



SASIGA MID-HIGHLANDS, ETHIOPIA

**MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT
JULY 2020**

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



INTRODUCTION

As the Sasiga Mid-Highlands entered into the second half of their journey toward graduation and self-sustainability, the first six months of 2020 were defined by great progress and complicated setbacks (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) for the 28,564 people living there.

With the help of a mid-term evaluation conducted this past year, updated goals have been established, allowing the community leaders and Food for the Hungry (FH) staff to see where progress has been made and which areas continue to need work going forward.

The improved well-being of children in the Sasiga Mid-Highlands remains the priority for the communities. To accomplish this goal, four major focus areas make up FH's Child Focused Community Transformation program. These are education, health, livelihoods, and leadership training. Interwoven within each of these focus areas is the promotion of gender equality, environmental protection, and spiritual connections. By addressing all four areas simultaneously, FH Ethiopia is able to help the Sasiga Mid-Highlands communities adapt during this time of uncertainty so that their future remains bright.

COVID-19 UPDATE

On April 8, the government of Ethiopia declared a state of emergency in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to travel restrictions, school suspensions, curfews, and more. During this time, FH Ethiopia has been allowed to continue with life-saving activities including food distribution and establishing handwashing stations in public markets. FH also worked with the government to creatively broadcast health and safety messaging around the country via various kinds of media, including radio, social media, national celebrity endorsement, and even videos in sign language.

*For more recent updates regarding FH's response to the pandemic, please visit:
blog.fhcanada.org/2020/03/update-covid-19-in-fh-partner*



EDUCATION

Primary school teacher training is essential to improving the quality of education and helping children reach their God-given potential. As such, it has been a key component of FH programming in the first part of this year.

While the distribution of new school supplies helped to improve learning within the classroom, new sports equipment allowed students to reap the benefits of participating on sports teams and encouraged children to improve their physical health. Academic and sports contests were held to motivate students to do their best and work hard. At the end of these contests, winning students received books and sport uniforms as prizes.

ACTIVITIES

- 50 teachers trained in improved methods in math and literacy
- 35 students awarded books as prizes for academic performance competition
- 72 sports uniforms awarded as prizes for sports competition



32 pieces of physical education equipment provided to schools



1700 kids supported with stationary materials

COVID-19 UPDATE

Schools were closed in March in response to the pandemic, however, the government of Ethiopia is presenting lessons for children via radio and television in an attempt to keep children engaged in learning. Unfortunately, due to the remote nature of the Mid-Highlands, the radio messaging has not successfully reached the communities. The local FH staff are working with the local government authorities to deliver printed school material to homes, and also work with the radio station in the nearest major town centre of Nekemte.



HEALTH

FH health initiatives in the Sasiga Mid-Highlands communities focus on reducing child and maternal morbidity (rate of disease and infection) and preventing malnutrition. The health of children under the age of five is a good marker of a community's overall wellbeing and is fundamental to promoting a community's growth and reducing poverty.

More than half of child deaths and illnesses can be prevented at home. Health, nutrition, and hygiene information is disseminated by local government health professionals, formally called Health Extension Workers (HEWs). FH comes alongside these community workers by offering additional health and nutrition training. Topics that are addressed in the community include neonatal care, essential nutrition, household hygiene, family planning, and more.

In order to improve personal and environmental hygiene, FH continues to promote the use of latrines and waste disposal facilities as well as environmental sanitation practices. To compliment these lessons, concrete slabs are being constructed with locally-sourced labour and provided to community families so each will have their own latrine. Many of these families have helped the slab construction by clearing space, hauling gravel, and digging pits.





HEALTH

ACTIVITIES

23 HEWs trained on complementary feeding of pregnant/lactating women

124 mothers received nutrition training from HEWs

20 HEWs trained on personal/environmental hygiene

181 community members trained on personal/environmental hygiene

189 people trained in HIV/AIDS awareness

128 latrine slabs
constructed for families



1600 girls provided
with sanitary
pads and soap



COVID-19 UPDATE

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, FH has pivoted some of its work to help community members better spread critical health messages and provide families with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Physical Distancing has been strongly encouraged, and modeled during any special gatherings or health and hygiene demonstrations. At the outset of the pandemic, several mass distributions of PPEs, sanitizer, soap, and food supplies took place for hundreds of families across FH partner communities, including the Sasiga Mid-Highlands. FH also set up additional handwashing stations (tippy taps, etc) in partner communities to help mitigate the potential spread of disease.



LIVELIHOODS

Improved food security and increased livelihoods directly affect the levels of malnutrition within a community, and parents can feel good about their ability to provide for their families when they have the right tools to do so. This year, FH trained model farmers on land rehabilitation and restoration, including soil and water conservation methods. As “models”, they will then be able to share with their neighbours. Additionally, larger groups of farmers learned about how to prepare and use organic compost and the advantages it gives in increasing crop yields.

When women are resourced to contribute to the economic development of their families, they become more confident. Along with a sense of pride, they feel better equipped to participate in discussions with their spouses on how to manage family resources. Part of this economic development comes from learning how to produce an abundance of vegetables for both family consumption and to sell in the markets. This not only addresses the issue of malnutrition in the home, but also improves their quality of life through the profits and social connections that are made. A combination of hard work, training from FH staff, and the gift of vegetable seeds to start their gardens is encouraging women to change the future for their families and their community.

ACTIVITIES

- 4 biogas units constructed
- 10 Savings & Loans Groups formed
- 22 kgs vegetable seeds distributed to women
- 50 model farmers trained in coffee production
- 34 farmers trained in bio-gas construction/use

- 96 farmers trained in organic fertilizer
- 38 community members trained in soil and water conservation methods



10 agricultural experts trained in coffee production



97 women trained on vegetable production





LEADERSHIP

An important aspect of being a good leader is learning to care for others and take responsibility for one's community. The Orphan and Vulnerable Children Development Program (OVCDP) teaches young people how activities carried out by local volunteers can contribute to development and sustainability, leading to transformation within their communities. The program currently has 41 young people enrolled. Not only does volunteering enhance the social capital within communities, it also leads to job creation and an improved quality of life. After receiving training, this group of young people organized local resources and have started building homes for widows using local materials. This is the next generation of leaders in the making!

A key component of the leadership training that FH conducts in a community as they journey towards self-sufficiency is how to manage and reduce the impacts of disasters, shocks, and stresses on the community. This training has never been more important, and in the last six months community leaders received instruction and guidance on how to create resiliency action plans.

ACTIVITIES



46 community leaders trained in Disaster Risk Reduction



41 youth trained on the value of volunteering

COVID-19 UPDATE

When the coronavirus pandemic reached Ethiopia in March and the government implemented restrictions and a state of emergency, FH Ethiopia staff were able to communicate by phone with community leaders in the Sasiga Mid-Highlands. They immediately began remote training on hygiene techniques for the communities to use in order to stay safe and healthy. The leaders are implementing the training they received, and the communities are doing well.

GOOD THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES

Have you ever heard the adage, “Good things come in small packages”? For Getahun Berhanu, that couldn’t be truer.

Getahun is a farmer who lives in Galo Janja, a rural kebele (community) in Ethiopia. For his entire adult life, Getahun depended on cultivating cereal crops to feed and support his family. Unfortunately, as the years rolled on, the productivity of his farm steadily declined until he reached a point where he could no longer provide for his wife and children through farming. The future looked bleak.

Then along came a very small package. What spilled out of it? Tiny, precious, life-changing seeds.



They were pressed into his eager hands at the close of FH’s vegetable production workshop series last year (2019). Getahun was excited to try something new. He faithfully planted the seeds and applied the techniques he learned at FH. And they worked!

“In this first harvesting season we consumed vegetables to be estimated at 2500 Birr (nearly \$100 CAD). I could also sell 10,000 Birr (nearly \$400 CAD) [of vegetables],” Getahun excitedly recounts. “I could feed my family a balanced diet. My family enjoyed eating a variety of fresh vegetables. With the income I got from the sales, I bought 14 traditional beehives and am working on honey production. For the future, I have planned to extensively work on both vegetable and honey production to boost my income and give my family a better life.”

Getahun is just getting started and we can’t wait to see where he goes from here!

Special Note from FH Staff: You may be wondering how Getahun and his family are doing now in this time of COVID-19 pandemic and food shortages. Due to travel restrictions within Ethiopia, our local FH staff were not able to provide a detailed follow-up with Gethun and his family. However, FH has been in touch with community leaders, who report that the food and hygiene products delivered to their communities are going to the most needy, and most farmers have been able to brave this storm, thanks to the agricultural training they’ve received and the robust crops they’re cultivating.

Thank You

Food for the Hungry (FH) Canada, FH Ethiopia, and the families of Sasiga Mid-Highlands thank you for your generous support. Your thoughts and prayers have been especially appreciated, as many activities have had to pivot to meet the immediate needs created by the COVID-19 crisis. Because of your partnership, the Sasiga Mid-Highlands is able to cope with the pandemic while lives continue to be transformed and a new future is being written for these communities.