



ETHIOPIA

EMPOWER YOUTH FOR WORK

Transforming social norms for young women and girls' economic empowerment

CONTEXT

Ethiopia is one of Africa's poorest nations, with half its 100 million people living below the poverty line. Most of the country's youth population live in rural areas with limited access to essential services. Unemployment levels are high, especially among young women. Drought and environmental degradation are major issues, forcing large numbers of people to migrate. The Empower Youth for Work (EYW) program is being implemented in Oromia and Somali regional states.

VISION

Working with long-term partners Rift Valley Children and Women Development Organization (RCWDO) and Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee (HAVOYOCO), our vision is of poverty reduction, youth empowerment and gender equality for young people in rural and semi-urban climate change affected areas. Women in rural Oromia and Somali region lack capacity and assets to invest in agricultural and pastoral livestock

productivity. EYW addresses policies and norms to alleviate gender-based violence (GBV), reduce young women's disproportionate care workload and to improve sexual and reproductive health (SRH). In both its service delivery and influencing, the program collaborates with stakeholders such as the Women and Children Affairs Department as well as government job-creation offices.

STRATEGIES

We focus on increasing agency and skills, improving economic opportunities and creating an enabling environment. EYW aims to help young people to be part of well-functioning and sustainable youth groups; to gain soft, technical and entrepreneurship skills in line with market opportunities; to establish new, climate-resilient microenterprises; and to gain access to fair, affordable finance for these enterprises and improve their business and social performance. Creating an enabling environment includes reducing GBV and gender discrimination; redistributing care and domestic responsibilities; removing barriers to SRHR; and influencing the government to adopt policies and practices in support of young people's social and economic empowerment.



Youth trained in short-term technical and vocational training EYW Ethiopia, year 3



ALAMI'S STORY: "I'VE CREATED JOBS FOR OTHERS"

Alami, 24, lives in Idola Burqa village in Oromia region. Although she graduated in auto-mechanics, she was unable to find a job, so she started retailing goods.

"My business wasn't growing fast, due to lack of skill," recalls Alami. She took part in an EYW entrepreneurship training, which helped her develop her business skills and create a plan. "After the training, I decided to expand my business by selling more goods.

Now I have created jobs for two youngsters. I save 500 Birr (€15.50) weekly. I have rented 0.25 hectares of land, with an annual fee of 5,000 Birr, to cultivate crops. I expect to make around 35,000 Birr by the end of the year. With this income, I am planning to build a house."



© Hailu Dibaba / RCWDO

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS - YEAR 3

Major achievements of the EYW program in Ethiopia during year 3 include identifying, organizing and strengthening youth groups, providing them with a Loan Guarantee Fund (LGF) and conventional Business Development Services (BDS), as well as business management, leadership and soft skills training, which has reached more than 8,000 youth (almost 50% female). As the recent midline report indicates, young people in the target districts confirmed that the soft skills components of the training, among others, were useful in their daily lives. The program has linked youth start-ups to microfinance institutions which have granted them around 7.3 million Birr in loans.

As part of the program's efforts to create an enabling environment for young people's economic empowerment, we printed and distributed more than 3,000 copies of training materials among beneficiaries, community leaders and participants of international observances. During year 3, more than 2,287 (1,245 female) young people took part in bi-monthly Community Conversations on GBV, SRHR and unpaid care work. School clubs were strengthened

to raise school communities' awareness on these issues, 735 (395 female) students are now regularly participating in the school clubs. Weekly radio shows also play an important role in EYW's work to create an enabling environment, through regular transmissions with full geographical coverage of the target regions. The radio shows raise awareness by running features or holding discussions on SRHR, GBV and care-work distribution, and celebrating events such as International Women's Day.

INNOVATION AND PILOTS

The EYW program's innovative approach is manifested mainly in the LGF scheme, mobile BDS, a youth apprenticeship scheme and the development of youth-friendly training modules to overcome inaccessibility of financial, business and similar services. The BDS vehicle is designed to bring business solutions direct to rural youth in hard-to-reach locations. Comprehensive and conventional BDS materials have been prepared and provided in local languages covering soft and entrepreneurship skills. In a bid to help youth start-ups boost their businesses, EYW organized training sessions that brought together a range of

experts from different institutions. This helped the program to ensure 70% female participation by easing the challenges young women face in moving from place to place for education, training and employment.

CHALLENGES AND RISKS

The program faced a number of risks and challenges to implementation in its third year. These included youth migration, lack of commitment among target youth, and negative experiences of some youth start-ups including price inflation, lack of financial capacity to sustain the business and insufficient stakeholder support/commitment. Measures taken to address these risks include revision of business plans, reorganizing the groups in line with EYW's 70/30 gender composition ambition, and providing business start-ups with follow-up assistance, including on-the-spot technical support, until the business has been established and group solidarity has been created.

For more information, please visit:
www.empoweryouthforwork.org

Edition: June 2019

