



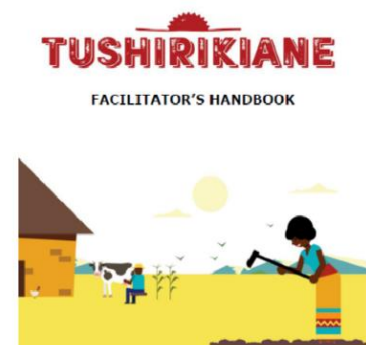
## The impact of progressive social behavioural change in Samburu, Kenya

Guest blog by Lucy Espila, Project Officer at Caritas Maralal

Available evidence in research reveals that women carry out most of the agricultural work in Kenya. Despite their numerous efforts to significantly contribute to the agricultural sector, women only earn a fraction of the income generated, own a nominal percentage of assets and take care of 90% of the household needs. The [\*“Enhancing Opportunities for Women’s Enterprises \(EOWE\)” programme\*](#) aims to strengthen women’s businesses through a mix of business support interventions as well as by challenging gender norms that limit women’s success in entrepreneurship. [\*Caritas Maralal\*](#) is one of the key partners to support women’s businesses in Samburu County. In the below guest blog, Lucy Espila, Project Officer at Caritas Maralal describes the importance of behavioural change to make women’s businesses a success.

In an effort to increase women’s economic participation and self-reliance in Samburu County, the EOWE programme is supporting 23 women’s enterprises in Samburu Central, North and East. Through the programme, the groups are currently been equipped with knowledge and skills necessary to be(come) successful in the agribusiness sector. The groups are also being linked to the relevant national and county government departments and private sector institutions with the aim of increasing access to basic services such as financing, farming inputs and capacity building support. A [\*Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices \(KAP\) study\*](#) on women’s economic empowerment, conducted in Baringo, Laikipia, Kitui, Marsabit, Samburu and Taita Taveta counties by SNV in 2016, showed that it is not solely lack of knowledge and skills, but also the existence of deeply rooted gender norms that limit women’s success in entrepreneurship.

Achieving women’s economic empowerment therefore requires a mix of business related trainings and support, as well as challenging key gender norms. Caritas Maralal is implementing the EOWE programme in Samburu County which is a highly patriarchal society that has reinforced gender inequalities and stereotypes over generations. Young men and women are socialised within this context, with men having more power and control over women and productive resources. This culture tends to fuel attitudes that perpetrate male dominance. Our intervention is informed by the research that was conducted for the development of SNV’s **“Tushirikiane”** Facilitator’s Handbook, a guide for Social and Behaviour Change Communication designed



<sup>1</sup> Tushirikiane means let’s work together in Swahili.

to challenge gender norms and practices through triggering, facilitating and promoting household and community dialogues.

Caritas Maralal has been facilitating household dialogue sessions with 10 couples, drawn from St. Anuarite, Lekiji and Lemisigiyo women's groups in the Samburu Community and 10 couples from Ekeunoth and Essep women's groups in the Turkana community in Baragoi. The EOWE programme seeks to challenge gender norms on: **time-use of women; control over and use of income** and **access to and decision on credit**. These were identified as critical in limiting women's success in business pursuit. As a result, the programme is mounting up a gender norms advocacy. The household dialogue sessions are informed by five pre-designed modules captured in the **Tushirikiane** Facilitator's Handbook.

The complete intervention consists of 11 dialogue sessions. In both communities, the 10 couples have attended 6 of the 11 dialogue sessions so far. Findings from all the discussions on issues that affect women's economic empowerment in the two communities are similar. A midterm review of this activity has revealed the following in Samburu Central:

**Time-use of women:** During the first household dialogue session in Samburu Central, men and women from the 10 households were asked to fill in time diaries. Discussions held after the exercise confirmed that women are time poor. Most of the women spend their time performing reproductive roles such as child care, fetching water and fire wood, cleaning the compound, cooking, doing the laundry and managing their homestead. They also have to create time for productive roles such as crop and livestock farming and running their small businesses. Men on the other hand spend most of their time handling a few productive roles, such as livestock marketing, herding and attending community meetings, and hardly any time on domestic chores.

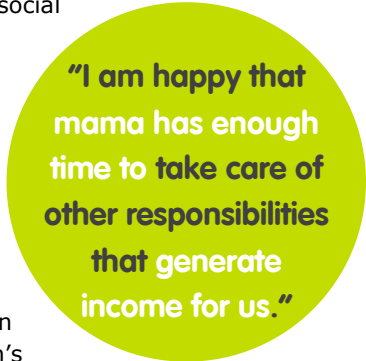
When discussing the possibility of changing the division of labour within their households, it became apparent that men have the following concerns: i) **what other men would say about them**, ii) **the inefficiency of time** and iii) **arduous nature of the reproductive roles**. Douglas<sup>2</sup> of Lemisigiyo women's group said "I can cook but the dishes must be cleaned by my wife". Caleb of Lemisigiyo said that he could only assist his wife during an emergency. Patrick of St. Anuarite women's group admitted that he would be embarrassed if any of his male friends saw him cooking or fetching water.

During the first session, the female participants were shy to speak in front of men, as this is contrary to the norms. However, they pointed out difficulties in managing their time and workload. Regina of St. Anuarite pointed out that men can assist their wives by fetching water using their motorbikes.

**Control over and use of income:** During the first session, the male participants unanimously said that decisions on finance and income are made by the husband; they may consult their wives, but men will have the final say. Some female participants felt that they do not have any control over their own income. They do not have any sense of ownership over assets such as livestock or other major resources. During the midterm review the couples were pleased to report that communication has significantly improved in their households. Most couples in Baragoi conduct joint business and currently, the husbands are involving their wives in decisions over the income that they have generated together. In Samburu Central, women and men run independent businesses, but they informed us that communication on use of and control over income has improved. In order to successfully challenge this particular norm, the couples will be taken through sessions on household budgeting. We plan to promote shared decision making in the household and women leadership. We will also challenge the social norm of men being sole decision makers and owners of productive assets.

**Access to and decision on credit:** The female participants pointed out that they do not have control over credit; their husbands control and make all decisions on these issues. Women who do access micro-finance or savings groups have to surrender the income to their husbands. Male participants insisted that decisions on credit have to be made by men because often they have to assist their women to repay their loans. To address this, we will hold dialogue sessions on access to and decisions over credit.

Following the six household dialogue sessions, there are remarkable stories of change on the **time use of women**. During an advocacy workshop on access to finance for women's



"I am happy that  
mama has enough  
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<sup>2</sup> All the names used in this article are fictional for confidentiality purpose.





📷 Mike (i) sweeping the compound, (ii) going to the posho mill and (iii) feeding poultry, activities that used to be done by his wife before our intervention. (photo: Caritas Maralal)

groups, Mike of Lemisigiyo village, told participants that he is happy to share responsibilities with his wife. As she prepares tea he sweeps the compound, as she does laundry he goes fetching water and as she cooks he goes to the posho mill (maize grinder). "I am happy that mama has enough time to take care of other responsibilities that generate income for us", he proudly expressed.

Jacqueline, Mike's wife is pleased with the outcome of the household dialogue sessions. She is happy that her husband helps her with time consuming duties such as fetching water and firewood. As a result they have had enough time to manage their vegetable farm together. She also assists her husband with livestock marketing from Lemisigiyo to Maralal town. She says that communication has improved in their household because they now work together to achieve a common goal.

Currently, Mike has acquired a copy of the Tushirikiane manual and he is using it to train other members of his community. Douglas and Caleb of Lemisigiyo also have copies of the manual and are using this to disseminate information that they have learned from the facilitated household dialogue process.

Patrick and his wife Regina are members of St. Anuarite women's group. During the first dialogue session, Patrick said that he would feel embarrassed if men from his community witnessed him undertaking any reproductive roles. Following this intervention, Patrick and Regina are sharing responsibilities in their home. Patrick assists his wife by fetching water using their motorbike and his wife assists him to milk cows, packaging the milk and do marketing in Lpartuk Village and nearby markets.



📷 Mike uses the household dialogue facilitation guide to train community members on gender norms (photo: Caritas Maralal)

William and his wife Getrude have also shared with us stories of change. During the Maralal International Camel Derby, Gertrude set up a hotel at the Yare Camel Camp in Maralal town. William supported her by taking care of the children, cooking, cleaning and managing the compound in her absence. Gertrude says that William also assisted her by ensuring that she has adequate supplies for her hotel business at the camel derby.

Facilitating discussions on gender division of labour amongst the highly patriarchal Samburu community was a tall order. However, women are currently reporting satisfaction in the reduction of their time use on domestic tasks. It is apparent that efficient ways of performing reproductive roles are attractive to men and possibly hold the key to addressing the time use of women. One critical question we are asking ourselves is "how do you bring the little change you see in the household to a much wider community scale?" In the meantime we are engaging the community elders to support us to explore answers to this question. We are also tracking time to find out how much time is being saved for such women and what they do with that time. The EOWE programme expects that this time will be redeployed to their businesses and that it translates to enhanced business performance and increased household income.