



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**



SASIGA MID-HIGHLANDS, ETHIOPIA

YEAR END REPORT

DECEMBER 2020

PREPARED BY
Food for the Hungry (FH) Ethiopia
& Food for the Hungry (FH) Canada

INTRODUCTION



“We are most grateful to God and FH for the changes on agricultural practices, especially vegetable production.”

– Wondimu Temesgen, **Galo Janja**



-  **Sasiga Mid-Highlands, Ethiopia**
-  **5,950 Households**
-  **28,564 people directly benefitting**
- 40,835 people indirectly benefitting**

In October 2019, the Sasiga Mid-Highlands entered into the second half of their 10-year journey toward graduation (2024) and self-sustainability for the 28,564 people living there. While 2020 was defined by great progress, it also saw complicated setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, Food for the Hungry (FH) Ethiopia continued to walk alongside churches, leaders, and families in nine kebeles (communities),

With the help of a mid-term evaluation conducted this past year, updated goals were established, allowing community leaders and FH staff to recognize progress and identify areas requiring ongoing work moving forward. The improved well-being of children in the Sasiga Mid-Highlands remains paramount. This year, FH directly supported 2,046 orphan and vulnerable children to enable them to attend school. In addition, access to clean water and food security will continue to be priorities in all the Mid-Highlands kebeles.

By simultaneously addressing education, health, livelihoods, and leadership training with attention to gender equality, environmental protection and spiritual connections, FH Ethiopia will continue to facilitate the Mid-Highlands’ holistic development journey.

COVID-19 UPDATE

The higher prevalence of HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis, respiratory tract infections, and malnutrition combined with communal living makes COVID-19 a significant threat to the families of Ethiopia. The disease is anticipated to place a high burden on the already overstretched health system. In addition to adapting development activities to respond to this health crisis, FH pivoted \$25,371 USD to support the nine kebeles of the Mid Highlands through capacity building and inputs.

“After FH came to our community, the local committee invited me to be trained on personal and environmental hygiene.”

— Busha, **Sasiga**



FH Ethiopia provided Infection Prevention Control (IPC) materials, hygiene items, PPE, and capacity building training around COVID-19 for FH field staff, community-based organizations (e.g. savings groups, Cascade health groups), faith-based organizations (e.g. churches), volunteers, and kebele level government staff. COVID-19 community awareness was raised in part through the printing and distribution of three banners, 400 leaflets, 100 posters, and information stickers.

More specifically FH trainings included infection prevention and control and mitigation to health professionals (24), church and community-based organization leaders (23), youth volunteers (23), kebele leaders (19), FH staff members (23), the district taskforce, and government stakeholders. The trainees understood the major signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and applied virus protection methodologies such as sanitizing, handwashing, and keeping physical distance.

FH also distributed PPE to the communities and additional sanitizing equipment to health centres such as jerry cans (25), water storage barrels (125), bottles of liquid soap 50, and waste disposal baskets (50). Two health centres also received 75 one litre bottles of alcohol, 750 bars of laundry soap, 200 bottles



COVID-19 UPDATE

of hand sanitizer, 100 boxes of surgical gloves, and 1,075 KN95 face masks. An additional 2,700 bars of laundry soap were distributed to the vulnerable, especially sponsor child families. The district health office was also stocked with mattresses, blankets, bed sheets, goggles, surgical gloves, boots, and heavy duty gloves for emergency use in health centres.

Many activities had to be adapted, postponed, or cancelled. For example, farmers who attended agricultural workshops began delineating their land to implement conservation agriculture techniques, but the COVID-19 lockdown prevented FH staff from supporting them to see it through. To reduce the economic impact of COVID-19 on community members, FH distributed and helped plant 1,124 grafted avocado seedlings to farmers as an additional source of income.



Distributing PPE, sanitizers, and other COVID-19 prevention materials has helped stopped the spread of the virus in the Mid-Highlands.

EDUCATION

FH helps children reach their God-given potential through early childhood interventions in the first nine years of life, including improving not only access to education, but also the quality of education. Research shows children with access to high quality early childhood programs lead healthier and more productive lives. Interventions during the early years are among the most impactful and cost-effective for reducing inequalities, particularly for children living in poverty. Accordingly, FH advocates early childhood support with parents, caregivers, schools, and local government by offering training on Early Child Development (ECD) activities using locally available materials. Early childhood stimulation increases primary school enrolment by preparing young children to succeed in the classroom. FH also provides training to primary school teachers and practical support to students by distributing exercise books, pens, and pencils to the most vulnerable. Without these materials, children could not complete assignments or practice what they're learning.

“My child is sponsored and supported by FH projects. My hope for my children is to go to university and become a good citizen.”

— Demitu, **Wara Kura**

Many girls miss school because of a lack of knowledge and resources (such as sanitary pads) on understanding and managing their period. This negatively impacts their learning and further exacerbates gender inequality in education. In addition, girls experience emotional and psychological stress when they are publicly shamed due to a lack of decent washrooms where they can change. Through education and the distribution of sanitary pads and soap, FH is helping equip girls to manage their health with dignity, stay in school, and continue to grow into confident, healthy women.

Despite COVID-19 disruptions, each sponsor family received two encouraging visits this year by a FH field worker, who also check in with families whose children are missing school. These supportive visits often result in parents' changed attitude toward formal education and an decrease in student absenteeism. Local churches support children's formation by teaching Sunday school lessons where children learn Bible stories



Supporting and training primary teachers is foundational to children's success in school.



Play is an important part of every child's early learning and development. New playground equipment was installed in Galo.

and biblical values and can sing in church. These activities strengthen social bonds and provide children a creative and worshipful outlet.

The Ministry of Education organizes school sports clubs, however, most schools are not equipped with sports gear and sports meets are not frequently held. FH filled this gap by providing soccer balls and working with the District Education Office to organize an inter-school sports competition. Sasiga students also enjoyed participating in an FH-organized academic competition including poetry contests and “quiz games”. All 13 participating schools received printer paper, trophies, and sportswear. In both the sports meet and the academic contests, nearly half the participants were girls! The Sasiga District Education Office is encouraging schools to continue organizing these competitions. These creative, teambuilding experiences that encourage children to let their skills and talents shine bolster confidence and motivate children to stay in school.

ACTIVITIES

50 primary school teachers (28 male, 22 female) trained on math and literacy instruction

33 people (29 male, 4 female) participated in annual review meeting

41 volunteers (34 male, 7 female) trained on orphan and vulnerable children development

15 caregivers and preschool teachers (9 male, 6 female) trained on ECD

32 soccer balls benefitting **9,766** students (5,051 male, 4,715 female) were distributed
Chairs, tables, nap-time mattresses, and playground equipment were used to furnish a new preschool in Galo community

57 students (55 male, 52 female) participated in one inter-school academic competition

35 students who won contest in the academic competition received reference books



2047

students (1,050 male, 997 female) received exercise books, pens, and pencils

100

combined desks, 4 tables, and 4 chairs provided to Gamane Primary School

506

students (251 male, 255 female) participated in a sports meet. Sports uniforms, reference books, and stationary awarded to the winning school

465

girls received soap and sanitary pads



FH Ethiopia is working with the communities of Sasiga to develop accessible and sustainable sources of clean water to improve the health of families, especially children, so they can work, play, and study free from pain and discomfort. In the reporting period, FH repaired and revived water wells that had fallen into disrepair and been abandoned, and dug three new wells that give 750 people access to clean water. A water committee of eight community members organized labour for the construction and were trained on the administration, management, and repair of the wells. Community volunteers participated by collecting local construction materials, like stone, and provided the labourers with shelter and meals during the building process.



“I could feed my family a balanced diet. My family enjoyed eating a variety of fresh vegetables.”

— Getahun Berhanu, **Galo Janja**

FH trained health extension workers on hygiene and sanitation so they, in turn, can help change their communities’ beliefs and practices around activities like handwashing, water purification, and open defecation. FH also provided families with latrine pit preparation training and sturdy latrine slabs to give families safety and privacy, enabling them to improve their health. Those who participated have already reported that the health of their children is dramatically improving!

While many people know HIV/AIDS is a killer, it has been difficult to change attitudes and behaviours. FH trained faith leaders and school clubs to create awareness around HIV/AIDS toward saving a generation, especially youth, from this devastating disease.

Over the past five years, FH worked with the communities to train midwives and health professionals to reduce the instances of maternal death. This was very successful, so the training was expanded to include



Lights and gas cookstoves powered by biogas technology improves the whole family’s health, education, income, and sense of pride. Biogas systems are complex and require specialized training and careful attention from the farmer.

A special distribution of soap was hosted to deliver much-need hygiene supplies to the most vulnerable in the Sasiga Mid-Highlands.

support of pregnant and lactating women, promoting antenatal care, and encouraging women to deliver at health centres with health professionals. In addition, health workers and community members are being trained to support those living with HIV/AIDS with complementary food items.

To address harmful nutritional gaps for pregnant and lactating women, FH promotes complementary feeding and growing and cooking nutrient-rich vegetables including carrot, beet root, potato, kale, Swiss Chard, and pumpkin.

FH staff help these women prepare their own home vegetable gardens and learn ways to incorporate new vegetables into more traditional foods. Raising this demographic's nutrition will result in healthier moms, and life-long health improvements for the babies.



COVID-19 awareness and response training was hosted regularly for kebele leaders and "command post" volunteers, who would share the education with communities, and be a personal resource for families with questions.

ACTIVITIES

268 families received latrine slabs and training on latrine pit preparation

23 health extension workers (4 male, 19 female) trained on essential nutrition action and complementary feeding

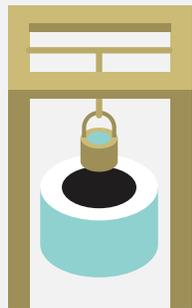
184 pregnant and lactating mothers trained on essential nutrition action and complementary feeding

20 health extension workers (1 male, 19 female) trained on essential hygiene action

181 community members (75 male, 106 female) trained on essential hygiene action

189 people (114 male, 75 female) trained on HIV/AIDS awareness

81 sponsor children (38 male, 43 female) received medical support



750 people (150 households) gained access to clean water through three new wells dug

112 people trained on COVID-19 prevention





LIVELIHOODS

Ethiopian formal financial institutions have no service package compatible with low income households, especially in rural areas. Most rural households like those in the Mid-Highlands lack previous saving records and properties which formal institutions recognize as collateral. Families cannot access formal savings, credit, or insurance services which further limits their capacity to run small businesses. FH established Savings and Loans groups in all nine kebeles to strengthen community members' skills in numeracy, accounting, group management, and entrepreneurship. As the groups grow their savings, they become powerful local institutions capable of addressing economic and sociocultural development.

“I started saving income I am getting from the sale of agricultural products, especially from coffee. I stopped drinking alcohol. I started collecting and harvesting crops on time. Now I have proper budgeting for family expenses.”

— Emiru, **Ethiopia**

Much of the farmland in Sasiga is infertile and unproductive due to termite infestations and high soil acidity, leading to food shortages and chronic food insecurity. Training farmers to restore their land to productivity through conservation agriculture techniques is a high priority. The conventional agriculture methods currently used require high external inputs (like expensive fertilizers and pesticides). Conservation agriculture is based on optimizing yields to achieve a balance of agricultural, economic, and environmental benefits by integrating ecological management with modern agricultural production. While community farmers engaged in lively debate about the benefits of conservation agriculture, they agreed to give it a try. Twelve of them chose to become conservation agriculture experts, meaning they will be able to test, demonstrate, and teach new techniques to other farmers so all their families can increase the food they grow.

To address the problem of soil degradation and water erosion, FH trains farmers in watershed management, establishing tree nurseries, and organic compost preparation and application. Compost contributes to soil



Biogas tanks provide farming families with electricity for lights, gas for cookstoves, and organic compost for more fertile fields.



Clean water access is critical to a community's health and sustainability. Learning how to maintain and repair wells is an essential step in a communities' journey toward sustainable access to clean water.

ecosystem resilience, improves soil water-holding capacity, and increases percolation by increasing soil biomass thereby decreasing erosion. One type of compost being used to fertilize farmland is made from biogas by-products. The biogas tanks constructed during the first five years of partnership motivated many other farmers to build their own. In response to their enthusiasm, FH assisted in the construction of nine biogas units and trained 34 model farmers with the required minimum five to six cows each needed to support the system. These systems are now powering electric light bulbs helping children get their homework done in the evenings; fueling gas burners so women spend less time and labour procuring firewood and no longer inhale toxic smoke; and providing highly effective compost fertilizer to increase crop yields. That's what we call a win, win, win!

Pests, fungal diseases, and poor crop management are among the factors causing a tremendous yield reduction in the production of organic coffee. Many farmers have coffee plants that only bear fruit every three or four years. When asked, farmers are unsure of the age of the coffee plants; many say their fathers or grandfathers planted them. FH aims to revive the coffee plants by training farmers and district experts with knowledge to increase yields, such as strategic pruning. Coffee has the potential to be a lucrative cash crop for these farmers.

In most areas, men own resources (such as farmland) while women are expected to contribute labour but have no say over how income is used. Through vegetable and fruit production, however, women in Sasiga are creating their own sources of income and starting key conversations with their families about how shared resources should be managed.

The families of sponsor children are often food insecure with insufficient income. By increasing their food production and providing domestic livestock, FH is helping families develop financial stability for the future so they will no longer need assistance. All the families who received sheep from FH this year are looking forward to giving away the first lamb to another family in need.



In rural communities, multiple generations still work the land together, like this mother-son duo.

With the right techniques, hard work, and a lot of love the degraded soil of the Mid-Highlands is being transformed into lush, productive farms.

ACTIVITIES

- 96 farmers (86 male, 10 female) trained on organic compost/fertilizer preparation and utilization
- 97 women trained on vegetable production
- 60 farmers and agricultural experts (59 male, 1 female) trained on coffee production and management
- 38 community members (35 male, 3 female) trained on soil and water conservation techniques
- 48 farmers (46 male, 2 female) received multi-purpose tree seeds, tools, and training on nursery management
- 9 biogas systems constructed
- 34 farmers (all male) trained on biogas technology

300 households received improved vegetable seeds—11 kgs beetroot, 11 kgs carrot, 12 kgs onion, 12 kgs cabbage



41 district agriculture experts, development agents, and model farmers (39 male, 2 female) trained on conservation agriculture

10 Savings and Loans groups with 270 female members were established and trained



Savings groups are changing the lives of countless women, giving them financial training and a way to save and manage money.



LEADERSHIP

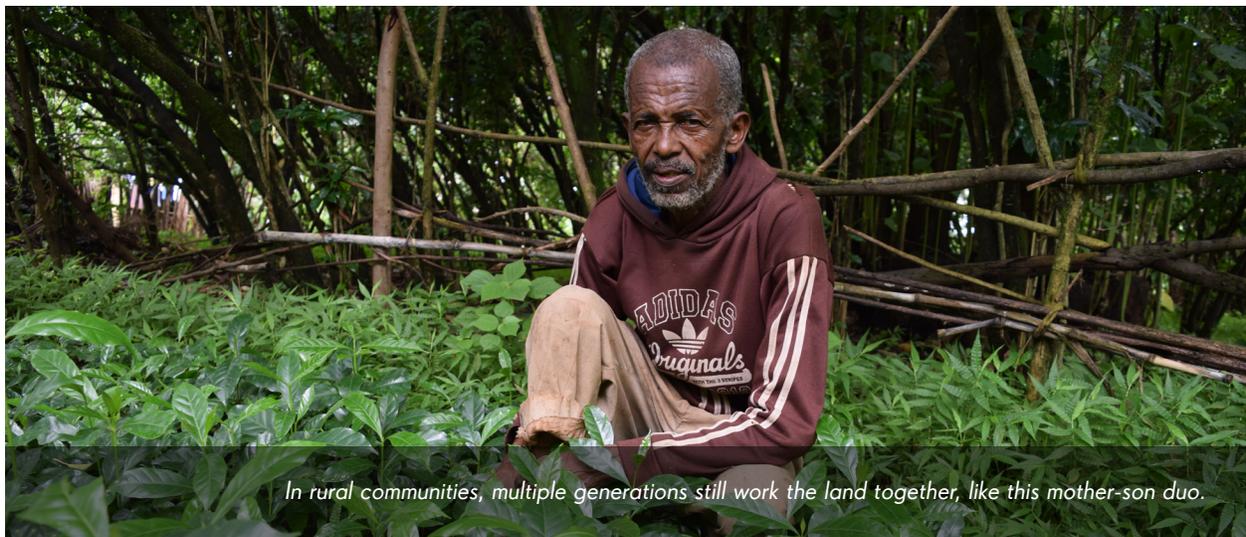
Community participation is not only about the contribution of material resources or labour, it is knowledge and experience based. As they collaborate with FH, community members contribute their own ideas rooted in their communities' collective experiences which shape and direct their development. This form of participation is what makes FH work successful.

Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) is a process of bringing people together within the same community to collectively address a common disaster risk and to collectively pursue common risk reduction measures. If disaster risks are not being reduced, achieving poverty reduction, social equity improvement, and sustainable development are in serious threat. FH established CMDRR in all nine kebeles by training and equipping leaders to create their own community resilience action plans. These leaders will organize themselves into groups and assess their communities' disaster risks, hazards, and vulnerabilities, and make mitigation plans.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Bekele Bedasa was a day labourer earning less than he needed to live on, eating only one or two meals a day. His inability to provide for his six children caused him to vacillate between anger, personal loathing, and prayer. Through partnership with FH, his youngest son was sponsored and he received agricultural training, improved seeds, and a female goat. This year, volunteers from his kebele collected Birr 7,670 (over \$260 CAD) from the community and built him a brand-new house to replace his crumbling, leaky dwelling.

"I am living in a well-constructed house which is sufficient for the whole family. As a result, my family's health is well protected. I appreciate the work of God that initiated the volunteers who organized the community of my area to construct a house for me. I also thank FH who trained the volunteers to participate on such kind works." — Bekele, Feyine Terano



In rural communities, multiple generations still work the land together, like this mother-son duo.

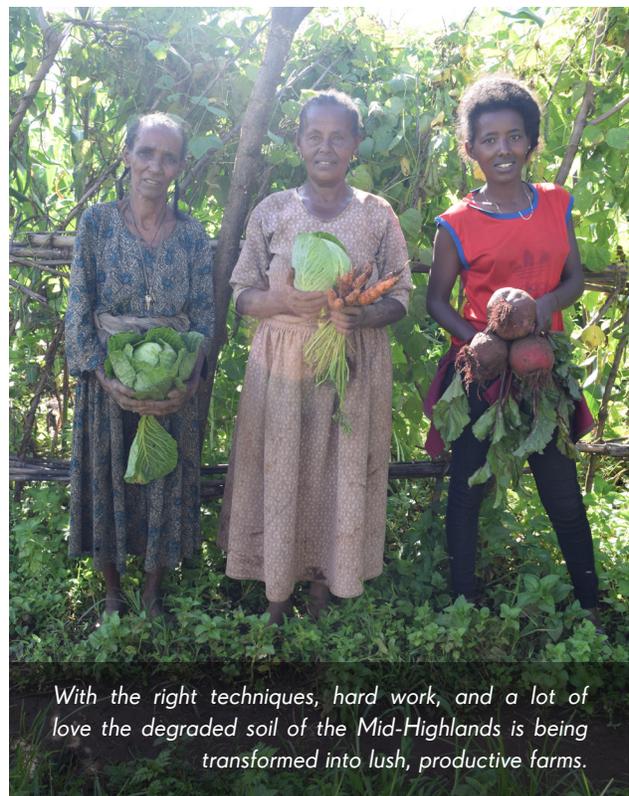
Local volunteers play a critical role in their communities' development; without them, transformation would not be possible. By strengthening social capital within the community, volunteers create opportunities for rural development, job creation, and improved quality of life. FH field staff work as a team with volunteers and provide them with training to strengthen their capacity as change agents. The youth volunteers trained this year built houses for widows and the elderly. The volunteers responded compassionately toward suffering and worked harder this year than in the past – a fruitful sign of a community on the path to graduation!

Through FH training, church members learn the “why” behind the “what” of poverty alleviation and how they can partner with God to serve families in need. While churches received no formal FH training this year, they leaned into what they had learned in previous years and continued supporting widows and the vulnerable in their communities as well as provided food for those in need and assisted in building houses for the marginalized. Church leaders continue to play a major role in facilitating child sponsorships.

FH works with church leaders, government leaders, and families to implement and monitor development activities. To strengthen the effectiveness of these partnerships, FH hosts annual review meetings with all stakeholders to discuss the past year's progress and plans for the upcoming year. FH field staff live within the kebeles and frequently follow-up with community members involved in FH programming; community members, in turn, provide critical feedback and help keep activities on track. Monthly local staff meetings and quarterly review meetings with staff FH district office staff and local field workers helps FH keep its finger on the pulse of the communities' development journey.

“Thanks to God and [FH] that created awareness in our community. I have stayed in this community for a long time and no one was concerned about me and my family. Everybody passed by without even greeting me. Now it is time for God to change my life through the project.”

— Kamiso Oli, **Ethiopia**



With the right techniques, hard work, and a lot of love the degraded soil of the Mid-Highlands is being transformed into lush, productive farms.

This year, FH Ethiopia conducted a midterm evaluation to help understand the impact of the program to date and to contribute to a culture of learning and evidence-based decision making. The evaluation team administered surveys and conducted focus group discussions with men, women, children, leaders, and community stakeholders. The findings were very encouraging! The program is helping families by building clean water infrastructure, improving availability of nutritious foods, and creating a hope for the future and a community of caring. The evaluation also helped the team understand where to dedicate resources in the last five years of their journey; they will focus attention on areas like educational outcomes for children and gender equality. More details are available on request.

ACTIVITIES

41 (34 male and 7 female) youth volunteers trained
1 annual review meeting with all stakeholders



46 leaders (36 male, 10 female) participated in preparing for disaster workshops



Following through on a response for unexpected disasters is often best done relationally between neighbours.

THE MIGHTY CABBAGE

As a 45-year-old mother of four living in rural Ethiopia, it's Belaynesh's responsibility to feed her family. But it's a struggle. Due to insufficient income, she's not able to buy vegetables from the local market. Nor can she grow her own—she can't access improved vegetable seeds and she doesn't have the cultural experience to grow and cook a variety of vegetables. Her community has long practiced mono-cropping grain, such as grains—growing the same crop on the same plot of land year after year, taxing the soil and limiting nutrition.

"Before FH Ethiopia entered our kebele, our living condition depended on agriculture. We were facing challenges and issues since we followed traditional agricultural practices and had poor agricultural knowledge, especially on vegetable production," Belaynesh explains. "Children were much affected by malnutrition...and infectious diseases."

These very real threats took a toll not only on families' physical health, but also on their mental health. "We felt hopeless, discomfort," Belaynesh shares.

In 2014, FH began a partnership with her kebele, Dengali Gongo. Food security was at the top of everyone's list. Community members quickly got involved in capacity building workshops on income generation, health and hygiene, clean water practices, and agriculture, to name a few. Home vegetable production became a popular way for families to generate income through selling produce in their local markets. It also became a way for mothers like Belaynesh to feed their families nutritious meals and bolster the health of their children.



Belaynesh's luscious garden feeds her family and brings in a steady stream of income to improve their lives.

THE MIGHTY CABBAGE CONT'D

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT

In addition to training women and men to successfully grow an abundance of life-giving food, FH also provided a wide variety of improved vegetable seeds and training on how to incorporate new produce into traditional meals.

“In our day-to-day challenges, we experienced that lack of agricultural diversification, for example our dependence on only food grain, cannot change or improve our living condition. Rather, following holistic agricultural approaches, for instance, in addition to crop production vegetable production, is important to improve our living condition as an income source and for our daily meal. Nowadays we follow diversified agricultural practice such vegetable production in addition to food grain. We started to generate our own income and can get a balanced diet.”

Belaynesh is relieved to be feeding her children not only enough food, but the right kinds of food to see them grow into healthy, vibrant adults. “My dream is to work harder and food secure my family. I also want to boost my earnings to send my kids to school properly,” she concludes.



It takes a daughter and a neighbour to help harvest these giant cabbages, beets, and carrots—delicious and nutritious.

Thank You

FH Ethiopia, FH Canada, and the families of the Sasiga Mid-Highlands thank you for your invaluable support of their development journey. Your gifts are expanding clean water access, improving food security through restorative agriculture, enabling children to go to school, and so much more!