



Excellence Chronicles

**Good Practices &
Success Stories**

**Second Quarter
2024**



**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 second 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

Second quarter
2024

50
years



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VILLAGES
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Empowering Communities Through Education and Collaboration

In January 2020, a special program called SOS Children's Villages Education and Empowerment started in Gondar. This program was made to help 1200 students and 1000 caregivers. It lasted for three years and got money from the Helmsley Charitable Trust. The program also wanted to make local groups like CCSCs (Community Care and Support Coalitions) and SACCOs (Saving and Credit Cooperatives) stronger.

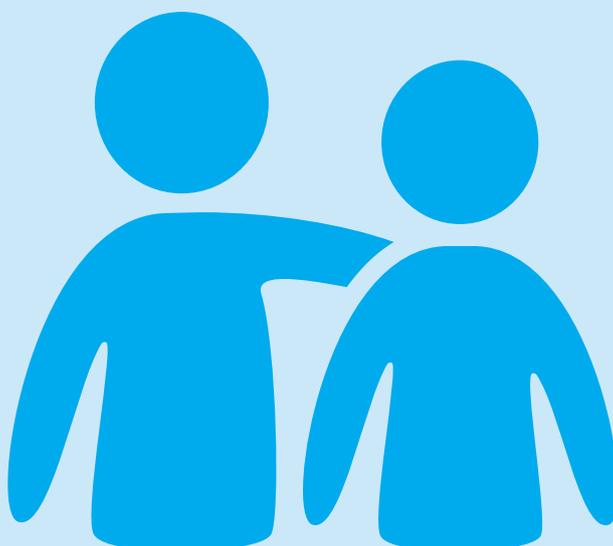
Before the EEP decided to help Ayer Tena Keble CCSC, which is one of its four partners, the CCSC wasn't working properly, didn't have official approval, and didn't even have an office to work in. So, the EEP stepped in to help by giving the CCSC training and teaching them how to use local resources. They also sent one person to assist them and provided important materials like computers and printers for their office and activities that help them make money. Because of this support, the CCSC became fully functional and able to do its job of helping the community.

The CCSC is a very important helper for the organization. They help by picking the right people and volunteers for the project, checking on how things are going, and giving office space to SACCO. They also started fun activities and groups to help the community, going from 12 to 451 members (268 of them are girls). These members actively participate and help out. They also collected money from members and other places to build things they can rent out, which helps them earn money every month.

The CCSC is a group that helps children who need extra care and also helps people in the community. They get help from other groups and kind people. To make sure they always have enough money to keep helping, they have started projects that can earn money. The CCSC is doing well because they get help from the government, support from an organization called SOS Children's Villages, have good leaders, and work well with others.

Key lessons learned include establishing strong partnerships with key stakeholders and organizations to generate commitment towards achieving the stated goals. It is recommended to continue capacity building activities for CCSC committee members and to conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to track the performance of organizations to achieve their goals of supporting vulnerable children and community groups.

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Disability is not an Inability

Launched in Bahir Dar in the year 2020 with funds from NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development) Together for Inclusion project of SOS Children's Village's Ethiopia aims to empower people with disabilities. The mission being to break the chains of misconception and create opportunities for those who had long been marginalized.

To address and reach persons with disabilities, financial literacy trainings, advocacy, awareness raising campaigns, workshops, community dialogues and a partnership with Kestedemena Saving and Credit Association was facilitated. Together, they set out to re-write the negative narratives that have long been believed about persons with disabilities. Since its launch, seventy-four participants were welcomed and have since been active members of Kestedemena.



Beneficiaries at the SaCCO office

The participants were given the chance to re-write their stories. After learning new skills and gaining confidence, they were finally able to get loans without having to wait six months. They were able to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and build their own success stories. Realizing the impact, the authorities of Kestedemena and the local community truly believed in engaging people with disabilities (PWDs). They worked hard to make the community center a welcoming and accessible place for PWDs to learn and grow. They built ramps and other improvements to make it easier for everyone to get around. Most importantly, they treated PWDs as individuals, respecting their talents and dreams, and encouraging them to follow their passions.

Since then, most participants have used their loans and newfound skills to make positive changes in their lives. Some have built their own homes, while others have opened small businesses, using their entrepreneurial spirit to sell products and services. After seeing the impact, Kestedemena vowed to sustain this change. They promised to extend their service beyond the present and into the years ahead. The participants, on the other hand, were no longer overlooked in their communities. They became inspiring examples, showing everyone that nothing could hold them back.

While the initiative successfully reached many individuals with disabilities, it faced significant challenges. Many people with disabilities feel isolated and believe their condition limits their potential, often due to societal perceptions and personal experiences. There was a lack of awareness about the abilities of people with disabilities and a misconception that disability equals inability. This led to a cycle of dependency and untapped potential. The initiative addressed these issues by working with both individuals with disabilities and their communities to raise awareness, challenge negative narratives, and promote inclusion.

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Success Stories

Second Quarter
2024

50
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VILLAGES
ETHIOPIA



Contents

- I. The Resilience of the Human Spirit**
- II. Pushing Through Against all Odds**
- III. Hope in the Midst of Uncertainty**
- IV. Stronger Families, Stronger Economy**
- V. Small Business, Big Impact**
- VI. Willing to win**

The Resilience of the Human Spirit

Hanna's life is a journey of both hardship and resilience. Born in Debre Elias, Gojjam, Amhara Region, she experienced the joy of family while it lasted as it was followed by the pain of her parents' separation. As if that was not enough for her little heart to bear, at just nine years old, she got severe eyesight complications. Unable to afford immediate medical attention, Hanna's sight gradually faded, leaving her in darkness.

Her mother, already struggling to raise three children alone, felt helpless. The weight of Hanna's medical bills was unimaginable, forcing her to make a difficult decision. With hope, she reached out to a visually impaired girl in their neighbourhood who had connections in Addis Ababa. Together, they embarked on a journey into the unknown, leaving behind their familiar life in search of a brighter future.



Hanna at the school library studying with her friends

In Addis Ababa, Hanna's new friend became her guiding light. She introduced her to Braille, opening a world of literacy and learning. Hanna dedicated herself to mastering the script, spending two years at the Misirach Disability Training Centre. Equipped with this newfound skill, she enrolled in Dagmawi Minilik Primary School, determined to pursue her education.

However, the path ahead was not easy. Balancing the demands of school having in mind the financial struggles of her family became a daily challenge. Despite the obstacles, Hanna's spirit remained unbroken. With hard work and dedication, she reached 9th grade. It was then that SOS Children's Village Addis Ababa launched a project known as Together for Inclusion with the school that Hanna attends in the year 2021.

One of the aims of the project is to improve education for girls and boys with disabilities to make an inclusive educational impact. It was at this time that Hanna was identified as one of many participants in the school. Whether it was faith or luck Hanna did not know how to react to the good news. She was almost on the verge of giving up on her education when SOS Children's Village's Addis Ababa came to the rescue.

Hanna's educational journey was transformed by her participation in the project. Equipped with essential tools like braille paper, recording materials, and a school bag, she was able to focus on her studies. The financial assistance also eased the burden of living expenses, allowing her to concentrate solely on her education. This intervention not only provided tangible resources but also instilled a sense of hope and strength in her. Hanna, once struggling to afford school supplies in the face of rising costs, now thrives as a top student. Her success demonstrates the power of support and the resilience of the human spirit.

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Pushing Through Against all Odds

Betty, a strong young girl born and raised in Yeka sub-city, Addis Ababa, faced challenges from a young age. Born deaf, she struggled to understand the world around her and express her own feelings. Her parents' limited income and subsequent divorce further complicated her upbringing, leaving her mother to shoulder the burden of raising her alone.

Despite the hardships, Betty's mother a hardworking vegetable vendor, found hope by enrolling her in "Afencho Ber Deaf Association Kindergarten." There, Betty flourished developing fluency in both sign language and written language. However, her mother's meagre income made it difficult to cover Betty's education costs, transportation, and basic needs. Determined to provide her daughter with the best possible future, she kept her struggles hidden and persevered.



Betty studying at the library for her upcoming exam

As Betty transitioned from primary to secondary school, a life-changing opportunity awaited her, a miracle that would ease most of her worries. That was when she joined Dagmawi Minilik Secondary school in the year 2022. To her and her mother's surprise soon after her enrolment and class commencement, the school in collaboration with SOS Children's Village Addis Ababa launched the next phase of the project known as Together for Inclusion.

One of the aims of the project being to improve education for girls and boys with disabilities to make an inclusive educational impact. Betty was soon identified as a project participant making her and her mother's worry lighter. Even though Betty's mother did not share her struggles with her daughter, Betty had always known in her heart she might need to stop attending school to support in generating income for their survival. That unspoken fear between mother and daughter was lifted when Betty was granted all necessary education materials, transport fees and a temporary meal support for her time in school.

This has made a huge difference for both her and her mother. Their relationship is stronger, and they are both happier and hopeful. Her mother's income covers their needs, as they are now free from the stress of covering for Betty's education. Betty is an inspiration to us all. She is showing the world that with hard work and determination, anything is possible. She is living proof that no obstacle, even a disability, can stand in the way of achieving one's dreams.

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Hope in the Midst of Uncertainty

Although born visually impaired, Tsion is a bright and hopeful young girl. At birth, when her case was confirmed, her family was determined to find medical help, seeking treatment at local hospitals. Unfortunately, there was no solution available. Undeterred, they travelled to Addis Ababa, from their hometown of Gurage Zone believing in the possibility of better opportunities.

At Dagmawi Minilik Hospital, they consulted with various doctors who, while unable to offer a cure, emphasized that Tsion's vision impairment did not limit her access to basic rights. They encouraged her mother to enrol Tsion in the Misrach Disability Training Centre, where she could learn Braille and receive the resources necessary to adapt and live a fulfilling life.

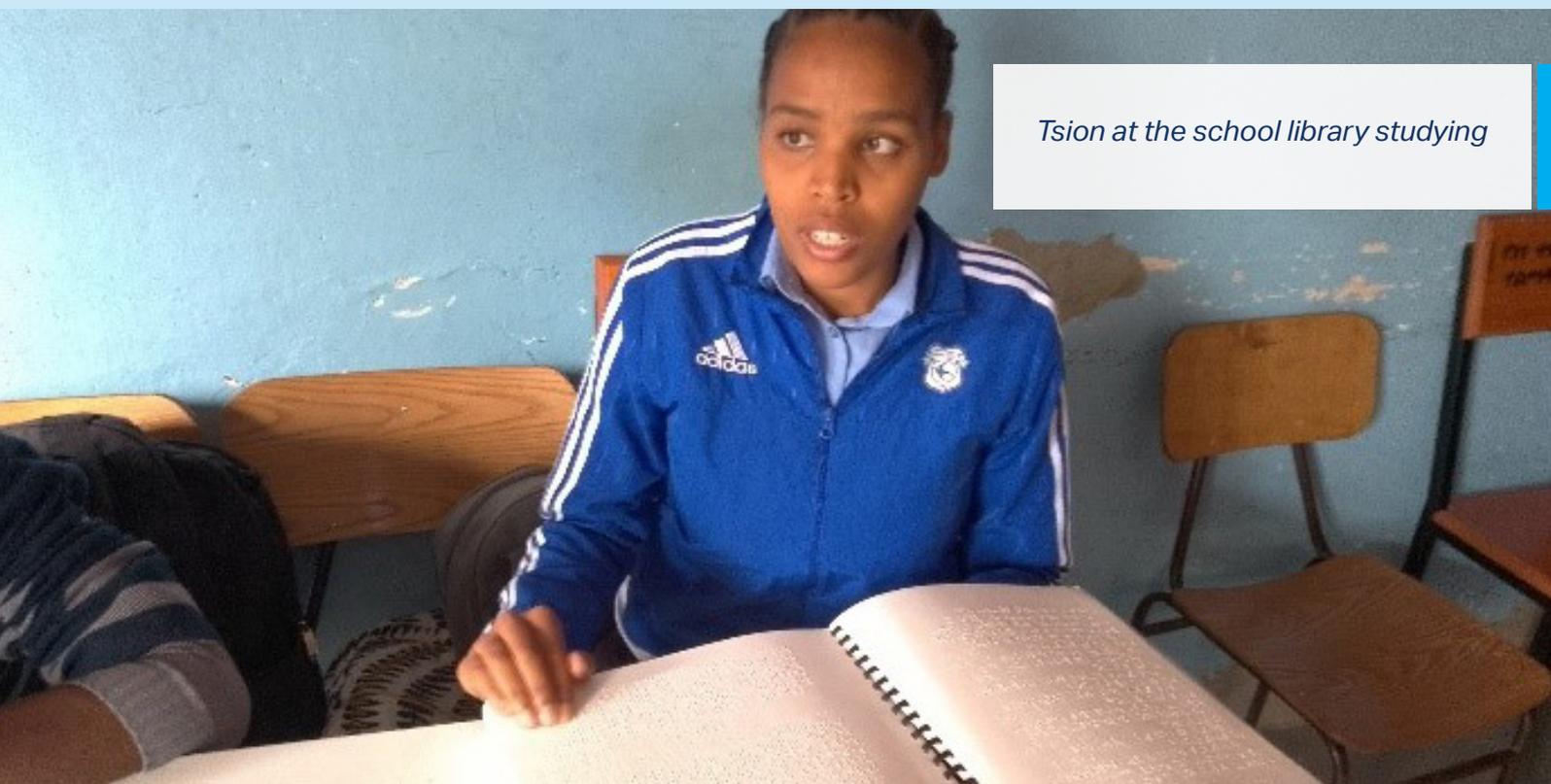
Faced with the difficult decision of separating from her daughter, Tsion's mother made the heartbreaking choice to send her to live with her sister in Addis Ababa. The family's limited finances prevented them from relocating together, but they held onto hope for a brighter future. Despite her sister's low income as a vegetable vendor, the family believed in the possibility of a miracle for Tsion.

Everything was hard for Tsion at first, being away from home and family as well as having to live with her disability was tough for her young age. Enduring all her pain, she was able to transfer to Dagmawi Minilik Secondary School after finishing a few years of schooling at her previous one.

It was there that she was presented with an opportunity not many are fortunate to have. SOS Children's Village Addis Ababa had then launched a project known as Together for Inclusion in partnership with her school. Recognized as project participant, she received comprehensive support to facilitate her education. This included essential equipment like slate and styles, braille papers, a recorder, a school bag, and a cane. Her transportation costs were covered, and her food and housing expenses were also taken care of during her time at school.

With Tsion's education secured, her family could finally breathe a sigh of relief and start planning a brighter future. Tsion shared with our project co-worker how much she missed her parents while living with her aunt. "I knew they had no choice," she said, "but I always worried about how she would raise me, especially as I got older." Thanks to the support she received, including school supplies and extra equipment, Tsion has been excelling in her studies. She is now at the top of her class, proving that the help she received has made a real difference in her life.

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Tsion at the school library studying

Stronger Families, Stronger Economy

Mrs. Dinknesh Demeke is a 32-year-old woman who lives in Kebele 01 in Debre Tabor city. She is married and has five kids. Her family has a hard time because they don't have enough money to buy things they need like food, school supplies, medicine, and clothes.

To help take care of her family, Dinke and her husband did small jobs every day like cleaning and weaving, but they didn't make much money. So, Dinke started looking for people and groups that could help her family live better.

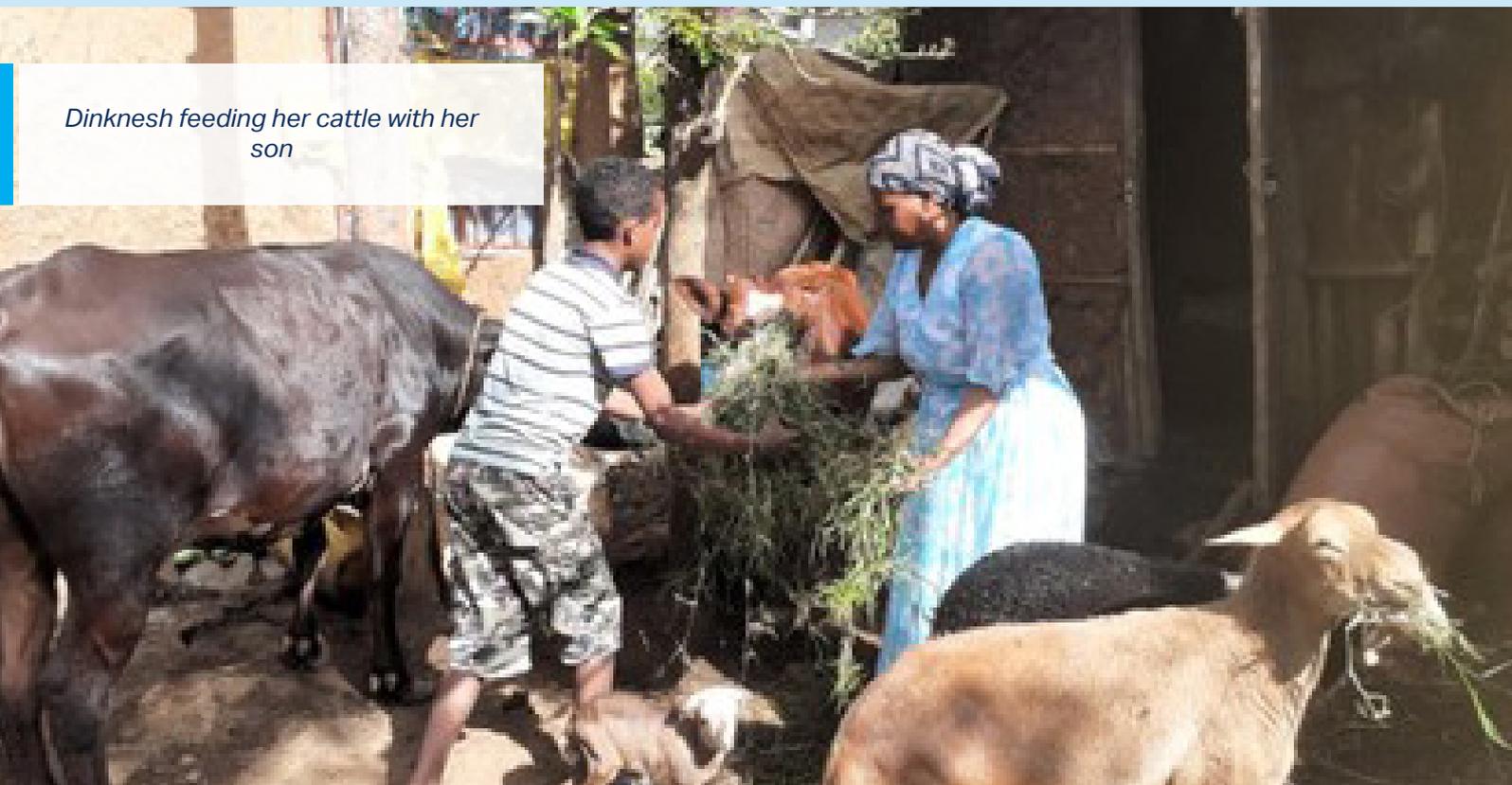
Luckily, at that time, SOS Children's Villages started a special 3-year project in Debre Tabor City called the Education and Empowerment Project (EEP), with the support from the Helmsley Charitable Trust. This project helps kids stay in school by giving support to them, their families, and their communities. Dinke and her family were chosen to get help because they met the project's requirements at Community Child Support Centers (CCSCs).

The EEP project addresses family needs and gaps and then offers capacity-building training and material support to children and caregivers. This helps families live better and helps kids do better in school. For example, after Dinke's family finished their training, they got a milk cow. The cow helps them make money so they can buy important things they need.

Dinke was really excited to start her small dairy business, and it turned out to be a great success. Besides providing enough milk for her family to drink every day, she now makes ETB 7200 each month by selling the extra milk. Her family also makes money by raising sheep and selling injera. Dinknesh saves some of her money at the local SACCO (Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization). Because of the help from the EEP program, Dinke's family's life has gotten much better, and they now have more money and feel happier.

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Dinknesh feeding her cattle with her son



Small Business, Big Impact

Lensa lives in the town of Nekemte, in the Bekenisa Kebele area. She is 33 years old and has three children. She didn't have her own business to take care of her family and was thinking about how to make their lives better. She only made money by helping neighbor traders each day, and she learned a lot about trading from them. Even though she worked hard, she couldn't earn enough to buy her children basic things they needed or school supplies. Life was very hard and challenging for Lensa and her children.

The Nekemte Educare Project, part of SOS Children's Village Jimma, has really helped Lensa and her kids. The town's office that helps women and children identified her as one of the right beneficiaries after doing an initial assessment of her family's life conditions and found that she was eligible. So she got to join the project and get the support she needed.

Because she had some experience, they made a business plan for her to start a small business. The business plan was prepared for petty trading income-generating activity. Having admitted her to the project, various capacity-building trainings like parenting skills, financial management skills, and others were provided for her.

Besides, the project had facilitated her a startup capital so that she could change her families' lives. Subsequently, she started trading various items of vegetables, fruits, and spices to the local market. Not only this, but the project has also been closely supporting and following up on her progress. With the support she received, she has been extensively working on her small-scale business and has easily adapted to the income-generating activity.

Right now, her income has been improved; she is able to fulfill her children's needs and they are all happily going to school. She also started saving some of her money. To keep making money in the future, she decided to make her small business bigger and open a shop.

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Lensa selling vegetables at local market



Willing to win

Mekame is a mom of four kids who lives in a village called Arada Kebele. Her husband's modest income as a government guard struggled to meet the family's needs. The couple's determination to improve their situation made them ideal candidates for the ARADA project.

Upon enrollment, Mekame benefited from a range of training, including parenting skills, business development, financial management, and sustainable agriculture. Recognizing the potential of her backyard, she transformed it into a productive vegetable garden with the project's support. Equipped with essential tools, seeds, and training, Mekame successfully cultivated a variety of vegetables. The project gave her tools and seeds for vegetables like lettuce, broccoli, beetroot, cucumber, onion, kale, cabbage, and carrots. She and her husband planted the seeds and were amazed by how many vegetables they could grow. They started eating fresh vegetables and even sold some to make money. Last year, she made 4,000-birr from selling vegetables.

The income generated from vegetable sales in her local market, combined with a 15,000-birr loan and additional business support, enabled Mekame to expand her venture into a small retail business. This newfound financial stability has empowered her to provide better care for her family and envision a brighter future.

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Mekame showing her garden to her neighbors

50
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