

## ActionAid's Humanitarian Response in Northern Ethiopia



*Distribution of the Multi-purpose cash to war-affected people in one of the IDP centres at Kobo primary school IDPs (Picture taken by PADet)*

January 2022, Ethiopia: Women and children are the hardest hit in natural and man-made calamities everywhere. Likewise, Northern Ethiopia's conflict is devastating the livelihood of millions. The armed conflict erupted in early November 2020 between the Tigray regional forces and the federal government forcing hundreds of thousands to flee from their homes. The armed conflict was in Tigray for almost

eight months but since mid-July 2021 the war expanded to neighbouring Afar and Amhara regional states which forced to leave hundreds of thousands of people from their home to neighbouring zones and towns.

In December 2021 alone more than 218,000 people were internally displaced from Sothern Tigray, North Wollo, South Wollo, and Oromia special zones

forcing them to flee southwards to the central part of the country. Many of these internally displaced people (IDPs) were temporarily sheltered in Kobo and Debrebirhan towns. ActionAid Ethiopia with the financial sourcing of Band Aid (this finance was meant to be used for the construction of school block and other related activities in Raya Azebo) took instant action to respond to the humanitarian crisis which severely affected women (pregnant and lactating), girls, the elderly, and people with impairments.

Many thousands were also displaced from South Tigray who have been suffering from shortage of food and basic needs for more than a year due to the lack of access because of the ongoing conflict. Out of nearly 51,000 IDPs that arrived in Kobo town, ActionAid together with its local partner Professional Alliance for Development (PADet) supported 2,022 persons (1315 Female)

that included lactating mothers, pregnant women, women-headed households with big family size, orphaned children, people with disability, etc. with multipurpose cash. The affected people used the cash to buy food items, supplementary foods for children, essential household kits, kitchen utensils,



***Distribution of the Multi-purpose cash to war-affected people in one of the IDP centres at Kobo primary school IDPs (Picture taken by PADet)***

purchase of clothes, payment for health care, purchase of WASH materials, women's sanitary pads, and purchase of small goods to resell as income generating activity even to pay back their debts. A total of Birr 1,617,600 multi-purpose cash

was dispersed at the rate of Birr 800 for each person (assumed enough to buy cereal, pulse, and edible oil for a month).

In a related development, AAE in close collaboration with Professional Association for Development (PADEt), one of its local partners in North Shewa, North Wollo and South Wollo, had supported 2,623 IDPs mainly pregnant, Women headed Households, lactating mothers, Orphan children, elders, person with disability (PLDs) etc. temporarily sheltered in Derebirhan town.

ActionAid Ethiopia is one of the humanitarian actors in the country responding to humanitarian crisis quickly by mobilizing available resources from donors such as IHART/DPRF, Start Fund, ALborda, Medicaor, Band-Aid, WRPII, DAP' and internal sources to respond to these multiple crises in different parts of the country mainly in Tigray, Amhara, Afar and Benshangul gumuz.

Our humanitarian signatures, transformative women led humanitarian response and shifting the power to the local actor, transparency, accountability and ensuring protection are enabling communities to actively participate in the humanitarian response process and harnessing the conventional way of humanitarian response in the complex situation especially in the IDP sites.

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***ActionAid Ethiopia reached a total of 90,114 (58,423 Female) people affected by different crisis with Food, Multipurpose Cash, Protection, Wash/NFI and COVID-19 controlling, and prevention materials with an outlay of more than £1,000,000***

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## Young girls ask policy makers to do more to stop GBV

March 2022, Addis Ababa: The outbreak of COVID 19 has proved to be a good opportune for perpetrators. The scale of gender-based violence and care burden piled up on the mental and physical freedom of women and girls. This phenomenon was more visible in urban set ups like Addis Ababa.



Young girls participating in women-led research methods, (Pic. AAE, 2021)

In an unprecedented manner, ActionAid Ethiopia (AAE) opted to implement young women-led research that aimed at both gathering evidence from the community and proving young girls' capacity to undertake research about their own issues. To do this, the organization in collaboration with a local partner- Young Men Christians Association, organized different training sessions like research

methodology and policy advocacy. These training are thought to have helped the young girls who made research on the impacts of COVID 19 on the lives of young girls in Addis Ababa be equipped with communication and research skill. But what moved the young girls more was the degree of existence of gender-based violence deep inside the communities they met during the research in selected districts of Addis Ababa.



Bethlehem Mohammed,15, grade 9 student, one of the young researchers (Photo taken by AAE)

'I've learnt a lot from the research. Now, I could see that I can play my stake in fighting gender injustice and solving the problems women are facing. As I had no experience going far away from my district, my family were hesitant to give me permission to participate in the research from the start. But

when I shared them about what we were learning in the research method training ActionAid Ethiopia organized, they were convinced and supported me to do the research. They also gave me cautionary advises during the actual research. Each evening I came back from the research I told them what I encountered during the daytime to my family, and they were surprised by the stories. Many members of the community were not willing to give us information we sought for, but we applied the techniques we learnt from the training we took to persuade them and succeeded in getting the data we were collecting for the research. We could observe from the research that how harsh and unjustifiable norms are violating the rights of women and girls in communities. I have a strong desire to exert my level best to help and teach.'

# International Women's Day

## Women demand for power shift through proportionate representation in leadership and fair educational opportunity for women public servants

March 2022, Mizan Aman that is one of the Local Right Program of ActionAid Ethiopia, International Women's Day is attractive when communities embrace it. It becomes more meaningful when women that have enlightened themselves about their rights and rejoiced its outcomes. Most importantly is serves as a venue for them to ask the duty bearer key policy issues



*Women and students celebrating International Women's Day in their localities in Semen Bench, March 2022 (Photo courtesy: AAE)*

Women and girls in Semen Bench of Southwestern Ethiopia celebrated the day with the motto 'I am my sister's keeper'. Women representatives from all public sectors of the local administration, women's watch group (WWG) leaders from the rural partners across the district and government executive officials from the local administration participated in the celebration.

During the discussion, participant women raised the right of equal leadership position at public sectors and the right of equal educational opportunity for women public servants.

After the discussion the local administration fully accepted the existence of disproportional appointment on leadership and unfair educational opportunity to women public servants in the district and the executive bodies of the woreda administration have promised to equalize the gender segregation in all aspects of public leadership. The woreda education office on its part agreed to promote women teachers to school director and any position in education office soonest possible.

School teachers, boys, girls, and school community members also celebrated the day through discussion

of how girls should be protected from harmful traditional practices (HTP), and violence against women and girls (VAWG) which hinder girls' right for education at large. School directors, teachers, students, and community members called for the community leaders and the government officials to better implement the law set to protect girls and women from any type of VAWG and HTPs.

In connection to 2022 IWD, best performing Saving and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO) that were established by ActionAid were recognized and awarded at zonal and regional levels by Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs. Based on the criteria set by WCY affairs, Kasha women only SACCO stood 1st among SACCOs in the region and further represented the region to compete at national level (held in Bahirdar city of Amhara region). There in the national contest, Kasha SACCO was awarded with Birr 5,000 and certificate of recognition. Gola women association, which was also founded by ActionAid Ethiopia, on its part stood first among Women associations in six woredas (localities) in the category of general activities in Bench Sheko Zone of Southwest Ethiopia Regional State.

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In Semen Bench of Southwestern Ethiopia, communities such as Menjas were marginalized due to groundless myths. They used to be devoid of going to school and health facilities, socializing with the rest of community members, creating assets, participating in political activities like elections, and even sell what they produce to markets, etc. But now, all these violations of human rights are mitigated because of social inclusion interventions that consist of economic and social supports with the application of human right based approaches (HRBA). ActionAid Ethiopia played the leading role in bringing all stakeholders together in its years of effort to bring social and economic justice for this community, though much more is to be done considering the challenge of changing norms and behaviours that existed for centuries.

International Women's Day was also celebrated in Elfeta, Guna, and Ameya LRPs with their own themes in their respective localities. The LRPs organized debates and discussions on gender and economic justice, women's leadership, unpaid

care work, and harmful traditional practices, and persuaded government bodies to commit themselves in beefing up the share of power by women in all spheres and respond to the asks raised by women and their institutions. In Elfeta, the theme was promoting Gender Responsive Public Service. Participant government staff and women watch groups (WWGs) requested government for safe space for women and women leadership in different sectors.

In addition, Women Watch Group (WWGs) representatives from three woredas/localities (Elfeta, Ameya, and Ambo localities) and government staff presented reports of their performance and finally requested the government to give equal attention to girls rest room while constructing school blocks; to recheck maternity leave against 6 month breast feeding health requirement; to give attention to Child Care Centres in work places; and to facilitate the legalisation of establishment of women only SACCOs.



***IWD celebration in Elfeta, a woman reading out demands by women in the locality***

# Access to Justice



March 2022, Addis Ababa: A consultative workshop aimed at exploring major factors that hinder survivors of exploitation, child labour, abuse, and human trafficking from getting access to justice was held in Bishoftu town. The participants drawn from Addis Ababa Police Commission Women and Children's Affairs Department and police officers working with one-stop centres in 11 sub-cities from Addis Ababa deliberated on the diverse and complex gaps in addressing this burning issue. Their discussions were preceded by presentations by the project manager for ActionAid Ethiopia and an experienced law enforcement consultant. The presentations cited the project objectives as well as its anticipated outputs in its course of three years and brought the drawbacks in the judiciary system, missed aspects in giving attention to budget allocation for crime prevention and one-stop-centre services for survivors of human traffickers, employers, and abusers. The participants shared different stances and their personal work-related challenges in the contexts mentioned above. They face challenges in budget allocation for services. law enforcing institution voiced that it is high time for all state and non-state stakeholders to join hands in doing what it takes to improve access to justice and psycho-social support to survivors, especially women and children and promoting decent work and care.

"Even though the police station has shelter for survivor children, it does not provide them with food. Desperately, the police officers usually share their lunch with children in the shelter"- A woman police officer in the workshop.

The workshop was organized by ActionAid Ethiopia through its Combating Modern Slavery (CMS)/ Promoting Decent Work and Care Project financed by Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD) that was launched very recently.

The project is being implemented by AAE in partnership with Emmanuel Development Association (EDA), Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations (CEHRO), People, Health Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHE-EC) and Union of Ethiopian Women and Children's Associations (UEWCA).

This three-year project is aimed at harvesting evidence, mobilizing concerned stakeholders, and playing constructive role and advocating to persuade the government and hiring companies in putting in place better policies, directives, and procedures that protect citizens from human exploitation and provide with access to justice service in the case of violating basic human rights under the cover of employment.

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***"I gave a blanket that was in office to a mother who brought a child with no clothing, but she left the child at a church covering him with the same blanket I gave her." A woman police officer***

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## Transforming Women's Livelihoods in Ameya Local Rights Programme



*Wegen vegetable farm on her back yard on small plot / FFS / plot (Pic taken by AAE)*

Wegene Berhanu, 42-year-old, lives in a place called Tumi Bino Sombo kebele/district in Ameya local administration where ActionAid Ethiopia's Local Right Programme is functioning. She is married and a mother of five. Wegene comes from a marginalised group of community that are economically found in poorest situation and socially excluded from the community. People from such group are neglected to have their own farmland, socialized with others, and engaged on making their own businesses etc.

Wegene and her husband have very small backyard and their family's economy depends on daily labour by working for other farmers in rural area and hiring their children on yearly contract. She used to practice preparation of inset /false banana/ seasonally or occasionally for economically better off people and in return, she takes few in kind which is not able to feed their family in sustainable ways.

Since the program intervention in Ameya district in June 2019, ActionAid has been working on agroecology with local government and community to change the lives of marginalized people living in

poverty. Wegene Berhanu was one of the member of organized reflection action circle (RAC) group and eventually became a member of Chitu Saving and Credit Cooperative /SACCO.

Wegen vegetable farm on her back yard on small plot / FFS / plot (Pic taken by AAE)

AAE provided trainings on Agro ecology and horticulture productions for the reflection action circle (RAC) group members, and she was the one to take the training. After the training and awareness creation Wegene became to the member of the saving and credit cooperative, she has got 7,000-birr loan in two rounds from the cooperative and engaged in crop/vegetable production and shoat fattening. In addition, she has got and planted 10 improved avocado seedlings and out of which six was survived.

During the last rain season, she produced vegetables like onion, tomato, and cabbage on her small back yard and wheat and maize with other peoples as a share.

Currently her life has changed a lot. She has started to sit together with other community members as a reflection action circle (RAC) group to discuss on their problem. As she was from the marginalized community, it is a big success for her to socialize and working with others, she has started producing her own crop and vegetable, she has shoats for fattening and has got net profit of 4,500 birr from the sale of last year production which covers her children cost for some basic needs. In addition, she covered her household food consumption from the crop she produced.

**"ActionAid has just changed my attitude and helped me to start my business/chores rather than working for others. The water was crossing my backyard while others were using it for irrigation. Now we started using irrigation and produced vegetable in our small plot back yard producing twice a year and irrigating my avocado plant during the dry seasons. Currently, I have 6 improved avocado plants and bear fruit in coming two years which is another opportunity to improve my livelihood.**

**In addition, I have taken three days training on poultry production, and management training and was supported with 12 chickens by ActionAid Ethiopia through my saving and credit cooperative (SACCO); currently they started giving eggs and that is helping me for my monthly saving and nutrition's for my family.**

**Lack of awareness and vision lead the family to live in poorest situation and we were unable and unwilling to send our children to school. Now I have decided to send my school age children to school. Currently only one child is going to school, the remaining three are out of school. I am trying to return to school in coming school year." said Wegene.**





## Our Vision

A just, equitable and sustainable Ethiopia in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity and, freedom from poverty.

## Our Mission

To achieve gender justice and poverty eradication, by working with Women and Girls, people living in poverty and exclusion, their organizations and supporters.

## Our Values

Mutual Respect,  
Equity and Justice  
Integrity  
Solidarity with people living in poverty and exclusion  
Courage of Conviction  
Independence  
Humility  
Excellence

## About Us

ActionAid Ethiopia, established in 1989, is a Gender Justice, good governance and poverty eradication organization. In Ethiopia ActionAid works to challenge various forms of social challenges and build capacities to create empowered mass of communities especially women and girls living in poverty and exclusion to fulfil their basic needs, ensure redistribution of productive resources and build their resilience. We prioritize to work with Women and Girls and their organizations, networks, civil society organizations, national and local government and other allies to overcome gender inequality and structural causes of poverty.

## Find Us

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