

# Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality



Stories of Transformation  
June 2023



# INTRODUCTION

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UN Women has been partnering and working closely with Amhara Bureau of Women, Children and Social Affairs (BoWCSA) to increase women's effective participation and equal representation in leadership through the "Enhancing Women's Leadership and Empowerment Project" since 2017 by employing multipronged strategies.

Among the strategies, capacity development programme on Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality for women leaders at various level coupled with mentorship support and promoting dialogue and awareness on the thematic area among various governmental and non governmental stakeholders in addition to facilitating community dialogue at grass root level to transform negative gender social norms have been employed since the start of the project. So far, UN Women in collaboration with AmharaBoWCSA built the capacity of more than 1300 women leaders and held gender forums including dialogues to promote women's participation in leadership and decision-making positions in the region. It also linked 109 mentees with 109 mentors through one-to-one mentorship approach. In addition, women leaders' networking platforms were established at regional, zonal and woreda levels to increase the voice, agency and leadership of women leaders and aspirants in Amhara region. These interventions boosted the confidence of women leaders to aspire for higher leadership positions as well as promote gender responsiveness in their respective positions.






# KENU BIADIG

HEAD OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OFFICE IN CENTRAL GONDAR

**Newfound confidence and developed a “I can do” mindset**

Significant changes because of the training: 



# ***Kenu Biadig***

## *Head of Women, Children and Social Affairs Office in Central Gondar*

Kenu Biadig, a 33-year-old Head of the Women, Children, and Social Affairs Office in Central Gondar, Ethiopia, once struggled with timely decision-making, effective time management, and delegation. She felt overwhelmed by her responsibilities, preferring to handle everything herself rather than trusting her subordinates. Overwhelmed by responsibilities, she hesitated to entrust tasks to her subordinates, hindering her effectiveness.

In 2023, Kenu's path took a decisive turn when she joined UN Women's WILG program. The intensive six-day training in Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality (TLGE) equipped her with essential skills in decision-making, personal development, gender and leadership, time management, communication, and mentorship.

The training empowered Kenu to embrace a new approach. She confidently signed a one-to-one mentorship agreement with a mentee, offering support in both personal and professional life. Meeting regularly, Kenu shared her experiences and insights, fostering a supportive and empowering relationship.

Kenu's newfound confidence extended beyond her mentee. Beyond her own transformation, Kenu collaborated with other UN Women-trained leaders. Together, they trained 65 women from various government organizations on TLGE Principles, creating a ripple effect of knowledge and empowerment further solidified her commitment to promoting gender equality.


The impact of the program on Kenu's life is undeniable. Her time management, decision-making capacity, communication skills, and relationships with colleagues have significantly improved. She has developed a "I can do" mindset, becoming a more effective leader and advocate for women in Central Gondar. Kenu emphasizes the transformative power of the training increased her decision-making capacity, enabling her to make evidence-based decisions swiftly and confidently.



# ALEMSIRA BELAY

TEAM LEADER AT GONDAR CLUSTER VOCATIONAL  
ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION CENTER

**Finding her voice and  
expressing ideas freely**

Significant changes  
because of the  
training: 



# ***Alemsira Belay***

## *Team Leader at Gondar Cluster Vocational Assessment and Certification Center*

Alemsira Belay, a 30-year-old team leader at the Gondar Cluster Vocational Assessment and Certification Center in Amhara, Ethiopia, initially felt stifled in her role. Despite her skills and dedication, she lacked confidence and avoided leadership positions, preferring to focus on executing tasks.

However, everything changed when she became part of UN Women's Leadership and Governance program. Specifically, the mentorship initiative paired her with a seasoned female leader. Through this mentorship, Alemsira gained valuable insights and support, learning to embrace her leadership potential. Weekly meetings with her mentor allowed her to reflect on her social and work life, leading to improved self-confidence, communication skills, and a growth mindset.

The impact was immediate and significant. Alemsira confidently accepted the team leader position offered by her office, becoming a vocal advocate for positive change within her workplace. She now actively participates in discussions, freely expressing her ideas and challenging existing malpractices. Her newfound confidence empowers her to speak up, bringing fresh perspectives and a commitment to inclusivity to her team.


Alemsira considers her improvement in self-expression as the most significant change resulting from her participation in UN Women's leadership and governance program. Her journey underscores the transformative power of mentorship and targeted training, unlocking individual potential and creating a ripple effect of positive change within organizations. Her story serves as a testament to the importance of empowering women to lead, fostering a more inclusive and equitable work environment.



# TSEHAY AMSALU

HEAD OF GONDAR CLUSTER CERTIFICATE  
OF COMPETENCE (COC) CENTER

**Improved decision-making  
abilities and boosted self-  
confidence**

Significant changes  
because of the  
training: 





# ***Tsehay Amsalu***

## *Head of Gondar Cluster Certificate of Competence (CoC) Center*

Tsehay Amsalu, a seasoned leader with over 15 years of experience, has served as the head of the Gondar Cluster Certificate of Competence (CoC) Center in Gonder. Despite her long-term service, she found herself increasingly frustrated and contemplating resignation. The challenges she faced in her workplace, coupled with a lack of community support for women in leadership roles, contributed to her feelings of frustration.

However, everything changed when she participated in UN Women's Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality (TLGE) training in 2023. The well-structured training empowered Tsehay to overcome her challenges and embrace her leadership position. She experienced a significant boost in self-confidence, improved decision-making abilities, and a strengthened commitment to promoting women in management roles. Her professional success was evident, leading to three recognition letters/awards from the government.

Tsehay's newfound confidence enabled her to effectively support women, address their concerns, and earn the respect and admiration of her community. She credits the training for helping her persevere in her leadership role, highlighting the transformative power of UN Women's programs.

Advocating for continued capacity-building initiatives for women, Tsehay suggests focusing on mentorship, engaging male leaders, and incorporating life skills and crisis leadership training. Additionally, she recommends experience-sharing workshops and visits both within and outside Ethiopia to foster a network of empowered women leaders.





# FENTAYE TIRUNEH

TEACHER AND LABORATORY DEPARTMENT  
HEAD AT GONDAR UNIVERSITY

**Improved expression of  
ideas and communication  
skills**

Significant changes  
because of the  
training: ✦



## ***Fentaye Tiruneh***

*Teacher and Laboratory Department Head  
at Gondar University*

Ms. Fentaye Tiruneh, a 31-year-old teacher and head of the Laboratory Department at Gondar University in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, faced challenges before joining the mentorship initiative of the UN Women Leadership and Governance Programme. She struggled to express her ideas freely and held a negative attitude toward leadership positions.

Fortunately, Fentaye was selected for mentorship support in 2023 through the UN Women program, which collaborates with the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Women, Children, and Social Affairs. After the mentorship orientation, she signed a one-to-one mentorship agreement and met with her mentor twice a month to discuss personal and social issues. Fentaye also followed the experiences of role model women leaders.

She successfully achieved her goals during the mentorship agreement, crediting the UN Women program for helping her improve her expression of ideas and communication with others. She developed a growth mindset and seized opportunities. Currently, she serves as a board member of the Women's Association. Fentaye emphasized that her ability to express ideas freely was the most significant change resulting from the program. She now confidently discusses her ideas and persuades others.


Finally, she recommends continuing this mentorship initiative at the woreda level to benefit more women.



# SIMEGNISH CHEKOL

DIRECTRESS OF GONDAR UNIVERSITY WOMEN  
AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

**Boosted self-confidence  
and improved  
communication**

Significant changes  
because of the  
training: 



# **Simegnish Chekol**

*Directress of Gondar University Women and Children Affairs Directorate*

Meet Ms. Simegnish Chekol, a remarkable leader and advocate for gender equality in Ethiopia. At 41 years old, she serves as the Directress of the Women and Children Affairs Directorate at Gondar University in the Amhara region with over nine years of experience in leadership positions. Before her transformative journey, Simegnish faced challenges familiar to many women in leadership roles. Out of the 62 members in the university's management body, only five were female. Simegnish recalls her situation before she participated in the TLGE training programme, she said “before I took part in the transformative leadership for gender equality (TLGE) training of UN Women, I lacked self-confidence and undervalued my own abilities. I used to think that women couldn't lead effectively and it left me feeling hopeless after encountering setbacks in my tasks.”

In 2023, Ms. Simegnish had a turning point. She became a beneficiary of UN Women's Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality (TLGE) training initiative. Collaborating with the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Women, Children, and Social Affairs, the program provided her with seven days of intensive training in Bahir Dar. The curriculum covered transformative leadership, time management, effective communication, personal development, gender awareness, decision-making, and mentorship. After being part of the training, Simegnish signed a mentorship agreement and engaged with her mentee twice a month. Their discussions spanned personal and social aspects, fostering a sense of familyhood and building a strong relationship.

The impact of the TLGE program was profound. Simegnish experienced a boost in self-confidence and self-esteem. Her communication skills improved, and she became more proficient at managing her time effectively. Most significantly, she learned to confront setbacks with resilience rather than despair.

In closing, Simegnish expressed heartfelt gratitude to UN Women Ethiopia for its invaluable support. Her journey exemplifies the transformative power of education, mentorship, and unwavering determination in breaking down gender barriers.



 **UN**   
**WOMEN** 