

Supporting Somali women towards economic empowerment and transformation

BBC Media Action's 'Somali Women towards Economic Empowerment and Transformation' (SWEET) project aims to help Somali women to better participate in the informal and formal business sector. This study found that the radio content and local discussions are helping to achieve that goal.

Women in Somalia face multi-layered barriers to accessing the labour market and bear the brunt of the hardships resulting from poverty, conflict and clan-based culture which promotes strict male hierarchy and authority. This challenging situation worsened with the arrival of Coronavirus, which impacted on the economic situation. Within this context we have been delivering the SWEET project, funded by Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), since 2018. The second phase of the project had an additional emphasis on supporting women to continue working safely during COVID

, and listeners reported that the programme helped them to understand and use preventative measures during COVID-19 and enabling them to still carry on with their business.

Husbands, fathers and influential men reported that the programme had

and this had encouraged some to support their wives/mothers. Some men reported that they had invested in their wives' businesses and supported them by sharing what they had learned from the programme, such as how to manage their finances.

There was some evidence that male listeners have discussed the role of women in business and the importance of men supporting women. Some listeners of the programme said they were able to change their peer group

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