

ActionAid Ethiopia Provides Immediate Response to Support Communities hit hard by COVID, Conflict and Food insecurity in Raya



Food items being transported from Mehoni town of Southern Tigray hit by locust, loss of production and armed conflict to affected villages. (Picture credit: ActionAid Ethiopia)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: As quite a sizable population is severely affected by COVID 19, ActionAid Ethiopia continues to mobilize resources to absorb the shock communities have come across. In addition to its functional Local Right Programmes (LRPs), AAE has collaborated with different kind-hearted philanthropists and funding institutions through ActionAid International to extend its support to critically



ActionAid Staff giving orientation to right holders on the modalities of targeting and distribution.

AAE has provided humanitarian support with \$500,000 (through AAI) for about 18,000 people with emergency food assistance,

needed humanitarian support items and services to the needy in different corridors of the country.

Among the LRPs ActionAid operates, Raya Azebo woreda is one of the hardest hit areas by locust, conflict, and food insecurity. ActionAid Ethiopia (AAE) together with other Humanitarian International NGOs made a joint assessment in five woredas (Alamata, Chercher, Raya-Azebo, Ofla and Wajerat) of South Tigray Zone and Kobo woreda from North Wollo zone, Amhara regional state, which is adjacent and one of the affected woredas by the crises. The assessment found that Raya-Azebo and Chercher woredas were the most severely affected woredas.

The population that needs humanitarian assistance in the area is estimated to be 70,000 according to the district administration.

AAE has provided humanitarian support with \$ 500,000 (through AAI) for about 18, 000 people with emergency food assistance, livelihood recovery, protection and WASH NFI in our operational area. Throughout our intervention AAE ensured our Humanitarian Signatures are implemented.

The Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations' Council (ECSOC) Established Picks ActionAid Ethiopia as its Primary Vice President

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Since the revision of the previous Ethiopian Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009, which many believe was suppressive for it was a blockade to any democratic and human right activities by civil societies and others in the country for the last decade, several fundamental reforms have been introduced by the government. One major step was substituting this crippling law by a new one, i.e., CSOs proclamation number 1113/2019.

Following this reformative measure, CSOs are now given wider scope of operations including human right and democracy with ease of use of their money. Encouraged by the introduction of this law, CSOs are now striving to play their stake in the democratic, humanitarian and economic development of the nation. One big stride they made as the result of the reform in the sector is the establishment of Civil Society Organizations' Council on December 31st, 2020 based on Article 85 of the CSOs proclamation number 1113/2019. The council represents more than 3000 civil society organizations formally registered by the Federal Democratic Republic

Ethiopia, Agency of Civil society organizations. The council aims at ensuring transparency and accountability of the sector using international principles and national values to promote self-governance on the ongoing operation of the sector as well as ensure representations at various levels.

The council is believed to play instrumental role in coordinating and leveraging all the opportunities and capacities CSOs have, mitigate challenges that might occur in the sector and contribute their stake for the social, economic, and democratic development of Ethiopia as a whole. In the event of the founding event of the council, representatives of three hundred CSOs democratically elected twenty-one executive members.

ActionAid Ethiopia represented by its Country Director, Tinebeb Berhane, has been elected to serve the council as Primary Vice President and was elected to be one of the three board members at the governmental agency of the sector, i.e., FDRE Agency of Civil Society Organization representing the council.

1st Civil Society Organizations, Government, and Private Partnership Exhibition and Conference Held in Addis



First ever exhibition entitled “The first Civil Society Organizations, Private and Government Partnership Exhibition & Conference” was held in Addis at Oromo Cultural Centre from April 06 to 09, 2021. The exhibition and conference were opened and visited by high profile government officials from Attorney General, Agency for Civil Society Organizations, and other sectoral offices.

Over fifty civil society organizations exhibited their works, services, and products to the visitors. Side by side with the exhibition, conference in which

exemplary development endeavors by some civil society organizations enforced with live impact witnessing stories narrated by right holders were conducted. Participants and visitors exchanged opinions and formed networks for collaboration both from the exhibition and conference. Over 1500 people visited the exhibition strictly applying the Ethiopian COVID-19 protocol and different media outlets gave news coverage for it. ActionAid Ethiopia participated in the exhibition both as a sponsor and exhibitor.

Changemakers-funded Project Bearing Fruits in Semen Bench



One of the school blocks constructed by ActionAid Ethiopia in Gola district. (Picture taken by AA Ethiopia)

March 2021, Mizan, Ethiopia: Quite a lot of changes are seen on the ground as the result of development interventions ActionAid Ethiopia with the full financial support of Changemakers, implemented in Semen Bench since 2019.

Based on the traditions and beliefs, girls in Semen Bench area are highly discriminated: they have less or no access to resources or public services like education, they are at higher risk of violence and harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and gender-based violence. They cannot inherit property, and they are responsible for burdensome caring duties and household chores from an early age. These and other factors limit girls' right to education, not to mention their right to a dignified

life. With the objective of empowering girls in fighting social injustice that hinder them from achieving their vision, Changemakers funded the works of ActionAid Ethiopia in this area for the last three years that empowers girls to realize their ambitions.

Quality education by creating better and safe school environment for girls is one of the remarkable interventions that attracted many girls to come to school. School management training, awarding better performing girls and their parents, annual discussion forum between school management, girls club and woreda authorities were made to increase safe school environment for girls and networking them to solve any incidence of social hitches that affect girl school enrollment.



School girls get safety and dignity services from their Girls' Clubs established by AAE with the financial support of Changemakers. (Pic. AAE)

Australian Embassy in Addis Joins hands with ActionAid Ethiopia to Support GBV Survivors

Guna, Ethiopia: "The two legal aid centers served 136 women and girls who came with different legal cases (61- at Kimrdingay and 75- at Debreabor legal aid centers). Out of these women and girls 5 cases went to court through lawyers of Debre Tabor University Legal aid clinic and their cases are settled in favor of the women."



Representatives of Women Watch Groups, ActionAid Ethiopia management staff and local government officials exchanging views on the achievements made so far and the way forward. (Pic. AAE)

Standard classroom, separate girls' toilet and library construction were also undertaken to improve services in three schools. Internal facilities like chair, table, combined desk, reference books and black board have been provided as well.

ActionAid Ethiopia's senior management team paid visit to the LRP and confirmed that the community, especially women and girls are indeed changing their attitudes and practices towards gender equality, harmful traditional practices, economic justice, education and more. As the project maturity period is nearing, representatives of women watch groups, saving and credit cooperatives, school administration, the local governments and elders made it clear that they are ready to continue the legacy of ActionAid to bring sustainable development in their localities in all aspects.

ActionAid Ethiopia's Country Director, Tinebeb Berhane during the visit expressed her gratitude and appreciation to all women structures, local government bodies, school administration and schoolgirls' clubs for the commendable change they have brought in the effort to challenge the structural causes of poverty and gender injustice in their localities during the project period.



Women whose life has been affected by GBV and COVID 19 receiving cash support at the office of Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association. (Picture taken by EWLA)

In a very short span of time, a project entitled Enhance Wellbeing of GBV Survivors amidst Covid-19 helped to bring a clear impact on GBV survivors in Guna. ActionAid Ethiopia and Australia Embassy in Ethiopia launched this project in early December 2020.

The project with an outlay of Birr 500,000 covered expenses for psychosocial and legal support services to GBV survivors in Guna and to give cash support to GBV survivors and those women whose livelihoods have been affected by COVID 19 pandemic living in Addis. These women in Addis get legal aid service by Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA). One hundred sixty-four carefully selected needy women were supported in cash to help them cope with the difficulty they faced due to COVID 19.

Case Story

Abeba's mother died when she was only a little child. Abeba did not have any sibling. She used to live in a rented house with her husband around the area commonly known as Saris. Abeba recalls back about her spouse, "I had a good relationship with my husband within a peaceful marriage". Abeba and her husband saved some amount of money in their joint account to cover her maternity cost. When Abeba's labor started, she went to the nearest health center with her husband to give birth. While Abeba was at the hospital, her husband returned to their home to bring cloth to her and to the newly born baby. However, surprisingly, Abeba's husband did not come back to the hospital and his cellphone was switched off. At that moment, Abeba was very worried about her estranged husband's situation. She called her neighbor to check upon him. But Abeba's neighbor told her that he had moved to a new house with all their household things. Abeba says, "when I heard about this sad news, I couldn't control myself and I cried the whole night. My heart was broken. And I felt desperate and didn't know what to do."

Abeba resumes her encounter, "I shared my situation with the doctor and the nurses. Afterwards, the doctor comforted me and suggested me to give the child for an adoption center. But I refused his suggestion and I told him that I want to raise my child by myself". Then, the doctor allowed me to leave my child to the nurses and look for my husband. I immediately went to the main bus station of Addis Ababa where my estranged husband was supposed to be, but I could not find him. The money that we saved together was withdrawn from the joint account and I realized that I have lost everything I had. I returned back to the hospital with the feeling of stress and hopelessness."

The doctor and the nurses contributed some amount of money and rented a very small house for her around an area called Bole Bulbula. They even paid a two-month house rent fee and provided her with some cloth for her and the little one. The rented



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house shared a common wall with a public toilet. She had no means of income to support herself and her little child. There were many days that she went to sleep without food. She did not pay a house rent fee for the past two months.

One day, Abeba's neighbor who previously received a legal aid service told her about EWLA's service and she encouraged her to go to the office. During this crucial moment, she came to EWLA's legal aid office and received 740 ETB from ActionAid cash support. She also received legal aid support to secure the child maintenance support.

Abeba concludes, "After I received the money, I paid 700ETB for the owner of the house. This enabled me to cover a one-month accumulated house rent fee. I bought some food items with the remaining 40 ETB. This support gave me a temporary relief. I am very thankful to EWLA and its donor ActionAid Ethiopia for arranging such kind of a support." she also revealed that she still needs additional financial support to cover house rent fee and to raise her child as well.

Melkadida and Kobe Refugee Camps Get Protection and Safety Service Facility

People's Post Code Lottery (PPL) funded the project



Members and leaders of Women's Protection Groups at the gate of newly constructed Melkadida Women and Girls' Safe Space.

Melkadida, Somali region, Ethiopia: ActionAid UK, ActionAid Ethiopia and Rehabilitation and Development Organization (RaDO) successfully accomplished a project aimed at accessing protection and safety services to women and girls sheltered in Melkadida and Gobe Refugee Camps, Somali region of Ethiopia.

The project entitled "Humanitarian investment fund on Women's Protection in Melkadida and Gobe Refugee Camps", after making a thorough assessment and preliminary studies, adapted and applied ActionAid's Women Watch Group Model to form two Women Protection Groups (WPG) in the two camps. Each group comprised fifteen carefully selected women, literate and illiterate. These groups were given different training on gender-based violence prevention, safe referral, and sexual and reproductive health rights. After taking these training, they transferred the knowledge and skills to many others whose awareness about GBV, harmful traditional practices (mainly early marriage and genital mutilation), and sexual reproductive health rights.

In addition to the formation of women protection groups and capacitating them, awareness raising workshops were organized for people drawn from different stakeholders like refugee council committees, traditional court, religious leaders, women's associations, youth associations.

As the time the project life was dominated by COVID

19, all the interventions were aligned to COVID 19 protection modalities and protective services and products were also distributed to the right holders. These include facemasks, sanitizers, dignity kits, wash basins, and gloves.

In an unprecedented fashion, the prominent breakthrough the project brought to the community was the construction of well-fenced Women and Girls' Safe Space (WGSS) furnished with basic office equipment, and having sanitary facilities like pit-latrines, shower rooms, and refreshing rooms. The safe space block meets the minimum international standard for such setups. The facility has improved the quality and safety of the already existing service by RaDO and give better protection and psychosocial service for GBV survivors and other women and girls that seek the service in the two refugee camps and their surroundings.

As the consequence of this project, Women Safety Groups (WPGs) are now better serving women and girls as vanguards for women and girls by preventing and aborting early marriages and harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilations that are very common in the localities and this has paved the way for girls to attend their schools and lead healthy lives. People's Postcode Lottery (PPL) funded the project with £104, 000.



Members and leaders of Women's Protection Groups at the gate of newly constructed Melkadida Women and Girls' Safe Space.



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 Equality 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.

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