



Women from the EU funded Breaking the Barriers programme celebrating in South Omo

## One year on: Breaking the Barriers in Ethiopia

Christian Aid, with funding from the European Union, is implementing the 'Breaking the Barriers' programme, which is promoting women's entrepreneurship in sustainable energy chains in Oromia and SNNP regions.

The aim of the project is to improve rural women's working, living conditions and well-being through their access to Sustainable Energy Technologies (SET) and related sub-products and services. It is envisioned that this in turn will strengthen women's social status.

The project is implemented through local partners in South Omo and Borena, while Christian Aid is implementing in Konso through its field office. The project started in February 2018, and will be implemented over the following 42 months.

### Key achievements

To date, 970 people have been selected and organised into 35 producer groups, 69 marketing and

distribution groups and 6 solar enterprise groups in 6 districts.

These groups are known as Women's Led Sustainable Energy Enterprises (WLSEEs). The WLSEEs have all received assistance and have been registered by the local authorities and given certification.

As part of capacity building within the programme, project staff were given training on business planning and financial management development. Staff have assisted WLSEEs to develop their own business plans and increased their understanding of financial management.

The project has supported all WLSEEs to save a 5% contribution, as part of the saving and loans scheme. Following this, 70% grant money was transferred to the WLSEEs based on their business plans.

Grant agreements have been signed between the project and WLSEEs in the presence of government

## Building climate and meteorological services

Christian Aid, together with the National Meteorological Agency of Ethiopia, Farm Africa and Mercy Corps, have developed the Climate and Meteorological Service Advancement in Ethiopia/CMESA-E to integrate climate services into priority sectors which are highly sensitive to climate extremes and changes.

CMESA-E aims to develop a National Framework for Climate Services. NFCS is spearheaded by the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, to coordinate and identify priorities for developing climate information and services tailored to different users in the country.

The NFCS will serve as a platform for institutional coordination and co-production among relevant technical departments at a national and sub-national levels, tailoring hydrological and meteorological information to support sector decisions and needs.

It will provide a legal framework that clarifies institutional mandates at a national level for the generation of weather and climate information, its tailoring, communication, use and evaluation of climate services.

It will act as a bridge between available climate science and user needs at a national, sub-national and local levels by continuously identifying user needs for climate services.

It will act as a link between climate knowledge with action on the ground to maximise the application of weather and climate forecasting products. We expect that the NFCS will be endorsed by high level government officials and ratified by parliament.



representatives.

All WLSEEs have been able to acquire land to construct shade for the storage and production of products. The process of construction has started.

Two micro-finance institutions (OMO and OCSSC) have been identified to work with the project to manage the 25% loan to the WLSEEs.

With the support of Ethio Resource Group, a project partner, 175 improved cookstoves producers and 30 solar enterprise groups received training on the production of improved cookstoves and the installation and maintenance of sustainable energy technology.

### **Drought Recovery Support in South Omo – DEC Appeal Programme**

The impacts of the 2015/2016 El Nino induced drought significantly peaked in the dry season in March 2017, having devastating effects for the communities in South Omo dependent on livestock for food and their incomes.

It was in response to this crisis that Christian Aid in partnership with Action for Development (AFD) and Women Support Association (WSA) implemented a one-year drought recovery project in Malle and Benatsemay districts of South Omo. The response focused on humanitarian assistance as well as recovery interventions to benefit more than 50,000 people.

As a consequence, this project has improved access to safe water, provided unconditional cash for the most vulnerable groups, provided support to protect and improve livelihoods of the most vulnerable and provided small business grants to improve the income of women self-help group members.

### **Key achievements**

Some of the key achievements from the programme include:

Improved access to potable water as well as sanitation and hygiene services for 11,925 individuals.

Potable water supplies closer to the communities has reduced time spent by women collecting water from 2 hours per round trip to less than 15 minutes, which has significantly eased

the burden on women and allowed them to engage in other productive activities.

An increased access to a safe water supply in the areas has reduced the prevalence of waterborne diseases.

The project has supported 3,164 poor farmers and agro-pastoral households to resume their farming activities.

We have supplied drought tolerant seeds and hand tools, and provided training on crop production and pest control and the construction of small-scale irrigation schemes.

### **Veterinary services and small grants**

Working through partners we have improved the quality of veterinary services and fodder production which as a result has improved the production and productivity of livestock for 5,299 households.

The project has provided grants and technical support to 1,215 women helping them to engage in small business. Vulnerable women who are members of self-help groups are able to access credit and save.

815 group members were also supplied with 5,106 chickens and chicken feed. Members of these groups have benefited from the sale of eggs and as a consequence have an improved diet for their families.

Unconditional cash transfers were also provided to 790 vulnerable households and vulnerable groups (including women, children, elderly people, and people living with disabilities). This has supported the most vulnerable to meet their essential needs.

Finally, a cash for work scheme has supported 450 households. Cash payments were provided in exchange for labour for range land management and water pan construction.

The project has proved particularly successful due to the active engagement of local communities and officials throughout the project life-cycle. They have played a critical role in targeting beneficiaries, site selection for construction of sites, monitoring progress and ensuring critical feedback to the project.



### **Breaking the Barriers 'I expect to get a better income and lift myself from poverty ...'**

Kuye Gehano, 50, is a single mother with three daughters living in Konso.

Kuye strongly believes that gender inequality in her community has a very real impact on her life, and her children's lives.

As she explains, 'In Konso culture, I am voiceless among my husband and close families as I don't have a son. Because of this I got divorced. My husband left our area and moved to Karat Town where he got married to another woman'.

As a result, currently Kuye's family depends on small-scale farming activities and the little trading that she is able to do.

As she explains, 'My daughters are not going to school as I have a limited income which is not enough to live by and pay school fees'.

Describing her journey so far in a Women's Led Sustainable Energy Enterprise (WLSEE) group, Kuye explains,

'A year back, Christian Aid came to our area and provided community awareness (about the Breaking the Barriers programme). That day I was filled with joy as I could see another opportunity in my life to grow and live a better life'.

'Following the selection, with my fellow friends, we were organised as a WLSEE group. As a group we have now finalised our contribution, registered and received a grant from Christian Aid Ethiopia for our work and started constructing shade for production and storage [for their new businesses]'.

As Kuye looks to the future, she tells us about her hopes.

'I expect to get a better income and lift myself out of poverty through actively working with my group'.

## Case Study: 'We can now get potable water within a 5 to 10 minutes walk'.

Gaytelo Gareto, 45, and her 6 children are among some of the people who have benefited from the newly constructed water scheme that Christian Aid and its partner, Action for Development (AFD), developed in the South Omo village, Aleze in Malle district.

Previously, communities in Aleze Village did not have access to a potable water supply. As fetching water is the sole responsibility for women in her community, Gaytelo used to walk for more than two hours on a daily basis to the nearby river, which they had to share with livestock and wildlife.

As she explains, 'Because of contaminated water from the river, my children had been suffering from different diseases', says Gaytelo.

Christian Aid through the DEC appeal has supported AFD to construct a water catchment structure. This has made a significant difference to Gaytelo's family and others in her community.

'We can now get potable water within a 5 to 10 minutes walk'. Gaytelo continues, 'This water is clean and fresh and our children are now healthier'.

Like Gaytelo, 2,424 members from Aleze Village are also benefiting from the water source. The community contributes 5 birr on a monthly basis. This funds the maintenance of the catchment structure, and ensures that the water scheme is sustainable.

## Enhancing access to Education

Zuway Dugda district, 200km south of Addis Ababa, is one of the most drought prone areas of the country, where food insecurity is rife. This area was seriously impacted by the 2015/2016 El Nino-induced drought and most households continue to suffer the continued impact.

Communities are experiencing serious food and water shortages, as well as high levels of hunger and malnutrition due to consecutive crop failures and deterioration in the health of livestock.

In response to the dire needs of the

communities, Christian Aid and its partner HUNDEE Oromo Grassroots Initiatives implemented a school feeding programme, providing nutritious meals for over 6,000 children through our Band Aid Trust, ICCO and Christian Aid Appeal funded work since 2016.

In addition, 1.8 million litres of drinking water were distributed to the drought affected schools and surrounding communities.

The school feeding programme supported families who were unable to provide food and send their children to school. As Abdulkadir Abaye a school principal from one of the target schools, Buchamo Primary School, explains,

'This area is drought prone and the community doesn't produce enough food and children don't eat enough food at home. Since the feeding programme started we have witnessed an increased enrolment of students in this school'.

'Drop out has significantly reduced. Overall attendance and performance of students have improved, they come to school on time and stay. They don't have to feel the discomfort due to hunger, and rather can focus on their education'.

## Looking to the future

With the feeding programme ending in June 2019, the challenge now remains how to maintain the students improved education performance and increased school attendance.

Local Education Office focal person Mohammed Bedasso reports,

'We fully recognise the challenge and we are currently closely discussing with the community so that they can continue to send their children to school.'

As a follow-up to the school feeding programme, Christian Aid is also bringing a safe drinking water supply to the target schools and the surrounding communities.

Accessing safe water reduces the time women and children spend fetching water from long distances. Moving forward, this will support students to have more time for their studies and maintain increased school attendance.



### Students in Adinsho Kori Primary School, Zuway Dugda district queuing for their school lunch

The students' report that they are extremely happy with their school lunches.

They report that it means that they can concentrate at school, and no longer feel hungry.

They now have the energy to learn.

As Genna Kedir, a 12 year old grade two student at Adinsho Kori Primary school explains,

'I have one brother and two sisters. Three of us attend this school. I like the meal at the school. We don't eat lunch in our home, so we are happy that there is meal at school'.

Genna lives with his parents who are farmers, who like many others in the area have struggled to feed their families due to the recent droughts.



Members of the Bona Self-Help Group meet in Bena Tsemay District, South Omo. The Bona Self-Help Group is one of 68 self-help groups which have received seed capital as part of the DEC's drought recovery programme. The programme aims to build community resilience to climate change. (Photo: Christian Aid/David Mudachi)

### Contact us

Christian Aid Ethiopia  
PO Box 20172 code 1000  
Ethio-China Friendship Avenue  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

### Call

+251 11 50536850/1/2

### Email

[christian-aid@ethionet.et](mailto:christian-aid@ethionet.et)