Midline Report

Evaluation of the FUTURES project

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Cover

A plant nursey in Witate kebele, Yayo woreda. Photo by Mrs. Almetsehay Sisay, Jimma University.

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Abbreviations

CSA	climate smart agriculture
D4I	Data for Impact
DA	development assistant
ECFF	Environment and Coffee Forest Forum
FGD	focus group discussion
FP	family planning
FPP	FUTURES project participant
FUTURES	FUTURES—My forest, my livelihood, my family
FPP	FUTURES project participant
HEW	health extension worker
KII	key informant interview
KYRHDO	Kulich Youth Reproductive Health and Development Organization
MSC	Most Significant Change
NABU	Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union
NGO	nongovernmental organization
ODA	Oromia Development Association
PFM	participatory forest management
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RH	reproductive health
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
UNC	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSLA	village savings and loan association
YCFBR	Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve
YFHS	youth-friendly health services
YSLA	youth savings and loan association

Executive Summary

Background

The FUTURES—My Forest, My Livelihood, My Family project (FUTURES) serves communities in the Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve (YCFBR), located in Oromia Regional State. Ethiopia . The three-year project was launched in April 2021 to address health, environment, and livelihood concerns of the YCFBR region. The project is implemented by CARE Ethiopia and its three local partners, Oromia Development Association (ODA), Environment and Coffee Forest Forum (ECFF), and Kulich Youth Reproductive Health and Development Organization (KYRHDO). FUTURES project activities are designed to target the economy, agriculture, and reproductive health (RH) sectors simultaneously, while working across household, community, and institutional levels, with a focus on women and youth. Project activities include health provider training and community education to reduce stigma to accessing RH services, entrepreneurship training and savings and loan programs for women and youth, diversified livelihood schemes, improved and climate smart agricultural interventions, and the formation and strengthening of multisectoral steering committees and mechanisms for knowledge sharing across sectors.

The FUTURES project evaluation, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and led by Data for Impact (D4I), aims to understand the impact of the FUTURES project on key health, agricultural, and livelihood and conservation behavioral outcomes, and to contribute to knowledge about the implementation of cross-sectoral programs, including monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) of such programs. A mixed-methods baseline evaluation was conducted November–December 2021. The baseline evaluation showed fairly high levels of family planning (FP) utilization, livelihood opportunities for women and youth, and improved forest conservation practices. Exceptions were the percentage of women actively using financial services; participation in participatory forest management (PFM) programs; and the application of various improved crop production practices, technologies, and inputs. Additionally, a low percentage of FP providers had received recent youth-friendly health services (YFHS) training. The full baseline report is available here: https://www.data4impactproject.org/publications/evaluation-of-the-futures-project-baseline-report/.

Midline Evaluation Aim and Objectives

The main development hypothesis that this evaluation aims to address is that integrating a health, livelihood, and environmental programming approach will lead to broader and more sustainable improvements than implementation of single-sector approaches.

The midline evaluation sought to contribute to what is known about the process of implementing cross-sectoral programs, including the community response to this type of programming. The midline evaluation approach follows the Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance (RE-AIM) framework to conceptualize the impact of the project as a product of the interaction between the framework's five dimensions. These dimensions (reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance) were used to formulate research questions to guide data collection and analysis.

Methods

Midline research questions were answered through qualitative data collection and project document review. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were held with community members (participants and nonparticipants) and project stakeholders to gauge their interest and experience with FUTURES activities, their level of participation in decision making and action, to identify any barriers to participation, and to collect their thoughts and perceptions on the integrated approach, including the perceived coordination/collaboration between activities.

FGDs were held in one kebele in each of the three woredas where FUTURES is implemented: Abdella (Chora), Sibo (Dorani), and Witate (Yayo). In each kebele, eight FGDs were held; one each with FUTURES participant groups and nonparticipant groups of male youth, female youth, male adults, and female adults. Two FGDs were also held with FUTURES implementing project staff, for a total of 26 FGDs with 204 respondents. Twenty-four KIIs were held with project stakeholders from local government agencies/offices, CARE Ethiopia and its implementing partners (IPs), kebele and woreda civil society and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), health extension workers, and the development agenda. The Most Significant Change (MSC) method was used to collect stories of change from project participants. MSC stories were collected during KIIs and at the end of FGDs with FUTURES staff and IPs.

Results

Key results for each domain of the RE-AIM framework are presented below.

Reach: Respondents felt participation was well-defined and that the project reached its target population, with the exception of reaching the "poorest of the poor" who faced financial barriers to participation. Participation of youth, especially male youth, was more limited.

Effectiveness: Increased opportunities for **livelihood** generation were seen as the most significant change resulting from project activities; accomplished through village savings and loan association (VSLA) groups, nursery enterprises, introduction of improved agricultural practices, and capacity building interventions. **Improved agricultural practices**, increased access to **FP/RH** services, and shifting **gender norms** were viewed as important contributors to improved livelihood opportunities. **Forest conservation** activities were seen as relatively less effective and less well-established.

Adoption: Knowledge and acceptance of the FUTURES project and multisectoral integration was well understood. VSLAs were seen as an important hub for linkages to other sectors and services. The most successful strategies were VSLAs and FP/RH services, and the least successful were YSLAs and conservation activities (PFM).

Implementation: Multisectoral integration happened mostly at the project and activity levels, whereas coordination and collaboration across sectors occurred at all levels, including government, project, and IPs. Project partners reported successful communication, collaboration, and coordination with local stakeholders, including local government. Barriers

included limited project area/intensity, a need to improve local ownership of the integrated approach, and pressure for immediate results and high expectations of the communities.

Maintenance: Respondents expressed a positive outlook on sustainability of the integrated approach due to buy-in, but also expressed a need for increased government ownership. Suggested project improvements were: to increase the intensity and reach; to improve male youth outreach; to strengthen conservation activities; to provide seed money for VSLAs; provision of more seeds/seedlings, irrigation materials, and market linkages; and increased training for life skills, financial literacy, and improved agricultural techniques.

Recommendations

The information provided by respondents in the midline evaluation of FUTURES generated several recommendations for the project. These include the following:

- *FP/RH services:* Continue to provide and expand FP/RH education for youth, including support for and awareness of YFHS; ensure consistent supply of FP/RH methods and materials.
- *Agriculture and conservation activities:* Reinforce training through follow-up visits; strengthen PFM groups and/or add activities to address community concerns related to the forest; consider additional support for agricultural market linkages, provision of high-quality seeds/seedlings, and tools and water irrigation materials.
- *Livelihood activities:* Continue to support VSLAs and expand where possible; strengthen support to and outreach for YSLAs; consider ways to involve the poorest community members in FUTURES activities; provide additional education on basic financial literacy; ensure that the project is reaching rural youth.
- *Multisectoral project approach:* Continue coordination and capacity strengthening for a multisectoral approach; plan for eventual transfer of ownership to local government agencies; advocate for allocation of funding from the public sector; continue to manage the expectations of community members through publicizing project goals and implementation activities.

Conclusion

The FUTURES project has employed an integrated multisectoral approach to address health, environment, and livelihood concerns of the YCFBR region. The project has been largely well-received by the communities served and has been perceived as more successful in addressing complex problems compared to single-sector approaches. Interventions that promoted improved livelihood opportunities, including through improved agricultural and savings practices, were seen to be the most important. Groups such as VSLAs provided important links to FP/RH services. Interventions related to conservation were seen as less successful, and future success in this area may depend on strengthening linkages between conservation and livelihood issues. Sustainability of the integrated approach will depend on local government commitment and capacity to continue the multisectoral integration established by FUTURES.

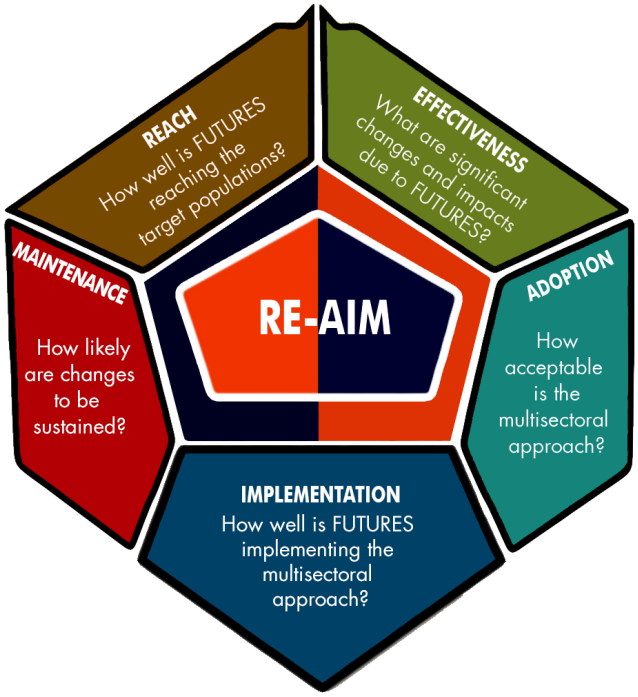
Evaluation Purpose and Questions

In 2020, the Packard Foundation funded a consortium of organizations to implement the FUTURES: My forest, my livelihood, my family (FUTURES) Project, an integrated family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH), agriculture, livelihood, and conservation project in Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve (YCFBR), Oromia, Ethiopia. In collaboration with the Packard Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Global Health/Office of Population and Reproductive Health requested that Data for Impact (D4I) conduct an outcome evaluation of the integrated project. Baseline data collection for the evaluation occurred in November-December 2021. The baseline report is available here (Mitiku, et al., 2022). This midline report presents results of the April–May 2023 midline data collection. The midline results will be used to inform further implementation and funding of the FUTURES project and to contribute to knowledge related to the implementation of multisectoral programs.

The main development hypothesis that this evaluation aims to address is that integrating a health, livelihood, and environmental programming approach will lead to broader and more sustainable improvements than implementation of single-sector approaches.

The midline evaluation of FUTURES followed the Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance (RE-AIM) framework (Glasgow, Vogt, & Boles, 1999; Tabak, et al., 2012) to conceptualize the impact of the project to date as a product of the interaction between five dimensions: reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance. These dimensions were used to structure and formulate research questions to guide data collection and analysis. Following guidance by Glasgow and colleagues (2019), the components were designed to address the most salient aspects of the project, in accordance with Learning Agenda questions.

Figure 1. Dimensions of the RE-AIM framework



The draft midline research questions were shared with project stakeholders, including FUTURES implementors and colleagues at the Packard Foundation and USAID. The resulting research questions were as follows:

(1) Reach appropriate audience (intervention coverage)

- How do project staff identify and recruit participants?
- Who is not being reached by the project's interventions?
- How transparent and fair is beneficiary selection?

(2) Effectiveness (achievement of expected/desired outcomes)

- What are the most significant changes (largest benefits) to participation in FUTURES according to participants, collaborators, and implementors? Are there differences by age or gender?
- How, and in what ways, does the FUTURES integrated approach contribute to:
  - Increased interest in, and use of, FP/RH and youth-friendly services? Are these services seen as high quality?
  - Increased empowerment of women and youth?
  - Increased participation in livelihood and economic development activities, especially among women and youth?
  - Increased participation in improved agricultural and conservation practices, especially among women and youth?
- How do participants compare the FUTURES project to other similar projects (e.g., Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union [NABU], Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation [REDD+], Farm Africa, PHE Ethiopia Consortium projects, etc.) implemented in the area?

(3) Adoption (acceptability and uptake of intervention)

- How do communities view the project? (Do they understand and accept the integrated approach, including the gender and FP/RH messaging? Are content and approaches appropriate?)
- Which activities garnered the most participation in the FUTURES project? And which ones garnered the least participation, and why?
- Do health extension workers (HEWs) perceive a greater interest in FP services, especially from youth? How do HEWs understand the integrated approach and synergies among services?
- Do Development Assistants (DAs) and natural resource experts perceive a greater interest from farmers, especially youth and women, in adopting improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture, and conservation? How do DAs understand the integrated approach and synergies among services?

(4) Implementation (intervention effectiveness or adherence to service delivery strategies)

- Do project partners communicate, cooperate, and collaborate effectively? Do project partners integrate their activities effectively?
- How do implementors understand the "integration" or "multisectoral" aspect of the project?
- Have the partnering organizations equally adopted an integrated approach to project management?
- How (at what levels) is integration happening?
- What have been the emerging implementation challenges? How have implementors modified/adapted service delivery to address emerging challenges?
- What are the supportive factors and obstacles encountered during implementation?

(5) Maintenance (sustainability of project impact and implementation)

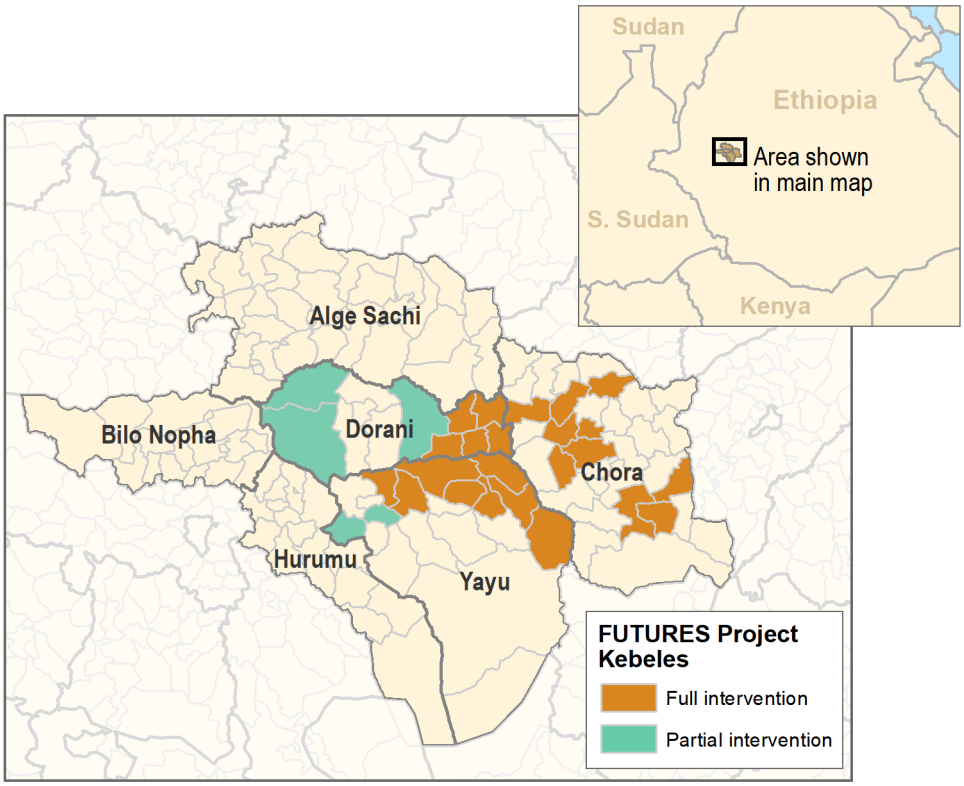
- How well are implementors and the government collaborating and coordinating to achieve sustained desired outcomes? (Is there an indication of increased government capacity? For example, co-planning, co-implementing, co-monitoring activities, sharing logistics, etc.)
- What are salient facilitators and barriers to the sustainability and scalability of improved behaviors/practices (e.g., improvements to forest management, improved agricultural practices, etc.)?

Background

The FUTURES project is a three-year FP/RH, environment and livelihood project started in October 2020 with an external launch in April 2021, with the potential for a two-year extension. The goal of the project is to achieve sustainable forest biodiversity and improved reproductive health and livelihoods of women and young people in the YCFBR. This long-term goal will be achieved through an integrated project that focuses on mutually reinforcing short-term objectives representing the development sectors in which the FUTURES project will be working. These are: (1) Improved FP/RH access and use for women and young people; (2) Improved livelihood opportunities for women and young people; (3) Improved forest conservation practices; and (4) Effective multisectoral partnerships for integrated programming and collective action developed and strengthened. It is expected that intervention activities will contribute to more than one objective and that the objectives themselves are mutually reinforcing. This integrated nature is exemplified by the project's Theory of Change (see Figure 3). FUTURES is implemented by CARE Ethiopia in collaboration with its three local partners, Environment and Coffee Forest Forum (ECFF), Kulich Youth Reproductive Health and Development Organization (KYRHDO), and Oromia Development Association (ODA).

FUTURES works in a total of 28 kebeles—10 kebeles in Chora, 10 kebeles in Yayo (of which two will have FP/RH activities only, as NABU will be implementing a project related to forest conservation and community development in these two kebeles), and 8 kebeles in Dorani (of which, three kebeles will receive only FP/RH activities from FUTURES). FUTURES is thus fully implemented in 23 kebeles and partially implemented in an additional five kebeles (FP/RH activities only). The selected kebeles in Chora are Abdala, Bero Muri, Chega, Dabo Tobo, Dalagsa, Dilbi, Halelu Hadesa, Ilala, Kodo, and Sibo Nogo. The selected kebeles in Dorani are Didu, Didu Haro, Hodha Obo, Machalee, and Sibo, with Batali gebebcha, Hena, and Warabo selected for FP/RH activities only. The selected kebeles in Yayo are Achibo, Bondawo, Gechi, Jeme Shono, Kamise, Leka, Witate, and Yambo, with Amuma and Geri selected for FP/RH activities only (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Map of intervention areas



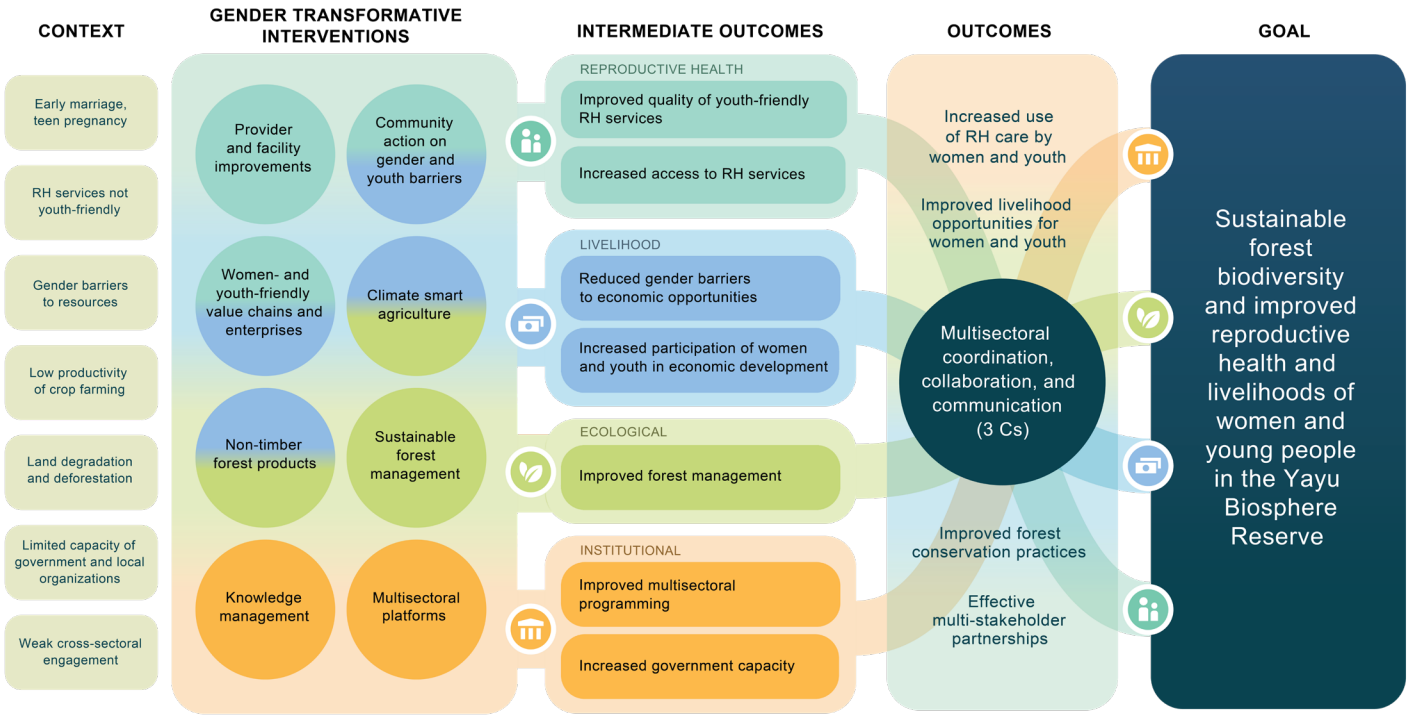
The target population for the FUTURES project includes youth and adolescents ages 15-29, women and girls ages 15 and older, and men and boys ages 15 and older living in the selected kebeles. The combined total population of the intervention kebeles at the start of the project was approximately 112,613, of which 57,267 were female and 55,346 were male.

A more detailed description of the project is available here.

Theory of change

The main goal of FUTURES is to improve health, including access to FP/RH information and services, while also increasing communities' management of natural resources in ways that improve their livelihoods, reduce drivers of deforestation, and conserve the critical ecosystems they depend upon. In recognition of the important roles that women play in enhancing human health and natural resource management, the project includes a gender-transformative approach in its design and implementation. The project's integrated approach responds to the multifaceted challenges encountered in rural, local communities and increases the capacity of local structures and systems to embrace integrated approaches (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Theory of change model



Methods

Midline research questions were answered through a combination of focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), Most Significant Change (MSC), and project document review, as described below. The midline data were mainly qualitative and were intended to help monitor implementation of the activities, provide contextual information, and explore the validity of critical implementation assumptions.

Focus groups and informant interviews were held with community members (participants and nonparticipants) in implementation areas to gauge their interest and experience with FUTURES activities, their level of participation in decision making and action, to identify any barriers to participation, and to collect their thoughts and perceptions on the integrated approach, including the perceived coordination/collaboration between activities. We also

explored exposure to local awareness-raising messaging, as relevant to project activities, and young people's perceptions of youth-friendly health services.

MSC stories were collected to highlight what project participants and stakeholders considered the most important impacts to date on coordination and collaboration, synergy of outcomes, reduction of gender barriers, and sustainability of project outcomes. Finally, FUTURES reports from years one and two were reviewed to triangulate information collected through FGDs, KIIs, and MSC.

Table 1 presents qualitative data collection methods, RE-AIM dimensions addressed, and data sources.

Table 1. Midline data collection by method, RE-AIM dimension, and data sources

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS **RE-AIM dimension**	**Data source(s)**
Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance	• Project staff
Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption	• Participants
Adoption	• Community members
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS **RE-AIM dimension**	**Data source(s)**
Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation	• Project staff • Donors
Maintenance	• Government • Local stakeholders
Adoption	• FP providers • DAs and natural resource experts • Model farmers
MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE **RE-AIM dimension**	**Data source(s)**
Effectiveness, Implementation	• Project staff
Effectiveness	• Participants

The midline study protocol, data collection instruments, and consent forms were reviewed by the Jimma University College of Agriculture and Veterinary Research and Postgraduate Coordination review board and granted ethical approval on March 28, 2023 (#1054-2023). These materials were also reviewed by the UNC-Chapel Hill Institutional Review Board (Study #23-0624, March 13, 2023) and determined to be non-human subjects research as defined under U.S. federal regulations [45 CFR 46.102 (e or l) and 21 CFR 56.102(c)(e)(l)]. Informed consent was obtained for individuals ages 18-49 and married minors ages 15-17 considered as

emancipated minors. Parental consent was obtained for unmarried minors ages 15-17 and assent obtained from unmarried minors ages 15-17. All qualitative data, including audio recordings, digital files, and written notes, contained no personal identifiers other than participant identification codes. Qualitative interviews were assigned a code number, and the list connecting personal information with this number was kept separate in a password-protected computer file on a password-protected and encrypted computer. Qualitative data are reported at the woreda level to minimize the potential for identification of respondents.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used for the qualitative component to identify informants/ participants with the most knowledge related to the activity(ies) of the FUTURES project. With purposeful sampling, one must decide who to sample, what form the sampling will take, and how many sites or people to sample (Creswell, 2013). FGDs were held in one kebele in each of the three woredas in which FUTURES is implemented. The evaluation team consulted with FUTURES staff on the selection of kebeles. Consideration was also given to accessibility by the data collection team and security conditions. The selected kebeles were Abdella, (Chora), Sibo (Dorani) and Witate (Yayo). FGDs in the three kebeles were held with community members selected in collaboration with implementing partners. The FGDs with implementing project staff were conducted at the zonal level (total of six implementing staff) and the woreda level (total of seven implementing staff).

Project stakeholders were purposefully selected from local government agencies/offices, CARE Ethiopia and its implementing partners, kebele and woreda civil society and nongovernmental organizations, community leaders (e.g., women in leadership roles), project stakeholders, health facility in-charges or providers, and others as identified in consultation with project implementers. Stakeholders were chosen based on having worked closely with the project, their knowledge of the interventions, and their location in the study area. Table 2 presents the number of respondents by data source and respondent type.

Table 2. Number of KIIs and FGDs by respondent type

Method and respondent type	Respondents		
	Total	Female	Male
Focus group discussions			
Project staff (implementors at zonal and woreda levels) – 2 with males/females any age	2 FGDs (n=13)	1	12
Youth 15-24, female and male – 3 with participants, 3 with community members	12 FGDs (n=94)	46	48
Adults 25-49, female and male – 3 with participants, 3 with community members	12 FGDs (n=97)	49	48
Total	**26 FGDs (n=204)**	**96**	**108**
Key informant interviews (including MSC)			
Government officials collaborating on activities	10	1	9

Method and respondent type	Respondents		
	Total	Female	Male
Leaders of civil society/nongovernmental organizations in selected woredas and kebeles (Farm Africa, PHE Ethiopia Consortium, REDD+)	3	0	3
FUTURES senior staff involved in project development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (CARE Ethiopia and IPs)	3	0	3
Health facility in-charges or FP providers	3	3	0
DAs and natural resource experts (PFM leader)	3	0	3
Model farmers	2	0	2
Total	**24**	**4**	**20**
Additional MSC interviews			
Model farmers	2	0	2
Project participants (adults and youth)	6	4	2
Total	**8**	**4**	**4**

The total number of respondents in the study was 236 (204 FGD participants, 24 KII participants, and 8 additional MSC participants). Among the participants, 104 were female and 130 were male, whereas 96 of the FGD participants were female (46 youth) and 108 were male (48 youth). No potential respondents declined to participate in the study.

Training and pilot testing

Drs. Fikadu Mitiku Abdissa and Adugna Eneyew Bekele, both associate professors in the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine at Jimma University, recruited data collectors, led training, supervised data collection, and conducted quality assurance for transcription and translation. A team of eight data collectors (three female and five male) were recruited for the study, based on their professional relevance to the study, experience in qualitative data collection, and availability during the study period. The names of data collectors are listed in Appendix 2.

KII and FGD guides (Appendix 3), which included prompts, were developed by the study authors with contributions and/or approval from FUTURES, Packard Foundation, and USAID stakeholders. Pilot training on the use of the guides was conducted prior to moving into the field.

Training was held April 17–18, 2023, at Jimma University College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine. The team received training on the FUTURES approaches and activities; qualitative study objectives; research methodology, including MSC, research ethics, and informed consent; and study instruments. Training on Dedoose software used for data analysis was provided to the entire team virtually by D4I's Ms. Liz Millar. The training on

Dedoose contributed to the development of research skills of Jimma University staff; as prior to the training, few staff were familiar with qualitative data analysis software and none were familiar with Dedoose. Combined with additional training on coding and summarizing qualitative data, the team expressed enthusiasm to learn and were pleased with the training, reporting that they felt it was useful.

Data collection

Data were collected from April 24–May 6, 2023. Potential respondents were identified by FUTURES staff and contacted by phone for an appointment. All FGDs were conducted in person and held at kebele centers. FGDs were held separately with female and male youth. FGDs lasted approximately 60–90 minutes. KIIs were conducted through a combination of in-person and telephone interviews. In-person KIIs were held at the informant's office or a quiet place in their compound. KIIs lasted from 30–45 minutes. All FGDs were conducted by pairs comprised of one female and one male. Interviews and FGDs were conducted in Afan Oromo. There was a pause-and-reflect session after the first day of data collection. The session was held to assess processes after the first day of data collection, to determine if modifications were needed to the tools, and to provide feedback to data collectors from supervisors. This session resulted in incorporation of MSC questions into all KIIs as well as of questions related to scalability for government collaborators and project staff. Feedback to data collectors included the need for preparation before starting the interview (such as by checking the recording tools) and reminders on roles for facilitation and note taking.

Pause-and-reflect session with data collectors, photo by Mrs. Almetsehay Sisay, Jimma University

During KIIs with FUTURES project participants, staff, and collaborators, respondents were asked to describe what they felt was the MSC resulting from project activities. Respondents were then asked to describe why they felt that change had occurred. FUTURES project staff were also asked this question in the two FGDs with implementors at the zonal and woreda levels. FGD respondents were asked to agree, disagree, or to add additional stories of change as needed. In KIIs with project implementors and collaborators, respondents were asked what they felt was the most significant or important change about the way the project was implemented.

FGDs and KIIs were audio recorded and handwritten field notes were also taken during the discussions and interviews. Recordings and notes were transcribed and simultaneously

translated into English Word documents on access-protected computers. Photos were taken with the study participants by a professional photographer. Transcripts were reviewed by the team supervisors for quality. Some KII participants were called for clarification during data transcription. Final transcripts were uploaded onto the Dedoose cloud-based server. Word files containing transcripts were also stored at Jimma University and UNC. After analysis, the audio files were deleted. Jimma University and UNC will continue to store transcripts and the codebook on access-protected computers until after dissemination events and/or publications of results.

Analysis

The four report authors invited six data collectors to participate in data coding and preliminary analysis based on their interest in developing qualitative skills and availability. The report authors developed a thematic codebook organized by the RE-AIM dimensions and evaluation questions. The draft codebook included 10 parent and 14 child codes, for a total of 24 codes. A retraining on Dedoose was held June 19, 2023, and included an introduction to the codebook and instructions on coding. The codebook was piloted in two rounds of independent coding on four transcripts by all members of the team. After each round, coding was reviewed for discrepancies and changes to the codebook were made as needed until coders demonstrated consistent coding. The final codebook, with 11 parent and 14 child codes, is included as Appendix 4. All ten members of the team participated in independent data coding. As part of the ongoing training, each of the six data collectors were paired with one of the report authors to receive additional support and guidance. Memos were used to make notes and communicate among team members. Coding was completed by July 25, 2023.

Coded excerpts and descriptors were then exported into Excel spreadsheets for analysis. Descriptors included sex, age group, data type (FGD, KII, or MSC), and participant type (FUTURES staff, project participants, nonparticipants, etc.). Excerpts were read and summarized by individual codes. Thematic matrices were developed for each code with summaries mapped to the research questions and RE-AIM framework (see codebook in Appendix 4 for mapping of research questions to each code). Using the matrices, the evaluation team assessed emerging themes and patterns of responses by topic area. Variations by age group, sex, geographic location, and type of respondent were noted.

MSC stories were initially reviewed by Dr. Bekele and Ms. Millar. MSC stories were summarized into a matrix and organized by common themes in change stories and respondent type. Change stories were mapped to the project's theory of change interventions and outcomes, where applicable, to connect MSC data with project goals and pathways; new or emerging outcomes or pathways were also captured.

Project annual reports were assessed for information on the number of training events and activities, number of participants, and/or for information on the participation of women and youth in improved agriculture and/or livelihood activities. Numbers for indicators identified in the MEL plan were compared to targets for the first two years of implementation and integrated into the results as relevant.

Findings from the different qualitative methods and project documents were triangulated and synthesized.

Potential limitations

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of qualitative data can be assessed by credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. The study sought to establish trustworthiness of the qualitative component using four criteria. First, credibility was established through stakeholder checks and triangulation. Stakeholder checks involved asking selected stakeholders to review the draft findings to corroborate facts, fill in any gaps, and address the confirmability of researcher interpretation. Triangulation of multiple data sources and methods was used to examine the issues from multiple angles and ensure we had the best possible understanding of them. We employed both data (e.g., different types of key informants with different perspectives and voices) and method (e.g., KIIs, FGDs, MSC) triangulation. Second, transferability, or the degree to which our results are applicable to other contexts or settings, was sought through the use of "thick" or rich descriptions to allow readers the opportunity to make judgments of how applicable our findings would be in a different context. Third, dependability addresses the consistency and reliability of the findings, and was maximized with records detailing the analysis process and related materials. Fourth, confirmability, or the extent to which findings are based on the researchers' interpretations rather than the ideas and experiences of participants, was minimized through the stakeholder check, the record trail, and data triangulation.

Field conditions

Field conditions were difficult due to heavy rains, bad roads, and power failures. The team was able to adapt and, despite the conditions, worked successfully together. As a result, no sites were missed, nor schedules changed, due to the field conditions. However, transcription of the field notes took additional time as the team could not work on them in the field due to the power failures.

Learning environment

The learning environment fostered by the study team meant that some aspects of the field work took more time to complete. Draft English transcripts were often sent back to the data collection team asking for additional details or better translations. Team members with less experience needed additional guidance in the field to successfully implement what they had learned during the training. After the transcriptions were completed, all members of the team volunteered to take a refresher training on Dedoose and to participate in coding of the transcripts. Therefore, pretesting the codebook and coding also took longer to complete due to the addition of training sessions, coaching, and paired coding with junior and senior members of the data collection team.

Results

Results are organized according to the research questions outlined by the RE-AIM framework.

1. Findings related to the reach of the FUTURES project

Identification and recruitment of participants

Data collectors leading an FGD, photo by Mrs. Almetsehay Sisay, Jimma University

FUTURES staff in FGDs and interviews reported that selection and recruitment of project participants was dependent on the intervention activity and that the criteria was well-defined ahead of project implementation. They reported that village savings and loan association (VSLA) membership was on a voluntary basis, and while also voluntary, membership in the participatory forest management (PFM) groups depended on the presence of a forest in the area. The PFM group members were organized into primary members—residents in the forested areas and secondary members—and those not living in forested areas but with some forest use rights. Selection for climate smart agriculture (CSA) activities depended on participant interest in technology adoption, their location for suitability of CSA practices, and their income/wealth status.

Community members generally reported that the project served all those interested and willing to participate who fit into the beneficiary groups—women between the age of 15-49; youth, both in and out of school; and community members engaged in agricultural practice and forest use. The project was known to be especially focused on the poorer members of the community. Nonparticipants were more likely to be unclear on the specific selection criteria or to not have an understanding of who could participate; although, nonparticipants in some communities said they were aware and felt that selection was fair.

Interventions like VSLAs, youth SLAs (YSLA), and PFM were used as entry points to train and raise awareness among youth, women, and girls on FP/RH issues.

One FGD composed of adult male FUTURES project participants (FPP) in Chora wanted to see the project have a wider reach in the community:

> *"We are satisfied with all the services that the project offered and need [it] to continue as it started. It would also be better if the project reached the wider community and improved maize varieties disseminated to the Abdela kebele…The project has focused on improving agriculture with vermicompost and this vermicompost needs to be provided for all the community engaged in agricultural practices."* *– Male adult, FPP Chora woreda*

Despite recognition that the project served youth, community members and participants also shared that youth participation was low, especially among male youth. A focus group of male youth participants stated they felt that:

> *"Nothing has been done for the youth. The youth have not been asked to save money. There is no support for the youth farmers."* – Male youth, FPP Doreni woreda

Nonparticipant members of some communities reported that they wanted to participate in the project but felt they didn't have clear information about why their community had not been selected or targeted for interventions. Such nonparticipants reported that:

> *"We are not aware of how the participants were selected to be the members of this project."* – Female adult, non-FPP Yayo woreda

> *"Opening space for those who are marginalized in the community and delivering all the services that FUTURES offers can improve the whole community life and reduce income disparities among the communities."* – Female adult, non-FPP Yayo woreda

Excluded populations

Project participants shared that, to their knowledge, individuals with outstanding loans and those outside the ages of 15-49 were excluded from joining. Some groups shared that the "poorest of the poor" were not able to join VSLA groups, as they could not afford the weekly contribution.

> *"Yes, there are people who want to participate in the FUTURES project; however, people that have no capacity to deposit money cannot be a member of VSLA. We also would like to participate in the project to improve our lives through training on health; on the importance of FP, different life skills that increase our awareness on health, agriculture on how to adopt different agroforestry practices."* – Female adult, non-FPP Yayo woreda

Lack of financial capital was often noted as a barrier to participation in the VSLA.

> *"Although there is fear among some women to pay the fixed weekly contribution, the poor are also a member and are participating in the association."* – Female youth, FPP Doreni woreda

In addition, some felt that the VSLA and YSLA requirements to contribute weekly to savings groups without providing seed money may have limited women and youth without capital to contribute to join.

> *"The FUTURES project is not providing the seed money for those who are not participating, and this scenario has discouraged the youth."* – Female youth, FPP Doreni woreda

Some respondents shared that women and youth who were not part of YSLAs/VSLAs or a PFM may not have received the messages about FP/RH services that were available to them, as these groups were seen as entry points for FP/RH messaging. Additionally, some participant FGDs mentioned that they felt "recruitment and outreach to involve male youth was lacking."

Transparency and fairness of beneficiary selection

Responses here were mixed, perhaps reflecting that project participation was led by local administrators rather than FUTURES staff. Participants and nonparticipants from most communities felt they understood selection criteria well and that participation/selection was a fair process. A few groups, however, reported that in their view, the selection criteria were not clear, or they felt that only those who knew someone in the kebele administration were selected to participate (this was expressed in Chora and Doreni). One community reported during an FGD that they felt YSLA selection did not seem fair as they observed all members were from the same family. In contrast, they reported that the VSLA selection seemed fair as the group included people from many different families.

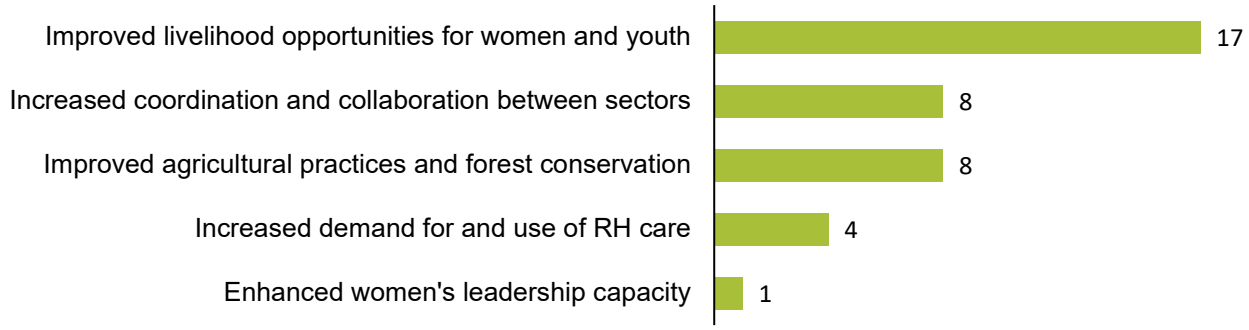
> *"The selection to the FUTURES project was not appropriate as most of the people were not aware of the plan and the goal of the project. The selection was done at kebele level and the information was not equally disseminated to the community. There was also the amount of money that the participants had to pay, and this didn't encourage participation of most of the poor who cannot afford this amount."*
>
> *– Male adult, non-FPP Doreni woreda*

2. Findings related to the effectiveness of the FUTURES project

Most significant benefits to participation in FUTURES according to participants, collaborators, and implementors

When asked in interviews and FGDs about the MSC brought by participation in FUTURES, respondents were likely to discuss changes related to improved livelihood opportunities followed by increased coordination among organizations and improved agricultural and forest conservation practices. FUTURES staff were asked about the MSC stories in FGDs and reached consensus in their discussion as to the most important change resulting from the project. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the open-ended responses categorized by outcome area.

Figure 4. MSC topics resulting from activities as identified during KIIs and the FGD with project participants, FUTURES staff, and project collaborators *



*In some cases, respondents named more than one most significant change.

Table 3 shows the interventions that were identified to have brought about the MSC, by respondent type.

Table 3. MSC by project outcomes and associated interventions as reported by respondent type

Respondent type	Outcomes	Interventions that brought about the change(s)
DAs - 2 males 	 Improved livelihood opportunities for women or women and youth	– Engagement in VSLA and nursey activities – Attitude shifts on savings and loan practices in the target groups – Cross-sectoral integration
HEWs - 3 females 	 Increased adoption of FP/RH services for women and youth  Improved agricultural practices and forest conservation  Increased coordination and collaboration	– Awareness creation of FP services facilitated by the project – Provisions of FP supplies to health facilities by the project and training for health workers – Alignment of project activities with existing mandates in government sectors

Local government collaborators – 12 males 1 female 	Increased coordination and collaboration Improved livelihood opportunities for women or women and youth Increased adoption of FP/RH services for women and youth	– Increased communication and commitment between sectors and organizations initiated by FUTURES – Saving culture developed through VSLA participation – Production of seedlings in nursery groups – Improvements in youth-friendly services
NGO stakeholders – 2 males 	Improved livelihood opportunities for women or women and youth Improved agricultural practices and forest conservation	– Saving culture developed through VSLA participation – Changes in societal attitudes on forest protection
FUTURES staff – 3 KIIs, male; 2 FGDs* with total of 12 males, 1 female 	Improved livelihood opportunities for women or women and youth Improved agricultural practices and forest conservation Enhanced women's leadership capacity	– Awareness creation and attitudinal changes fostered through VSLAs – Awareness raising on the importance of conservation – Training specifically on vermicompost and beekeeping – Multisectoral collaboration – Empowerment of women in various social affairs and leadership capacities
FUTURES Participants – 4 males including 2 model farmers 	Improved livelihood opportunities for women or women and youth Improved agricultural practices and forest conservation	– Nursery activities and YSLAs – Training and capacity building, especially on beekeeping and vermicompost – Market linkages to engage in business and livelihood generation – Awareness building on the importance of forest conservation
FUTURES Participants – 4 females 	Improved livelihood opportunities for women or women and youth Improved agricultural practices and forest conservation	– Opportunity to engage in small business through VSLAs – Training on savings and credit, and small-scale trading activities – Training on good agricultural practice

*During FUTURES staff FGDs, respondents agreed on an MSC story.

Improved livelihood opportunities for women and youth were the most frequently discussed significant change resulting from project activities. The excerpt below from a local government collaborator highlights how VSLA groups contributed to livelihood opportunities as well as being an important hub to create awareness for forest conservation and other topics.

> *"From my perspective, the most significant change in the communities served by the project is the saving culture developed by women through VSLA, and the associated livelihood improvement or job creation for both women and the youth groups. In addition, the awareness creation and the attitudinal change of women and youth on the importance of forest conservation and on impacts of deforestation can also be considered as the MSC in the communities." – Local government collaborator, female*

This excerpt from a youth participant in Yayo woreda highlights how improved livelihood opportunities and participation in a local VLSA group contributed to her feeling empowered as a leader in her community.

> *"Before joining VSLA, I used to sell coffee, tea, and biscuits. I did this by buying only one or two kilos of flour. I made the biscuits and sold them with tea and coffee to make a living and I didn't have any shop. I joined the VSLA and after my savings reached 3,000 ETB, I borrowed 9,000 ETB, three times my savings. I grew my business by purchasing 50 kilos of flour, 20 liters of oil and coffee. I have grown my business into a shop with the money I made from these activities...I am repaying my team's debts and running my own business in a good way. Now I am an owner of a shop!"*
>
> *"I was previously unknown and I had no recognition either by the kebele administration or others. I had finished school and was making biscuits in my house to earn a living. Currently, because of the FUTURES project and the establishment of the women's VSLAs, I am the facilitator of women's groups in this area. I was able to do this because I have been attending various trainings in the kebele and district organized by FUTURES project. Now, I am an empowered woman thanks to the FUTURES project!"*
>
> *– Female youth FPP, MSC interview, Yayo woreda*

A participant from Doreni woreda discussed how her participation in the VSLA group gave her access to lifesaving funds for her family:

> *"I have been trained on VSLA and contributed money regularly. At the time of contribution, unfortunately my son became sick, and I lacked the money to send him to hospital. It was a serious issue in which my son was affected by nasal bleeding and reached the level of death. In the midst of life's challenges, thanks to VSLA and God, I have borrowed 1,000 ETB from the VSLA to treat my son at the health center. After the treatment, my son was cured and back home. VSLA is the life curing strategies that are designed for poor people. Because of the FUTURES project, my son hasn't passed away." – Female adult FPP, Doreni woreda*

Male participants were more likely to name improved agricultural practices as the MSC resulting from the project. This youth participant from Chora woreda described how access to seeds and market linkages have benefited him and his family:

"The FUTURES project has made an intensive investment in my life. They organized about 13 youth on the nursery work…Currently, we are nine in number, four of our group members were unable to continue with us due to their poor work culture. They also gave seed for all seedlings you can see on the field—avocado, coffee, grevillea, improved banana, improved enset [false banana], conifer, potato, tomato, and hot pepper—and the necessary farm tools for nursery work. We have effectively implemented all the technical advice and training we get from the FUTURES project. Discussing with local government collaborators the FUTURES project created market linkage for our seedling. Particularly, the Office of Agriculture played a lion's share in creating the market linkage. The nationally launched green legacy initiatives also created a good opportunity in getting market for our seedlings. Last year, we got 107,000 ETB from the sales of seedlings. From that share, I bought a cow and 200m^2 land on the roadside. My cow gave a calf and my children are drinking milk today. This was unthinkable without the FUTURES project." – *Male youth FPP, Chora Woreda*

An adult male participant from Chora woreda spoke specifically about training on beekeeping practices and opportunities for his local community to improve livelihood opportunities:

"They trained me on beekeeping technologies, bee feeding and management, nursery establishment and management, and various spice technologies…Even though my village is highly suitable for beekeeping, I hadn't even noticed it. I used to buy honey for my family from the local market. I then started making and buying the traditional hive to start beekeeping around my home. Finally, I was able to establish my own apiary site which has 20 hives. From the traditional hive, I get an average of 3kg/hive, while 14kg/hive from the modern hive. I noticed the productivity difference and added eight modern hives at my own cost. I now have about 35 beehives…Most importantly, the way I see the resources around my area has been totally changed. The FUTERES project used to teach local communities on my farm, and I am now able to share my experience with others. What I now understand is that there are many more opportunities to improve the livelihood of people in our area if everyone opens their eyes. FUTURES project is now opening our eyes."

– *Male adult FPP, Chora Woreda*

Interest in, and use of, FP/RH and YFHS; quality of services

FP/RH activities mentioned by respondents mainly centered around training and awareness raising, for which there was much support. The trainings mentioned included more than informational sessions about contraceptive methods and services—sexually transmitted infections, infant mortality and birth intervals, child health and nutrition, early marriage, and others were mentioned in FGDs. Counseling received at school was also mentioned in the youth FGDs.

"We have been participating in the school education that the FUTURES project prepared to train the girls on gender, sexually transmitted disease, and counseling on future life related challenges. The project has changed our minds and we are not the same as nonparticipants with regards to early marriage and sexually transmitted diseases. We know the way to achieve our goal and the way to pass tricky challenges."

– Female youth, FPP Chora woreda

Trainings were described as crucial to help young women make informed decisions regarding their health and wellbeing (female youth FPP FGD in Yayo). In fact, some FGD participants considered the FP/RH interventions to be the most important interventions of the project.

Sign for the Yayu Health Center, photo by Mrs. Almetsehay Sisay, Jimma University

HEWs and FUTURES staff also discussed the activities relating to service training for the provision of long-acting methods and setting up a separate space at health facilities to serve youth clients. These were understood as important to increasing access to FP/RH. FUTURES staff also discussed the importance of including men in FP/RH activities and working with local community elders to promote FP awareness.

Across the FGDs and KIIs with FPPs, non-FPPs, HEWs, local government collaborators and stakeholders, and project staff, there was a common perception that interest in FP/RH and use of FP/RH services had increased in the intervention areas. For example, in one focus group of adult male participants from Doreni, discussants mentioned the FUTURES FP/RH services as one of the most important services received in their life. The FGD participants admitted that before joining the project, they had no idea about FP and its benefits. They thought FP was only for rich and educated people. But, during the project, participants learned about the importance of FP for a healthy and happy family. They stated they could now make informed decisions about FP and convinced their wives to support each other in this matter. The FGD participants said that this change helped them to reduce the economic burden of having more children. Others expressed similar sentiments.

"We believe that the improvement in FP use is due to the intervention of this project in the area."

– Male youth, non-FPP Chora woreda

> *"The FP services helped us make informed decisions regarding having children."*
> *– Female adult, FPP Chora woreda*

One woman gave a personal account of how FUTURES participation influenced her life:

> *"Before the project, one of my kids died in my womb and after taking the FP training, I used contraceptives and just stopped giving birth each year, and my life went fine. It may lead me to death if I do not continue to use it." – Female adult, FPP Doreni woreda*

Knowledge and use of long-term methods was also understood to have increased due to the project's activities.

> *"They are working on improving women's awareness of available FP options. This has increased utilization of long-term FP methods in the woreda."*
>
> *– Female, KII, local government collaborator*

Many nonparticipant focus group discussants assumed lives were better for participants in FUTURES activities due to their involvement with the project, though some were uncertain of whether positive changes were due to the project or not.

> *"There is a change in the use of FP, but we don't know whether it is implemented by the project or others." – Female youth, non-FPP, Yayo woreda*

The positive response to FP/RH activities was reflected in the Year 1 and Year 2 annual reports, showing that FUTURES was meeting or exceeding the planned targets for FP/RH outcome indicators for the first two years of implementation, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. FP/RH targets reached during years 1-2 of project implementation

FP/RH activity outcome	Total	Planned
Individuals receiving FP/RH information	9,202 (5,297 female)	6,000
Peer educators trained	680 (378 female)	680
Youth who received counseling on FP/RH topics	14,000+	12,550
Health facilities supported	41 (28 health posts, 10 health centers, 3 private clinics)	38
Health workers trained to provide youth-friendly services	28	28
Community scorecards completed	8	20

Perception of FP/RH and YFHS

Discussion of service quality centered around improving access. Access was understood to have increased due to improvements in making services available to youth, through YFHS, and to improving the method mix available to clients, through offering long-term methods. As noted by a member of FUTURES staff:

> *"The project has improved access to FP/RH services, especially through promoting youth-friendly extension and counselling services. For improving the services, the project, for example has arranged special rooms for treatment of any kind of disease for youth of age ranging between 12 and 24 years. As this is also in line with the government's priority area, the project has seriously worked on improving the services." – KII*

A FGD of female youth participants from Yayo expressed gratitude for free and confidential services and accurate information on contraceptive methods and how to prevent STIs, but some participants mentioned that they faced challenges accessing the health services due to a lack of supplies like medicine and health equipment. One FGD of male youth participants (Yayo) were unaware of the separate spaces.

The response to engaging with men was reflected in the positive comments about FP, as seen from all the male FGD members. However, some female youth felt that while most men knew about traditional methods of birth control, their knowledge of the subject was poor and misconceived. Therefore, "*the project needs to work more on improving the husband's mind on FP and its benefits*."

Contribution of the integrated approach to increased interest in, and use of, FP/RH and YFHS

Overall, there was good knowledge and acceptance of the integrated cross-sectoral activities, even among nonparticipants, as exemplified by the following quotes.

> *"…A team including NRM, health, and administration came one day to visit the potato farm. The messaging was integrated. HEWs, DA, NRM speak the same language in an integrated way." – Male youth, FPP Doreni woreda*
>
> *"I do believe that the cross-sectoral activities have contributed to the increased interest in improved agricultural and conservation practices; for example, the VSLA services have given the opportunity to be engaged in agriculture-related small businesses like vegetable and poultry production. In addition, enhanced FP adoption has positive implications to the forest as it contributes to minimizing the pressure on the resource."*
>
> *– Male, DA, KII*

The integrated approach seemed to appeal to a FGD with female youth participants in Yayo, because it addressed the interconnectedness of different facets of their lives and had shown significant impacts on the lives of the FGD members. In Doreni, male youth nonparticipants agreed that integrating information on RH into agricultural or livelihood trainings could be

effective for increasing women's participation in FP/RH services and would therefore be ideal if provided more widely to the community. One FGD of female adult nonparticipants in Doreni could not speak to the effectiveness either way, as they were not familiar with the approach. An FGD of male youth participants from Yayo assumed the cross-sectoral approach was the best approach, but they had a perception of weak cooperation among the team, as the health experts mostly focused on health issues and the agriculture experts mostly focused on agriculture issues.

Often, the links between FP/RH were expressed in relation to improved livelihoods, as it was understood that fertility control allowed women to participate in income-generating activities, and the VSLAs and YSLAs were specifically mentioned as important hubs for disseminating messages about different sectors. Because of this, it was speculated in KIIs with project staff that the FUTURES partial implementation areas might not be as successful in FP/RH as the full implementation areas, since the YSLAs/VSLAs and the PFM were used as entry points for trainings and raising awareness. Linkages between FP/RH and agriculture and conservation were discussed less frequently yet highlighted how participation in these FUTURES activities helped to link participants to FP/RH trainings and services and improved their knowledge of FP/RH issues. Only one group, consisting of non-FPPs, explicitly discussed how use of FP and birth spacing could allow for increased agricultural activity.

Contribution of the integrated approach to empowering women and youth

When asked whether the project had succeeded in empowering **women** within their communities, both participant and nonparticipant community members said that the project was effective in creating awareness and making progress to shift norms and attitudes regarding the roles of women. Community members attributed this to the different training and awareness-raising efforts implemented by the FUTURES project intervention. They reported that increased engagement of women in livelihood-generation activities demonstrated the potential for such opportunities to benefit women, their families, and their communities. Respondents of focus groups in some communities cited examples of increased participation of women in community decision making and leadership roles.

> *"In our community, there is also a change in the attitudes of husbands because of the change that the women are showing in their livelihood."* – *Male adult, non-FPP Doreni woreda*

> *"Currently, because of the FUTURES project and the establishment of the women's VSLAs, I am the facilitator of women's groups in this area. I was able to do this because I have been attending various trainings in the kebele and district organized by FUTURES project. Now, I am an empowered woman thanks to the FUTURES project!"*
>
> *– Female youth FPP, MSC interview, Yayo woreda*

DAs and HEWs working on FUTURES activities reported increased collaboration to deliver health and agricultural training, and training focused on gender equity in household roles, to

encourage husbands and wives to redistribute household labor. The project has worked to cascade gender training to all intervention woredas and kebeles in collaboration with the zonal and woreda-level women's and youth offices. Nonparticipant community members also voiced their appreciation for the integrated approach, saying:

> *"Women's empowerment enables all the households to participate in the business that can uplift their life from poverty. The linkage and the integrated training given on health, economic livelihood, agricultural improvement, and forestry management has contributed to the improvement in the attitudes of the women and youth towards business, forest management, and FP."* – Female youth, non-FPP Chora woreda

Conversely, some community members felt that it would be hard to attribute any change directly to FUTURES, as government actors had already been working toward women's empowerment in the region.

> *"We've noticed some changes in attitudes toward gender roles, but we're not sure who brought them about."* – Female youth, non-FPP Doreni woreda

Reactions to whether the project had successfully empowered **youth** were more mixed, with some respondents expressing that the project had provided important livelihood opportunities for youth through YSLA and nursery activities. Female youth participants tended to speak more positively about the impacts of the project and articulated the ways in which the project benefitted them—through increased awareness and knowledge related to modern agricultural practices and home gardens, group engagement with other young women, and access to markets for selling their produce, which increased their income and motivation.

> *"The FUTURES project has given me the ability to make improved decisions for both myself and my family, which makes me feel more empowered."* – Female youth FPP, Yayo woreda

However, it was noted that youth project participation was less so than adult participation. Suggestions for improvement included more outreach to youth and increased support for market access, and for credit and business loans. One male youth expressed:

> *"Nothing has been done for the youth. The youth have not been asked to save money. There is no support to the youth farmers…the FUTURES [project] serves only women and men in this kebele.."* – Male youth FPP, Doreni woreda

Contribution of an integrated approach to participation in livelihood activities

FUTURES staff stated that the project aimed to improve livelihood opportunities in communities served by the project through the introduction of various income-generation activities, establishment of VSLA and YSLA groups, and various capacity building trainings to raise the awareness and capability of participants.

> *"First, the community had poor saving habits, and the intervention has changed this attitude. Second, saving and loan demand has increased. Third, women get three-fold loan from their saving and [are] able to engage in small business. – FUTURES project staff*

VSLAs and YSLAs are self-managed groups of 10–20 women and youth from the community who meet regularly and contribute money into a combined savings account. Members are then able to access small loans. VSLAs were widely reported to positively impact the livelihood opportunities of women. VSLAs may also have reduced dependency on other, potentially riskier options for borrowing money with higher interest rates, such as taking loans from wealthier individuals. Participant women reported that VSLA services were instrumental in improving their economic well-being by enabling them to engage in different income-generation activities, like selling and trading grain, bualtina, butter, honey, and home garden products (e.g., vegetables including tomatoes, cabbages, onions, garlic, and potatoes, and herbs such as rosemary). One participant said, "I have been able to start a small business with the savings I made, and I am now able to support my family." Women participating in VSLA loan services were able to start their own small businesses in poultry, coffee, sheep fattening, and vegetable production, among others.

Table 5. Livelihood targets reached during years 1-2 of project implementation

Livelihood activity outcome	Total	Planned
YSLAs/VSLAs supported	185	160
VSLA business plans developed	49	23
YSLA/VSLA members	3,754	6,450
Total savings from VSLA groups	2.5 million birr	*Not available*

YSLAs were reported to have created important opportunities for youth, but the impact was noted to be less than that of VSLAs. A main reason cited for this was the lower participation of youth, especially male youth; some respondents speculated this was a result of youth having less access to funds to contribute to YSLA groups. Some participants felt there was less outreach to recruit youth participants, or that perhaps youth in the region were more migratory and preferred to look for economic opportunities through jobs in different regions.

Overall, project participants, staff, and stakeholders felt the project had the greatest impact on livelihood in communities served by the establishment of VSLA groups, nursery enterprises, introduction of improved agricultural practices, and/or capacity building interventions. The project reported 72 trainings and workshops held on alternative livelihoods in the first two years of implementation. Project participants reported that women were increasingly participating in economic development, and that bottlenecks to their economic participation had been reduced through increased access to economic resources, knowledge, and markets, as well as the connections established through VSLA participation among women embarking on small business opportunities.

An example of bee keeping practices, photo by Mrs. Almetsehay Sisay, Jimma University

> *"Training was given on improved agricultural practices such as poultry, bee keeping, animal fattening especially. We have observed that different improved seeds of garden vegetables such as carrot, garlic, and beetroot were distributed for the community, and they benefited from it both nutritionally and financially. These and other activities contribute to livelihood improvement of the participants, especially poor women, which, in turn, contribute to the well-being of the community."*
>
> *– Female youth, FPP Doreni woreda*

Nonparticipants agreed that the project empowered women through trainings and access to savings programs. They reported that women benefited from VSLAs and noted that a main difference they could now observe between participants and nonparticipants was the savings practices the participants developed. Participants joined in savings groups and some of them received loans to help start small businesses.

There were also community members in some areas who reported knowing women in the village who participated in FUTURES-supported programming like the VSLA, but they hadn't noticed an improvement in their life directly related to their participation. They felt:

> *"The project hasn't brought any tangible change to the community as of now. We noticed that there were activities being done, but there was no visible change it has brought in the community."* *– Female adult non-FPP, Dorani woreda*

Acceptability and participation in improved agricultural and conservation practices

Most of the participants in the different categories of FGD and KII felt that the acceptability of improved agricultural practices, such as crop rotation; intercropping; soil fertility management; soil and water conservation; use of organic fertilizer, such as animal manure and vermicomposting; climate smart agriculture; and forest conservation, had been improved due to FUTURES project interventions. Increased acceptance of improved agricultural practices was attributed to project intervention through training and capacity building; introduction of new technologies such as vermicompost to the area; provision of different improved vegetables; grafted avocado; improved banana; improved beehives; improved enset; improved coffee; and the demonstration of these technologies at nursery sites and in farmer's fields. The most often mentioned of these was training in vermicomposting, followed by the establishment of nurseries and training on, and provision of, improved seeds and seedlings (e.g., avocado, grevillea, potato, coffee, spices, tomato, hot pepper, and other vegetables).

The project reported over 8,000 seedlings distributed during the first two years, including avocado (651), coffee (3,806), banana (768), enset (150), grevillea (2,410), vetiver grass (210), and pineapple (40)—over half of which were distributed to kebeles in Dorani woreda.

On the subject of vermicomposting, according to FUTURES staff, this practice:

> *"…was not known in the area before our project. We trained and raised awareness of farmers to use vermicompost. These interventions were made on three farmers in each kebele and used as demonstration centers to train the other farmers in the kebeles."*
>
> *– FUTURES staff, KII*

Female, male, youth, and adult FGD members expressed high degrees of acceptance of these practices, as well as the desire to be provided with any knowledge or skills that could improve agricultural yield and productivity. Respondents also felt that the FUTURES project had improved the awareness and acceptability of climate smart agriculture and forest conservation practices. FPPs reported attending training sessions and receiving informational materials from the project that increased their knowledge of these practices. Participants mentioned that the project supported the establishment of community forests and provided training on sustainable forest management practices, leading to a perceived reduction in illegal logging and land-use change.

Many FPP groups provided details on how the interventions helped. For example, one FGD with female youth reported that FUTURES helped them by (1) increasing awareness and knowledge related to modern agricultural practices, which helped them improve their yields and productivity; (2) increasing group engagement, which helped the young women to share experiences and learn from each other; (3) increasing awareness of home garden agroforestry (a sustainable, eco-friendly gardening practice that involves growing food crops and trees together in small spaces); and (4) accessing markets, which increased income and motivated them to continue farming.

Market access was seen as an essential supportive factor for improved agricultural practices.

"I have been participating in this seedling production consecutively for the last few years. However, there was no market for the seedlings. After the FUTURES project came to our kebele, I got the market through the project and sold all that I had last year."
– Male adult FPP, Chora woreda

An example of seedling production in practice, photo by Mrs. Almetsehay Sisay, Jimma University

FGDs of male youth FPPs reported that, after the trainings, the use of vermicomposting had increased; in addition, grafted avocado increased and the cutting down of trees decreased. In one FGD, a participant mentioned that the project organized a tree-planting campaign in the community, which was well-received by the residents. Another participant discussed participating in a farmer field school established by the project, which enabled them to learn from other farmers and share experiences. Other FGD members mentioned increased income through their support of improved agricultural practices—like improved seeds for coffee, avocado, spices, and vegetables (tomatoes, onions, garlic, beet root); modern beehives (honey); chicken production; and fattening of goats—that enable better agricultural outcomes and lead to higher crop yields.

Challenges were also identified related to promoting improved agricultural practices, CSA, and forest conservation in the community. Some respondents mentioned that farmers were still resistant to change and preferred traditional methods. Others were said to face financial constraints and lacked access to resources such as seeds and tools. And it was noted by others, that while the project was introducing improved agricultural technologies for various fruits that could reach harvest in a short period of time, it was not bringing improved coffees, which were seen as the most needed crops by farmers.

"Also, we note that conservation practices are not really functioning as planned. The established of PFM has not shown any results, since it is still in process and the construction of the office was also late in our village compared to other areas we have heard. Still, the project needs additional time to judge its outcome regarding the PFM; nevertheless, the starting is good." *– Male adult, FPP Yayo woreda*

Participation of women and youth in improved agricultural and conservation practices

Results from FGDs and KIIs show that the integration approach of the FUTURES project was perceived to have contributed to increased participation by women and youth in improved agricultural and conservation practices.

> *"Because of the project's implementation strategy of the integrated approach, the participation of youth and women in improved agricultural practices have increased. The youth have especially benefited from the nursery activities…the same is true for females as the result of the benefits they have seen from VSLA services."* – *KII, DA*

An FGD with female adult FPPs in Yayo explained that when different sectors like health, FP, and economic livelihood-generation activities work together, a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to agricultural development results. A female participant stated that economic livelihood-generation activities, such as income-generation and savings and credit services, are crucial for women to participate in agriculture. She explained that when women have access to these services, they can invest more in their farms, buy better seeds and fertilizers, and financially support their families. Another participant mentioned that FP/RH services are important for improving agricultural practices because they empower women to make informed choices about their RH. This enables women to better plan their pregnancies and spacing of their children, which, in turn, allows them to manage their time and resources more effectively and more actively participate in agricultural activities.

Such sentiments were echoed by FGDs among men, who felt that increased participation of women and youth in improved agriculture could be attributed to collaboration of the different sectors and the integration of activities; training and capacity building programs; women and youth access to resources such as seeds, seedlings, land, and tools; community mobilization to enhance awareness on women's empowerment, which helped to change attitudes toward women and youth involvement in agriculture; and advocacy efforts, which engaged policy makers and other stakeholders to ensure the needs of women and youth are addressed in agricultural programs.

Non-FPPs also witnessed that the integrated approach contributed to increased women and youth participation in improved agricultural practices through providing them different inputs, stating:

> *"We have heard and seen that women and youth group members or participants have taken part in various activities that have had positive impacts on their lives. For instance, they have been able to successfully save money through a savings association, which has enabled them to access loans for doing small business, like vegetables and fruit trade, goat and sheep rearing, grain trading activities. Additionally, they have adopted improved agricultural practices such as home garden agroforestry, as well as the use of better seeds for fruit and vegetables. These improved seeds include vegetable seeds like potato, tomato, hot pepper, coffee, and avocado seedlings and other high-quality seeds that have resulted in improved yields. The group has also been involved in conservation practices, particularly forest conservation within their kebele."* – *Female adult, non-FPP Yayo woreda*

Though almost all respondents conformed with the understanding that the integration approach of the project contributed to the participation of women and youth in improved agricultural practices, some respondents felt that there was too much reliance on training and raising awareness.

> *"Though the project has contributed towards the knowledge of households including women and youth about improved agricultural practices, awareness alone is not sufficient to bring a change in participation in agricultural practices unless it is practiced."*
>
> *– Femail adult, FPP Doreni woreda*

Other adult female FPPs also found the achievements in improved agriculture to not be as strong as other project outcomes for women, such as in savings and FP.

Comparison of FUTURES to other similar projects

FUTURES participants and nonparticipants alike most often mentioned Sustainable Land Management (SLM), a large project funded by the German Agency for International Cooperation, as one project that provides services similar to FUTURES in agriculture, livelihood, and conservation. Other projects mentioned were the Agricultural Growth Program, which organizes women for honey production (mentioned in one FGD of male youth non-FPPs), and Menschen fur Menschen, a forest conservation and livelihood diversification project (mentioned in one FGD of male adult FPPs). FUTURES was seen as different from these programs due to its cross-sectoral work. Not all projects work in the same woredas; thus, most FGD groups in Chora and Yayo were not aware of any similar projects and therefore could not make comparisons.

> *"Many of the community members felt that SLM interventions were having more impact on the communities. For example, a FGD of male adults in Doreni expressed agreement that the acceptability of improved agricultural practices, climate-smart agriculture, and forest conservation had improved in their community because of the FUTURES project, but that the impact was lower as compared with SLM, which had operated many activities that improved the life of the poorest of the poor. The respondents indicated that the SLM project had done tangible work to reduce land degradation, restore degraded land, and improve soil fertility through sustainable farming practices.*
>
> *Farmers compare SLM and FUTURES and say that FUTURES is almost nothing!"*
>
> *– Male youth, FPP Doreni woreda*

The lack of seed money for PFM groups or communities and less flexibility in solving societal problems were also mentioned as less effective in FUTURES than in other projects.

In contrast to the community members, local government collaborators and stakeholders named multiple programs working in the area, including SLM, REDD+, Wetland, NABU, and FARM AFRICA. The local government collaborators and stakeholders made many positive

comparisons between FUTURES and these other programs, as exemplified in the three interview excerpts below.

> *"I have some experience with some programs, but the unique feature of the FUTURES project is its transparency and enhanced engagement of multiple sectors in its activities from the zonal to the community level."*
> *– Local government collaborator, Women and Children's Affairs Delegate, female*
>
> *"We have NGOs like FARM AFRICA, Genet Foundation, etc.; they have weak communication with the zonal level Office of Agriculture. None of them promote multisectoral integration. The FUTURES project highly promotes transparency, multisectoral integration, and this is what makes the project unique."*
> *– Local government collaborator, Office of Agriculture, male*
>
> *"I have some previous experience with similar projects like the FUTURES project. I see many similarities in these projects and FUTURES in terms of benefiting the community. However, I also see that multisectoral integration as its main implementation strategy is the unique feature of the FUTURES project. Other projects specifically focus on certain issues related to some specific sectors and as a result are using more of a sectoral approach."* *– Local government collaborator, Woreda administrator, male*

FUTURES staff agreed that the implementation approach of FUTURES makes it different from other projects in the area.

3. Findings related to the adoption of the FUTURES project

Community knowledge and acceptance of FUTURES

Participants of the FUTURES project expressed a good understanding and acceptance of the project's integrated approach. They generally appreciated the services offered by the project and felt that FUTURES was having a positive impact in the community. Both men's and women's groups equally spoke of FP/RH and gender concepts in a positive way. Some male youth discussed the positive effects they were seeing from women's VSLA groups but felt that they did not have the same opportunities for training and support in livelihood generation.

Surprisingly, even nonparticipants knew specifics about services the project provided and could explain the logic behind the integrated approach. Some male non-FPPs reported that FUTURES was relatively more effective in terms of training services due to its integrated approach. They noted that FUTURES addressed various aspects of community development, including health, agriculture, conservation, and livelihood generation in an integrated approach, while other projects did not.

> *"Overall, it appears that the FUTURES project has been a valuable resource for the participants, as it has equipped them with skills and knowledge that have contributed to their well-being and livelihoods."* *– Male adult, non-FPP Yayo woreda*

However, other nonparticipants were less familiar with the integrated approach, as might be expected.

> *"We don't know whether the approach is increasing women's participation in FP/RH or not. We have no information regarding forest conservation and the way it can be related to livelihood improvement."* – *Female youth, non-FPP Yayu woreda*

Strategies with the most participation and interest

FUTURES staff reported that interventions focused on **livelihood generation** had the greatest interest from community members and contributed toward improving the culture of saving. Indeed, livelihood-generation activities and outcomes were the most mentioned intervention area throughout the interviews and discussions. FUTURES participants agreed that the livelihood generation accomplished through the VSLA groups has been very important. Male youth discussed VSLAs as a hub for many important services.

> *"The VSLA interventions are the most important because women are saving money, borrowing the money when they need it for different purposes, such as purchasing chicken, fattening sheep for livelihood activities…They are also getting training about FP at the same time. This all contributes to changes in the lives of their household. So, VSLA is relatively the best among their interventions."* – *Male youth, FPP Doreni woreda*

VSLAs were seen as improving the culture of saving through providing information and important first steps in changing cultural norms. Additionally, the provision of saving and credit services was viewed as an important step toward empowering young women in the community to take control of their financial futures.

The **FP/RH services** were also seen to be very important in supporting young women to make informed decisions regarding their health and wellbeing. FGD participants explained that these services help improve overall well-being and quality of life.

> *"FP helps me to manage my finances, and I am able to provide for my children without struggling."* – *Male adult, FPP Doreni woreda*

However, some FGD members also suggested that FP/RH interventions beyond awareness raising were needed.

Strategies with the least participation and interest

FUTURES staff shared that **social analysis and actions (SAA)** was one of the activities with the lowest participation. They discussed that the SAA interventions seek to break traditions and establish very strong institutions, a process which takes a long time. Furthermore, community leaders and elders, who help set and enforce norms and laws, hadn't yet been well recognized by the government legislative bodies. As a result, while 27 SAA groups had been established and 24 sessions conducted in the first years of implementation, participation has not been maintained.

FUTURES staff also noted that interventions meant to increase **conservation practices** were not really functioning as planned. FUTURES worked with other projects to establish 15 government-led environmental and forest law enforcement working groups. The project trained 58 DAs to provide agricultural support and forest conservation services and trained about 200 individuals (including 24 females) on boundary demarcation. However, the establishment of PFM was still in the early stages. Project participants agreed that conservation activities were comparatively less successful.

> *"The conservation of forest was not effective as the FUTURES project only gave the training and didn't practice it."* *– Female adult, FPP Doreni woreda*

Some female FGD members also shared that, as the community is highly dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, services that directly relate to their agricultural practices are seen as a priority. However, conservation practices were described as a luxury that they could not now afford. Consequently, the lack of awareness and understanding of conservation practices further diminished the need for such services.

> *"The project was very effective in FP and livelihood improvement plans that the project implemented in the communities. However, there is less participation of the youth and women in conservation of the forest. This has happened because community attitudes towards the forest are too low."* *– Female adult, FPP Doreni woreda*

Agricultural practices were also mentioned as the least important service provided by the project, especially in Yayo woreda where there is lack of access to land, making it challenging to sustain any agricultural practices.

> *"We observed as women participants, that improved agricultural practices are not as significant as livelihood, FP, and conservation practices. This is mainly because the members have not been able to acquire high-quality seeds that could increase their agricultural productivity. In my discussions with some of them, they mentioned purchasing vegetables seeds such as brassica carinata, capsicum annuum, daucus carota, and rosmarinus officinalis from the market, but these seeds did not germinate properly due to their poor quality. This resulted in a lower yield, which affected their ability to earn a significant income from their agricultural produce."* *– Female adult, FPP Doreni woreda*

Interventions focused on youth, especially **YSLAs,** were also reported to garner little interest and participation, although there were multiple perceived reasons for this. FUTURES staff felt that the youth members were dependent on their families and had no money to save, that there was little interest from youth to participate, and/or that they were not interested in saving, but only generating immediate cash. In contrast, some male youth participants felt that little had been done for the youth or youth farmers. They recognized the livelihood-improving activities for women but didn't feel these were available to youth.

HEW perceptions on increased interest in FP/RH and integrated approach

Interviews were conducted with three female health extension workers (HEWs), one from each intervention woreda. The HEWs all agreed that they had seen an increased interest in FP/RH services since the start of the FUTURES project. They attributed the increased interest to the project's continuous awareness creation events; training on contraceptive methods and services, particularly related to long-acting methods; and the creation of YFHS that provide a separate space for youth. These activities were supported through capacity strengthening of the HEWs to train on and deliver these services.

> *"Yes, I have seen increased demand for FP/RH services as a result of the continuous awareness creation. For example, the adoption of long-acting contraceptive methods has increased quite a lot."* – *HEW #1*

These results are true for the youth as well. However, one HEW added:

> *"Also, there is a change in the demand for FP/RH services by youth. The project has been working on awareness creation, training a group of youth as peer influencers from both males and females so that they share the information and help (other) youth make informed decisions. The project advises us to separate the room for youth and adults. Hence, the youth are being served in separate rooms different from women. However, the number of youth visiting the health post for this service is still very few in number, as yet they haven't started to comfortably come to the health post and use the FP services."* – *HEW #2*

The HEWs participated in the integrated approach mainly through cross-sectoral trainings and the establishment of VSLAs. The HEWs felt that by participating in trainings and awareness-creation activities with collaborators from other sectors, such as agriculture, environment, education, and others, they came to understand the need for cross-sectoral activities to improve the community's wellbeing. This type of participation beyond the typical scope of their work was seen to increase their capacity in FP/RH and their understanding of how improved health is related to other community outcomes.

> *"In these trainings, I learned the need for cross-sectoral activities on the overall improvement of community's livelihood and also on the natural resource conservation."* – *HEW #3*

> *"These cross-sectoral activities positively influenced my regular job in different ways. Working with others helped me to understand other's works which are very important for women. I use the knowledge and learning obtained from other sectors to serve women and girls. It is an opportunity for me to enhance my performance on my regular job and the project objective I have to implement."* – *HEW #2*

As well, the HEWs felt that the cross-sectoral approach contributed to increased participation in FP/RH because:

> *"…each work is supportive of one another, and women are willing to learn and apply the advice and trainings they receive."* – HEW #3

DA perceptions on increased interest and acceptability of improved agricultural practices, CSA, and forest conservation

The development agents and natural resource experts interviewed perceived increased interest among farmers, especially youth and women, in adopting improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture, and conservation. The changes in interest of farmers were attributed to the multisectoral approach of the project, in terms of working with different partners, and the integration of different activities, capacity building, and in-kind support made by the project through providing different inputs.

> *"I do believe that the cross-sectoral activities have contributed to the increased interest in improved agricultural and conservation practices; for example, the VSLA services have given the opportunity to be engaged in agriculture-related small businesses like vegetable and poultry production. In addition, enhanced FP adoption has a positive implication to the forest as it contributes to minimizing the pressure on the resource."* – DA, KII

> *"People have better awareness since the FUTURES project has come and organized farmers into different PFM cooperatives and PFM committees, and FUTURES staff has given training to farmers. Farmers have also been trained on the benefit of reforestation that they might be compensated for their forested land. Farmers who have free land for tree planting have got training and afforestation is ongoing. FUTURES delineated the land and supplied seedlings. Farmers are also buying and planting seedlings. Female farmers are also getting grafted avocado through training opportunities.* – DA, KII

4. Findings related to the implementation of the FUTURES project

Communication, coordination, and collaboration of implementing partners

FUTURES staff shared that a key component of their integration strategy has been to communicate often, from the selection of kebeles to planning implementation, and having regular review meetings with stakeholders. Specifically, the communication has been with offices of women's and youth affairs and agriculture, environmental protection agencies, Oromia Wildlife and Forest Enterprise, and the health sector. FUTURES staff acknowledged that some aspects of the approach have been trial and error, as there is no existing roadmap for integrated programming such as this. A first step was to raise awareness and attempt to

break down the existing sectoral boundaries for collaboration. One FUTURES staff member noted that:

> *"The coordination aspect is most effective. Woreda-level sectors come together and discuss together. But collaborations are the least effective, this needs time due to the past sectoral thinking. The where, when, and how of collaborations should be clearly known by all partners. True collaboration only exists with FUTURES project implementing partners only.* – *FUTURES staff FGD*

FUTURES staff also described having established an "integration platform" for implementing partners to share tasks, plan together, and monitor interventions. The integration also involved regular communication with and training for government offices. The goals of FUTURES' work have been aligned with the goals of the individual government sectors. Project staff noted that "communication and cooperation were the most significant change" in the way the project was implemented; however, many felt this type of integration was still nascent and that it will take additional time to overcome sectoral barriers, especially when working with existing government offices.

Local government collaborators reported that the project has been coordinating very well with government agencies and that the FUTURES project was filling gaps which the government sector hasn't been able to address, such as providing FP-related supplies where there were shortages and helping to train government workers in project topic areas. They also reported that collaboration was working well as coordinated through VSLA groups and using these groups as entry points to "mobilize women and discuss RH and FP issues."

> *"The nature of the FUTURES project calls for collaboration and coordination. It came with the clear approach of multisectoral integration and collaboration, showing interest in jointly working with different government sectors."* – *Local government collaborator*

Local government collaborators also felt that the communication from the project had been effective.

> *"We receive a monthly report from the project. We have different regular meetings with them, we have focal person who follows their interventions, and we communicate on each and every activity."* – *Local government collaborator*

Other government respondents noted that the main motivation for commitment to collaboration with the project were the gaps, including budgetary, that the project has been able to fill.

> *"I think that our sector's commitment to coordinate across sectors working on forest management, agriculture, health, and livelihood support has increased; mainly because the cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination have enabled us to fill some of the existing gaps (e.g., in relation to budget deficit) we have in our sectors. It made us more efficient by coordinating and integrating activities."* – *Local government collaborator*

Among the challenges to collaboration were the high turnover of staff and security issues in the country, which affected rollout of some aspects of integration and implementation:

> *"I think that the overall multisectoral collaboration and coordination have been going on very well; except that sometimes, because of the high turnover of some of the officials, collaborations on the initiated activities were not adequate. Also, in relation to some emerging issues (e.g., security problem), the sectoral collaborations have not been realized to the desired level."* – *Local government collaborator*

This staff turnover was noted as a limitation to sustainability of the increased communication and coordination, and a government collaborator felt that they may face budgetary and logistical constraints to maintain the same level of coordination if the FUTURES project were to be phased out anytime soon.

Implementors' understanding of an 'integrated' or 'multisectoral' approach

FUTURES implementing partners described integration as covering the "3Cs: communication, collaboration, and coordination" to create linkages across agriculture, FP, conservation, and livelihood generation. In response to a question about what "integrated" means in regard to FUTURES, staff explained:

> *"Integration is just having a complete package of livelihood improvement interventions, agriculture, FP, and forest conservation. Integration is like an elephant; you can't touch every part of it at one time. We can't speak as if we have fully integrated everything in these sectors, but we have made the maximum effort in capturing the existing opportunity."* – *Staff FGD*
>
> *"The need to design the different components of the project packages has been aligned with the complex and interconnected drivers for natural resources degradation and biodiversity loss and with the fact that sectoral approaches cannot address these drivers like population pressure, poor agricultural practices, poor livelihood of the communities, etc."* – *Staff FGD*

Government collaborators and DAs reported that they felt the project was integrated in terms of activities that included health, agriculture, conservation, and livelihood. One DA also commented that the project was integrated "in terms of the target beneficiaries—women, youth, and men." Both groups also reported attending trainings on integration but felt that "the practical implementation still needs further improvements as it cannot be considered to be adequate."

> *"I came to learn that the sectoral approach would not bring adequate changes, and I have developed the understanding that cross-sectoral integration can result in substantial changes, which all together have resulted in increased interest in improved agricultural practices and conservation practices."* – *DA*

Adoption of an integrated approach by implementing partners and ways in which the project implements integrated activities

FUTURES staff reported working toward integration among partners through joint planning, shared goals, ongoing communication, and regular coordination meetings. Staff also reported that steering committees were established at regional, zonal, and woreda levels to support implementation.

> *"We are four different organizations, but we have one common plan. The implementing partners have a review meeting every Monday at the zonal level. The same is true at woreda level. They have review meetings every Thursday. This saved our time, energy resources, and reduced duplication of effort.* – *FUTURES staff member during FGD*

HEWs and DAs expressed an understanding and appreciation for the multisectoral approach. For example, DAs reported participation in trainings provided by FUTURES, which furthered their understanding of the integrated approach and its importance.

> *"I have been involved in different trainings about the need for the promotion of cross-sectoral thinking to accommodate other activities of the project apart from agriculture and conservation activities, including activities of other sectors such as women's and youth affairs, health, EPA, and cooperative promotion agency. The need to move from the previous sectoral approach to cross-sectoral thinking across these sectors was the main message emphasized in the trainings provided."* – *DA*

Project participants reported receiving training on the interrelatedness of agriculture, health, conservation, and livelihood and commented that they observed the messaging from different sectors to be integrated:

> *"The messaging was integrated. HEWs, DA, Natural Resource Management speak the same language in an integrated way. Yes, overall health service has increased. FP has positive impact on conservation and then on agriculture."* – *Male youth FPP, Doreni woreda*

As this quote shows—and as was discussed in previous results—the transferal to community members of integrated multisectoral thinking was effective. Some participants noted that the integrated approach was done in parallel, in that experts from single sectors trained only in their particular area but were coordinated with experts from other sectors to provide the trainings to the same groups (through the VSLAs, for example).

The results indicate that the multisectoral integration for FUTURES occurred mainly at the project and activity levels, whereas coordination and collaboration across sectors occurred at all levels, including the government, project, implementing partner/organizational, and individual levels.

Challenges/obstacles to implementation and responses

The main barriers to project implementation discussed by FPPs included financial and gender role constraints to participation, mainly impacting women and youth, as well as a resistance to change from traditional farming practices. Participation in conservation activities was also noted as a challenge. For example, some participants expressed that they faced financial constraints when implementing conservation projects. They also noted that they sometimes lacked support from their local authorities, who viewed conservation activities as a secondary issue. Youth were occasionally portrayed as disinterested in the long-term benefits of the program, or as in feeling that FUTURES had not worked closely enough with the youth to ensure their participation.

> *"Youth have no interest to work hard and earn. They want to get benefits using a short cut. They need to get direct money. So, they go to the forest and cut trees, make charcoal, and sell it. It would be good if alternative income is created for youth, such as by making charcoal from coffee husk. This needs technology to process it. It could also be good to bring some trees such as bamboo to the area. Youth and women do not have their own land. So this constrains their involvement in improved agriculture."*
>
> *– Female youth FPP, Yayo woreda*

Barriers to project implementation identified by stakeholders included high expectations, as there can be "over-expectations from government sectors and communities for immediate benefits," including per diems and payment for experts. Though it was also noted that this affects the performance of many NGOs, not just FUTURES. Others mentioned a limited project area/intensity to extend project benefits, and a need to improve ownership of the initiatives by government officials so they can sustain the work initiated by the project. The time and attention needed to support the work of FUTURES was also noted as a barrier:

> *"As a leader, we have time constraints to support the FUTUREs project; sometimes, we may not be easily available due to the political security situation of the area; official turnover is very high and sometimes this blocks the flow of information."* *– Local government collaborator*

One of the HEWs noted the continuing barriers to improving RH services for youth, mentioning that there is further work to be done to fully address this problem. Finally, some collaborating partners identified no barriers or hindrances to project implementation.

FUTURES staff echoed some of these barriers to project implementation. They also discussed a deep-rooted sectoral approach among government agencies and woreda and kebele leadership.

> *"How did these challenges affect the ability of the project to deliver services?"*
>
> *"The challenges affected the project's ability to effectively integrate the project activities by different sectors. There were even cases where some of the sectors were questioning why other sectors were considered as signatory members for the project implementation in an integrated approach."*
>
> *– FUTURES staff*

Staff felt that through their awareness-raising efforts, the communities could now see the benefits of reduced duplication of effort in the services provided. A local government collaborator shared in an interview:

> *"I have observed that all stakeholders had little knowledge of a multisectoral approach before the FUTURES intervention. Now, their know-how and awareness has improved due to the project."* – *Local government collaborator*

The transition from the sectoral approach to a multisectoral approach took longer for the project to realize than anticipated. Staff also noted that changing farmers' attitudes on the significance of the forest conservation to their overall livelihood on a sustainable basis was challenging given the high expectations of the community for immediate economic benefits from the forest (e.g., in relation to changing the carbon trade mentality of farmers). In addition, skill gaps for some of the activities, such as fruit grafting and CSA practices, were among the challenges noted. Overall, staff felt that the challenges encountered affected the project's ability to achieve the intended outcomes to the desired level for the youth, women, and girls. The challenges demanded that the project design different adaptation strategies (e.g., continuous community dialogue and/or filling skills gaps using experts from other areas), which resulted in longer time periods required to achieve outcomes for the intended beneficiaries.

5. Findings related to maintenance of the FUTURES project

Collaboration and coordination between implementors and government to achieve sustained, desired outcomes

Local government collaborators largely felt that the FUTURES project has been collaborating well with existing government agencies. They reported coordination was largely happening at the woreda level, but that there were steering committees and review meetings in place with various implementing partners on a quarterly basis.

> *"In my opinion, I think that the FUTURES project implementers have been collaborating very well with the woreda administration and also with other government sectors."* – *Local government collaborator*

One government collaborator mentioned that the FUTURES project would be used to model more integrated government structure, and some government respondents felt that FUTURES activities would encourage future collaboration across government sectors.

> *"As a result of the collaboration initiated by the FUTURES project, our commitment to coordinate across different sectors working on forest management, agriculture, health, and livelihood support has increased. The increased commitment is basically because of the benefits we have seen from the cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination promoted by the FUTURES project."* – *Local government collaborator*

Another government representative expressed that government sectors do not currently have good mechanisms for collaborating with one another and, therefore, long-term integration may not be sustainable beyond the life of the project.

> *"Integration is hypothetical in its definition. We have neither a common plan nor common platform to work with other collaborating government offices. We do not have practical realities at woreda level. This component is very weak; we haven't yet fully applied it at the woreda level. In the other case, integration needs political commitment. Meanwhile the project hasn't yet achieved this outcome."* – *Local government collaborator*

Government collaborators also mentioned that an increased scope for the project moving forward should include the offices of labor and social affairs.

Salient facilitators and barriers to the sustainability and scalability of improved behaviors/practices

KIIs with local government collaborators and stakeholders revealed many felt that the FUTURES project achievements were sustainable and scalable as a result of the integration modalities, which have benefits such as increased sectoral efficiency through collective planning, thinking, and action, as well as collective monitoring and evaluation. Some further explained that multisectoral integration saved their time and energy, and reduced duplication of effort. This increased the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of all interventions at the grassroots level, which can be further scaled out. Comments by government collaborators and stakeholders included:

> *"Yes, it can be scaled-out. We have now reached a stage where PFM and other forest conservation is impossible without multisectoral integration. We reached this stage due to the practical integration experience we gained from FUTUREs project."*
> – *Local government collaborator, protection authority (EPA), male*
>
> *"One best experience I personally learned is how integration can be made at the sectoral level. The integration is highly scalable. We thoroughly understood integration saves resources, time, and energy. This approach saved farmers time and provided a complete package in changing the livelihood of farmers at the grassroots level."*
> – *Local government collaborator, Office of Agriculture, male*
>
> *"Currently, we are preparing a report for the higher officials for learning and scaling up. I am sure that it will be scaled to other sectors and organizations and will also urge future collaborations to adopt this approach."*
> – *Regional government collaborator, Regional Steering Committee, male*

FUTURES staff pointed to the ability of FPPs to sustain adopted practices.

> *"Improved agricultural practices and CSA have been adopted at the highest level. Everybody in the community has started to benefit, even they can sustain if the project is not available."* – *FUTURES staff, FGD*

Project staff and collaborators felt that the existing best implementation activities (such as VSLAs and nursery sites), capacity building, and the benefits realized by the beneficiaries, could be considered for serving as benchmarks and demonstration sites for scaling-up the project interventions. However, some indicated there are challenges that will limit scalability. These challenges included logistical problems, budget limitations, and commitment and ownership by the government, as well as high dependence on the FUTURES project.

> *"The first challenge could be the budget deficit for most of the public sectors. Most of the budget requirement so far for promoting the multisectoral approach has been covered by the FUTURES project, and the scalability of the initiatives by the public sectors alone without project support might be somehow constrained unless special attention is given in allocating adequate budget. The other challenge I think is the deep-rooted sectoral thinking by some of the sectors (e.g., health sector) might have its own negative impact in bringing all the sectors on board with the same pace to further scale up the initiated commitment and coordination among the public sectors."* – *FUTURES staff, KII*

One local government collaborator suggested continuous capacity strengthening was needed during the remaining time of FUTURES to help ensure scalability.

Suggestions for project improvement

FGD and KII respondents made several suggestions for FUTURES programming as it moves forward. All types of respondents suggested increasing the **reach** of the project, by assisting more community members in intervention communities and/or by expanding to other communities. Some respondents also suggested increasing the **intensity** of activities through more outreach and follow up after training (especially in relation to agricultural training).

> *"They have limited capital to reach a large section of the community, they have limited logistics; they have only one motorcycle, their interventions are limited to a few farmers when compared with other projects operating at the woreda level. [Additionally,] the FUTURES project has no intervention on energy, livestock, etc., and should be improved."* – *NGO stakeholder*

Expanding work related to **forest conservation** was also commonly suggested; for example, by strengthening community involvement through PFM. Awareness raising and training were suggested, as needed, to combat negative attitudes toward the forest and the crop-destroying animals inhabiting it. It was suggested that communities in this area be compensated for carbon trading to help sustainably protect the forest.

> *"Among the services provided, we are satisfied with nursery, FP/RH services, VSLA services, and we are not totally satisfied with forest conservation. The conservation of the forest has not been well accepted since the community believes in thinning and clearing the forest to grow coffee…The project needs to facilitate the way to use the forest besides conservation, as sometimes the coffee needs small sheds."* – *Male youth, FPP Yayo woreda*

Community members also had suggestions for **training** they would like to see more of (e.g., expansion of life skills training, financial literacy training, and improved agricultural techniques), or **resources** they wish they had better access to—such as higher quality or more variety of seeds. It was commonly suggested that FUTURES provide participants with seed money, small-scale investment, or credit to buy livestock or agricultural equipment or to establish a VSLA. Many groups suggested additional activities to organize **youth** and provide them with livelihood opportunities. FGDs also discussed the need for access to water and suggested that FUTURES assist with **irrigation** materials. Direct linkages between producers and markets were also suggested as an area where FUTURES could provide assistance.

Respondents had other suggestions that went beyond the scope of FUTURES, including to improve infrastructure through building roads, rural health posts, and/or youth centers; improving the electric power supply; expanding the health component to incorporate maternal health and addiction issues (e.g., chat and smoking); adding livestock activities; and/or providing access to land for women and youth.

Local collaborators echoed many of the suggestions and added that the project should continue to enhance the economic and leadership participation of women, continue to strengthen the multisectoral collaboration, and improve the supply of FP/RH services.

Discussion

The FUTURES midline evaluation produced information to address the five dimensions of the RE-AIM framework, drawing from 236 respondents involved in FGDs and KIIs. The results show the project has reached a high level of success in generating community understanding and buy-in to the multisectoral integrated approach to programming. Project participants and nonparticipants alike were able to explain how the sectors worked together and contributed to the improved well-being of their communities. Furthermore, they were able to discuss how benefits from one sector can support and contribute to successes in others. In fact, the multisectoral approach seems to be more responsive to the expressed needs of community members when compared to the single-sector approach as it better addresses the "whole person" or "whole community." This was despite an ingrained single sector approach that permeated throughout local government and NGO actors, which was seen as a large initial barrier to implementation by FUTURES project staff and continues to be a challenge. Sectoral specialists working with FUTURES, such as HEWs and DAs, understood and appreciated the cross-sectoral messaging and coordinated with each other to provide training and awareness raising. However, some respondents felt that the continuity of the multisectoral approach may be constrained when the project is gone and without another source of financing and support.

Community members were familiar with the FUTURES project activities and who the project was designed to reach. While recruitment into the project was generally understood to be fair, and often reliant on volunteerism, some felt the criteria for selection into the project wasn't always clear. Many felt that the "poorest of the poor" were not able to participate due to barriers such as the financial contributions needed to join the VSLAs and that FUTURES could help alleviate this barrier through the provision of seed money.

Adoption and uptake of FUTURES programming varied by activity. Livelihood activities, especially the VSLAs, were the activities most often mentioned by respondents, and were the most common topics of MSC stories. VSLAs were also seen as important to increasing women's empowerment by providing them with opportunities to benefit their families and communities and to participate in leadership roles. In contrast, YSLAs were seen as less effective due to the low participation and interest among the youth.

Community members also expressed a high level of support for FP/RH knowledge and services. This was true for women and men alike. Youth were particularly enthusiastic to receive information on RH topics, especially through sessions conducted at schools; though not all were familiar with changes to clinics to make them more youth friendly. The VSLAs were seen as an effective hub for disseminating information and training on FP/RH issues. HEWs were trained on the provision of long-acting reversible contraception to improve access to a range of contraceptive methods. However, issues with the FP supply of materials to clinics remain.

Activities related to improved agriculture were of high interest to the communities; vermicomposting, beekeeping, and the establishment of nurseries were the most often discussed interventions. Community members also appreciated, and wanted more, training on practices that could improve crop yield, access to high-quality seeds, additional seed varieties, and direct access to markets. Many felt that follow up after the trainings would be beneficial to ensure that practices were sustainable. In contrast to agricultural interventions, forest conservation activities, such as PFM, were seen as less effective and requiring a longer time to assess the benefits. PFM was also not viewed as a lucrative endeavor. Communities have traditionally used the forest for agricultural and livelihood activities and expressed reticence about changing that relationship. Some suggestions to improve forest conservation were to create alternative livelihoods, such as promotion of bamboo and realizing carbon trading, to supplement the livelihoods of those dependent on the forest.

Overall, the FUTURES project compares well with other projects implemented in the area, especially due to the uniqueness of its multisectoral approach. However, some community members expressed a desire to see more tangible results, which they felt other projects (e.g., SLM) were producing. Many suggestions to improve the project were proposed by the respondents. These suggestions included requests to expand the reach of the project, to further emphasize forest conservation and management, and to better engage (male) youth in agricultural and livelihood activities. Occasionally, the project was viewed as "not flexible" enough to provide what was requested by community members. This may be due to the matching of project activities to the TOC framework and outcome areas. Project implementors may be reticent to support work that does not fit within the purview of the project. Additionally, FUTURES may be implemented on a smaller scale as compared to other projects.

Lastly, positive attitudes toward sustainability and scalability of the project were expressed by the respondents. Sustainability would be further enhanced by ensuring that government agencies can, and will, continue working in a collaborative, multisectoral approach.

Limitations

The midline evaluation of FUTURES used qualitative data collected from project participants, nonparticipants, local government collaborators, HEWs, DAs, NGO stakeholders, and project staff. Due to the nature of this information, the midline evaluation is not able to determine the level of project effectiveness; rather, it provides deep insight into the knowledge, perceptions, and reactions of collaborators and community members.

FUTURES project staff participated in the identification of respondents for the FGDs and KIIs. It is, therefore, possible that the opinions provided by the respondents were biased to be more positive than would be those of respondents recruited by different means. Nevertheless, the respondents critically discussed all aspects of the project. Negative opinions, even when in the minority of a FGD, were captured and are reflected in this report. It is not known whether FGDs included individuals that had dropped out of FUTURES activities (such as PFM or YSLAs); information from such individuals would help illuminate the reasons for drop out and what the project could do to maintain participation.

Implications

Contextualized, multisectoral activities can strengthen single-sector programming and have multiple benefits. As seen among respondents in the YCFBR of Ethiopia, such programming is understood and accepted as meeting the many needs of individuals and communities. As reflected in this report, multisectoral programming may get closer than single-sector interventions to improving the overall well-being of people, their communities, and their environment. Livelihood generation was a motivational driver connecting outcome areas and meeting the needs of community members. The ability of FUTURES to improve conservation outcomes may depend on the project's ability to connect conservation activities to livelihood issues.

Recommendations

The information provided by respondents in the midline evaluation of FUTURES generated several recommendations for the program.

Recommendations related to FP/RH activities:

- Continue providing FP/RH education for youth in and out of school, which was well-received.
- Continue ensuring that clinics provide high-quality YFHS. Youth were not always familiar with clinic changes; use peer educators to help spread the word that the changes can improve the experience of receiving FP/RH services.
- Seek ways to ensure a consistent supply of FP/RH methods and materials after the project is ended, given community interest and support for FP/RH services.

Recommendations for agricultural and conservation activities:

- After training sessions, implement follow-up visits to assess progress and provide coaching or retraining, as necessary. The need to move beyond "training only" to help with "practice" was mentioned by respondents as an area for improvement.
- Strengthen PFM groups and/or consider additional activities to address community concerns and improve forest conservation (such as how to deal with wild animals or how to replace income generated from the forest).
- Continue to link agricultural producers to markets; market linkage was often mentioned as a concern by community members.
- Increase the provision of high-quality seeds and seedlings. Consider the provision of tools, as well as water irrigation materials and technical assistance.

Recommendations for livelihood activities:

- Consider ways to involve the poorest community members in FUTURES activities, such as through initial VSLA contributions or micro-credit. The provision of seed money was commonly proposed as a suggested addition to FUTURES programming for all participants, but it would be especially helpful for the poorest community members. Education on basic financial literacy would be beneficial in tandem with provision of seed money or credit.

Recommendations related to youth:

- Increase outreach to youth for livelihood, improved agriculture, and conservation activities, especially those that build skills. Both female and male youth felt agricultural and conservation activities did not effectively reach youth; however, since females were seen to benefit more from the FP/RH and livelihood-generation activities, male youth felt especially left out of FUTURES activities.
- Ensure that the project is reaching rural youth, as they were not thought to be benefiting from the project.
- Strengthen the nursery activities and establish (or strengthen) YSLAs.

Recommendations related to project implementation:

- Continue coordination and capacity strengthening for the multisectoral approach, as this is still considered a unique approach to programming in the area. Additionally, consider implementing a process to transfer ownership of collaboration to local government agencies. There is a need for the allocation of funding from the public sector to scale up, and to continue coordinating the multisectoral approach once the project has ended. Collaboration and commitment from government officials is limited due to time constraints; FUTURES can assist with negotiations or high-level dialogue for funding, shared responsibility, and commitment.

- Consider expanding the scale and/or intensity of project activities, as this was commonly cited as a suggestion for the project. Additional VSLAs would expand one of the most popular interventions of the project.
- Continue to manage the expectations of community members through publicizing the goals of the project and the main implementation activities. Additionally, in some cases, respondents felt that the project was duplicating government services or programs (such was the case for women's empowerment, for example). Project staff can emphasize that they are working in collaboration with government agencies and other programs, and that they are aligned and supportive of the work rather than in duplication of it.

Conclusion

This report presents findings from the midline evaluation of the FUTURES project, which was launched in April 2021 with the aim of achieving sustainable forest management and improving agricultural productivity, reproductive health, and the livelihoods of women, men, and young people in the YCFBR through an integrated multisectoral approach. The midline evaluation was conducted in April and May 2023 using the RE-AIM framework to conceptualize the impact of the project as a product of the interaction between five dimensions: reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance. These dimensions were used to structure and formulate qualitative research questions to guide data collection and analysis. Data from 236 respondents involved in FGDs, KIIs, and MSC interviews informed the findings.

The FUTURES project has generated a high level of understanding among the community and was praised for its integrated multisectoral approach to programming. Such programming was understood as meeting the many needs of individuals and communities and perceived as better for minimizing duplication and addressing complex problems than single-sector approaches. The most important interventions discussed were livelihood related, such as VSLAs. Improved agricultural practices, including vermicomposting, beehives and nurseries, and FP/RH activities, were also of high interest and often discussed in relationship to livelihood participation and earning. The potential for FUTURES to improve conservation outcomes may depend on its ability to connect conservation activities to livelihood issues. Sustainability of the integrated approach in this region will depend on the local government's commitment and capacity to carry forward what FUTURES has started.

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Appendix 1. Evaluation team

The core D4I evaluation team is comprised of experienced research staff based in the U.S. and Ethiopia. Roles of team members and brief bios are provided below.

Janine Barden-O'Fallon, PhD, is the activity lead and Principal Investigator for the evaluation. Dr. Barden-O'Fallon is responsible for the overall development of the evaluation design and implementation of the evaluation; collaboration with local partners and consultants; and coordination with USAID/Washington, Jimma University, CARE Ethiopia, and other stakeholders. She has worked in the field of international family planning and reproductive health for more than 20 years, currently as the Senior Technical Advisor for Population & Reproductive Health for D4I. She has overseen evaluation research and data collection in Honduras, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, and Tanzania, among others, and contributed to the development of numerous tools for the monitoring and evaluation of global health programs. Dr. Barden-O'Fallon is Assistant Professor in the Department of Maternal & Child Health at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Fikadu Mitiku Abdissa, PhD, is the co-Principal Investigator for the evaluation. Dr. Mitiku serves as the in-country lead for all evaluation and research activities. He provides contextual, technical, and logistic guidance and liaises with in-country stakeholders. Dr. Mitiku is an Associate Professor of Agricultural and Development Economics at Jimma University, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, Jimma, Ethiopia. Dr. Mitiku has been working as trainer, researcher, and community service provider in the area of agricultural and development economics at Jimma University for the last 16 years. He has been involved in monitoring and evaluation activities for different projects implemented in the field of agriculture and livelihood in Ethiopia. He worked as a team leader at Oromia regional state level for midline evaluation of AGP-2. He successfully supervised a team of qualitative experts who collected data from different woredas of Oromia region and organized a regional level report. Dr. Mitiku also has experience in designing tools and collecting baseline and end line data for impact evaluations.

Liz Millar, MPH, provides project management, technical support, and qualitative research leadership to the evaluation. Ms. Millar contributes to tool development, analysis, writing, and technical review of evaluation products and reports. She leads training in the use of qualitative software, coding, and analysis. Ms. Millar is a Research Associate for Evaluation and Learning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Carolina Population Center (CPC) and has supported evaluation research and qualitative data collection for reproductive health programs in Botswana, Honduras, Kenya, Lesotho, the United States, and Zimbabwe.

Adugna Eneyew Bekele, PhD, provides contextual, technical, and methodological backstopping on monitoring and evaluation designs of the livelihoods, gender, and conservation impacts of the FUTURES project. With more than 16 years of professional experience as a trainer, researcher, and consultant, Dr. Eneyew has strong experience in monitoring and evaluation designs for rural development and livelihood projects. His research focuses on sustainable livelihoods, food security, climate change, value chain analysis, land policy, and gender analysis. Dr. Eneyew is an Associate Professor of Rural Development & Agricultural Economics at Jimma University in Jimma, Ethiopia.

Appendix 2. Evaluation team: Data collection and Analysis

Name	Sex	Role and Responsibility
Fozia Ali	Female	Interviewer and Analyst*
Dereje Bekele	Male	Interviewer and Analyst
Derresa Bulcha	Male	Interviewer and Analyst*
Tamiru Chalchisa	Male	Interviewer and Analyst
Zanaba Kedir	Female	Interviewer and Analyst*
Amsalu Mitiku	Male	Interviewer
Geremew Motuma	Male	Interviewer*
Alemitu Worku	Female	Interviewer and Analyst*

*Enumerator for baseline survey.

Data collection team, Jimma, Ethiopia, April 2023; photo by Mrs. Almetsehay Sisay, Jimma University

Appendix 3. FGD and KII interview guides

Interview Guide for Key Informant Interviews

A. Local non-governmental collaborators

Date of Interview:	**Start Time:**	**End Time:**
Interviewer:		
Participant code:		
Position/Organization:		
Woreda:		
Language:		
Participant Sex:	**Male ☐ Female ☐**	

1. Please describe your connection to the FUTURES project (alternative: How are you involved with the FUTURES project?)

2. How long have you worked with FUTURES in this capacity?

3. How familiar are you with the FUTURES project and its activities?

4. In what ways have you seen the FUTURES implementors collaborate and coordinate with local government officials?

5. In your opinion, how well are the FUTURES implementors collaborating with local government officials?

    a. Do you have specific examples of how the collaboration is (is not) working well?

6. What factors have facilitated the collaboration and coordination with local government officials?

7. What factors have hindered the collaboration and coordination with local government officials?

8. Based on collaboration with the FUTURES project, do you think there is an increase in government capacity to coordinate across sectors, such as forest management, agriculture, health, and livelihood generation? *(probe: What makes you think this?)*

    a. Do you think the improved capacity will be sustainable after the end of the FUTURES project? *(probe: Why/why not?)*

9. What could a similar project do differently in the future to achieve even more positive change?

Thank you! Those are all the questions that I have for you. Do you have any questions for me?

B. Interview guide for local government collaborators

Date of Interview:	**Start Time:**	**End Time:**
Interviewer:		
Participant code:		
Position/Agency:		
Woreda:		
Language:		
Participant Sex:	**Male ☐ Female ☐**	

1. Please describe your connection to the FUTURES project (alternative: How are you involved with the FUTURES project?)

2. How long have you worked with FUTURES in this capacity?

3. How familiar are you with the FUTURES project and its activities? *(probe: which activities are you most familiar with?)*

4. In what ways have the FUTURES implementors collaborated and coordinated with you and/or others in your agency? *(probe: meetings, workshops, information sharing)*

5. In your opinion, how well are the FUTURES implementors collaborating with you and your agency?
    a. Do you have specific examples of how the collaboration is (is not) working well?

6. What factors have facilitated your collaboration and coordination with the FUTURES project?

7. What factors have hindered your collaboration and coordination with the FUTURES project?

8. Based on your collaboration with the FUTURES project, do you think there is an increase in your agency's capacity to coordinate across sectors, such as forest management, agriculture, health, and livelihood generation? *(probe: What makes you think this?)*
    a. Do you think the improved capacity will be sustainable after the end of the FUTURES project? *(probe: Why/why not?)*

9. From your perspective, what was the most significant change in multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination due to the FUTURES project? *[probe: Why is this the most significant change?]*

10. What could a similar project do differently in the future to achieve even more positive change?

Thank you! Those are all the questions that I have for you. Do you have any questions for me?

C. Interview guide for FP/RH providers including HEWs

Date of Interview:	**Start Time:**	**End Time:**
Interviewer:		
Participant code:		
Position/Organization:		
Woreda:		
Language:		
Participant Sex:	**Male ☐ Female ☐**	

1. Please describe your connection to the FUTURES project (alternative: How are you involved with the FUTURES project?)

2. How long have you worked with FUTURES in this capacity?

3. How familiar are you with the FUTURES project and its activities? *(probe: which activities are you most familiar with?)*

4. Since the start of the FUTURES project, have you seen an increased demand for FP/RH services? *(probe: If yes, how do you think the FUTURES project contributed to the increased demand for services?*

    a. Have you seen an increased demand for FP/RH services from youth? *(probe: If yes, how do you think the FUTURES project contributed to the increased demand for services among youth?*

5. Have you been involved with any of the FUTURES cross-sectoral activities (i.e., activities that included elements other than FP/RH)?

    a. Please describe these activities.

    b. Do you think these activities increased interest in FP/RH? If so, how?

    c. How do these types of cross-sectoral activities impact your work/the services you deliver?

6. In your opinion, how well does the FUTURES project address barriers to improved reproductive health, especially among youth?

7. What are the most significant barriers that remain to improve reproductive health behaviors, especially among youth?

8. What could a similar project do differently in the future to achieve even more positive change?

Thank you! Those are all the questions that I have for you. Do you have any questions for me?

D. Interview guide for DAs and natural resource experts

Date of Interview:	**Start Time:**	**End Time:**
Interviewer:		
Participant code:		
Position/Organization:		
Woreda:		
Language:		
Participant Sex:	**Male ☐ Female ☐**	

1. Please describe your connection to the FUTURES project (alternative: How are you involved with the FUTURES project?)

2. How long have you worked with FUTURES in this capacity?

3. How familiar are you with the FUTURES project and its activities? *(probe: which activities are you most familiar with?)*

4. Since the start of the FUTURES project, have you seen an increased interest among farmers in the adoption of improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture, and conservation? *(probe: If yes, how do you think the FUTURES project contributed to the increased interest in these practices?*

    a. Have you seen the same level of interest in these practices among youth farmers? Among female farmers? *(probe: If yes, how do you think the FUTURES project contributed to the increased interest in these practices?*

5. Have you been involved with any of the FUTURES cross-sectoral activities (i.e., activities that included elements other than agriculture or conservation, such as FP/RH or livelihood generation)?

    a. Please describe these activities.
    b. Do you think these activities increased interest in improved agricultural and conservation practices? If so, how?
    c. How do these types of cross-sectoral activities impact your work/the services you deliver?

6. In your opinion, how well does the FUTURES project address barriers to improved agricultural and conservation practices, especially among youth and female farmers?

7. What are the most significant barriers that remain to improve reproductive agricultural and conservation practices, especially among youth and female farmers?

8. What could a similar project do differently in the future to achieve even more positive change?

Thank you! Those are all the questions that I have for you. Do you have any questions for me?

E. Interview guide for FUTURES project staff

Date of Interview:	**Start Time:**	**End Time:**
Interviewer:		
Participant code:		
Position/Organization:		
Woreda:		
Language:		
Participant Sex:	**Male ☐ Female ☐**	

We'd like to ask you a few questions to get started.

1. Please describe your role on the FUTURES project.

2. How long have you worked with FUTURES in this capacity?

Questions on the Objectives

3. Please describe the extent to which you think the project has or has not improved the livelihoods of youth in the project implementation areas.

    a. Which specific interventions have had the greatest impact on improving the livelihoods of youth? How did they make a difference? Can you provide examples?

    b. Which of the interventions were least effective in improving the livelihoods of vulnerable youth and their households? Why?

4. Please describe the extent to which you think the project has or has not improved the livelihoods of women and girls in the project implementation areas.

    a. Which specific interventions have had the greatest impact on improving the livelihoods of women and girls? How did they make a difference? Can you provide examples?

    b. Which of the interventions have had the least impact on improving the livelihoods of women and girls? Why?

5. Please describe the extent to which you think the project has or has not improved the adoption of improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture, and conservation in the project implementation areas.

    a. Which specific interventions have had the greatest impact on improving agricultural practices and conservation? How did they make a difference? Can you provide examples?

    b. Which of the interventions have had the least impact on improving agricultural practices and conservation? Why?

6. Please describe the extent to which you think the project has or has not improved access to FP/RH services, especially for youth.

    a. Which specific interventions have had the greatest impact on improving access to FP/RH services? How did they make a difference? Can you provide examples?

    b. Which of the interventions had the least impact on improving access to FP/RH? Why?

    c. Thinking specifically about the partial implementation areas (i.e. where only reproductive health interventions are provided by the FUTURES project), do you think similar outcomes were achieved? *[probe: Why/why not]*

7. Please describe the extent to which you think the cross-sectoral integration is effective. What is the level of coordination across the implementing partners and across the activities?

    a. Do project partners communicate, cooperate, and collaborate effectively? Do project partners integrate their activities effectively?

    b. Have the partnering organizations equally adopted an integrated approach to project management?

8. What do think is the most successful example of FUTURES' cross-sectoral integration?

<u>Questions on Lessons Learned</u>

9. What were some of the barriers to project implementation or emerging implementation challenges?

    a. How did they affect the ability of the project to meet the needs of youth? And women and girls?

    b. How have implementors modified/adapted project implementation to address emerging challenges?

10. What were some of the contributing factors that led to successful project implementation?

<u>Most Significant Change and Wrap up</u>

11. From your perspective, what was the most significant or important change in the communities served by the project? [*probe: who was most affected? how were they affected by the project? How did this most significant change occur?]*

12. From your perspective, what was the most significant change in the way the project was implemented? [*probe: through collaboration or coordination or cooperation?) How did this most significant change occur?]*

13. Summarizing what you have told me, what are the greatest strengths of the FUTURES project for youth? Why? (*probe: for women and girls? Why?)*

14. Summarizing what you have told me, what are the greatest weaknesses of the FUTURES project? Why?

Those are all of the questions I have for today. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about you or your involvement with the FUTURES project before we complete the interview?

F. Interview Guide for Most Significant Change Interviews

Project participants

Date of Interview:	**Start Time:**	**End Time:**
Interviewer:		
Participant code:		
Kebele/Woreda:		
Language:		
Participant Sex:	**Male ☐ Female ☐**	

1. How old are you?

2. Please describe any services, trainings, or activities related to the FUTURES project that you have received in the past two years. [Prompt recall specifically with names of implementing organizations]

    a. For each of those mentioned…When did it happen? Did you find the service/training/activity helpful?

    - [If **Yes**] how was it helpful?
    - [If **No**] why wasn't it helpful? What would have been more helpful?

3. What was the most meaningful/significant change in your life due to your participation with these FUTURES services/training/activities? [*probe: what practices or behaviors were most affected? Why do you feel this way? How did this significant change occur? Did this change cause any other changes to happen? If so, what were they? Probe for integration among the different sectors, such as changes related to the combination of gender attitudes, economic livelihood, agricultural practices, forest management, and/or FP]*

4. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your involvement with the FUTURES project?

Thank you! Those are all the questions that I have for you. Do you have any questions for me?

G. Focus group guide -FUTURES participants

Date			
Start time		**End time**	
Woreda/Kebele			
Gender of group	(Circle one) Men Women		
Age of group	(Circle one) Youth Adult		

Thank you very much for coming to participate in this conversation. We are interested in learning about your experience with the FUTURES project. During our conversation today, we ask that only one person speak at a time so that we can capture everything that is said. Let us agree as a group that we will not repeat or share with others anything that is shared here in the group today.

Please also be respectful of everyone's opinions; we may disagree but there are no right or wrong answers and everyone should feel free to express their opinions.
Are there any questions for me before we begin?

---Pause for questions ----

1. Knowledge about the FUTURES project

1.1 To begin, I would like to first ask you to share what you know about the FUTURES program.

- Who does the FUTURES project serve?
- What services does the FUTURES project offer?
- Where does the FUTURES project operate?

If these topics do not come up in this section, probe about:

- What about FP/RH services?
- What about conservation practices?
- What about livelihood generation?
- What about improved agricultural practices?

1.2 What has your involvement in the FUTURES project been? (Specific services, programs, events, etc.)

2. Effectiveness and adoption of the FUTURES project

2.1 Next, we would like to learn what it has been like for you to participate in the FUTURES project and services. In general, how has the FUTURES project affected this community?

2.2 In what ways has the FUTURES project affected your life, if at all? Can you give me some examples?

2.3 How satisfied are you with the FUTURES project services? What aspects could be improved to make the project more beneficial to the community?

2.4 What services or programs of FUTURES do you feel are most important? For what reasons?

2.5 What services of FUTURES are the least important? For what reasons are they least important? What would make them better?

If these topics do not come up in this section, probe about:

- What about FP/RH services?
- What about improved agricultural practices?
- What about conservation practices?
- What about livelihood generation?

2.6 Do you know people who would like to participate in FUTURES services but are not able to? Without naming names, who are they? What prevents them from participating? *Probe: affordability of services (the "poorest of the poor"); people with disabilities; other groups that may not be included.*

2.7 Integrated approach

As you may know, the FUTURES project implemented activities that involved many different aspects of life including health, economic livelihood, agricultural improvement, and forestry management. This is referred to as an integrated, or cross-sectoral, approach. Do you think this type of approach increased participation in FP and youth friendly health services? Why/why not?

2.8 Do you think this type of approach contributed to empowering women and youth? Why/why not? *Probe:* Are women and youth increasing their participation in economic development? Have bottlenecks to women and youth economic participation been reduced?

2.9 Do you think FUTURES activities contribute to women and youth participation in conservation activities? If so, how?

2.10 Do you think FUTURES activities contribute to women and youth participation in improved agricultural practices?

2.11 What cross-sectoral messaging did you receive from your participation in FUTURES? (i.e. messaging that included more than one aspect of health, livelihood, agriculture, or forestry)

2.12 Has acceptability of improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture and forest conservation improved in your community because of the FUTURES project?

3. Other services/projects in the area

3.1 Are there projects in the area that offer similar services to FUTURES that you are aware of? If so, what are these programs? (NABU, REDD+, Farm Africa, PHE, or others) What services do they offer?

- FP/RH services?
- Agricultural practices?
- Livelihood generation?
- Forest conservation?

4. Finally, I would like to ask you about services that FUTURES does NOT offer that you would like to see? What are those services? Why are they important to you?

5. What other suggestions do you have to improve the FUTURES project or similar projects?

Those are all the questions I have for you today. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that you have not had a chance to say?

H. Focus group guide for nonparticipants/community members

Date			
Start time		**End time**	
Woreda/Kebele			
Gender of group	(Circle one) Men Women		
Age of group	(Circle one) Youth Adult		

Thank you very much for coming to participate in this conversation. We are interested in learning about your knowledge of the FUTURES project in your community. FUTURES is implemented by CARE Ethiopia in collaboration with Environment and Coffee Forest Forum, Kulich Youth Reproductive Health and Development Organization, and Oromia Development Association (*may need to specify organization depending on the region and who is operating there*). During our conversation today, we ask that only one person speak at a time so that we can capture everything that is said. Let us agree as a group that we will not repeat or share with others anything that is shared here in the group today.

Please also be respectful of everyone's opinions; we may disagree but there are no right or wrong answers and everyone should feel free to express their opinions.

Are there any questions for me before we begin?

---Pause for questions ----

1. Information about the last year/introductory question

1.1 To begin with, I'd first like to ask you about what life has been like for your community in the past year. How has life been for families like yours in the past year?

2. Knowledge about the FUTURES project

Now I would like to ask you to share what you know about the FUTURES project in your area.

2.1 Have you heard about the FUTURES project? *If so, ask separately for each bullet point:* what do you know about…?

i. Who the FUTURES project serves?
ii. What services the FUTURES project offers?
iii. Where the FUTURES project operates?

2.2 Without naming names, do you know someone who participates/has participated in FUTURES services? if yes, what specifically have they participated in? In what ways has it affected their lives, if at all?

If these topics do not come up in this section, probe about:

iv. What about FP/RH services?
v. What about agricultural practices?
vi. What about conservation practices?
vii. What about livelihood generation?

3. Effectiveness and adoption of the FUTURES project

Next, I would like to learn what it has been like to have the FUTURES project and services in your community.

3.1 In general, how has the FUTURES project affected this community? *Probe for examples.*

If these topics do not come up in this section, probe about:

i. What about FP/RH services?

ii. What about improved agricultural practices?

iii. What about conservation practices?

iv. What about livelihood generation?

3.2 In your view, how have FUTURES project services impacted participants? In what ways are their lives different than those who do not participate??

3.3 From what you understand, how are participants selected to participate in FUTURES activities? Do you feel that selection of participants is appropriate? For what reasons?

3.4 Do you know people who would like to participate in FUTURES services but are not able to? Without naming names, who are they? What prevents them from participating? *Probe: affordability of services (the "poorest of the poor"); people with disabilities; other groups that may not be included.*

4. Integrated approach

As you may know, the FUTURES project implemented activities that involved many different aspects of life including health, economic livelihood, agricultural improvement, and forestry management. This is referred to as an integrated, or cross-sectoral, approach.

4.1 One of the integrated approaches was to include information on family planning/reproductive health as part of agricultural or livelihood trainings. What do you think about this approach?

4.1.1 Is it effective for increasing women's participation in FP/RH services? What about youth?

4.2 Another example was to include livelihood training as a way to improve forest conservation. What do you think about this approach? Is it effective in your view?

4.3 In your view, have community attitudes on gender roles and norms changed due to the FUTURES activities? If yes, why do you think this has happened? Please give examples.

5. Other services/projects in the area

5.1 Are there projects in the area that offer similar services to FUTURES that you are aware of (NABU, REDD+, Farm Africa, PHE, or other)? If so, what are these programs? What services do they offer?

- FP/RH services?
- Agricultural practices?
- Livelihood generation?
- Conservation practices?

5.2 In your view, how does FUTURES compare to these other projects/programs?

6. Finally, I would like to ask you about services that FUTURES does NOT offer that you would like to see offered in your community? What are those services? Why are they important to you?

Those are all the questions I have for you today. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that you have not had a chance to say?

I. Focus group guide for FUTURES project staff

	Date			
	Start time		**End time**	

Thank you very much for coming to participate in this conversation. We are interested in learning about your experience implementing the FUTURES project. During our conversation today, we ask that only one person speak at a time so that we can capture everything that is said. Let us agree as a group that we will not tell others about things that are shared here in the group today.

Please also be respectful of everyone's opinions; we may disagree that there are no right or wrong answers and everyone should feel free to express their opinions.

Are there any questions before we begin?

---Pause for questions ----

1. Purpose of the FUTURES project

1.1 To begin, let's talk about the FUTURES project and its services.

- First, who does the FUTURES project serve? Who are the main beneficiaries? How are beneficiaries identified/selected?
- Next, what are the main services that the FUTURES project provides?

If these topics do not come, probe about:

- What about FP/RH services?
- What about improved agricultural/conservation practices?
- What about livelihood generation?

2. Effectiveness of FUTURES project

2.1 Next, we would like to learn what it has been like to implement different aspects of the FUTURES project. How do project partners communicate and collaborate? In what ways is this effective? In what ways could the collaboration be improved, if any?

2.2 Who is typically involved in the collaboration and communication? What are the processes for this?

2.3 Now, I'd like you to describe the "integrated" approach of the FUTURES project. What does "integrated" mean for FUTURES?

If these topics do not come, probe about:

- What about FP/RH services?
- What about improved agricultural/conservation practices?
- What about livelihood generation?

2.4 In your view, what aspects of the integrated multisectoral approach are most effective? For what reasons? What aspects are least effective?

2.5 Which specific interventions had the greatest impact on the communities served by FUTURES? How did they make a difference? Can you provide examples?

2.6 Which specific interventions had the least impact on the communities served by FUTURES? For what reasons do you think this is?

2.7 In what ways was the integrated approach challenging? How could this be improved in the future?

3. Adoption (acceptability and uptake)

3.1 In your view, how do communities view the FUTURES project?

3.2 How well do communities understand the integrated approach?

3.3 Which participant selection or recruitment strategies have resulted in the highest levels of participation in the FUTURES project? For what reasons?

3.4 Which participant selection or recruitment strategies have resulted in the least participation? For what reasons?

3.5 Has acceptability of improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture and forest conservation changed since the project's start? In what ways?

3.6 To what degree have participants adopted improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture and forest conservation changed since the project's start?

4. Implementation

4.1 In what ways has the FUTURES project been challenging to implement?

- How did these challenges affect the ability of the project to deliver services?
- What adaptations have been made to address these challenges, if any?

4.2 In what ways is the FUTURES project different from other projects that provide similar services?

- In what ways does the integrated approach make it unique, if any?

5. Maintenance

5.1 How has the project collaborated with the government to implement the project? Please give examples.

5.2 Please describe changes you think future integrated projects could make to deliver integrated programming.

6. Most significant change

We would now like to understand what the most significant or most important change from the FUTURES project has been.

6.1 Does anyone have an example or story of a significant change to share?

- Who was the most affected?
- How were they affected?
- How did this significant change occur?

6.2 Do others agree with this story of change? Does anyone have anything to add?

6.3 Does anyone have a different idea of a significant change?

That is all the questions I have for you today. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me before we complete the focus group?

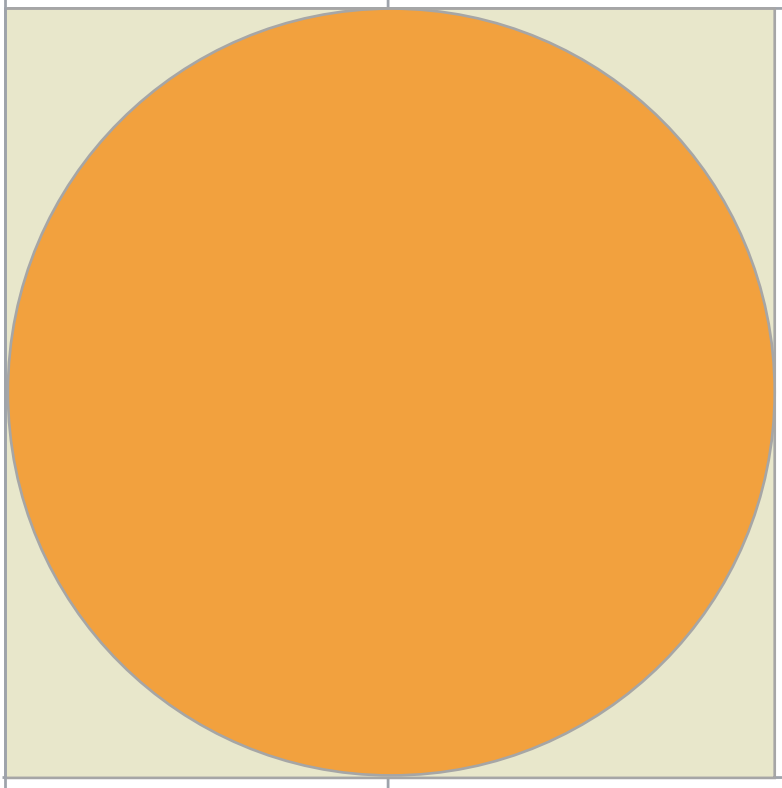
Appendix 4. Analysis codebook

	Parent code (Topic)	Child code (sub-topic)	*Definition*	*Protocol topic area*	*Qualifications or exclusions*
1.0	Personal experience with the project		Respondent discusses specific knowledge of, participation in, or other experiences with FUTURES project		Includes project staff, collaborators, participants, nonparticipants
1.1		Perception of the FUTURES project	Respondent discusses personal or community views or perceptions of any aspect of the project	3a. Impressions of the community 3b. Consistency with beneficiary needs 2d.i. Knowledge of cross-sectoral messaging	
1.2		Intensiveness of activities	Respondent discusses project coverage or lack of, including activities that were available/not available including to specific areas/groups	1c. Intensiveness of interventions	
1.3		Activities with highest/lowest interest	Respondent discusses activities with highest or lowest interest, and reasons for this	2a. Services that generated highest and lowest interest among beneficiaries	
1.4		Comparison to other projects	Respondent discusses how FUTURES work or results compare to other projects	2g. Comparison to other projects	
2.0	Recruitment of beneficiaries		Respondent discusses the process or experience of identifying and recruiting participants, including problems or successes in recruitment	1a. Identification and recruitment of beneficiaries	
2.1		Fairness in selection and participation	Respondent discusses equity and fairness (or lack thereof) in identifying and recruiting participants, and the success of recruitment strategies	1b. Fairness/equity in selection and participation of beneficiaries	
3.0	Level of integration		Respondent discusses project implementation specific to individual, HH, community, or sector level, and/or integration across these	4c. Levels of integration 2d.i. Knowledge of cross-sectoral messaging	
3.1		Definition of integration or multisectoral or cross-sectoral	Respondent discusses definition or understanding of any of these terms	4b. Understanding of “integration” and “multisectoral”	

	Parent code (Topic)	Child code (sub-topic)	*Definition*	*Protocol topic area*	*Qualifications or exclusions*
4.0	Local stakeholder collaboration		Respondent discusses FUTURES project collaboration or coordination with local stakeholders including government officials, NGOs, private sector, media, CBOs, universities, and others	5a. Extent of collaboration and coordination with government	This does not include coordination of project partners (captured in code 5.0)
5.0	Project coordination across sectors		Respondent discusses efforts to work or communicate across two or more sectors, such as forest management, agriculture, health, and livelihood generation including adaptations of IPs to the integrated approach and comparisons to other projects	2c. Success of multisectoral approach 2d.i. Knowledge of cross-sectoral messaging 2e. Communication/cooperation/ collab. between IPs; 2f. Adaptation of IPs to integrated approach 4b. Understanding of "integration" and "multisectoral" 5c. Scalability of multisectoral collaboration 2g. Comparison to other projects	Cross-sectoral activities and/or messaging (i.e., activities that included elements other than agriculture or conservation, such as FP/RH or livelihood generation)
6.0	Project impacts		Respondent discusses perceived impact (or lack of impact) as a direct result of project interventions	2a. Services that generated highest and lowest interest among beneficiaries 2c. Success of multisectoral approach 2g. Comparison to other projects	These do not include the MSC stories
6.1		Livelihood generation	Respondent discusses activities intended to support livelihood generation, including participation in or knowledge of livelihood generation activities		
6.2		FP/RH services	Respondent discuses improvement in, changes to, addressing barriers related to, or challenges with accessing FP/RH and/or youth-friendly health services	3c. Perception of FP providers and HEWs 2d.ii. Cross-sectoral messaging for FP/RH and YFHS	
6.3		Youth	Respondent discusses how the project has impacted the lives of youth and what has changed (or not changed) because of the project	2d.iii. Cross-sectoral messaging for empowerment of women and youth 2d.iv. Cross-sectoral messaging for participation of women and youth in conservation	

	Parent code (Topic)	Child code (sub-topic)	*Definition*	*Protocol topic area*	*Qualifications or exclusions*
6.4		Gender norms	Respondent discusses how the project has impacted gender norms, what has changed (or not changed) because of the project	2d.iii. Cross-sectoral messaging for empowerment of women and youth 2d.iv. Cross-sectoral messaging for participation of women and youth in conservation	
6.5		Improved agricultural practices	Respondent discusses knowledge, experience with, or programming designed to address agricultural practices	2d.v. Cross-sectoral messaging for improved agricultural practices 3d. Perceptions of DAs and natural resource experts 3e. Perceptions of farmers 3f. Acceptability of improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture, forest conservation	
6.6		Climate smart agriculture (CSA)	Respondent discusses knowledge, experience with, or programming designed to address CSA	3d. Perceptions of DAs and natural resource experts 3e. Perceptions of farmers 3f. Acceptability of improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture, forest conservation	
6.7		Conservation	Respondent discusses knowledge, experience with, or programming designed to address conservation	2d.iv. Cross-sectoral messaging for participation of women and youth in conservation 3d. Perceptions of DAs and natural resource experts 3e. Perceptions of farmers 3f. Acceptability of improved agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture, forest conservation	
7.0	Barriers and challenges to project implementation		Respondent discusses barriers to project implementation including recruitment, coverage, sustainability, and and/or whether anything was done in response	4a. Implementation challenges and delivery adaptations 5b. Facilitators and barriers to sustainability of positive changes	May include barriers internal to or outside the control of the project (e.g., contextual barriers such as political unrest)

	Parent code (Topic)	Child code (sub-topic)	*Definition*	*Protocol topic area*	*Qualifications or exclusions*
8.0	Sustainability		Respondent discusses how likely they feel the effects from interventions or approaches implemented by FUTURES are to last beyond the life of the project, including in comparison to other multisectoral projects	5a. Extent of collaboration and coordination with government 5b. Facilitators and barriers to sustainability of positive changes 2g. Comparison to other projects	
8.1		Suggestions to improve FUTURES	Respondent suggests improvements for FUTURES or a similar project in the future to achieve even more positive change	4a. Implementation challenges and delivery adaptations 5b. Facilitators and barriers to sustainability of positive changes	
9.0	Scalability		Respondent discusses their perception of the potential to scale-up specific interventions or approaches, including in comparison to other multisectoral projects	5c. Scalability of multisectoral collaboration 2g. Comparison to other projects	
10.0	Most significant change story		Use this code to tag an entire excerpt when a respondent shares a most significant change story during an interview or focus group	2b. Most significant interventions/ benefits 4d. MSC for implementation practice	
11.0	Context		Respondent discusses how life for self or the community recently changed (hardships, opportunities, challenges) outside the services provided by FUTURES or another project		



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