

Technical Brief

In Ethiopia, Gender Analysis Findings for the Pharmaceuticals Fund and Supply Agency on Women's Supply Chain Participation and Leadership

Background

Gender affects each step of the supply chain cycle, from the selection of specific commodities for procurement to distribution at the “last mile,” where a physical flow of products reaches the point where end users can access them. By allowing diverse perspectives, experiences and voices, promoting gender equality in supply chain management can fundamentally improve clients' access to quality medical products and technologies.

In Ethiopia, the percentage of women participating in the labor force has increased from 43.1 percent in 1990 to 47.3% in 2017¹. As in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, pharmacists dominate the health supply chain management (SCM) workforce. The gender make-up of the pharmacy profession greatly influences the number of women working in warehousing, distribution, forecasting and supply planning, and many other professions related to health supply chains. The first pharmacy workforce analysis conducted in 2010 indicated that 77.6 percent (1,474) of pharmacists were men and 22.4 percent (424) were women². Also, the Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Association reported similar statistics: 63.8 percent (1,149) male pharmacists and 36.2% (651) female pharmacists.

The Pharmaceuticals Fund and Supply Agency (PFSA), the organization in charge of supply chain management of public health commodities in Ethiopia, is committed to improving access and equity of essential healthcare services and commodities and addressing its workforce shortages. Moreover, Ethiopia's Pharmaceuticals Supply Transformation Plan (2015/16-2019/20) aims to enhance the role of women in leadership with its governance and management indicator, *number of women in supply chain leadership*.

In light of these goals and the perception that the supply chain workforce is overly segregated, PFSA, with the support of the USAID Global Health Supply Chain Program-Procurement and Supply Management (GHSC-PSM) project launched a study to identify workplace segregation and the gender-related factors that contribute to that segregation in the supply chain workforce. The results of the analysis would guide the recruitment and development of more

¹ https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Ethiopia/Labor_force_percent_female/

² <http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/10828/1/Gebremedhin%20Beedemariam.pdf>

women into jobs traditionally considered the province of men and would address the larger shortage of supply chain managers in Ethiopia's health sector.

Methods/Interventions³

GHSC- PSM supported PSFA's gender analysis by customizing IntraHealth International's *Gender Discrimination and Inequality Analysis (GDIA)* Toolkit.

The PFSA gender analysis considered two types of gender segregation⁴:

- **Horizontal gender segregation** which refers to the concentration of men and women in types of occupations or jobs. Men are concentrated in a wider range of gender-typed occupations or jobs; technical, management, scientists, or strength-based jobs (i.e., "male jobs") and women are concentrated in a narrower range of occupations, in lower-grade and less well-paid jobs that are less likely to provide benefits, on-the-job training, and fewer opportunities for promotion or to exercise authority or control.
- **Vertical gender segregation** which refers to the concentration of men and women in the organizational hierarchy, where women are concentrated in lower-level and less well-paid jobs, while men are concentrated in top-level managerial and leadership jobs.

The PFSA gender analysis was a rapid formative assessment to quickly obtain a holistic understanding of an organization and its culture, structure, policies and programs from both 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives.^{5 6} Data collectors were recruited and trained, a one-day pretest was conducted at PFSA Addis Ababa branch. After the pretest, a final data collection commenced on July 31st and ended on August, 11th 2017. The gender analysis was conducted in 10 out of 17 purposively selected PFSA branches and in its headquarters.

For this activity, data collectors employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques, including:

- Analysis of HR records of 417 (technical and management) employees selected from the 1,989 total employee records obtained from PFSA.
- Review of one PFSA-related document and 22 non-PFSA related strategic and operational documents to assess national legislation and policy.
- A survey of 193 (46.3%) of PFSA's 417 technical and management employees.

3 Information for this technical brief came from Report on a Gender Analysis for the Pharmaceuticals Fund and Supply Agency on Women's Supply Chain Participation and Leadership. Newman CJ and Geremew, E. 2017. USAID Global Health Supply Chain Program- Procurement and Supply Management.

4 Ibid.

5 Rapid Evaluation. I-Tech Technical Implementation Guide #6, 2009. University of Washington: Seattle.

6 Needle RH, Trotter RT, Singer M, Bates C, Page JB, Metzger D, Marcel LH. Rapid assessment of the HIV/AIDS crisis in racial and ethnic minority communities: An approach for timely community interventions. American Journal of Public Health 2003 Jun; 93(6): 970–79

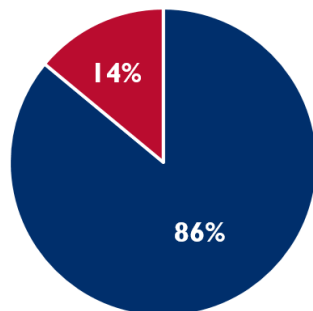
- Key informant interviews of 16 management staff; six from PFSA headquarters and 10 branch managers. Five (31%) of these were female and 11 (69%) male.
- Focus group discussions in six female and six male groups, comprising of 100 of 417 technical and management employees.

Quantitative data provided the number and percentage of men and women working in supply chain management (SCM) positions, i.e., the types of jobs and at what levels. Quantitative analysis was also used for responses to opinion and perception survey questions. Qualitative data revealed structural and cultural aspects of the organization or the wider society and the beliefs, norms and stereotypes that drive gender segregation.

Key Findings

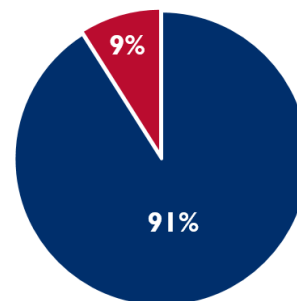
PFSA personnel records showed that there were 1989 supply chain employees; 1473 (74%) male and 516 (26%) female. Of these, 360 of 417 (86%) of supply chain workers directly involved in technical activities were men, and 57 (14%) were women. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number and Percentage of Women and Men in All SCM Jobs (N=417)



■ Men = 360 ■ Women = 57

Figure 2: Number and Percentage of Women and Men in Leadership Jobs (N=69)



■ Men = 63 ■ Women = 6

As shown in Figure 2, the concentration of men in leadership positions is very high: 63 of 69 (91%) are men, while six (9%) are women.

The study also investigated gender-related contributors to the gender segregation of supply chain management jobs. Key findings of the analysis are summarized as follows:

There are positive perceptions of women leaders, but also indications of negative bias. More than a half (62.1%) of respondents say they think men and women can equally perform any supply chain job except those that require heavy lifting.

When asked whether men and women are equally able to play leadership roles in supply chain management, 85 (71.4%) men and 27 (81.8%) women indicated that they believed so. However, women are expected to care for the household, while men are expected to pursue their education and employment outside of the home. Participants viewed domestic responsibilities as impacting a woman's ability to access job postings, promotions, examinations, training, and professional organizations. Moreover, the volume of household duties makes it difficult for women to find the time to search or apply for jobs, train for jobs or participate in other career development opportunities.

"I believe that it is better for a man to do physical work requiring labor than a woman because it is our nature; so we must accept that a man can do better in physical work than a woman because it would be difficult for her."

-Mixed staff focus group, female participant

Household chores primarily carried out by women include cooking family meals (87.5 %), housecleaning (83.3%), shopping for food (80%), and fixing and maintaining the house (80%)

Societal gender norms prescribe motherhood as women's primary role. Full-time supply chain work may threaten what are perceived as women's primary roles and responsibilities.

Focus group participants agreed that it is easier for men to take on work that requires travel. For example, even if a father traveled he could still be perceived as a good father regardless of his limited household and childcare responsibilities. Women, on the other hand, would be perceived as irresponsible if they prioritized their paid work over their children.

Most male and female participants agreed that pregnancy was not a formidable barrier to hiring or carrying out job requirements. Respondents agreed that job tasks could be modified to accommodate pregnancy. The greatest concern expressed by men and women is the ability to breastfeed for six months. Most respondents felt it was not feasible to work eight hours a day and breastfeed at the same time.

"An ideal mother is a mother who spends her time with her children for six hours and looks after them but the SCM work could even take you to border towns and that will not give her the time she wants to spend with her children." – *Line Managers focus group, female participant*

The actual and perceived demands of balancing household responsibilities, motherhood, and the workplace are even more pronounced for women in leadership due to additional workplace responsibilities. The "double burden" of work seems to put leadership out of the reach of working married women with children.

The organization, structure and culture of PFSA appear to be shaped by norms of full-time, "face-time" work, which do not allow flexibility for working parents.

The Government of Ethiopia has a policy and strategic framework that is favorable to gender equality, women's leadership, and support for workers with family responsibilities, but policies are not operationalized in institutional policy.

Conclusions and Implications

PFSA has a horizontally and vertically segregated workforce, where men occupy most supply chain jobs, both by job types and in the higher job levels. These suggest an important degree of horizontal and vertical gender segregation of the supply chain workforce. Reaching 50/50 gender parity in PFSA's supply chain leadership would necessitate an increase of 41% women in leadership jobs. This may be considered a baseline against which to measure changes due to project interventions.

The apparent gender segregation of the supply chain workforce seems to have several contributing factors: High expectations for motherhood and inequitable distribution of domestic chores and family caregiving responsibilities between men and women result in a high burden of family responsibilities for women that makes it hard for them to meet both their family and work obligations. While women are perceived as having the capabilities of effective leaders, and as equally capable of leadership, there appears to be some negative bias against female leaders.

There is lack of recognition in human resource policies and lifecycle event practices and of employees, possible underuse or uneven application of affirmative action measures, and processes of promotion into leadership jobs. However, this is balanced by a national policy and strategic environment favorable to gender equality, women's leadership and support for workers with family responsibilities.

Recommendations

The main recommendation is to implement a gender-transformative strategy based on substantive equality policies, with actions to increase women's participation in Ethiopia's PFSA workforce in more varied jobs and more senior levels.

Given women's present and historic disadvantage in education and paid workforce participation, a women's leadership strategy must reflect **substantive equality** policies, measures and enabling conditions to increase the number of women in supply chain management jobs and in leadership.

The main recommendation is to implement a gender-transformative strategy based on substantive equality policies, with actions to increase women's participation in Ethiopia's PFSA workforce in more varied jobs and more senior levels.

The approach should be **gender transformative**, i.e., implement policies and programs that seek to transform gender relations to promote equality, while achieving program objectives.

Validation and action steps

The findings, conclusions and recommendations of the gender analysis were presented to 79 PFSA employees from its central office and regional branches at a workshop in Addis Ababa from September 22-23, 2017. After validating the conclusions and recommendations, participants prepared action plans to implement the PFSA women's leadership strategy with actions and steps to be taken in the current and coming fiscal years.

Next steps

The preliminary findings and conclusions of the PFSA gender analysis have implications for the extent to which women will attain the most senior representation without targeted and sustained organizational change efforts. The path to women's leadership in the supply chain workforce does not appear straightforward. Indeed, it may take women with superior drive and desire to opt for a leadership path in the face of the cultural and practical barriers identified by the gender analysis.

The findings and summary conclusions suggest that employment processes and experiences are not "gender neutral," and thus, there is a need to include the organization (its culture) as a site of development and change. Further, a women's leadership strategy must reflect *substantive equality* policies, special measures and enabling conditions to increase the number of women in the supply chain management workforce and in leadership jobs.

Eleven priority actions were proposed under four components – affirmative mobilization, affirmative fairness, affirmative action, and enabling conditions – that are based on, and consistent with the Ethiopian constitution and various national laws and policies. Examples of priority actions include:

- Develop or improve systems to report on, monitor and evaluate progress towards women's leadership and substantive equality.
- Clarify promotion processes.
- Offer career planning to PFSA employees.
- Redesign work on a collective basis (e.g., by department or unit) to make work or the workplace more flexible for working parents with family responsibilities, while maintaining deliverables.