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**MAHARO  
PROJECT**



# Maharo Gender Analysis - Report 2021

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Photo by Sedera Ramanitra/CRS





Catholic Relief Services, a non-governmental organization, has been working in Madagascar since 1963, initially providing support through food distributions and emergency relief programs. Over the years, CRS has expanded its interventions to meet development needs across the island.

MAHARO is a five-year project (2019-2024) focused on food security funded by the Resiliency Food Security Assistance (RSFA) Program of USAID/FFP. It is implemented by the Consortium: CRS, CDD, Venture 37, Youth First, Humanity - Inclusion, Cornell University, and Harvard University. This gender analysis and report were made possible with financial support from USAID/FFP. The collection period was between November 28 and December 15, 2020. The study was carried out in Beloha and Tsihombe for the Androy region and in Ampanihy West for the Atsimo Andrefana region.

The overall objective of the Maharo project is to improve food security and reduce the incidence of acute and chronic malnutrition, both during and after the project. To achieve this, Maharo intends to establish sustainable risk mitigation systems that will contribute to the food and nutritional resilience of 55,880 households and 279,398 of the most vulnerable individuals living in Beloha, Tsihombe, and Ampanihy West districts.

The first specific objective of the Maharo project is to ensure that communities, in particular, households and the most vulnerable individuals, are supported by inclusive and effective social services and social protection. The second level aims to improve the nutritional status (acute and chronic) of pregnant and lactating women, adolescents (especially girls), and children under 5. The third specific objective is to strengthen resilient livelihoods for vulnerable and extremely poor households (especially women, young people, and people with disabilities). Finally, the fourth specific objective is to help vulnerable households, communities and institutions be more resilient in managing disasters, shocks, and climate stress.

By the end of the project, participants will have better access to basic social services and improved protection systems, more active community involvement to improve local governance, improved health and nutrition, efficient management of natural risks and disasters, protection and regeneration of natural resources, and improved socio-economic status. The intervention integrates the participation of individuals of different categories (men, women, young people, people with disabilities) as well as households with different constitutions and situations (household involving people with disabilities, women-headed households, households lead by children, households with elderly people at their heads, polygamous households, especially, those without resources and without land).

CRS is convinced that tackling gender inequalities helps reduce food insecurity. Social constructs around gender differ and evolve both over time and in the society in which they are conceived. The Maharo project conducted this gender analysis to gain an understanding of current situations. This is to enable us to understand the specific profiles of each area before implementing activities with relevance, efficiency and to ensure the sustainability of those activities. In addition, if we are to effectively achieve the project's Theory of Change (ToC), it is necessary to integrate a gender-based approach through the activities of each component over the promotion of human rights, good governance of resources and benefits, equitable sharing of roles and responsibilities between men, women, girls and boys, taking into account diversity (disabled persons) and gender-based violence reduction. The results of this gender analysis conducted from the three intervention districts will serve as the basis for the integration of gender into the project activities and for the project's gender strategy.

This report presents the results of the gender analysis conducted by an independent team of consultants in conjunction with the Gender, Youth and Social Dynamic Unit and the Strategic Learning Lead of Catholic Relief Services. First, the document outlines the contexts around the analysis and the stages of its implementation. Clarifications are given such the socio-demographic information of the targeted population with which the study was conducted. Finally, the report separately presents the "gender profile" of each district to define actions to be considered in the gender strategy design and for the gender integration into Maharo activities.

Every effort has been made to verify the reliability of the content of this document, the information is considered correct as of the date of the production of this report. However, CRS and USAID cannot be held responsible for the use of the content of this document for other purposes and in other contexts.

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Recommended quote: Razafiarimanana H., Ramananjohany V.; 2021. Gender Analysis Report, MAHARO Project, Catholic Relief Services.

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## *Acknowledgements*

The implementation of Maharo gender analysis was made possible thanks to the help of various actors as well as with the support of the local authorities to whom we express our gratitude.

The team of investigators would also like to thank those who participated in this analysis from near and far. Our heartfelt thanks go first to those who have been willing to devote their time and answer our questions through the interviews and group discussions. We would also extend our appreciation to the Maharo CRS staff and CDD, Maharo's implementation partner who facilitated the organization, approach and discussions with the communities and participants in this study.

Finally, we express our deep gratitude to the Gender, Youth and Social Dynamic Unit team and the Maharo Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) team for the organization process, the data collection leading to the completion of this research.

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# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	Atsimo Andrefana
CDD	Conseil Diocesain de Developpement
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
RSFA	Resilience Food Security Assistance
HI	Humanity Inclusion
IGAs	Income Generating Activities
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning
NRPD	Nutrient-Rich Protein Dense
P1	Purpose 1
P2	Purpose 2
P3	Purpose 3
TOC	Theory of Change
USAID	United States Agency International Development
USAID  FFP	United States Agency International Development  Food for Peace
GBV	Gender-based violence
VOI	Vondron'olona ifotony or grassroots communities



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

This analysis supports the theory of change and justifies the key points of the Maharo project's gender strategy. It was conducted at the three project intervention districts of Ampanihy, Beloha and Tsihombe. The analysis developed gender profiles for each district focused on identified gaps related to gender which are “role and responsibilities”, “access to and control over resources,” “power relations and decision-making,” “leadership and participation in public life,” and “gender-based violence.”

## Methodology

Based on the five research questions, the qualitative methodology is based on both deductive and inductive approaches. The data collection was conducted by 10 enumerators supported by 2two consultant leads during the period between November 28–December 15, 2020. It involved: (i) 90 individuals from 5 types of households<sup>1</sup>, (ii) 18 key informant’s interviews, (iii) 24 discussion groups targeting separately women, men and youth. The collected material was transcribed and translated exclusively to be encoded with NVivo software (version 12). The analysis is based on the principle of triangulation of sources and methods. The tools used involved no less than thirty questions each and the large number of targeted participants may have affected the consistency of the narratives as qualitative data. Demographic categories (young women, young men, people with disabilities, and children) singularities may not deepen like-for-like women and men specificities and understanding of inherent differences by age groups. In addition, it was also necessary to consider the respective cases of five different types of households. The involvement of lead consultants in the data collection largely contribute to the biases limitation and facilitates cross-checking regarding to the underestimated time allocated to this analysis.

## Key results

The sociocultural norms shaping the distribution of roles and responsibilities in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana disadvantage women. Women take on the burden of unpaid activities as they spend most of their time on household chores at the expense of their IGAs. Men are automatically considered primary heads and purveyors of household food, minimizing the involvement and role of women in productive activities. This devalues women in “power relations and decision-making,” but also in “access to and control over resources.”

However, these norms are slowly evolving, for several reasons. As more development projects come to work in the region, people are being exposed to gender sensitizations and other activities. Increased migration out of the region, as people search of work, is also changing social dynamics, as more women find themselves the head of their households. The erosion of parental relationships, especially with the persistence of the *kéré*<sup>2</sup> (i.e., ongoing famine), is also prompting social changes.

This inequitable distribution of roles has a significant impact on who can lead the decision-making process that shapes food and care environments within a household. Decision-making power traditionally goes to the person in the household who earns money or owns

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<sup>1</sup> With women heads of households/polygamous households/headed by the elderly/ headed by children/ including people with disabilities.

<sup>2</sup> functioned as both a substantive and an adjective in the Mahafale dialect, denoting a famine event and also describing the state of being in a famine, famished, or, less drastically, in a state of wanting, lacking and in need (Jeffrey C. Kaufmann, 2008) | Famine induced by drought



properties/assets. Since women are not recognized as providers, they are not considered to have the right to take part in important household decisions. The responsibility for decisions involving expenses – including the family food budget – falls to men. Yet it is the women who are learning the importance of varied nutrition and food diversification from the maternal and infant nutrition projects working in these areas. Women are increasingly providing dietary diversity through growing vegetable gardens, often at the initiative of the same development projects. Men, meanwhile, are not. If such sensitizing activities continue to target only women, men's knowledge and awareness will remain limited, to the detriment of their households.

The commune of Itampolo in the district of Ampanihy is an exception. The women there are actively encouraged to take the lead as food managers in their households (from purchasing to preparation of meals). By having a hand in the allocation of fishing income brought back by their husbands, they can make wiser food choices when shopping in the markets. However, such empowerment due the reproductive task still restrict their involvement in IGAs.

The inequalities that exist in power relationships and in the distribution of household roles handicap women, justifying their limited access to household goods and financial resources – even while contributing to household incomes through gardening, farming, and running small businesses. nevertheless, sociocultural norms go beyond the fact that the decision is owned by the one who earn money “Men”. These sociocultural norms relate not only to the role of women in their marriage but also what they can or cannot control because of the belonging of the property but also their abilities. These inabilities limit women access to and control the means to generate income in the manner of men, push them to show great resilience. They indeed seek to develop small businesses and small farms to bear, often on their own, the burdens associated with feeding the home. On the other hand, the generally low level of education further establishes these socio-cultural norms by giving reasons to ancestral knowledge.

Regarding the participation in public life and leadership, men remain the prominent figures in the community. Even when people with disabilities, women, young women, and young men are encouraged to take part in community meetings, only men are be to make decisions in public life.

Despite the success and popularity of women-led associations, male power is unavoidable in decisions involving financial resources or requiring physical forces whether at the household or community level. The development of associations will have the merit of involving women in IGAs with the main purpose of improving livelihoods dedicated to household nutrition. Indeed, in addition to the [savings](#), crops and livestock enterprises are often run by these associations.

Gender-based violence is the area where efforts need to be strengthened the most. The situation as it stands is alarming. Physical and sexual violence, especially when perpetrated by a spouse, has been normalized. Communities minimize the prevalence of rape and incest against children. Most people are resigned to the reality of early (child) marriage and pregnancy. Too many children are sexually exploited for money (especially in Itampolo) and child labor is too often tolerated and expected, especially in single-parent households.

The normalization and minimization of these and other forms of gender-based violence make the assessment of the effectiveness of potential protection systems difficult.

## Discussions

The analysis revealed similar gender profiles in all three districts and demonstrated the importance of tackling gaps reflecting gender inequalities across the five areas. These realities deserve to be nuanced according to gender categories, and they evolve according to the constant

involvement of development projects, and changes in family configurations caused by climate shocks. All of these must be documented continuously through systematic and objective feedback from the Maharo project. This should consider *kéré* as an integrated part of the current contexts and actions to be adapted to the situations changes and what they involved. This also means that the evaluation of the project impacts, especially of the gender strategy, will have to be carried out in a similar context (during *kéré*) and, if possible, during the same period. Finally, to fully exploit the potential of qualitative research, it is preferable to adapt the length of the tools and give priority to immersion over the amount of information.

## Conclusion

The focus is on existing inequalities in the distribution of roles and responsibilities in the household, and the lack of value placed on women's contributions to household incomes. These inequitable attributions rub off on the decision-making power granted primarily to men, who are recognized as the main providers at home. Men's power is justified by their access to and control over resources and goods

The devaluation of women and their contributions is not limited to their households but exists at the community level as well, where their voices and opinions are rarely considered. Perceptions of the dangerousness of talking about gender-based violence and the minimization of its prevalence make the effectiveness of potential protection systems difficult to assess. All these gaps play not only to the detriment of women, people with disabilities and children, but also to the food security of households.

It is important to point out that empowered women are more aware of the importance of food diversification (through their experiences and the awareness received through contact with health care actors and projects and/or through associations). However, because of these gaps, especially in the first four areas, women remain simple "implementers" of the meal preparation and don't take part at decision-making process about its composition.

## Recommendations

### 1. Empower gender categories: place women as a "provider of household needs" like-for-like men by:

- ✓ **Promoting a more equitable distribution of domestic chores, and care practices within households.** This will allow women to free up time to devote to the IGAs and income at household and increase men's involvement and responsibility in domestic chores and learn new experience (to tackle social norms and promoting positive masculinity);
- ✓ **Supporting the development of their IGAs through entrepreneurship training.** This will allow them to see how their IGAs fit their long-term goals and prove their profitability even if climate shocks occur.
- ✓ **Encouraging equitable participation in food production, purchasing and preparation,** which will lead to the promotion of essential action for nutrition (e.g.: nutrient-rich protein dense).

## 2. Improve joint decision-making at the household and community level

Encourage couple joint decision making. This will require building women's capacities for IGAs, as well as skills and knowledge, to enable them to better formulate and argue for ideas, with the goal of reaching "financial inclusion" within communities.

## 3. Promote equitable access to and control of resources and assets, both at the household and community level

Equitable access to and control of the means of production and income-earning opportunities will lead to an equitable opportunity for women to develop IGAs, earn income, and contribute to household income and in this way, increase their capacity for joint decision-making within the household. Increasing women's IGAs diversification will give them independence and with it the opportunity to contribute like-for-like with men to the household income and wealth.

To begin changing the societal norms and practices regarding women's lack of access to and control over land and the means of production, it is necessary to disconnect their activities from those of men<sup>3</sup>. That way their IGAs will not depend on climate change like those of men, which stopped during the drought period (*kéré*). Diversifying in this way will allow for a combined approach to addressing food insecurity<sup>4</sup>, enhance women's financial autonomy, and position them to negotiate with men from a position strength, as such status is partly conditioned on who owns property and assets. These efforts should actively be promoted with behavior changes.

## 4. Encourage equitable participation of men, women, girls and boys, and people with disabilities, both at household and community level

The Maharo project should seek to support the active involvement of women and people with disabilities in associations, with the goal of demonstrating their effectiveness as leaders and the myriad capabilities of people with disabilities. However, advocacy based on evidence from a formative study seems necessary to accompany this measure to identify the drivers of change.

Socio-cultural norms are strongly resistant to such changes. Despite their contributions, including financial ones, women do not participate in decision-making in the presence of men. Thus, women, youth, and people with disabilities should work together to participate in community affairs by being actively involved in their communities as community volunteers in various activities and structures such as PLC (Producer Learning Centers), Leader Farmers, and leaders/active members of value chain or cooperative activities.

## 5. Support community to mitigate or even eradicate the normalization and undermining of gender-based violence

Societal normalization and minimization (from lack of awareness) of the dangerously high prevalence of gender-based violence impede the effectiveness of potential protection systems such as reporting and effective sanctioning.

The Maharo project should advocate for women, youth, and people with disabilities, by emphasizing their humanity and their inherent rights as human beings, raising awareness of the

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<sup>3</sup> In this case, we need to see how to reduce the jealousies of men who restrict their mobility and to do in parallel with the promotion of social equity (see first recommendation).

<sup>4</sup> Not to ignore/lose the experience gained and which values the woman in nutrition and in the face of this food insecurity.

danger of gender-based violence of human rights and dignity (by showing evidence and factors that limit the reporting and effective sanctions against GBV).

Priority action must be considered by the project, including raising the awareness of local leaders (traditional and authorities) to identify relevant support systems, whistleblowing mechanisms, and other protection<sup>8</sup> systems to be implemented.



## I GENDER ANALYSIS

### I.1 BACKGROUND ON THE GENDER ANALYSIS APPROACH

The Maharo project operates at the regional level in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana, where there are relatively young populations (as an indication, in Beloha and Tsihombe, 55 percent of the population are under the age of 14<sup>5</sup>), where child sexual exploitation exists, and where teen pregnancy and early marriage are common.

In addition, perpetrators enjoy relative impunity due to the complacency of witnesses and survivors' limited access to justice and remedies that can guarantee their safety and protection<sup>6</sup>[1],<sup>7</sup>[2],<sup>8</sup>[3]. The situation is such that the proportion of women reporting physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence in the Androy and Atsimo Andrefana regions in 2013<sup>9</sup> reached 31 percent and 28 percent, respectively. This violence is all the more normalized since 78 percent of women and 75 percent of men in Androy, and 59 percent of women and 54 percent of men in Atsimo Andrefana agree that men have the right to use physical violence against their partners<sup>10</sup>[4].

Moreover, although gender situations in these two regions remain poorly documented<sup>11</sup>, the gender analysis of the Fararano project<sup>12</sup> has shown that patriarchy in the region still prevails, whether at the household level or within the community. Households with only women at their heads<sup>13</sup> are most vulnerable to gender<sup>14</sup> inequalities as they have, for example, no men to represent them in society.

According to the results of the Fararano gender analysis, the prevailing socio-cultural norms mean that women are assigned to domestic tasks and men are involved in fieldwork. Differences in consideration by age and gender exacerbate inequalities of power in decision-making, including access and control of land and equipment for production activities. Young people are increasingly called upon to contribute to the financial support of household expenses. Many children, often young single mothers, are propelled to the head of their households [2],[3].

Girls are socially and culturally encouraged to be involved in transactional sexual activities, which is accepted in the south. As they are sent in a separate hut from their parents when young adolescent girl' puberty become visible, parents do not take charge of this revenue.

### MAHARO THEORY OF CHANGE

**IF**, basic services and protection systems are at the service of all, in particular, the marginalized and the most vulnerable [P1]

**IF**, nutritional status of women, adolescents and children improves sustainably [P2]

**IF**, livelihoods are resilient, productive and profitable and shock and stress resistance improves [P3]

**THEN**, acute food insecurity among extremely poor and chronically vulnerable people in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana will permanently decrease (MAHARO goal).

Peer influence and parental denial means that girls and young women engage in sexual transactions to meet their needs. Traditional marriages are common and child marriage is frequent. Meanwhile, parents work to ensure that their sons work part of the family land, as that is expected of young men. Finally, migration is a strategy many young men adopt, which does always benefit families.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES AND JUSTIFICATION

The shortcomings reported in the previous section justify the integration of gender into the Maharo theory of change. However, the information on current contexts in these regions is rather thin and needs to be more substantiated to consolidate the project's gender strategy. This justifies the conduct of this analysis which will propose actions adapted to the contexts of the project's intervention.

This specific analysis for Maharo project aims to identify key issues to inform the logic of gender equity in intervention strategies and support the Project Theory Of Change (TOC). To ensure the equity logic, each purpose must consider the voices of each "type" of participant (woman, man, young woman, young man, disabled person, vulnerable person). On the other hand, by providing clues to tackle the root causes of inequality and by focusing on understanding the dynamics around power relations, decision-making, role distributions and responsibilities, the results should enhance the TOC pathway. Then, the objective of this analysis is to document the gender profiles of the three districts by confirming, supplementing, and updating "pre-existing" knowledge.

The development of these gender profiles and the resulting recommendations will enable the Maharo project to stimulate:

- The equitable participation of men, women, girls and young men, people with disabilities in the project;
- Improved decision-making at the household and community level;
- Empowerment of gender categories through equitable workload sharing, equitable access, and control of resources;

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<sup>5</sup> Census data from the Ahavelo and Lova.L.C. CRS projects in 2018.

<sup>6</sup>[1] Evaluation finale et externe du projet Ranavalona : prévention, accompagnement et accès à la justice pour les filles survivantes d'exploitation sexuelle, ECPAT France à Madagascar, 2020. Lien : <https://unfpa.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2020/07/ranavalona-project-prevention-care-and-access-to-justice-for-girl-survivors-of-sexual-exploitation>

<sup>7</sup>[2] Razafiarimanana H., Ramananjahary O et Raharimalala P. ; 2019. Rapport de l'étude socio-anthropologique en Santé Maternelle et Infantile et de réadaptation : Santé Sexuelle et Reproductive des jeunes dans la Région Atsimo-Andrefana. Antananarivo, Projet CASIMIR, Humanité & inclusion.

<sup>8</sup>[3] Delaunay, Valérie. « L'exploitation économique des enfants à Madagascar à partir de l'Enquête démographique et de santé 2008 », Population, vol. 68, no. 2, 2013, pp. 331-348.

<sup>9</sup> According to a semi-annual review resulting from collaboration between the Ministry of Population (gender program coordination) and UNFPA.

<sup>10</sup>[4] Landy Miary DANIEL ANDRIANAIVOSOA. SEXUAL VIOLENCES IN the 6 cities of Madagascar. ECPAT France Madagascar.

<sup>11</sup> At least recently.

<sup>12</sup> Report of the gender analysis of the Fararano project 2016.

<sup>13</sup> 43% of all households were headed by women and 46% in the 14-29 age group.

<sup>14</sup> See here as a concept across these five areas: Roles and Responsibilities, power relations and decision-making, access and control of resources, leadership and public life, gender-based violence.

- Mitigation of gender-based violence that can be generated by changes and/or practices already in the community;
- Finally, this analysis must fill in the knowledge gaps for the project, thus meeting the cross-cutting role of the CRS Gender, Youth and Social Dynamic team.

### I.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To achieve the above objectives, this analysis seeks to answer the following five research questions:

1. How do the socio-cultural norms and practices of in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana affect the roles and responsibilities of men and women who support nutrition and health behaviors? How are these standards evolving and at what rate?
2. How do power relations and decision-making in nutrition, water, health, governance, mobility, and subsistence vary across different types of households? How does this affect the food security and nutrition of different types of households?
3. How does access and control of education, resources, and goods affect the livelihoods of women, men, youth, and people with disabilities in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana? How does migration affect this access and control and what is its effect on food security and nutrition?
4. How can we improve the representation and voice of women, young men and women, and people with disabilities in formal and informal community groups in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana that have an impact on food security and nutrition?
5. How can we effectively support community-level protection mechanisms in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana that are accessible and mitigate gender-based violence, such as intimate partner violence, child labor, child marriage and early pregnancy?

## II METHODOLOGY

### II.1 OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

This analysis was based on a qualitative methodology and mobilized both inductive and deductive<sup>15</sup> approaches. Its deployment was divided into five stages:

- Stage One: Prepared the collection, i.e., exchanges with donors regarding the common expectations of the questionnaire research<sup>16</sup>, establishment of the resulting tools, training of the investigative team, identification of study participants, and the preparations needed for visits to the study areas.
- Stage Two: Conducted a literature review, to inform methodological reflections, enrich the analyses of findings related to the gender profile of the regions, and to differentiate new findings from those previously known.
- Stage Three: Data collection. Investigators:

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<sup>15</sup> Based on field data and considering the fact that the analysis is part of a logical framework, assumptions and tools formulated by the project proposal and above all that it answers research questions to have inferences.

<sup>16</sup> Gender consultation on march 2020

- ✓ Conducted 90 in-depth interviews with targeted individuals to better identify gender practices at the 5-type household level<sup>17</sup>.
  - ✓ Conducted 18 interviews with key informants on the main themes of agriculture<sup>18</sup> or nutrition<sup>19</sup>. These interviews highlighted perceptions and understandings of gender dynamics in communities in relation to the themes.
  - ✓ Conducted 24 group discussions<sup>20</sup> to better understand socio-cultural norms within communities in relation to the issue of gender around the themes of agriculture or nutrition.
  - ✓ Ten data collectors trained in qualitative methodology carried out this work under the supervision of two lead consultants.
- Stage Four: [Processed and analyzed the equipment](#).
  - Stage Five: Restitution to stakeholders, both at the donor level and at the community level. The latter will take the form of dissemination and consultation to allow a "validation" of the project's gender strategy based on feedback from participants.

## II.2 DATA TREATMENT AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Interviews and discussions with groups were recorded or supported by real-time notetaking in Malagasy<sup>21</sup> and later translated into French for analysis. This material<sup>22</sup> will be encoded using NVivo software-version 12, which will enable specific queries about the "weight" of words or ideas based on individual attributes, household types, and group categories. This essentially inductive analysis is based on a triangulation of sources and methods.

## II.3 OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS UNITS

The observation and analysis units focused on:

- (1) "Individuals" at the household level (in-house) and experts as key informants outside households (external). Interviews with the former will allow us to assess the representations and practices of those who will benefit directly from the Maharo project's work. Conversations with key informants, on the other hand, support the justifications for these representations and practices by reporting more global facts in their circle of expertise<sup>23</sup> and those around them.

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<sup>17</sup> With women heads of households/polygamous households/headed by the elderly/ headed by children/ including people with disabilities.

<sup>18</sup> Specifically, around agriculture, natural resource management, risk and disaster management and governance.

<sup>19</sup> On the topics of health, nutrition and governance.

<sup>20</sup> In each case, eight discussions were conducted with the communities in each study area, divided equally between the two main themes cited and by gender and the following age groups: young women under 24, women over 25, young men under 24 and men over 25.

<sup>21</sup> Made by the 10 data collectors as well as two lead consultants.

<sup>22</sup> Referring to data in qualitative research.

<sup>23</sup> The nutrition and governance or agriculture, natural resource management, risk and disaster management and governance.



- (2) "Groups" that are representative of the community. Discussions with groups provide an understanding of social and cultural norms within the communities. Finally, the analysis will focus on the factors that may influence gender differences.

## II.4 COLLECTION TOOLS

- (1) In-depth interviews with individuals within households were conducted using a 33-question interview guide divided into four sections [Appendix A. *Guide for Individuals in Households*].
- (2) Interviews with key person expert on the topic of agriculture were conducted using a 39-question interview guide divided into four sections. [Appendix B. *Interview Guide for Key Informants | theme: Agriculture*].
- (3) Those with key informants on the health theme were conducted using a 25-question, 5-section interview guide. [Appendix C. *Interview Guide for Key Informants | Thematic: Health*].
- (4) Group discussions were carried out with the support of an animation grid with 25 questions divided into four sections for the theme of agriculture and 25 questions with five sections on health [Appendix D. Focus group animation grid on agriculture & Appendix E. Focus group animation grid of health].

The wording of the questions in the interview guides and animation grids of the focus group was based on Maharo project themes and the five areas of gender analysis<sup>24</sup>:

- (1) power relations and decision-making;
- (2) roles and responsibilities;
- (3) access (to) and control of resources;
- (4) leadership and participation in public life, and;
- (5) gender-based violence. Bias detection and mitigation

The collection was conducted during the period of *kéré*<sup>25</sup>, which undeniably influenced the participants' responses. Analysis of interviews and group discussions show that participants reference *kéré* even for questions not directly related to food and agrarian activities. In addition, communities waiting or hoping for aid from development projects participated believing that doing so would ensure that they would either remain on the list of those receiving food distributions or receive immediate compensation for their involvement.

To limit these biases induced by the *kéré* period, investigators tried to establish a bond of trust with respondents. After clarifying that participation was not tied to food distribution or compensation, investigators explained that respondents' participation was crucial to ensure that the project met the real needs of their communities.

## II.5 GENDER ANALYSIS LIMITATIONS

The lack of secondary data available has not limited the need for information. This would explain the length of the tools used and justify the need to conduct such a well-supported data collection at the level of these Maharo project intervention regions. Although, for future like-for-like gender analysis, it is suggested to find a balance between the large number of targeted people interviewed and the number of questions to be asked to avoid information saturation

<sup>24</sup> Asked about the project's research questions.

<sup>25</sup> Coming from the Antandroy dialect, meaning "to be hungry" and referring to the recurrent famine that occurs mainly in southern Madagascar.

and interviewee fatigue. Even if the tools were tested and there were no issues with the language or other aspects at that time, during implementation, it was realized that asking the same question for different segment groups led to interviewee fatigue. In the future, questions need to be assigned according to the respondent category to avoid asking the same questions to all the interviewees. In addition, data quickly reaches saturation from two to three interviews per household type and from two interviews with key informants per thematic per district.

## II.6 VALIDITY OF THE INFORMATION

The information will be validated on cross-reference between the data sources, between the actors' claims and between the collection methods. Particular attention was paid to the collection to avoid possible biases (prevarication, social desirability, information, or memorization) and to preserve the objectivity of the analysis. Finally, in trying to be as objective as possible, enlisting the expertise of The Gender, Youth and Social Dynamic Advisor, which had the opportunity to accompany the gender analysis of the Fararano project, was good practice. Indeed, as that advisor has extensive knowledge of the contexts of these regions, she has been able to support the analysis (her expertise, for example, has been very useful in identifying persistent facts and new facts, as existing literature is quite thin).

## II.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical protocol met the following ten points:

1. The safety of participants (respondents and each member of the investigative team) was prioritized and safeguarded by protecting everyone's anonymity during and after the research.
2. The investigative team took care to secure the information provided by the participants, by temporarily storing it on computers and then transferring the data to a hard drive managed by one of the lead consultants. Only data collectors, consultants, and key analytics officers were able to access this information.
3. The methodology and tools were thoroughly thought through to minimize any risk of violence against the respondent. The team was required to have a plan in place to protect respondents' rights, including their privacy and the confidentiality of the information they provided.
4. Investigators got informed verbal consent from each participant at the outset of all interviews and group discussions. Participants were informed on the purpose of the study and its duration; the terms of their participation (which is voluntary and without consideration); their right to refuse to participate and to withdraw from the study at any time without being obliged to explain their reasons; and their right to choose whether to answer certain questions. For interviews with minors, the authorization of a parent or legal guardian was required.
5. Adhering to these ethical principles was emphasized in the training of the investigative team members.
6. Each data collector had to be able to provide information about the project and its possible fallout.
7. The study was not to disrupt the outcome of the project's intervention or the lives of the participants. To do this, the team was careful to respect each participant and local customs, and to be courteous.

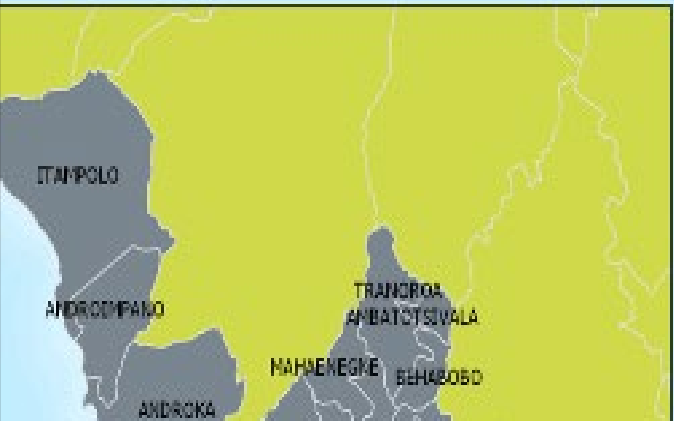
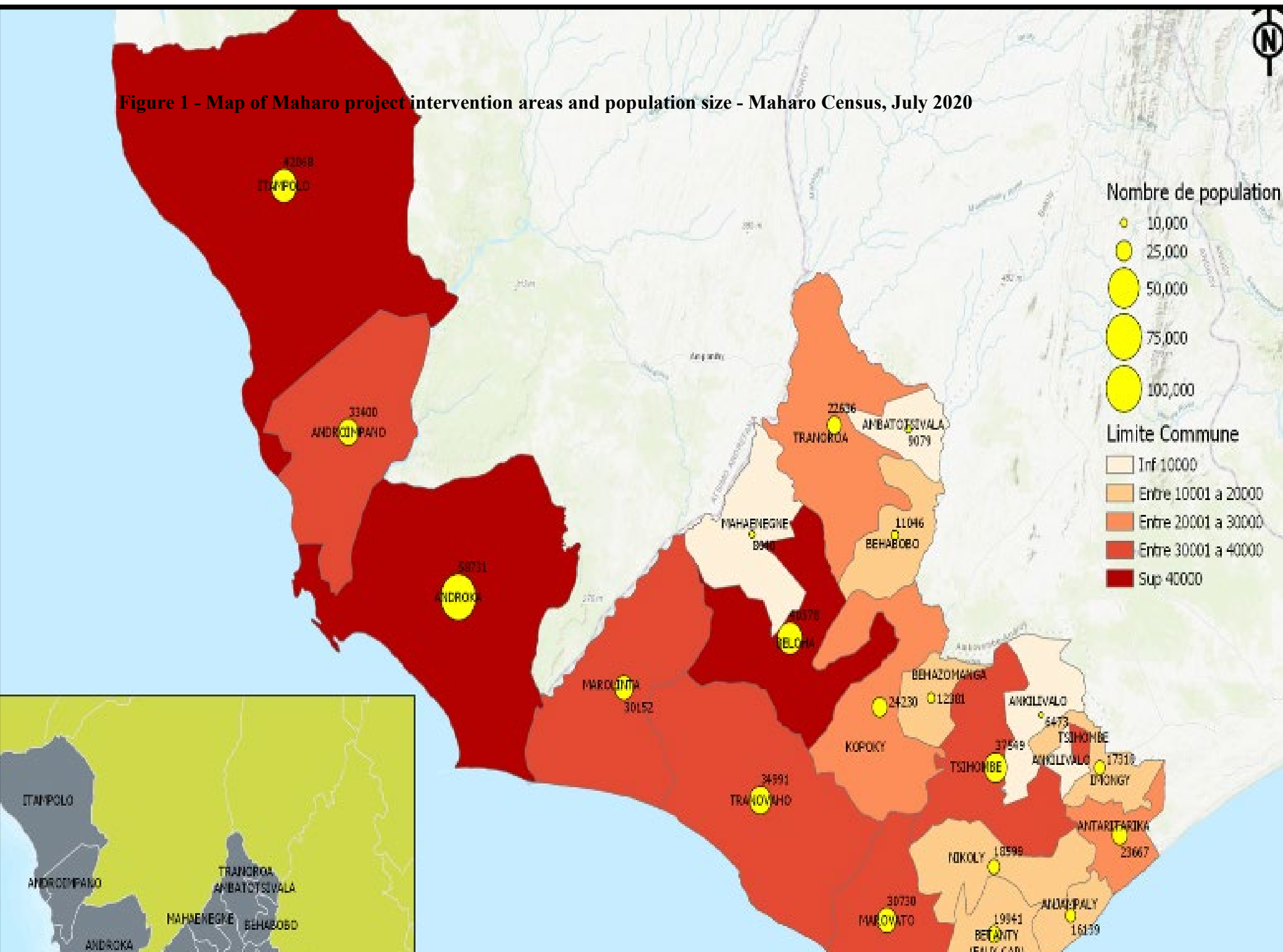
8. The collection tools were designed in a culturally acceptable manner and were not a source of distress for respondents.
9. Health measures have been explained and respected to avoid the possible risks of COVID-19 exposure.
10. Finally, if the interview was conducted with a deaf person, a facilitator was involved and assisted by a trained data collector.

## II.8 COLLECTION AND TRAINING TEAM

The Maharo project has trained the collection team to be able to question aspects and areas of gender with a qualitative methodology. A 10-day training course was organized to raise awareness among data collectors and lead consultants about the concept of gender and how to best conduct interviews and group discussions. This training period was also an opportunity to organize logistics for collection the data.



Figure 1 - Map of Maharo project intervention areas and population size - Maharo Census, July 2020





### III DESCRIPTION POPULATION

The analysis, although essentially qualitative, considered the socio-demographic data of individuals and groups included in the study, with the goal of highlighting both voices and narratives according to gender categories and to describe situations of individual cases. However, it should be noted that these attributes will be mobilized in the queries made on the NVivo software and to contextualize stories recounted by interviewees. This analysis does not in any way seek to exploit links or correlations between these data. Indeed, it is important to note that their exploitation does not seek to respond to any representativeness of the results of the program participants' perspectives within the study population (Maharo zones).

Information collected during each interview pertaining to a household included the type of household; the number of household members (particularly, the number of children by age group) and their genders and ages; marital status of household members before and after the study; and the education levels and occupations of household members. For expert interviews with key informants, age and gender were discussed, in addition to their respective occupations and level of education. Finally, only age groups and gender are known to the groups with whom the discussions were conducted.

#### III.1 LOCATION AND MODE OF SELECTION

Data collection was carried out in the Communes of Marolinta in Beloha, Behazomanga in Tsihombe, and Itampolo in Ampanihy West. It involved 17 villages whose selection made sure to include those furthest from and closest to the district capitals. Although in qualitative research, the selection does not start from a sampling; rather a list was drawn up based on the 2020 census carried out by the Maharo project. This list starts with a random draw of Maharo project participants. The mobilization of this list communicated by the MEAL team concerned only individuals targeted at the household level for in-depth interviews. This made it easier to find project participants while being careful to include gender categories and the five types of households<sup>26</sup>. As for the key informants, they were selected once the collection team was at the village level. Group discussions were held at the fokontany level.

#### III.2 INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUALS TARGETED AT THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

Consideration of the place and role assigned to the interviewee, their attributes, and the family configuration in which they find themselves facilitates a better understanding of interview responses. This socio-demographic analysis provides a comprehensive description of the attributes that were identified during the collection and their relevance to the gender analysis. A descriptive and rather quantitative interpretation is made here of these socio-demographic data before they are integrated into qualitative analysis.

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<sup>26</sup> As a reminder: With women heads of households/polygamous households/household headed by the elderly/household headed by children/ household including people with disabilities.

About 90 participants in in-depth interviews

Individuals chosen for the in-depth interviews were selected with a more or less equitable inclusion between 5 different household configurations, namely: (1) households headed by women, (2) those with a polygamous regime, (3) those headed by the elderly, (4) those whose children are the leaders, and finally, (5), those headed by persons with disabilities (PwD).

The discrepancies are in the change in the status of the individual interviewed before and during the study (some previously polygamous have, for example, become monogamous and are equated with either households headed by the elderly or those headed by women; others would have been carried out before the study by children under the age of 18 who are now adults).

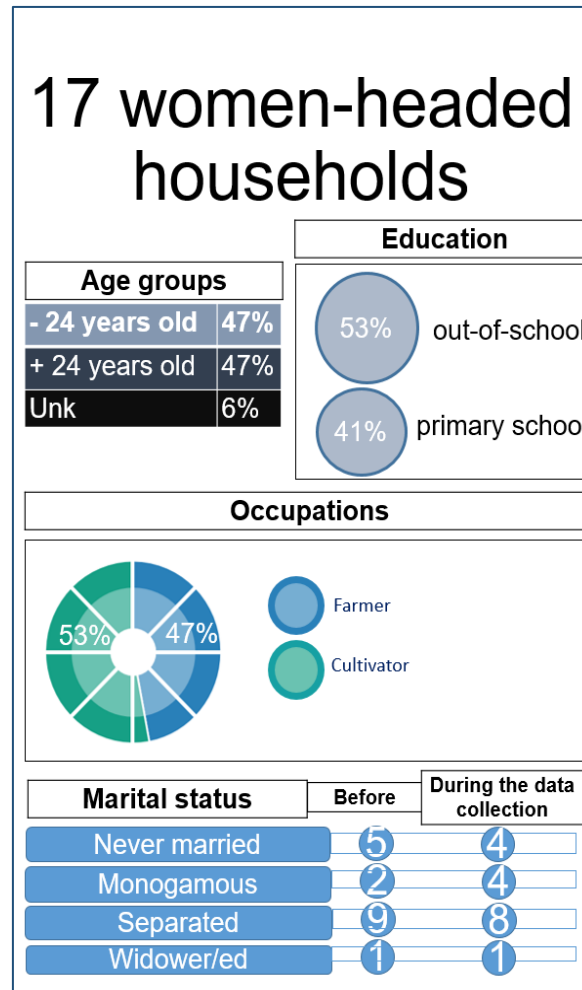


Figure 2 - Information on women-headed households

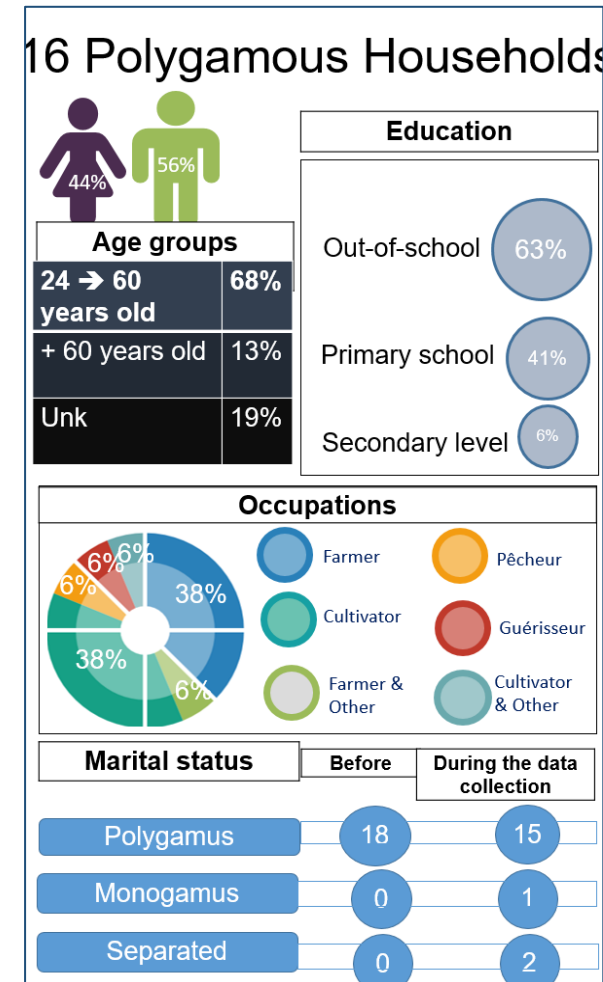


Figure 3 - Information on polygamous households

Figure 4 - Information on elderly-headed households

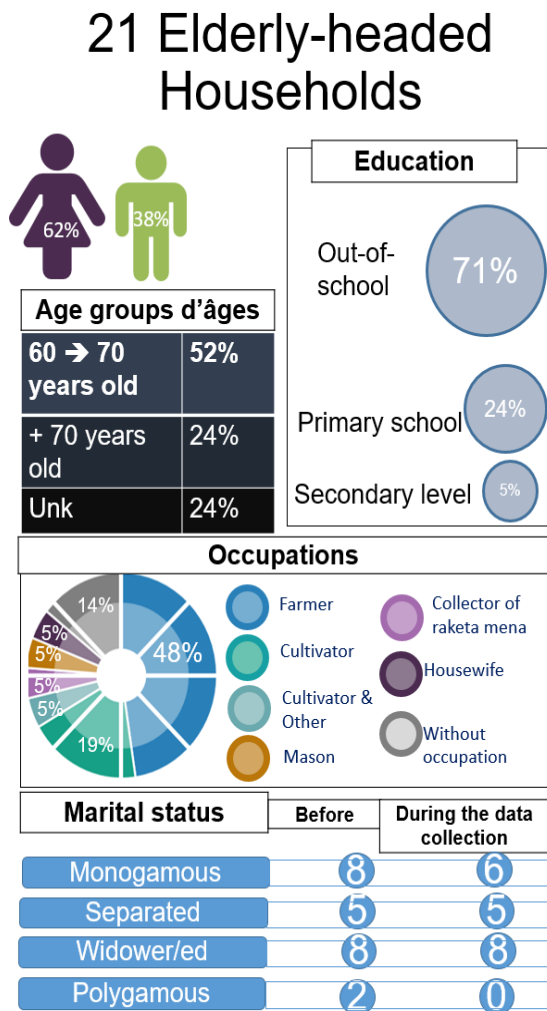


Figure 5 - Information on child-headed households

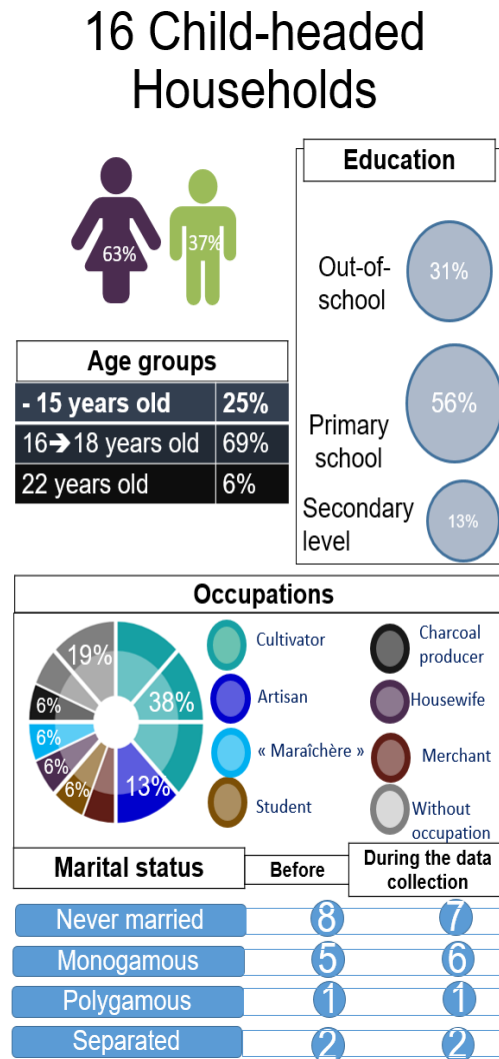
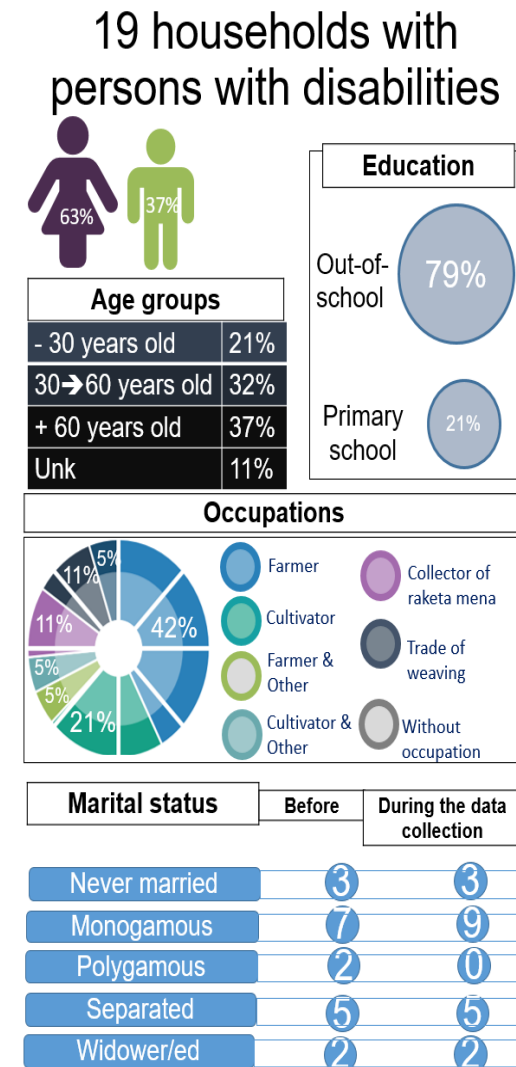


Figure 6 - Information on PwD-headed households



### III.3 INFORMATION ON KEY INFORMANTS

Two types of key informants were approached during this analysis. Nineteen<sup>27</sup> interviews were conducted with "experts" from the communities on two themes, (1) "agriculture, natural resource management, risk and disaster management, and governance" and (2) around topics related to "health, nutrition and governance." Those respondents' occupations, levels of education, and ages are recounted in the following tables.

**Table 1. Occupations of key informants**

Key Informant Occupations	Thematics			
	Agriculture		Health & Nutrition	
Sex	♀	♂	♀	♂
Association President		5		
Traditional leader	1			
Fokontany President	3			
Assistant of the fokontany President	1			
Traditional birth attendant			1	3
Community worker			1	3
Midwife				1
Total	5	5	2	7

Education	Thematics			
	Agriculture		Health & Nutrition	
Sex	♀	♂	♀	♂
Out-of-school	1		1	3
Primary/elementary school	2	2		2
Secondary school	2	3	1	1
University level				1
Total	5	5	2	7

Age groups	Thematics			
	Agriculture		Health	
Sex	♀	♂	♀	♂
Less than 30 years old		3		2
From 30 to 40 years old		1	1	
From 40 to 50 years old	1			2
More than 50 years old	4	1		2
Unknown			1	1
Total	5	5	2	7

### III.4 FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION

Discussions were conducted with 24 groups distributed equitably among the three study areas. The following table provides information on the attributes of the groups formed for discussions on "agriculture, natural resource management, risk and disaster management and governance" or on "health, nutrition and governance."

**Table 4. Information about group discussions**

Thematics	Sex	Ages	Beloha	Itampolo	Tsihombe
Agriculture, natural resource management, risk and disaster management and governance	Young women	24 years old and less	✓	✓	✓
	Female adults	More than 24 years old	✓	✓	✓
	Young men	24 years old and less	✓	✓	✓
	Male adults	More than 24 years old	✓	✓	✓
Health, nutrition and governance	Young women	24 years old and less	✓	✓	✓
	Female adults	More than 24 years old	✓	✓	✓
	Young men	24 years old and less	✓	✓	✓
	Male adults	More than 24 years old	✓	✓	✓



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# Gender Analysis Results



RS, Household in Androka



## IV GENDER ANALYSIS RESULTS

### IV.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

First research question: How do the socio-cultural norms and practices of Androy and Atsimo Andrefana affect the roles and responsibilities of men and women who support nutrition and health behaviors?

*“We don't like it and we're afraid if it's a man who takes care of the dishes. The reason is that it is not done here for a man to do the dishes. The reason behind this is that when a couple or a household gives birth to two children: a girl and a boy. These children play: the boy draws a zebu, he learns to cut the iron from his hand, he will make a knife. The little girl, she will learn or... will draw a small house, she will make a pot from the mud to mimic the preparation of the meal, she will play with the scraps of tissue, she plays or takes the corn leaves to pretend to eat them. These children's games have become habits. For the boy, it became a preconceived idea for him to "play" with the zebu, pushing the cart with the zebu, it became a habit, a preconceived idea. For the little girl who learned by pretending to cook, it became a preconceived idea for her to cook. These children's games have become habits and preconceived ideas.”*

- 
1. *“Persistent social constructions will confine women to domestic tasks and men to production work.”*
- 

In view of the daily calendar of women and men<sup>28</sup> activities [Annex F to Appendix H], these inferences can be drawn: Whether in the Androy region or in the Atsimo Andrefana region, the distribution of roles is based on persistent social constructs assigning domestic tasks to women and production work to men. This distribution according to local social and cultural norms will limit the opportunities for women to be involved in income-generating activities. This limited involvement of women in production activities gives men the status of principal provider to the needs of the home. The wives would spend most of their time, going until 7 hours for a day in the carrying out of domestic tasks while men would allocate to it less than an hour a day.

The most important household tasks are the search for food and the preparation of the meal, followed by house cleaning, and caring for the children (including their hygiene). If these reproductive activities do not result in significant expenditure, they will be exclusively the responsibility of women. As a kitchen manager and in her role as a foster mother, women must ensure that the meal is ready and served especially for their "tired" husbands when they return from the fields. In Beloha and Tsihombe, they even go so far as to go into the fields just to serve the men's meal.

Women have the help of young women and especially children in the preparation meals. Both men and young men also provide support through the drawing of water or in the cutting and transport of firewood.

Meanwhile, men are reluctant to contribute to domestic chores and even go so far as to be ashamed<sup>29</sup> to do the dishes while the women are there. Although some refer to the erosion of these standards, the participation of men remains random and in areas that require only their

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<sup>28</sup> Listened to during group discussions.ours

<sup>29</sup> Afraid of "what will we say?"

strength (fetching water, preparation, and transport of firewood, etc.). Men are even afraid to do laundry for fear of coming across women's intimate clothes. This fear transpires into a belief that these men will no longer carry out physical activities requiring force to grow crops in fields, fishing and/or breeding and working with production animals.

*“These are traditions that are already established, men cannot cook and do domestic chores, it is true that these are already practices of all kinds, but now it is no longer done. In truth, before, women went into the fields every morning, tired of work in the fields, they still had to cut wood, draw water and also cook. At noon, the man arrives, he is lording, he does nothing, he waits for the meal. It's not like that it was before and not now. For me, now, on Saturday and Sunday, it's my wife's turn to do the laundry, if it's the laundry it's up to my wife to do it because it's hard for a man to do the laundry. We (men) don't clean children's feces, we don't wipe them out children, and we don't do what's messy, for example: touching children, washing women's panties, it's dirty so we don't do it. “*

*Key Informant, Health - Nutrition and Governance, Man,  
Community Officer, 31, High School, Tsihombe*

These social and cultural norms persist because women have also integrated and accepted this distribution. As these tasks enhance their roles as "women," their "good wife" and "good mother" skills, they find it difficult to detach themselves from them. They even go so far as to reduce the involvement of young women in this role, alongside them. In Itampolo, women still can devote "time for themselves" in the morning, especially for their shower. In Beloha and Tsihombe, laundry time has not been mentioned, perhaps, because this task becomes less regular due to the scarcity of water. The same applies to meetings, both in terms of formal structures and within communities. These were not addressed at all by participants in the three study areas.

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2. *These social constructions of roles will limit the involvement of women in production activities.*

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According to group discussions, the performance of these daily domestic tasks restricts [women's mobility](#). Women's daily calendar showed their usual daily activities where one can infer that they devote very little time to their income generating activities (IGAs). Often, these activities are done in parallel with domestic tasks. In Itampolo, some have argued that these tasks can be scheduled and negotiated in the household since their execution would not limit their ability to achieve their household duties and would allow them time outside the home. Yet, according to the daily calendar, reproductive and household nurturing activities take up most of their time. In any case, if the women do go out, they resume the tasks left when they return. Their husbands would wait for them to serve them the meal. However, most IGAs in which women have demonstrated interest and abilities are done outside the home (except for weavers). For small businesses or poultry farming to be profitable requires the financial means to move between villages and markets. Based on the time-consuming nature of the domestic chores assigned to women, it can be inferred that most women do not have enough time to devote to their IGAs to make them profitable.

On the other hand, although men sometimes consent to women working outside the home, their activities are mostly seen as an unvalued medium.

*“Domestic chores hinder my IGA but I have to do it anyway, when I should go and devote myself to my sales activities in the morning, I also have to clean the box. When I'm only selling and there aren't many customers, I'll go and prepare the meal and do the dishes. I manage (still) to juggle the two. While I should rest a little in the afternoon, I have to catch up on the laundry that I haven't finished yet.”*

*Group discussion around nutrition, wives under 24-years-old, Itampolo*

*“All the crops that germinate in the fields, it's up to the man to take care of it, the woman, she just helps. The reason is that she will soon go home to feed the poultry, take care of the children (...) even if the household has zebus, it is up to the man to take care of them, the woman is a help.”*

*Group discussion around agriculture, men over 24, Beloha*

This limited involvement of women in production activities gives men the status of primary provider to the needs of the household and disempowers them in reproductive activities.

Although women are held accountable as the guarantor of nutrition, food, and activities at home, they remain dependent on their spouses for:

- Household food procurement, in general, depend on husband choices of crops undertaken in the fields and much of the household's food is drawn from those crops. However, when women grow crops, those crops are destined for household consumption. There is more opportunity to diversify the household's food registry. In Itampolo, for example, there is a gardening project lead by women where they cultivate a wide range of vegetables (for selling and self-consumption). In Beloha, some women plant vegetables to sell in the market, while also keeping a portion of those crops to meet household food needs. Referring to some narrations, women try to sell other goods and products to diversify their household's food (if they have rice, they sold the quarter and buy some greens).

*“What men are currently doing at home level is to make a lot of effort to take care of their family by looking for "wages" if there is "wage", looking for food, it is the women who take care of the home, but we men try to find food to be able to light the fire every night and what to eat every lunchtime.”*

*Group discussion on nutrition, men under 24, Tsihombe*

However, the cultures undertaken by women are conditioned by lack of time, lack of money and water availability. Especially since in most cases they will not bring them money or at least not regularly.

- The distribution of the meal, it is customary for men to be served first, then young people and children. Women self-serve last. If these practices continue in times of wedding, the nutritional status of women is the most weakened.

Households headed by women, most often single, do not follow these "standards." The procurement and preparation (all the provision) of the meal is the sole responsibility of the mother.

A completely different way of operating was observed in Itampolo, especially among people whose livelihoods involve fishing. In these households, husbands who are fishermen give their wives most of the money earned from the sale of fish. She has the decision-making power over how this income is used, especially in regard to food purchases.

*"After working, it's either 10,000 ariary or 15,000 ariary, I keep for example 5000 ariary and I give 10,000 ariary to my wife to use it for "needs" at home, I don't have a job at home, it's only women who do this! As long as it's about food, it doesn't concern me, my job is to get money....the laundry at home is not my job!  
Making food is not my job!"*

*Group discussion around agriculture, men over 24, Itampolo*

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3. *Persons with disabilities are seen more as burdens than aids in domestic tasks and production activities.*

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People with disabilities are perceived as an unable to work. Families largely view them as "burdens." Few participants perceive the disabled as have ability to execute anything. Because some of them can pay someone to do their fieldwork. This result should be reinforced with the socio-anthropological study conducted by Humanity - Inclusion as part of this project. This study provides more clarity on perceptions and considerations of types of disability.

*"People with disabilities: There is nothing they can do except wait for help. Wait for CRS to help them. People "malemy" (literally weak), they cannot work anything. When they are "malemy," they crawl all over the yard."*

*Man from a household including a disabled person, 65 years old, married (previously polygamous), 6 children, farmer, Beloha*

Young people participate randomly in domestic tasks and are more likely to engage in IGAs. Young people are not fully empowered for reproductive activities and are more supportive of fetching water, food-seeking, etc. for older women.

Young men will move faster towards their role working in the fields because of the ease of their access to land or production animals. This gives them financial resources and autonomy in the use of their income.

Young women, on the other hand, run small businesses, raise poultry (see Access to and control of resources) or take part in activities that amount to "sexual transaction." They are able to decide what to do with the money they have earned.

*“Young women do not make decisions at the home level because they may still be in school and not self-reliant. They don't grow yet so they can't have power over crops. (...) Young women should ask their fathers if they want to learn a job. If a young woman wants to study and her father does not want to send her, then she has to go and get enough to buy notebooks and pens and she can then decide to go and study. She is tall and she is aware of what is right for her. “*

*Group discussion around health, women over 24, Beloha*

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#### 4. *Children are heavily involved in "women's activities"*

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As the primary purpose of the analysis was not to document the situation of children<sup>30</sup>, the information in hand does not allow us to quantify<sup>31</sup> the time allocated by children to carry out activities with their parents. However, on the cross-checking of the mothers, children are their closest collaborators in fulfilling their role and responsibilities as women. Children contribute largely in domestic tasks<sup>32</sup> and also support their mothers in production activities<sup>33</sup>. They devote as much time to the chores as their mothers and take a break at the same time as their mothers' rest times<sup>34</sup>. The boys also go to work with their fathers in the fields.

Child labor is increasingly standardized, especially when mothers, who are often single parents:

- cannot walk away for food; or
- is no longer physically fit to work the land; or
- enlists them to draw of water; or
  
- have difficulty reconciling domestic tasks with production activities. They concern any child perceived to be quite tall and physically fit, whether a boy or a girl. This is also the case when single fathers are at the head of the household.

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<sup>30</sup> Apart from the fifth issue, which addresses, among other things, child labour as a GBV.

<sup>31</sup> Nor is this the purpose of qualitative research.

<sup>32</sup> Preparing firewood, lighting fire, looting rice or cassava, preparing meals, etc.

<sup>33</sup> Transportation of crops, cultivation, etc.

<sup>34</sup> According to the observations, especially since these tasks requiring travel with their peers and peers are considered to be part of the daily "fun".

*“Women follow men into the fields to bring back the "fangitra" obtained. If their children are already old enough, they are the ones who will accompany the men to carry the "fangitra" collected.”*

*Group discussion around nutrition, women over 24, Beloha*

*“My job when I get to find food is to cook, it's my children who are big enough to whom I ask to cook. I have already grown children, my job is to look for food, they are the ones who will cook. They cook every morning and even until noon. (...) I go to work the land, it is depending on the time at which I wake up that I not for the fields. If I wake up at 6 a.m., I go at 7 a.m. to work the land, as is the case. My boys, they go to school and at the same time they go with me to the fields. They wake up with me at 6:00 and we leave together for the fields. They are not going to graze the goats because we do not have any.”*

*Man from a household run by an elderly person, does not know his age, separated, 7 children, farmer, Itampolo*

## Exceptions and new facts

### Q1.2. How are these standards evolving and at what rate?

- Contact with "the vazaha" (here, actors in development projects), mainly those who promote the "gender" are moving these norms. Awareness supports the gradual participation of men in domestic tasks, thus offloading women from some of their "stakeholder" responsibilities at home, to allow them to have time to develop their income-generating activities.

*“People today have changed. Previously, men worked only in the fields. Nowadays, men do domestic chores because they no longer go into the fields. It helps me in the education/care [care] of our children. There has been an awareness made by the "vazaha" about the "miralenta" on the education/care of our children. When we feel tired, we help with meal preparation, dishes and child care. (...) Men, they take care of their children because they love them.”*

*Key Informant, Health - Nutrition and Governance, Elderly Woman with Many Beautiful Daughters, Matron, 45, Out of School, Beloha*

- Increases in migration have partially reversed mens' and women's roles at times. Women who remain behind will take on some or all of mens'<sup>35</sup> production activities, while men left behind must do meal preparation and related tasks, such as the cleaning of pots and dishes. The effect of migration on these standards has been accentuated by contingency measures of coronavirus spread (limiting physical circulation and information as well as communications).
- Changes in family configuration (a separation, death of the spouse, dissolution of the "status" of polygamy, etc.) will also influence the monitoring of these standards. Single

<sup>35</sup> Men are the ones who will most often leave mainly for the cases of Beloha and Tsihombe if in Itampolo it is young women and women who still feel "fit" to prostitute or "make the waitress".



women assume both the role that had hitherto been assigned to them with that initially assigned to men.

- There is an emotional dimension that leads men to help their wives by taking on traditional women's roles. For instance, when a woman cannot work due childbirth, for the "jabela period"<sup>36</sup>, or when they get sick, etc. However, this kind of involvement does not lead to the social equity since the husband's help is conditional.
- The *kéré* (impact of climate shocks) will also disrupt the distribution of tasks arising from these socio-cultural norms. In the time of *kéré*, when work in the fields is partially if not totally interrupted, both men and women set about in search of food (*raketa mena* for women and food requiring more strength for men).

*"No one goes to the fields because the year is bad, there is no rain. The role of men would have been to be in the fields in the morning, at noon or in the evening if there was something to cultivate. The state of the fields [now] resembles that of these courses [by designating], as clean, nothing can be done about it."*

*Group discussion around nutrition, women over 24, Beloha*

- Financial difficulties and drought have made women more and more responsible for household income. This allowed them to demonstrate that they were more resilient to climate shocks/change as well as facilitate their participation in IGAs where they might otherwise not have engaged in such activities.

*"The work of men at home [at the community level] at the moment: we are already cooking, we are babysitting, we are drawing water, I, who are talking to you, this is happening to me since my wife works, I am obliged to cook and keep the children, and then there is also the collection of firewood. The reasons, I do this is that life is really hard and women are looking for money, they are taking care of their businesses. (...) What prevents us from doing it...here in the bush, we have nothing to do, our real occupation is culture, there is no culture at the moment and out of spite, we do the work at home and it is our women who will go to trade but once the rain comes back, it will be the role of the woman to do the domestic tasks."*

*Key Informant, Health - Nutrition and Governance, Man, Community Officer, 31, High School, Tsihombe*

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<sup>36</sup> Confinement observed by the mother after delivery.

## IV.2 POWER RELATION AND DECISION MAKING

This part of the analysis provides some answers to the second research question below: How do power relations and decision-making in nutrition, water, health, governance, mobility, and subsistence vary across different types of households? How does this affect the food security and nutrition of different types of households?

*“There is no real tradition but more customs and customs. Sometimes the two spouses work together to make decisions about the use of financial resources. It is not ‘there are no real cultural norms that restrict women from not using financial resources, but it depends on what happens in the household. There are households where men decide. There are also households where men and women decide together. There are households where women alone decide. (...) Perhaps it is not women themselves who can use the resources, but they may be the responsibility of men since they are the fruits of men's hard work through culture (in the fields). In this case, single women cannot decide/have control over (financial) resources, but they have to wait until after the unilateral decisions of men to be able to use them.”*

*Key Informant, Health - Nutrition and Governance, Health Personnel, Women, 25, University Education Level, Beloha*

Three decision-making mechanisms were identified during this analysis. They do not necessarily oppose each other and may be complementary:

- The first gives the power to make the decision to "the one who works."
- The second confers this power on "the one who supports" or "the one who can commit (financially)."
- Finally, a "consultation" process (that differs from that sought for the decision to be joint), through which a woman is consulted for her opinion to help inform a man's decision. This approach is uncommon.

In general, decision-making does not really depend on the type of household but rather the configuration of it (single parent at the head of the household, elderly married with a younger person, etc.).

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### 1. *Whoever is "capable" of working can decide on his subsistence activity*

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Capacity, work force and involvement in a task determine a person's decision-making power. In addition to socio-cultural norms, men are recognized as being strong and able to work the land. Women are considered suitable to less strenuous activities and are rarely involved in fieldwork and livestock.

For income, women, young women, young men, and men, can decide how to use their cash-earned income since they were the ones who worked to get it (valid for all three districts). However, the same is not true for [Savings](#). Women and young women are not permitted to make the final decision on how to use cash-earned from savings activities, as the decision ultimately rests with the household head.

As for projections, young women, especially women are overwhelmed by the worries of everyday life, have little latitude to think about what they want to do or become. They are resigned to running small businesses with just enough profitability to cover the day-to-day expenses. Men have more time and resources to devote to their personal development. For example, when they buy additional zebu and farmland, they gain social recognition (recognized as prosperous).

For the choice of the activity to be practiced, if the reported income can support the household, the person concerned can do so. In Itampolo, for example, women can make [sexual transactions](#) in plain sight and without the knowledge of all, and even with the consent of their spouses. They can freely prostitute themselves because it helps to provide income for their households, especially in lean times.

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2. *The man will "decide" the composition of the household's food as long as he has control over the supply*

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Often, especially in Tsihombe and Beloha, the crops are used exclusively for household food and always not be intended or not sufficient for sale. Because men largely work the land, the choice of what to grow is theirs. Many are still restricted to growing traditional crops and do not consider the need for a diversified or specific diet for children under 5 years of age.

The men, as the first responsible for the production activities, decide on the income allowances from the crops. As a result, women are forced to negotiate food money from their husbands. Hence the restriction of the possibilities of diversifying the household's diet. Men are not aware of the value of diversification or the specification of food. This deduction is more reflected in household situations in the Androy region. In some cases, women still have the option of composing the ingredients for household meals<sup>37</sup>:

- If she grows crops of her own, she can choose what to plant and be better able to manage the food for her own home. She will keep enough to feed her family and she will sell part to finance other necessities. However, it will always be limited by the time (availability) and means (dark and financial) that it can mobilize to develop its own cultures. This does not leave him enough room to diversify their diet<sup>38</sup>.

*“When we go to grow cassava in the fields, it is the men who are the real decision makers, the women have nothing to do with it. When cassavas are finally collected, they are transported home. When they are at home, it is women have control over their use, it is more our role. Even if the crops are there thanks to us, the men in the home, it is the women who are the decision makers.”*

*Group discussion around agriculture, men over 24, Beloha*

- If the woman manages to get a cash inflow (usually from small businesses with daily income), she can decide what to do with it. There will be no need to negotiate their allowance with the husband. In most cases, this money will go into the family's food budget. Again, this possibility is ad hoc/random and will depend on the availability of funds and the 'market'.

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<sup>37</sup> Within the limits of financial means and their knowledge.

<sup>38</sup> Especially since in this case, it will take over the exclusivity of the supply.

- Moreover, for the households of fishermen in Itampolo, the daily income is managed by women. Most of it is then allocated to the household food budget. The husband, on the other hand, only enjoys enough to buy their coffee as a reward for their efforts.

*"It is the women who will manage the money because they are the ones who are going to go shopping, there is just one part that we will give to the men. For example: if you get 4000Ariary, the 3000 Ariary will be paid to women, the 1000Ari will go to the men to have pocket money, they may meet a family member and that way they can offer coffee, they won't have to ask their wives again so that people can say they are "under the control of their wives"."*

*Group discussion around agriculture, men of less 24-year-old Itampolo*

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### *3. Decision-making around water is conditioned by its availability and accessibility*

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Both women and men can decide on where to get the household's water, based on its availability and accessibility. However, as water resources are primarily used for food preparation, consumption, hygiene and laundry, women are the decision-makers on water supply and use. It is important to point out that although women have not directly participated in the income of the household, in some cases they become the treasurer of the household without having control over the management of money. To the extent that water must be purchased, women will either ask their husbands for money or draw from the saving without their permission<sup>39</sup> or use their own financial resources. They must ensure its availability within their households. In terms of the tasks around water supply:

- Men and young men are asked to go and draw water as part of domestic chores.
- For households headed by a woman, the sole parent or with only one adult in the household, this responsibility rests with the children. This can limit, depending on observations and maintenance, the amount of water reported<sup>40</sup> for the household.

It should be noted that at the time of this study, for almost all fokontany, water was often a scarce commodity. In addition to those who benefited from a drawing system offered or supported by a development project, most of the people interviewed reported either its high cost or the remoteness of the source. The decision of the need to supply water is then conditioned by the financial possibilities of the household and/or the physical capacity of or of these members to undertake the journey for the draw.

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### *4. Health decisions belong to the person who is able to cover expenses*

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<sup>39</sup> They must still account for the use of this money (indeterminate reporting frequency).

<sup>40</sup> Often in one or two bottles per child.

*“It is only we men who are decision-makers in relation to health, but we do not expect women. I decide if we're going to take the patient to the traditional practitioner or take him to the health center. The reason is that there will be a good that we will sell to treat the sick and therefore it is up to us, the men to make this decision and not the women. For example, we're going to sell the goat or the zebu to care for our sick child. It is the power of man, not woman. (...) The man will go to sell e zebu or the goat to have the sick child treated.”*

*Group discussion around agriculture, men over 24, Beloha*

In terms of care in particular, decision-making differs at two levels:

- First, women are identified as primary caregivers of household members, particularly children. When they do not incur significant expenses, they remain the responsibility of women and do not require the approval of men. Women are the only decision makers when it came to breastfeeding their young children (its frequency and duration).
- Second level, when the health of children and the sick in the home incurs expenses, it is up to the man to decide. This control would be justified by the facts that:
  - ✓ The property to be transferred to have money available to pay for care belong to the man.
  - ✓ A man is better able to choose the remedy by his "knowledge."
  - ✓ The man is the one who can make commitments (in case the care costs).

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5. *The mobility of women under the supervision of men, governed by their availability and restricted by lack of financial resources and insecurity*

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Decision-making on women's mobility in the three districts is governed by four types of restrictions:

- The first relates to the authorization of their spouses. During interviews and discussions, the men argued the need to ask for their permission so that their wives could go out. Even for those who have some financial autonomy, especially to go to the market, they must notify the "real" reasons for their travels.
- The second reason that would limit women's mobility refers to the lack of financial resources. Without money, women are not be able to go to the markets to supply the household's food. However, this is part of their main obligation and proves to be a valid reason<sup>41</sup> to get out. Moreover, without the financial resources, they will not have enough to develop their small businesses. To make them grow, they must go to the markets to buy what they are going to resell.
- The third restriction is the unavailability of time due to the magnitude of their daily domestic tasks. Indeed, such tasks can take up almost eight hours of their time each day if we refer to their activity clocks. The trips consist of bringing back the husband's meal, the search for food and possibly the drawing of water<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> In the eyes of men.

<sup>42</sup> If not the accompaniment of the one or those who will do it.

*“It is the domestic chores that prevent women from leaving the house. Women cannot leave the house until work at home is done.”*

*Woman head of household, does not know her age, Widow, 2 children, Out of school, Farmer, Beloha*

In Itampolo, as previously reported, some women say that by organizing these tasks, they can still go out. Their priorities would even be to work outside the home.

In other cases, although women can go out mainly with the convening from development projects<sup>43</sup>, they still have to resume the household tasks when they return.

- Finally, the phenomenon of banditry hinders the mobility of both women and men. However, young women and women are most affected by their vulnerability. Indeed, during the team's passage on the ground, they were making changes of routes to reach the markets due to attacks by organized gangs.

## Note on community resources management

*“When we leave here [of the group discussion], we will go straight back to our home because our husbands will already be waiting for it. They must starve to death. Once we women are there, we have to prepare the meal. Even if the men are already there, they don't prepare the meal, they bask on the bed. Even if the meal is already cooked in the pot, they cannot serve themselves to eat. The men wait for the women to return to serve them the meal. Sometimes it's difficult for us women, since we have to prepare meals and take care of ourselves at the same time.”*

*Group discussion around agriculture, young women under 24, Beloha*

Community resources are almost non-existent. Most of them have been invested. Land, for example, is already demarcated by villagers either legally or, most traditionally, as is done. However, a few single women without land inheritance will still risk working land without apparent occupation. In addition, sacred forests can be communal because of the ancestral tombs that are built there. Finally, the mostly dry streams are no longer usable.

*“If I can find work, I will go to work but if I can't find one, I'll stay home and take care of my family.*

*For me, personally, there is no impact because I manage to organize my time well, I can continue to do my work as a weaver even if it is necessary to take care of the family. In the morning, I wash my children's clothes, then I go weave after I have walked, after I have woven, I will go cook.*

*If you can find a job, sometimes you may not even finish the work in the home, but if you don't find one, you stay home to take care of it.”*

*Group discussion around nutrition, women over 24, Itampolo*

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<sup>43</sup> Especially for this group discussion.



## Other considerations

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6. *A person with a disability, if he is a fit man to work, will be able to make a decision in the same way as a man without a disability.*
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*“It is not the same if it is a man and a woman if both are disabled. Man has power because he can decide at the community level. He can decide what about zebras and goats. He will be able to negotiate on what gives him power at the community level, the man is strong, he has an indisputable power but the woman with or without disability has no authority at the level of the community.”*

*Dgroup discussion around agriculture, men over the age of 24, Beloha*

There is a general perception that people with disabilities are reduced to their "inability to work," so they cannot make decisions about nutrition, health or their production activities. On the other hand, there are nuances to be made in relation to the sexes: men could make decisions (in case they have inheritances, where they can mission/pay people to work their land or use production animals) unlike women who are assimilated to their non-disabled peers. According to some testimony, people with disabilities can make decisions about their subsistence activities and income.

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7. *Young people have the opportunity to make choices in areas where they are self-reliant and where their elders are not involved*
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Financial self-sufficiency empowers young women and men to make decisions about activities that will enable them to maintain their independence:

- ✓ For young women, these factors often lead them to look for financial resources and independence as their involvement in domestic duties is controlled by the mother, they are not decision-makers.
- ✓ Those who leave school (especially due to early pregnancy) must be self-reliant.
- ✓ Marriage is also a way to no longer depend on the parents/father and is often encouraged by parents. This is also part of the reasons why they are leaving schools.

Chosen activities are the result of peer-to-peer influence (they almost all want/do the same thing as long as it makes money fairly quickly). For the most part, they will lean towards the development of small businesses and/or crops that are less difficult to maintain. The use of income is mostly used to reinvest and to develop IGAs, although some of it is spent on “flirtatiousness”. Young women for cultural and economic reasons are subject to activities akin to "sexual transaction."

Parents often assign part-time land to their sons so they can learn how to cultivate land. Compared to young women, young men are privileged concerning the accessibility of the land

and means of production. They can dispose of it freely if they negotiate the final decision with their fathers. As a "man," boys will go into physical activities for which they are more better suited (drawing water by transporting it by carts for pay, working other people's land for wages, etc.). They invest their money in the purchase of goods or animals for production, clothing, and "pleasure" (Radio/CD, for "sexual transactions").

## Exceptions and new facts

- Consultations are encouraged.** Interviews revealed that for some couples, consultation is required, especially for important decisions concerning the use of financial resources. In most cases, women are only consulted, with the decision ultimately resting with men (always because he owns the property to be transferred or is the one who produced the financial resources). Consultation would be especially sought in polygamous households and in couples where the man is older than the woman and is no longer fit to work:
  - ✓ In the first type of household, women are either a valued work force or the husband cares to provide them with equal treatment.
  - ✓ In the second type of household, the woman is either the only or the first work force in the household.
  - ✓ Finally, it is practiced especially when the woman has proven herself i.e., has a "recognized" place in the community (key informants: community officer, association leader, etc.) or in the family (grandmother).
- The *kéré* redefines power in decision-making.** As the variety of foods is limited:
  - ✓ The choice is more oriented by survival than by the decision-making of any one person. It is not really governed by a power relationship but more by the situation around the *kéré*.
  - ✓ The population expects food from donors and is ready to do "what is requested" by external actors to ensure the continuity of this donation.
- Migration leaves those family members left behind with the power to make decisions within reason, however once the man HoH returns, decision-making power resumes with him.

The temporary breakdown of contact due to migration means that:

- ✓ The remaining parent is forced to make all decisions on subsistence, household feeding, production activities, etc. on his own.
- ✓ The remaining parent is also responsible for deciding on the sale of the goods to meet the needs (not of great value, do not concern production animals or land).
- ✓ This rupture was accentuated by the travel restrictions implemented by the government to curb the spread of COVID-19.

## IV.3 ACCESS TO AND CONTROLS RESOURCES / ASSETS / SERVICES

As a reminder, for this part, the questions analyzed were: How does access to and control of education, resources and goods affect the livelihoods of women, men, youth, and people with

disabilities in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana? How does migration affect this access and control and its effect on food security and nutrition?

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1. *Access to education is hampered by socio-economic issues for both girls and boys.*

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Looking at the [characteristics of each type of household](#), it can be seen that [children who run households](#) have gone the farthest in their studies (13% in secondary school) yet however few attend school (31%). Meanwhile, the elderly (71%) and people with disabilities (79%) are most likely not to have attended school. This may mean:

- Formal education is becoming more accessible. However, stopping primary school is more common, even for these children (56%). This situation is not impartial as it would affect both girls and boys. According to some participants, girls are even more likely to go to school. Stopping studies for both boys and girls is often motivated by the need to earn money. This quest for financial autonomy is most often encouraged by parents and justified by the financial precariousness of the household. Girls also leave school due to early pregnancy. Young men leave school because they are needed to help out at family farm.
- Overall, the level of education remains low. This was reinforced by the group discussions where participants had difficulty conceiving the organization of their work (apart from the fact that they mobilize their own measurements of time). It turns out that among young people and young adults, the lack of knowledge about the seasonality of cultures was obvious.

This low level of education generally widens inequalities as:

- Physical and non-intellectual work is encouraged. This generates independence the physical and demanding labor of agricultural, livestock, and productive activities. This limits the involvement of women and girls in production activities.
- The respect given to elders, the source of knowledge, is accentuated because the youngest do not "know what to do" (non-valorization of youth potentiality).
- Women do not have enough education to make a long-term return on their IGAs (without study). They will then not be able to justify their continued involvement in production activities<sup>44</sup>.
- If the woman's level of education is lower than that of the spouse, the spouse will dominate in decision-making and in the public sphere. For example, one woman who was interviewed said she had ended her schooling after 6<sup>th</sup> grade and said she is eclipsed in all things by her husband, who is the deputy chief of fokontany with a BEPC diploma – despite her role as a leader of an important association<sup>45</sup>. This woman said she was not able to speak with as much distinction as educated people. She refused to answer questions under this pretext.

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<sup>44</sup> Because they have not proven themselves by making their IGAs profitable. The income is punctual and will immediately meet the primary needs (food, soap, water, etc.).

<sup>45</sup> If we refer to its weight and its presence according to the Venn diagram.

*“I dare not speak. I'm not like those women who can talk and dare to speak in public. I don't know how to talk. He [her husband] represents us [for this study] and knows how to speak.”*

*Key Informant, Agriculture, Association Leader, Women, 24, Secondary Education Level 1er*

- Women leaders we met who had already received training in Antananarivo or went to secondary school or more, spoke more confidently and dared to speak publicly on behalf of their association.

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*2. Control of the land and production animals is distinguished between property that belongs to the husband and those that may be his spouse'. Which plays against the woman.*

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*“I have already been to Antananarivo for training. It was there that I learned to talk with people, to convince them. (...) They listen to us (...) and then we bring them new things, light [thanks to the solar panels].”*

*Key Informant, Agriculture, Association Leader, Woman, 30, Secondary Education Level 1er cycle, Itampolo*

Women's access to and control of goods and resources is severely restricted in the Antandroy culture because there is no "regime" of equitable division of property between spouses. Local social and cultural norms, as well as the anticipation of separation<sup>46</sup>, do not allow women to dispose of the property that belongs to their companions. Thus, they have no control at all over the land and production animals considered to belong to their spouses – even if they were acquired during their marriage.

The goods and equipment at home outside the kitchen utensils are not entirely under the control of the woman as she came to follow the husband "without any property".

The only way for women to have control over the use of land and production animals is to make these goods available, not their fathers. However, unlike young men, they did not inherit the land or these animals, their fathers only granted their use as a loan.

*“The land is a legacy on the part of the ancestors of men. When women marry, they have no inheritance from their fathers, but it is their brothers who have it. We women will not also have a share on the side of our husbands. It's our boys who are going to inherit the land.”*

*Group discussion around agriculture, women over 24, Tsihombe*

*“Where can we have control, it is in these woods that we have control. Zebus, goats, sheep all belong to men. It is up to the man to decide on the sale of zebus or goats or sheep and the man will give the money obtained to the woman to keep it.*

*It is the men who are the owners (indigenous), the women cannot decide the money they keep without asking the men's permission. Similarly, men must tell women, "Let's sell our zebus because we are in great difficulty in these times of the kerar." Zebus, goats and sheep are men's, women can't take part [in decisions about them].”*

*Group discussion around agriculture, women over 24, Tsihombe*

<sup>46</sup> Due to the lack of stability of the union.

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### 3. *Women's perceptions as being weaker reduce their ability to do men's work*

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Women are considered not having the strength to work in the fields, they fall back on low-rent crops<sup>47</sup> to meet daily liquidity needs<sup>48</sup>. This results in a lack of women's involvement in production activities, specifically in fieldwork and in the care of production animals. Starting from the idea that the person who grows it owns it, women cannot therefore have control over the means of production due to their lack of involvement.

Men in Beloha revealed that while some women had zebus, they could not control them because of their limited strength and had to entrust them to their husbands. Even in the quest for food, the work of men and women differs according to their strengths.

*“Poultry is a common commodity for men and women. However, it is really up to the woman. The reason is that it is the role of the woman and not the man. They are not used to it because they think it is too light work for them. It is the care of the zebus that corresponds to them the most. Men won't know what to feed the poultry. (...) We can control poultry as a woman. If these are bigger things, we can't control them as a woman, but if they're lighter things, we can control them. For example, when it comes to zebus, goats and sheep, women cannot control them, but they are the responsibility of men. It's like poultry, its women who can control them. Zebus are the responsibility of men because it is their wages, their sweats that they were able to obtain them. Women with their wages, cannot buy zebus, only poultry. (...) Even though I get a lot of money from my sales as a woman and I have the idea to buy a zebu, I have to go ask her to go buy it since it will still be he who will take care of it. That's why the woman can't control the zebu. (...) Men know about zebus because they have learned their prices. It is like poultry that women can control because they know their prices. “*

*Group discussion around nutrition, women under 24, Beloha*

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### 4. *Zebus are of the ilk of men and poultry of the level of women*

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In addition to the ownership of the property, women are perceived to not have the skills or strength needed to handle zebu, which is then used to justify the inequalities of access. Thus, socio-cultural norms in the areas investigated dictate that:

- Women (the same owners or who can afford zebus on their own income) cannot control zebus because of their low body size and lack of experience (usually) in this regard. The same is true for goats.
- Women do not have the necessary knowledge to market (price) and use them.
- Men are best able to control livestock and women are the most adept at raising poultry with low profit potential and need to be fed "like humans" (role of the feeding mother).

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<sup>47</sup> That they will often undertake alone with the support of children

<sup>48</sup> *Single women have more autonomy and latitude in field culture, however, they are more limited by daily time constraints and lack of funds.*

- Incomes are under the control of men and those who contributed to that income.

Young women and men with their own incomes can freely dispose of them by spending them either in their income-generating activities or in "those who please them."

*"In the years when there was no kerosene, young men and women grew to buy "radio cards", they raised poultry so they could buy them. Since they are not yet married and do not need to consult with their spouses, they can do whatever they want (...) Young men ... when the land was still arable, the money they had, they used it to look for women to go out with, but now the land is not wet, they do nothing."*

*Group discussion around nutrition, women over 24, Beloha*

For married women, free access to financial resources remains a challenge.

- Indeed, they have very little control over the financial resources of the household insofar as men appropriate all the merits of their acquisition.
- Revenues are largely mobilized for [Savings](#), only a tiny portion is intended to meet the daily needs of the household. This limits the possibilities of diversifying the household's diet.
- Women are forced to fend for themselves to pay for their daily expenses. In most cases, they take everything on themselves without involving their husbands in the face of their daily worries.
- As for the [Savings](#), it is the husbands who will decide their results. They will often reinvest them in the acquisition of new assets (herds, farmland, carts, etc.) or to give wages to people who will work their land in the event of disability or to increase their output and thus, their earnings.

*"When the crops arrive. The money obtained will be kept by the women. However, when man says he needs it, we give it to him. We women are just treasurers. If we women spend money (wrongly and through) without asking our husbands for permission, they can take us back to our families."*

*Group discussion around agriculture, women over 24, Tsihombe*

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##### 5. *Agricultural inputs and equipment under the control of those who know how to use them*

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While seed storage is often a woman's responsibility, [choosing cultures](#) is essentially the responsibility of the men who will cultivate them.

In this same way, farming equipment is under the control of those who are supposed to use it and who can handle it: Axes and machetes, for example, belong to men who work in the fields (maintenance does not involve the possession of more substantial materials).



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6. *Productions, crops and stocks under the control of those who worked there before arriving at the kitchen*

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*“When we go to grow cassava in the fields, it is the men who are the real decision makers, the women have nothing to do with it. When cassavas are finally collected, they are transported home. When they are at home, it is women have control over their use, it is more our role. Even if the crops are there thanks to us, the men in the home, it is the women who are the decision makers.”*

*Group discussion around agriculture, men over 24, Beloha*

According to group discussions and interviews around agriculture, the crops would be under the control of men until the harvest time where they need the women to help with transport and storage. Men tend to prioritize growing traditional cultures, as they believe they are sources of energy and value their work force, and see the growing of greens and vegetables as the responsibility of women.

The management of these crops is entrusted to women who ensure the distribution between the husband's family, their home and those that will be sold. They are recognized as being skilled in calculations (even if they are considered bad in trading zebus sales). This makes them even more responsible for the availability of food in their homes. However, even in this role, they tend to want to please men.

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7. *Kitchen equipment remains the only ones under the total control of women*

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*“We bring the crops home and we women will decide what part we will give to our in-laws, which will be consumed and which will be put up for sale. If the men tell us that “this part of the harvest, we’re going to give it to my family.” We will not oppose it.”*

*Group discussion around agriculture, women over 24, Tsihombe*

In general, the only "goods" over which women have total control are kitchen equipment and utensils, as they are the main managers and users. Young women, although occasionally providing their help, cannot decide on their use.

### Notes on exceptions and new developments

In this area, there is no significant change with the tenacity of socio-cultural norms that disadvantage women on issues of inheritance, land ownership and livestock. In addition, wedding times are major issues for this area since during this period, the role of the husband is reinforced as the main decision maker on the sale of the property that belongs to him.

However, in Itampolo, during the group discussions, the men reported supporting their wives financially in their shops. This was supported overall by observations of the operation of the stalls and the cross-checking with a few interviews (specifically those of key informants).

*“If I have goats or zebus and I sell one. When the zebu or goat is sold, I get about 50,000 ariary or 40,000 ariary and I give the money to my wife. She's going to make it profitable, she's going to do business, she's going to earn a profit of 2000 ariary or 3000 ariary, a profit she's going to use for the "bazaar" to buy food. We support each other so we don't get tired. We're going to use that money, we're going to sell starchy foods, we're going to sell fried fish, we're going to go out to sea to look for fish for sale or frying. It is the money that we will use, thanks to him that we can help each other and that we can support each other.”*

*Group discussion around nutrition, men under 24, Itampolo*

#### IV.4 LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

How can we improve the representation and voice of women, young men and women and people with disabilities in formal and informal community groups in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana that have an impact on food security and nutrition?

1. *Women and young women may attend community meetings but remain silent. Decision-making is up to the latter because they are the only ones who can get involved.*

*“If there are meetings at the village level, if women can speak it is because they can take part in decisions at the association level but if they are meetings according to tradition, they cannot, it is only the "olo-be" who can do so.”*

*Group discussion around nutrition, women over 24, Itampolo*

- Women can attend community meetings; however, their speeches are controlled and restricted. During a courtesy visit, a woman dared to give her opinion and some men booed her and told to shut up. Yet, in the same fokontany, almost all reported that women are allowed to speak at meetings.
- The expectation is that women remain silent, unless invited to speak or take part in decision-making. Indeed, only men can make decisions on behalf of the home for these reasons:
  - ✓ Men are from the place where the meeting is held. Women are largely there through marriage and were not born there.
  - ✓ Men are the ones who can get involved: If there is common work, they are the ones who will do the family's part. If there is a financial contribution required, they will honor them. If there are property to be surrendered or animals to be "sacrificed", they are the owners, therefore, the decision makers.
  - ✓ Women cannot make a commitment at the societal level (they cannot take out a loan because they have no guarantees or to guarantee repayment).
  - ✓ The persistence of social and cultural norms is justified by the "strength" and "weight" of men in communities. Men are the only ones who can vouch for financial commitments. There is also this belief that men are "always right."

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2. Women, even those at the head of their households, cannot take part in decisions at the community level, since no man would support their decision. They must therefore go through their fathers or brothers when contributions are needed at community meetings if they live in the same village. They can send their sons big enough to attend meetings and commit to joint work without them being able to make decisions. *Can kéré and migration allow for the erosion of these standards?*
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The phenomenon of *kéré* will have dismantled that the production activities of men<sup>49</sup> are not sustainable in the long term. Meaning that this allows men to detach themselves to physical work, allowing women to intervene through their IGAs that are less prone to climate change. This can enhance women's status and create more room for collaborative decision-making at the household level. Migration<sup>50,51</sup>, too, has been able to change socio-cultural norms about women's decision-making in the household. However, women still cannot make decisions at community meetings. Even though associations value women, they do not give them the same status and power as men. Would *kéré* and migration, if they persist, be the reason for these tenacious socio-cultural norms?

Women can decide on their own whether to join an association or group. This is permissible since the objectives of those associations do not run counter to social and cultural norms<sup>52</sup>. Most join associations dedicated to savings (an area in which women are recognized as a better treasurer than the spender), those that include greens (crops generally considered to be at the height of women's work force) or those where poultry farmers gather.

However, because their time is mainly spent on family care and domestic duties, they must notify their spouses of their absence. In most cases, they still seek the advice of their spouses, especially in cases where financial investments are needed (membership fees, couple savings, etc.). The reasons for refusal or hesitation of men are mainly about their jealousy or a lack of confidence in the real intentions of women in "meetings."

In associations where women and men are present, men retain decision-making power because of certain socio-cultural norms that women should not speak before men, women must follow the heads of their homes who have taken them into their fathers' homes, etc. For example, some women complain that it is men who decide the fate of the interests of [Savings](#) associations.

*"What we, women, cannot do when the money has been placed in associations and it is increasing. We cannot say, "We are going to do this or that with the money." We wait for men to make money; we women are going to make money. We won't have a say. Men do not give us the opportunity since they have already bought our "thought" (speaking and deciding) in the hands of our fathers.*

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*Key Informant, Health - Nutrition and Governance, Elderly Woman with Many Beautiful Daughters, Matron, 57, Out of School*

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<sup>49</sup> Fieldwork.

<sup>50</sup> That will have left women to fend for themselves in responsibilities and decisions.

<sup>51</sup> One may also ask who could have made the decisions about mass migration? As for the questioning of the media and local authorities regarding the situation around the "*kere*".

<sup>52</sup> For example, there has not been an association of women zebu's breeders.

## Exceptions and new facts

### 3. *Inclusion of women, youth and people with disabilities encouraged by the presence of "vazaha"*

The presence of women is tolerated in community meetings. Men even go so far as to give them the floor to listen to their opinions (without guaranteeing their consideration). However, this mode of operation is only supported to "please" the vazaha and cannot be sustainable. This inclusion is conditioned by the presence of development projects, as a counterpart to donations. Moreover, it is for the same reason that women do not have decision-making power in community meetings, which are not yet invested by the "vazaha."

Finally, women can be heard at the community level through associations. However, the total voice of women in an association would be equivalent of one man at community meetings.

*"Women do not attend VOI meetings [Vondron'Olova Ifotony or grassroots communities] because they do not engage in work and it is not their responsibilities. In fact, there are women who are members, at the VOI level because there are women who take dry wood for cooking and selling. There are also women who are not married and who want to build their houses and who will "pay" young men to go and take wet wood to build their huts.*

*We cannot make women aware of joining this paperless association on your part, so that we can increase their number in the association.*

*Traditions cannot be changed because it is difficult to change the laws (tabous) that our ancestors put in place.*

*Women can decide if they are like you, if their president is a woman. That is to say that in projects it is women can decide but if it is traditions, it is not done."*

*Group discussion around agriculture, men under 24, Itampolo*

## IV.5 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

The final research question is: How can we effectively support community-level protection mechanisms in Androy and Atsimo Andrefana that are accessible and mitigate GBV such as intimate partner violence, child labor, child marriage and early pregnancy? First, it is important to understand how the communities involved in this study perceive the different types of GBV and their prevalence.

### 1. *Normalization of physical violence as signs of affection*

*"It is the young men who decide; why should young women be considered? This is how young men dare to slap young women if they refuse to follow what they have decided: "How dare you contradict me (not accept what I want)? This is how young men's decision-making with regard to young women begins. The girl who fell in love with me was the one who convinced him by "rubbing" herself most often."*

*Group discussion around agriculture, men over 24, Beloha*

Women, young women, young men and men alike justify physical violence by:

- Jealousy justified by women's deceptions to their husbands (even if it is only a suspicion)
- Signs of affection through possessiveness and control over the wife (based on the general power of man over his "property")
- One wonders why women accept to be abused. Is the fact that they are strangers in their husbands' communities one of the reasons for this acceptance?

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## 2. *Minimizing sexual violence*

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*"These are desires not satisfied by the wife, men do this because the woman does not satisfy these desires, and it is the woman's fault."*

*Group discussion around agriculture, men over 24, Beloha*

Sexual violence, especially between spouses, is seen by almost all as:

- Part of the seduction.
- Giving "spice" to the relationship of man and woman.
- A normal fact emanating from the man's unassured sexual "need" and "appetite"<sup>53</sup> for his wife (who must do her duty). It is not considered violence within the household.

The prevalence of rape (thus here, non-consensual sex for participants in group discussions, to differentiate between sexual violence equated with "sexual games") would be minimal.

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## 3. *Denial of sexual violence and incest against children by taboo*

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Shame that does not allow the subjects of sexuality between girls and fathers to be addressed leads to the denial of rape and incest of girls. In fact, the men quickly dodged the subject during the group discussions. For pedophilia and incest, community acknowledge that "it is wrong" and that "the child is in pain" and that this "is not done" unlike other forms of sexual violence that they have minimized. However, they felt, like the other participants (women, young women and young men) that these cases of incest or sexual violence against children are rare in their communities.

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## 4. *Child labour integrated into everyday life*

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As seen in the role and responsibilities section, children are involved beyond mere participation in tasks and production activities with their mothers or fathers (only parents).

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<sup>53</sup> "Normal coming from him" and only coming from him but not from the woman.

Sexual transactions are common currencies.

*"I you see there, I was gone, I just came back the day before yesterday, I just came back from Tulear to prostitute myself, my husband can no longer work, I you see there now. I told my husband, "My husband, stay here, life is difficult, I will go and sell my body, when I can find some, I will send you money, and he stays here with my children. When I get to see my children long enough, I will go back to do my job in Tulear. That's why my face is all black because I hang out with "too many" men.*

*The older ones are not the same as us young people, they leave and the work they will do there will not be the same as for us young people since they, they will perhaps pull the shoots while we, we will work night and day, you understand what I mean!"*

*Group discussion around health, women over 24, Itampolo*

Several studies (cf. Delaunay 2013; and Razafiarimanana et al. 2019) have already shown that sexual transactions are not seen as such in the region and are normalized. Single women without "sustainable" financial resources and young women encouraged by young men (who spend part of their income on this) engage in sexual activity for money. However, for the population in Beloha and Tsihombe, this does not amount to prostitution.

In Itampolo, where these transactions are more frequent, according to the results of this analysis, even married women succumb to them. In this district, women and young women report on their prostitution work without complexity. They claim financial difficulties and the inability of their husbands to provide for the household. They even go so far as to be proud of having gone to another city for practicing it. These activities are not only for adult women but also for minors.

On the other hand, marriages and early pregnancies are part of the daily life of communities and even seem to be the norm.

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### 5. *Women are more alert to financial violence*

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Women complain more about this form of violence, they recognize that it is common and would even be part of their daily lives (although they only learned during discussions that it was a form of violence). Indeed, they are more likely to recognize and complain about this form of violence as it involves their main concern: money problems.

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### 6. *Minimizing violence and not realizing its dangerousness makes it difficult to establish an effective protection system and to strengthen any system already in place.*

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In this section, it is important to present specifically the method used for the data collection on GBV. This technique followed four steps. The moderator of the discussion presented one image based on a scenario referring to one type of GBV without providing an explanation. They then asked the participants to describe what they see in words. Then, the moderator explains the type of the GBV described on the same picture. Finally, the moderator asked participants to



estimate the prevalence of each type of GBV by using stones (example: zero stone if the person believes that this violence is non-existent in their locality, one if it occurred rarely, etc.).

This technique revealed the low-level awareness on the part of participants about GBV issues. During the evocative picture presentations, most of them laughed while other sat fascinated like they are watching TV. In the rare case that a participant understood what was being conveyed, they chose not to speak of it negatively but rather to justify the type of violence. These justifications supported violence between those who are “considered” as adults, violence between spouses, early marriage, and pregnancy and finally but rarely, moral violence against people with disabilities. The forms of violence presented are not considered as such by the participants. In many cases, it appeared that they were viewing these situations as violent for the first time.

In addition, interviews with key informants, including a personal caregiver, report that rape cases are resolved amicably and that parents often do not report them at their level.

Gender-based violence does not seem to be at the heart of general concerns. The application of sanctions remains haphazard and push towards amicable arrangements putting victims still plagued with their tormentors (who remain their neighbors). **The fear of key actors in reporting GBV induced duality of how GBV is perceived and reported.**

## Main conclusion about Gender Based Violence

What impedes the report of the GBV case in general?

- **Arrangement is the privileged system by the communities**

Communities don't recognize GBV and the type as a criminal and moral offenses and violence. Practical norms promote arrangement to resolve such cases. Those arrangements consist of giving compensation for damage (the perpetrator offers zebu to the victim's family in exchange for their silence). Traditional leaders play an important role by leading the mediation between the two parties and by prioritizing arrangements as the main solution in resolving GBV cases.

- **Shame and fear (punition and reprisals) of communities to report GBV cases**

Victim's families are afraid to report GBV as reporting GBV is seen as retrogression to community norms and practices (“Family members to not sue one another. That is not allowed.” (Gender analysis dissemination, June 2021)). In cases where the victim's family is willing to report, they are excluded by the communities, are forced to leave and to pay compensation for damage. Complainants are sources of dishonor for the family and conflict for the community

- **No complaint and report within the local authorities**

Factors related above impede case reporting among legal authority and skilled care attendants. Gender analysis dissemination confirmed that there is no reported case to legal authorities. An interview with a midwife related that communities are not willing to report the truth about what really happened. They report other sources of damage like accidents to justify the injuries in victims. This midwife feels that she does not have a role to play in fighting GBV, as communities are not willing to confess the truth to her.

“Médecin inspecteur” and “Chef de Brigade de la Gendarmerie” in Beloha and Tsihombe confirmed that communities keep GBV as secrets. When there is no compensation, the victim's family is more willing to sue the perpetrator.

- **Non-effectiveness of the Declaration of the National Strategy Against GBV (SNGBV)**

The Minister of Population had already set up a platform to report and respond to GBV cases, but this tool is not used because of the lack of leadership, sensitization activities and especially financial means. There is also funding from UNICEF and UNFPA to sensitize communities about GBV that is deployed only at the district level. These weaknesses lead to the ineffectiveness of the SNGBV at the fokontany and villages level. Maharo has to play an important role in supporting the platform if it is to become an effective community-based protection. The project wants to involve traditional leaders in the process of reporting, and to educate communities to be willing to report cases and not to cope (to be silent) with impunity of perpetrators.

Through the platform, Maharo aims to decline SNGBV to set community-based protection with all the stakeholders at the district level (gendarmerie, medical staff, municipalities, fokontany). As platform members are mainly male, the Maharo Gender Strategy intends to encourage and facilitate these men/ young men's involvement in GBV prevention.

- **Logistical and financial problems that may encounter**

Additional factors impede the reporting of GBV cases. Financial aspects are important to an effective reporting system as the victim must allocate money to ensure medical treatment and for the reporting and complaint procedure (investigation, legal fees, and displacement).

## DISCUSSION

### Contributions from gender analysis

This analysis of the project's three main intervention areas establishes five socioeconomic conditions that affect gender: (1) roles and responsibilities, (2) power relationship and decision-making, (3) access and control, (4) leadership and public life, and (5) gender-based violence. It helped reveal and highlight the gaps to be filled in terms of gender inequalities that hinder the nutritional status of young children<sup>54</sup> and breastfeeding women. It will also result in an adaptation of the actions to be taken according to the possible and respective specificities of the areas of intervention<sup>55</sup> and gender categories.

The results from the analysis showed that it is important to tackle together the gaps of these five closely related areas, i.e., the impartial distribution of roles plays on the power relationship and decision-making within the household. In those contexts, results show that the "power to

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<sup>54</sup> Less than five years.

<sup>55</sup> It should be noted that the profiles of the districts of Tsihombe and Beloha are quite similar if that of Ampanihy is quite distinct from the two.

decide" depends largely on the ability to generate income. The choice of the composition of the food usually belongs to the one who have control of the procurement.

In Beloha and Tsihombe, where cultures are mainly destined to the household needs, men appear more powerful to decide the main food compositions. In fact, they earn this credit and this power by being the main provider and having the opportunity to devote themselves to production activities.

However, women are empowered as guarantors of the availability, preparation, and meal service to ensure the family's nutritional needs. In Itampolo, especially when the income is mainly procured by fisheries activities, even if the men are the provider, they give the power to choose the meal composition to their wives<sup>56</sup>.

On the other hand, access to and control based on the ownership of goods and the ability to manipulate them also impact this distribution of roles and decision-making. Evidence from the data: the production animals and the land often bequeathed to young men and belonging to men are totally under their control. This restricts women's ability to use family resources and assets and contribute to decisions about their income (sales when times are tough, for example).

Involvement in public life and the ability to participate in community decisions are dependent on the first three areas<sup>57</sup> to the extent that: the valuation of man as a "work force", "primary provider" for the family and "responsible for the return of money" within the household positively affects his status at the community level. According to common perceptions, as man is the one who is primarily (if not the only), involved in the production activities of the household, he is the one who can engage financially and physically in community work.

Finally, perceptions and prevalence of gender-based violence are consistent with the weight and place attributed to women, young women, and children across these four areas. The analysis found, for example, that the devaluation of the (young) woman<sup>58</sup> makes her more vulnerable to physical violence perpetrated by a (young) man who "would have the right to correct it" for challenging his decision/speech.

## Limits of gender analysis and lessons learned

This analysis could have been more specific and less exhaustive on the topics covered. This could have been done on two levels:

- From a methodological point of view, since specific and up-to-date secondary data concerning the gender context in these three districts are nonexistent, a lot of information needs to be filled by this gender analysis to be pertinent. Pertinent, but complex research questions, are meticulously elaborated to fill these gaps leading to the heaviness of the tools which is challenging for the data collection. Despite the experience of trained investigators and consultants, they struggled to use the tools and to make them understandable for the participants, most of whom are illiterate.

As this gender analysis is considered a driver for this project and by extension, for these contexts, there is a lot to learn from the best practices and what not to redo following

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<sup>56</sup> More than the one who is empowered and who bears the mental burden.

<sup>57</sup> This access and control, the relationship of power and decision-making as well as the distribution of roles and responsibilities.

<sup>58</sup> Whether in its role and responsibilities within the household, whether in relation to its inferior place in power relations and decision-making, whether through its lack of access and control of financial resources and resources or its invisibility in the public square/sphere.

the experience of the data collection in the field. For forthcoming gender analysis in the same contexts, to have more consistent information and to better deepen our understanding, it is recommended that the research be divided into preliminary and secondary phases. Separating these steps will lighten the tools and make questions clearer.

- As the population is not yet aware of the necessity to include all gender categories identified for this analysis (men, women, young men, young women, and people with disabilities), they struggle to give details concerning specific cases as they have not considered these things before, especially as they relate to youth and people with disabilities.

Fortunately, the gender analysis anticipates two formative studies to tackle specific issues for these two last categories. As inductive research<sup>59</sup> investigators faithfully report respondents' perceptions (even though we rigorously asked them about people with disabilities and youth for each question, many of those interviewed did not respond, as they indicated that they did not know these specific cases or minimized the experiences youth and people with disabilities). In fact, one study was carried out to gather information about youth employment and another one was led to gain a better understanding of how handicaps and people with disabilities are seen and considered by the communities.

Those studies were done by an organization with expertise in targeting those specific populations: Youth First and Humanity & Inclusion. Since Maharo (commissioned external consultants) of these specific issues (youth employment and perceptions of people with disabilities), certain results of the main gender analysis should be delegated to these partners according to their main technical expertise. This solution aims to lighten research questions and the data collection tools.

The study led by Youth First gives recommendations about the IGAs that must be supported by Maharo (Livestock activities, SILC group, entrepreneurship activities and off and non-farm activities). Results also showed that young people need to be more involved in community activities, such as taking part in the decision-making process during meetings. In fact, Maharo's youth approach focused on empowering young people to be involved, to be consulted and to be informed as an equal partner at community level.

The socio-anthropological research advised people with disabilities to encourage their self- empowerment and recognition by addressing their abilities and contributions, which are to be validated at household/community levels beyond their disabilities. The analysis also recommends that people with disabilities must be seen as "clean" to be included. Following this research, Maharo gender strategy should include these recommendations to promote inclusion through gender champion sensitization and coaching.

As this gender analysis did not expect to point the intensification and the weight of child labor in these areas<sup>60</sup>, this finding needs to be another key theme of future gender analysis. This

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<sup>59</sup> from data gathered on the ground not aiming to induce participants answers.

<sup>60</sup> Which is already existing but is intensifying because of the lack of action to counter it. It also increases as women are involved in domestic and physical work. Children play an assistant role if not substitutes for their mothers.

research also merges the category of children<sup>61</sup> with young people (women and boys) and young women. They need to be separated as they have different issues that must be addressed in future interventions.

The *kéré* as a recurring phenomenon must be considered in tool design and analysis. For this, the time of year during which data is collected must be the same if a continuity or comparison of the evolution of situations is desired.

Finally, the validity of the data has been verified by cross-checking the method and sources (in-depth interviews with one member of each targeted household, key informant interviews and groups of discussion). That said, planned observation studies could have strengthened the validity of the data (e.g., community meetings, labor chores, market, etc.). This method helps to complete narratives with observed practices. In fact, guided by their former qualitative research experiences, principal investigators have done unplanned observation.

## CONCLUSION

### About this gender analysis

This analysis will support the gender strategy of Maharo by highlighting the gaps in term of gender inequalities and by advancing operational recommendations. Adopting a qualitative methodology, this research considered the voice of each category of participant by including people with disabilities, young women, young men, men, women, and those who do not own land. The data collection occurred during the *kéré* (famine induced by drought) which shaped the results as the productive activities of men as they depend on the rain and for certain, are interrupted as women take the place as provider for families as men migrate away from the region in search of work.

While women can gain power as the sole provider of the households during this drought period, their contributions are not validated in the household or at the community level. Within their families, their income is considered secondary as men frequently mentioned that they are the main providers. They remind women of this by insisting that it's just for the drought period and when the rains return, women will focus on their former chores and men will return to do what is considered as "real work" (i.e., labor chores, managing livestock, etc.). This was the prevailing attitude of male partners and the larger community toward women's power: "Even a woman can afford to buy a zebu, she will not be able to care about it and to manage it because she lacks knowledge and force."

Therefore, the Maharo strategy must exploit resources beyond land and productive means to promote the involvement and economic empowerment of women through their IGAs. Their activities do not have to depend on assets since they must be different to those assets labeled "for men." The gender strategy seeks to strengthen women's IGAs to help them achieve long-term goals for sustained change and not just "one-off troubleshooting." Within the community, men's decision-making power persists in monopolizing public life. In fact, even if women, young women, and women with disabilities can be present, only the men can speak and make decisions. The obligation to be silent is applied even for women who are respected by the innovation or benefits that they bring to their villages (e.g., women leading associations

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<sup>61</sup> Age categories to be justified and determined on the basis of a literature review.

facilitating access to solar panels) and by serving communities (e.g., traditional birth attendant, and community worker). This study focused on the resistance of traditional leaders to women's participation in decision-making within the community meetings and without the presence of the *vazaha* is needed.

Concerning food diversification within the households, women gain power in decision-making when they have money to make their own food-purchase choices. Some women demonstrate their reliance to do both productive and reproductive activities, especially when they are forced (windowed, separated, and never married). Although, they are overwhelmed by household chores and their labor burden, children are obligated to make significant contribution to lessen women's burden. By focusing on women's social/economic empowerment and financial autonomy, it may impact children's lives as they may be less involved at domestic chores.

On the other hand, men value children's contributions, or their "recent" involvement with what they call "women duties." They specify the chores they are willing to be involved in (i.e., fetching water, firewood transportation, food preparation, keeping an eye on children for example) and avoid those chores that dislike due to the chore's close association as women's work (i.e., washing dishes, doing laundry, etc.). To share more of their actual responsibilities with their partners, the Maharo gender strategy will consider ways to tackle the low knowledge, lack of experience, and motivations of men to help with certain types of household chores (the kinds that take more time for women to do). In fact, men lack experience as male participation in domestic chores has remained low for a long time. In addition, former capacity building and technical interventions on maternal child health and nutrition targeted mainly women, further entrenching to men's limited competencies.

## Gaps to be filled by gender domain

This analysis showed that inequalities at the expense of women consolidate decision-making power with men, thereby adversely impacting food security in the home, as men do not have the knowledge or understanding of the importance of nutritional diversification. Because they are not very involved in their preparation and are not responsible for the "food security" of the home, they do not prioritize "good" nutrition in spending. Power relations, access to and control of resources devalue women's knowledge and contributions. The danger of these gaps lies in the fact that most women accept and integrate these power dynamics (examples: accountability for the availability of food, touching and sexual violence perpetrated by the spouse, child labor, etc.). However, it is important to point out that some women seem outraged by the inequality in resources and property, especially in terms of land inheritance.

Throughout the three districts, the roles and responsibilities of men and women are still governed by the socio-cultural norms of Androy and Atsimo Andrefana. Production activities are assigned to men and domestic tasks remain women's recourse. This limits the opportunities for women to develop IGAs. This distribution makes them even more responsible in their role as foster mothers and guarantors of the availability of food at home<sup>62</sup>. Women who are overwhelmed by domestic chores and sometimes also by activities to feed the family rely on the help of their children.

The power to make decisions impacts what is eaten in the home. Men decide on which crops to plant, directly impacting what foods are available in most households, especially in Tsihombe and Beloha. Men also decide on use of care since they would be the ones who would cover the expenses. In both areas of intervention, some men even go so far as to control the

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<sup>62</sup> However, they are not recognized as purveyors of this diet unlike men who are valued as such.



movements of their wives who are primarily responsible for performing tasks at home. In Itampolo, fishermen's wives have more latitude to choose the composition of the household's food since their spouses' income is paid directly to them.

Women have access to and control of kitchen items, as they are the ones who use them. But because these resources do not generate income for the family, women's contributions in the kitchen do not afford them enough status to decide on the household income allowance. Young men can own the equipment and animals they produce as well as the land they need for their work. They decide what they will do with the money they will earn. Men can have access to and control on land, zebus, and goats. They may also decide on their sale or additional investments. Since their efforts, by design, generate household income, they are empowered to decide on the allocation of financial resources. Women are forced to negotiate what to buy for food if they do not produce food themselves. Finally, women who earn income can control it<sup>63</sup> but it is often difficult for them to allocate time to their productive activities, due to the overwhelming time commitment needed to complete household chores.

These realities prevent women from meaningfully participating in public life. This is because it is neither a women's traditional role as cash-earner or identified IGAs proven to be profitable, and therefore overtaken by men. Meanwhile, the socio-cultural norm that men are more capable of decision-making than women persist due to lack of education. This educational gap does not allow us to advance reasoning that are recognized as true in the face of ancestral knowledge. Yet timid advances show that women educated and trained in association leadership would achieve almost the same status as a man at the societal level. They are heard and seen as "positive" change actors at the community level as they often bring innovations (solar plates, mobile banking, revenue management models, etc.), especially in Itampolo. Men's decision-making power and leadership may be valued more because of the small number of women leaders and independents.

The normalization and minimization of gender-based violence is a chronic social disease that plagues the three districts: Physical violence against women, especially by spouses, would be justified by their behavior. As men have sexual desires that need to be fulfilled, it is normal for women to satisfy them. The terms referring to having sex resulting in "mandrava" (literally, destroying) are confusing. Also, sexual violence is seen as part of the games of seduction, the touching being likened to foreplay.

Although incest offends and is recognized by the majority as "a bad practice," they would rarely manifest themselves in their communities, according to the study participants. Sexual exploitation, early marriage, and early pregnancy are seen almost as practical norms in these communities, where precarious socio-economic situations are justified. Verbal abuse and harassment did not seem to be really shocking to participants.

The analysis was unable to assess the effectiveness of the protection mechanisms put in place in view of this minimization and normalization of such gender-based violence that was not denounced in the majority and thus unpunished. **The fear of local key actors in reporting GBV induced duality of how GBV is perceived and reported.**

Finally, this analysis was able to reveal a violence whose study was not planned, and which deserves to be more documented and tapped: child labor.

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<sup>63</sup> Until it will be involved on the couple commune saving.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Actions to be taken and justification of the Maharo project's gender strategy

### A. EMPOWER GENDER CATEGORIES THROUGH EQUITABLE WORKLOAD SHARING

Equitable participation in the production, purchasing and preparation of food will lead to the promotion of essential action for nutrition (e.g.: nutrient-rich protein dense or NRPD).

- Seeking food is one of the most time-consuming of household chores, especially during the *kéré* period. Everyone (except people with disabilities) is involved in this activity. *Raketa mena*<sup>64</sup> collection and other locally available picking food require long walks to find, are over-exploited, and tend to be rare at the community level. Mangoes and chayote are often found nearer to many villages but are not valorized as food that replace rice and other staple foods and appear to be over-exploited as well.

Food preparation consumes firewood which is scarce and requires time to find. All of that requires **fair distribution task between household members**. As men are already involved of seeking food and other chores (fetching water, childcare) during the *kéré* period, it would be opportune to help them to continue those behaviors to alleviate women's burden. This would allow women to devote additional time to other, more profitable activities (homestead gardening, small business to have access to income to purchase diverse food). This requires men's participation in positive masculinity training and having allies to fight against the shame of doing domestic chores.

- Additional aspects should also be considered also as the food preparation was the main activity of women. The project must promote other alternatives and solutions that could help alleviate the time-consuming nature food preparation, i.e., the use of solar-powered stoves. The goal is to allocate more time for women to gain power in decision-making process through her profitable IGAs or homestead gardening activity. This technology will also valorize the person in charge.

### B. IMPROVE JOINT DECISION-MAKING AT THE HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY LEVEL THROUGHOUT PROMOTION OF SOCIAL EQUALITY

- Equitable workload sharing allows women and men to have equal time engage in production and income-generating activities that enhance the power to decide. As the analysis revealed, decision making power is directly related to the ability to earn money.

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<sup>64</sup> Literally: red cactus, variety of prickly pears.

**Equitable participation in food decision-making (from production to preparation)** will lead to the promotion of essential action for nutrition (e.g.: nutrient-rich protein dense or NRPD). Thus, project should consider behavior changes (and perceptions) through the SBC strategy combined with gender activities to enhance **couple communication and individual self-confidence**.

**The promotion of equal access for both men and women to information on food diversification** will help women, men, people with disabilities having the same knowledge and capacity to be agents of change in improving household food security and nutrition outcomes. They would be able to make joint decisions (contrary to the current practice, only the woman has the knowledge when she does not have the means and the decision).

**This is especially important for the people with disabilities, as most of them** cannot work to make their voices heard in their homes. The project must consider the recommendations of the socio-anthropological study on perceptions of people with disabilities and consider all the recommendations aimed at raising their profile (e.g., seeking to develop with them IGAs for which they can be valued and allowing them to maintain an image of "clean person" at the level of society).

### C. PROMOTE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OF RESOURCES, ASSETS, INCOME BOTH AT HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY LEVEL

Equitable access to and control of means of production leads to a greater equity to develop IGA, to earn income, to contribute equitably to household wealth and to give possibility of joint decision-making within the household (based on the social norms principles). Thus, the analysis led to the following recommendations:

**Demonstrate that both women can contribute to income at household level** and in a more sustainable way, because their activities are not necessarily affected by climate change<sup>65</sup>. This is particularly important in terms of the food security of the household, especially in times of *kéré*. It would also help to enhance access to and control on household assets, income, and community resources.

- Support women in the development of their IGAs or small business through actions related to economic empowerment. Help women scale up and improve their IGAs to be more profitable, to not restrict those earnings simply as extra income but rather to finance the daily supply of the household.
- Promote social equality, especially in the distribution of tasks and participation in decision-making at the household level. This will free up time for women to devote to their IGAs. Faced with the persistence of socio-cultural norms and the shame of "what will be said," the example of "model" dads seems to be a relevant solution. *This can also reduce the influences of social norms of the community and the family and will gradually lead to the transformation into gender relationship.*

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<sup>65</sup> And sometimes require less resources than field work.

**Improving women's and people with disabilities financial independence.** This will allow them to take part in decision-making if it is assumed that "it is the one who appeals who decides." Moreover, the promotion of couple consultation is to be considered so that in the long term, power relations can not only depend on the possibility for one or the other to have an income. The project should promote behavior changes through SBC support to negotiate women's access to and control of livestock and land needed for productive activity. Advanced age, which will ultimately affect one's ability to participate in production activities, should not reduce one's decision-making power. Financial independence will be benefit women and people with disability in the following ways:

- ✓ It supports women and people with disability to contribute like-for-like men to the household income and reach "financial inclusion" within their communities.
- ✓ It helps women and people with disabilities to negotiate the same access and control as men to the means they need for their reproductive and productive roles, as these are partly conditioned by the origin and ownership of property (who purchase the good).

**Diversify women's activities to reduce dependence on male-controlled means of production.** As the project will not be able to intervene directly for women's access to land or production animals, initiation to non- and off-farm activities seems more sustainable. Women are already motivated to run small businesses. Women in Itampolo are more empowered because of their commitment with development projects and their capacity to appropriate innovations such vegetable gardens with new products "beetroot."

Moreover, the Itampolo case cannot meet the needs of the other two districts. The economic progress of Itampolo compared to Beloha and Tsihombe is not the same. It is advised to investigate the potential IGAs of interest and potential profitability in the three districts (integration with the P3). Incomplete and non-exhaustive leads could be:

- ✓ Handicrafts: weaving mats in rushes are reported by some households as their only sources of income in these times subject to climate shocks. Its limits are based on limiting mobility (unavailability, road closures, etc.) and how to invest in the medium and long term. Another risk is the saturation of the market if several women do it.
- ✓ Poultry farming and marketing, which has also proven its worth even in times of *kéré*. Lack of resources and limiting mobility (will women have the time and means to come and go in district capitals where they have more opportunities to sell?). We must therefore think about the development of a value chain conducive to the development of this activity.

#### **D. ENCOURAGE EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION OF MEN, WOMEN, GIRLS AND BOYS, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BOTH AT HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY LEVEL**

**Pushing women even more to leadership at the first level at the association level.** To strengthen women's skills as leaders, the project should reinforce women's participation at association level and establish a plan to support these associations as models of successful leadership of women. Second, advocacy should be made with community leaders to tackle the barriers to considering women's voices at meetings. Before that, it is important to conduct a formative study on this subject if this has not already been done, since questions remain

unanswered. Indeed, if we assume that "the person who contributes financially can decide", how is it that even women who contribute cannot have the right to vote in community meetings? Why can't those who contribute to the household's savings included as well? How is it that the positions of presidents of fokontany are occupied only by men?

Women, men, youth, and PwD's collaboration to collectively act together to fight food insecurity are support by equitable participation and shared decision-making in the household and the community. To achieve this, equitable responsibilities within the household and access to and control of resources at community level must be achieved. This includes women, youth, PwD's serving as leaders, community volunteers, and their active participation into community activities and structures. Such structures include the PLC (Producer Learning Centers), Leader Farmers, and leaders/active members within value chain and/or producer organizations' (POs) activities. As a result, a second analysis is needed to identify the socio-cultural barriers and drivers that reduce women's and PwD's contributions, devaluing their roles to make the patriarchy more flexible.

#### **E. SUPPORT COMMUNITY TO MITIGATE OR EVEN ERADICATE THE NORMALIZATION AND UNDERMINING OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

The normalization and the minimization (lack of awareness) of the dangerousness and the "high" prevalence of GBV impede the effectiveness of potential protection systems (reporting, effective sanctioning). The Maharo project should advocate women, youth, and people with disabilities' valorization as full human beings with rights despite patriarchal prejudice, raising awareness on the danger of gender-based violence on basic human rights and dignity (by showing evidence and factors that limited the reporting and effective sanctions against GBV).

Priority action must be considered by the project, the awareness of local leaders (traditional and authorities) for the identification of relevant support, whistleblowing, and protection systems to be implemented. It needs to gather evidence about situations and factors that limited the reporting and effective sanctions against GBV.

During the group discussions, illustrated leaflets were used to explain the forms of GBV. Although some participants were more amused than offended, they seemed interested and captivated by the explanations. Awareness sessions (via information sharing) should be carried out on an ongoing basis on these forms of violence. It would also be wise to stress the negative impacts of GBV at all levels: (1) reproductive, i.e., the adverse effect of early pregnancy and other health issues (physical and mental); (2) productive, i.e., the harmful effects on one's physical and psychological capacity to fulfill the work, as well as child labor and its effect on children's education and future; and (3) community, i.e., the affect that gender-based violence has on the community as it relates to the ability of women, youth, and PwD to feel empowered to actively contribute/work towards the betterment of their family's health, welfare, livelihoods, and to improve their food and nutrition security within their households and the larger community.

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