



Excellence Chronicles

Good Practices &
Success Stories

Fourth Quarter
2024



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES

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 third quarter of the year 2024. 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 Practices

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SOS Children's Village Harar Family Integration Initiative

Since 1980, SOS Children's Village Harar has been supporting children, young people, and families, focusing on alternative care for those who have lost parental support. In 2024, the organization pioneered a new initiative by integrating a family living in SOS Children's Village Harar into the wider community, allowing children to grow up in a more connected and socially engaged environment.

The primary beneficiaries of this initiative are the children, young people, and caregivers in SOS Children's Village Harar, with key stakeholders including the Harar Regional State Bureau of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs, police, community-based organizations, and local administrators actively supporting the integration process.

To make the initiative a success, it involved conducting family readiness assessments, identifying suitable homes, and engaging the community through awareness campaigns. This has led to the family's successful integration to improved social relationships, increased independence for the caregivers, and enhanced life skills for the children, such as self-esteem, conflict resolution abilities, and social participation.

The initiative is highly replicable, with the potential to expand to more families from SOS Children's Village Harar and other program locations as well, by integrating income-generating activities to ensure long-term sustainability and independence of the families.

The innovation of the initiative lies in shifting from a traditional village setting to a community-based care model, fostering broader social connections and reducing institutional features of care. For sustainability, the program has focused on strengthening local partnerships, supporting integrated families with income-generating activities, and promoting family integration to others. However, challenges arose, including initial concerns from families about losing support and facing discrimination from the community. This challenge has been addressed through the different awareness raising sessions and open discussions.

Key lessons learned include the importance of engaging all stakeholders in the process, securing long-term housing, and planning for unforeseen expenses to ensure a smooth transition for the integrated families. This model represents a sustainable, scalable, and innovative approach to family care, benefiting both the families and the wider community.

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Community integrated family in their new home

Maximizing Impact by Leveraging Local Resources for Children with Disabilities

The “Advancing the Rights of Children and Young Adults with Disabilities” project has been a transformative initiative in the kebeles of Dire Dawa City for the past three years. Aimed at children under 18 with various disabilities, the project has supported 626 participants, including 279 females. The initiative was designed to address barriers such as physical inaccessibility to acquire education in school, lack of public awareness, societal stigma, and insufficient educational resources. By providing disability support materials like teaching aids, constructing ramps, and conducting awareness campaigns, the project has made significant strides in improving the lives of children with disabilities in the community.

The success of this initiative was driven by the active involvement of community volunteers, the Women, Children, and Social Affairs Bureau, and experts from Cheshire Ethiopia Dire Dawa Branch, who collaborated to mobilize resources and implement solutions. Awareness campaigns and stakeholder engagement were among the crucial steps for garnering support, and a structured process was followed to identify and assist beneficiaries. This method fostered sustained communication and coordination, ensuring the project’s goals were met. Significant outcomes included enhanced mobility for six children (three females) through wheelchair provision, increased school attendance for children with disabilities, and a reduction in the financial burden on families, allowing them to allocate resources for other essential needs.

The practice has great potential for replication in other regions, as it demonstrated the power of community-driven resource mobilization and partnerships. Key success factors for replication include transparent communication, trust-building with stakeholders, and a strong focus on inclusive education and disability rights. What sets this initiative apart is its innovative approach to directly engaging individuals, not just institutions, to secure support. Sustainability was achieved both institutionally and socially. By strengthening partnerships with local organizations and public schools, the project established a framework for continued support. Social sustainability was fostered through awareness campaigns that reduced stigma and promoted societal acceptance of children with disabilities. Additionally, the economic sustainability of the project was supported by local resource mobilization, such as contributions from individuals like Dr. Ayda Zaynu, which reduced dependence on external funding and eased the financial burdens on families.

Despite these successes, the project faced challenges such as the high cost of disability aids and the time required to convince potential supporters to get involved. Overcoming these obstacles required persistence, effective advocacy, and continuous communication. Key lessons learned include the importance of clear communication to build trust, the need for community collaboration to ensure sustainability, and the recognition that local resources and individual contributions can significantly enhance project impact. The initiative has proven that with strategic resource mobilization and community engagement, transformative change is possible for children with disabilities.

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A joyful moment experiencing a wheelchair for the first time

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From Street Struggles to Entrepreneurial Success

Yisak, a 17-year-old from Hosahna, was born into a family of farmers. Seeking better opportunities, he moved to Addis Ababa five years ago, influenced by his peers. Upon arrival, he faced severe hardships, including hunger and lack of proper clothing, and spent his days on the streets around Mexico Square. Like many children in similar situations, Yisak struggled to find food, shelter, and income, making him vulnerable to exploitation and theft. The harsh realities of street life left him feeling hopeless.

In 2024, Yisak was identified and selected for the SOS Children's Village CiSS (Children in Street Situations) program due to his vulnerability and potential for reintegration into society. Through this initiative, he received business skills training and startup capital of 8,000 ETB to launch an income-generating activity. With this support, he set up a mobile shop, selling goods and services.



However, his journey was not without challenges. At one point, thieves robbed his shop, causing a loss of approximately 25,000 ETB. Despite this setback, Yisak's resilience and determination enabled him to restart his business from scratch. Thanks to the training, mentorship, and financial resources from SOS Children's Village, his small business gradually flourished.

Today, he operates a thriving street shop near Mexico Square, selling a variety of products, including biscuits, soft drinks, candy, gum, and plastic goods. With daily earnings averaging 300 ETB, he has been able to save 6,000 ETB every month through an Ekub (a traditional savings system). Reflecting on his journey, he shared, "The continuous support of SOS has helped me navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship and stay committed to realizing my future goals despite setbacks."

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A Father's Fight for Stability

Kebede, a 46-year-old single father of two daughters, faced numerous challenges after divorcing his wife ten years ago. With no stable income, he struggled to provide for his children, often working as a daily laborer. When work was scarce, he resorted to begging just to meet their basic needs. Financial instability left his family at constant risk of homelessness and hunger, with no foreseeable way out of poverty.

In 2023, Kebede was introduced to the SOS Children's Village program through Mary Joy Ethiopia, a local partner. His situation was identified as critical, and he was selected for participation based on his immediate needs and potential for self-sufficiency. Through the program, he received essential services, including shelter for his children, parenting skills training, and business skills development.

To help him secure a sustainable income, the SOS CiSS Project provided training on poultry production and startup capital of 7,000 ETB. With this support, Kebede started a small poultry business focused on egg production. Over time, his business flourished, and he now owns 50 chickens, generating a stable income from daily egg sales.

This newfound financial stability has enabled Kebede to provide food, shelter, and education for his daughters. His hard work and dedication have transformed his life, ensuring a brighter future for his children. The SOS Children's Village program played a pivotal role in his transformation by offering not only financial assistance but also the necessary skills to succeed as a business owner and parent.

Reflecting on his journey, Kebede expressed gratitude, saying, "With the support of SOS, I have been able to rebuild my life. Now, I am focused on expanding my poultry business and securing my family's future."

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Kebede proudly standing by his chickens

Rising Against Adversity

Hewan, a vibrant and determined mother of three, faced significant hardships when her husband left in search of economic opportunities, never returning. Living in a rental house and raising her children alone, she struggled to make ends meet. Her youngest child, Tsinat, could not enroll in school at the right age due to their financial situation, and the academic performance of her other children, Tesfaye and Kidist, was affected by the hardships they endured.

"I endured significant hardships in providing for my family and meeting our needs," Hewan shared. However, her journey took a positive turn when she became a member of the SOSCV SHASHE project.

She actively participated in various training sessions, learning about positive parenting, effective communication, teenage management, business skills, and the importance of saving. She also joined the Jalene SACCO, where she began saving money. In addition to receiving support, she took the initiative to volunteer as a focal person, following up on students' educational progress within her community.

One of the most impactful moments in her journey was participating in a training on the rights of persons with disabilities. Remembering her niece, who had been stigmatized and denied schooling due to her disability, Hewan took action. She worked with SOS staff and trainers to ensure her niece gained access to education.

With financial assistance of 11,000 ETB from the project, Hewan started a poultry business and began selling eggs. Currently, she sells 30 eggs daily and has also expanded into goat fattening, further diversifying her income. Her perspective on saving and income generation transformed through continuous training and skill development, helping her create sustainable financial security for her family.

Additionally, her children received academic support through school tutorials, scholastic materials, and uniforms. As a result, their grades have improved significantly.

Looking ahead, Hewan aspires to expand her goat fattening business and employ other young mothers in need of financial independence. "Now I am ready to exit the project, well-equipped with confidence and determination, and prepared to help other young mothers like me," she said.

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Hewan feeding her chickens

From Poverty to Prosperity

Feriya, a 45-year-old mother of six, has experienced a profound transformation in her life through the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) project. Living in Midega Tola town, an area severely affected by drought, she faced immense difficulties in sustaining her family.

Recognizing the urgent needs of the community, the DRA project conducted assessments that led to the introduction of a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). This initiative provided women like Feriya access to financial resources to start small businesses.

Feriya received an initial loan of 8,000 ETB, which she used to purchase three goats. Her strategy was to raise them until their value increased, enabling her to repay the loan while generating additional income. This financial support not only improved her family's situation but also enhanced her entrepreneurial mindset.

Her journey is a testament to the transformative impact of targeted financial support and skill-building. "With the right support, it is possible to overcome adversity and build a better future," Feriya said. As she continues to thrive, she serves as an inspiration to others in her community, proving that resilience and opportunity can lead to long-term stability.

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Feriya and her goats on the day she received them

Hanna's Journey to Independence

Hanna, a 23-year-old from Adama City, had always dreamed of furthering her education after completing grade 12. Like many young girls her age, she had high hopes for her future. However, financial constraints and coming from a low-income household made it impossible for her to afford college tuition. Faced with these barriers, Hanna found herself in a life she had not planned for, working as a house help to support herself and reduce the financial burden on her family.


Despite the challenges, Hanna never gave up on her dreams. While working, she kept searching for better opportunities, hoping for a breakthrough that would help her achieve the future she envisioned. That opportunity came when the Woreda Job Creation and Skills Office identified her as a candidate for a five-day life and employability skills training, part of the Sustainable Training for Employment Promotion Project (STEP) implemented under SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia, which aims to empower 3,500 youth in Addis Ababa and Adama city.

Hanna eagerly seized the chance without hesitation. During the training, she gained invaluable skills that reshaped her outlook on life. Reflecting on the experience, she said, "The topics covered were incredibly important. I learned critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, professionalism, communication, goal setting, and time-management. All of which brought me closer to the life I want to create for myself." These newfound skills reignited her belief in her potential and opened her eyes to new possibilities.

After completing the training, Hanna decided to take a bold step toward her future. She quit her job and enrolled in a three-month garment and textile program at Adama Polytechnic College, supported by STEP. Seeing this as her path to independence, Hanna immersed herself in learning skills she had never imagined. Sketching, cutting fabric, creating patterns, and sewing garments like skirts, t-shirts, trousers, and dresses. Each day, she became more passionate about her new craft, building the skills that would shape her future. Her determination, combined with the training and support she received, soon paid off. Hanna secured a job at Yetty Fashion Design, where she now earns 5,500 ETB a month. An income she never thought possible before the training. Her dream of attending university still lives on, though her focus has shifted. "With the money I save from working at the shop, I hope to attend university and study Fashion Design. This training gave me hope and optimism for my future," Hanna shared.

The impact of the STEP project has not only transformed Hanna's career prospects but also helped her discover a passion for the garment industry. "The skills I gained have made all the difference in finding employment. I have also developed a strong interest in advancing my career in garment work," she said. Hanna now believes strongly in the power of such training programs to help youth like herself. "These opportunities should be offered to more young people," she added. "Many are unemployed and lack the skills needed to secure a job. Initiatives like STEP provide the tools to change that and create a brighter future."

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Hanna focused during her new job

Overcoming the Challenges of Climate Change through Sustainable Agriculture

Hassan, a 55-year-old father of seven, lives in Midega Tola, a town that has been severely impacted by drought. For years, he relied on traditional farming methods to support his family, but as the drought worsened, his ability to provide for them became increasingly difficult. The minimal resources he had could no longer ease the labour of farming, and his efforts went unrewarded. On his one hectare of land, Hassan could only harvest 1 quintal of maize and 1 quintal of sorghum far from enough to meet his family's needs. What was once a source of livelihood became a struggle for survival.

Like many farmers in his community, Hassan found himself trapped in a cycle of hardship exacerbated by climate change. The unpredictable weather, inconsistent rainfall, and prolonged drought left him with nothing but hope and determination to continue farming despite the overwhelming challenges. For families like Hassan's, climate change is not just an environmental issue but a matter of survival.

Recognizing the severe impact of climate change on families like Hassan's, SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia, in collaboration with the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA), conducted a comprehensive assessment to identify the needs of the community. The results highlighted the urgent need for farmers like Hassan to receive support in modern agricultural practices to better adapt to the shifting climate and enhance their productivity. In response, the initiative aimed to assist 37,692 disaster-affected individuals in the Midega Tola district of the East Hararghe zone in 2024.

Hassan as one of the beneficiaries, received tailored support through the DRA project, which included training in modern crop production management, access to high-quality seeds, and improved farming tools. The goal was not just to increase his yields but to equip him with the knowledge and resources to sustain his farm and provide for his family in the face of ongoing environmental challenges.

The transformation in Hassan's farming practices was profound. With the training, he learned how to apply better management techniques that improved his productivity. The introduction of improved maize seeds and the use of appropriate farming tools allowed him to farm more efficiently, overcoming the challenges posed by the drought. His harvest then improved from just 1 quintal of maize and 1 quintal of sorghum to 8 quintals of maize and 7 quintals of sorghum. This increase in yield not only sustained his family's food security but also provided him with an opportunity to generate additional income.

Through this targeted intervention, Hassan's farm was able to adapt to the challenges of climate change, providing him with a more sustainable source of income. As he continues to reap the benefits of his hard work and the DRA project's support, Hassan is committed to paying it forward. He actively participates in community training and discussions, sharing the knowledge he has gained with fellow farmers. He emphasizes the importance of collaboration and learning from one another to ensure that everyone in the community has the tools they need to thrive.

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Hassan standing proudly by his crop



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