



# Excellence Chronicles

Good Practices &  
Success Stories

2023



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
ETHIOPIA

# Introduction

As a member of SOS Children's Villages International, SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia was established in response to the devastating 1973 famine. Since its inception, SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia has been dedicated to providing essential childcare, protection, family strengthening, health, and education services to children who have lost parental care or are at risk of losing it. Additionally, the organization has played a crucial role in delivering life-saving humanitarian aid to individuals affected by conflict and drought, with a particular focus on supporting women and children.

SOS Children's Villages operates in seven regional states across Ethiopia, including Tigray, Addis Ababa, Amhara, Harari, Oromia, SNNP, and Somali. Through its comprehensive programs and services, SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia continues to make a significant impact on the lives of vulnerable children and families, ensuring they have the support and resources they need to thrive.

For the past 50 years, SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia has been dedicated to providing high-quality care for children and young people. Throughout our interventions, we have consistently communicated our impacts, achievements, and challenges to both internal and external stakeholders through the publication of annual reports, showcasing good practices, and sharing success stories.

As part of our ongoing unwavering commitment to transparency and accountability, our **Success Whisperers** team members from program development and quality assurance, brand and communications, sponsorship, and program implementation have compiled the success stories and good practices of the year 2023. These stories serve as a powerful testament to the impact and effectiveness of our work, highlighting the positive changes and improvements brought about by our projects and initiatives.

We firmly believe that by sharing these inspiring good practices and success stories, stakeholders like yourself can be motivated to get involved and support our cause, while also building trust and credibility in our organization and even can help strengthen our relationships and attract even more support.

Together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and young people in Ethiopia. Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to our shared mission.

*Please note that names on the stories are changed for the sake of data privacy.*

# Good Practice 2023

50  
years



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
ETHIOPIA



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# A little push can make a huge impact

In a bustling city neighborhood where the echoes of laughter and the sounds of children playing were once scarce, a transformative initiative took root to address the pressing needs of children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Recognizing the lack of access to sports, education, health services, and essential resources for these youth, Edith & Godtfred Kirk Christiansen Foundation, SOS Children's Village Program Jimma, in partnership with the local government came together to embark on a journey to construct a youth-friendly center in Jimma town and Bore Kebele. that would serve as a beacon of hope and opportunity for the next generation.

The vision was to create a safe and inclusive space where children and young people could thrive, grow, and reach their full potential. The center would not only offer access to sports facilities like indoor games, educational resources like library and ICT services, and health services but also provide a nurturing environment that fostered empowerment, well-being, and community engagement. It was a dream born out of a deep-seated commitment to ensuring that every young person, regardless of their background, had the support and opportunities they needed to succeed. The journey to bring this vision to life was not without its challenges. Limited funding, market fluctuations and political instability which caused delays and threatened to derail the project. However, the unwavering dedication and passion of the project team, coupled with the support of key stakeholders and the resilience of children and young people themselves, propelled the initiative forward.

After months of planning, fundraising, and community engagement, the construction of the youth-friendly center finally began. The center was designed to be a multi-purpose facility, featuring state-of-the-art sports facilities, well-equipped study areas, and a dedicated space for health services and counseling. The architecture was modern yet welcoming, with vibrant colors and open spaces that invited children and young people to explore, learn, and connect. As the construction progressed, excitement and anticipation grew within the community. Children and young people from all walks of life eagerly awaited the opening of the center, knowing that it would be a place where they could not only access essential resources but also forge friendships, pursue their passions, and chart a course for a brighter future. When the doors of the youth-friendly center finally opened, it was a moment of joy and celebration. The center buzzed with energy and enthusiasm as children and young people flocked to explore the facilities, join sports teams, attend tutoring sessions, and engage in health workshops. The impact was immediate and profound, with disadvantaged youth finding a sense of belonging, purpose, and empowerment in this new community hub. Over time, the youth-friendly center became more than just a physical space; it became a symbol of hope, resilience, and possibility for the entire neighborhood. Children and young people who once felt marginalized and overlooked now had a place where their voices were heard, their talents were nurtured, and their dreams were supported.

As the sun set on another day at the youth-friendly center, the echoes of laughter and the sounds of children playing filled the air once again. The construction of this center had not only addressed the lack of access to sports, education, health services, and essential resources for disadvantaged youth but had also ignited a spark of change and transformation that would continue to shine brightly for generations to come. In constructing a youth-friendly center aimed at addressing the needs of disadvantaged youth, the community had not only shown the importance of local resource mobilization and efficient use of existing resources to solve community problems but had also sown the seeds of a brighter and more inclusive future for all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances.

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*Young people playing chess at the youth center*

# The life changing innovation: Locally sourced reusable sanitary pads

In a community where availing sanitary pads for schoolgirls is anomalous, a group of determined girls club members, teachers, and other volunteers came together to address a pressing issue affecting the young girls in their community: the lack of access to affordable and hygienic menstrual hygiene products. Recognizing the challenges faced by schoolgirls who often missed classes during their periods due to the unavailability of sanitary pads, they embarked on a mission to introduce locally sourced reusable sanitary pads as a sustainable and empowering solution.

The journey began when collaboration among four partner schools in Hawassa City started and various activities pertaining to education are being actively pursued, such as child parliament, environmental preservation, sports clubs, girls' clubs, health clubs, and more. Among these clubs, the girls club stands out as it greatly impacts the health, hygiene, emotions, confidence, and attendance of female students. Hence, the members of this club are trained in creating reusable sanitary pads using locally available materials, both manually and with sewing machines. This knowledge allows students to easily create these pads at home as well. Through these sessions, it became clear that the high cost of disposable sanitary pads and the stigma surrounding menstruation were significant barriers to menstrual hygiene management for many girls in the community. As a result, this initiative has brought positive impact on female students at the age of puberty, such as improved school attendance and reduced drop-out rates, as witnessed by the entire school community, including female students, Girls club leaders, school administration, and even male teachers. Armed with this knowledge and a shared commitment to promoting menstrual health and dignity, the group set out to design and produce affordable and eco-friendly reusable sanitary pads using locally sourced materials. Working with skilled seamstresses and textile artisans from the village, they developed a prototype that was not only effective in providing protection and comfort but also easy to clean, durable, and environmentally sustainable. The production of the reusable sanitary pads became a community-led initiative, with women and girls coming together to cut fabric, sew pads, and package them for distribution. Local businesses and organizations also lent their support by providing funding, materials, and logistical assistance to ensure the success of the project.

As the first batch of locally sourced reusable sanitary pads was distributed to schoolgirls in the community for free, the impact was immediate and profound. Girls who had previously struggled to manage their periods now had a reliable and hygienic solution that allowed them to attend school with confidence and dignity. The reusable pads not only saved families money in the long run but also reduced waste and promoted sustainability in the community. The positive feedback and success of the initiative inspired neighboring villages to adopt a similar approach, leading to a ripple effect of change and empowerment across the region. As more and more schoolgirls gained access to locally sourced reusable sanitary pads, the stigma surrounding menstruation began to dissipate, and conversations about menstrual health and hygiene became more open and inclusive. Through the introduction of locally sourced reusable sanitary pads for schoolgirls, the community had not only addressed a critical need but had also fostered a sense of solidarity, empowerment, and innovation that transcended traditional barriers. The initiative served as a shining example of good practice, demonstrating the power of grassroots collaboration, cultural sensitivity, and sustainable solutions in promoting the well-being and dignity of young girls in underserved communities.

As the sun set over the village, the laughter of schoolgirls echoed through the air, a testament to the transformative impact of a simple yet powerful idea: that locally sourced reusable sanitary pads could change lives, empower girls, and pave the way for a healthier and more equitable future for all.

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*Student-Led Production of Sanitary Pads  
with Teacher's Support*



# Enhancing project efficiency and effectiveness through participatory monitoring and supportive supervision

In a program location where more than thirteen projects have been implemented to help children develop in a caring family environment and become self-reliant members of society, establishing a strong monitoring and supportive supervision mechanism plays a pivotal role to ensure the success of these development projects. The project team, comprising dedicated professionals and community members, recognized the importance of implementing a structured framework of Participatory Monitoring and Supportive Supervision (MSS) activities to enhance project efficiency and effectiveness at SOS Children's Village Program Hawassa.

The core objective of the MSS approach was to ensure that resources were utilized optimally, project activities were on track, and the desired impact was being achieved. To achieve this, the team embraced a range of good practices, including the utilization of checklists to evaluate project progress, validation of documents and data, conducting data quality audits, and making field visits to target households and organizations. The journey towards implementing the MSS approach began with a series of capacity-building sessions and workshops for project staff, community volunteers, and local leaders. Through these sessions, participants gained a deep understanding of the importance of participatory monitoring and supportive supervision in driving project success. They learned how checklists could serve as a valuable tool for tracking project activities and milestones, ensuring that no crucial step was missed in the implementation process.

Validation of documents and data emerged as a critical practice within the MSS framework, as accurate and reliable information was essential for decision-making and impact assessment. The team diligently cross-checked project reports, surveys, and data sets to identify any discrepancies or errors, ensuring that all project information was credible and up to date. Regular data quality audits became a routine part of the project cycle, allowing the team to assess the accuracy, completeness, and consistency of project data. By maintaining high standards of data quality, the team could confidently analyze progress, identify trends, and make informed decisions to steer the project towards its goals. Field visits to target households and organizations provided a unique opportunity for the team to engage directly with beneficiaries, understand their needs and challenges, and gather feedback on the project's impact. These visits not only strengthened community participation and ownership but also allowed the team to witness firsthand the positive changes brought about by their interventions.

As the MSS approach unfolded, the impact was profound. However, there were challenges in relation to overlapping of assignments, which delays the completion of monitoring activities and difficulty of working in a team when members are overwhelmed with urgent tasks. The project team found that by systematically monitoring and supervising project activities, they were able to detect issues early, address challenges promptly, and adapt strategies as needed. This proactive approach not only enhanced project efficiency but also fostered a culture of accountability, transparency, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

The structured framework of Participatory Monitoring and Supportive Supervision (MSS) activities had not only enhanced project efficiency and effectiveness but had also empowered the community to take ownership of their development journey. The project in the rural community served as a shining example of good practice, demonstrating the transformative power of participatory monitoring and supportive supervision in driving sustainable change and improving the lives of those in need.

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*Co-workers Conducting Assessment for Improved Efficiency*



*A Celebration of Community Contribution:  
Honouring Volunteers with Certificates of  
Appreciation*

## Strengthening lives together: collaborative initiatives for children's well-being

In a bustling city where the streets echoed with the laughter of children and the challenges faced by vulnerable groups were all too apparent, a unique collaboration between projects supporting children in street situations and those focusing on disabilities was born at Dire Dawa through SOS Children's Village Program Harar. This collaboration aimed to address the complex needs of these marginalized groups through a range of strategies that emphasized joint planning, resource mobilization, community involvement, and continuous learning and improvement.

At the heart of this collaborative approach was the recognition that children in street situations and children and young people with disabilities often faced intersecting challenges that required a holistic and inclusive response. The first step in this journey towards collective impact was conducting comprehensive needs and gap assessments to understand the specific vulnerabilities and barriers faced by these groups. Through in-depth interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions, the project teams gained valuable insights into the lived experiences and aspirations of the children and young people with disabilities. Armed with a deeper understanding of the challenges at hand, the projects embarked on a journey of joint planning, where they worked together to develop integrated strategies and interventions that addressed the unique needs of both groups. This collaborative planning process not only fostered synergy and alignment between the projects but also ensured that resources were leveraged effectively to maximize impact. Resource mobilization emerged as a critical aspect of the collaborative approach, as both projects sought to secure sustainable funding and support for their initiatives. By pooling their resources, networks, and expertise, the projects were able to access a wider range of funding opportunities and partnerships, ensuring the long-term viability of their interventions. Implementation and progress monitoring were carried out hand in hand, with regular coordination meetings and joint field visits enabling the project teams to track progress, identify bottlenecks, and make real-time adjustments to their activities. This agile and responsive approach ensured that the needs of children in street situations and children and young people with disabilities were being met effectively and efficiently.

Community involvement and awareness-raising were central to the success of the collaborative approach, as the projects sought to engage residents, businesses, and institutions in supporting and advocating for the rights of these vulnerable groups. Through sensitization workshops, outreach campaigns, and community events, the projects were able to foster a culture of inclusivity and empathy, breaking down barriers and promoting social cohesion. Stakeholder engagement and advocacy played a pivotal role in amplifying the voices of children in street situations and children and young people with disabilities, ensuring that their needs were heard and addressed at all levels. By partnering with government agencies, civil society organizations, and advocacy groups, the projects were able to advocate for policy changes, resource allocation, and systemic reforms that benefited the most marginalized members of society. As the collaborative approach, the projects not only succeeded in addressing the immediate challenges faced by these vulnerable groups but also laid the foundation for lasting change and empowerment. The children found a sense of belonging and support, while children and young people with disabilities gained access to essential services and opportunities for growth and development.

Although there are challenges such as resource constraints, sustainability concerns and fear of lacking community engagements, the challenges can be solved through working together, sharing resources, and leveraging each other's strengths so that the projects are able to create a more inclusive and equitable society where all children and young people could thrive and reach their full potential. This collaborative effort stood as a beacon of good practice, demonstrating the power of partnership, empathy, and collective action in driving positive change and transforming the lives of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

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# Leveraging resources through strategic partnerships for enhanced childcare

In a world where education is the key to unlocking a brighter future, a strategic partnership between a child-focused non-governmental organization (NGO) and government institutions emerged as a beacon of hope for children seeking to pursue their dreams. This partnership aimed to leverage government resources to enhance childcare and educational opportunities, empowering children to embrace the benefits of enrolling in government institutions and pursuing their chosen fields of study with enthusiasm.

At the core of this collaborative engagement was the belief that by working together, SOS Children's Village Program Harar and government institutions in Harar could create a more supportive and inclusive educational environment for children from all backgrounds. The partnership began with a shared vision of providing quality education and holistic care to children, ensuring that every child had the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential. Through strategic planning and coordination, SOS Children's Village Program Harar and government institutions identified key areas where their collaboration could make the most significant impact. By aligning their resources, expertise, and networks, they were able to pool their strengths and address the diverse needs of children in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

One of the primary focuses of the partnership was to enhance educational opportunities for children by promoting enrollment in government institutions. Our organization worked closely with government schools and educational authorities to raise awareness about the benefits of formal education, provide support for enrollment processes, and advocate for inclusive and child-friendly learning environments. Through targeted outreach campaigns, community engagement activities, and capacity-building initiatives for teachers and school staff and organizing events to showcase achievements, the partnership succeeded in breaking down barriers to enrollment and creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for children in government schools. As a result, more children embraced the opportunity to pursue their education in formal institutions, eager to learn and grow in a nurturing environment.

The collaborative engagement with government institutions also led to the enrichment of educational opportunities for children, with innovative programs, extracurricular activities, and support services being introduced to enhance the learning experience. By leveraging government resources and expertise, the partnership was able to provide children with access to quality education, mentorship, and career guidance, empowering them to explore their interests and pursue their chosen fields of study with enthusiasm. The impact of this collaborative approach was profound, as children and young people benefited from a more inclusive and supportive educational system that nurtured their talents and aspirations. The partnership not only enriched educational opportunities but also fostered a sense of belonging, confidence, and empowerment among children, inspiring them to dream big and work towards a brighter future.

As children embraced the benefits of enrolling in government institutions and pursued their educational journey with enthusiasm, the collaborative engagement between SOS Children's Village Program Harar and government institutions stood as a shining example of good practice. By working together, sharing resources, and prioritizing the needs of children, the partnership had significantly enriched educational opportunities and positively impacted the lives of countless children, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable society where every child has the chance to thrive and succeed.

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*African Child Day Celebrations in  
Collaboration with Government Bureaus*



# Expanding social horizons: collaborative activities enriching children's potentials

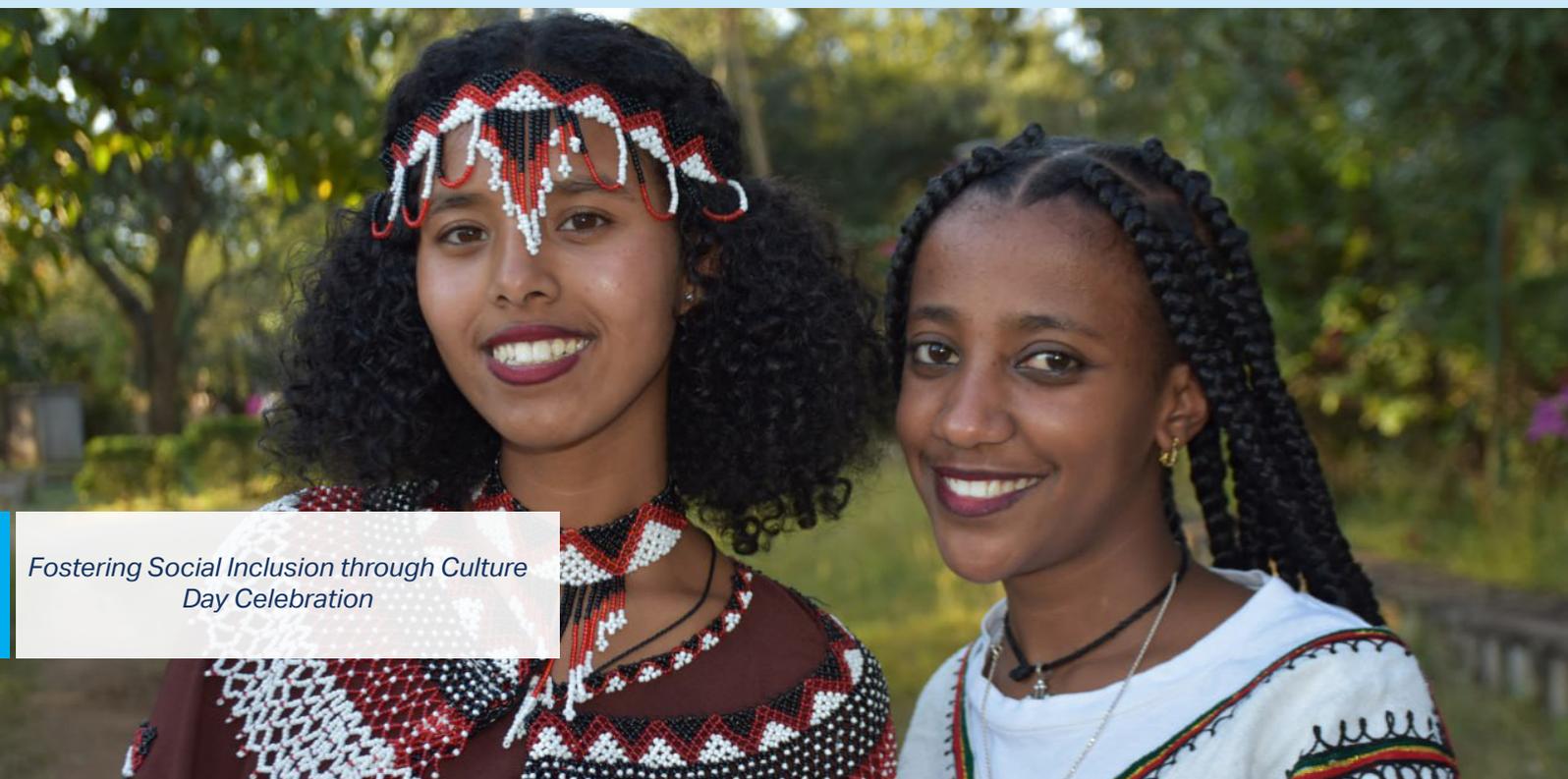
In the serene surroundings of SOS Children's Village Program Harrar, children and young people in the Family-like care program found themselves nestled within the comforting embrace of their village community. However, their interactions were predominantly confined to the village, limiting their exposure to the broader community. Recognizing the importance of social integration and the need for diverse connections, the program took a proactive step in 2023 to enhance the social experiences of the children and young people by orchestrating collaborative activities with other care programs.

The initiative aimed to break down barriers and expand the horizons of the children and young people, providing them with opportunities to engage socially and form connections beyond the familiar confines of the village. Through thoughtful planning and coordination, the program sought to create avenues for meaningful interactions and shared experiences that would enrich the lives of the children and young people. Collaborative activities were carefully designed to foster a sense of community and inclusivity, bringing together children and young people from different care programs to engage in shared interests, hobbies, and learning experiences. From art workshops and sports tournaments to cultural exchanges and collaborative projects, the initiatives were crafted to spark joy, curiosity, and camaraderie among the participants.

As the collaborative activities revealed, the children and young people found themselves immersed in a vibrant tapestry of new experiences and connections. They had the chance to meet new people, exchange stories, and cultivate relationships that extended beyond their immediate surroundings. The expansion of their social networks not only broadened their perspectives but also provided them with the opportunity to learn from others, celebrate diversity, and build a sense of belonging that transcended the boundaries of the village. The impact of these initiatives was profound, as the children and young people discovered the beauty of connecting with others and embracing the richness of different perspectives. They found joy in sharing their talents, learning from their peers, and building friendships that spanned across care programs. The collaborative activities became a source of inspiration, empowerment, and unity, nurturing a spirit of togetherness and mutual support among the participants.

As the children and young people returned to the village, they brought with them a newfound sense of confidence and belonging, knowing that they were part of a larger community that extended far beyond their immediate surroundings. The collaborative activities had not only enriched their social experiences but had also instilled in them a deep appreciation for diversity and the value of building connections with others. This proactive measure taken by the Family-like care program at SOS Children's Village Program Harrar to enhance social integration through collaborative activities with other care programs stood as a shining example of to be scaled up. By expanding the social horizons of the children and young people, the program had provided them with invaluable opportunities to engage, connect, and thrive in a diverse and inclusive community, laying the foundation for a future where they could embrace the world with open hearts and open minds.

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*Fostering Social Inclusion through Culture  
Day Celebration*

# Success Stories

2023

50  
years



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
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# From Tragedy to Triumph: The Incredible Journey of Abrihet

Amidst the chaos of the Tigray conflict, Abrihet's\* life took a devastating turn. As a 35-year-old mother of five, she faced unimaginable horrors that left her physically and emotionally scarred. Her husband's loss compounded her despair. Displaced and broken, she found herself in Came, with her son joining the Tigray defense forces, consumed by anger and hopelessness.

But through it all, Abrihet's spirit remained unbroken. Despite facing more tragedy, with her daughter experiencing another assault, Abrihet's determination to protect her children and rebuild their lives shone brightly. It was in her darkest hour that SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia HGFD reached out a helping hand.

Thanks to SOSCVE HGFD's timely assistance, Abrihet and her family found a glimmer of hope amidst a devastating food crisis. Essential supplies reached 856 households, ensuring that no one went hungry or suffered malnutrition. The support not only sustained them but also reignited their sense of dignity, sparking a newfound optimism within Abrihet.

No longer bound by reliance on others, Abrihet now dreams of a future filled with peace and prosperity. Fueled by the resilience and hope instilled by SOSCVE HGFD, she works tirelessly to rebuild her life and uplift her community. Through her unwavering determination, Abrihet stands as a shining example of the transformative power of support and perseverance, breaking the cycle of suffering one courageous step at a time.

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# Overcoming Adversity: The Inspiring Journey of Redwan

In the quiet village of Tuta Kannisa, 21-year-old Redwan\* faced challenges of chronic illnesses and drought. But despite these obstacles, his determination to support his family never wavered.

Through the DRA project, Redwan received financial aid, training, and innovative seeds that could grow with little water. Using these resources, he cultivated a bountiful harvest, earning an impressive 11,000 ETB.

Redwan's success inspired him to invest in a cow, providing his family with a reliable source of food. He also expanded his farming, planting more seeds and anticipating even greater prosperity. The DRA project not only improved Redwan's life but also gave him hope for the future. He now shares his story to inspire others facing despair. He promotes positivity and resilience, encouraging them to rebuild their lives through perseverance and collaboration. To those displaced from their homes, Redwan urges transformation and renewal. He expresses gratitude for the DRA project, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and local authorities for their transformative impact on his community.

Redwan's story is a testament to the triumph of the human spirit over adversity. It shows how acts of generosity can empower individuals and lead to a brighter future. His gratitude for the DRA project, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and local authorities for their transformative impact on his community. With heartfelt appreciation, Redwan's story showcases the triumph of the human spirit over adversity, demonstrating how acts of kindness can foster abundance and empowerment.

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*Redwan beaming with pride as he showcases his prized livestock*

# Empowering Dreams: Biftu's Journey to Success

In the heart of Burka Jato Kebele, Nekemte, resides the indomitable Biftu\*, a 37-year-old mother of four who braved the storm of unemployment and financial struggles. Amidst the harsh realities exacerbated by the pandemic, Biftu's unwavering commitment to her family's well-being propelled her on a quest for a brighter future.

In her pursuit of opportunities, Biftu's path intersected with the transformative EduCare project, which recognized her potential and extended a helping hand. Through EduCare, Biftu underwent training in vital skills such as credit management, financial literacy, and parenting, alongside receiving crucial seed funding to kickstart her entrepreneurial journey. Emboldened by this support, Biftu ventured into the realm of baking and selling Injera, a traditional Ethiopian staple. Armed with newfound expertise, she unveiled her business to the world, captivating the local community with 130 pieces of delectable Injera daily. As word spread of her exceptional quality, Biftu's clientele burgeoned to include esteemed hotels, marking a significant milestone in her entrepreneurial voyage. Through Biftu's unwavering determination and the guiding light of EduCare, her Injera enterprise flourished. Presently, she vends 300 pieces of Injera daily at a competitive price of 14 ETB each, seamlessly meeting the escalating demand. Tigist's triumph transcended mere financial success; it paved the way for her financial independence and prudent savings, a testament to the invaluable mentorship she received.

The ripple effects of Biftu's achievements reverberated through her family, with her eldest child pursuing higher education and her other children excelling academically. Grateful for the profound impact of EduCare on her life, Biftu humbly acknowledges the seismic shift from dependency on her husband's income to self-sufficiency—a transformation that reshaped her identity and empowered her to inspire her community. Biftu stands tall as a beacon of resilience and perseverance, a living testament to the boundless possibilities that unfurl when determination meets unwavering support. Her narrative echoes a poignant tale of empowerment and growth, underscoring the transformative power of commitment and collaborative assistance in sculpting dreams into reality.

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*Biftu in the process of making Injera for her business*

*Genet the heroic mother and her children*



## Rising from Adversity: Genet's Tale of Resilience

In the peaceful Finchawa Kebele, lives Genet\*, a 38-year-old single mother of six. Her life has been a journey from deep loss to newfound independence.

Genet's life was once filled with joy and stability. But her world fell apart when her husband died of blood cancer. She was left alone to face grief and financial struggles. Her newborn son also had health problems, making her feel overwhelmed and hopeless.

But in the darkness, a light appeared. The Finchawa Expansion Project, funded by a caring donor, saw Genet's plight and offered help. Together with the ABCD project, this support changed her life.

Genet received counseling, training, and a monthly payment. This eased her financial burden and allowed her to focus on her children's education.

With the support of the ABCD project and the Finchawa Expansion Project, Genet overcame her despair and found a path to self-reliance. She learned parenting skills, hygiene, business, and animal care. She became empowered and self-sufficient, creating a brighter future for herself and her children.

Genet joined Atote SACCO, where she saved money and borrowed loans to invest in poultry and livestock. This diversified her income and brought financial stability. Today, her family flourishes in better living conditions. Her children excel in their studies, and Genet exudes a newfound confidence that stems from her unwavering spirit. As a testament to the transformative power of community support and personal determination, Genet serves as an inspiration, guiding her businesses toward growth and continuously striving to surpass her current achievements.

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# From Homelessness to Professional Fulfillment: Abel's Inspirational Journey

Abel's\* life took a tragic turn at age 13 when his parents divorced and his father lost his job. Family illness and depression led him down a dark path of homelessness and despair.

Hope emerged through the CiSSP project team, whose compassionate outreach offered him a lifeline. With their support and guidance, Abel found solace and empowerment in leatherwork training, earning a certificate of completion.

Reflecting on his journey, Abel said, "This program gave me a way out of my past. Now, with my leatherwork certification, I'm ready to succeed." His triumph inspired him to support his father and pursue further education, proving the power of resilience and community support. Showing the transformative power of resilience and community.

Together with six fellow participants from the training program, Abel found employment at Andrea Shoes. This demonstrates the boundless possibilities that emerge when opportunities and guidance intersect. His story is a beacon of hope, illustrating how a confluence of support, vocational training, and unwavering determination can steer individuals from the depths of despair towards self-sufficiency and success.

The Dire Dawa CiSSP project is a testament to the transformative impact of community-driven initiatives. Its noble vision is to reach 2,700 children living on the streets by 2026. Through a holistic approach encompassing outreach programs, vocational training, and social reintegration efforts, this project aims to nurture the potential of vulnerable youth. It provides them with the tools and support needed to navigate the complexities of life and carve out a brighter future. By fostering sustainable support networks and advocating for systemic change, the project aspires to create a lasting impact on the lives of individuals like Abel. It ushers them towards a future brimming with promise and possibility.

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*Abel showcasing his skills in his new work environment*

# A Journey of Promise: Biniyam's Quest for Empowerment

In the tapestry of Biniyam's\* life, the threads of dedication and resilience intertwine to weave a narrative of triumph and inspiration. From the corridors of the Harrar Children's Village Program emerged a young dreamer, fueled by a passion for societal change and a relentless pursuit of knowledge. Biniyam's academic prowess shone brightly, earning him accolades from teachers and caregivers alike, culminating in a scholarship to Anadolu University in Eskisehir, Turkey. As he stood on the threshold of a new chapter, he made a solemn vow to his caregiver, a promise that echoed with determination, "One day, I will make you proud of my achievements."

Embracing the vibrant tapestry of opportunities at Anadolu University, Biniyam immerses himself in the tapestry of learning, diligently mastering the nuances of Turkish to excel in his academic pursuits. Fueled by his childhood dream of studying society to effect positive change in his community, he charts a course towards a degree in Sociology, guided by the unwavering belief that education is the key to translating aspirations into reality. A beacon of inspiration to the younger residents of the Harrar SOS Children's Village, Biniyam's journey epitomizes the transformative impact of the SOS Children's Village program, illuminating the boundless potential that blooms when dreams are nurtured with love and support.

At the core of SOS Children's Villages, we are unwavering in our commitment to nurturing the aspirations of every child. We empower them with quality education and the tools to shape their destinies with dignity and purpose. By creating an environment where challenges are overcome and talents are honed, we pave the way for children to become active contributors to their communities, architects of their social, economic, and cultural futures. Through direct access to quality education, we sow the seeds of a brighter tomorrow, cultivating a legacy of empowerment that transcends generations.

In Biniyam's unwavering pursuit of knowledge and societal transformation, we witness the embodiment of hope and resilience, a testament to the transformative power of education and unwavering support. As he forges ahead on his quest for empowerment, Biniyam stands as a living testament to the transformative impact of dreams nurtured with care and dedication, illuminating a path for others to follow in pursuit of their own aspirations. own aspirations.

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*Biniyam ready to embark on his exciting new ventures*

Misra in the affectionate embrace of her older sister



## Rediscovering Roots: Misra's Journey of Reunion and Resilience

In the tapestry of Misra's life, woven with threads of loss and longing, a tale of reunion and resilience unfolds, painting a portrait of courage and curiosity. At the tender age of five, when fate dealt her a cruel hand by taking her parents, Misra found solace and sanctuary within the embrace of the SOS Children's Village Harrar. For nearly a decade, she and her younger brother thrived in the nurturing haven of their SOS family, forging bonds that transcended blood ties.

As the Village embarked on a reintegration project, stirring the embers of curiosity within Misra's heart, a new chapter beckoned—one that would lead her on a poignant journey of self-discovery and connection to her roots. Conversations with her caregiver, Banchi, became a safe harbor for her mixed emotions, as she grappled with the yearning to unravel the mysteries of her past while cherishing the love that enveloped her in the Village.

Stepping into the unknown with courage and the unwavering support of the Village staff, Misra embarked on a summer visit to her siblings in Kobo and Obi, guided by a blend of trepidation and excitement. Despite her initial reluctance to leave the familiar embrace of her SOS family, Misra embraced the opportunity to forge connections with her biological siblings, immersing herself in a world that felt simultaneously foreign and familiar. "Everything felt different when I was there," she reminisces, "but I met my brothers and sister, learned Afan Oromo, and made friends."

Guided by the compassionate hand of the Village team, Misra navigated the terrain of her reconnection with her roots at her own pace, laying the groundwork for future relationships to bloom. With time and on her own terms, Misra expressed a heartfelt desire to reunite with her biological sister, Zeynaba, a wish that the reintegration project wholeheartedly supported through a holistic approach. Zeynaba received training in positive parenting and small business management, coupled with a start-up capital for an income-generating venture. The project also elevated their living standards by enhancing their accommodations with additional rooms, sanitation facilities, and access to electricity.

Today, Misra thrives in the company of Zeynaba in Kobo, a testament to the enduring power of love, resilience, and the bonds that transcend distance and circumstance. Their story, intertwined with two other tales of successful reintegration, stands as a beacon of the project's unwavering dedication to guiding children towards their forever homes, where they can flourish and thrive in the embrace of family and community.

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# A Mother's Selfless Embrace: Lemlem's Journey of Resilience and Empowerment

Amidst the tumultuous seas of life's trials, Lemlem\* found herself navigating the storm of loss and hardship, her spirit unwavering in the face of adversity. The shadows of grief loomed large as she bid farewell to her spouse, shouldering the heavy burden of financial struggles to provide for her two children. With unwavering determination, she toiled tirelessly across multiple jobs, a beacon of resilience in the midst of life's tempests.

Tragedy struck once more, casting a dark veil over Lemlem's world, as her younger sister arrived in Harrar bearing the heavy weight of a life-threatening illness and three young children in tow. Despite Lemlem's unwavering dedication and care, her sister succumbed to the illness, leaving Lemlem standing at the crossroads of personal grief and newfound responsibilities, entrusted with the care of her nieces and nephews. In a selfless act of honoring her sister's final wish, Lemlem opened her heart and home to her sister's three children, embracing the mantle of caregiver with grace and fortitude. Overwhelmed by the sudden surge in responsibilities, she sought solace in alternative care options, finding a lifeline in Family-based Care Programs that extended a compassionate hand of support. These programs became pillars of strength for Lemlem, ensuring that the children's fundamental needs—food, education, clothing, and healthcare—were met, alleviating her burdens and granting her the peace of mind to nurture her extended family.

Though uncertainty clouded her path, Lemlem's faith found affirmation in the unwavering support of SOS Children's Village Harrar's family-based care program, a beacon of hope that illuminated her journey towards empowerment. The program not only fulfilled the children's basic needs but also equipped Lemlem with invaluable tools through small business training and start-up capital, igniting the spark of entrepreneurship within her. With courage as her compass, Lemlem embarked on the path of entrepreneurship, birthing a thriving Ethiopian spice business that not only provided additional income but also paved the way for a brighter tomorrow for her children and herself. Today, her two biological children stand employed, while her sister's children thrive in the realm of higher education, pursuing dreams in pharmacy and software engineering, a testament to Lemlem's unwavering dedication and the transformative power of support systems like SOS Children's Villages. Lemlem's story stands as a testament to the indomitable human spirit, illustrating how with the right assistance and unwavering perseverance, individuals can transcend adversity and sculpt a future brimming with hope and promise. Her gratitude echoes through the annals of time, a poignant reminder of the enduring impact of programs like SOS Children's Villages on countless lives, including her own, a legacy of resilience and empowerment that shines brightly in the tapestry of her journey.

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*Lemlem diligently packing and sorting spices for her business*



*Brave young girls taking centre stage during a Team-Up activity*

## Rediscovering Joy and Purpose: Meftuha's Educational Triumph

In the heart of a town scarred by the shadows of ethnic conflict, a young soul named Meftuha\* stood resilient amidst the tempest of adversities. Torn from her home and father, she sought solace under the guardianship of her uncle in the tranquil haven of Chinaksen, nestled in the Eastern Hararghe Zone of the Oromia Region. Yet, tranquility eluded her grasp as she grappled with the echoes of emotional abuse, exploitation, and the daunting task of acclimating to a world unknown.

Enrolled in school, Meftuha's journey was fraught with challenges as she navigated the labyrinth of grief, isolation, and overwhelming responsibilities that weighed heavy on her tender shoulders. Struggling to keep pace with her studies, her anguish manifested in tardiness, disengagement, and a poignant withdrawal from those around her.

In the midst of her turmoil, a beacon of hope emerged in the form of Mr. Kemal, a compassionate teacher and facilitator of the JOFA project's transformative TeamUp program. Recognizing the silent cries of Meftuha's spirit, he extended a hand of support, delving into the depths of her pain and burdens. The TeamUp program, a sanctuary of movement-based psychosocial intervention, provided a nurturing space for Meftuha to confront her inner demons and embrace a path of healing. Meftuha's metamorphosis transcended the confines of the classroom, as the TeamUp facilitators collaborated with her uncle's family to alleviate her burdens and cultivate a supportive sanctuary within her home. Armed with newfound coping mechanisms and resilience, Meftuha blossomed into a beacon of strength, surmounting obstacles with unwavering determination and grace.

Witnessing the transformative power of TeamUp in Meftuha's life, the project, in synergy with local authorities and child protection organizations, embarks on a journey of expansion and advocacy. By advocating for the integration of TeamUp with physical education, they aim to amplify its impact, empowering a legion of children, akin to Meftuha, to rediscover joy, purpose, and resilience in the realm of education. Meftuha's odyssey stands as a testament to the profound impact of compassion, support, and empowerment in nurturing the seeds of hope and transformation. Her story illuminates the transformative journey from adversity to triumph, a symphony of resilience that echoes through the annals of time, inspiring a generation to embrace the power of education as a beacon of light amidst the shadows of despair.

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# A Single Mother's Triumph: Nurturing Growth Amidst Adversity

In the tumultuous landscape of political upheaval, communities find themselves ensnared in crises, leaving children bewildered and hungry, their future hanging in uncertainty. Amidst this chaos, parents grapple with the daunting task of providing the most basic necessities, their struggles painting a stark picture of uncertainty and hardship.

Arsema\*, a single mother of four, stood as a resilient figure amidst the tempest of political instability, navigating the turbulent waters of adversity with unwavering determination. In 2019, a beacon of hope shone upon her as she embraced the opportunity presented by the Green Plus Project, a lifeline aimed at alleviating her family's financial burdens.

Through the project's nurturing embrace, Arsema embarked on a transformative journey, honing her entrepreneurial and financial management skills. Empowered by a loan of 7,000 ETB, she ventured forth into the realm of income-generating activities (IGAs), establishing a thriving laundry and sanitation service alongside a flourishing business selling injera, all in a bid to support her family and swiftly repay the loan.

Tragically, the shadows of war descended upon Arsema's path, disrupting her progress and shattering her dreams. Her IGA came to a halt, rendering loan repayments an insurmountable challenge, plunging her family once more into the abyss of unmet basic needs and food insecurity.

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*Children of Arsema taking care of vegetables in plastic bags*

50  
*years*



SOS CHILDREN'S  
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