



**FOOD FOR  
THE HUNGRY**



# **SASIGA MID-HIGHLANDS, ETHIOPIA**

## **YEAR-END PROGRESS REPORT**

### **FISCAL YEAR 2021**

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**PREPARED BY FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY (FH) CANADA**

# INTRODUCTION

-  Communities:  
**9**
-  Total Households:  
**5,950**
-  Total Population:  
**28,564**
-  Program Participants:  
**20,535**



## Walking with Sasiga Mid-Highlands, Ethiopia



Now just over halfway through their 10-year journey toward graduation, nine Sasiga Mid-Highlands communities are making great strides out of poverty and into sustainability. Food for the Hungry (FH) Ethiopia continues to walk with churches, leaders, and families as well as roughly 2,079 vulnerable children. Together, they face new challenges and celebrate new breakthroughs. A great deal of progress has been made, but critical development challenges remain in the areas of health and nutrition, and improving household incomes.

One of the major challenges this year was the disruption to activities caused by the impacts of COVID-19. Frustration, mental stress, and scarcity of resources slowed planned activities. A lack of available construction materials and price escalation delayed the construction of one school building. In addition to COVID-19 obstacles, security issues in the Sasiga area have interrupted organized development activities.

# INTRODUCTION



## WHAT IS HAPPENING IN SASIGA?

Conflicts in northern Ethiopia have displaced an estimated 2.1 million people from their homes. An estimated 8.1 million people in Northern Ethiopia need humanitarian assistance. In the fall of 2021, an armed conflict erupted in the Eastern Wollega area of Ethiopia, where Sasiga is located. Travel restrictions were placed on the FH Ethiopia team at the beginning of September due in part to some attacks on public transport. FH Ethiopia is relieved to report that all sponsor children are safe and advised to stay home. However, the situation is unstable. On November 19th, fighting broke out on the edge of a partner community in Sasiga. Although staff are limited in what activities they can conduct due to travel restrictions, the Mid-Highlands communities continue to cautiously move forward with their goals for sustainability—for example, meeting in their Savings and Loans groups and farmer cooperatives. FH Ethiopia is waiting for the situation to stabilize before staff can resume visiting communities in Sasiga. In the meantime, they stay connected with key community leaders through text messaging. Through community volunteers, the team is able to track the wellbeing of sponsor children and the overall situation in the communities.

In addition, just outside of Sasiga, more than 3,000 displaced families from the northern Tigray region of Ethiopia are taking shelter from ongoing conflict in their own communities. The FH Sasiga team, along with Sasiga community leaders, are planning to buy and distribute needed items for those families temporarily living nearby. They continue to collect information about the best ways to support these families.



# EDUCATION

## GOAL

**Help children reach their full potential through targeted early child interventions that bring holistic development and cognitive gains for lifelong success.**

*“My future hope is to see the life of my family improve, especially of my children. I want to see my children learning in higher education.”*

— Sibilu, father

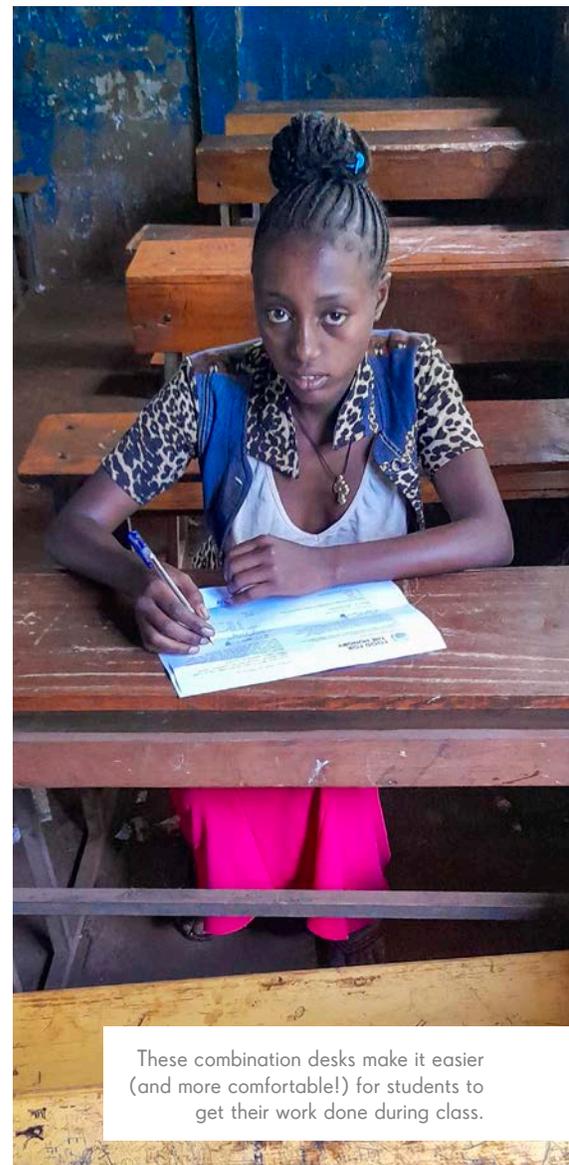
## Building Classrooms

FH is reducing student-to-classroom ratios by building more classrooms. This is improving teaching and learning environments as well as making room for all school-aged children in the community to enroll in school. In Gemene kebele (the Ethiopian term for community), FH recently completed the construction of one school building with four classrooms. This new structure will improve the learning environment of 645 students. Due to budget savings, an additional 100 combination desks (larger desks with benches attached) and four tables were provided to the school in Oda community.

## Supporting Early Childhood Development

In order to strengthen the communities' early childhood development (ECD) efforts, FH trained primary school teachers on better techniques for teaching math and literacy. All the participants “cascaded” their learning to community schools to improve students' academic excellence. In addition, FH trained primary school teachers on how to include girls in leadership roles in their classes and at their schools. By working through the formal education system, FH is helping to close the gender gap. More children overall, and girls in particular, are in school!

Caregiver involvement at home has a significant, positive effect on children's immediate learning and future achievements. To improve children's early grade success, FH conducted workshops to help caregivers know how to engage with their young children. Typically, young children in Sasiga don't get much attention at home. As caregivers encounter a new perspective through FH training, however, they are changing their parenting. FH staff support families as they make these changes by visiting them in their homes to provide encouragement and counseling.



These combination desks make it easier (and more comfortable!) for students to get their work done during class.



# EDUCATION

## Sparking Community-Led Change

Earlier in the year, FH conducted a training to help communities build support systems to remove, mitigate, and reduce toxic stress. FH Ethiopia is thrilled to report that this training is improving education outcomes for children! After that particular training, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) of Galo Primary School collected donations from the community toward starting up after-school tutoring for students. With those donations, the PTA was able to hire outstanding teachers who are providing tutoring that will help improve student performance across the board.

## ACTIVITIES

**109** caregivers (34 men, 75 women) trained to stimulate their children's intellectual, social, spiritual, and emotional **development**



**130** caregivers (49 men, 81 women) engaged in the home to improve child performance in **formal education**



**1** **school building** with **4** classrooms constructed to benefit **635** primary school students

See more impact numbers on page 16



Locally made tippy-taps can revolutionize a community's health by giving the public access to sanitation.



# HEALTH

## GOAL

**Reduced child and maternal morbidity and preventing malnutrition.**

*“The life and health of my children has improved!”*

— Sibilu, father

### Equipping Communities for “Total Sanitation”

FH continued to promote community-led total sanitation, a process whereby communities identify problem points and solutions to improve their own sanitation. To support them in this effort, FH provided concrete slabs for new home latrines. FH also provided “dignity kits” to school girls’ clubs to equip girls to manage their periods in a healthy, private, and dignified way.

### Caring for Sick Children

Local health extension workers trained mothers on how to care for a sick child—knowing what warning signs to look for and when it’s time to seek professional help. FH was able to reimburse 90 percent of the medical costs incurred in the treatment of 44 vulnerable children whose families were unable to pay their doctor bills. This intervention has saved the lives of sick children.

### Life Gardens - Partnership with Thrive for Good

Thrive for Good is an international not-for-profit organization based in Canada that provides organic agricultural and nutritional training and development programs around the world. Thrive trains communities to grow “Life Gardens”—organic gardens dense with highly-nutritious foods and disease-fighting plants and herbs year-round—utilizing small land plots, even in areas with scarce rainfall. In 2021, FH Ethiopia partnered with Thrive to pilot Life Gardens in Sasiga. FH has found several advantages in partnering with Thrive. These include: a wider variety of vegetables in Life Gardens (some providing community members with disease-fighting herbs) and a focus on knowledge about micronutrients.

FH staff members took Thrive’s online training so they could train community members on organic farming, nutrition, medicinal plants, and income generation. Thus far, there are 11 active Thrive groups in Sasiga. Participating farmers are already harvesting, consuming, and selling produce from their Life Gardens. As a result, the feeding culture of many farming families has improved! Some have said they didn’t know their land could support so many vegetables; they feel like they’ve started a new life.



A newly constructed family latrine.



# HEALTH

## WELLS

Kebele (Communities)	Hand-dug Wells Established	Community Members Impacted
Gemene	1	160
Gemene School	1	686
Nano Senbeta Dure	1	140
Nano Senbeta Dure School	1	311
Galo Janja	1	215
Wora Kura	1	160
Dangali Gongo	1	160
Haro Gudina	1	150
Feyine Terano	2	325
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2307</b>

## SPRINGS

Kebele (Communities)	Natural Springs Developed	Community Members Impacted
Oda	1	180
Dangali Gongo	1	125
Haro Gudina	1	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>455</b>



By covering natural springs like this one and installing taps, the water is protected from contamination and kept clean for consumption.

## Developing Clean Water Sources

FH has been working to develop clean water sources for the communities which will dramatically improve family health. This year, eight community wells and two school wells were completed, providing water to 2,307 people! Community participation was vital to the success of these wells. Volunteer water committees trained by FH mobilized local resources and labour to help with the wells. They also organized shelter and food for the day labourers who manually dug the wells. Water committees are responsible for maintaining and repairing the hand pumps at the water points.

Having access to new sources of clean water has significantly reduced the number of waterborne diseases in families making more time for rest, work, play, and studies. Girls in particular, whose job it often is to collect water for the family, are spending more time in school and less time walking long distances to fetch water from unprotected streams.



# HEALTH

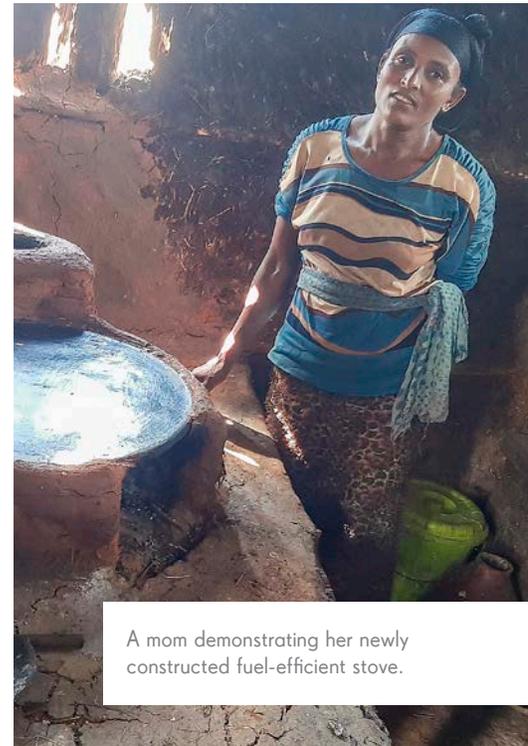


**A fuel-efficient stove changed Birhane's day-to-day life in wonderful ways.**  
[Read her story on our blog here!](#)

## Improving Women's Health and Wellbeing

Hours of women's time are consumed walking long distances to collect firewood. They also suffer negative health impacts from breathing the toxic smoke of cook fires, threatening the health of their eyes and lungs. Young children who spend a large portion of their time close to their mothers also breathe the toxic smoke, which poses a risk to their health as well. In addition to the health burden, there are livelihood and environmental consequences of using open fires to cook.

Alternatively, using fuel-efficient stoves can empower women to reduce the amount of toxic smoke filling their households. It can also reduce the amount of biomass (wood, crop residues, dung) needed and lower cooking times, both of which reduces the labour needed to cook meals. Through Health Extension Workers, FH trained women to make fuel-efficient stoves using locally available materials, and provided two sacks of teff straw to each workshop participant. The women involved built their new stoves and have already seen an improvement in family health and a reduction in the hours they spend searching for firewood.



A mom demonstrating her newly constructed fuel-efficient stove.

## ACTIVITIES

**800** dignity kits (soap and sanitary pads) provided to girls in school girl clubs

**194** mothers trained on the benefits of essential nutrition action and complementary feeding for pregnant and lactating women

**202** latrine slabs distributed impacting 202 households



See more impact numbers on page 16





## LIVELIHOODS

### GOAL

**Improved food security and livelihood status of children and families.**

*“In our day-to-day challenges, we experienced that lack of agricultural diversification... Nowadays we follow diversified agricultural practices such as vegetable production in addition to food grains. We started to generate our own income and can get a balanced diet.”*

— Belaynesh, female farmer



**Belaynesh’s family has found new hope through gardening.**

[Read her story on our blog here!](#)

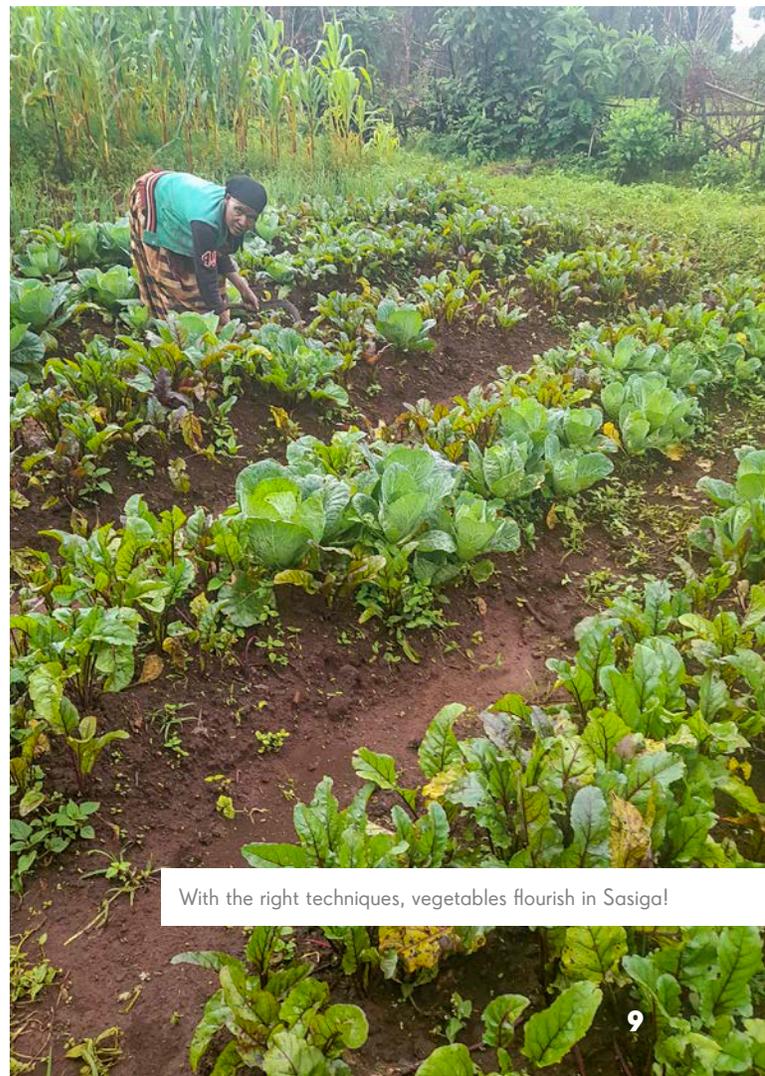
FH Ethiopia seeks to improve food security, environmental protection, and livestock production in order to improve livelihoods for families in Sasiga. Recently, this has involved training on agroforestry, vegetable production, livestock rearing, mixed farming, coffee cultivation, bee-keeping, establishing Savings and Loans groups, and a partnership with Thrive for Good.

### Cultivating Agroforestry

To improve food security, FH teaches agroforestry—a set of cultivation principles that creates a mutually beneficial system between crops and trees that enriches the soil and protects water resources, making growing food more productive and sustainable. FH Ethiopia recently held a two-day agroforestry workshop for local farmers. As a result, participants are no longer clear-cutting their fields to plant crops, but rather applying an integrated approach that protects (and encourages!) tree growth.

### Equipping Women Farmers

By training different sectors of the community on gender equality, FH is increasing women’s capacity to participate in decision making and help develop their communities’ economies. This year, FH equipped women farmers to better feed their families and earn an income through training on vegetable gardening and providing improved seeds. Participants are now strengthening their families’ health with fresh veggies and selling produce to provide for additional needs.



With the right techniques, vegetables flourish in Sasiga!



## LIVELIHOODS

### Growing Coffee

Sasiga is known for its organic coffee, however, production is low due to poor management practices and persistent pests. FH Ethiopia is training smallhold coffee farmers on strategies to minimize or control yield loss due to pests while maximizing the profitability of organic coffee. These include planting more resistant varieties of coffee, applying [push-pull technology](#), and using non-synthetic chemicals.

### Strengthening Ancient Practices

For thousands of years, farmers in Ethiopia have practiced mixed farming—using both livestock and crops. Crop by-products, such as the stalks from grain plants, can be used as animal feed while animal manure can be used for fertilizer, thus growing more plants! FH trained farmers to strengthen this cycle so they can fatten their livestock while still using their land to grow food for humans. Many of the participants have since built proper stables for their cattle and are applying practices to protect them from common diseases. FH also trained the farmers to grow better forage crops that will further improve animal nutrition and increase livestock productivity (milk, meat, offspring). This practice compliments crop production by fixing nitrogen in the soil—an essential nutrient to maintaining soil fertility.

### Growing Savings and Loans Groups

Without tangible assets, most households in Sasiga can't access savings, loans, and insurance through banks, which further limits their ability to run small businesses. Community Savings and Loans groups fill this gap for many families. The groups have been so successful that FH helped establish an extra group they hadn't even planned on! In addition to training, FH provided each group with a ["Piggy Bank"](#). Every two weeks, members meet to contribute their savings; and by the end of the year and had accumulated a total of roughly \$3,182 CAD.

### Sasiga's All A-buzz!



After training 30 farmers on beekeeping, FH Ethiopia provided the participants with modern beehives and apiculture accessories. They're now busy preparing shelter, bee food, and a watering trough to keep their sweet little friends happy and healthy! Soon, the new beekeepers will be making an income on their sweet bees-ness.





# LIVELIHOODS

## ACTIVITIES

**131** sets of farm tools provided to farmers (115 men, 16 women)



**102** women trained in vegetable production for economic empowerment



**100** people trained on animal husbandry

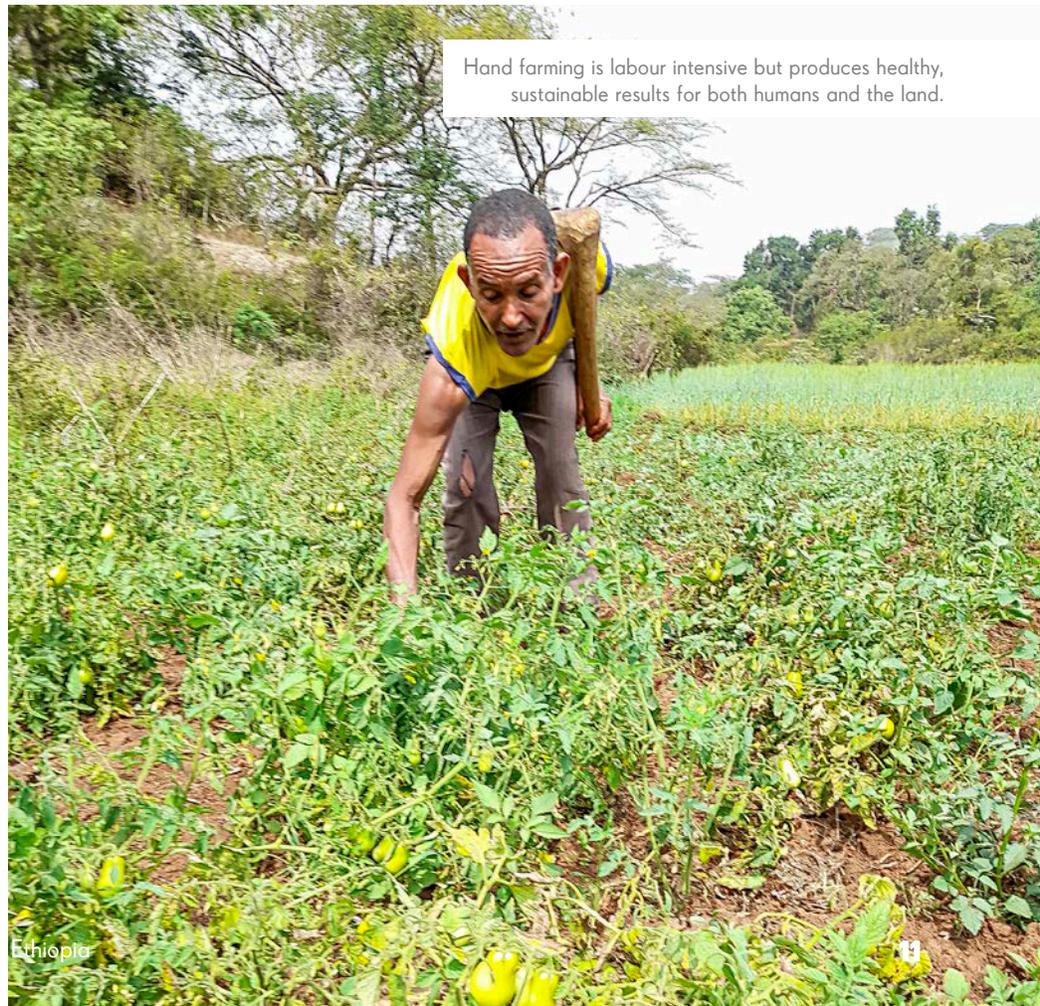
See more impact numbers on page 17



Garlic is plentiful in this year's harvest.



Hand farming is labour intensive but produces healthy, sustainable results for both humans and the land.





# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

## GOAL

**Reduced impacts of disasters, shocks, and stresses on the communities.**

*"I appreciate the work of God that initiated the volunteers (young people) who organized the community of my village to rebuild a house for me [after the fire]. I also thank FH Ethiopia who trained the volunteers to encourage and support the vulnerable ones."*

— Bekele, vegetable gardener

## Including All the Right People

By working with church leaders, community leaders, and families, FH learns the roles of different stakeholders in their communities. Putting responsibility in the hands of the right stakeholders safeguard's project resources and is essential to initiating lasting transformation. Without their participation, change is unsustainable. In line with this principle, FH conducted their annual review meeting with community and government stakeholders at the close of the year.

Throughout the year, FH trained development agents, community elders, representatives from women's associations, kebele chair persons, and kebele managers on disaster risk reduction. Volunteers in all sectors received training in their area of expertise and heard, once again, the transforming truth that they are loved by God and that he has equipped them with assets and resources to change the direction of their futures.



Savings and Loans groups like this one empower women to accumulate savings and access credit to start small businesses.



# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

## Mobilizing People of Faith

FH works with all kinds of faith-based organization (FBO) leaders to implement development activities. This year, FH trained FBO leaders to train and encourage young adults to participate in community development activities and re-engage with agriculture. In response, FH invited participants from 21 congregations to train them on how to engage their youth in community development.

FH trains Christian church leaders, specifically, toward both spiritual and physical development—i.e. kingdom discipleship. As a result, church leaders actively participate in development activities, especially as committee members. Church leaders are actively involved in mobilizing their members to engage in development activities, including FH's child sponsorship program. Church leaders help identify families who need extra support, facilitate the practical aspects of the sponsorship relationship, and serve as sponsorship committee members at the kebele level. Additionally, they provide training to church members on different topics that enable them to support development activities. In addition to practical help, church leaders also fill the critical role of praying for the FH staff, sponsor children, and their communities. A mutual trust has grown between church leaders and FH through their shared faith.

## Elevating Women's Voices

Through partnership with FH Ethiopia, existing gender gaps in decision making, control and access to resources, and women's workload have improved in Sasiga. FH works with both men and women to raise the living standards of families, especially for children. And it's working! FH's influence has resulted in an increase in the number of women participating in decision making at the local government level. At the household level, husbands and wives are increasingly making financial and business decisions together, such as when to sell farm commodities like honey or livestock.

## ACTIVITIES

**114** community members (76 men, 38 women), such as farmers and youth, trained on positive mind-set transformation

**45** stakeholders (38 men, 7 women) attended the annual review meeting



See more impact numbers on page 17



# VEGETABLES TO THE RESCUE, AGAIN!

## Sasiga Mid-Highlands, Ethiopia

Sibilu is a young farmer in his mid-thirties living in the community of Feyine Terano. Since 2014, FH Ethiopia has walked with his community and introduced a number of practical changes that have unlocked new life for families like Sibilu's.

Husband to Birane and father to three sons and two daughters, Sibilu carries the responsibility to care for his family close to his heart. "Before FH came to my kebele, I always lived with stress," he recalls. "My life was uncomfortable, my children were not pleasant, I was angry and unsatisfied."

Sibilu explains one of the simple yet life-altering realities that caused such struggle in their lives. "We had no awareness of how to work on vegetable production," he says. "So there were no vegetables in our diet." As a result, all their health suffered, especially the children. Without vegetables, they couldn't eat a balanced diet. They were missing essential vitamins and minerals they desperately needed. This had significant ramifications for their early development. His children suffered the effects of malnutrition, including stunting.

Most of the families in Feyine Terano had similar experiences to Sibilu. The burden and shame of not being able to provide what their children needed to thrive was heavy. They didn't know where to start to get out of poverty.

"I faced daily challenges, like working on conventional agriculture which is unproductive; being unable to support my family with sufficient food; subjecting my family members to [work as] daily labourers," Sibilu shares.





Thankfully, FH Ethiopia was able to help fathers like Sibilu by offering training on income-generating activities like beekeeping and plant nursery management. They also trained families in vegetable production and provided improved varieties of vegetable seeds and hand farm tools. New techniques, new equipment, and new know-how helped the people in Sibilu's kebele totally transform their farming, their diets, and their incomes!

"The life and health of my children has improved!" Sibilu exclaims joyfully.

Sibilu is grateful to God and to FH, who demonstrated the benefits of embracing a new way of doing an ancient thing—farming! By providing knowledge in this area, FH helped Sibilu improve the lives of everyone in his family.

"My future hope is to see the life of my family improve, especially of my children. I want to see my children learning in higher education. Transformation is only possible if guided by almighty God. The change of the life of the family is done by God."

## Thank You

The families of Sasiga thank you for your support of their journey from stuck to thriving. Your generous gifts are helping caregivers learn to connect with their children; providing clean water and reducing illnesses; kick-starting new and successful businesses; and growing life-giving partnerships between FH staff and community stakeholders. Thank you for being a part of this transformative journey!

# MEASURING SUCCESS!

The report above is a summarized snapshot of what community leaders and families in Sasiga Mid-Highlands, with the support of FH Ethiopia, have accomplished this year. Below are more numbers and statistics that paint a fuller picture of what has been happening on the road to sustainability.



## EDUCATION IN NUMBERS 2020/2021

By the Mid-Year	By the Year-End
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,062 children (1,064 boys, 998 girls) provided with school stationary and uniforms</li> <li>• 50 primary school teachers (26 men, 24 women) trained on math and literacy instruction</li> <li>• 44 volunteers (38 men, 6 women) trained on working with orphans and vulnerable children</li> <li>• 6,871 students participated in a sports and knowledge contest day</li> <li>• 123 caregivers (36 men, 87 women) engaged in the home with support on early child stimulation and reducing toxic stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 109 caregivers (34 men, 75 women) trained to stimulate their child's intellectual, social, spiritual, and emotional development</li> <li>• 130 caregivers (49 men, 81 women) engaged in the home to improve child performance in formal education</li> <li>• 1 school block constructed for 635 primary school students and 16 teachers</li> <li>• 200 desk/chair combos, 8 teacher's tables, 8 teacher's chairs provided to two schools</li> </ul>



## HEALTH IN NUMBERS 2020/2021

By the Mid-Year	By the Year-End
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 127 women trained on essential care to mother and newborn during pregnancy and delivery</li> <li>• 122 mothers trained on the benefits of breastfeeding</li> <li>• 23 mothers trained in Cascade groups on the benefits of essential nutrition actions</li> <li>• 23 women trained in Cascade groups on essential hygiene action</li> <li>• 193 people (106 men, 87 women) trained in HIV/AIDS awareness</li> <li>• 47 leaders (30 men, 17 women) trained on Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 202 latrine slabs constructed impacting 202 households</li> <li>• 194 mothers trained on the benefits of essential nutrition action and complementary feeding for pregnant and lactating women</li> <li>• 125 mothers trained on caring for a sick child</li> <li>• 44 critically ill children provided with essential medical treatment</li> <li>• 192 community members (30 men, 162 women) trained on essential hygiene action</li> <li>• 800 "dignity kits" (soap and sanitary pads) provided to girls in school girl clubs</li> <li>• 11 water committees established and 51 committee members trained</li> <li>• 2 school WASH clubs established and 15 members trained</li> <li>• 98 women trained on making fuel-efficient stoves</li> </ul>



# MEASURING SUCCESS!



## LIVELIHOODS IN NUMBERS 2020/2021

By the Mid-Year	By the Year-End
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 162 farmers (151 men, 11 women) trained on organic compost/fertilizer preparation and application</li> <li>• 232 farmers (132 men, 31 women) trained on eco-friendly termite control</li> <li>• 159 farmers (146 men, 13 women) trained on improved coffee production and management</li> <li>• 37 young adults (24 men, 13 women) given entrepreneurship training and material support for vocational training</li> <li>• 11 Savings and Loans groups (79 men, 163 women) established and trained and savings kits distributed</li> <li>• 30 farmers trained in apiculture (bees!) management</li> <li>• 27 model farmers (24 men, 3 women) trained in biogas construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 farmers (98 men, 2 women) trained in agroforestry</li> <li>• 31 farmers (men) trained in conservation agriculture</li> <li>• 102 women trained in vegetable production for economic empowerment</li> <li>• 261 kgs of vegetable seeds (tomato, beet root, onion, cabbage) provided to 49 women and 136 men to generate household income</li> <li>• 123 farmers (116 men, 7 women) trained on Integrated Pest Management (IPM)</li> <li>• 100 people trained on animal husbandry; 98 on forage production; 54 kgs of improved forage seeds distributed</li> <li>• 31 modern beehives provided to trained farmers</li> <li>• 169 community members (163 men, 6 women) trained on soil and water conservation techniques</li> <li>• 131 sets of farm tools provided to farmers (115 men, 16 women)</li> <li>• 48 people (46 men, 2 women) trained on private nursery establishment</li> <li>• 190 farmers cultivating central and private nurseries supported with training, tools, and 850 kgs of multi-purpose tree seeds</li> <li>• 40 farmers (20 men, 20 women) trained on livestock fattening</li> <li>• 149 parents of sponsor children and 90 vulnerable women were provided support with animals and fattening livestock</li> </ul>



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN NUMBERS 2020/2021

By the Mid-Year	By the Year-End
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38 people (30 men, 8 women) trained in community managed disaster risk reduction</li> <li>• 86 community members (78 men, 8 women), including FBO leaders, trained on positive mind-set transformation</li> <li>• 40 key stakeholders (9 men, 31 women) trained on gender integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 114 community members (76 men, 38 women), such as farmers and youth, trained on positive mind-set transformation</li> <li>• 45 stakeholders (38 men, 7 women) attended the annual review meeting with government representatives</li> <li>• 46 church leaders are working closely with FH Ethiopia on community development</li> </ul>