



# STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN FOUR ATVET COLLEGES

**Report On Focus Group Discussions in Nedjo,  
Woreta, Wolaita Sodo, and Maichew**

**McGill University**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This report shares the findings of eight focus group discussions (FGDs) that were conducted at four ATVETs (Nedjo, Wolaita Sodo, Woreta, and Maichew) from May-July 2018 during Year 5 of the ATTSVE project.*

FGDs were organized as part of project evaluation, and as follow-up to a large-scale survey on gender-based violence (GBV) that was conducted at the same ATVETs in Year 4 (Mitchell & Starr, 2018b). FGDs were conducted by McGill graduate interns during seven-week field placements in Ethiopia. The objectives of the FGDs were as follows:

- To gain an understanding of the students' perceptions, understanding, knowledge, and experiences of gender-based violence at their ATVET college;
- To inform programming to combat gender-based violence;
- To contribute to a knowledge-base on sexual violence as a barrier to women's participation in agriculture, education, and leadership.

FGDs were audio-recorded and fully transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis techniques.

Several major themes emerged from the data, including the following:

- Defining GBV;
- Context of GBV;
- Causes and effects of GBV;

- Institutional factors; and,
- Interventions.

Data is presented and discussed according to theme and sub-theme.

## Participant-led Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on participants' articulated needs and requests:

1

### CREATE AWARENESS OF GENDER ISSUES FOR ALL STUDENTS AT ANNUAL STUDENT ORIENTATION SESSIONS

- Highlight the importance of gender equality on campus.
- Communicate explicit policies on gender-based violence including: reporting structures (who students can speak to, how they can access help, what will happen once they speak to someone), consequences for perpetrators, support (including emotional support and access to health services) for survivors.
- Provide visible reminders by posting signs around campus.

**2****FORMALIZE REPORTING STRUCTURES AND INVOLVE THE GENDER FOCAL PERSONS**

- Students report feeling more comfortable speaking to a peer or a Gender Focal Person about issues related to GBV.
- Make sure students know **who** they can tell and **when** this person is available: post office hours on the Gender Office door.
- Remind students that they can bring a friend when speaking to a Gender Focal Person or other staff or faculty member (including college management).
- Consider reducing the teaching load of faculty members serving as Gender Focal Persons in order to ensure that they are available in the Gender Office during office hours.

**3****ENGAGE AND SUPPORT STUDENT LEADERS AS CHANGE MAKERS**

- Provide space for Gender Club meetings.
- Continue to provide training to all students on topics including gender equality, consent, and life skills.

**4****SUPPORT STUDENTS FINANCIALLY AND ACADEMICALLY**

- Provide stipends for students in need.
- Offer tutorial classes and well-lit study spaces for female students.
- Provide menstrual products for female students.
- Enhance sustainability by using existing income generation activities to support students.

**5****MITIGATE THE UNEQUAL BURDEN OF HOUSEHOLD LABOUR ON FEMALE STUDENTS**

- Provide safe cooking facilities on campus.
- Address the social norms that prevent female and male students from participating equally so that students can work towards sharing equal responsibility for tasks related to daily living:
  - If female students are expected to cook, how will male students contribute?
  - For example, male students could wash dishes so that female students can begin their studies earlier in the evening.

# INTRODUCTION

*The Agricultural Transformation Through Stronger Vocational Education (ATTSSVE) project aims to support Ethiopia in entering a market-focused agricultural system while fostering gender equality, diversity, and inclusiveness.*

Implemented over a period of six years (2014-2019), the ATTSSVE project is designed to enhance the capacity of the Ethiopian Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education Training (ATVET) system to prepare skilled, competent, technical graduates. Four ATVET colleges (**Nedjo, Wolaita Sodo, Woreta, and Maichew**) were selected for focused training and investment, with the intent that they will become leaders in change, sound institutional management, and innovation, while, at the same time, serving as models for teaching and curriculum reform and demand-driven programming for the ATVET system.

The project situates gender mainstreaming as an integral component of economic development, and has focused on building a Gender and Leadership Community of Practice involving students and staff across the four ATVETs.

Projected project outcomes include:

## 1 INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Increase capacity of four ATVET colleges to implement innovative management strategies and provide high quality training that responds to labour market needs of private and public-sector stakeholders active in commercial agriculture;

## 2 INSTRUCTOR TRAINING AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

Increase capacity of ATVET instructors at selected colleges to provide training and services that are gender sensitive and that meet the needs of commercial agriculture; and

## 3 NETWORKING AND LINKAGES

More effective partnerships developed between targeted ATVET colleges and public and private stakeholders in the sectors of agriculture and education.

The project implementing partners are Dalhousie University, Mennonite Economic Development Associates of Canada (MEDA), McGill University Faculty of Education (MCGILL), and Jimma University College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine (JUCAVM). The project is funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

## Background to the Study

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is a global concern affecting the health, psychosocial, and physical well-being of millions of girls and women around the world. Ending all forms of violence and discrimination against girls

and women is included in the United Nations Sustainable Development goals (UN, 2017). As has been clear in much of the global research on SGBV in schools and in relation to the ‘rape culture’ of universities, learning institutions are often areas that are breeding grounds for power imbalances that result in high rates of SGBV. At the same time, there is growing recognition that learning institutions should be places for transformation and that more ‘up close’ studies of what transformation could look like are needed (Mitchell, 2017). Among the countries included in the WHO Multi-Country Study of Violence Against Women, Ethiopia has one of the highest rates of SGBV (Gelaye, Arnold, Williams, Goshu, & Berhane, 2009). In Ethiopia, violence against women and girls continues to be a major challenge and a threat to women’s empowerment (Central Statistical Agency [Ethiopia] & ICF, 2016). Ethiopia is a Sub-Saharan country where 71% of its women in rural areas are at risk of physical or sexual violence by their intimate partner (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2005). Gasha, Schei and Magnus (2018) confirmed this statistic by noting the rate of 50-78% for the prevalence of intimate partner violence among reproductive-age women in Ethiopia (for additional information, see inset: “Ethiopian Statistics,” p. 8). Given the evidence of the high rates of SGBV in Ethiopia, this study aimed to involve young people in contributing to a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of individuals within local Ethiopian contexts.

## Objectives

The overall purpose of the study was to draw on the voices of ATVET students, both male and female, in order to learn about their perceptions of campus-based gender-based violence. The focus

of this report is on sharing the findings of eight focus group discussions (FGDs) that were conducted at four ATVETs from May-July 2018 during Year 5 of the ATTSVE project. FGDs were organized as part of project evaluation, and as follow-up to a large-scale survey on gender-based violence that was conducted at the same ATVETs in Year 4 of the project (Mitchell & Starr, 2018b). FGDs were conducted by McGill graduate interns during seven-week field placements in Ethiopia. The purpose of the FGDs were as follows:

- To gain an understanding of the students’ perceptions, understanding, knowledge, and experiences of gender-based violence at their ATVET college;
- To inform programming to combat gender-based violence;
- To contribute to a knowledge-base on sexual violence as a barrier to women’s participation in agriculture, education, and leadership.

### ETHIOPIAN STATISTICS

**50–  
78%**

**PREVALENCE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AMONG REPRODUCTIVE-AGE WOMEN**

**71%**

**WOMEN AT RISK OF PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY THEIR INTIMATE PARTNER**

**10%**

**REPORTS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BY A NON-PARTNER SINCE THE AGE OF 15**

**19%**

**PREVALENCE OF INJURY AMONG WOMEN WHO HAD EVER BEEN PHYSICALLY ABUSED**

**54%**

**CURRENT RANGE OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY INTIMATE PARTNERS**

**14%**

**REPORTS OF FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE AS FORCED**

(Garcia-Moreno et al., 2018)



# METHODOLOGY

*This research was conducted within the context of seven-week field placements for Canadian graduate student interns.*

Placements at each college lasted between four to seven days, and focus group discussions were part of multi-day programming that included the following: introduction ceremony and stakeholder meetings with college management, faculty (Gender Focal Persons, English Language Focal Persons), student leaders and Gender Club members; campus orientation tours led by Gender Focal Persons and students; popular education workshops on various topics in response to students' self-identified needs and requests, including "Intro to GBV" (focusing on key terminology and concepts related to gender-based violence), "How to Plan and Lead a Workshop" (focusing on supporting students in developing peer engagement strategies), and "Active Listening" (focusing on developing the capacity for peer support). Qualitative data was collected during focus group discussions and interns' field notes throughout their engagement in ATTSVE programming. Participation in focus group discussions was voluntary and did not preclude students from taking part in other programming and activities.

## Study Sites

ATTSVE is operational in four ATVET colleges (**Nedjo**, **Wolaita Sodo**, **Woreta**, and **Maichew**), which were selected based on a set of criteria informed by

differing realities and existing evidence. This report covers all four ATVETs supported by the ATTSVE project. Nedjo is located in the Oromia Region; Woreta is located in Amhara; Wolaita Sodo is located in SNNP; and Maichew is located in Tigray Region (**see Figure 1**).

## Field Coordination

Internship placements were coordinated and managed by ATTSVE staff at McGill University and the in-country ATTSVE office in Addis Ababa. Pre-departure training and orientation was implemented by a McGill Project Coordinator and two senior faculty researchers. In-country orientation was led by the ATTSVE Director, Administrators, and Gender Officer at the head office in Addis Ababa. When traveling to ATVETs, interns were accompanied by the ATTSVE Gender Officer who liaised with ATVET management and staff and worked collaboratively with interns to coordinate translation into local languages (Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya) and project administration.

Focus group questions were developed collaboratively by a McGill senior researcher, interns, and Gender Officer, with feedback from Gender Focal Persons at each college. The study team for leading focus group discussions consisted of the three McGill interns, ATTSVE Gender Officer,



**Figure 1.** Ethiopia Administrative Regions and Population (<http://www.ethiovisit.com/ethiopia/ethiopia.html>)

and at least one Gender Focal Person at each campus. Questions were orally translated by the ATTSVE Gender Officer and Gender Focal Person, and participants were able to respond in the language of their choice. Before the study team departed for the field, prior communication and coordination had been done by the ATTSVE project team in Addis and in the respective regions. Setting up appointments, and informing and recruiting the participants were all activities key to the success of the project. Data was collected from May 22 – July 7 2018.

## Data Collection

Participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques. The selection was made based on the relevant positions each of the participants had within the ATVET context. The purpose of the FGDs was to learn about students' experiences and perceptions of GBV on campus, and the impact of the ATTSVE project, and thus FGDs were limited to ATVET students. ATVET faculty members (primarily the Gender Focal Person(s) and English Language Focal Person)

were present to facilitate translation, and met with the interns and ATTSVE Gender Officer to familiarize themselves with the FGD questions and procedures. Based on recommendations of in-country ATTSVE staff and ATVET faculty, separate FGDs were held with female and male students to facilitate student comfort when discussing issues related to gender and violence. Accordingly, 2 FGDs occurred at each of the ATVET colleges, totaling eight FGDs. Each focus group included 8-12 participants, and lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. Students were provided with an opportunity to provide anonymous written feedback at the end of the FGD.

## Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at McGill. All participants were informed in detail about the true purpose and complete scope of the study, that their contributions would be analyzed anonymously, and that they were free to withdraw from focus group discussions at any time. Given the sensitive nature of the subject matter, participants were informed that they could speak with researchers, Gender Focal People (two college faculty members who have received training on gender issues and have established support relationships with students), or the ATTSVE Gender Officer.

## Data Organization and Analysis

FGDs were recorded and fully transcribed, organized according to each of the ATVETs. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques and a two-stage coding process: first, open coding was used to draw out all themes appearing in the data, before undertaking focused coding

using the most prominent and important themes (Esterberg, 2002). Analysis and coding was conducted by a member of the study team who was present at all FGDs, and could incorporate field notes and observations throughout the study process, including guiding the creation of themes.

Analysis was guided and informed by intersectional feminist research methodology. Within this framework, knowledge is understood as constructed within discursive systems of power, and embedded within social context and practices. Efforts to mitigate the unequal power relations between researcher and researched (McCorkel & Myers, 2003) include critical reflexivity to engage with our own social locations as researchers (Rich, 1986).

Initial analysis (open coding and refinement) of each ATVET's transcripts followed the chronological order of the FGDs (**Nedjo, Wolaita Sodo, Woreta, and Maichew**). Data was then compiled and disaggregated by theme. For the purposes of this report, data is organized and presented according to theme in order to highlight the commonalities evident across all four campuses. While each ATVET has a unique context with different types of programs and services, common themes emerged which appeared to reflect the breadth and scope of the ATTSVE project. Within this thematic framework, individual quotations are identified using the gender of the speaker and the location of the FGD.<sup>1</sup> This identification is an effort to explicitly acknowledge the importance of context and social location while seeking to make broader thematic observations.

<sup>1</sup> Quotations in Section 1 A *Defining GBV: Impact/ Role of Facilitators and Translators* are not attributed to a specific ATVET in order to preserve the anonymity of the translators.

# THEMES

The following section provides a thematic framework for the ATTSVE project, highlighting commonalities evident across all four campuses.

	MAIN THEME	SUB-THEME
1	DEFINING GBV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Impact/Role of facilitators and translators</li> <li>B Multi-faceted definition (e.g., social, cultural, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, economic, unequal power)</li> <li>C Roles (victims/survivors and perpetrators; males and females)</li> </ul>
2	CONTEXT FOR GBV— SITUATING GBV IN TIME AND PLACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Time: Past, present</li> <li>B Place: Campus, community (surrounding campus), region (students' home communities)</li> </ul>
3	CAUSE AND EFFECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Economics</li> <li>B Education</li> <li>C Health</li> </ul>
4	INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Reporting</li> <li>B Response</li> <li>C Responsibilities</li> </ul>
5	INTERVENTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Training</li> <li>B Female students' daily lives</li> </ul>

# 1 DEFINING GBV

## A IMPACT/ROLE OF FACILITATOR AND TRANSLATOR

In order to establish a common understanding of the subject matter and key terms, each FGD began by asking students to define GBV as though they were explaining it to someone who had not heard of this concept before. This provides an example of the focus group as a site of intervention, as after participant responses were gathered, a common definition was provided based on the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women's definition of violence against women:

“Any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women” (United Nations General Assembly, 1993).

This interaction made visible the impact and/or role of the focus group facilitators and translators, demonstrating that FGDs were not a neutral site of gathering objective information but rather a dialogic space of knowledge construction. For example, when participants offered examples of primarily physical violence, the translator offered additional examples in Amharic before informing researchers about the exchange by stating the following:

*“Sometimes they consider GBV is only physical, but it can also be psychological that can ... a feeling of inferiority or fear or anxiety which somebody can say, I mean can insult or can have just poke them, so they might have a fear, a fear not to report them for the management or the higher position. If they are, I gave them*

*an example, if there is a peer group that they can discuss about that issue and they can solve by themselves, or if usually they do not feel able to report there might be a representative to report to the management. So this is just an example. An example of potential solutions.”*

TRANSLATOR

In this example, the translator provided additional information regarding the various forms of GBV, and also discussed a potential barrier for students reporting. It was unclear to facilitators whether this barrier was identified by students, or whether it was first suggested by the translator. Likewise, it was unclear whether the proposed solution (engaging with a group of peers to discuss challenges and facilitate peer support when reporting) was generated by the translator or by the students. Through this interaction, the discussion transitioned from defining GBV to identifying challenges faced by students and also suggesting possible solutions, demonstrating the way that translation contributed to shaping the structure and direction of the FGDs.

There are additional examples of the process of translation contributing to the content and structure of the FGDs, often shifting the FGDs from a place of knowledge gathering to one of intervention through knowledge sharing:

*“Just they are not responding on the meaning of GBV, so I try to explain what gender based violence is, I am telling them that.”*

TRANSLATOR

*“I'm telling them that just GBV occurs in different ways, just culturally community attach female as inferior, even if we attach females to different*

*conditions like objects or something that happen. So, in this way, GBV might happen so makes us, what are the most barriers that make us not talk about such condition?"*

TRANSLATOR

*"So I was just discussing that the issue of GBV is not only the issue of women or female, but also there could be issues in relation to women because we are focusing on women because different research has indicated that women are more exposed to GBV so that's why we're focusing on women. So if there are any issues related to GBV on male, they can also discuss that."*

TRANSLATOR

*"It's not only, it's only the very strong or dangerous violences, but even touching without her consent is kind of violence, so I explained that and if there are any issues even with a female student might also might violate guys so that could be also another issue. If there are such issues in the colleges, they can raise, I said, he can raise."*

TRANSLATOR

The theme of establishing a shared understanding through defining GBV was also evident in the facilitators' tendency to provide examples of GBV on Canadian college campuses. This was also an attempt to mitigate the unequal power dynamic in which the white, Canadian graduate students were viewed as more liberated than the black, African ATVET students, as though they had been sent to Ethiopia with answers on ending GBV because this is no longer an issue faced by the developed West. This assumption was often discussed by the research team, and may be an example of the researchers' subjective discomfort embodying the roles of white researchers in Africa:

*"For example at the university where we come from, a big challenge was there was no one at the university specifically for students to talk to about GBV. That was a big issue that students identified, because they didn't know who to tell they only to tell their friends. There was no one who worked at the university to listen. Maybe you can share that example of an issue we faced."*

FACILITATOR

*"Can you share that this challenge of having to do work at home and study and having the expectation to do a lot of work at home is similar in many other colleges and in Canada. It is very hard for women with children to study at school. Just that we understand a little bit."*

FACILITATOR

*"At our university too, 100% ending GBV has not happened and we've heard that other universities and colleges all over the world, that it is an issue people are trying to work on."*

FACILITATOR

It is unclear whether participants perceived researchers this way. There were occasions where participants asked researchers what they should do to end GBV, asking for advice and instruction. On multiple occasions, participants asked for additional resources from ATTSVE:

*"I am asking them what do you think of yourself? Are you confident enough to express your feelings and are you feeling you are as strong as me? And they responding: even we feel fear, we don't freely express our ideas – so to avoid such condition it might be advised to support us and give us some advice."*

TRANSLATOR

Quotes from facilitators further demonstrate the impact of translation, as facilitators engaged in conversation with translators in the process of trying to communicate with students: they often addressed translators directly and then requested that what they had said be communicated to students, sometimes adding rationale for why they wanted to communicate certain points to students. The process of translation was truly dialogic as it was composed of multiple intersecting and simultaneous dialogues: between facilitators, facilitators and translators, translators themselves, translators and students, and amongst students.

## **B** MULTI-FACETED DEFINITION

Participants' definitions of GBV were multi-faceted, reflecting unequal distribution of power, and included the following dimensions: social, cultural, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and intellectual, and economic (emphasis added):

*"I usually think that it's the violence is mostly performed on women or females so it could be the social, **from society**, or it could be **from the male group** or from the male, but generally I think GBV is on women, so she might experience different types of violence like the **physical and emotional and social violence** but when we talk about GBV we came only female ones."*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

*"That it is a forceful act intended to hurt somebody, and mostly it's, it's implemented or it's forced on a woman, it might be rape. If someone wants **sexual activity without her consent** we say that's GBV. It's beyond, the activities beyond her*

*willingness and beyond her consent and she explained it in female sex."*

FEMALE, WORETA

*"So he said that mostly women are exposed for GBV, especially in this area, and even **denying their human right** is also violating, it's kind of violation. And we could say **early marriage** could be an example for GBV these are the common things in this area."*

MALE, WORETA

*"GBV is **unequal distribution of resources or unequal opportunities** for women or men."*

MALE, WORETA

*"**Abduction and early marriage** could be an example in this area so totally **ignoring their rights or their needs** is what we call GBV."*

MALE, WORETA

*"Denying or excluding women from any benefit or excluding them from, their voices from any developmental activities and not consider their rights and values into any activities cause GBV."*

MALE, WORETA

*"Women are not that much given the opportunity in **decision making roles** because everybody thinks they are, as if they don't know anything, they have less knowledge about any activity and they don't have, they **don't have the chance to participate in decision making roles** so that's also, that's one problem in this campus."*

MALE, WORETA

*"It's the same this that women are **not much educated or have no value**, and thinking that women are not enough for any positions, any leadership positions. So **undermining their values and undermining their roles**, it's just*

*an attitude on the students, on the management staff that **women are not, not for any leadership role.***

MALE, WORETA

*“So, sometimes there are **verbal abuses** like when we got out from the college as we are in the college they might make fun of us, in our [inaudible] make comment, [inaudible] us verbally **male students verbally attack the female students.**”*

FEMALE, MAICHEW

*“So he said that like we can consider that **male students might take their pen and some stationaries or some schooling materials** like and handouts from female students. It might not, they might not use force but somehow they might like kind of cheat or I'll give you later, they might say I'll give you later and then keep totally. So we can say, we can consider this a GBV.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

## C ROLES

When defining GBV, the different roles of females and males was an important feature across all campuses. Participants readily identified that they understood females as predominantly occupying the roles of victims/survivors, which was stated more frequently and openly than the accompanying assumption (that males are more frequently perpetrators). GBV was often defined as something that happens to females, and not as something that is done by males. Less frequently, males were identified as victims or survivors, often by pointing out that males also experience violence in the community surrounding the college rather than violence based on their gender.

*“It's more shown on women this violence are mostly create inequality between male and women in the society this is also additional, apart from other issues that women are experiencing from the society this is also another burden for women.”*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

*“Women are mostly affected and their voices are denied.”*

MALE, WORETA

*“GBV means females are less, females are not as incorporated in activities as male students.”*

FEMALE, MAICHEW

*“GBV means it might be social or psychological harm toward somebody but usually this harm is towards female, and usually men are the perpetrators of these acts, actions and this might be affecting their life and their vision. And as the name implies this towards a specific gender.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

*“One thing that we should believe or like we should be aware about women are equal with men, we have to have that thinking, men have to have such kind of thinking.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

At one college, participants discussed social sanctions and judgment towards men who engaged in traditionally feminine activities, offering a sociocultural dimension of violence based on normative gender roles.

*“If you take standard hotels around the cities for example. In the hotels, men are cooking, but when we come back in the rural areas the perception of individuals for cooking is just very bad. So perception by itself is one of the barriers and he say it is because*



*of our perception that this happen. [inaudible] men can cook. In city, male is cooking, but when we come to the rural areas, if male does domestic jobs in the home, the female herself is not feeling good for that male—she is saying he is cooking in the home. When she tells this to other person, other person just attach that feeling this way toward him, so the perception is in this way.”*

**MALE, NEDJO**

At several colleges participants identified females as perpetrators of violence toward themselves through self-limiting beliefs and internalized misogyny.

*“By nature females feel they may not be strong as male. Such perception is also there and when distributing work in the home the time even for male and female is different. The time even for work for female is not equal to the time for education. In such a way they condition might affect their education and they might not be as competent as male.”*

**FEMALE, NEDJO**

*“The problem is from the female side because there was cultural something cultural where they protect or they feel they are inferior. So I never seen any male that treat female as inferior but female by herself female feels she is inferior because of the previous cultural impact. No there is female by herself feeling she is inferior but I’ve never seen male treat her as inferior.”*

**FEMALE, NEDJO**

*“It’s not also one person is undermining another person. We as a women has also have also, have a, also a habit or you could say a behaviour to undermine ourselves.*

*And there is also even one woman undermines another woman, it’s not only opposite sex. We believe we are oppressed or undermined.”*

**FEMALE, WORETA**

One participant elaborated on the impact of social context in constructing these beliefs for both women and men:

*“Women by themselves are always considering themselves as inferior so even though we try to like give them a place to participate they always not confident or they undermine their potential, so this is one challenge. And other one is most of us came from rural community and these communities and we were raised in these communities that have no awareness about gender. We tend to treat women like they are inferior, we don’t give any good treatment like considering that our sister our wives, our mother, we don’t consider that, they say that we always give them like they are inferior because we, we mostly came from, we were raised in such communities, so we have almost no awareness about gender equality, that’s why we tend to act like this.”*

**MALE, MAICHEW**

Throughout the theme of roles, it emerged that participants sometimes felt uncertain about consent. This included cases where male participants believed that female participants were consenting to sex acts and retroactively withdrew consent when they were upset about another issue.

*“It is because of some reason that the male may attack the female. It is because of the actions that she showed that the male has tried to make the relation with her. So, during the first time she will cause for the*

*relation. When she feels when they come together and they form the relationship they may disagree. So other time she feel that she is affected or she is violated and so then she may take this to the law and she just try to make him [inaudible] for this reason it is important to include both the male and the female in the training for their awareness. So it is important to have training for both of the sexes so that they know what they do."*

**MALE, NEDJO**

*"We can say there are some relations like winking and some relations, but this is based on their willingness so we cannot say they are violences, it's just to make interactions, so you might wink them or have some interactions but it's based on their willingness, not some kind of attack."*

**MALE, WOLAITA SODO**

The theme of consent also included examples of transactional sex in order for female students to feel safe when walking off campus:

*"We are forced to rent houses with guys because we thought they are going to protect us when we come back, when it's night, but after a while we thought they are friends or we have a relationship like brother and sister, but after a while they might be change and want to have sexual relations with us if we say no the attack might also come from the students by themselves."*

**FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO**

At all ATVETs, participants shared the belief that females could learn to protect themselves to prevent becoming victims. It was seldom articulated that males could spread awareness about the importance of not committing GBV,

as perpetrators were usually not named.

*"So he said just in general male does not become a perpetrator without the action shown by the female. So It is the actions that they are shown that the male might affect or impact the — so as I think, he called it training is important for both male and female."*

**MALE, NEDJO**

*"There are different opportunities that aware female students to protect themselves. And now, here in the campus also, there are different intervention mechanisms that aware female students and other staffs to intervention gender based violence. And including the tutorial classes. Females are more privileged to empower themselves, there are tutorial classes and different activities that empower and improve their skills."*

**MALE, WOLAITA SODO**

*"The most import thing she said is that we as a female student we should not expose our self to such violences we should be confident and we should not undermine ourselves and our roles and our values. We should be confident and stick to the goal which is education and what we came to what we came here. So we should, we should focus on education."*

**FEMALE, WORETA**

*"We advise and suggest for females, for friends, our female friends, to not go out if the time is late or if at night it might be difficult for a woman to go out after a certain time."*

**MALE, WORETA**

*"So it's not allowed to go out to the college for after 8 o'clock so we advise or we give protection that if she go out we will tell her the consequences or what she might*

*be exposed if she would go out to such areas, we would advise and protect from such expositions.”*

MALE, WORETA

*“Especially on the prevention of GBV, we’ve been working on how they, how female student can protect themselves and not to be exposed for GBV.”*

MALE, WORETA

These statements appear to reflect a belief that female students are responsible for their own safety, which may be connected both to the idea that experiencing GBV is the fault of the survivor, but also that when faced with a significant and pervasive challenge like GBV, female students may not be able to change the behaviour of perpetrators but may find ways to try and stay safe. This theme reflects a tension between discourse on victim-blaming as well as female empowerment. Several female students challenged the construction of GBV as a risk experienced by individuals, and situated GBV as a systemic issue:

*“She says the GBV attack is all of the college populations responsibility, not only female students responsibility, but male students as well. It must be reported.”*

FEMALE, MAICHEW

*“Everybody’s responsible to do this and even the responsibilities of the management they will do this and staff so, any related documents should be announced or should be posted in any visible places at the college.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

## 2 THE CONTEXT FOR GBV— SITUATING GBV IN TIME AND PLACE

### A TIME: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

In addition to defining GBV by discussing **what** constitutes GBV and who experiences GBV, participants also shared **when** and **where** they perceive GBV to take place, and how time and place impact their experiences and perceptions. Early on in most FGDs, participants clearly situated GBV in the past, as something that has previously occurred.

*“In previous times there was GBV, but nowadays after we educated, we can understand GBV, and tell concerning bodies, we are able to do something and there is no more GBV.”*

FEMALE, NEDJO

*“As my thinking and understanding, just GBV mean the position of peoples on males and females in the past times.”*

MALE, NEDJO

*“Similarly he said in past times there were different perceptions there is a new system is coming more for equality. In the past time just they were saying that female are not as strong as gender but they can work like a man and it is what I think, he said.”*

MALE, NEDJO

*“Government strategies in past times, there were no support for females, but nowadays females and disabled peoples are getting support from others and I think the equality in gender is good.”*

MALE, NEDJO

*“So his opinion on GBV is during the previous times I mean the back ago, sexual I mean GBV are expressed in rape and sexual assault and different abuses on female. But in the recent times it is not that much appearing because there are legal sectors and rules and regulations, and it’s kind of now, not appearing in these times.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

As each group’s definition and shared understanding of GBV developed, and perhaps as participants gained familiarity with facilitators and translators and felt more comfortable sharing, ideas emerged that challenged this temporal bracketing of GBV in the past, and pointed to current examples:

*“I think it is impossible to say 100% there is no GBV, but it is obvious that the men sometimes request of female. Sometimes these men obligate [inaudible] Because of the culture.”*

MALE, NEDJO

*“I don’t say that, I don’t think there is no GBV, GBV is still existing here. For instance being treated as in inferior in home and unequal in education are examples of gender based violence.”*

FEMALE, NEDJO

As discussed in the previous section, students were able to clearly articulate numerous examples of GBV in many domains (social, cultural, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and intellectual, and economic), reflecting a

current understanding of GBV. However, when asked directly, participants appeared to want to give the impression that progress had been made to end GBV. Researchers reflected on whether this demonstrated an additional dimension of how their relationship to the project impacted participant responses, as perhaps participants wanted to indicate that the project had been effective in ending GBV in their communities.

## **B** PLACE: CAMPUS, COMMUNITY (SURROUNDING CAMPUS), REGION (STUDENTS’ HOME COMMUNITIES)

In addition to situating GBV in time, the theme of place emerged as participants discussed **where** GBV takes place, and where they feel safe or at risk. Similar to the discussion of time in which participants initially shared that GBV is no longer a current issue, participants also initially discussed that GBV is not an issue on campus but exists in the surrounding communities. This theme was often linked to the challenges faced by female students responsible for food preparation and cooking, as access to cooking facilities often involves needing to leave the campus grounds:

*“We feel more safe inside the college, but outside the college there may be some verbal attacks from outsiders, so we feel more safe when we are inside the college.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

*“Female students usually don’t have they don’t feel safety to study late in the library and they cook food outside the college so, the college it has dormitories, but they go out to cook food outside the college. So, it would be nice if the college facilitates a kitchen or establish a kitchen so*

*that we can stay in the college and study late, that might be helpful.”*

**FEMALE, MAICHEW**

*“So of course there are some issues around the community. For example if they might have to study late it is not safe or insecure around this community, they might be some challenges when they go out late. And there’s no also cafeteria here, there is a dormitory, but they are required to cook outside the college, so including the house renters and some people around they might not do it by force, but they might like ... they might insist them to have a sexual relationship including coming from different areas for construction or for areas of contract works for road or for building. Or they might ask: I’ll give you this, and so easily they can be abused or they can be, like they might require some money, so as a transactional sex they might easily be cheated, so this is also an issue in the community or outside the community.”*

**MALE, MAICHEW**

*“I’ve never seen any violence in the campus, but most of the GBV issues are coming from outside the campus because they use kitchen service outside the campus. They rent a house around the surrounding ATVET so after class, which they finish around 5, they have to go to that house and prepare their dinner, so sometimes that class might take long hours, up to 6 so they don’t have enough time to prepare food and there are times even we don’t have our dinner because we fear that if it’s late, somebody is going to attack us so this is the main issue related to GBV in the campus after.”*

**FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO**

*“There is no GBV issue on our campus and it’s so free to even to communicate with students as well as our instructors, so she emphasized the issue is coming from outside the campus.”*

**FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO**

*“The issue is outside the campus some students might go up to 20 minutes’ walk to cook their food and the house is kind of far, so when they prepare their food and come back to the ATVET the compound is closed at 8:30, up to 9. So there’s also not enough time to go there, cook food, eat and come back to the ATVET. Also there may be some attacks from the society like taking their stuff, maybe mobiles, and some jewelries, and also they might attempt to sexual harassment so it’s kind of its not very safe from outside campus.”*

**FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO**

It appears that the distinction between college campuses and wider communities is linked to the rules and regulations related to GBV on campus, suggesting that having formal policies and guidelines regarding GBV contributes to students’ perceptions of safety. Contrastingly, it appeared that students believe that the consequences and laws related to GBV are less enforceable outside of the campus environment:

*“So most of the students are in this campus, college are coming from rural areas, surrounding rural areas. So, most of the time they experienced GBV. But when they came here there are different rules and regulations that helps them to protect themselves from GBV. And there are no attacks or violence, including verbal attacks and physical attacks there are no*

*such kind of issues in this college because the college and also the project have done so many activities to alleviate. He can say GBV is completely alleviated in this college.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

*“The most impact or the force is coming from outside the campus, which we don’t know and nobody is going to take care or to the legal places so they might attack us or take our mobiles when we come back from the cooking house.”*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

However, the boundaries between campus and the surrounding community do not always appear to be clear. Students shared examples of feeling vulnerable off-campus to attacks perpetrated by other students from the campus community. While the “where” may be in the community, the “who” is linked to the college. In these instances, campus rules and regulations appeared to contribute to students’ perceptions of safety:

*“So they might not be experiencing or exposed to any GBV because there is also rules and regulations on the compound. But outside the compound she is saying sometimes we do have, we are forced to rent houses with guys because we thought they are going to protect us when we come back, when it’s night, but after a while we thought they are friends or we have a relationship like brother and sister, but after a while they might be change and want to have sexual relations with us if we say no the attack might also come from the students by themselves. So the other also is that the students also might attempt to attack us but after a while they might be known and the attack also is not that much*

*experienced by them because they know they will be charged or be experiencing some charge from the students, I mean the college.”*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

When discussing the tension between on- and off-campus experiences, participants highlighted the importance of engaging community members in trainings and awareness projects related to GBV:

*“She says that maybe there is a GBV from in our family, for example having more workload or time to study. I would be providing more GBV training for our families and create resources as a school for additional success.”*

FEMALE, NEDJO

The ideas of community engagement were often linked to the need for the project to provide additional resources (emphasis added):

*“So when they came here, of course there is some improvement, during the previous time, but of course we need some support and some awareness creation educations so that they can improve their confidence and here, including the student, the male students, we support and follow up so that they can be more confident and so that they can be more aware about their lives. Nobody is violating women in this campus, so, but **there should be more support and follow up from this project.**”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

*“The one, the have knowledge, is not, should not be bounded here they should transmit and disperse the knowledge they got from here to their sisters and the other social community when they get back,*

*and they finished school. So in order to do that **they should have some budget or something incentives** to teach and to aware other people.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

Although colleges were often presented as safer spaces, protected by rules and regulations, there were multiple instances of participants sharing examples of GBV on college campuses:

*“Even though I want to go to the library or to study in somewhere, it’s I have a fear it not might be safe for me to go to studying, to the library cause sometimes, or you could say very rarely, there are some male students who have undermining comments or negative comments for female students and thinking that if they are on, on the road to the library, I’m not comfortable to go and study. So this also can be one issue.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

*“The issue of GBV is not only in our college but also you can observe it in the social, I mean the community, in some religious and overall in Ethiopia. So when it comes to in our college of course there are some gender inequalities.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

In some instances, participants shared examples of behaviours that they did not perceive to be threatening or related to GBV. For example, male participants might share their perception of male behaviours on campus as being normal or part of campus culture. Facilitators and translators appeared to find it challenging not to contradict these beliefs, particularly when female students had expressed that these types of behaviours were perceived as attacks by them:

*“It’s not that worse but, there are, we can mention some like for example when female students wear some inappropriate clothes that [inaudible] get students attention, we might say something that might even affect her psychological status and sometimes we might throw stone, but it’s not out of like to affect her or to make her feel bad, it’s just a way to be like a friendly which we, which has been like for a long time. They might say something or like poke her to express their affection, that’s one kind of, like our culture. It’s not worse and I’m not even considering it as GBV, he said that. They are not any worse or put woman in danger.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

*“So, sometimes there are verbal abuses like when we got out from the college as we are in the college they might make fun of us, in our [inaudible] make comment, [inaudible] us verbally male students verbally attack the female students.”*

FEMALE, MAICHEW

## 3 CAUSE AND EFFECT

### A ECONOMICS

#### ***Financial Resources and Division of Labour***

In terms of economics, participants shared that lack of financial resources contributed to females’ increased risk of GBV, and also females’ relative inferior position in society contributed to ongoing financial precariousness. Additionally, the distribution of labour emerged as a major theme at every college. Participants provided examples of how females’ responsibility for household labour on campus and

in their home communities, often including cooking for their male classmates, contributed to their vulnerability to GBV and ongoing lower position in society.

*“So the basic problem she raised is there is no cafeteria to serve students so in order to fulfill that or in order to establish a cafeteria here the college needs huge amount of budget so the government doesn’t have such kind of money to allocate to establish the cafeteria here. So the project could support the college in order to establish a cafeteria to serve if possible the whole students, if not the female students, because they are the most vulnerable for different violences outside the campus.”*

**FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO**

*“Women are mostly assigned for lots of activity in the household so what gender means or gender equity mean fair distribution of any labour or any activities or any resource for both genders. But here we mostly assign women to lots of activities for in the household.”*

**MALE, WORETA**

*“Example in college, gender issue that participate [inaudible] for example [inaudible] in sport example in sport, men and very exercise that [inaudible] women come and [inaudible] as work station and rates of work are very high in the house [inaudible] environment, but [inaudible] is very in time acquired very necessary but cannot exercise, in sport. They might sometimes have high burden, they might have other household activities”*

**MALE, MAICHEW**

*“Female students are so much stressed in household activities and as a result they might not participate in so many*

*academic activities or teaching I mean system. And there is, related to this they often feel, they sometimes feel inferior or undermined, they underestimate themselves and even though there are, like they have free time, they might not have the confidence to participate in any kind of schooling activities.”*

**MALE, MAICHEW**

The impact of the unequal distribution of labour on women seemed to be clear to male participants. Both female and male focus group members shared similar accounts of how the burden of preparing food and washing dishes, often in off-campus facilities, placed a disproportionate amount of stress on women as well as posed risks to physical safety. However, when describing this issue, male students presented the solution as building an on-campus cafeteria to decrease the amount of time spent commuting to off-campus kitchens for female students, and did not suggest that male students could share the domestic workload:

*“So in our culture mostly women are women are mostly, women are mostly do the household activities, yes, the household activities, the cooking food and that is, that takes so much time for female students. Even the guy came to the house and eat, only what he wants and wash his hands and immediately leave the house, but female students might be, females be might be stay in the house and maybe wash the dishes. And might be stay in the house and even to cook maybe another food that takes so much time and even puts so much pressure on her education. So attention should be given on budget allocation to provide some materials for the cafeteria so that they can be more focused on their education and because they have so much potential*



*in their studies. Like other male students, they have equal, they have equal awareness and even knowledge, and they can be more empowered and they can be in top positions, because, but this challenges are affecting their statuses and lugging them from different developmental activities.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

### **Transactional Sex**

Connected to the issue of household labour is the role of transactional sex, sometimes as an expectation included in domestic labour, and sometimes as a means of securing personal protection:

*“Sometimes we might share cooking rooms with men to share the rental costs but they don’t want to share any activities when we prepare food, they only want to come and eat food. So there is no support from the guys and if we also stayed and pass the time to enter the campus we might sometimes pressure to sleep with the guys. That’s also a lot of pressure for us. So we recommend if such kind of things, uh, have solutions.”*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

*“The ATVET and the project should at least establish a cooking place or a kitchen in the campus, at least for needy female students because if they don’t have money to cook, or if they don’t have a place to stay they might be exposed or forced to have what we call transactional sex they might be exposed or vulnerable for such kind of issues because they need money to buy sanitary pads or any other materials, stationaries, for so they expose themselves for other men to have sex, they are forced to have sex in order to have something or money from other surrounding society.”*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

### **Parenting and Care Work**

In addition to household labour, parenting responsibilities and care work were also discussed as impacting the economic security of female students and thus their experiences of GBV:

*“There are students who have children and most of them are making house outside the campus and they only came here when there is a class so they don’t have a chance to be incorporated and, or their needs are not incorporated that much. So I can say that this is GBV.”*

MALE, WORETA

*“There is one thing they miss so much classes when they, whenever they are pregnant. The, and when they came back for exam, the instructors are not willing, or not supportive and there are some struggles or challenges on the students because their, I mean their instructors are not much supportive so they miss school, as a class one thing they miss, it is challenging to be supported to take an exam and there are no favourable conditions even to deliver the baby.”*

MALE, WORETA

*“So with regard to accommodation these pregnant mothers or students are not considered whenever they are assigned or allocated for dormitory, they just randomly give them, maybe this might be on third floor or second floor. So for for him, he said that they should be go on first floor, because they should be given or treated well and second one, they don’t have access for transportation whenever they want to get into town and take medical follow ups, so it’s also one or they are not given even any pocket money for this medication so that could be also be included in GBV you can say.”*

MALE, WORETA

## B EDUCATION

### **Access to and Participation in Education**

Participants linked the impact of females' economic position and household responsibilities to females' access to education and ability to participate fully in their education. These issues include limited time to study due to the burden of household labour. Participants also drew a clear link between lack of access to education negatively impacting females' ability to benefit from development activities, that is, to participate and engage in economic development and training activities that may increase their economic independence and thus their position in their communities:

*"The first respondent said just the perception that is found in their parents that in the home, is one of the biggest problem and even our parents feel that our education might not have value ... they do not give time to study. They do not encourage them. They make us females to feel inferior, from parents. The other thing is just the wrong view between male and female even when we take this condition to anybody we may not the chance to be heard by the concerned body because lack of awareness and lack of education. So this is one of the main barriers for address GBV."*

FEMALE, NEDJO

*"In a way they could have extra time or better time to study and improve their educational status. Because they are now spending lots of time to cooking, and travelling. So they could save that time for studying and*

*even to have recreational time for themselves. So the basic problem is budget allocation from the project, as well as from the college. The project might support through materials, kitchen materials, and other items."*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

*"GBV could be, could be from different aspects, it can be physical, emotional, social, but it can put lots of burdens and pressures on women and it can affect their educational status while learning."*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

*"During the back times women are not given the opportunity to participate in education even he said that I have an older sister, but I am the one who is privileged to go to school than her. Because she, most of female students, or female are engaged in household activities, so they haven't got the time to go to school and to learn and improve their educational status and that hinders the chance to participate and benefit from any development, any development from a sector, any developmental sector."*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

*"They have low participation comparing to men in any kind of activity in the college, their participation is low and I think their also given less opportunity comparing to men, so we can say ... He also added that they are not even supported their education, there are not tutorial classes to improve educational performances, they haven't got the chance because usually they are, they don't have equal participation so he thinks they should be supported with tutorial classes."*

MALE, WORETA

## Unsafe Learning Environments

Related to education, participants also provided examples of how risk of GBV surrounding campus, and unequal power relations between instructors and students, can be damaging to students' educational attainment:

*“So she said that if we think they, they are waiting us outside the college, or if we think there are some bad comments or verbal attacks when we go to classroom we might not be motivated to go to the classroom or attend the classroom. Because we don't wanna, I mean, face that, and that might affect our learning or attendance in the classroom.”*

FEMALE, MAICHEW

*“During the previous times, before like 2 and like 3 years ago, female students took a competency exam, so some of the instructors or the, who provided the exam might like, like transactional sex. They might request them to have, to be involved in sexual activities so that they can give them great, or a good result. But nowadays he said this, the students are a bit aware of gender and they are a bit empowered the coming, they recently they are have the capacity to say no, I mean they have a discussion and these things are now improved.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

## C HEALTH

### Access to Health Services

The issue of economic resources and barriers to education were connected in participants' discussions of health issues. Lack of access to health care was stated as an issue faced by female students that can interrupt their education:

*“There is a clinic in the campus, in the college, but it is not fully accommodated or it's not that much comprehensive or advanced to give us full service. They might only suggest medication, only listening your, what the patient told but there's not laboratory test and advance mechanisms to identify their disease so if possible, these are also, because if somebody is sick it's very difficult to go to class and properly took, take education. So there is also, they might be expected to, usually for medication into private clinics and hospitals is very expensive and they are expected to have lots of money in order to cover their medical expenses. Which exposes that, in order to have money they are expected to have some arrangement with other people to cover that cost. So there [inaudible] and medical services on campus is also another solution.”*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

### Pregnancy

Furthermore, access to health care was discussed as impacting female students who are pregnant and/or parenting:

*“The college should be also, should be very committed to facilitating the childcare center because most of the students are very much affected and influenced by this problem. And there are some students who left school because there were, there are no favorable conditions in the college and because they were, they were at due dates around 8 and 9 months and they were it was very difficult to deliver a child around this community so they left school. And they are thinking to go back to school again, so they're I think they are having so much trouble because of the absence of this center, so we should be more we should focus on this*

*issue. Other everything is going well.”*

MALE, WORETA

### **Exposure to HIV**

Issues of consent and unequal power dynamics between men and women were also discussed in terms of female students' risk to exposure of HIV/AIDS:

*“During previous times, the relationships between male and women is not so much if one man wants to have sexual relationship, or to have a partner, female partner, it is just go, it's only the consent of male, women have no much decision making power. So even, the sexual relations are not that much protected and this exposed women to different transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

## **4 INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS**

Institutions—including educational, legal, government, and religious—appeared to feature prominently in students' understandings of GBV as well as in their daily lives. The role of institutions has appeared in the previous themes, as physical spaces, providers of resources and protection, and facilitators of opportunities. The following section focuses explicitly on the role of institutions in participants' lives, how they perceive institutions to impact their safety, and how they may choose to engage with various institutional structures when dealing with GBV.

### **A REPORTING**

#### **Peer Support**

When asked about how they might respond to incidents of GBV, the

importance of peer support emerged as playing an integral role in participants' perceptions of how to report and what to do when faced with GBV. Across all campuses, participants expressed that they would first engage with their peers—usually Gender Club members—and then contact the Gender Focal Persons through the Gender Office, possibly followed by college management and legal or governmental institutions. Peer engagement appeared to be the first point of contact for most students:

*“Females students are very much collaborated and have their own clubs, and they know where to go even though, any issues, they know where to go to up to higher management and even outside the college there are different legal sectors they know where to go if they face different issues so we can say they are even they know their rights and they are so much aware of GBV.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

*“[If a friend told me she had experienced GBV] I would give her so much comforting and comforting ideas or advices and comments so even, even if I am also a victim I should be very calm, at the first I should be calm, I should be very calm and have to follow the regulations maybe for the first time I might seek advice from my friend and if it's worse I might go to the higher, or to the management, I might report to other offices.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

*“We easily discuss with our friends and solve the issues at that stage. We, there are no, they will not go to the higher step to report. But if there is such kind of issues reported to the management I'm sure they have rules and regulations and they might*

*take measures, serious measures to the students. But outside the college, of course, there are legal offices and institutions and if somebody is a victim they can easily report to surrounding or the area to the legal office and the perpetrator will be charged and it will be lifetime, it's kind of serious nowadays."*

FEMALE, WORETA

### Gender Office

The Gender Office appeared to provide a tangible space with clearly identified individuals with whom students have regular contact. Researchers observed that students came to the Gender Office to speak with Gender Focal Persons throughout the week, and having a clearly labeled location on campus with faculty members who were accessible to students appeared to create more accessible faculty-student interactions than if students were to contact management directly. The college acted as a hub or central place of reporting, even if something happened off campus.

*"If the condition happens or if we are impacted within the college first of all we contact office, but if we experience outside, in the market, or on the way we come and back home we report to the police station and there is also if the problem is stronger we also contact the — office and even if the problem we face is outside the ATVET we also inform the college so they know about our problem so in such a way we are responding or reporting."*

FEMALE, NEDJO

*"Male students are given the opportunity to focus on different trainings, capacity building trainings, and the gender focal persons are also very much supportive not even for*

*females students but also for male students we would easily or freely go to gender focal persons and tell them our challenges or any issues we face in this college. So he said that, these activities are very much supportive to women or female students."*

MALE, WORETA

*"If it was a serious problem they would give it to, for legal offices outside the campus, but if it's a kind of an easier one they might take to gender focal persons here."*

FEMALE, MAICHEW

While students expressed awareness of legal and government offices, researchers wondered about the accessibility for students to contact these institutions directly, particularly as ATVET campuses are located in rural areas and participants shared that there were significant financial barriers to leaving campus in other situations (for example, when seeking medical care). Thus, in terms of reporting structures, the Gender Office plays an even more crucial role in facilitating responses to GBV as the first, and perhaps only, point of contact for students.

## B RESPONDING

Discussions about responses to GBV included both individual and institutional levels. Similarly to the theme of reporting, participants shared that peer responses would often be the first point of contact:

*"I'm going to do is make her, or make her calm and give her supporting and empowering ideas ... I will tell her you're not deserving this, you're better off without him and kind of such comments."*

FEMALE, WORETA

Participants also explicitly stated that responses to GBV should not just focus on consequences for the perpetrator, but also on support for the survivor.

*“So a man could be sentenced to 25 year, or more than lifetime, more than his lifetime, but I mean I think she will be, she has I mean, she will have such traumatic experiences in her lifetime. I don’t think such sentences would even compensate her, what she experienced so such measurements could be legal, but she has to be treated, even after, even if she has such experiences the psychology and emotional should be treated and — she might need to be given or provided a therapy before because she might got any transmitted diseases and she might got be pregnant so following any incident there should be a treatment, we are not only focusing on the legal charging the perpetrator, we should also focus on the victim.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

When discussing the consequences for perpetrators of GBV, it was unclear whether participants based their examples on precedents, formal college policies, or personal opinion. There appeared to be varying levels of consequences, including physical labour, and possible removal from campus:

*“It depends on the crime, so start, there might be some easy like insulting, and start to the higher level it might be rape. So depending on what is the crime they might be given like some work, being like some physical work, some physical hard works in the college, or there, there is a committee, management committee, including the students, they might be withdrawn from the campus*

*for up to 2 years and to higher level they might be [inaudible] to jail.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

## C RESPONSIBILITIES

### Campus

The ATVET campuses appeared to represent a central hub, and featured prominently in students’ discussions of GBV. Given that FGDs were taking place on campus and in the context of a project that engaged students through campus coordinated activities, the centrality of the ATVET in students’ perceptions was unsurprising.

*“Since we joined we haven’t seen any issues but even if there is a problem there are rules and regulations, the college has rules and regulations and I’m sure they’re going to be implemented. For example if somebody, if somebody might perform GBV on a woman based on the severity of the issue, he might be dismissed from the school, or he might be even if it’s a small problem or minimum, he might be charged to wash dishes in the cafeteria it might be his charge to serve the college to some times.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

*“There is also low, lack of motivation from the leaders, from the management, there are only a few women in leadership positions.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

### Legal System

Participants appeared to frame engaging with legal institutions as an escalation of severity or seriousness. The responsibility of legal institutions appeared to be understood as dealing with situations that were too serious

for the campus to handle, and that legal action would be taken only after the college had been informed and assessed the situation. These opinions also seemed to imply that physical harm was more serious than psychological harm:

*“First we have to do the psychological part [by offering emotional support] and if it’s worse like physical one, we should go to or I will help her or support her to go to the legal or any concerned body.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

As discussed in the section of “Place,” some participants expressed the belief that it is more difficult to engage with the legal system, which could account for the importance placed on campus responsibilities as the campus may be viewed as the more accessible avenue for recourse or action (emphasis added):

*“The most impact or the force is coming from outside the campus, which we don’t know and **nobody is going to take care or to the legal places** so they might attack us or take our mobiles when we come back from the cooking house.”*

FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO

### Government

The existence of an Office for Women’s Affairs in government, as well as governmental policies supporting gender equality, appeared to bolster participants’ confidence in the importance of working on gender issues.

*“GBV is not only the concern of this college, but our government has done so many activities to intervene GBV. But still there are challenging*

*factors, the key challenging factor is budget. Any project, any program should allocate gender focused budget, so that, to empower and build the skills of women.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

*“For instance if — it was me, first of all I tell my friends and discuss with my friends. And then the next time I take that to the various government bodies working on GBV, woman affairs office – if the conditions are very much or strong I take to them and discuss with them, then I take to the law, on the other hand, I also contact the gender person.”*

FEMALE, NEDJO

### Religious and Spiritual

Religious institutions were explicitly named less often by participants, but the importance of religious and spiritual practice in local contexts was present throughout the FGDs. Although researchers tried to work with campus staff to schedule FGDs at times that were convenient for participants and did not interfere with their course schedule, there were instances where the scheduled discussion occurred during a fasting period for Orthodox Christianity, the religion followed by the majority of students, as well as during Ramadan for Muslim participants. Given the importance of religion in Ethiopia, researchers were surprised that religious institutions did not feature more prominently in discussions on GBV; however, one student did explicitly describe his perception of changes in religious institutions and how these impacted individuals’ perceptions of gender equality:

*“Even the spiritual and religious institutions are very much aware and*

*supportive to such kind of relations and they aware or they advise any partners, two partners to take a test, HIV/AIDS test and different laboratory medical tests before they got engaged to or they got married. So we can say it is now more improved, but still we need so much support and encouragement from the project and any kind of programs.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

## 5 INTERVENTIONS

### A TRAINING

The impact of interventions focused on education about gender issues and skill-development (for example, engaging peers on gender issues, intervening in GBV), as well as opportunities to gather and talk about these issues appeared to have a significant impact for students on all campuses.

*“The issue of GBV is now history, because there are so many improvements in the college, because of the trainings and different workshops that are made with the project, and with even the support of the college, so, so much improvement and awareness, the students has awareness about GBV.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

*“So she said we have been participating in different clubs starting from the earlier classes. So that have got such information’s during those sessions and especially now we are part of gender club and this awareness are coming from such participations.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

*“And we can also feel safe or free to discuss with gender focal persons and we have so much discussions and awareness meeting, awareness creation meetings, we develop [inaudible] on how to respond whenever there is an issue on GBV and we been have also been advising so many students how can they solve [inaudible] when they have the same experiences and everything was solved with a discussion not in the worst case like any physical things or any physical violences we were solving the issues by discussions, yes.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

*“So the training, most of the focus of the training is mostly focused on gender concepts, how we can empower women, support them in various activities as well as even though I mean it might be difficult to reduce gender inequality totally but rather how can we struggle to reduce gender inequality and to be successful, and to do any activities together and including some gender based violence concepts, we have learned so many issues, about gender issues.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

*“There is an event twice a year, so in this event we discuss, the students discuss about gender concepts and last year we got gender and HIV/AIDS training. Then we have also discussed gender issues in this training and learned so much how we can support women and how can we like reduce such kind of issues.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

Students were clear that it is important to involve all students in trainings on gender issues, not just female students:



*“It’s not only female should be included on such kinds of trainings. Men also should be involved in such trainings because they have to know, and if they know they might support us and to not create any problems, or attack or any violence in the college. So, they should be more informed and their capacity should be built on such kind of issues.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

*“We would like supporting female students, starting with creating awareness on gender inequality so we would create awareness about gender equality for the students and we’ve been practicing since we joined this college.”*

MALE, WORETA

Including these types of training and awareness programs in orientation sessions appeared to have a particular impact in setting the tone for the campus environment:

*“I mean the management or the college conducted an awareness creation program, a welcoming program that all students were participated and got informed about gender inequality and the overall, the basic concept of, of gender.”*

MALE, WORETA

*“When we first joined the college we got any awareness about gender issues, gender concepts that everybody is in this college, will be equal, equally, equally have equal responsibilities and roles in this college so that they can participate equally in the college, they got such awareness. And last, there is also gender club that helped or assisted them to get an awareness through different training so that women are*

*empowered and participate in a lot of activities as well as any academic activities. So the college as well of the project also do that to reduce any, any problems in the college.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

*“So starting from joining the college they have welcome ceremonies and during that time students are provided about the basic gender based, I mean gender concepts and, if there are any I mean the rules and the measurements if somebody, maybe somebody commits GBV, what is the measure if someone commits, I mean, rape, or it might be insult, so there are some measurements and they might, the college management will clarify these rules and regulations.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

Some participants also spoke about the role of course instructors in incorporating gender issues into class activities and learning, further establishing the presence of gender on campus:

*“Our teachers were giving us awareness about GBV and after we got here, when we joined the college, we got an orientation, a brief orientation about GBV when the conduct welcoming ceremony, everyone’s informed about GBV, how they can protect themselves from any danger, how can they even report and how can they discuss with their friends and stuff, so they have that information cause of such communications.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

*“Everybody has such awareness in the classroom, because the instructors also take time to give and provide, conduct such sessions in the classroom.”*

MALE, MAICHEW

The topics of these trainings ranged from academic skills to ways to stay safe and ways to intervene in GBV (emphasis added):

*“A moment he observed GBV. He was walking on the road and some just when he’s walking he said males took cell phone from her [inaudible] as a group we were just there walking in group, we tried to return her mobile phone her. And the other thing he observed is just, in class, culturally wearing trousers for female is forbidden, there was a verbal attack from the male side and she cried and then I advised her and in such a way I supported females. And as much as possible **I try support females if it is possible for me.** If it is beyond me I would take to the law.”*

MALE, NEDJO

*“Most of the students who came to learn here in the college are experienced GBV, and **they are traumatized** with that feeling, so they **need to be supported** with different, we can say life skill trainings, and that can improve their confidence in the academic and even their social involvement.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

*“And gender focal people were also very helpful in providing trainings, especially the one they had, one, one, month ago was very helpful and it taught us so many concepts and skills, **how to defend**, and to **be confident and to deal with such kinds of problems** and even not related to gender activities but also in our **academic performances** we have learned how to perform and **how to study better** and, I mean the instructors were also very helpful to support and to provide tutorial classes.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

*“They had a meeting with the students and they advised them to be patient and be friendly, to create more friendly environment between themselves. And they have also, additional training from gender office, that I remember is life skills training. She said that was very important and was advantageous for **improving our responding skills.** And we have learned so much from such training to defend or to respond back to such students and **we have also continued such discussions between ourselves** so that we can manage such kind of behavioral distractions between the students. Because of the training, as well as they left the school, it’s much, it’s kind of better and more favourable environment now.”*

FEMALE, WORETA

## **B** FEMALE STUDENTS’ DAILY LIVES

### **Gender-aware Spaces**

Participants shared that the creation of spaces that considered the gender-based challenges faced by female students, including female-only computer labs, photocopier rooms, rest rooms, breastfeeding rooms, and childcare centres, contributed to an enhanced feeling of safety.

*“They’re also provided computers through the project to improve their computer skills and be involved in different technological advancement using internet and some important applications in the computer.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

*“And also, there is also a photocopy room for only female students it is supported by McGill, it is one of the gender activities, so we bought or the project provided a photocopy machine and female students are privileged*

*to have a copy within, with 30 cents per page, outside it is 1 birr per page. Here it is 30 cents per page. So she is saying this especially this photocopy machine has helped us to, whenever we print outside the campus we would have wait for long lines and there might be some harassment while we have waiting for photocopy so that minimized our vulnerability for GBV.”*

**FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO**

*“About pregnant students, so the college allow woman, I mean female students to eat food anytime they want from the cafeteria plus they would wear any want, they can wear any clothes that make them comfortable, there is no restrictions regarding clothing styles, so these 2 can be a good example of what the college do to support female students.”*

**MALE, WORETA**

*“From the project some students who have, who came from low economic status are supported by the project through giving an amount of money per month, that’s also, he thinks that’s also very proper and currently they also have a rest room if they, if there is any [inaudible] issues. They may take some rest in this classroom. And even they might get a counselling or a therapy from the instructions whenever they are feel like tension during exams or they might feel depressed so they might get some counselling from the gender club members as well as their instructors and the gender focal from the gender office.”*

**MALE, MAICHEW**

### **Tutorial Classes**

The issue of tutorial classrooms and other academic accommodations included conflicting perspectives. On

the one hand, numerous students expressed the importance of having access to tutorial classes and extra time as external circumstances, including household labour and medical leave related to pregnancy and parenting, negatively impacted female students’ academic performance:

*“It would be nice if the college facilitate tutorial classes for only female students so there are not classes in this college so that’s also support or supports them to improve their academic performance so they recommend this one.”*

**FEMALE, WORETA**

*“So she said that usually women are not that much active they don’t have active participation in education. And we have been told that we are not that much, we don’t, they’re not bringing any change if we they learned and they have household responsibilities in the house to study so this [tutorial classes] will support us and compensate our performances to equally, or to equal participation in the classroom. This will improve our performance and to go through any challenges so she said it is very important.”*

**FEMALE, WORETA**

*“We can we might support them when we, like giving them extra time to, like when they miss classes, we can like give them an explanation of what they miss we can give them additional tutorial support or educational support, whenever they have some challenges at the household, or we can give them support or in the classroom, like supporting them to have a good mark or good result in their education so we can do, we can be supportive in such kind of activities.”*

**MALE, MAICHEW**

Contrastingly, some students shared their concerns that being provided extra time or tutorials may be detrimental to the perception of female students on campus:

*“Just on one side getting such additional support is good but on the other side it may put us to feel as we are inferior. So for instance where one teacher give us additional class or tutorial class, the other males say that they are giving the answers for the assessment.”*

FEMALE, NEDJO

These differing perspectives reflect the complexity of addressing gender issues in different environments, and the gradual shift in norms and perceptions within campus communities.

Participants shared that these types of physical interventions, including the introduction of computer labs and computer classes and subsidized photocopies, appeared to change the campus culture. For example, by increasing female students' participation in sports and other campus activities:

*“Women used to be in their dorm, or somewhere, in quiet place they don't they don't have their not even privileged to any sport activities. But now they are very much confident even has the chance or given the opportunity more than men to participate any sport activities including football which we think that's the only, the only male sport. So they can you can even see they are playing football and playing tennis in the compound, and the other activity, they are provided these sport materials like net and balls for tennis and for football.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

Further to the changes in awareness on campus, one participant spoke specifically to the boldness and visibility of gender initiatives on campus:

*“We can say the gender activities are much more bold and so much, so much impressive works has been done. Even the college is more, the college is more proud and what we call it, they are, they are much more privileged from colleges in surrounding community. The gender activities are much more bold, it can be a role model for other ATVETs in the southern regions.”*

MALE, WOLAITA SODO

## C FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The issue of financial resources appeared throughout all the previous themes. In terms of specific intervention, participants expressed both that support from the ATVET for students who were in financial need had a significant impact on students' lives:

*“Students are supported through this project and given 150 birr per person, and currently 20 persons are supported, for needy female students who have low access or low income or their parents might be in a poor livelihood situation, so the project supports these students.”*

MALE, WORETA

However participants shared ongoing financial challenges faced by students, and the need for additional financial resources:

*“Even though we want to come with using vehicles or using bajaj, it's kind of costly and it's very difficult to cover with*

*our status because they are students and they don't have any income generation assistance they only got what they have from their families or some relatives. So even though they want to come using vehicles or any other services they don't have that kind of money and so if possible we need a solution for facilitating such kind of service mechanisms. And also we rent houses far from this ATVET because they are more cheaper if we have I mean if we need houses surrounding*

*they are very expensive around the ATVET. That is why we took long hours to walk to the cooking houses."*

**FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO**

*"We are only allocated only 12 birr per day. That's not enough to cover our meal because living cost is rising day to day and it is not covering out meal cost so expensive, but somehow it's kind of supportive."*

**FEMALE, WOLAITA SODO**

# DISCUSSION

*In many ways, the FGDs functioned as interventions by creating deliberate spaces to talk about gender issues.*

It is important to understand the presence of translators and facilitators not as passive observers and neutral intermediaries, but as active agents in the process of co-creating knowledge. Within these spaces, participants shared their understandings of unequal power dynamics related to GBV, and the social, cultural, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic dimensions of gender inequality in their lives. At all colleges, participants emphasized that women are most often the victims of GBV, and linked this phenomenon to gender norms within their social context.

The qualitative data collected during FGDs confirmed many issues identified in the previous survey (Mitchell & Starr, 2018b), including the high level of financial need faced by many students, pressure for transactional sex related to securing economic and physical safety, and risks students face when engaging with the outside community. FGD participants did not initially disclose examples of GBV on campus, and at all colleges stated that GBV occurred in the past, and usually in the surrounding communities, away from the college. This absence of GBV on campus reflected a contrast to the responses shared on the survey. The stance that GBV had been eliminated on campus was often contradicted later in each FGD, perhaps as participants became more comfortable with the

FGD format and established stronger rapport with facilitators. The potential impact of the unequal power dynamic between facilitators and participants is discussed further in **Limitations**.

FGDs highlighted both the challenges of operating within socially embedded norms, as well as the tangible impact of interventions targeted at improving the relative economic position of female students. The embedded nature of gender norms was particularly apparent with regard to the division of domestic labour, and students at all colleges identified the challenges faced by female students as a result of bearing the sole burden of food preparation. These challenges ranged from limited time for studying and recreation, to increased exposure to risk when traveling to and from cooking facilities, and being expected to engage in transactional sex to secure their physical safety in cooking environments. At most colleges, students did not suggest that a possible solution to this issue would be for men to participate in the daily preparation of meals. At one college (Nedjo), male participants discussed the challenges of being socially ridiculed—including by women—if they participated in cooking, reflecting the internalized nature of these gendered social norms. At another college (Maichew), male students shared their experiences participating in a Gender Club during

junior school (prior to attending college), which included an opportunity for male students to learn to cook and roast coffee. This stood out to researchers as an example of the impact of early interventions in education.

At all colleges, students expressed the positive impact of financial stipends provided to students in need. The impact of this financial support highlights the importance of building sustainable income generation into college activities so that money can be invested back into the college community. As the ATTSVE project comes to a close and external financial support for students ends, it is important that colleges sustain these transfer payments by using income generation initiatives (many of which are already in place) to financially support students.

Through the establishment of a Gender Office and Gender Club, each college brought attention to the importance of gender equality on campus. Establishing clear policies and engaging students in trainings and awareness programs were identified by participants as important, and can be understood as addressing the social and intellectual space. Additionally, visible changes to the campus environments—the physical space—also appeared to be particularly impactful in shifting norms and highlighting the importance of female safety and support. For example, Woreta was in the process of building an on-campus breastfeeding room and childcare centre, and Maichew had created a female restroom where students could go and spend time when they were not in class. In contrast, the female students at Nedjo expressed concerns about perceptions of being given special treatment, and stated that they did not want

extra tutorial classes or female-only spaces. Differences across campuses reflect the importance of context, as well as the impact of engaging students in creating initiatives that are meaningful and effective in their lives.

## Limitations

As documented in both the international literature as well as the literature on sexual violence in Ethiopia, studying issues of GBV brings several challenges. While efforts were made to support participants in feeling comfortable before, during, and after participating in FGDs, it is possible that for many participants, especially female students, engaging in a discussion on gender-based violence was unfamiliar and emotionally challenging. In addition to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, the format of a group discussion and participatory-based student engagement may have been unfamiliar for students within the cultural context of the Ethiopian education system. In response to students' hesitancy to participate in a large group, researchers encouraged students to discuss their responses in pairs or small groups before sharing with the larger group. This approach appeared to foster increased participation.

The unequal power dynamic between researchers and participants presented another challenge. Using an intersectional, anti-oppressive feminist analytic frame, the researchers held a number of intersecting privileges connected to socially constructed identity markers including race and class. Additionally, as representatives of the ATTSVE project, it is possible that researchers were perceived as holding influence over project funding decisions. For example, ATVET management or

faculty sometimes prompted students to thank researchers for the support of ATTSVE. Given the economically disadvantaged position of individual participants and ATVET campuses, it is possible that participants felt pressured to report findings that they believed would lead to continuation or increases of ATTSVE funding. Furthermore, participants may have felt hesitant to report ineffective project strategies in order to give the impression that the project had been a success. The researchers' position was in no way neutral.

Lastly, translation posed a major limitation. The FGD questions were first written in English, and then translated into local languages by the Gender Officer and ATVET Gender Focal Persons. Given the semi-structured nature of the FGDs, questions often changed slightly or progressed in a different order, and thus oral translation occurred in real-time. Occasionally, multiple translations were required: from English to Amharic, Amharic to the local language, before being translated back to English. Given the number of translations, some meanings may have been lost or misunderstood. Furthermore, additional content was often added to questions during translation, including providing examples for participants when they appeared not to know the definition of key terms. While this was helpful in fostering participation, it impacted whether responses accurately reflected participants' knowledge. Additionally, translators sometimes filtered responses by identifying which of several opinions they thought was best, or engaged in discussions with participants with whom they disagreed. The impact of these interactions can be viewed as additional artifacts for analysis within the context of the raw data. In this sense,

FGDs were not conducted as “neutral” or objective research spaces, but served as the backdrop for an intervention unto itself by drawing attention to issues of gender-based violence.

## Participant-led Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on participants' articulated needs and requests:

### 1

#### CREATE AWARENESS OF GENDER ISSUES FOR ALL STUDENTS AT ANNUAL STUDENT ORIENTATION SESSIONS

- Highlight the importance of gender equality on campus.
- Communicate explicit policies on gender-based violence including: reporting structures (who students can speak to, how they can access help, what will happen once they speak to someone), consequences for perpetrators, support (including emotional support and access to health services) for survivors.
- Provide visible reminders by posting signs around campus.

### 2

#### FORMALIZE REPORTING STRUCTURES AND INVOLVE THE GENDER FOCAL PERSONS

- Students report feeling more comfortable speaking to a peer or a Gender Focal Person about issues related to GBV.
- Make sure students know **who** they can tell and **when** this person is available: post office hours on the Gender Office door.
- Remind students that they can bring a friend when speaking to a Gender Focal Person or



other staff or faculty member (including college management).

- Consider reducing the teaching load of faculty members serving as Gender Focal Persons in order to ensure that they are available in the Gender Office during office hours.

**3**

**ENGAGE AND SUPPORT STUDENT LEADERS AS CHANGE MAKERS**

- Provide space for Gender Club meetings.
- Continue to provide training to all students on topics including gender equality, consent, and life skills.

**4**

**SUPPORT STUDENTS FINANCIALLY AND ACADEMICALLY**

- Provide stipends for students in need.
- Offer tutorial classes and well-lit study spaces for female students.

- Provide menstrual products for female students.
- Enhance sustainability by using existing income generation activities to support students.

**5**

**MITIGATE THE UNEQUAL BURDEN OF HOUSEHOLD LABOUR ON FEMALE STUDENTS**

- Provide safe cooking facilities on campus.
- Address the social norms that prevent female and male students from participating equally so that students can work towards sharing equal responsibility for tasks related to daily living:
  - If female students are expected to cook, how will male students contribute?
  - For example, male students could wash dishes so that female students can begin their studies earlier in the evening.

# CONCLUSION

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This study highlights the importance of student-led research in relation to trying to get at their everyday experiences and concerns in relation to gender-based violence. Complementary to the findings of previous studies of GBV on ATVET campuses and in other post-secondary institutions in Ethiopia (see Adinew & Hagos, 2017; Mitchell & Starr,

2018a; Takele & Setegn, 2014; Tora, 2013), safety is a key issue in relation to student learning and especially the learning of young women.

The recommendations provided by the students themselves suggest the need for their participation in arriving at solutions, along with instructors and managers.

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