

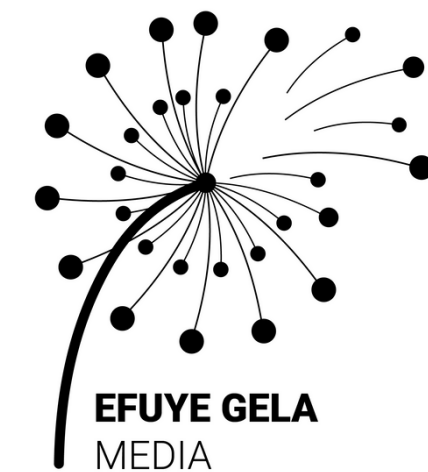
EFUYE GELA FILMS



AMONG US WOMEN

PROPOSED IMPACT AND SCREENING CAMPAIGN

2022



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BRIEF

About The Film

Among Us Women is a feature-length documentary, about Huluager, a 25-year-old woman that's nearing the end of her 4th pregnancy. Prior to this pregnancy, she opted for a home birth. For this child, she is considering a modern midwife. Set in Megendi Gojam, the film explores why rural mothers choose traditional birth attendants over modern maternal care facilities. The former offers the option of being served by a trusted member of the community but it lacks the safety and assurance of a hospital, while the latter offers this but the women miss the emotional support and the traditional wisdom.

Although the film has maternal care at its focal point, it touches upon different patriarchal and societal issues rural women of Ethiopia face. The film lightly touches on the main protagonist's, Huluager's and other characters parallels of life. From Huluhager's early child life where she was married off at a young age, to when she was forced to drop out of school, to having kids at a young age, to being trapped in a loveless unhappy marriage, to gendered power dynamic with her husband, and her regrets throughout her young life.

BRIEF

About the film

Despite the tremendous efforts put forth by the government and non-governmental organizations, Megendi (like many other places across the country) still faces major issues. The issue is more than just access. Given the nature of pregnancy, women often feel safer and more comfortable with traditional midwives. They feel that midwives understand their needs better and therefore give better service than health professionals.

The film points out, despite the dangers of birth with traditional midwives, that women still seek out these services due to the emotional and religious connotations of the act. Home delivery is said to be more intimate and focuses on the mother's emotional wellbeing too.

The film explores this issue in-depth from all perspectives and attempts to find where the problems lie and hints at potential solutions, mainly in the proper understanding of rural mothers' needs beyond safe delivery and provision of technical services.

Other than that, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage and power imbalance between men and women in marriage are highlighted.

THEMATIC LANDSCAPE

Maternal Care



The nature of childbirth inevitably puts women in a vulnerable position and therefore touches on intersecting issues. The intersection becomes more woven when gender dynamics, social structure, and income come into play. In the film, traditional birth attendants are seen as culturally acceptable and capable, despite the risk associated with home births. These birth attendants personally engage with expectant mothers throughout their pregnancy. They also positively involve themselves in the personal lives of these women and are often seen as motherly figures by the expectant mothers.

In contrast, health facilities that do offer safer and professional alternatives, have yet to earn the trust of their patients and are sometimes seen by rural mothers as cold and uncaring compared to the attendants. The film also hints at a possible solution. Maybe midwives can combine their professional services with the traditional wisdom and emotional support the birth attendants offer.



THEMATIC LANDSCAPE

Women Empowerment

Huluager's world, the main subject of the film, is riddled with obstacles that prevent her from making her own decisions. She was married at a young age to a man she didn't want and on top of that was forced to quit school. Endal is a traditional birth attendant that doubles as a maternal figure to pregnant mothers she cares for and has carved a path for herself despite the challenges of being a woman in rural Ethiopia. Welala, a professional midwife, is also doing her part in understanding and providing solutions to the women of Megendi.

Throughout the film we see these three women making their own decisions and standing up to patriarchal structures that impede their progress and that of other women.

Thematic Landscape

We see these women rise above strict norms and push boundaries. We see them push boundaries and find their footings in a world different than the old ones. As this film is made through a gendered lens, we acknowledge the empowering aspects of it such as denouncing FGM, child marriage, and Huluager's happy ending as she frees herself from her unhappy marriage and go on a new journey on her own.

Women Empowerment

Endal, the renowned traditional midwife, openly denounces FGM, which appears to be handled by traditional care givers such as herself.

Welela, openly speaks about her FGM and how it affects her relationship and intimacy as an adult.

PRIMARY AUDIENCE



Trainee and Professional midwives

The major aim of the film is to bridge gaps of understanding between professional midwives and expectant mothers. The film showcases how the divide happens, why they seek services from traditional attendants, and the potential dangers of doing so throughout its runtime.

It invites midwives to step into the shoes of patients they will eventually serve/ are currently serving and presents the challenges she is facing from her perspective. We want the film to spark conversation between professional midwives and for them to explore ways to better serve rural mothers.

SECONDARY AUDIENCE



Health officials/Decision Makers/Maternal care institutes

In the long run, we hope that doctors, nurses, health officers, and the communities they serve will engage in dialogue to bring workable solutions to the issue of homebirths. We strongly believe that a dialogue is a starting point for positive change to happen.

The General Public

We also aim for the public to be aware of the issue and understand the challenges rural mothers face during their pregnancy. We also want the conversation to happen between everyday people.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

The major goal of the campaign is to screen the film for midwives (trainee and professional) in the hopes of sensitizing them to the needs of expectant mothers in rural areas beyond health issues (pregnancy follow-up) and facilitate dialog between professional midwives.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES


The campaign also aims to foster conversations between rural communities, health professionals, medical institutes, and health education centers to bring lasting solutions to the gaps of understanding between rural communities and the health professionals that serve them.



THE PROPOSED CAMPAIGN

Here at Efuye Gela, we are particular about the films and projects we choose to work with. We see films, if used properly, as a prime medium for social advocacy. Among us Women, not only does that for the women of Megendi but also packages the advocacy in a relatable story. Making this film versatile enough to drive already existing efforts.

The film raises an important issue. The understanding gap between health professionals and expectant mothers often pushes pregnant women to seek risky at home births. Bridging this gap, we believe, is an important step that could help reduce home births and increase safe births in rural communities. What we aim to do is with this campaign is to create opportunities for these conversations to happen in the hopes of bringing workable solutions to the issue. To achieve this goal, we propose the following strategy.





PHASE 1:
Screenings





SCREENINGS FOR MIDWIVES

We aim to showcase the film to professional midwives and trainee midwives. The film provides a unique insight into the issues faced by pregnant mothers in rural areas and presents it in a relatable manner. We strongly believe that it will create a genuine connection with rural mothers and spark fruitful conversations.

Efuye Gela proposes to pair the screenings with a community dialog pack. This pack will include, a conversation toolkit that provides guidance to host structured conversations on how to better understand the needs of rural mothers and better maternal care services. This guide will be created in collaboration with health professionals experienced in rural areas and communication specialists from the Efuye Gela team. Upon screening the film, instructors/health experts will host a discussion among students and professional midwives on how their current education/training prepares them for the challenges associated with providing maternal care for rural mothers.



SCREENINGS FOR MIDWIVES

Efuye Gela will partner with medical training institutes/schools and health associations to distribute the film and the guide. Given the nature of the story, there are ample opportunities to engage in fruitful discussions on how to better complement their current professional training with the necessary socio-cultural understanding to provide improved midwife services.

To encourage fruitful discussions, the discussions will be moderated by a professional and a shorter version of the film will be produced (30-45 minutes). This version of the film will showcase portions relevant to this target audience.



INSTITUTES & THE PUBLIC

- The edited version of the film will be presented to associations like the Ethiopian Midwives Association, Marie Stopes, and other institutes working on maternal care. Any interested party can request for the film to be made available should they need it for learning and/or awareness creation purposes.
- Following its Ethiopian premiere at the Addis International Film Festival, we will partner with select event organizers, cultural institutes and creative organisations to screen the film to members of the public.



PHASE 2:

TV Presence



TV PREMIERE



Once all other activities have been completed, the film will have its official TV Premiere. A shorter version of the film will be produced to suit the medium.

a. Special Episode

After the film's TV premiere Efuye Gela aims to produce a follow-up television special to further discuss the issues raised in the film. The episode will feature guests ranging from health ministry officials, midwife professionals, and subjects from the documentary.

b. TV Appearances

The film crew along with concerned professionals will appear on several well-known TV shows to raise awareness about midwifery in rural Ethiopia. Platforms such as the Helen Show, Seifu, and other popular talk shows, present a unique opportunity to delve deeper into the issues raised in the film and showcase how good storytelling can positively boost the impact of social causes.



PHASE 3:

Public Outreach





PUBLIC OUTREACH

To tie the impact campaign efforts, we will create a public awareness creation campaign. This campaign will promote the film and the issues it raises to the public. Moreover, we will also fundraise for a Maternal Care Clinic to be built in Megendi.

A. Fundraising event

We will host a fundraising event for the Megendi clinic. The nature of the event will be specified later. We are exploring options that will allow us to collect funds and raise awareness on the issues explored in the film. All proceeds earned from the event will go towards the Megendi Maternal Care Center.

B. Among-Us Women Coffee Talk

Paired with a screening of the full-length film, we will host a women-only panel discussion. The sessions will bring female doctors, maternity experts, and key feminist influencers to explore the feminist angle of maternity care. The platform will encourage open and frank discussions on the state of maternal care in the country and what can be done to better answer the needs of expectant mothers.



PUBLIC OUTREACH


C. Exhibition

We propose to create a three-day exhibit featuring photography taken from the film and other sources to give further highlight on the issue rural mothers face across Ethiopia. The exhibit will be opened with a screening of the full-length version of the film, followed by a curated series of photographs that capture the issues the Megendi women face. As a side event, the exhibition will feature a roundtable discussion.



Social Media Advocacy


Selected events/activities will be documented and broadcast on dedicated Among us women social media pages. We propose to partner with key influencers that align with our vision, such as the LeTena podcast to promote the film and the issues it raises.





MONITORING AND EVALUATION





To effectively measure the success of the impact campaign we will constantly track and monitor the responses the film received from the target groups. We have set the following metrics as preliminary key performance indicators for the campaign. Additional metrics will be identified before the campaign launches.

- **Audience Engagement**

How have the targets received the film and how they have engaged with the themes discussed in the film.

Evidence:

- Frequency and quality of discussion (online/offline)
- Details and findings from panel discussions
- Responses to audience feedback forms.

- **Reach**

Has the campaign reached its desired audience

Evidence:

- Frequency and number of screenings/discussions
- Attendance to screenings/discussions
- Discussions

- **Influence/Network**

Did the campaign make the issue more visible to the target audience? And did the target audience start to practice the desired changes?

Evidence:

- Sustained/continued use of the film by other institutes for advocacy and learning.
- Unique collaborations between organizations, stakeholders, and other concerned parties triggered because of the film.
- Increased frequency of collaboration between institutes/organizations



RISK MITIGATION





- **Subject dignity and focus**

The full-length film tackles different issues and is primarily the story of Huluager. Hence, it portrays certain challenges she faces and parts of her life that viewers might find offensive and might be perceived as invading her privacy.

This is why we will edit the film to suit the audience and bring the issues of maternal care presented in the film at the forefront.

- **Security Concerns**

We want the film to be showcased across the country, especially for trainee/practicing midwives in rural communities, and given the country's situation (war and political instability), we are unable to do so. However, we plan on working with the Ethiopian Midwives Associations, Ethiopian Student Doctors Association, and Higher Learning Institutions to disseminate the film across Ethiopia and extend its reach beyond the city. The campaign activities will also allow us to create ample opportunities to form solid partnerships with key institutions that align with the film's core messages.

- **Culture and Context**

The film is set in a specific part of the Amhara region. It is also a personal story before it is an educational documentary and is primarily in Amharic. This might be an obstacle to midwives(both professional and trainees) and other target groups unfamiliar with the region/language showcased in the film. We will work with a cultural expert/consultant to ensure that the film's themes will cross potential communication barriers. These adjustments will not, in any way, subtract from the film's personal story, as it is what makes it effective. The nuances explored through Hulu Ager's story are a major strength of the film and also provides an emotional anchor.

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