

# **Drought and Cash Transfers in Madagascar:**

## **A qualitative study of women's experiences**

Sigrid Lillestøl Danevad



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Faculty of Psychology  
Department of Health Promotion and Development  
University of Bergen

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## **Abstract**

Since 2019 Southern Madagascar has experienced four consecutive years of the worst drought they have had in 40 years. Madagascar is also one of the poorest countries in the world. This, combined with existing traditional gender norms, disproportionately affects women and girls. This thesis will explore how women and girls experience the drought, focusing on marriage, pregnancies, gender-based violence (GBV) and education. It will also explore how receiving unconditional cash transfers may have improved their situation.

The thesis has a qualitative approach and is based on ten individual interviews and one focus group discussion in a village in southern Madagascar. The participants for the individual interviews include seven mothers receiving cash transfers, and three employees working in the area with knowledge of women and girls' situation. The focus group discussion included ten girls receiving cash transfers. The data collection took place as a part of a field visit to the Amboasary district in Madagascar with UNICEF.

The study found that women experienced the drought and cash transfers to have several impacts on marriage, pregnancies, GBV and education. One observation is that many believed the drought had resulted in less child marriages, as men could no longer afford to pay the customary price to get married officially. On the other hand, many thought it had increased cases of GBV, due to increased social tensions. Unconditional cash transfers seemed to especially have a positive impact on the ability to attend school and access to contraception.

Participants had varying experiences, which makes it difficult to establish any clear linkages. However, the study gives an insight to the different ways in which women and girls experience the drought and the effects from unconditional cash transfers, and lays a foundation for future research.

**Key Words:** drought, climate shock, gender, child marriage, early pregnancy, education, gender-based violence, cash transfers, UCT, Madagascar

## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

GBV	Gender- Based Violence
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfers

# Chapter One: Introduction

Across the world, woman and girls are more exposed to climate shocks compared to men. Madagascar is no exception. In the past four years, Madagascar has experienced a drought in the southern regions of the country commonly referred to as *Grand Sud* (the Grand South). The drought has reinforced already existing gender inequalities across the country, and disproportionately impacted women and girls (Kellum, 2020).

## 1.1 Background and context

I will begin with presenting the necessary background information and context to the ongoing situation in Madagascar, focusing on the drought, existing gender norms and UNICEF's use of cash transfers in their humanitarian response.

### Madagascar and the drought

Madagascar is an island country located off the coast of East Africa. It is among the poorest countries in Africa with one of the largest number of people living below the poverty line (Dias et al., 2022). The country is ranked number 164 out of 189 on the Human Development Index (WFP, 2022). The southern region of Madagascar is particularly affected by poverty, and 91 percent of the population lives below the poverty line (Amnesty International, 2021, p. 10). The food crisis is critical, and Madagascar is the 10<sup>th</sup> worst country affected by stunting in the world and has a 42 percent rate of chronic malnutrition (WFP, 2022).<sup>1</sup> Although the country has always experienced droughts and floods, the ongoing one is the worst drought in 40 years (Dias et al., 2022). Since 2019, the southern regions of the country have been struck with consecutive droughts, having disastrous impacts on agriculture and forcing people to resort to desperate survival strategies. Today, 1.64 million people are facing food insecurity and need urgent humanitarian assistance due to the drought (WFP, 2022).

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<sup>1</sup> Stunting is the impaired growth and development that children experience from poor nutrition, repeated infection, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation (WHO, 2015).

## Traditional Gender Norms

Although the drought has caused challenges for the entire population in the southern region, women and girls in Madagascar are faced with distinct difficulties due to pre-existing gender norms. Cultural norms and beliefs regarding masculinity and femininity in Madagascar expect men to be the stronger sex, and women the weaker one (Kellum, 2020, p. 16). This leaves women and girls facing several challenges.

Despite a law prohibiting marriage for children under the age of 18, the practice persists. A survey by UNICEF conducted in the south of Madagascar in December 2020 found that the numbers of child marriages has increased since the drought. This is due to the difficulties the drought poses to the family, including the lack of resources and food. To reduce household expenses, parents will in some cases resort to arranged marriages (UNICEF, 2021a). Child marriage is strongly interlinked with early pregnancies, which has also been a significant issue in Madagascar. Not only do early pregnancies pose a risk to the girl's health, it also contributes to increasing gender inequality and affects their access to education (UNFPA, 2013). Children and adolescents, especially girls, also face challenges with completing their education. Only 12% of adolescents in the Anosy region (located in the south) complete the first cycle of secondary school (UNICEF, 2021b).

Gender-based violence (GBV) is another significant issue affecting women and girls in Madagascar. Surveys indicate that one-third of women and girls have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes (Kellum, 2020, p. 14). The high levels of violence can be explained by gender norms that allows for a general acceptance of violence against women and girls in the country. It has been reported that more than 40 percent of women believe that a husband is allowed to beat his wife if she does not fulfil her expected role as a woman and wife (Kellum, 2020, p. 14). The southern areas of Madagascar have the highest prevalence of gender-based violence (Kellum, 2020, p. 14).

## UNICEF's distribution of unconditional cash transfers

The drought in southern Madagascar has caught the international community's attention, and many actors are present in the south to distribute humanitarian aid, including UNICEF. One



of the measures taken by UNICEF includes the use of unconditional cash transfers.<sup>2</sup> This is a part of a larger integrated social protection programme called *Fagnavotse* (meaning “rescue” in Malagasy) which includes several interventions especially focusing on gender and people living with disabilities. It is implemented by the Government of Madagascar, together with UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA and ILO (Dias et al., 2022). There are two main forms of unconditional cash transfers through this program, the *Fiavota* and the *Tosika Vonjy Aina* (TVA). *Fiavota* refers to original cash transfers that came with the social protection programme, the amount varies depending on the number of school-aged children in the household. The TVA on the other hand, are emergency cash transfers of 100, 000 Ariary (equivalent to 240 NOK) a month. The amount is fixed regardless of the household size (Dias et al., 2022). The TVA is a response to the increased humanitarian crisis as a result of the drought. It has predominantly benefitted women and girls who make up 70 percent of the TVA recipients (Dias et al., 2022). This research focuses on beneficiaries of the TVA. The village where this study takes place has the largest proportion of beneficiaries (Dias et al., 2022).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

With the assumption that women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate shocks, this thesis will seek to explore how women and girls experience the impact of the drought in southern Madagascar. It will also look at how receiving unconditional cash transfers have affected their experience. Specifically, the thesis will focus on marriage, pregnancies, gender-based violence and education.

## **1.3 Research objectives**

The thesis has two main objectives:

**Objective 1:** To explore how women and girls in a rural village context in southern Madagascar experience the effects of the drought, especially focusing on marriage, pregnancies, GBV and education.

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<sup>2</sup> Unconditional cash transfers refer to the distribution of cash to beneficiaries without any specific requirements beyond eligibility (UNICEF, 2016).

**Objective 2:** Explore how women in southern Madagascar who have received cash transfers perceive its effect in curbing negative coping strategies affecting women and girls, especially focusing on marriage, pregnancies, GBV and education.

## **1.4 Structure**

This thesis is structured in six chapters. The introduction presents relevant background information needed to understand the context in Madagascar. The second chapter will outline previous literature on the topic through a literature review, followed by the third chapter looking at relevant theories. Chapter four elaborates the methods used in this research. Chapter five presents the findings and discuss them in relation to the existing literature. Lastly, chapter six will conclude the thesis and present recommendations for possible future research and measures.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter will present previous research relevant to this study. The literature was found using several databases, including the University of Bergen's digital library (Oria), Google Scholar and ProQuest. To find the literature, I searched the word *drought* together with either *education*, *child marriage*, *GBV* or *early pregnancies*. I then added *cash transfers* to the same search. The chapter will be structured in five parts. The first four will present literature on how climate shocks and droughts impact marriage, pregnancies, GBV and education. The last part will present previous literature on how cash transfers have affected these four areas. This literature will serve as a basis for the discussion later.

### **2.1 Droughts and marriage**

Previous research on the effects of droughts on child marriages is extensive, and particularly focuses on marriage as a source of income. In Christopher Eldridge's research on the 1992 southern African drought, he found that some families arranged for their daughters to get married earlier as a coping mechanism to the drought. Families would obtain brideprice as an

additional source of livestock (Eldridge, 2002, p. 81).<sup>3</sup> 20 years later the findings are similar. New numbers from UNICEF indicate alarming rates of child marriage in the Horn of Africa as a result of the most severe drought in 40 years (UNICEF, 2022). The drought has resulted in a growing number of parents marrying off daughters at an early age to secure the income generated through this, to have one less mouth to feed, or to secure the bride stays in a household with better living conditions (UNICEF, 2022).

One study found that droughts increase the frequency of early marriage in sub-Saharan Africa, while decreases it in India (Corno et al. 2016, p. 24). The study compares cases in India and Africa and argues that one reason for the difference are the customs related to marriage. In India, the brides' family pays a dowry to the groom, while in sub-Saharan Africa customs are for the groom to pay for the bride. Droughts have a significant impact on household income, and marriage is therefore seen as a form of income in sub-Saharan Africa (Corno et al., 2016, p. 3). In 2011, Caroline Archambault conducted a study where she looked at how the marriages of Maasai girls in a Kenyan community were used as an adaptation strategy to respond to livelihood insecurities created by climate change, particularly focusing on droughts. As a result of the struggles faced by the families, many parents felt pressured to marry away their daughters at a young age to reduce the size of their families, as well as to secure the daughter's future (Archambault, 2011, p. 637).

Madagascar has committed to eliminate child marriage by 2030 in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 5.3 and has implemented a law setting the minimum age of marriage at 18 years old. Despite this, child marriage remains an issue in Madagascar and the country has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world (UNICEF, 2021a, p. 4). A case study conducted by UNICEF in 2021 shows that marriage is used as a survival mechanism for girls to deal with poverty and food insecurity caused by the drought (UNICEF, 2021a, p. 10).

Campaigns to end child marriage typically assert that marrying under the age of 18 years old has negative impacts on wellbeing, and that girls have no autonomy in the process. However, few studies explore local attitudes towards marriage and the age considered to be appropriate to get married (Schaffnit et al., 2019, p. 1). Schaffnit et al. explores these attitudes in their

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<sup>3</sup> Brideprice is when the family of the groom pay their future in-laws at the start of their marriage (Michelle, 2020).

research from rural Tanzania and finds that women were frequently active in the selection of when and who to marry. In addition, marriage was viewed as an important way of ensuring social status within one's local community. They therefore argue that more culturally sensitive perspectives are necessary in future policy and academic discourse on early marriage (Schaffnit et al., 2019, p. 11).

## **2.2 Droughts and pregnancies**

Existing literature on the relationship between droughts and the age of pregnancy is limited. However, some previous research has been done in how droughts affect access to contraceptives, which again affects pregnancies. UNFPA found that in times of crisis, girls particularly face risks and violations that may lead to unwanted pregnancies (UNFPA, 2020). In addition, during these times, girls have particularly difficulties accessing resources and information (UNFPA, 2020).

A study by MSI Reproductive Choices looks at how climate disruptions affect women's access to reproductive choices. They found that since 2011, 11,5 million women have had their access to contraception disrupted due to climate-related displacement (MSI, 2021). Research from drought-affected communities in Zambia, found similar findings (Rosen et al., 2021). Barriers to women's access to family planning services were exacerbated in times of droughts and as household incomes shrank, women could no longer afford contraceptives (Rosen et al., 2021, p. 8). At the same time, the demand for family planning services during droughts increased due to wanting smaller families who could have their essential needs met (Rosen et al., 2021, p. 8).

Some previous studies also indicate that the use of contraceptives rise in times of climate and income shocks. Data from Tanzania shows that women experiencing income shocks from poor crop yields used higher rates of contraceptives (Alam & Pörtner, 2018). Similar findings were found in northern Ethiopia. In drought and famine-prone communities, numbers indicate an increased use of contraceptives and decline in fertility rates (Ezra, 2001).

## **2.3 Droughts and GBV**

One systematic review looking at 41 studies exploring the relationship between extreme weather shocks and GBV across all continents, found that the effects of weather shocks will vary depending on different gender norms, traditions and other factors. However, in most contexts, GBV will be a significant consequence (van Daalen et al., 2022, p. 519). The review found that weather shocks alone do not cause GBV, they only exacerbate drivers of violence or create environments for violence to occur (van Daalen et al., 2022, p. 519). A report by UN Women has similar findings and demonstrates how the feeling of powerlessness as a result of the loss of livelihoods may further strengthen pre-existing levels of violence amongst men (Dankelman, 2016, p. 21).

Another research looking at how droughts affect intimate partner violence (IPV) towards women in 19 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, found that droughts were associated with an increase of physical and sexual violence, particularly for adolescent girls and unemployed women. The increase of violence is caused by stress resulting from financial strains on the household and increased worries about food access (Epstein et al., 2020, p. 11). A case study from Uganda demonstrates how the failure of income crops caused by a drought resulted in men trying to sell crops grown by women. Men would then beat their wives to exercise control over the land (Castañeda et al., 2020, p. 140).

Gender-based violence is a widespread issue in Madagascar (Kellum et al., 2020). IPV is the most common form of violence, and 40 percent of married women report having experienced a form of this. Violence is by some perceived as a result of women not living up to their traditional roles and responsibilities that are expected through Malagasy social norms. A study showed that as many as 41 percent of women from 15-49 years old, and 29 percent of men believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife if she does not live up to her expected role (Kellum et al., 2020, p. 25). Hilde Jakobsen's research on wife beating in Tanzania, found similar perceptions about intimate partner violence (2014, p. 551). She refers to West and Zimmerman's (1987) concept of "doing gender", and the argument that gender is "something one does, rather than is" (Jakobsen, 2014, p. 543). Jakobsen shows that the act of violence is seen as a way of maintaining gender roles, and that both men and women think that a husband is justified to beat his wife if she does not live up to her expected role as a woman (Jakobsen, 2014, p. 551).

## **2.4 Droughts and education of girls**

Much previous literature indicates that droughts have a negative effect on children's education (Mariussen, 2022; UNICEF, 2019; Ramtu, 2017). As a result of the decreased household incomes caused by droughts, many families cannot afford the necessary school fees. Children are also likely to leave school and work instead as an additional form of income when parents experience income shocks (UNICEF, 2019, p. 6). Another aspect is the lack of food resulting in hunger, which prevents children from attending school or interrupts their concentration (Ramtu, 2017).

A report by the Malala Fund clearly demonstrates the effects of climate change, including droughts, on girls' education specifically (2021). Girls in vulnerable households are more likely to leave school to get married in times of weather-related crises to ease the financial burdens of their families. Girls are also more likely to be withdrawn from school in times of drought due to gender norms where women and girls are expected to fetch water (Malala Fund, 2021, p. 10).

Despite a lot of research indicating droughts have a negative effect on girls' education during droughts, some research would indicate the opposite. Ardyn Nordstrom and Christopher Cotton's research looks at the impact of the severe drought in Southern Africa in 2015-16 on education for girls, focusing on Zimbabwe (2020). They found that the drought increased the probability of girls staying enrolled and progressing through school (Nordstrom & Cotton, 2020, p. 14). Girls also spent less time performing economic activities to support the household. Nordstrom and Cotton therefore argue that once the opportunity cost of education falls, households are less likely to keep their daughters from school (Nordstrom & Cotton, 2020, p. 14).

## **2.5 Cash transfers effect for women and girls**

There is much research investigating how unconditional cash transfers benefit women and girls. One report found that cash transfers have multiple positive effects for women's empowerment. However, the evidence found that cash transfers can reduce physical abuse, but may increase emotional abuse (Bastagli et al., 2016, p. 212). Several studies find that cash transfers reduce violence by decreasing conflicts over money (Angeles, 2012; Yildirim et al.,

2014). Looking at the relationship between cash transfers and intimate partner violence, one review focuses on the reasons for exactly how cash transfers result in a decrease of IPV (Buller et al., 2018, p. 233). The reasons found were: a) Cash transfers increase women's empowerment and changes the dynamics of the household. b) By decreasing household poverty, cash transfers reduce poverty-related stress and improve emotional well-being. c) Cash transfers increase the interactions with the health sector, which could lead to improving women's health and make her more resilient to abuse (Buller et al., 2018, p. 233).

Cash transfers also have significant effects on marriages and pregnancies. Previous research has found that cash transfers delay the age of when girls and women get married and decreases pregnancies (Bastagli et al., 2016; Simon, 2019). The latter may be explained through an increased use of contraception, enabled by cash transfers (Bastagli et al., 2016, p. 212). Simon's report from 2019 argues that there are two primary pathways for how cash transfers effect marriage and pregnancies. The first being that cash transfers allow girls to remain in school, delaying marriage and pregnancy. The second pathway is through enabling women and girls to be financially independent, which reduces vulnerabilities and that lead to women and girls engaging in transactional sex for survival (Simon, 2019, p. 11).

There is growing evidence that cash transfers can improve enrolment and attendance rates in schools (Simon, 2019, p. 7). A study comparing unconditional cash transfer (UCT) programs with conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs found that CCT has significant impacts on school enrolment and attendance for girls.<sup>4</sup> UCT programs positively impacted enrolment, but had no effect on attendance (McIntosh et al., 2012). Another research found that cash transfers can increase school attendance for both girls and boys, with no difference by sex. However, the learning outcomes were significantly higher for girls compared to boys (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2017, p. 4).

## **Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework**

In this chapter I will present relevant theories that are used to guide the research and the discussion. I will focus my study on “empowerment” and “theory of change”. The two

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<sup>4</sup> Conditional cash transfers are transfers given to beneficiaries conditional on specific actions (UNICEF, 2016).

analytical approaches enable me to further understand the intentions behind cash transfers, and how they are meant to contribute to significant changes for women and girls.

### **3.1 Empowerment**

As one of the most influential authors in the field of empowerment, Naila Kabeer defines empowerment as the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make their own choices acquire such an ability (Kabeer, 2005). Kabeer looks at how empowerment can be explored through three dimensions. The first one is *agency*, which is the process by which choices are made and put into effect. The second dimension is *resources*, which are the medium through which the agency is exercised. And lastly, *achievements* refer to the outcomes of agency (Kabeer, 2005). She emphasizes that empowerment is a process coming within, rather than an instrumental goal. To truly be able to challenge the power structures in society, she explains how empowerment can be facilitated by group participation. She argues that the growth of one's consciousness comes through social interactions with people with similar experiences, and that the ability to increase their agency comes through collectively realizing the need to break out of disempowered positions in society (Kabeer, 2005).

The concept of women's empowerment has been adopted by the development community and is often thought to be achieved through giving women access to resources. Cash transfers are often seen as a tool for the empowerment of women (Bastagli, 2016). In Kabeer's terminology, cash transfers would be the equivalent to *resources*. Many cash transfer programs focus on ensuring that women are the ones to receive the cash transfers. The idea behind these cases, is that the women will then have a larger share of the overall household income, and their agency within the household would therefore increase (Bastagli, 2016). However, several feminists, including Kabeer, have criticised the idea that empowerment comes as a direct result of improved access to resources (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015, p. 405). In her article analysing the MDGs from 2005, Kabeer criticises how the international agenda uses the concept of empowerment as an operational strategy to advance women's economic position (Kabeer, 2005). Cornwall and Rivas further examine this, and argue that interventions targeting women's empowerment, such as cash transfers, do not empower women in and by themselves, but rather "*clear the obstacles from the path and provide sustenance for women as they do empowerment for themselves*" (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015, p. 405).



### **3.2 Theory of Change**

The cash transfers provided by UNICEF are a part of an integrated social protection programme involving UN actors and the Government of Madagascar. The programme applies a theory of change to ensure an effective response. Theory of change has become popular among donors in recent years and can be used as a strategy for planning, participating and evaluation that is used in organizations to promote change. The strategy is used to find long-term goals and uses these goals to find the necessary preconditions needed to achieve these. A theory of change explains how the activities done in the project will contribute to a chain of results that lead to the intended impact (Better Evaluation, 2021). It is often developed in the beginning of the project in the planning stage. However, it may also be used for monitoring and evaluation (Better Evaluation, 2021).

The theory of change for the integrated social protection programme in Madagascar, which the cash transfers are a part of, divides the programme activities into two main pillars. Delivering unconditional cash transfers are a part of the first pillar, which is a “downstream” pillar focusing on delivering an integrated package of social protection interventions to vulnerable people. In addition to unconditional cash transfers, this pillar includes health insurance, agricultural insurance, livelihood activities and activities to reduce GBV (Dias et. al, 2022, p. 2). The cash transfers promote the households’ well-being, and is meant to improve health, nutrition, education and increase household resilience. They are also aimed at supporting women’s empowerment and decision-making. The outcomes are meant to yield a medium-term impact, around three years, of poverty reduction (Dias et. al, 2022, p. 2). The second pillar focuses on strengthening the social protection system’s ability to deliver integrated services and will directly strengthen the first pillar activities’ ability to reach households. Together, these pillars are meant to contribute to the establishment of an inclusive social protection programme in Madagascar (Dias et. al, 2022, p. 3).

## **Chapter Four: Methodology and Ethics**

This chapter will describe the design and methods used for this research and present the ethical considerations. I will begin with introducing the context behind the data collection and provide information about the study site. This will be followed by the research approach used,

and an introduction to the participants. I will then present the data collection method, data management and analysis, and lastly conclude with ethical considerations in the research process.

At the time of the data collection, I worked as an intern for UNICEF in Antananarivo (Madagascar), focusing on gender and gender-based violence. The data for this thesis was collected during a field visit to the south of Madagascar which I participated in. I was in the Amboasary district for six days. During this time, I did the data collection, as well as work tasks for UNICEF. The data collection was approved and encouraged by my line manager. I travelled with another colleague working with gender, who also helped me with translating during the data collection. The data collection took approximately three days in total. Ideally, we would have had much more time. However, the resources provided by UNICEF in terms of help in planning, a driver and translator were essential in ensuring the success of the data collection, and it is unlikely that I would have been able to reach the participants I did had the data collection not been a part of UNICEF's field visit.



**Picture 1:** *Picture from the field visit with UNICEF (not a part of the data collection). The women pictured were leaders of organisations that were helping women in the south.*

## 4.1 Study site

The study took place in a village located in the Amboasary district of Madagascar. Amboasary is located in the south of the country and is considered one of the hardest hit regions of the drought. To ensure anonymization of the participants, I will not use the village's name, and will refer to it as "the village".



**Pictures 2 & 3:** *The village*

## 4.2 Research design

As the purpose of this research is to investigate how women and girls are affected by the drought in Madagascar, and how receiving cash transfers had an impact on their lives, data was collected with the aim to get an insight into their experiences. The most suitable type of research to conduct this type of study is therefore qualitative research. Qualitative research is mainly concerned with process, context, interpretation, meaning or understanding through inductive reasoning. It does not reduce complex social issues to variables and pre-determined categories, but allows for more in depth data (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 313).

Qualitative research acknowledges that meanings are constructed and that social realities vary depending on different positions and perceptions (Neuman, 2011). For this research, we see

how the women experienced a variety of different realities and reported differently in terms of the effect of cash transfers. This can depend on several factors, and every participant in this study had different experiences of the drought and cash transfers.

### 4.3 Participants

The participants for the interviews can be divided into two categories: the main participants and the key informants.

#### 4.3.1 Main participants

The main focus of this thesis was to look at how women and girls have experienced the drought and the effects from receiving cash transfers. I therefore consider the main participants to be the women and girls interviewed. The main participants can be divided in two groups: the mothers I interviewed individually and the girls in the focus groups discussion.

##### *Mothers*

I had individual interviews with seven women, with the main criteria being that they were mothers. Other requirements included the following:

- They had at least one daughter
- They were over 18 years old
- They received cash transfers

Participant pseudonym	Age	Number of children
Mialy	19	1
Irina	24	1
Miora	26	4
Aina	30	3

Tatiana	32	5
Lalaina	40	5
Sylvie	58	4

**Table 1:** *Overview of the mothers with pseudonyms*

### *Girls*

For the focus group discussion, we talked to ten girls who were all 18 years old. Other than the age criteria, the girls or their families also had to receive cash transfers.

### **4.3.2 Key informants**

As for the key informants, these included employees working in the Amboasary district with issues related to gender. One was an employee working at “Centre d'Ecoute et de Conseils Juridique” (CECJ). The CECJ is funded by the Malagasy government and UNFPA, and is a service that provides psychosocial, legal and medical support to victims of gender-based violence and their families. 25 CECJs are currently in place across Madagascar. The participant will be referred to as CECJ. The second key informant was a medical doctor working at a public hospital. Lastly, I interviewed the deputy traditional leader of the village. The traditional leader is called chief Fokontany. I was originally supposed to meet with the main leader, but he had to cancel last minute. The deputy chief will be referred to as the chief Fokontany. The table below provides an overview of the groups of participants, as well as the method of data collection used.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Type of interview</b>
Main participants	7 Mothers	Individual interview
	10 girls (18 years old)	Focus group discussion

Key informants	CECJ (female)	Individual interview
	Doctor (female)	Individual interview
	Chief Fokontany (male)	Individual interview

**Table 2:** *Overview of all participants*

**4.4 Gatekeepers and recruitment procedures**

The recruitment process included multiple gatekeepers and started through communication with the representative for UNICEF in Amboasary. This representative helped me get in touch with the employees interviewed in Amboasary. Originally, I had planned on identifying participants for individual interviews among the women in the queue for the monthly disbursement of the cash transfers. However, due to delays in the distribution of cash transfers, this was not possible. UNICEF’s representative therefore put me in touch with the representative for the Ministry of Population, Social Protection and Promotion of Women in the area, to help identify the women and girls to be interviewed in the village. This representative delegated the responsibility to the mayor of the village, who was the person who ended up finding women who agreed to be interviewed in the village. Although it was useful to have the mayor select the participants, as many women were willing to participate, it is difficult to determine whether it may have affected the data. When recruiting the women, we do not know if the mayor was selective in choosing women who would give answers that would not necessarily reflect the reality of the challenges they face. The women were given a time and a place, and we were surprised to find that more women than we had asked for showed up and wanted to be interviewed. One possible explanation for the large number of women who showed up could be that they hoped to receive some type of compensation for participating. As we had a tight schedule, we were unable to interview all the women and had to stick with our original plan to interview seven. The same procedure applied for the focus group.

## 4.5 Methods of data collection

As for the data collection methods, individual interviews and focus group discussions were used as it is the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research (Punch, 2014, p. 144). I had individual interviews with the seven mothers and the key respondents, and a focus group discussion with the girls. All interview sessions were recorded with the participant's consent. The duration of the interviews varied. The individual interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes, while the focus groups discussion lasted closer to 45 minutes.

The interviews were held in Malagasy with a translator. The translator was my colleague at UNICEF. The translation process began with me writing the interview guides in English. I then worked with the translator to translate these to Malagasy, and together we ensured that no meaning was lost in translation. During the interviews, the translator would ask the questions in Malagasy as we had agreed beforehand. After each answer from the participants, the translator would explain what was said in English. The reason for why the translations were given regularly throughout the interviews was to ensure that I would be able to ask follow-up questions if needed. However, this posed a challenge as the translator would not directly quote what was said, but rather explain it. The original quotes are therefore in a third-person point of view. When presenting the findings, the quotes have been edited to a first-person point of view.

The interview guides for all interviews were somewhere between structured and semi-structured, and mostly included open ended questions (Appendix B). This helped to avoid limit the responses (Punch, 2014, p. 145). I had originally hoped to be able to ask more follow up questions during the interviews. However, difficulties with translation limited the possibility for this. All the interview guides included questions related to how the drought and cash transfers had affected women and girls, focusing on marriage, pregnancies, education and GBV. While the interview guides used for the interviews with the mothers specifically included personal questions of their experiences, the interview guide used in the focus group discussion was more general and less personal. Similarly, the interview guides for the key informants included questions of their general perception of how these factors have changed due to the drought and cash transfers. During the interviews with the mothers, it quickly became clear that some questions were articulated in a too complicated way. I therefore adjusted the questions so that they could be more easily understood.

## 4.6 Data management and analysis

All the interviews were recorded with the oral approval of the participants, and the audio files were stored on the University of Bergen's SAFE system for safety. I transcribed the interviews myself in Word. As I do not speak Malagasy, I could only transcribe the parts where the translator explained what had been said in English. This may have caused some data being lost in translation.

When I started to review the findings to analyse the data, I already had four main themes developed through the interview guides: marriage, pregnancies, GBV and education. I therefore decided to analyse the data within these four themes. To do this, and better structure the findings, I used a coding strategy inspired by Braun and Clarke's six phases of thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). I started by familiarizing myself with the data, which I did when I transcribed and re-read the interviews. Since this is a 30-credit thesis and I had relatively short interviews, I decided to code and analyse the data manually. The fact that the interviews were structured, and participants were asked very similar questions within the four themes (marriage, pregnancies, GBV and education), made it easy to analyse the interviews and find reoccurring themes. For the analysis, I created a table with all the main findings from all participants. This helped me to get an overview over the recurring themes, and to decide what was meaningfully related to the research objectives. The table (Table 3) can be found in chapter five.

## 4.7 Trustworthiness

Ensuring good quality of the research is essential. In qualitative research, quality is often referred to as the *trustworthiness* of the study. Trustworthiness refers to the insurance of the legitimacy of the research process and results (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 319). A common way to address trustworthiness in qualitative research is through the concepts of credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122).

*Credibility* means that participants involved in the study find the results of the study true and credible (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 320). Many strategies can be applied to ensure credibility. Member checking is an example, which means that participants check the final research report to



ensure whether the findings accurately reflect their views (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122). This method was not possible, as the lack of ways to contact the participants, due to the lack of phones and internet, limits ways to ensure member checking. Triangulation is another way to enhance credibility, where the strategy is to use different methods or sources to explore the same issue (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122). For this study, I interviewed different sources to get as many perspectives as possible. I also used both individual interviews and a focus group discussion.

To ensure *dependability* and *confirmability* I used a so-called audit trail, where I made notes of all decisions that were made during the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122). I was persistent in following the research plan and made notes of any changes. This ensured that the findings were grounded in data, and that my personal opinions did not affect the outcomes.

Lastly, *transferability* refers to whether the findings are transferable to other similar settings (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 320). Since this is a small study conducted in one place over a very short period, the transferability is limited. However, the discussion of the findings in relation to findings from other contexts will show that there are many similar issues.

#### **4.8 Role of researcher**

To complete a trustworthy study, practicing reflexivity and remaining aware of my role as a researcher and how this may affect the information given is important. During the data collection, I was aware that there were many factors that would inevitably affect the answers the participants gave. Firstly, although I did my research as an independent student, I do not know to what extent the participants were aware that both me and the translator were working for UNICEF. To get access to the gatekeepers and participants, it was necessary to get help from the UNICEF representative in the area. The gatekeepers were therefore aware of our position as UNICEF staff, however the participants' knowledge of this is uncertain. As UNICEF are the main distributors of cash transfers in the village, it may have affected the answers that we were given by the participants if they thought it could benefit them. Being a UNICEF intern working with gender and gender-based violence could also have an effect in that I was already familiar with gender issues in the south of Madagascar and had assumptions on what the participants' answers would be. Lastly, being a foreigner could also

affect what the women were willing to share. Even though the translator was Malagasy, she is from the capital city and speaks a different dialect, she was therefore also considered to be a foreigner.

## **4.9 Ethics**

Acting in accordance with ethical guidelines to protect the participants of the research is essential in any research. Several topics in this research can be considered as sensitive, which means there are many ethical clearances that must be considered.

### **4.9.1 Informed consent**

Informed consent is essential before, during and after the research. All participants should give their informed consent prior to the research. This consent implies that the participants have been clearly informed of the purpose of the study, and how the information given will be used, and have based on this information agreed to be part of the study (Punch, 2014, p. 44). For this study it was important to clearly inform the women of the purpose of the research as well as their rights in the process in a language that is understood, which was Malagasy. All consent forms were written in Malagasy. Most of the participants, except for the key informants, could not read. The translator therefore had to read the consent form for each of the participants before getting their signature.

All participants were informed of the purpose of the project. We explained that the intention was to find out how the drought and receiving cash transfers has affected women and girls in the village. We also explained that we would record the interviews, and that only I would have access to this later. As most participants did not have access to phones or internet, one significant challenge was to figure out a way for the participants to reach me after the interviews, in the case they would have questions or have wished to withdraw their consent. To solve this, I made an agreement with the mayor of the village where he was given my email address and Norwegian phone number, that can be accessed through WhatsApp. He agreed to act as a middleman, where women can reach me through him if they need to.

### **4.9.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality and anonymity are important aspects to consider in ensuring that the research is ethical. Confidentiality in research considers the researcher's assurance that the connection between the participant and the information given will not be made known to other parties. One strategy in achieving this is through anonymity, the removal of information from the data stored that makes the participant easily identifiable and traceable (Punch, 2014, p. 47). I have chosen not to share the name of the village where the research was conducted to ensure anonymity of the participants. In addition, the mothers that were interviewed have been given pseudonyms.

#### **4.9.3 Institutional Clearances**

For this research, I applied for and received an ethical clearance from the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD). I also registered the project in RETTE, which is the University in Bergen's system for risk and compliance in research.

#### **4.10 Challenges and limitations of data**

Before presenting the findings, some challenges and limitations to the data will be presented below.

##### *Criteria*

Firstly, some misunderstandings regarding the criteria to be interviewed occurred. We were originally only supposed to interview married mothers who received cash transfers. During the interviews we learned that two of the women were divorced. However, this was not considered to be a significant barrier to the information they provided.

##### *Translation*

There were some issues with the translation, as the translator and the women we interviewed sometimes had trouble understanding each other due to dialect differences. We also believe that some women had difficulties understanding the content of some questions and making the necessary reflections to answer these. During some interviews this posed significant challenges as we were not able to get answers for some of the most important questions, or that the women's answers were not relevant to the question.

### *“Dishonesty”*

We suspect that due to the illegality of some activities, such as marriage under the age of 18 and violence, not all the participants would answer honestly to these questions. For example, some participants said that nobody gets married under the age of 18 because it is illegal. Based on literature from Madagascar, we know that this is not the case.

### *Location*

Another aspect that could affect the data was the location where the interviews with the women and girls were conducted. We were allowed to use an office in the building of the mayor’s office. However, during the interviews, the doors and windows were open with people standing outside and people occasionally walking in to get things. This may also have affected how much the women and girls were willing to share.



**Picture 4:** *The Mayor’s office where the interviews were conducted.*

## **Chapter Five: Experiences with the drought and perceptions of cash transfers**

This chapter will present the findings and discussion of the analysis of my interviews. The chapter will start by presenting the participants' overall experiences of the drought and of receiving cash transfers. The rest of the chapter will then be divided in four sub-chapters covering the following themes: marriage, pregnancies, GBV and education. Each sub-chapter will start by presenting the findings from the interviews, followed by a discussion of these in relation to previous literature and theory.

### **5.1 Context – drought and cash transfers**

In the beginning of the interviews, participants were asked general questions regarding how they experienced the drought and receiving cash transfers.

The main consequence of the drought for most participants was the loss of livelihood. All the women interviewed were farmers. Due to the drought, they were unable to continue growing and selling products, and were therefore experiencing financial hardship. *“The drought affected our situation because as farmers we rely on the rain. We used to plant products to sell to get an income, but now without the rain we do not have anything to do”* (Lalaina).

All the women interviewed had received cash transfers for approximately 10 months at the time of the interviews. It was clear that they all relied on this support to survive, as they no longer could make money from farming. *“Due to the drought, we don't have food to produce anymore and no products to sell, if there weren't the cash transfers, we wouldn't be able to survive”* (Aina).

The women were asked how they spent the cash transfers, and who made the decisions in how to spend it. Most of them said that they spent the cash transfers on food and school fees. *“I spend 50 000 Ariary for the school fees for my children, and 30 000 Ariary for rice, chicken and other food, and with the rest I buy small things needed in the house”* (Irina). Regarding whom decided how to spend the cash transfers, the women said either they decided alone or

together with their husbands. *“When it comes to economic decisions, it’s up to me to decide how we spend the money. This is because I know better how to use it, I know better the price of the products so it’s better if it’s me that decides so that the food can last longer”* (Lalaina). Tatiana explained that she decides how to spend the money herself, as her husband doesn’t want to be involved. Lalaina said that it is her who decides how to spend it, but her husband will sometimes advise her.

## **5.2 Marriage**

This section will focus on how the drought and humanitarian aid has affected marriages. Firstly, the findings will be introduced. The findings can be categorized into three sections: perceptions of marriage in general (unrelated to the drought), the consequences of the drought on marriage and the effects of cash transfers on marriage. As seen in previous literature, droughts will in many cases result in girls getting married at a younger age as a way to ease the family’s financial pressure. After the findings have been presented, they will be discussed in relation to existing literature.

### **5.2.1 Findings on marriage**

The findings in this section includes perceptions on how the drought and cash transfers affected marriages in the village, particularly focusing on the amount of marriages and the age of when girls get married. A variety of answers were given and contrary to what was expected based on existing literature, most of the participants said that there had been an overall decrease in marriages since the drought.

#### Perceptions of age of marriage (unrelated to the drought)

There was a lot of variation in when the participants thought girls and women usually got married before the drought, with the ages suggested varying from 13 to 30 years old. As for the focus group discussion, all the girls agreed that girls get married at around 14 or 15 years old. One girl emphasized that girls get married at this age for economic reasons. This was also the case in some of the individual interviews with the women. One woman emphasized that

the age girls got married varied due to several factors, mainly when the man chooses to marry her and if she has an education.

*First of all, it's not the women who decide at what age they want to marry, they wait for the men to take them as their wife. Most of the time men take the girls to be their wives at the age of 20, but if the girl went to school and has knowledge about contraception and everything, they sometimes wait until they are 30 before getting married. But if they don't go to school, that's when they get married earlier. (Lalaina)*

In 2007 a law was passed in Madagascar setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 years old (UNFPA, 2012). In my conversation with the chief Fokontany, he was clear that due to the marriage laws, girls did not get married before the age of 18. *“Before girls could get married from the age of 14, some even earlier at 10, but now there are rules that don't allow the girls to get married before the age of 18.”*

The main reason for why girls got married was poverty, according to many participants. The CECJ emphasized that girls did not want to be a financial burden to their families, *“Reasons might be that they don't have money, so they want to help their parents, they don't want to be a burden to their parents, so they get married really early”*. The tradition in the south of Madagascar is for the family of the bride to get a zebu from the groom once he marries their daughter.<sup>5</sup> This was also stated as a reason for getting married.

*The main reason for girls getting married young is poverty. The parents get a zebu when their daughter gets married. It's really important for families to have zebras for the social status and economic advantages. (Doctor)*

### Education and marriage

Although the participants were not asked specifically about this, a lot of the women emphasized the importance of education. Four out of the seven women said that they did not want their daughters to get married before completing school.

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<sup>5</sup> The zebu is a subspecies of domestic cattle.

*If it was up to me, I would like my daughter to finish her studies and get a degree, and then own her own company before getting married. I know it's not up to me, but that is the dream I have for my children. (Lalaina)*

### Consequences of the drought on age and frequency of marriages

There were a lot of different reflections on the consequences of the drought on marriages, with the majority saying that the number of marriages had decreased and the age of girls getting married had increased due to the drought. The reason was that men can't afford the zebu that must be given for a traditional marriage to be valid. Aina said: *"There are less girls getting married due to the drought, the men don't have zebras anymore to get a wife"*. The girls in the focus group also said that the lack of zebras had resulted in less marriages. One girl said that it had also affected the age of marriage: *"Now women get married at like 30 years old because they can't get married since there are no zebras"*.

The CECJ employee was the only participant saying that the drought had caused girls to get married earlier, *"Due to the drought, the girls tend to get married even earlier, sometimes they get married at like 12 for example"*. She further explained the reasons for this: *"They are given by their parents to men to marry because they don't have anything to eat. That way these men can provide them with some food"*.

Others didn't think the drought had anything to do with marriages. Some said that they were only able to focus on survival and getting food. *"The marriages didn't increase because of the drought because people don't have money so when they get money it's just for food. The number of marriages has just stayed the same."* (Sylvie). Lalaina also did not think the age of when girls got married had anything to do with the drought, and argued that the age is only correlated with education, *"It's just up to the parents if they send their kids to school, if their kids go to school, they don't get married early. Its hasn't changed anything with the drought, it's the education that matters"*.





**Picture 4:** *The traditional zebu that must be given to the girl's family for a marriage to be official.*

### Co-habitation

During the interviews, the participants were specifically asked questions using the word “marriage”. Although many said that official weddings had decreased, some participants talked about co-habitation as an informal form of marriage. They explained that girls still move out of their parents’ house to live with partners, and act as if they were married, despite not being able to get officially married due to the economic constraints.

*There are more girls getting married now, even during the drought, but since they don't have money, they end up just living together and don't actually get married. They don't do a traditional wedding. (Tatiana)*

Also in the focus group, the same trend was mentioned: *“They don't do the traditional wedding because they don't have zebu, but women follow the men anyways. So people don't get married officially. They are not married, but they live together”*.

### Effect of humanitarian aid on marriages

The perceptions of the effects of humanitarian aid on marriages also varied amongst the participants. Although the question focused on cash transfers, the chief Fokontany talked

about a contraceptive project which had resulted in less girls getting pregnant early. *“They provided free contraceptives for girls, with the aim of girls not getting married earlier. It helped a lot, because now girls don’t really get married at an early age, and the parents of girls don’t have the burdens of their daughter and their child”* (chief Fokontany).

The CECJ employee said that by distributing the cash transfers every month, families have another alternative than to marry away their daughters at an early age, *“Thanks to the cash transfers they have another alternative, at least short term, to not get married that early”*.

However, when the women with daughters were asked if receiving cash transfers had any impact on their decisions to marry away their daughters, almost everyone agreed that it would not have an impact. They would not consider this as a measure at any point. Lalaina said that if it was the last resort, she might have to. However, she would prefer for her daughter to finish school first.

## **5.2.2 Discussion on marriage**

As seen in previous literature, the topic of marriage and droughts has been widely researched. The findings in this section investigate the relationship between the drought, cash transfers and marriage. The response varied, and establishing any linkages based on these is difficult. This section will look at similarities and differences between these findings and previous findings on similar research, as well as reflect on how some findings were different from what we had expected.

As for the questions asked during the individual interviews with the mothers, these were made with the assumption that parents had a more significant role in the timing of their daughters’ marriages. However, based on the answers, this did not seem to be the case. The findings were therefore different than what we expected.

Most of the previous literature on the topic of droughts and marriages find that droughts led to girls getting married younger as a form of income (Eldridge, 2002; Corno et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2022). However, the findings in this research implies the opposite. Most of the participants explained that as the men do not have the resources to give the bride’s family a zebu, which is needed for the marriage to be official, less girls get married during the drought.

Due to previous research in Madagascar and other similar contexts indicating different outcomes, these findings were also unexpected.

Although the findings indicate there are now less marriages, and girls get married at an older age, cash transfers did not seem to have a significant impact on this. When starting the research, the cash transfers were expected to empower women and give them more opportunities. The interviews gave no clear indication on the possible linkage between cash transfers and age/frequency of marriages. The CECJ employee was the only participant saying cash transfers would give families other alternatives than to marry away their daughters. Using Naila Kabeer's framework, the cash transfers would in this context be seen as the *resources* that were thought to enable the *achievements* of less child marriages. The *agency* would be the decision to not marry away the daughters at an early age to receive an additional income, as the cash transfers would allow them not to.

Previous reports from southern Madagascar finds that the country has one of the highest rates of child marriage, and that child marriage is used as a survival mechanism to deal with the food insecurities caused by the drought (UNICEF, 2021a). It is therefore interesting to look further into why the findings in this research indicates something else. One possible reason behind the findings could be the illegality of child marriage. Many participants seemed to be aware of this. For example, the chief Fokontany was clear in his answer that no girls get married before the age of 18 due to the law. If the whole village was aware of this, it could have affected their answers as they did not want to admit to breaking the law.

As for the mothers that where interviewed, it is also possible they did not want to admit to marrying away their daughters, or considering marrying away their daughters, as a way of not appearing as "bad mothers". This is often referred to as *social desirability bias*. This occurs when participants give answers that makes them look good to others, and their answers may therefore not be true to their actual experiences (Nikoloupoulou, 2022). Interestingly, the findings show that those who would not risk looking "bad" when asked about marriage, mainly the girls in the focus group, the doctor and the CECJ employee, answered that girls got married early. The participants who risked looking "bad", the mothers and the chief Fokontany, answered that girls got married later.

The findings regarding co-habitation, meaning how participants discussed that girls do not get officially married, but still live together and “act married” are also interesting and should be researched further to investigate what implications this has for the girls. It would also be interesting to further look at the relation between co-habitation and poverty. Although the girl’s family does not get a zebu without the official marriage, it will still ease the family’s financial burden if the girl lives elsewhere.

## **5.3 Pregnancies**

This chapter will focus on the effects of the drought and cash transfers on pregnancies. The findings will be introduced, and then discussed in relation to existing literature. The findings are categorized as following: a general perception of the age of when girls get pregnant unrelated to the drought, the consequences of the drought on pregnancies and the effects of humanitarian aid on pregnancies.

### **5.3.1 Findings on pregnancies**

Participants were asked about the age of pregnancies, the effects of the drought and the effects of humanitarian aid on pregnancies. The participants’ answers mostly cohere, and participants agreed that overall, they experienced a decrease of pregnancies both due to the drought and to receiving humanitarian aid.

#### Average age for pregnancy (unrelated to drought)

As with marriage, the perceptions of when women and girls get pregnant for the first time varied, and participants gave ages from 12 to 20 years old. Sylvie said she got pregnant sooner than she would have wanted to and that she got a child at 15. She explained that she had always thought that she wanted children, but her plan was to get her first child at the age of around 20. However, because of financial difficulties, she got married and had a child five years earlier than she had originally planned.

Miora said that there is an increased focus on finishing school, which has led to less early pregnancies, “*There are less pregnancies now than before, not because of the aid, but*

*because girls want to finish school first*". This is linked to the findings in the marriage chapter, where women strongly focused on completing their education before getting married.

Another reason was increased awareness of the law forbidding to get underage girls pregnant: *"During the awareness raising they tell young people if a man is getting a minor girl pregnant, he is going to jail, so people are really afraid of that"* (chief Fokontany).

### The effects of the drought on pregnancy patterns

When asked how the drought has affected pregnancy patterns, the majority of the participants agreed that the drought had resulted in less pregnancies. This was usually explained to be a result of women being afraid to not be able afford to provide food for the child and the rest of the family. The girls in the focus group said: *"Due to the drought they get pregnant a little bit later because they are afraid that they won't be able to support their families' needs"*. The chief Fokontany also explained the increased cautiousness of getting pregnant: *"The drought has affected pregnancies in general because now families are afraid to not afford food for the whole family. So they are really cautious about getting pregnant"*. Mialy said that women and girls' only focus now is on finding food.

*There are less pregnancies due to the drought because women and girls think about finding food, not about getting married and having children. (Mialy)*

One woman, Aina, reported that she had taken a very concrete action to avoid getting pregnant because she couldn't afford another child. She said that even though she really wanted another child, she can't afford to have more kids due to the current drought.

Only one participant, Lalaina, said that there were more pregnancies. The drought has interrupted the girls' education, meaning that they do not receive information regarding contraception.

*Because of the drought there is an increase of pregnancies because there are less kids going to school. The parents don't know what is going on in their lives and don't know if they have boyfriends for example, and as they don't go to school they don't get contraception education. (Lalaina)*

## Humanitarian aid and pregnancies

The participants were asked about how humanitarian aid had affected pregnancies in the village. Although we had expected them to focus on the effects of cash transfers, a lot of the participants discussed awareness raising on contraception. Based on what the participants said, we understood the awareness raising on contraception as humanitarian aid organisations, both local and national, providing information regarding contraception to the village. The drought has caused an increased presence of humanitarian aid organisations, and therefore an increased awareness. The doctor described the increased awareness of contraception as a result of an increase of humanitarian aid due to the drought.

*Since the start of the drought, more and more projects have been starting in the area. Not only with help related to food and water, but also with education of various areas, that's why awareness of contraception has increased. (Doctor)*

According to many of the participants, the increased awareness raising on contraception had a significant effect on pregnancies. Less girls got pregnant and at an older age. The CECJ employee said: *“There are less girls getting pregnant outside of marriage, the reason is because there is a lot of information given about contraception”*.

*Awareness raising about familial contraception has really worked well because now girls don't get pregnant before they are 18. It was different several years ago when they got pregnant at like 10 or 12. (chief Fokontany)*

One of the women made a very direct link between cash transfers and pregnancies. She said that there are now less pregnancies because cash transfers, combined with contraception awareness raising, allowed women to be aware of and be able to afford the contraceptive pill. Sylvie said: *“There is a decrease of women getting pregnant due to cash transfers because they get money, so now they can afford the contraception which costs 1000 Ariary”*. 1000 Ariary is equivalent to approximately 3 NOK.

During the focus group, the girls agreed that when receiving humanitarian aid, *“they think about finding food for themselves first, and not about getting pregnant”*. Therefore, they argued, humanitarian aid has resulted in less pregnancies.

On the other hand, some participants said that cash transfers had enabled women and girls to get pregnant more. Irina said that *“because of the cash transfers, girls can get pregnant earlier because they have money to afford the family needs”*. Aina also agreed with this: *“Women now like to get pregnant more often now that they can afford it due to receiving cash transfers”*.

### **5.3.2 Discussion on pregnancies**

As seen in the findings, most of the participants said that pregnancies have decreased due to the drought and humanitarian aid. This section will look at the findings compared to previous literature on similar topics. We will see how some findings are similar to the literature, while some differ.

Much previous literature indicates that during times of crisis, girls have more difficulties in accessing resources and information regarding contraception (UNFPA, 2020; MSI, 2021; Rosen et al., 2021). The findings in this research, however, indicates the opposite. Due to more contraceptive awareness in the years prior to the drought, as well as an increase of humanitarian aid as a result of the drought, including cash transfers, the women and girls expressed that they have more knowledge about, and access to, contraception. Women said they had started using contraceptives and could now afford it thanks to the cash transfers.

Many participants in this research also said they wanted to avoid getting pregnant as they wanted to be able to afford to provide for their families. Other researchers have also found this. Findings by Alam and Pörtner found that women in Tanzania used higher rates of contraception when experiencing income shocks (2018). Ezra found that droughts and famine-prone communities in northern Ethiopia experienced an increased use of contraception (2001).

Similarities can also be drawn between the findings in this research and previous research on how cash transfers specifically effect women’s decision to get pregnant. Research by Bastagli

et al. found that cash transfers allowed for an increased use of contraception (2016, p. 212). This correlates with the findings in this research, where some of the participants said that because they received cash transfers, they could afford to pay for the contraceptive pill. However, a small number of participants said that when getting cash transfers, this enabled them to get more children, as they could now afford to provide for them.

## **5.4 Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence is a common issue in Madagascar. This chapter will present the findings regarding GBV and how the participants perceive that the drought and cash transfers have affected cases of it. The findings will then be discussed.

### **5.4.1 Findings on GBV**

In this section I will firstly introduce the various types of violence present in the village according to the participants, and thereafter present samples of how participants think violence has changed due to the drought and due to receiving cash transfers.

#### Forms of violence (unrelated to drought)

The participants had various responses when it came to types of violence in the village, with the majority focusing on domestic violence. Participants gave different explanations for why domestic violence occurred, some saying it was caused by fighting over resources, and others saying violence occurred as a result of husbands having mistresses. Economic violence and sexual violence also came up. Some participants also said that there was no violence present in the village.

#### **Domestic violence**

Many participants said that domestic violence was the most common form of violence in the village. They explained this violence as the husband hitting his wife during fights. Different reasons were given for the fights to occur, mainly issues related to money and to having affairs. *“The most common form of violence is domestic violence, the men often cheat on their*



wives, and when the wives find out about it becomes a source of fights which can result in the man hitting the woman” (Lalaina). The CECJ employee explained that domestic violence is a common form of violence in the village and occurs “because they might have different opinions in their family which leads to the husband hitting their wives”.

Tatiana explained how money related issues often led to violence and used her and her husband as an example to demonstrate. She explained that she would sometimes try to make a small income, for example through selling some types of food. If she manages to make some money, her husband expects her to give this to him. If she refuses, he will hit her.

### **Economic violence**

When discussing violence, some participants talked about how husbands had mistresses or other wives, and gave the money they received to them, instead of their “actual” family. This can be seen as a form of economic violence.<sup>6</sup> This is a significant issue in southern Madagascar. Men often travel to other areas to make money over longer periods. Sometimes they will find new wives and start new families in these areas and stop sending money to their family back home. The women and children are then left with no source of income.<sup>7</sup> The CECJ employee explained how he believed this effects woman:

*Men here in the south can have 2 or 3 wives. The men are in charge of the family’s money and don’t give enough money to the wife so they can buy food and everything. The women don’t get enough resources to feed their whole family. (CECJ)*

The women and girls in the focus group explained similar issues, however they did not speak of husband’s other wives, but of their mistresses. Similarly to what the CECJ employee said, a common issue is for the husband to cheat on their wife, and give money to the mistress instead of their family. “The most common form of violence is when men are cheating on their wives and give the money to their mistresses” (Irina).

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<sup>6</sup> Economic violence refers to any act or behaviour which causes economic harm to an individual (EIGE, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Information based on conversations with colleagues at UNICEF.

## **Other forms of violence**

During the focus group, the girls gave multiple examples of other forms of violence they had witnessed or experienced in the village. One girl said that marital rape, meaning the act of sexual intercourse with one's spouse without the spouse's consent, was a common form of violence: *"For a couple who is already married, if the woman does not want to have sex with her husband, he might force himself on her anyways"*.

The girls also explained that they had experienced harassment from local authorities, like the police. They said that if they rejected the authorities, they would "punish" them and make fun of them.

*There are local authorities that want to date some of the girls and if they don't want to sleep with them, the next time they see the girls they will do silly things, like make bad jokes about them and make fun of them. (Focus group)*

Lastly, some participants said they had never noticed or experienced any violence in the village. The doctor explained that there had been a decrease of cases of gender-based violence. *"There are not a lot of GBV cases, before there were some cases of rape, but now there are not a lot of cases"* (Doctor). One of the interviewed women, Sylvie, said that she had never seen any form of violence in the village at all. Again, this can be a result of social desirability bias.

## Effects of the drought on GBV

The responses on how the drought had affected GBV were contradictory, with some saying it has caused cases to increase and some saying they had decreased. Those who said the drought had caused an increase of cases of GBV explained that it was a result of increased stress in the households.

*The violence has increased due to the drought because families have less money, and they are fighting more often. (Irina)*

*There has been an issue with GBV because of the drought, as people have no money, they tend to be anxious and stressed and can't stay calm. (CECJ)*

Aina said that the drought had resulted in a lack of activities to do, which had led to more fighting. *“The most common form is domestic violence because due to the drought the husband and wife don't have activities to do, so they are fighting about who should go find money and who should stay”* (Aina). The girls in the focus group also agreed that the drought had caused more fights, and therefore increased the cases of violence.

On the other hand, some participants said that the drought had resulted in less cases of GBV, as the only focus was on finding food. *“Because of the drought violence has decreased because the couples are more focused on how to find food and money and don't really have time to fight”* (Lalaina). Mialy similarly explained that cases of violence have neither increased nor decreased as couples were just focusing on finding ways to earn money. A possible explanation for less fighting could be that men no longer have money to give to their mistresses instead.

#### Cash transfers' effect on GBV

Responses also varied in how cash transfers may have affected gender-based violence. Many women said that cash transfers had decreased stress. *“People are in less difficulties now because they can afford going to the doctor and sending their kids to school thanks to the cash transfers”* (Aina). Several participants explained that the decrease of stress caused less cases of violence. *“With the cash transfers there is less violence because couples don't fight because they have more money to use”* (Mialy). The girls in the focus group also said that cash transfers had caused less fighting, which resulted in less violence. Tatiana explained that she hadn't received cash transfers in a couple months, and that this had resulted in fights between her and her husband to reoccur.

*When we got the cash transfers there was less fighting with my husband, but now that I haven't gotten it for a while we are starting to fight again. (Tatiana)*

The CECJ employee explained that cash transfers can have both positive and negative effects on GBV.

*Cash transfers can have good and bad effects. It can have a good effect in that the one who gets humanitarian aid can afford to buy food for the family. But for those who don't get it, it can be source of more violence by their husband because they know that some people get it and they don't get it, which causes them to act violently. (CECJ)*

Irina explained how she thought receiving cash transfers could increase violence, as the husbands continue giving money to their mistresses instead. *“Even with cash transfers, violence has increased because when the family gets the cash transfers, the man still gives the money to the mistress. It's a source of fights between wife and husband”* (Irina).

#### **5.4.2 Discussion on GBV**

The findings regarding droughts, cash transfers and GBV have both similarities and differences to previous similar literature. The discussion will look at these and highlight some possible challenges that may have impacted the answers, including the social norms accepting domestic violence in Madagascar.

One study found that weather shocks, such as droughts, do not cause GBV alone, but exacerbate drivers of violence or create environments for violence to occur (van Daalen et al., 2022, p. 519). Another research looking at droughts in sub-Saharan Africa, found that droughts caused an increase of violence due to more stress resulting from financial strains on the household and increased worries about food access (Epstein et al., 2020, p. 11). Similar findings are found in the participant's answers. Based on the findings in this research, and previous data from Madagascar, it is clear that violence, especially domestic violence, was a significant issue before the drought. However, most participants said that the drought had caused cases of violence to increase. This was explained to be a result of increased stress in the households, mainly related to financial burdens. Interestingly, some participants said that the drought had led to less fighting, as the only focus was on finding food. It would therefore be interesting to further research the reasons why increased stress led to more violence in some households, and less in others.

Previous research on cash transfer's effect on GBV is relevant to the findings in this research. A lot of studies find that cash transfers reduce violence by decreasing conflicts over money

(Angeles, 2012; Yildirim et al., 2012). A study by Buller et al. finds that cash transfers reduce intimate partner violence through decreasing household poverty, and thereby decreasing poverty-related stress (2018, p. 233). Similarly, many participants in the village said that the cash transfers had decreased stress in the household, which had led to less violence. An interesting finding that is not found in much previous research, is how cash transfers may increase violence because the cash transfers are given by the husbands to the mistresses instead, resulting in more fighting. This shows how distributing cash transfers to women, and not men, could have an impact on how the money is spent.

Much research looks at the impacts of cash transfers on empowerment. Giving cash transfers to women may contribute with changing the dynamics of a household and give the women more bargaining power, which again may result in less violence (Bastagli et al., 2016). In Kabeer's terminology, cash transfers can be seen as a *resource* for the *achievement* of less violence (Kabeer, 2005). Although many reported experiencing a decrease of violence once they received cash transfers due to less stress, the research does not find any clear evidence of how cash transfers may have changed the household dynamics. This could be interesting to further investigate considering Cornwall and Rivas criticism towards using increased access to resources as a tool for empowerment (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015).

GBV is a sensitive topic, and certain factors may have influenced the answers given. Firstly, many women had difficulties in understanding the concept of gender-based violence. Previous research finds that many think domestic violence is an acceptable act between husbands and wives in Madagascar, and 41 percent of women believe a husband is justified in beating his wife if she does not live up to her expected role (Kellum et al., 2020, p. 25). This cultural norm may therefore have had an impact on women's understanding of GBV, and how they responded to the questions regarding violence.

## **5.5 Education**

This chapter will focus on education, specifically the effect of drought and cash transfers on girls' opportunities to attend school. The findings will show that the drought had a negative impact on education, but this was mitigated by cash transfers which had a positive effect. The

discussion will reflect on the similarities and differences between these findings and the existing literature.

### **5.4.1 Findings on education**

The findings from the interviews show that the drought had a negative impact on education due to lack of food and money, and that receiving cash transfers had a positive impact on the ability to return to school. This section will present the findings in the following order: the drought's effect on education, activities done when not attending school, and cash transfers' effect on the ability for girls to attend school.

#### Drought's effect on education

There were two main ways the drought had affected education, according to participants: the lack of food and the lack of money to pay for the fees related to schooling. The women and girls mostly focused on how the school fees prevented school attendance. Aina said that although she had never considered taking her children out of school during the drought, they could not always afford the school fees: *"Sometimes when we cannot afford the fees for school, it's the school who doesn't allow the children to come to school. So sometimes they stop going to school because of that"*. Similarly, the girls in the focus group said that they could not afford the school fees and that they had all dropped out of school for an entire year during the drought.

The chief Fokontany also explained how the lack of money had a significant impact on the ability for children to attend school. *"With the drought there are less children in school, because they cannot afford the fees, they cannot afford the equipment like the books and the pens and everything. They can't afford food for the children to go to school"* (chief Fokontany).

The interviews found that the drought affected education because some parents were unable to provide food for their children. *"The number of kids who has dropped out of school has really increased because parents don't have food to give to their children before going to school so they don't send their children to school"* (Doctor). The CECJ employee similarly

explained that the lack of food combined with the long distances to school disturbed the children's education.

*The children who go to school have to leave really early to get to the school because of the distance. They don't eat well before going and get back home very late. It disturbs their concentration at school, and some even drop out of school because of the difficulties caused by the drought. (CECJ)*

### Activities instead of school

When asked what children did instead of going to school, in those cases that they are forced to drop out due to the drought, many said that they stayed at home and helped their parents. The girls in the focus group explained that they helped their parents by trying to find food: *"When we stopped going to school we went into the forest to try to find food to eat or to sell. We found some fruits in the ground we could eat"*. The CECJ employee similarly explained that: *"Those who drop out of school because of drought, they help their parents at home to go find water"*.

The chief Fokontany also said that children stayed home and helped their parents, as they are not legally allowed to work.

*Kids who don't go to school stay at home to help their parents. There is nothing to do to find money and since it's not allowed to employ kids under 18, they just help their parents at home. (chief Fokontany)*

### Activities instead of school - differences between girls and boys

Most participants said that there were no significant differences between girls and boys in terms of what they did instead of going to school. However, the doctor said that when boys are forced to drop out of school, it can put them at risk to become criminalized. She explained that some boys start stealing as a way to make money.

During the focus group, the girls explained how they thought some boys were able to return to school faster as they found ways to get money to afford the school fees.

*Some boys went to the woods and gathered wood that they sold. That way they got money so that they could go back to school earlier than girls. (Focus group)*

### Humanitarian aid effect on education

Humanitarian aid seemed to have a significantly positive impact for both girls' and boys' possibility to attend school. Almost all of the girls in the focus group who had to drop out of school due to limited resources and the inability to pay for the school fees, said that they were able to go back to school due to receiving cash transfers. One of the women also said that she was able to send her children back to school after she started receiving cash transfers. *"Its thanks to the cash transfers that we were able to bring them back to school"* (Aina).

The doctor explained that in addition to cash transfers, there are other humanitarian aid projects that help children to attend school. For example, she explained how the World Food Programme provides food at some schools.

*There are some effects of humanitarian aid, for example some schools working with WFP, they provide food at schools to both girls and boys to ensure they go to school. (Doctor)*

### **5.4.2 Discussion on education**

Existing literature on the topic of education and droughts clearly demonstrates a linkage between these two. This section will look at the similarities and differences between the findings in this research regarding education and previous literature.

A UNICEF report from 2019, looking at the East Asia- Pacific region, demonstrates how droughts have a direct impact on the ability for children to attend school, as many parents are unable to pay for school fees (UNICEF, 2019, p. 6). Similarly, multiple participants in this study said they had to drop out/take their children out of school as they were not able to pay for the school fees. One woman emphasized that it was the school that refused her children to come when they did not pay. It is interesting to see how the key informants, the doctor, chief Fokontany and the CECJ employee, all spoke of how children did not go to school as they



couldn't afford the fees, while the mothers said their children didn't go to school because the schools refused them to attend when they couldn't pay.

An interesting finding in this research is how the lack of food seems to have a negative impact on both attendance and concentration at school for children. Ramtu's research similarly finds that the lack of food can seriously impact children's concentration, as well as preventing them from attending school (2017).

The findings in this research differs from existing literature in certain areas. UNICEF's report shows how children are more likely to leave school to work as an additional form of income when parents experience income shocks, for example as a result of droughts (UNICEF, 2019, p. 6). This was not the case in our findings. The chief Fokontany emphasized that as child labour is illegal, children are not able to work when not attending school. As previously seen, the drought in Amboasary also resulted in less jobs, as the main source of income in the area is agriculture. This may also be another explanation behind why children do not work when not going to school. Some participants said that girls would help their families to get water and other tasks in the household. However, no participants gave any indication that girls had drop out of school to perform these tasks.

Some literature exists regarding cash transfer's effect on education, mainly focusing on the positive impacts *conditional* cash transfers may have on the ability to attend school. This research finds evidence of how women perceived *unconditional* cash transfers to have a positive impact. This may be explained by the strong motivation girls had to go to school, and the strong motivation the mothers had to send their children to school. They therefore prioritized spending the cash transfers they received on school fees. It would be interesting to further research if the same priorities would be made if the fathers were the ones to receive the cash transfers. This strong desire to get an education was apparent throughout the entire interview, including in the questions regarding marriage, pregnancies and gender-based violence.

	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Pregnancies</b>	<b>GBV</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Mothers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drought has caused less marriages as men can't afford the traditional zebu</li> <li>- Strong emphasis on wanting their daughters to finish their education before getting married</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The drought has caused less pregnancies as women are afraid to not be able to support a child, and because the only focus is on survival</li> <li>- Humanitarian aid has caused <b>less</b> women to get pregnant because they can now afford contraception, and because they have more information about it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic violence occurs when the husband gives money to their mistresses instead of actual family</li> <li>- Drought has increased violence due to more stress</li> <li>- Drought has decreased violence due to focusing on finding food</li> <li>- Humanitarian aid had decreased violence through decreasing financial stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When they can't afford to pay for the school fees, the school refuses the children to go to school</li> <li>- Thanks to the humanitarian aid children can return to school</li> </ul>
<b>Girls (focus group)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-habitation: Couples still "act" married and live together, although they can't afford to officially get married</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Girls get pregnant later because of the drought because they are afraid to not afford to have a child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Domestic violence is the most common form of GBV, and is mostly a result of husbands and wives fighting about the husband's mistress</li> <li>- The drought has increased violence because there are more fights</li> <li>- Humanitarian aid has decreased violence by contributing to less fights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All the girls in the focus group had to drop out of school for a year during the drought, but could all return after starting to receive cash transfers</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Fokontany</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less child marriages now due to law forbidding girls to get married before 18</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drought has caused women to be cautious about getting pregnant because they are afraid of not being able to support for a child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There used to be cases of domestic violence, but not anymore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With the drought there are less children in school because they cannot afford the fees, food and school equipment</li> </ul>
<b>Doctor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drought caused less marriages because men can't afford the traditional zebu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less girls get pregnant outside of marriage due to increased information about contraception. Increased information is a result of more humanitarian aid due to the drought</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are not a lot of GBV cases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of kids who have dropped out has increased since the drought due to the lack of food</li> <li>- Some humanitarian aid programs have helped children continue to go to school, for example through providing food at the schools</li> </ul>
<b>CECJ employee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Girls get married earlier after the drought to ease their family's financial burdens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less girls get pregnant outside of marriage, as there is more information given about contraception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More violence with the drought, due to increased stress</li> <li>- Humanitarian aid can both have a good and bad effect. It can have a good effect by releasing stress in the household. It can be bad through creating a source of fighting for families who do not receive it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drought has affected education because the lack of food ruins the children's concentration</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Overview of main findings**

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion and recommendations**

This thesis has had two main objectives: to explore how women and girls have experienced the drought and to investigate the possible impacts cash transfers may have had for them, specifically focusing on marriage, pregnancies, GBV and education. The answers given by the different women varied to a large extent, and it is therefore difficult to establish any clear linkages between the drought and cash transfers and women's experiences of these. However, the purpose of the research was not to find one true reality of how the drought and cash transfers have affected the lives of women and girls, but rather to learn more of the different experiences of these women, which may serve as a basis for further research. The experiences of the women in the village differed from what we would have expected based on similar research in other countries and regions. This shows us the importance of cultural context, traditions and norms in how people experience different phenomenon. Below is a brief summary of the main findings in the research focusing on the two objectives.

### Experiences of the drought

The study finds that the drought has brought social change in the village. Many of these social changes were surprisingly positive. It was particularly interesting how many said that the drought in fact had decreased the amount of child marriages, as the men could not afford to get married in the traditional way. Climate shocks are usually considered to have a negative impact on child marriage. However, this study demonstrates how Malagasy traditions results in different outcomes, based on the women's reported experiences. It was also interesting to see the passion the women had for education. It was clear that almost all the mothers and girls saw the value in receiving an education and prioritized this even in difficult times during the drought. As the study focuses on the worst drought Madagascar has seen in 40 years it is only natural that the research found negative consequences. Perhaps the most important finding regarding the negative consequences of the drought, was that many believed that it had increased cases of GBV.

### Perceptions of the effects of cash transfers

The findings regarding how women experienced receiving cash transfers were mostly positive. Many expressed gratitude and joy over how the cash transfers enabled children to return to school, and it was clear that many chose to spend the cash transfers on this. This was particularly positive for girl children, as they often returned to school later than the boys after

having dropped out. All the girls in this study had returned to school after receiving cash transfers. It was also interesting how many brought up contraception awareness when discussing humanitarian aid. Many women said that they had started using contraception to avoid getting more children, that they could not afford having, due to increased contraception awareness combined with cash transfers. It is clear that this type of humanitarian aid has been successful in the area.

The theory of change of the project that the cash transfers are a part of is based on the idea that the cash transfers will support women's empowerment and decision-making. It also aims to reduce GBV, improve health, education outcomes and increase household resilience (Dias et al., 2022, p. 4). The findings in this thesis do not offer any evidence to argue that the cash transfers have contributed to empowering women. However, the findings clearly show that many women have experienced that the cash transfers have had a very positive impact in their lives, particularly regarding education.

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, this thesis also had several limitations that must be addressed. I consider there to be two main challenges: the duration of the data collection and the translation. Firstly, few interviews were conducted, and the data collection took place over a very short period of time. A more long-term engagement would most likely have reduced some of the challenges that occurred, for example the social desirability bias. Some issues also arose in the translation process, due to dialect differences between the translator and the participants, mainly the mothers and girls. Using a local translator would likely have made the questions more understandable for the participants, which could have resulted in longer, more reflected answers.

## **6.1 Recommendations for further research and future measures**

This study has investigated many topics, and there are many areas that would be interesting to look further into and research.

*Cash transfer distributions to women vs men* – Although most of the interviews found that the wife and the husband decide how to spend the cash transfers together, it would be interesting to further research how distributing the cash transfers to men would differ from distributing the cash transfers to the women in terms of how it is spent.

*Conditional vs unconditional cash transfers* – This research focuses on unconditional cash transfers. Further research could be made to examine how the situation for women and girls would differ if the cash transfers were conditioned to specific actions. It should be noted that unconditional grants require much less monitoring than conditional grants. They are therefore more cost efficient, which means more of the funds can reach the target population.

*Co-habitation* – The study found that although official marriages had decreased, many couples still live together, and “act” married. Further research could investigate the reasons behind why they move in together, and if it is related to financial constraints, e.g. triggered by the drought. It would also be interesting to find out whether such relationships are less stable than conventional marriages.

*Men’s perspective* – Only one man was interviewed for this study, the chief Fokontany. Including the men’s perspectives in how they have perceived the drought and cash transfers could be interesting in future research. Understanding men’s experiences is also important in bringing forward change.

*Local perceptions of child marriage* – The findings of this study demonstrate the importance of more research on how the local population perceives child marriage. Research by Schaffnit et al. in Tanzania found that some communities have positive attitudes towards the marriage of girls who have not yet turned 18 (2019). However, this study found that mothers emphasized the importance of getting an education and being financially independent before getting married. I therefore agree with the findings of Schaffnit et al., regarding the need for further research on local perceptions of child marriage in different contexts before policy recommendations are put in place and interventions are designed.

*School fees and food distribution at schools* – Some participants said that children dropped out of school during the drought due to the lack of food, while some said it was due to the inability to pay school fees. The government and humanitarian and development aid agencies should further examine and prioritise measures to avoid children dropping out of school for these reasons.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Consent Forms (English)

### Consent form for mothers:

#### Invitation to participate in research project

This is a question for you to participate in a research project where the purpose is to investigate the potential effects humanitarian aid have had for issues faced by women and girls suffering from the drought in the south of Madagascar. This information sheet provides you with information regarding the goals of the project and what participation will mean for you.

#### Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of Bergen is responsible for the project.

#### Why are you asked to participate?

You are a woman with at least one daughter, who lives in Amboasary district and regularly receives humanitarian aid.

#### What does it mean for you to participate?

If you choose to participate in the project, it means that you participate in an interview lasting about 30 minutes which will be recorded. The interview will include questions on your economic situation, your family situation, including questions on your daughter(s). All information will be anonymized.

#### Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the project and you can withdraw your consent at any time and have the information you've provided deleted.

#### Your privacy - how we store and use your information

We will only use the information about you for the purposes we have described. We treat the information confidentially and in accordance with the privacy regulations. Only I (Sigrid Danevad) and supervisor (Siri Lange) will have access to your information. Your name and contact information will be replaced with a code that is saved on a list separate from the other data.

#### Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- Access the personal data that is being processed about you
- Request that your personal data is deleted
- Request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- Receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- Send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

**What happens to your information when we end the research project?**

The information is anonymised when the project is completed / the assignment is approved, which according to the plan is June 2022. Data will then be deleted.

**What entitles us to process personal information about you?**

We process information about you based on your consent.

On behalf of the University of Bergen, NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

**Where can I find out more?**

If you have questions about the study, or want to exercise your rights, please contact:

- Janecke Helene Veim (privacy representative at UiB): +47 55 58 20 29,  
[Janecke.Veim@uib.no](mailto:Janecke.Veim@uib.no)

- Sigrid Danevad (researcher) [sigrid.danevad@student.uib.no](mailto:sigrid.danevad@student.uib.no)

If you have questions related to NSD's assessment of the project, you can contact:

- NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS by email  
( [personvertjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personvertjenester@nsd.no) ) or by phone: 55 58 21 17.

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**Declaration of consent**

I have received and understood information about the project and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to participate in interviews regarding my experiences.

I agree that my information will be processed until the project is completed

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-  
(Signed by project participant, date)

## **Consent form for focus group:**

### **Invitation to participate in research project**

This is an invitation to participate in a research project looking at the potential effects humanitarian aid have had for issues faced by women and girls suffering from the drought in the south of Madagascar. This information sheet provides you with information regarding the goals of the project and what participation will mean for you.

#### **Who is responsible for the research project?**

The University of Bergen in Norway is responsible for the project.

#### **Why are you asked to participate?**

You are a girl between the age of 12 and 18 living in Amboasary district, and have a family who receives humanitarian aid.

#### **What does it mean for you to participate?**

If you choose to participate in the project, it means that you participate in a focus group lasting about 1 hour which will be recorded. Questions asked will include information on schooling, economic situation and marriage amongst other things. All information will be anonymized.

#### **Voluntary participation**

It is voluntary to participate in the project and you can withdraw your consent at any time and have the information you've provided deleted.

#### **Your privacy - how we store and use your information**

We will only use the information about you for the purposes we have described. We treat the information confidentially and in accordance with the privacy regulations. Only I (Sigrid Danevad) and supervisor (Siri Lange) will have access to your information. Your name will be replaced with a code that is saved on a list separate from the other data.

#### **Your rights**

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- Access the personal data that is being processed about you
- Request that your personal data is deleted
- Request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- Receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- Send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

#### **What happens to your information when we end the research project?**

The information is anonymised when the project is completed / the assignment is approved, which according to the plan is June 2022. Data will then be deleted.

#### **What entitles us to process personal information about you?**

We process the information about you based on your consent.

On behalf of the University of Bergen, NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

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[Janecke.Veim@uib.no](mailto:Janecke.Veim@uib.no)

- Sigrid Danevad (researcher) [sigrid.danevad@student.uib.no](mailto:sigrid.danevad@student.uib.no)

If you have questions related to NSD's assessment of the project, you can contact:

- NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS by email ( [personvern@nsd.no](mailto:personvern@nsd.no) ) or by phone: 55 58 21 17.

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**Declaration of consent**

I have received and understood information about the project and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to participate in interviews regarding my experiences.

I agree that my information will be processed until the project is completed

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(Signed by project participant, date)

## **Consent form for key respondents:**

### **Invitation to participate in research project**

This is an invitation to participate in a research project looking at the potential effects humanitarian aid have had for issues faced by women and girls suffering from the drought in the south of Madagascar. This information sheet provides you with information regarding the goals of the project and what participation will mean for you.

#### **Who is responsible for the research project?**

The University of Bergen in Norway is responsible for the project.

#### **Why are you asked to participate?**

You work in the area of Amboasary and have knowledge of issues around gender.

#### **What does it mean for you to participate?**

If you choose to participate in the project, it means that you participate in an interview lasting about 30-60 minutes which will be recorded. Questions asked will include information on the situation for women in the area and how the drought has affected them. All information will be anonymized.

#### **Voluntary participation**

It is voluntary to participate in the project and you can withdraw your consent at any time and have the information you've provided deleted.

#### **Your privacy - how we store and use your information**

We will only use the information about you for the purposes we have described. We treat the information confidentially and in accordance with the privacy regulations. Only I (Sigrid Danevad) and supervisor (Siri Lange) will have access to your information. Your name will be replaced with a code that is saved on a list separate from the other data.

#### **Your rights**

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- Access the personal data that is being processed about you
- Request that your personal data is deleted
- Request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- Receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- Send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

#### **What happens to your information when we end the research project?**

The information is anonymised when the project is completed / the assignment is approved, which according to the plan is June 2022. Data will then be deleted.

#### **What entitles us to process personal information about you?**

We process the information about you based on your consent.

On behalf of the University of Bergen, NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

**Where can I find out more?**

If you have questions about the study, or want to exercise your rights, please contact:

- Janecke Helene Veim (privacy representative at UiB): +47 55 58 20 29,  
[Janecke.Veim@uib.no](mailto:Janecke.Veim@uib.no)

- Sigrid Danevad (researcher) [sigrid.danevad@student.uib.no](mailto:sigrid.danevad@student.uib.no)

If you have questions related to NSD's assessment of the project, you can contact:

- NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS by email ( [personvern@nsd.no](mailto:personvern@nsd.no) ) or by phone: 55 58 21 17.

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**Declaration of consent**

I have received and understood information about the project and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to participate in interviews regarding my experiences.

I agree that my information will be processed until the project is completed

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(Signed by project participant, date)



## Appendix B: Interview Guides (English)

### Interview guide: individual interviews with mothers receiving cash transfers

#### Topic 1. Background

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
  - Age, when married, age at marriage for her and partner, how many children

#### Topic 2. Economic situation

- How does your family normally get an income? (what husband does for a living, what she does)
- How do you normally decide about economic issues in your family? Do you discuss it with your husband?
- How has the drought affected your family's economic situation?

#### Topic 3. Cash transfers

- How long have you received cash transfers?
- How is the process? (who receives it, how often etc.)
- How did you spend this support?
- Who decided how to spend the support? You and your husband?

#### Topic 4. Child marriage

- In your view, what is a good age for girls/young women to get married?
- Do you think patterns have changed in regards to girls getting married due to the drought?
  - Do you think there's been an increase of marriages? If so, why?
  - Do you think there is a difference in the age girls get married? Do they get married younger?
- Are any of your children married? (if yes, tell about the process – how was it decided, ages of bride and groom at marriage etc.)
- Do you have marriage plans for any of your daughters now?
- Do you think your daughters would be in other positions if it was not for the cash transfers?

#### Topic 5. School dropout

- Does (do) your daughter(s) go to school?
  - If no
    - Why is that?
    - When did she drop out if she used to go to school?
    - What does she do instead?
    - (if they have a son) Does your son go to school?
  - If yes
    - Has there ever been a case where you considered taking her out of school?
    - Do you think the cash transfers has had any impact in them being able to go to school? If so, how?

#### Topic 6. Early pregnancies

- At what age did you have your first child? (Do you feel that it was a “good time”, or too early too late?)
- Are any of your daughters pregnant/have children?
  - If so, at what age did she get pregnant?
- Have you noticed any differences in patterns of pregnancies due to the drought?
- Have you noticed any differences in patterns of pregnancies after having received cash transfers?

#### Topic 7. GBV

- What are the most common forms of violence against women in your village?
- Do you think there has been an increase in violence because of the drought?
  - If yes, why do you think that is?
- Have you noticed any changes after people started receiving cash transfers?
  - If yes, what kind of changes, and why do you think these changes happened?

## **Interview guide: key respondents (staff)**

### Topic 1. Background

- Can you tell me about the organisation you work for and what you do?
- How long have you worked for the organisation and what did you do earlier? (Probe for education and work experience, and knowledge of the local area, time spent there)
- What does a normal day look like?

### Topic 2. Drought

- What would you say are the main consequences of the drought?
- Have you noticed any changes in your work due to the drought? What?

### Topic 3. Child marriage

- At what age do girls usually get married here?
- What do you think the reasons are for them getting married at this age?
- Do you think patterns have changed in regards to girls getting married due to the drought?
  - Do you think there's been an increase of marriages? If so, why?
  - Do you think there is a difference in the age girls get married? Do they get married younger?
- Do you think cash transfers could have an effect on when/how girls get married? How?

### Topic 4. Education

- Do you think the drought has affected if children go to school? How?
- Do you think girls and boys are effected differently by the drought in regards to school attendance?
- What do those who do not go to school do instead? Are there differences between girls and boys?
- What effect do you think cash transfers have/could have for girls' education during the drought?

### Topic 5. Early pregnancies

- What is the average age for girls getting pregnant?
  - Has the drought effected this? How and why?
- Have you noticed any changes in the number of girls getting pregnant outside of marriage?

### Topic 6. GBV

- What are the most common forms of gbv here?
- Do you think there has been an increase in gbv because of the drought?
  - If yes, why do you think that is?
- What effect, if any, do you think cash transfers could have on gbv?

## **Interview guide: focus group**

Prior to the Focus Group, all the participants will be asked about their age, level of education, parents' occupation, number of siblings (their sex and age) and whether their family has received humanitarian aid or not. This will be noted on a list.

### Topic 1. Cash transfers

- Do you know what cash transfer is? Can you tell us what it is? (if not, explain).
- Who in the family receives the cash transfer (mother, father or both)?
- Who decides on how the money should be spent? Any examples from your families?

### Topic 2. Child marriage

- In your view, what is a good age to get married?
- How has the drought effected marriage for girls?
  - Do more girls get married than before the drought?
  - Do you think there is a difference in the age girls get married?
- Have you noticed a difference after your village received cash transfers?

### Topic 3. Education

- Do you think the drought has affected if children go to school?
  - If yes, why is that? Any examples?
  - Do you think girls and boys have been differently effected in regards to possibilities of attending school? Any examples?
- If girls do not go to school, what do they do instead?
- What effect do you think cash transfers have had on possibilities to go to school?

### Topic 4. Pregnancies

- Do any of you have children?
- When do girls usually get pregnant here?
- Has this changed due to the drought?
- Has the cash transfers had any affect?

### Topic 5. GBV

- What are the most common forms of violence against women in your village?
- Do you think there has been an increase in violence because of the drought?
  - If yes, why? Any examples?
- Have you noticed any changes after the distribution of cash transfers started?
- If yes, what changes? In your view, why these changes?

# Appendix C: NSD Assessment

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger

07.11.2022, 19:13

[Meldeskjema](#) / [Research project on effects of cash transfers on gender issues in th...](#) / Vurdering

## Vurdering

Referansenummer	Type	Dato
953299	Standard	18.11.2021

### Prosjekttittel

Research project on effects of cash transfers on gender issues in the south of Madagascar

### Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Bergen / Det psykologiske fakultet / Hemil-senteret

### Prosjektansvarlig

Siri Lange

### Student

Sigrid Danevad

### Prosjektperiode

24.11.2021 - 30.06.2022

### Kategorier personopplysninger

Alminnelige

Særlige

### Rettslig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene kan starte så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det rettslige grunnlaget gjelder til 30.06.2022.

[Meldeskjema](#) 

### Kommentar

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 18.11.2021, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

### TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger og særlige kategorier av personopplysninger om helseforhold frem til 30.06.2022.

### LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR UTVALG 1

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 nr. 11 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse, som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

For alminnelige personopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a.

For særlige kategorier av personopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være den registrertes uttrykkelige samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a, jf. personopplysningsloven § 10, jf. § 9 (2).

### LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR UTVALG 2

<https://meldeskjema.nsd.no/vurdering/617bacea-bf5f-4529-bc4c-8095eeb49107/0>

Side 1 av 3

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra registrerte/foresatte til behandlingen av personopplysninger om de registrerte. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte/foresatte kan trekke tilbake.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være registrertes/foresattes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

#### LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR UTVALG 3

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 nr. 11 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse, som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a.

#### LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR TREDJEPERSON

Prosjektets formål er å undersøke hvorvidt "cash transfers" har hatt en effekt for problemstillinger jenter og kvinner møter som et resultat av tørken i sør i Madagaskar. Under intervju og fokusgruppeintervju i utvalg 1 og 2 vil det fremkomme personopplysninger om enkelte famillemedlemmer. Det skal bare registreres alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger om tredjeperson, det skal kun registreres indirekte identifiserende opplysninger, prosjektets varighet er kort og opplysningene skal anonymiseres fortløpende.

Vår vurdering er at behandlingen av personopplysninger om tredjeperson oppfyller vilkåret om vitenskapelig forskning, jf. personopplysningsloven § 8, og dermed utfører en oppgave i allmenhetens interesse.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen av alminnelige personopplysninger er dermed at den er nødvendig for å utføre en oppgave i allmenhetens interesse, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav e, samt for formål knyttet til vitenskapelig forskning, jf. personopplysningsloven § 8, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 3.

Behandlingen er omfattet av nødvendige garantier for å sikre den registrertes rettigheter og friheter, jf. personvernforordningen art. 89 nr. 1.

#### PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lenger enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

#### DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER – UTVALG 1 og 3

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

#### DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER – UTVALG 2

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte og deres foresatte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art.

17), begrensning (art. 18) og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert/foresatt tar kontakt om sine/barnets rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

#### DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER - TREDJEPERSONER

Så lenge tredjepersoner kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), protest (art 21).

Det er vår vurdering at det kan unntas fra informasjonsplikten, jf. personvernforordningen art. 14 nr. 5 b) ettersom det vil kreve en uforholdsmessig stor innsats å gi informasjon til de registrerte sett opp mot nytten den enkelte vil ha av å bli informert. Varigheten for behandlingen av personopplysninger om tredjepersoner er kort, og omfanget av personopplysninger er lite. Prosjektet vil også be utvalg 1 og 2 om å videreformidle informasjon om prosjektet til sine famillemedlemmer.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

#### FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1 f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

#### MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: <https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>. Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

#### OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Marita Ådnanes Helleland

Lykke til med prosjektet!

[Meldeskjema](#) / [Research project on effects of cash transfers on gender issues in th...](#) / Vurdering

# Vurdering

Referansenummer	Type	Dato
953299	Standard	30.06.2022

**Prosjekttittel**

Research project on effects of cash transfers on gender issues in the south of Madagascar

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**

Universitetet i Bergen / Det psykologiske fakultet / Hemil-senteret

**Prosjektansvarlig**

Siri Lange

**Student**

Sigrid Danevad

**Prosjektperiode**

24.11.2021 - 30.01.2023

**Kategorier personopplysninger**

Alminnelige

Særlige

**Rettslig grunnlag**

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene kan starte så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det rettslige grunnlaget gjelder til 30.01.2023.

[Meldeskjema](#) 

**Kommentar**

Personverntjenester har vurdert endringen i prosjektsluttdato.

Vi har nå registrert 30.01.2023 som ny sluttdato for behandling av personopplysninger.

Hvis det blir nødvendig å behandle personopplysninger enda lengre kan det bli nødvendig å informere prosjektdeltakerne.

Vi vil følge opp ved ny planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson: Marita Helleland

Lykke til videre med prosjektet!