



# Excellence Chronicles

Good Practices &  
Success Stories

Third Quarter  
2024

50  
years



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 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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# Empowering Kinship Caregivers Through Adult Learning

A standout best practice within the Kinship Care Project is the implementation of an adult learning approach, which has profoundly empowered kinship caregivers and enhanced the overall effectiveness of the initiative. This method focuses on providing tailored training that addresses the unique needs and circumstances of each caregiver, ensuring that the training is not only relevant but also immediately applicable.

By offering practical, real-world skills, the program equips caregivers with essential tools for effective child support. For instance, training sessions cover topics such as child development, gender equality and inclusion, and effective parenting strategies. This targeted education allows caregivers to better understand the specific needs of the children in their care, facilitating improved interactions and outcomes.

The project promotes group learning sessions that foster social interaction among caregivers. This creates a supportive community where individuals can share their experiences, challenges, and strategies. As caregivers connect with one another, they build strong networks that help combat feelings of isolation and provide emotional support during difficult times.

Moreover, the adult learning approach enhances caregivers' awareness of available resources within the community, enabling them to navigate systems effectively and access crucial services. This knowledge empowers caregivers to make informed decisions regarding their children's needs, further improving outcomes.

The skills and insights gained through the training contribute to sustainable change, as caregivers can continue to apply what they have learned long after the formal sessions conclude. This long-term impact is particularly significant, as it fosters a culture of continuous learning and adaptation within families.

Furthermore, it empowers caregivers to become advocates for their children, equipping them with the skills to communicate effectively with schools, social services, and other community organizations. This advocacy enhances caregivers' confidence and ability to navigate complex systems on behalf of the children they support.

Finally, by teaching coping strategies and problem-solving skills, the adult learning approach helps build resilience among caregivers. They become better equipped to handle the challenges and stresses associated with kinship care, ensuring a more stable and supportive environment for the children.

In summary, this holistic approach ultimately leads to improved outcomes for both caregivers and the children in their care, making it a best practice worth emulating in similar initiatives.

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# Re-engaging School Dropouts in Tabor Sub-City, Tilte Kebele

The Grow Equal project implemented in Hawassa City administration through SOS Children's Village Hawassa was initiated with a goal to reduce the rising rates of school dropouts in Tabor Sub-city, specifically within Tilte Kebele. The project aimed not only to bring children who had already dropped out back into school but also to create an environment where education, particularly for girls, was prioritized and valued by the community.

The target group for this initiative was made up of children, young women and men who had dropped out of school due to several reasons. Financial difficulties, lack of family support, or their parents deeply ingrained societal attitudes towards education being some of the reasonings.

Key to this initiative's achievements was the collaboration of numerous stakeholders. Project staff collaborated closely with the local community to conduct assessments and identify the root causes of school dropouts. Community volunteers supported awareness-raising campaigns, and schools played a crucial role by welcoming the children back into classrooms and providing the academic support they needed. To better understand the challenges faced by the children and their families, project staff conducted door-to-door visits to gather information and engage directly with the households. These visits allowed the team to understand the specific barriers each child faced, whether financial, social, or cultural. From these initial insights, the project implemented a series of assessments, including an initial evaluation and a core assessment, to identify the key obstacles to education and tailor solutions accordingly.

One of the project's most important strategies was the ongoing engagement with parents and caregivers. Through a series of awareness-raising activities and dialogues, the project aimed to shift long-held cultural attitudes, particularly around the education of girls. Many families had not fully recognized the value of education, either due to financial constraints or deeply rooted beliefs about gender roles. In cases where financial barriers were preventing children from going back to school, the project stepped in to provide necessary support. This included helping families with the costs of scholastic materials, uniforms, and in some cases, covering school fees.

The results of these combined efforts were tangible. By September 2024, 62 children of which 29 are girls had successfully rejoined the education system, marking a significant achievement for the project. This represented 13.7% of the targeted children, a notable success given the challenges involved.

The potential for up scaling this initiative is high. With dropout rates still a concern in many regions, this project has demonstrated a clear path forward for addressing the issue. The success of the interventions in Tilte Kebele provides a model that can be replicated in other areas facing similar challenges.

To ensure the sustainability of the initiative, the project emphasized the importance of long-term engagement with families, schools, and local stakeholders. Continuous follow-ups with the children, their parents, and their schools have been arranged to help monitor progress and address any emerging challenges.

One of the biggest challenges faced during the implementation of the project was changing the mindset of parents. Many parents had low awareness of the importance of education and held traditional views that limited educational opportunities for girls. Overcoming these attitudes required patience and persistence. Several key lessons emerged from the project's journey. First, raising awareness and maintaining continuous dialogue with families was crucial. Second, it became clear that tailored interventions were the most effective. Every child and family had diverse needs, and addressing those specific challenges, was essential to ensuring success. Third, the collaboration between stakeholders was vital. The combined efforts of project staff, local community members, CBOs, schools, and the kebele administration created a strong network of support that made the project's success possible.

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# Success Stories

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# Building Financial Futures in Arba Minch

In collaboration with SOS Iceland, SOS Children's Village Ethiopia launched a three-year initiative in February 2024 titled "Empowering Families and Communities for the Care and Protection of Vulnerable Children and Youth" in Arba Minch Town. From the start, the project demonstrated resilience, innovation, and a commitment to transformative change.

The project began with gap assessments to identify implementing partners, particularly Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs). Despite the absence of existing SACCOs in the area, the team discovered six informal saving groups with no legal structure. These groups were engaged and expressed strong interest in merging to establish formal cooperatives.

Collaboration with the town cooperative office played a pivotal role. The office facilitated a general assembly for group members, enabling them to vote on merging and elect leadership teams. It also guided the SACCOs in drafting bylaws, preparing accounting materials, and fulfilling legal requirements, leading to the licensing of two SACCOs: Barkot and Chamo.

With legal status secured, the project organized a visit to Shashemene City for SACCO leaders to learn from established cooperatives. Two days of training on leadership, finance, and grant management further enhanced their capacity. SOS Children's Village Ethiopia also supported the SACCOs by recruiting accountants, providing office furniture, and transferring 600,000 birr in sub-grants to kickstart loan services for caregivers.

By March 2024, SACCO caregivers had saved 172,656.65 birr collectively. Combined with grants, these savings enabled 80 caregivers to secure loans after entrepreneurship training. They are now thriving as entrepreneurs in diverse businesses, including injera baking, vegetable sales, and mini-shops.

This success highlights the power of collaboration, particularly with government stakeholders such as the town cooperative office and kebele administrations. Their support, including free office space and guidance, was instrumental in the project's swift progress.

In just one month, informal saving groups transformed into legally recognized SACCOs, addressing financial needs and fostering long-term community resilience. This initiative demonstrates that with strong partnerships and commitment, sustainable change is achievable.

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*Training for SACCO Leaders*

# The Story of a Young Artist's Comeback

Anteneh is a 21-year-old young man living in Hosaena, a small town in the Hadiya Zone of Central Ethiopia. Born with an innate talent for art, he had always dreamed of using his creativity to express his emotions. Bright, driven, and full of potential, he was known for his passion and dedication to anything he set his mind to. But life, as it often does, threw him an immense challenge that would change everything.

At just an early age, Anteneh lost his father, the pillar of the family. As the eldest son, the weight of responsibility immediately fell on his shoulders. With a mother who did not work and younger siblings to care for, he found himself in the role of the provider. Gone were the carefree days of youth; instead, he worked tirelessly at any job he could find just to make ends meet. "Life was extremely hard," he recalls. The creative young man who once saw art as his escape was overwhelmed by the struggles of survival. His paintbrushes and canvases sat untouched, believing that art was no longer a luxury he could afford to pursue.

*Anteneh with his painting*



Life has a way of offering second chances when we need them most. Anteneh crossed paths with the SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia Action for Right Accountability and Development Assurance (ARADA) project in Hosaena. An initiative launched to support vulnerable youth and children in Hosaena. Focused on creating a caring community and protective environment, the project set out to make a difference in the lives of 1,000 children, 35 youth, 240 caregivers, and local organizations, bringing hope to those who had lost it with the support of SOS Switzerland.

Having been selected as one of the thirty-five young people to receive support, Anteneh was given access to life skills training, fiscal management courses, and youth-focused leadership development. These initial steps began to reshape his mindset and build the resilience he had long since lost. Then came the breakthrough. As part of the project's support, Anteneh was provided seed money to launch an income-generating activity. Without hesitation, he decided to return to his first love for art and turn it into a business.

The training had reignited his spirit, and the stories he heard from other young people in the program many of whom faced similar struggles only fuelled his determination. With a small investment in art supplies, he began creating again. He went door to door, visiting local businesses like cafes and restaurants to display his artwork. His sincerity, coupled with his powerful story, resonated with the community. Word of mouth spread quickly, and soon he was receiving commissions and selling his pieces regularly. As his business grew, so did his confidence. Anteneh even had the honour of participating in the Grand Jubilee of SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia, where he showcased his artwork and presented a heartfelt poetry performance, expressing his gratitude for the support that had helped him rediscover his artistic purpose.

Today, Anteneh is not only a successful artist but a symbol of resilience in his community. He is admired for his commitment to his passion, using his creativity to support his family and inspire others to do the same.

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