial support for children in the case of divorce, seems to be a serious blockage to women leaving unnecessary hardship and/or abusive relationships. Girma could consider adding this as another topic of exploration with its SBC approach with religious and traditional leaders, and depending on the outcome of those discussions, make it a point of community dialogue.

These SBC themes and approaches should be accompanied by **support to women's and girls' livelihoods** as well as families' agricultural activities in general. Even though women reported that economic success did not increase her influence (perhaps because few women reported having economic success, or her earnings are too low, or perhaps because this does not overcome the cultural norm of women's submission to husbands' decisions), given global evidence as well as findings from a study among Hausa women in Maradi that successful business women reported improved status in the home[3], as well as evidence that women spend their income in ways that support the family's food security and nutrition, Girma should pursue this approach and **monitor carefully whether there is any link between women's increased income generation and their influence in household decisions**. Women's lack of access to land without her husband, and thus access to food for herself and her children, also likely reinforces her need to stay in abusive relationships, further reinforcing the need to support women's livelihoods.

Literacy training and supporting girls' access to schools (through SBC) is also an important component to overcoming girls' and women's submission and supporting their empowerment in the long run.

Girls' education

Both male and female respondents' education levels were abysmal, but even worse for females, only 9.2 percent of whom had accessed formal education. Given the number of links between education and health, food security, gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as delayed marriage, promoting education should become a focus of Girma, at a minimum as part of its SBC approach.

The gender analysis found that the **belief that girls' education is important** was the greatest factor that contributed to the decision to continue girls' education. On the other hand, girls reported that influencers' belief that education was *not* important was the greatest factor leading to their drop out. Narratives revealed that not all girls valued education; some girls were forced to drop out and some wanted to. At the same time, one of girls' most trusted sources on education-related decisions was their peers, showing that Girma needs to target girls as well as their parents—particularly fathers, who have most decision-making power—with activities

2 Niger Social Institutions and Gender Index. Accessed May 10, 2017 at http://www.genderindex.org/country/niger.

3 World Bank and UNFPA: Niger Girls' Vulnerability Assessment: Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Project (SWEDD). Perlman, Daniel, PhD. Undated.

that demonstrate the value an education brings. Girma could **work with positive deviants** who believe that girls' education is important, especially for ensuring their wellbeing, who could serve as influencers for those who believe that girls' education is unnecessary. Influencers also valued teachers' encouragement, which Girma could build on; the program could **target teachers as part of its SBC strategy**, share this study's findings with them, and encourage their outreach to parents and community leaders, building on the message of education's importance and using it as a path out of poverty.

While women and girls found that proximity of the school is one of the most important factors to girls' education, influencers valued a much larger range of factors that are linked to the quality of education, including having good school infrastructure (materials used to build the schools, water supply, pharmacy), being equipped with supplies; having school canteens; and having enough and qualified teachers. As it is outside the scope of the program to build schools, equip them, and ensure qualified teachers are in place, Girma should seek to complement its interventions with education programming, and USAID should consider allocating additional funds for such activities in the target area. If Girma successfully encourages parents to send their children to school, and students then attend school without any tangible gain to offset their costs of education (both in actual and opportunity costs), such efforts could backfire future education initiatives.

Child marriage

DHS data shows that overall, statistics related to marrying before age 18 have not improved in Niger for decades.[4] While marrying at age 18 or older is certainly the goal, it is also unrealistic in the short term in rural Nigerien society. Since this study found that 67.3% of women and girl respondents (N=563) reported getting married when they were 15 or younger, **Girma is most likely able to move the needle on reducing the number of marriages that occur before age 15** and could focus their efforts accordingly.

The study found a complex link between education and early marriage, though it does appear overall that girls staying in school delays their marriage. As stated above, **Girma should thus incorporate a theme on the importance of education for both boys and girls into SBC approaches**, and seek to link with education programs in the area to complement Girma's efforts and cover the education gap that Girma doesn't fund.

Analysis of narratives also show that experiences related to girls' marriage decisions are varied and multi-faceted, and that a variety of factors come into play for each individual involved. As with other norms discussed above, **the approach to delaying girls' marriage needs to target a number of factors and take a socio-ecological approach**. Nevertheless, the study found that fathers—followed closely by mothers—have the most influence in girls' marriage-related decisions, suggesting that efforts targeting them should be emphasized. Brothers and uncles were also found to influence marriage-related decisions to a lesser extent. Women, girls, and influencers said that the most relevant causes for child marriage was to conform with tradition and respect religious precepts. Religious and community leaders can thus play an extremely influential role in delaying girls' marriage and should be included as part of a robust SBC strategy (as Girma plans to do) that would ultimately reach mothers, fathers, girls and boys themselves, as well as brothers, uncles, and other family members who influence the decision.

Influencers (husbands, religious and community leaders, first wives, and female heads of households) who delayed girls' marriage said they did so mainly out of fear for girls' physical or psychological health, followed almost equally by the importance given to their studies and the need for girls' work (either with household chores or productive activities). While Girma's SBC approach can and should discuss the harm of marrying young, some CRS staff have found that this is a typical child marriage prevention message that is not always effective and may actually turn off community members' attention to the issue. SBC efforts should thus endeavor to **highlight the positive aspects of what can be gained from continuing girls' education and delaying girls' marriage** instead of taking a negative and shame-inducing approach.

4 Institut National de la Statistique (INS) et ICF International, 2013. *Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples du Niger 2012*. Calverton, Maryland, USA : INS et ICF International.

Given that influencers found girls' development of physical attributes, attraction of male attention, and the prevention of pregnancy outside of marriage as important to their decision, **Girma's SBC approach should also include education that physical maturity does not equal cognitive maturity and reinforce the concept that adolescence is an age of transition**—not adulthood—and girls should wait until their development has finished (or at least significantly advanced) before they marry to maximize their and their children's well-being. An additional point that will likely resonate with parents as well as religious and community leaders is that girls marrying early and/or forced into marriage may more often result in divorce, which influencers are keen to avoid. This may be due to girls' poor decisions around who they choose as their life-long partners, as cognitive development is growing remarkably during adolescence, and/or girls' desire to respect their parents and follow their marriage-related wishes. Indeed, women and girls gave importance to the desire to strengthen family alliances and not dishonor her family in their decisions to marry. This desire to please their parents, combined with the cultural role of women's and girls' submission, likely leads to girls' not being open and clear about their marriage-related desires.

The approach discussed above—on **how to foster respectful and open communication between girls and their parents and other family members without being labelled disrespectful/ unsubmissive**, will be important to raise girls' voice. In addition to raising this as a community dialogue theme through its work with traditional and religious leaders, this could be a potential topic for Girma's grandmother inclusive approach (as envisioned during project design). As identified above, girls living unhappily in their homes are particularly at risk for child marriage, as they want to enter a new life and achieve the higher social status of being a married woman.

While girls' level of influence in their decision is less than her parents', some girls also want to get married, in part to conform to her peers, who are their most trusted sources of information. Like their parents, girls should be targeted with information on why it's better to wait. Adolescent girls desire to take on the social status of a married woman, perhaps without realizing the realities of marriage, particularly if they are moving into a compound in which their mother-in-law lives. Girma should **integrate this discussion into IRH's child marriage modules of the GrowUp Smart** curriculum.

Other approaches Girma could take to boost girls' happiness and social status before they are married include elements of a broader **girls empowerment approach**, such as gaining income generation skills, furthering their education and literacy skills, gaining life skills that include an analysis of early marriage and other inequitable gender norms, and being exposed to options beyond child marriage such as via women who have delayed their marriage with positive effects.

Finally, as part of a socio-ecological approach, Girma should also consider **how to reach adolescent boys and unmarried young men with SBC efforts to delay marriage**. Since boys' voices were not deliberately collected as part of this study, Girma should review the literature on boys' motivations around marriage and design its SBC approach accordingly. Presumably the same themes discussed above should reach boys and young men either via community dialogue led by religious and community leaders, and/or by integrating discussion in curricula that reach boys and young men, including literacy and life skills curricula delivered by the program.

IntraHousehold Dynamics/ Polygamy

Findings suggest that polygamy is an extremely sensitive topic. Although women report it as a major subject of tension and even violence within households, men appear unwilling to admit to a lack of harmony among their wives and problems that engenders. Polygamy is also a long-standing custom, grounded in community members' interpretation of Islam as well as men's dominant position in society, making it an extremely entrenched practice. Nevertheless, in addition to the conflict polygamy engenders within families and the lack of cooperation among co-wives, findings from this study also suggest that the practice has negative implications

for food security, since women report a lack of motivation to have good harvests as that increases the likelihood of gaining a co- wife.

At a minimum, Girma should design its programs to take a **Do No Harm approach**. This should include, for example, ensuring that interventions—particularly livelihood activities—are available to all co-wives so as not to provoke conflict, and ensuring any transfers take into account "mother-children units," or each wife in a household.

Girma is also faced with the dichotomy of possibly increasing the practice of polygamy against women's wishes with its efforts to improve households' harvests and livelihoods. Likewise, Girma's Harmonious Family Life program is currently extended to both polygamous as well as monogamous households, and is reportedly successful with both groups, which while admirable could also have the unintended consequence of increasing the "success" of polygamy. Girma should seek resources to **study what effects the program has on the practice of polygamy**, both during implementation and after its completion, and further investigate any positive or negative consequences of polygamy on gender relations and households' food security and nutrition.

Girma should also consider **piloting polygamy as a theme of its SBC approach** with religious and traditional leaders. Girma could share a case study and/ or this study's findings on the effect of polygamy on conflict and food security for leaders' consideration and discussion. This should be done *after* other themes have been covered, and once Girma has gained significant trust and rapport with the religious and traditional leaders with whom it works. If the discussion goes well, and leaders believe it is an important topic to raise with communities, Girma can determine how and whether to proceed.

Livelihoods

Supporting On- and Off-Farm IGAs for Women

Women clearly make significant contributions to their families' food nutrition and security, despite numerous and varied constraints, and should be supported in their efforts. This study found that women were most positive about their off-farm IGAs, which when combined with women's lack of access to productive resources (such as land, equipment/ tools, services, and more), suggest that supporting women in off-farm IGAs is a promising approach for improving women's contributions to nutrition. However, women's off-farm IGAs (selling snacks, mats, etc.) are generally very small in scale and may not contain much potential for significant changes in their income. In addition, Girma must find a balance between opportunities available to women and what the market will support as profitable endeavors. At the same time, food production is also insufficient to meet households' needs, suggesting a need for increased and/or improved on-farm activities. **Girma should thus study and consider both on- and off-farm opportunities that women may pursue** to improve their livelihoods and food security. Given women's repeated indication that there is a lack of opportunity in their zone, Girma should particularly seek to **link women to training opportunities and services**, including technical assistance, transportation, processing, and commercialization services. Girma should also consider how it can **support women's access to markets**, particularly by achieving sufficient volume to negotiate (e.g. via increasing individuals' production and/or having women come together for collective sales), which women cited as their major constraint. These interventions must be designed considering women's current restrictions of movement (discussed more below) and whether trainings for women must be separate from those provided to men.

As part of its livelihoods' strengthening proposal for women, Girma should also particularly examine why fewer young women (age 30 and under) as compared to older women, and—if feasible to investigate without raising tensions—investigate why fewer Fulani as compared to Hausa and Kanuri women access services, and seek to minimize the disparity. The program must also give special attention to female-headed households, who

typically have even less access to land and other productive resources than women in male-headed households, to support their specific needs and constraints.

Having a livelihood strengthening strategy for women should not preclude supporting households' overall livelihoods (i.e. agricultural production), not only to avoid backlash against women, but also to take a holistic approach to improving families' and communities' well-being. Indeed, women reported that generally the biggest constraint to their access to resources is the simple scarcity of those resources.

Other components of Girma's livelihood strategy should address women's control over land; women's time availability; access to and control over capital; and mobility. Several areas for further exploration are also outlined below as well as needed themes for Girma's SBC strategy.

Land

SenseMaker data as well as collective interpretation workshops revealed that women's lack of control over land, combined with her lack of decision-making power, puts downward pressure on productivity levels and thus families' food security and nutrition. In addition it is also not only unfair, but may also contribute to women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence, since women must leave any access to land via her husband if she wants to escape the marriage. Girma should thus **include strategies to increase women's control over land** as part of its women's livelihoods' strengthening strategy. This could include increasing women's representation on COFOs (land management committees); providing information on women's land ownership rights to men and women; and facilitating women's producer associations in the long-term lease or purchase of land. Girma should also include this as a theme of its SBC strategy (explained in more detail below).

Time

Interestingly, in collective interpretation workshops, most women indicated having time and having control over it; only Hausa women said they are overburdened (while other Hausa women in the survey did not). Girma should put **strong monitoring systems and/or learning questions in place around women's time use, how that changes with program activities that Girma introduces, and with what effects** (including for girl and boy children).

Given the number of activities Girma will target towards women, CRS should anticipate that women will have an increased time burden with effects for themselves and their children. Girma has already envisaged to facilitate mill establishment and management in communities as one effort to reduce women's time burden. Girma should also investigate ways to **increase women's access to equipment and tools** that would not only aid their productive activities but also reduce their time burden. This could include forming tool management committees among SILC group members or women's producer organizations and/or connecting women producers to Girma's private service providers.

In addition, Girma should seek to increase the value placed on women's reproductive/ care work, among staff as well as program participants, and encourage more flexibility in how and which household activities are undertaken by males and females. This should be one theme of the SBC approach described below.

Access to and Control over Capital and Resources

Girma's program design team correctly identified that women need **additional access to capital**—they rely on it to improve their livelihoods and indicate being able to control their own earnings, but their earnings and financial assets are very small. Girma has envisaged that SILC would assist women's access to capital; the program should further investigate what women's real level of need is to improve their livelihoods and whether SILC would meet those needs and propose any alterations accordingly. Girma can also layer business skills into SILC trainings and technical support to improve women's incomes and resilience, since CRS has found that as women receive

financial education and start saving and accessing loans, they tend to search for off-farm business. In addition, Girma should monitor whether women retain control over their income and project-acquired resources as they increase and include this as a theme in its SBC approach as a mitigation mechanism.

Mobility

While women most frequently cited a lack of resources as the main constraint to their movements, this was frequently in combination with restrictions imposed by their husbands. It is possible that lack of resources may constrain women's movements in some cases more than others (e.g. to access health centers), while her husband may constrain her movements more than resource constraints in others (e.g. when accessing trainings, markets, attending community meetings/ participating in community structures, etc.) While a deeper understanding of these dynamics is needed, Girma can nevertheless **add women's mobility as a theme to its SBC approach**.

Women's access to markets could be another topic for further exploration, since this study asked about markets generally, while it is taboo for women to attend livestock markets (even though small ruminants are generally one of women's most accessible assets) and there are constraints to women attending night markets.

Use of Income

An **emerging practice Girma could investigate further** is evidence from this study that young women more frequently indicated buying animal products than older women. This could be because different ages have different priorities (e.g. older women more frequently used revenue for their daughters' weddings, which wouldn't be a need for young women with younger children); nevertheless, Girma should seek to understand whether there is something to learn from this practice that the program could build on. Girma could also consider investigating differences among socio-linguistic groups, such as why Kanuri women spend more money on fruit, vegetable, and animal source foods, and why more Fulani women spent money on water and hygiene products. CRS staff who participated in the pre-culmination workshop also cited the need for further inquiry about the nutrition habits of the Kanuri in particular.

Public Sphere

Girma will either strengthen or create a diverse set of community organizations, creating additional opportunity for women's participation and representation (as well as adolescent boys and girls of all socio-linguistic groups in targeted communities). Respondents indicated that women are unaware of the value of participating in community structures, so one foundational step is **discussing the benefit women and all community members can derive from diverse and inclusive participation and representation**. Indeed, women most frequently indicated joining savings and loans groups because they wanted to receive benefits of membership and that they maintained participation in the structure because they observed tangible results. The design of Girma's governance programs, then, must also **ensure that women observe tangible results from their participation**.

At the same time, Girma's SBC strategy must also address traditional norms of male decision-making that exclude women from community structures. Girma should discuss the positive effects of having diverse and inclusive representation with traditional leaders, whose support is vital to success. A potential entry point to build on is the finding that women seem to serve in the position of Treasurer more often than men, showing that it is culturally appropriate for women to represent community structures in at least some positions.

Indeed, Girma should strive to create mechanisms for participation among all age, sex, and socio-economic groups, and may want to do so in a way that is seen as program-driven to overcome any initial resistance while demonstrating the value of women's participation. This is also relevant for male and female youth, who are not typically included in community decision making processes, and adolescent girls' participation in community meetings is "seen poorly."

Once women gain increased representation roles, they must also be able to express themselves openly in community structures. Indeed, women indicated being able to express their needs and interests as a factor that maintained their participation in savings and loans groups, thus efforts to create such a climate in governance structures is also important to maintain women's participation as well as support their voice. Traditional norms discourage women from speaking in front of men publicly, so significant thought and attention need to be devoted to **devising strategies for creating a climate in which women express themselves and men listen to and respond appropriately**.

Girma must also take care in promoting women into leadership positions since having unqualified women representatives could backlash. This validates the importance of Girma's planned initiative to **build women's leadership skills**, as well as its **literacy courses**, which potential women leaders should attend as part of a leadership development program. That women's low education levels were found to be a constraint to their participation in community structures also validates the recommendation that the program include SBC to encourage girls' education to aid women's leadership development in the long run.

Other Girma initiatives will also address women's constraints to joining community structures, including strategies to reduce women's workloads, which will be especially important as women's participation in community structures would increase their time burden, and increasing women's financial resources and thus ability to join savings groups. **Distance to meeting locations must also be deliberately planned** and agreed upon to ensure equitable access for all community groups.

Girma should also create mechanisms to **monitor the "quality" of women's participation/ women's voice** (i.e. the extent to which they express themselves and to which their voice is heard and acted upon) **and its effects**, not only on governance and development outcomes, but also on an individual and relationship level, for example any effects on women's workload, her self-confidence, her relationship with her spouse and/or co-wives, and status in the household and community.

Social Behavior Change

As identified throughout this document, a number of unequal gender norms constrain women's well-being and livelihood opportunities, and thus food security and nutrition of women, girls, their children, and society more broadly. Two major avenues of Girma's SBC approach include Harmonious Family Life (HFL) and working with religious and traditional leaders to foment community dialogue. These two approaches should be part of a broader socio-ecological approach to social behavior change, as Girma has planned, since the gender analysis highlighted the varied role all layers of the community play in the continuation of these norms. While men—primarily husbands, religious leaders and community leaders, but also uncles and brothers—dominate the decisions made that affect women's and girls' lives, women and girls indicated even higher levels of personal beliefs in inequitable gender norms than influencers did. In addition, although girls' fathers and mothers play key decision-making roles in girls' lives, girls and women look to their peers as their most trusted sources of information for most decisions, and women and girls indicated that fear of social sanctions (losing their social status and damaging family honor) were major reasons for their lack of action. Grandmothers' role in decisions studied in this gender analysis varied, though showed that they do have influence in some cases, as do mothers-in-law. Women also cited mothers-in-law as being able to help reduce IPV by "advising their sons to live in harmony."

Assuming that the HFL approach is already at maximum capacity with its focus on couples' strengthening and joint decision making with more targeted modules on household nutrition, disaster risk management and governance, Girma should consider including several themes in its approach to working with traditional and religious leaders to initiate community dialogue. Each theme could be presented in the form of a story

or case study for leaders to discuss, reflect on, and finally determine talking points for their discussions with communities. These themes/ case studies—as outlined above—could include but are not limited to:

- **benefits of the household working together as a team**, valuing all contributions household members make, be it with productive activities or domestic and care work
- **women's submission:** explore how women can share their views and perspectives with their husbands respectfully (i.e. have respectful and open communication)—and girls with their parents—without being seen as disrespectful
- **women's fear of being separated** from their children and the lack of a middle path or alternative arrangements, such as joint custody
- the importance of **girls' education**
- **delaying girls' marriage**
- the effects of **polygamy** on conflict and food security for leaders' consideration and discussion
- **sharing household resources** for all household members' productive activities (to increase women's access to household assets)
- **increasing women's voice in decision making**, particularly in how harvests/ household income is used and how land is distributed
- **distribution of traditional reproductive and productive tasks**
- **women's control over personal earnings**
- **women's mobility** (e.g. to access health centers, training, and/or participate in community structures)
- the benefit women and all community members can derive from **diverse and inclusive participation and representation**
- effects of **adolescent girls' lack of social status** (example from girl who wants to marry because she's unhappy in her home)

In addition to reaching various groups of community members with its gender transformative programming, the gender analysis team observed that some CRS staff require a better understanding on gender approaches and support to critically reflect on social norms that CRS is trying to change during collective interpretation. Girma should thus **hold Unconscious Gender Bias Trainings with all staff**, which the program has already planned and budgeted for, as well as increased awareness of gender approaches Girma will undertake.

Annexes

Annex 1. Core SenseMaker "signifier questions" for collection tools 1 and 3

ANALYTICAL FRAMING ELEMENT	DIMENSION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY OR OUTCOME	TYPE OF FOLLOW-UP QUESTION	TOOL 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE	TOOL 2: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM INFLUENCERS' PERSPECTIVE
Information about the experience shared		Signifier MCQ	Type of story positive negative neutral	Type of story positive negative neutral
		Signifier MCQ	Type of decision marriage family relations education finances livelihoods health and nutrition domestic and care work	Type of decision marriage family relations education health and nutrition
Gender norms and behaviors	Gender norms	Slider with stones	Beliefs for acting from "you totally agree with it' to "your community totally supports it" Stones: a man has the right to correct / discipline his wife and children marriage success is women's responsibility women must be submissive	Beliefs for acting from "you totally agree with it' to "your community totally supports it" Stones: a man has the right to correct / discipline his wife and children marriage success is women's responsibility women must be submissive
	Gender norms	Signifier MCQ	Reasons for early (girls) marriage	Reasons for early (girls) marriage
	Gender norms	Triad	Reasons for delaying girls' marriage fear for her physical/ psychological wellbeing priority given to her studies Need her labor	Reasons for delaying girls' marriage fear for her physical/ psychological wellbeing priority given to her studies Need her labor
	Gender behaviors	Signifier MCQ	Age that got marriage	Age the woman or girl got marriage
	Gender norms	Triad	Reasons for dropping girls from school Her safety the believe that girls don't need to study education costs	Reasons for dropping girls from school Her safety the believe that girls don't need to study education costs
	Gender norms	Triad	Reasons for keeping girls' in school encouragement of teachers importance given to girls' education need to ensure girls' economic wellbeing	Reasons for keeping girls' in school encouragement of teachers importance given to girls' education need to ensure girls' economic wellbeing
	Gender behaviors	Signifier MCQ	Level of schooling when girl was dropped out of school	Level of schooling when girl was dropped out of school
	Opportunities	Signifier MCQ	Factors that contributed to keep girls in school	Factors that contributed to keep girls in school

ANALYTICAL FRAMING ELEMENT	DIMENSION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY OR OUTCOME	TYPE OF FOLLOW-UP QUESTION	TOOL 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE	TOOL 2: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM INFLUENCERS' PERSPECTIVE
Gender norms and behaviors (continued)	Gender behaviors	Triad	Triggers of gender-based violence co-wives husband in-laws	Triggers of gender-based violence co-wives husband in-laws
	Gender behaviors	Triad	Characteristics of non-violent men trusting their spouse(s) being open to dialogue with spouse(s) having self-control	Characteristics of non-violent men trusting their spouse(s) being open to dialogue with spouse(s) having self-control
	Gender behaviors	Signifier MCQ	Characteristics of non-violent men	Characteristics of non-violent men
Intrahousehold gender dynamics	Voice	Signifier MCQ	Household members who influenced the decision	Household members who influenced the decision
	Power	Slider with stones	Level of influence of different household members in the decision from "complete influence" to "no influence at all" Stones for married women: herself husband first co-wife mother in-law Stones for unmarried girls: herself father mother grandmother	Level of influence of different household members in the decision from "complete influence" to "no influence at all" to Stones for married women: the respondent/influencer the woman or girl herself her husband her co-wife her mother in-law Stones for unmarried girls: the respondent / influencer the woman or girl herself her father her mother her grandmother
	Voice	Signifier MCQ	Non-household members who influenced the decision	Non-household members who influenced the decision
	Power	Triad	Relative level of influence in decision-making by type of decision maker the women/girl herself household members non-household members	Relative level of influence in decision-making by type of decision maker the respondent/influencer household members non-household members
	Choices	Slider	Level of support among cowives from "only their position/interest" to "fully your position/interest"	Level of support among cowives from "only their position/interest" to "fully the position/interest of the woman/girl"
	Opportunities	Signifier MCQ	Trusted sources of information for decision-making	

ANALYTICAL FRAMING ELEMENT	DIMENSION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY OR OUTCOME	TYPE OF FOLLOW-UP QUESTION	TOOL 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE	TOOL 2: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM INFLUENCERS' PERSPECTIVE
Intrahousehold gender dynamics (continued)	Power	Signifier MCQ	Factors that contributed positively to the women/girl power in the decision	Factors that contributed positively to the women/ girl power in the decision
	Power	Signifier MCQ	Factors that contributed negatively to the women/girl power in the decision	Factors that contributed negatively to the women/ girl power in the decision
Intimate partner relations	Voice	Triad	Factors that contributed to women and girls' agency your self-esteem knowing your rights having your own source of income	Factors that contributed to women and girls' agency her self-esteem knowing her rights having her own source of income
	Choice	Triad	Individual threats for lack of agency being separated you're your children your physical wellbeing the economic consequences	Individual threats for lack of agency being separated from her children her physical wellbeing the economic consequences
	Choice	Triad	Social threats for lack of agency losing your social status being excluded in your community damaging the family honor	Social threats for lack of agency losing her social status being excluded in her community damaging her family honor
	Power	Slider	Response to gender-based violence *from "did everything you could to stop it" to "couldn't do anything to stop it"*	Response to gender-based violence from "did everything she could to stop it" to "couldn't do anything to stop it"
	Opportunities	Triad	Effects of agency or lack of agency related to gender-based violence economic physical emotional	Effects of agency or lack of agency related to gender-based violence economic physical emotional
	Women and youth empowerment	Slider	Level of gender-based violence in communities from "violence is present everywhere" to "there is no violence"	Level of gender-based violence in communities from "violence is present everywhere" to "there is no violence"
	Women and youth empowerment	Triad	Effects of gender-violence against women in the communities economic physical emotional	Effects of gender-violence against women in the communities economic physical *emotional*

ANALYTICAL FRAMING ELEMENT	DIMENSION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY OR OUTCOME	TYPE OF FOLLOW-UP QUESTION	TOOL 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE	TOOL 2: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM INFLUENCERS' PERSPECTIVE
Women and girls' agency	Power	Signifier MCQ	Factors that contributed to the woman/girl influence in the decision made for her	Factors that contributed to influence the decision made for the woman or girl
	Women and youth empowerment	Slider	Impact of the decision *from "was the best for you" to "completely hindered your potential"*	Impact of the decision *from "was the best for her" to "completely hindered her potential"*
	Women and youth empowerment	Slider with stones	Agency pathway *from "very vulnerable and unprotected" to "with numerous opportunities"* Stones: before the experience during the experience now	Confidence on the decision over time *from "highly concerned on its impact" to "very confident that it was the right one"* Stones: while influencing the decision when the decision was taken now

Annex 2. Core SenseMaker "signifier questions" for collection tool 3

ANALYTICAL FRAMING ELEMENT	DIMENSION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY OR OUTCOME	TYPE OF FOLLOW-UP QUESTION	TOOL 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE
Information about the experience shared		Signifier MCQ	Type of story positive negative neutral
		Signifier MCQ	Actions taken to improve food production and/or income cropping in her plot of land diversifying her production systems implementing improved practices to increase productivity establishing home gardens start raising livestock starting/improving an agribusiness starting/improving an off-farm business developing/strengthening their competencies getting a job
Equitable roles, responsibilities and time use	Choice	Triad	Capacity to work time health, energy and motivation opportunities
	Choice	Slider with stones	Freedom of movement from "fully able without restrictions" to "completely banned" Stones leave the house go to the market attend a training visit a health center
	Choice	Triad	Limitations to freedom of movement your husband the lack of resources the norms in your community
	Choice	Triad	Productive and reproductive activities affected by workload the care of your children your productive activities your opportunities to develop your capacity / get education
	Choice	Triad	Strategies to overcome time limitations for productive activities sharing the work with your children asking your husband for help asking your co-wives for help
	Choice	Slider	Strategies to overcome time limitations for productive activities from "reorganized your activities and worked more hours" to "asked for support from other household members"

ANALYTICAL FRAMING ELEMENT	DIMENSION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY OR OUTCOME	TYPE OF FOLLOW-UP QUESTION	TOOL 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE
Access to and control over resources and services	Opportunities	Canvas with stones	Access to and control over resources Axis X from "highly limited your attempts" to "highly helped your attempts" Axis Y from "you had full control on its use" to "you had no control" Stones personal plot of land money equipment and tools time labor
	Opportunities	Slider	Barriers to access resources from "the scarcity of these resources" to "not being allowed to use them"
	Opportunities	Signifier MCQ	Type of land that can access
	Opportunities	Slider with stones	Access to markets for selling produce from "all outside of the house" to "all in the house" Stones yourself your daughters your sons your husband
	Opportunities	Triad	Limitations for selling produce you did not have enough volume of produce to negotiate you did not know buyers who could buy your produce you were not allowed to sell your produce outside the house
Effective participation and leadership	Choice	Signifier MCQ	Barriers for participating in community structures
	Choice	Signifier MCQ	Influencers who disincentive women and girls from participating in community structures
	Voice	Signifier MCQ	Participation in different community structures
	Voice	Signifier MCQ	Most important community structures in which participate
	Voice	Signifier MCQ	Position in the most important community structure in which participate
	Voice	Triad	Motivations for participation in community structures wanted to influence decisions that affect your life were inspired by the goals/objectives wanted to receive benefits from this organization
	Voice	Slider	Quality of participation in community structures from "clearly expressed your needs and interests" to "kept your interests and needs to yourself (kept silent)"
	Power	Slider	Contribution to community structures from "able to choose to do what you found meaningful" to "given roles that had no relevance"
	Power	Triad	Motivations to continue participating in community structures decisions were transparent and informed your points of view were valued you observed tangible results

ANALYTICAL FRAMING ELEMENT	DIMENSION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS' AGENCY OR OUTCOME	TYPE OF FOLLOW-UP QUESTION	TOOL 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS AGENCY FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE
Effective participation and leadership (continued)	Power	Triad	Benefits from participating in community structures develop strong relations influence decisions express your needs and interests
Link to Girma program sub-purposes	Agriculture production	Triad	Impact of lack of control over land motivation to work the plot of land interest in investing resources in the plot of land interest in trying new practices and/or crops in the plot of land
	Income providers	Triad	Contribution to household income you your husband your children
	Use of income	Slider with stones	Use of own income *from "none of your income' to "all your income"* Stones basic staple food vegetables and/or fruits animal products accessing safe water and hygiene products health expenses education expenses social events preparation for daughters weeding

Annex 3. Planned and achieved sample size by sociolinguistic group and interest group

TOOL	SOCIO-LINGUISTIC GROUP	INTEREST GROUP	SAMPLE SIZE PER INTEREST GROUP		SAMPLE SIZE PER SOCIOLINGUISTIC GROUP	
			PLANNED	ACHIEVED	PLANNED	ACHIEVED
Tool 1: Women and girls' agency from their own perspective	Haousa	1. First wives in polygamous HHs	24	25	96	99
		2. Other wives in polygamous HHs	24	21		
		3. Wives in monogamous HHs	24	27		
		4. Adolescent girls (16-18 years)	24	26		
	Fulani	1. First wives in polygamous HHs	24	25	96	88
		2. Other wives in polygamous HHs	24	19		
		3. Wives in monogamous HHs	24	25		
		4. Adolescent girls (16-18 years)	24	19		
	Kanouri	1. First wives in polygamous HHs	24	25	96	105
		2. Other wives in polygamous HHs	24	31		
		3. Wives in monogamous HHs	24	22		
		4. Adolescent girls (16-18 years)	24	27		
Tool 2: Women and girls' agency from the perspective of influencers	Haousa	1. First wives in polygamous HHs	24	39	144	141
		2. Mothers-in-law	24	25		
		3. Women in female headed HHs	24	22		
		4. Adult men	24	15		
		5. Religious leaders	24	21		
		6. Community leaders	24	19		
	Fulani	1. First wives in polygamous HHs	24	22	144	143
		2. Mothers-in-law	24	24		
		3. Women in female headed HHs	24	27		
		4. Adult men	24	18		
		5. Religious leaders	24	32		
		6. Community leaders	24	20		
	Kanouri	1. First wives in polygamous HHs	24	9	144	142
		2. Mothers-in-law	24	27		
		3. Women in female headed HHs	24	19		
		4. Adult men	24	28		
		5. Religious leaders	24	20		
		6. Community leaders	24	39		

TOOL	SOCIO-LINGUISTIC GROUP	INTEREST GROUP	SAMPLE SIZE PER INTEREST GROUP		SAMPLE SIZE PER SOCIOLINGUISTIC GROUP	
			PLANNED	ACHIEVED	PLANNED	ACHIEVED
Tool 3: Gender in livelihood systems and participation in the rural public sphere	Haousa	1. First wives in polygamous HHs	24	21	72	71
		2. Other wives in polygamous HHs	24	26		
		3. Wives in monogamous HHs	24	24		
	Fulani	1. First wives in polygamous HHs	24	19	72	61
		2. Other wives in polygamous HHs	24	22		
		3. Wives in monogamous HHs	24	20		
	Kanuri	1. First wives in polygamous HHs	24	30	72	79
		2. Other wives in polygamous HHs	24	23		
		3. Wives in monogamous HHs	24	26		

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