



# Ethiopia – long term changes in children's lives



**PROJECT:** Health, Water, Sanitation, Education and Livelihoods projects



**TIMEFRAME:** 2007 – 2021



**LOCATION:** Yilmana Densa, Banja and Libo Kem Kem Area Programmes,  
Amhara Region, Ethiopia



**GOAL:** Sustained wellbeing of children, especially the most vulnerable

## Introduction

Flooding, crop failure, disease and conflict: our programmes in the Amhara Region faced these, and other, disasters during their 15-year lifetime responding to emergencies to prevent loss of life. Many schools were dilapidated, poorly run and attendance was low. Now, as Banja, Libo Kem Kem (LKK) and Yilma Densa (YD) programmes come to an end we celebrate the increasing resilience of children and families across the three programme areas, made up of 32 communities and nearly 720,000 people.



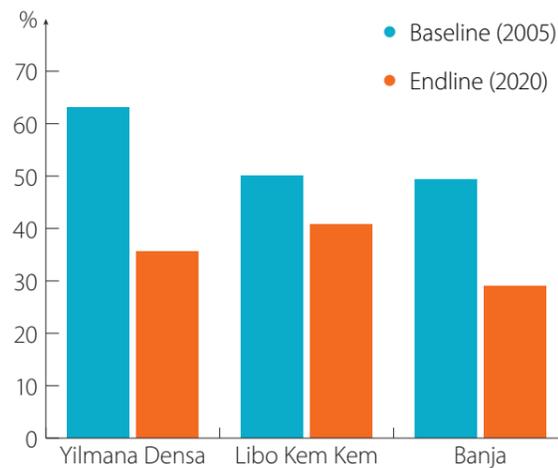
## Improve and protect food supply

Families were trained in backyard gardening and agricultural technologies. Over 1000 hectares of degraded land has been rehabilitated through Farmer Managed Natural [Tree] Regeneration.<sup>1</sup> In Yilmana Densa, 100,000 indigenous tree seedlings were planted to mitigate problems, including soil erosion, landslides and the effects of climate change. 400 saving groups<sup>2</sup> were formed to provide access to credit. In Banja, by the end of the programme group members saved more than £118,000 to share and use for essentials like food, medicine and clothes. In YD nearly 1,000 children and their families were assisted when disasters struck and 1,225 children recovered from malnutrition.<sup>3</sup>

The smallest reduction in stunting was in Libo Kem Kem, although access to a year-round food supply is now 85% in LKK and has nearly doubled since 2016. In addition, dietary diversity improved in LKK from 15% in 2012 to 52% by the end of the programme, which indicates that progress is still being made. Other factors beyond household food security can affect this progress. And LKK recorded a more moderate improvement in use of improved water sources in comparison. The evaluation also found that there was still more that could be done in improving mothers' and caregivers' feeding practices, increasing food production and diversifying household income.

**ABOVE:** Before Shola Village Saving Group in 2018, the community there were paying 50% interest on loans. Now, says Priest Abebe Taye, "The saving group is important and useful. Thank you World Vision for this life changing work." © 2021 World Vision

**FIGURE 1:** Percentage of child with chronic malnutrition (stunting) in Yilmana Densa, Libo Kem Kem Area and Banja Programmes, Ethiopia.



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**"The saving group is important and useful. We take loans for buying seeds and fertilisers for our farmland, school materials for our children and also to do some business. At times of emergency we no longer sell our assets as before, we take a loan from our saving."** – Priest Abebe Taye

## Results

The final evaluation reports from our programmes<sup>4</sup> showed that the biggest reduction in chronic malnutrition was seen in YD, where stunting was at 63% in 2005, dropping to 35.6% in 2020.

The YD evaluation found that activities such as poultry and vegetable production, and village saving and loan groups are helping the people to save part of their income and take loans when necessary. Additionally, training in food preparation and use helped improve the nutrition of children and pregnant mothers.

<sup>1</sup>FMNR Project model Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration | Development | World Vision International (wvi.org)

<sup>2</sup>Savings for Transformation project model 'Savings for Transformation' a sustainable platform for accessing savings and small loans | Senegal | World Vision International (wvi.org)

<sup>3</sup>The PD Hearth nutrition project model was used to treat the children. Positive Deviance Hearth Plus (PDH+) | Nutrition | World Vision International (wvi.org)

<sup>4</sup>Final Evaluation reports of LKK, YD and Banja conducted in December/January – first report draft submitted February 2021

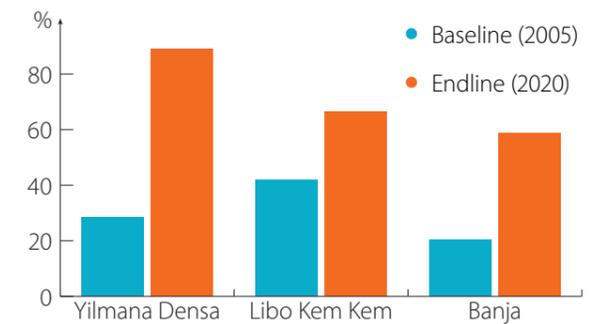
## Improved water and sanitation access

We improved or constructed 224 drinking water sources, wells, springs and boreholes, and trained community groups and technicians to ensure sustainability. More than 13,000 people attended sanitation campaigns and constructed or improved their own toilets<sup>5</sup> and young people joined Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - or WASH -clubs in their schools. We followed the Community Led Total Sanitation project model (CLTS) which is now adopted by the government of Ethiopia.

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**"We have 25 members in the club. We create awareness on sanitation, hygiene, and menstruation. The club together with the school is working to create permanent means of income for hygiene supplies."** – Yemikir Mitiku, teacher at a school in Libo Kem Kem



**FIGURE 2:** Percentage of population using an improved drinking water source in Yilmana Densa, Libo Kem Kem Area and Banja Programmes, Ethiopia.



## Results

Access to improved drinking water sources improved in all programmes, most notably in YD, which saw an increase from 28.6% in 2006 to 89% in 2020. LKK achieved 99% target for becoming open defecation free and diarrhoea prevalence in children under 5 has reduced by 20 percentage points across all programmes during their lifetimes.<sup>6</sup>

**ABOVE:** School WASH club members from left to right: Alemitu, 14, Lielit, 14, and Tsedeniya, 14. "Girls usually feel ashamed when they see period. Because of this many girls in our school miss classes, some of them even drop out of school. Now things are getting better since this School WASH club is opened," says Tsedeniya. © 2020 World Vision **ABOVE RIGHT:** Women delighted with the spring. Over 32,000 people have benefitted from 107 new, clean water sources, installed with World Vision during the lifetime of the Banja programme. "Wild animals were also drinking from the same water source and contaminating the area with their urine and dung. Our children were frequently exposed to waterborne disease. Now we are protected." – Silli Bekalu, above in blue. © 2021 World Vision

<sup>5</sup>The CLTS approach | Community-Led Total Sanitation (communityledtotalsanitation.org)

<sup>6</sup>The final evaluation recorded the prevalence of diarrhoea as: 1.5% (LKK) 8.3% (YD) and 11% (Banja)

## Sustaining change in education for all children

During the early years of the programmes we provided infrastructure, teacher training and strengthened school management. Community members began to fund 60% of the cost of school construction in the last part of the programme lifetime. More than 200 new classrooms were built and at least the same number were renovated. Libo Kem Kem reported student attendance increasing from 65% in 2013 to 96.6% in 2020. In Banja, just 43% of children of secondary school age attended in 2007 but by 2020 this had risen to 85%.

In the latter stages we focused on improving literacy and building capacity in early years education through Unlock Literacy and Learning Roots project models.<sup>7</sup> 182 reading camps started, 2,000 schoolteachers were trained, and more than 70 Early Childhood Development centres were established.

### Results

Amazingly, in 2005 only 3.4% of children completed preschool in Libo Kem Kem – it is now 51%. We have also seen an improvement of 20 percentage points or more in literacy. One of the reasons was the voluntary input and support of community members in helping to set up reading camps alongside the commitment of schools and teachers.

FIGURE 3: Change seen in children's attendance at school in Libo Kem Kem.

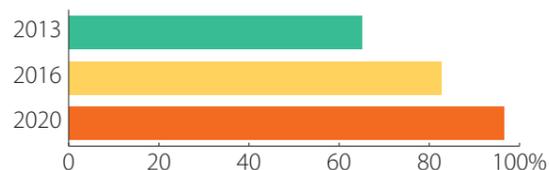
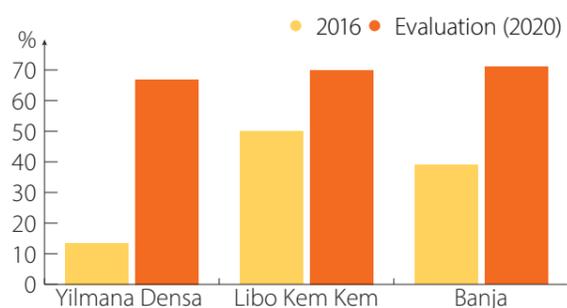


FIGURE 4: Children who can read with comprehension age 11 (grade 5) using FLAT Tool. (Yilma Densa used STAR method).



To enable child wellbeing into the future, the government of Ethiopia has given legal status to Community Care Coalitions (CCCs), made up of community members and leaders<sup>8</sup> who fundraise to help vulnerable children, elderly people, and those with disabilities. Activities have included building a house for the elderly, supplying school materials, and supporting University students. They also work with authorities to protect children from violence and harmful traditional practices, including preventing child marriage. Last year, in Banja alone 26 CCCs collected £9,482, which helped vulnerable children with teaching aids, school uniforms and food support. Across all three programmes, over 11,000 children were assisted to attend school, enabling some children to re-join school. Unsurprisingly school dropout rates are now at or near zero.<sup>9</sup>

"In restoring hope to the poorest of the poor children and families ...children who are from economically poor families are able to attend, equal to other students from economically better families."<sup>10</sup>

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**"We are very grateful to World Vision for organising us to support our own community. We have got so many experiences from World Vision. Thus, we are ready to continue our work even if World Vision leaves."** – Takele Tsgaw, a committee member (LKK)



ABOVE: Members of a community care coalition meeting in Libo Kem Kem. From left to right: Gebrehiwot (Manager of the Kebele Administration), Mola (Committee Chairman), Takele (Inspection) and Ashagerech (Cashier). © 2020 World Vision

<sup>7</sup>In our education project models we followed Learning Roots (LR) aimed at children 3–6 years old. Learning Roots | Education | World Vision International (wvi.org) Alongside LR we followed Unlock Literacy to promote literacy skills of early grade students (grade 1 to 4) Unlock Literacy | Education | World Vision International (wvi.org)

<sup>8</sup>Set up originally to support people made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, the goal is to achieve improved quality of life for the most vulnerable boys and girls in a community, CCCs typically contain community members such as parents, community leaders such as Faith leaders and business leaders together with government representatives.

<sup>9</sup>CCCs work with other community-based groups such as Parent Teacher School associations to encourage parents in their children's education. Available data shows that drop out rate is now zero in LKK and 2.7% in Banja, a drop of almost 10 percentage points for both programmes.

<sup>10</sup>WV Ethiopia Technical Programme Evaluation Report Education and Life Skills Technical Programme (2016-20)



## Escaping from child marriage

Child marriages are often arranged by parents or caregivers. It is unlawful in Ethiopia, but agreements between the parents of the bride and groom are secret and remain unknown until the wedding day. Community Care Coalitions (CCCs) and child rights clubs are empowered to address this issue. In this practice adolescent girls are usually forced to marry much older men. It is a source of shame and dishonour if girls are not chosen quickly by potential grooms. Through CCC and child club sessions, girls were made aware of these beliefs and encouraged to report when they heard about them to child right club leaders or teachers. Meanwhile teachers and CCC leaders were trained to handle reported cases quickly.

### Meskerem's story

**In Banja AP these interventions helped 18 girls, like 15-year-old Meskerem,\* to escape from an arranged marriage to an older man.** When Meskerem heard about the plans for her future, she informed the school child rights club leader. With the school principal, the CCC leaders and the local government women's affairs office, they were able

to cancel the marriage arrangement. Meskerem explained, "Last February I heard my brothers talking – my father [had agreed] to give me to one of his best friend's son. When I asked him he told me the wedding will be after a month. I begged him to cancel the marriage but he was not willing; he told me he already received a gift from the groom's family. I remember crying the whole night and being angry with my father, because he decided such a thing without even asking me. The next day I told everything to the child right club leader in our school. I did so hoping they will do something so that I will continue my education because I want to go to university one day. Then after a few days, our school director and another person came to our house and discussed with my father.

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**"At first my father didn't accept their idea but after several days they convinced him. Now I am happy because the wedding is off and my father told me that he stands for me. I am promoted to grade 7."** – Meskerem, 15

ABOVE: Meskerem, 15, from Ethiopia. © 2018 World Vision

\*Name changed to protect her identity.



## Conclusion

Our national level evaluation in education and life skills concluded that, “The better the stakeholders, parents, community’s involvement the better the project outcomes achieved.”<sup>11</sup> From the early years of our programmes in Ethiopia this has been true. Child wellbeing has been boosted by the involvement of parents, community leaders and collaboration with the Ethiopian government, throughout the lifetime of the programmes. This has given us the best chance of meeting World Vision’s global goal, the sustained wellbeing of children especially the most vulnerable. Those children are now supported by the community structures we have strengthened, such as the CCC and Savings Groups to ensure the gains are sustained and that progress continues.

## Learning and next steps

By working alongside the Ethiopian government on these project models, the technical capacity of Government on project models such as CLTS has meant that the benefits have expanded beyond the area World Vision is working in to surrounding areas. We are also really excited to have launched two new programmes south of the capital Addis Ababa called Lemo and Boke. Using our experience we have begun work with communities to promote climate smart and nutrition sensitive agriculture practices; enable families to engage in productive and resilient livelihoods; Improve access to drinking water; and tackle child rights issues, including child marriage and sexual violence.

**ABOVE:** Villagers meet together showing their vegetables and poultry production after they were trained and supported by Banja Area Programme. © 2018 World Vision

<sup>11</sup>World Vision Ethiopia Technical Programme Evaluation Report Education and Life Skills Technical Programme (2016-20)

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At World Vision, our focus is on helping the most vulnerable children, in the most dangerous places, overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian faith, we’ve worked together with communities, partners, local leaders and governments, for over 70 years, so that children – of all faiths and none – are empowered to experience fullness of life.

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**COVER:** Yosef and the spinach plantation, part of the nutrition smart agriculture in Banja AP that has helped his family. © 2021 Aklilu Kassaye / World Vision

