

A Snapshot of Views and Experiences

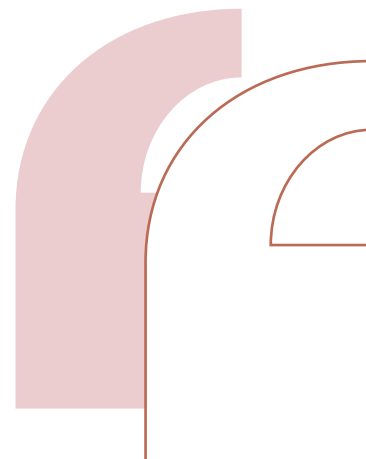
Piloting new Development Approaches through
the MDG Achievement Fund in Ethiopia

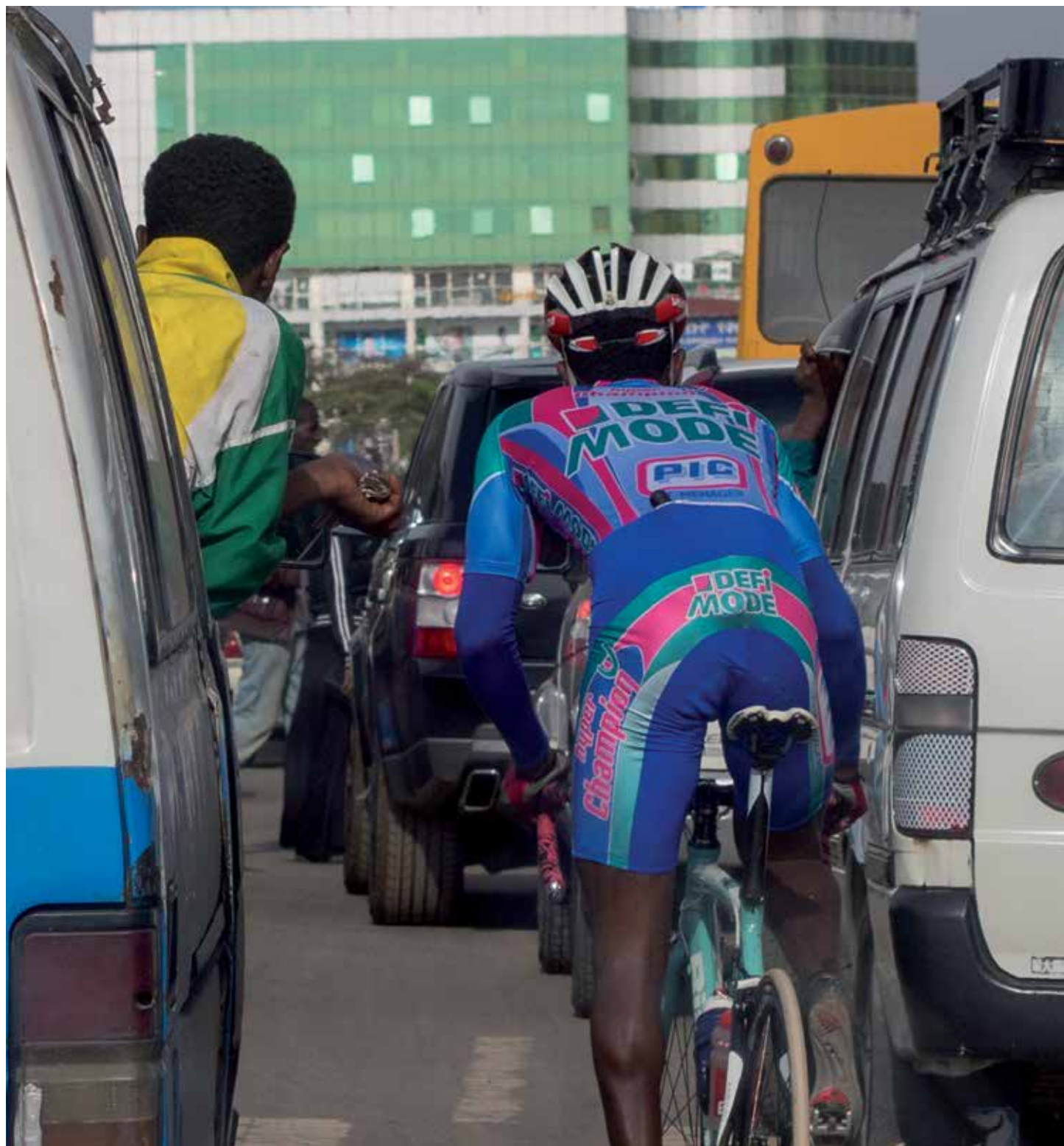




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Supporting a Bold Development Agenda

With double-digit economic growth and significant human development leaps recorded over the past decade, Ethiopia is clearly a country on the move. Industry, services and agriculture have all grown consistently, while the percentage of people living below the poverty line has fallen from 45.5% (1995/96) to 29.6% (2010/2011). The country is also on track to meet six of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Experts believe this optimistic picture is largely a result of the government's bold development agenda, which is centred on investing in people and a green economy.

Yet, the vast majority of people (80%) still live in isolated rural areas and are largely dependent on rain-fed agriculture for their survival. Many are vulnerable to natural disasters and have limited access to productive resources or opportunities such as education and health. There is also a social aspect to vulnerability, which often makes it harder for people to escape poverty for good. This involves the lack of trustful relationships alongside isolation from community networks as well as the biased beliefs held by some groups.

Over the past three years, with support from the MDG Achievement Fund, the government of Ethiopia and the United Nations (UN) tested new approaches for involving some of the

most vulnerable people more actively in the country's development process. At the heart of this effort has been to rally, often for the first time, the expertise and resources of different sectors around common goals. Through five programmes, new development approaches were piloted with impressive results. In addition to adopting a holistic, cross-sectorial approach, each programme focused on investing in individuals' capabilities and social opportunities. They also strengthened entire communities through economic and self-help groups. Similarly, institutions were supported and policies shaped to better respond to the needs of the communities they serve.

Leaving No Woman Behind

As the face of poverty in Ethiopia is often female, the government and the UN brought relevant sectors together at federal, regional and district levels to assist thousands of women to dramatically expand their individual capabilities and social opportunities. Women gained better knowledge and access to health care. They developed literacy and life skills alongside income generating activities. Meanwhile, regular community conversations challenged detrimental practices and changed attitudes towards gender relations and issues such as child marriage and genital mutilation.



“Ethiopia has a very bold and ambitious national development strategy, with two pillars. One is to become a middle income country by 2025. The second is to become a carbon neutral and climate resilient economy by 2025.” – Eugene Owusu, UN Resident Coordinator.

Building Resilience in the Face of Climate Change

Likewise, pastoral communities who are Ethiopia's most vulnerable to climate change, benefited from a rounded package of services to diversify their incomes, improve rangelands, water facilities, and their access to animal health care. This was the first time such a concerted approach was tested. It demonstrated how resilience can be quickly built by giving people access to new skills and strengthening economic

groups and self-help organisations. It also demonstrated that pastoralists are more than mere survivors, leading traditional lifestyles as often perceived. Their business vision and initiative make them active market oriented actors.

Strengthening a Valuable Chain

All the new approaches tested focused on furthering existing government plans and priorities. With agriculture accounting for 80% of employment, a key government priority



is transforming this sector to reduce poverty and power economic growth. How to develop promising agro-industries, such as edible oil, was demonstrated by strengthening every aspect of this industry's value chain.

Securing Children's Health

Tackling the longstanding issue of child malnutrition is another key development priority. Under the well-established National Nutrition programme new ways of targeting the main factors causing child malnutrition in Ethiopia today were tested. These factors include lack of knowledge among parents and the need for greater therapeutic support as well as a national information system for better managing and responding to malnutrition. The programme also successfully piloted a new method of producing affordable local infant food. As a result, the National Nutrition programme now has a greater focus on complementary food and has adopted

other tried and proven good practices.

Tapping Ethiopia's Cultural Riches to Beat Poverty

Meanwhile, a new approach for promoting creative and cultural industries as a way of reducing poverty and enhancing intercultural coexistence was also demonstrated. New management plans for cultural sites were devised, while a reinforced legal framework is now set to strengthen the culture sector with parliament ready to consider the newly developed Cultural Industry Investment Code and the Cultural Industry Development Strategy.

As the five MDG Achievement Fund programmes in Ethiopia come to an end, this booklet presents the views and experiences of those involved. It captures the key impacts and implementation insights, while highlighting stories of change from across the country.

The MDG Achievement Fund

Set up in 2007 with a contribution from the Government of Spain to the United Nations system, the MDG Achievement Fund works in support of citizens and their organisations as well as governments to implement programmes that help advance the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) worldwide.

The MDG Achievement Fund in Ethiopia

Since 2009, the Fund has supported five joint UN programmes in Ethiopia worth a total of US\$26.5 million. Coordinated jointly by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the UN Country Team, these efforts piloted new ways of including the most vulnerable people more actively in Ethiopia's development process. A range of government institutions were crucial in devising and implementing these programmes. The lead institutions were: the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Environment Protection Authority, the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The five programmes also drew on the technical expertise of ten UN Agencies: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO).

Charting Programme Highlights

Enabling pastoral communities to adapt to climate change and restoring rangeland environments

Piloted ways of bolstering the resilience of pastoralist communities against climate change on a number of fronts. This inter-sectoral approach involved support to restore rangelands, manage community water facilities, diversify livelihoods and access to better animal health services.

MDG-F Funding: 4,000,000

Lead Ministry: Ministry of Agriculture together with the Environment Protection Authority

UN Agencies: UNDP, UNEP and FAO

MDGs: 

Children and food security

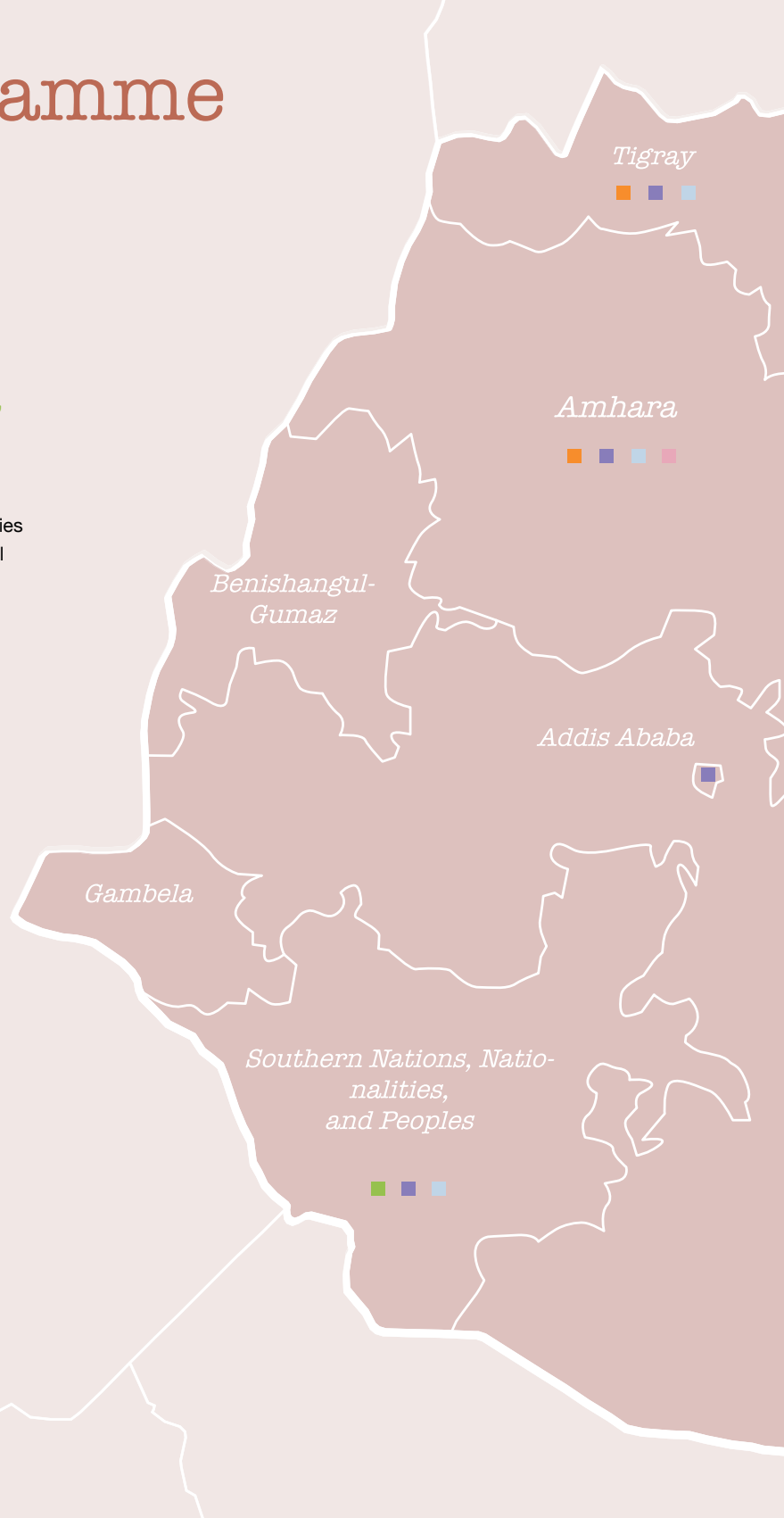
Strengthened the National Nutrition Programme by testing ways of targeting the main factors causing malnutrition in Ethiopia today.

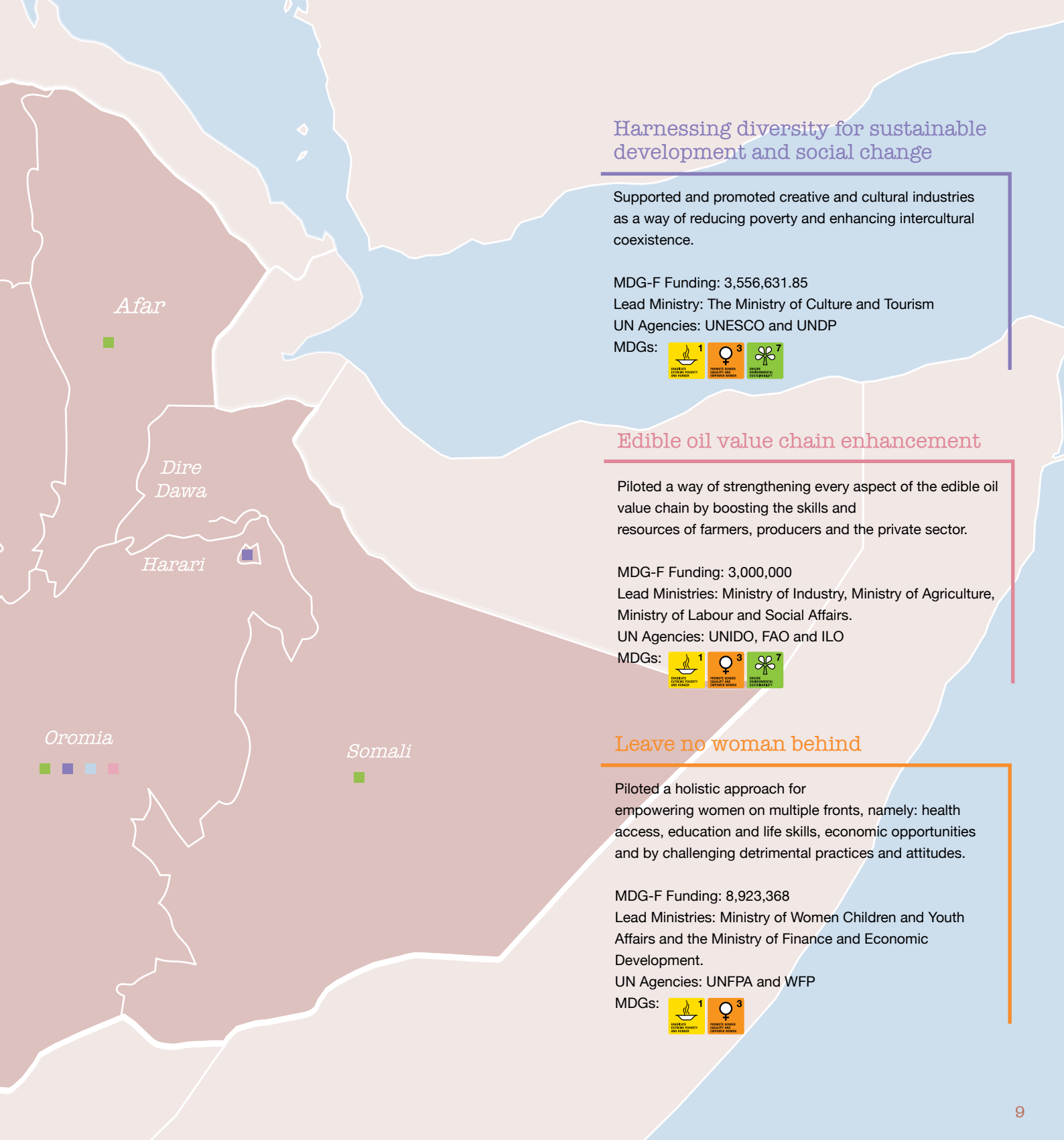
MDG-F Funding: 7,000,000

Lead Ministry: The Ministry of Health

UN Agencies: UNICEF, WFP, FAO and WHO

MDGs:  





Harnessing diversity for sustainable development and social change

Supported and promoted creative and cultural industries as a way of reducing poverty and enhancing intercultural coexistence.

MDG-F Funding: 3,556,631.85
Lead Ministry: The Ministry of Culture and Tourism
UN Agencies: UNESCO and UNDP
MDGs:



Edible oil value chain enhancement

Piloted a way of strengthening every aspect of the edible oil value chain by boosting the skills and resources of farmers, producers and the private sector.

MDG-F Funding: 3,000,000
Lead Ministries: Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
UN Agencies: UNIDO, FAO and ILO
MDGs:



Leave no woman behind

Piloted a holistic approach for empowering women on multiple fronts, namely: health access, education and life skills, economic opportunities and by challenging detrimental practices and attitudes.

MDG-F Funding: 8,923,368
Lead Ministries: Ministry of Women Children and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.
UN Agencies: UNFPA and WFP
MDGs:



Leaving No Woman Behind

Many Ethiopian women face considerable obstacles to living a full and productive life. These include limited access to services and livelihood opportunities as well as discriminatory attitudes and practices.

“The interest of improving one’s life standard is increasing, everyone has understood that women should not stay at home rather they should participate in all activities as men do.” – Tsega Debesay, Accountant for a Women’s Cooperative in Tigray and programme beneficiary.



The *Leave No Woman Behind Programme* directly assisted 141,374 women to concertedly tackle some of the key obstacles holding them back. By strengthening the government’s efforts to promote and protect human rights, as well as by mobilising women’s groups and entire communities, the programme:

- **Engaged** communities in conversations and collective action against detrimental practices such as child marriage and genital mutilation.
- **Imparted** life skills, such as literacy, to women.
- **Improved** women’s access to reproductive health services by providing health posts with needed equipment and medicines. And, by raising awareness among communities about the importance of regular health checks, HIV screening, and family planning.
- **Enabled** women to improve the food security and financial standing of their families through livelihood start-up loans and training.

Conversations for Change

Under the cooling leaves of Acacia trees, the communities of Adigba and Gonder (Tigray) are having a heated debate about child marriage. Atsedie Sahle, herself once a child bride, is arguing that girls' bodies are not ready for marriage and that it is healthier to allow them to develop fully first. Her own daughter will go to school and make her own decision about marriage after she's 18, Ms Sahle says.

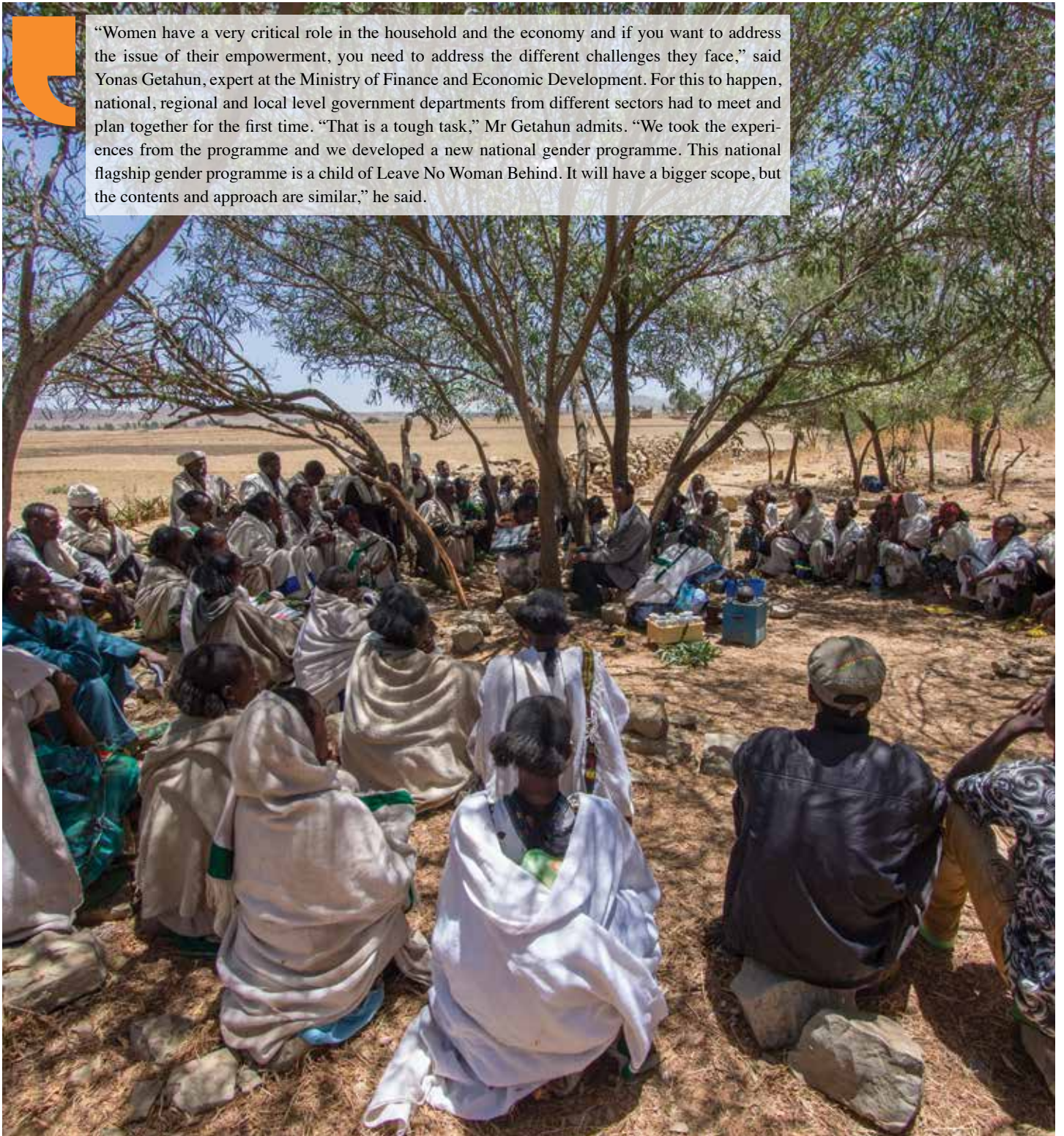
While one young man remains sceptical, most of the women and men gathered nod and voice their agreement. "When we first started these discussions, it was too hard to make the antagonists believe because they thought we were trying to change our culture," Ms Sahle said. "But after having discussed for years about the difficulties that early married girls can face, the community is agreed that girls under 18 shouldn't marry," she said.

Regular conversations like these in more than 50,000 communities in Tigray and Amhara, where the programme was active, have positively influenced entire communities' attitudes towards issues and practices that have traditionally held women back. Facilitated by trained community members, the conversations involve local leaders, men and women.

These conversations proved a vital part of the holistic programme, which seeks to empower women in all aspects of their lives: physically, economically, socially, and academically. With a loan from the cooperative to buy a cow, new life skills, and access to family planning and other health services, Ms Sahle says she has benefited from all four aspects of the programme. "If only one aspect had been offered to us we would have benefited only in that area," she said. Through the holistic approach of the programme she and many other women in her community have instead been empowered on many fronts, including socially.



“Women have a very critical role in the household and the economy and if you want to address the issue of their empowerment, you need to address the different challenges they face,” said Yonas Getahun, expert at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. For this to happen, national, regional and local level government departments from different sectors had to meet and plan together for the first time. “That is a tough task,” Mr Getahun admits. “We took the experiences from the programme and we developed a new national gender programme. This national flagship gender programme is a child of Leave No Woman Behind. It will have a bigger scope, but the contents and approach are similar,” he said.



Community Conversations Changed Attitudes

51,310

communities conducted regular conversations guided by trained facilitators. These monthly events stimulated dialogue and consciousness on HIV and AIDS and reproductive health issues. They also addressed harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, teeth removal, and child marriage, among others. Thousands of people participated across the districts covered by the programme. Testimonials reveal many parents who are now refusing to allow their daughters to marry early or undergo genital mutilation.

Women Gained Confidence through Improved Life Skills

119,600

women and teenage girls learnt to read and write as well as other important life skills. Testimonials from the participants said the training boosted their overall confidence as well as their ability to manage their new livelihood endeavours.

More Women now seek Medical Advice

846

health workers were trained on reproductive health, gender and HIV/AIDS in addition to the general training they receive from the Ministry of Health. This training, coupled with stocking health posts with the needed equipment and medicines, increased communities' confidence in local health centres. In-turn, increased knowledge among women about reproductive health means many more are now seeking regular medical advice.

Families Improved their Financial and Food Security

100,000

women took part in business skills and technical training, while 8,000 received loans to start new livelihood activities, such as livestock fattening, enabling them to increase their incomes, improve their families' food security and boost their resilience against financial shocks.

NEXT STEPS

Inspired by the programme results, the government is now planning to roll out a similar effort on a wider scale. Support from additional donors such as the United Kingdom's DFID, Norway and Sweden has been secured and the lives of many more women are expected to improve. Meanwhile, holistically addressing the key obstacles facing women in Ethiopia today will continue to be the backbone of the government's efforts.

Building Resilience in the Face of Climate Change

Fourteen per cent of the population lives along Ethiopia's arid southern, eastern and western borders in pastoralist communities. Geographically isolated, they have little access to development schemes and government services. With droughts now occurring regularly as a result of climate change, they are even more vulnerable to poverty.

"We used to see a wind blow from one direction, a cool breeze. We used to follow this wind because it told us of rain coming. Now there is wind from four directions and even when it whistles to us we don't trust it anymore."– *Ahmed Muhammad, pastoralist.*



The *Enabling Pastoral Communities to Adapt to Climate Change and Restoring Rangeland Environments* programme piloted practical ways of bolstering the resilience of pastoralist communities against climate change. A cross-sectorial approach involved support to restore rangelands, manage community water facilities, diversify livelihoods and access to better animal health services.

Overall, the programme demonstrated how very remote pastoralist communities can become significantly more resilient against climate change when different sectors come together in a concerted response. A final programme evaluation revealed that working together in this way strengthened links between different sectors. This meant more holistic support to communities, who in-turn felt more commitment to taking actions forward. It also demonstrated that pastoralists are more than mere survivors, leading traditional lifestyles as often perceived. With technical support, training and coaching, they are market oriented with business vision and initiative. The programme:

- **Introduced** a bundle of services that enabled communities to manage common water facilities, recover local rangelands, improve animal health, and diversify their livelihoods through community cooperatives.
- **Increased** knowledge about climate change and the ability of government and pastoral institutions to respond to its impacts.
- **Integrated** new coping methods for pastoralists into national, regional and district development policies and plans.

New Cooperatives offer Vital Safety Net to Pastoral Communities

“Just like a farmer who cultivates the land, I cultivate these animals,” says widowed mother of two, Kadra Abdi, while feeding her goats outside her house in Madawayn – a small village close to the Somali border. Until recently everyone in this pastoral community at the end of a sandy road, hours drive from the nearest town, was completely reliant on the wellbeing of their own herds to survive. When increasingly severe droughts struck, people sometimes lost everything and often fell into poverty. But, with the newly formed Madawayn Livestock Marketing Cooperative, their options for earning an income have expanded – creating a vital safety net for the 400 households here.

Ms Abdi’s community cooperative is one of 35 supported through programme. When they decided to form their group, they gained support to open a bank account and training in animal fattening and marketing. The cooperative leaders also learnt business skills and how to network and negotiate with buyers. Now, the cooperative buys local livestock for fattening and resale, making a profit for its members along the way.

There are other advantages too. “Before the cooperative, people might try to save the animals from dying on the road by using a vehicle to transport them to the market, but this was very expensive,” said Muktar Yousef Hasan, the cooperative chairperson. “Now the

cooperative buys right in front of our homes,” Ms Abdi explained. The cost of transportation to the distant markets now falls to the buyers who come to Madawayn once a price has been agreed with the cooperative. “Everyone has made a profit ... Even the brokers have benefited from the direct sale,” she said.

“I am very happy because now I can work and make money, while I have my family nearby in my own area where I live,” Ms Abdi said. She says the involvement with the committee has made her feel supported by the community and she encourages other women to also get involved. “It is beautiful for women to work so that they get out of hunger and feed their children and benefit themselves,” she said.



The marketing cooperative is one of several groups recently formed in the village through the programme. Other committees are working on restoring rangelands and managing a community water facility. Motivated by their own success and the general range of support being provided, the Madawayn cooperative is now confident to look at expanding their business activities by opening the village’s first shop to sell foodstuffs and basic items like clothes and shoes.



Community Managed Water Facility Improves Lives

Most of time water was the problem, says community leader Osman Mohammed. The people living in Farah Liben would regularly have to haul water over 12 kilometres and when the rains failed, filling the reservoirs meant hiring expensive trucks to bring it from even further away. With support from the programme, this community was one of many to set-up a water facility. “Once we had the information,” Mr Mohammed explained “we started to collect money and hired a digging machine. When the machine broke we continued to dig by hand. That is how we built it,” he says of their new community managed water reservoir. Each family is given a coupon and is allowed to draw a set amount of water. This is the only community managed water facility in the area. Others are owned by individuals “who can charge what they want”, explained Mr Mohammed. “Even though the problem isn’t completely gone, we are now much better off,” he said.



Better Access to Water, Animal Health, and Livelihoods

35

new cooperatives are enabling hundreds of pastoralists to diversify their incomes through fresh ventures such as bee keeping and livestock marketing.

300,000

seedlings were distributed to communities helping to recover vital rangelands.

83

new community managed wells, water harvesting facilities and one reservoir have increased access to drinking water in 17 villages.

12

animal health clinics and vet posts were rehabilitated, while more than 192 government vet staff and 190 community animal health workers benefited from refresher training.

Increased Knowledge and Coordination

3454

people are now part of a critical mass – including regional experts, community members, teachers and local leaders – trained on climate change adaptation and disaster risk management. Their knowhow enables them to provide better support to pastoral communities. Meanwhile, information packs about climate change and coping strategies in local languages are widely available to community leaders and institutions across the six districts where the programme was active.

Incorporating New Coping Methods into National, Regional and District Policies and Plans

16

practical ways of coping with unexpected weather events were tested. These were then documented and presented as a toolkit for regional and district government staff tasked with supporting pastoral communities. This was one of the many activities to integrate new coping methods into government policies and plans.

NEXT STEPS

As a result of the programme, the Ministry of Agriculture has greater information and knowledge about the likely impacts of climate change on pastoral groups. It is important they continue to share this knowledge to help pastoralists understand the impacts and options available to them. To support this effort and to help inform future programmes, the achievements of the programme will be publicized at national and regional levels to development partners, particularly those working with pastoralists.

People's Voices



Amdi Weyane
Debre-hayla, Tigray region

“My name is **Toku Ashebr**. Before, we used to do things unplanned and to have children over and over. This caused lots of health problems for my wife. Now days, everything is planned. Before we plan to have a child, we first fulfil everything that the child will need. My wife is healthier and she can read and write. Before I was head of the family but now we discuss and solve our problems together. I accept her ideas and she accepts mine. Overall we listen to each other and our economic situation has got better. I feel very proud of my wife.”



Bahir Dar,
Amhara region

“My name is **Wudu Muluneh**. I used to grow the [oil] seeds using traditional methods and it was not productive. Professionals gave me training on how to sow the [oil] seeds. They told me that the land has to be ploughed up to three times for it to give a good harvest. I tried that and saw a huge increase in yield.”



Wukro, Tigray region

“My name is **Slas Slassie**. When I was younger I loved to run and I even competed at the regional level, but I was forced to get married and to stop schooling. My husband died and then things fell apart. I got involved in this association and after I took some training, I became more experienced in making these baskets. I am now the head of our association and when someone gives us orders, we work together to fulfil it. We are reinvesting all the money we make back into our business and we hope that in the future we’ll be able to improve our incomes through it.”



Madawayn, Somali region

“My name is **Muktar Yousef Hasan** and I am the chairman of the Madawayn Livestock Marketing Cooperative. I received training about finding the market price for animals ... but most importantly I learnt about networking with people. My life and future is very good. I am hoping our cooperative will support and train other new cooperatives. These cooperatives should not just deal with livestock. I would like to see us manage other businesses such as shops.



Tahia-Hatsebo, Tigray region

“My name is **Mebrhit Medhin** and I have been here for five years as a health worker. Today is a child health day and we call all the mothers to bring their children so that we can check their weight. If a child is underweight we send him or her to the health post for further assessment and treatment. We also advise the mothers on proper nutrition for their children.”

Strengthening a Valuable Chain

Many of the world's most famous edible oil seeds originate from Ethiopia, where different varieties grow in every part of the country. Improving seed quality and supply, better edible oil production methods, as well as marketing, could see many small-scale farmers and producers escape poverty.



“It [the programme] helped us advance our technology. It recommended modern methods, like packaging and semi-refining our products. It introduced us to supporting organisations such as universities, trade and transportation offices, and urban development bureaus.”– Getenet Aseres, edible oil producer and programme beneficiary.

Developing the edible oil industry to reduce poverty among farmers and small-scale producers is a priority under the national Agro-industry Sector Master Plan. In the past different layers of the value chain were addressed separately. By adopting a broad and holistic approach, the *Edible Oil Value Chain Enhancement programme* strengthened every aspect of the value chain and managed to rescue the industry from decay. It boosted the skills and resources of farmers, producers and the private sector. Specifically the programme:

- **Enhanced** the supply of raw oil seeds by training farmers and providing them with high quality seeds.
- **Improved** producers' ability to manufacture greater volumes of refined edible oil in-line with national regulations and standards. Through training in business development, producers are also becoming more competitive in the marketplace.
- **Expanded** access to markets by involving the private sector in the value chain.

Boosted Industry Lifts Farmers and Producers along the Value Chain

In 2009, edible oil producer, Getenet Aseres, almost broke, considered giving up his struggling business. The competition from cheap imported oils and new government health and safety regulations made him consider leaving his family behind to search for work in Addis Ababa. Only four short years later, Mr Aseres now employs 12 people on a part-time basis, has started his own edible oil brand and is about to expand his sales beyond his local town of Bahir Dar.

Mr Aseres was one of 92 edible oil producers in Bahir Dar and Adama who received support from the *Edible Oil Value Chain Enhancement programme* to improve the technology and methods used to produce and market oil. Over the years, his once dark small workshop has been transformed into a large production area where the raw seeds are now cleaned by a dedicated machine, rather than by hand, and where the oil seeds are now not only pressed, but also semi-refined, before being poured into labelled containers by women wearing hairnets, gloves and gowns.



“The quality of the oil has changed,” said one of Mr Aseres’ regular buyers, local shop owner Asnakew Ayalew. “I now buy more from local producers because my customers are asking for it,” he said. “The packaging has really made a difference. People prefer it because it has an expiry date and they know the source,” he added.

The government is keen to develop this industry and the programme brought different sectors together to pilot an approach that strengthens the entire value chain. Apart from supporting producers, this also involves working with farmers, their associations and government agricultural development departments. More than 700 farmers received training in edible oil management practices, such as preparing their land and fertilizing. Meanwhile, field days allowed even more farmers to learn about the new techniques. “As a result of the training we have changed our mind to give equal attention to Noug [type of edible oil seed] like the other major crops,” said one of the farmers in Amed Ber, Ahara region.

Meanwhile, farmers’ cooperatives got loans to buy the oil seeds along with training in entrepreneurship, finance and marketing. Previously oil seed sales were slow and the seeds would sometimes be “eaten by insects” while waiting to be sold in the cooperative’s warehouse, explained Tasore Emelie Mokommon, a Farmer’s Cooperative Chairman. The programme facilitated agreements between cooperatives and producers like Mr Aseres so now the oil seeds are sold directly and in greater volumes.

“You cannot compare my position now to four years ago. The difference is like that between the earth and the sky ... things have really changed. There has also been a shift in people’s awareness about domestic products and respect for our business at Ministry level,” said Mr

Aseres. His self-styled edible oil brand is known as Minabe, which means dream in Amharic and also signifies his ambition. “It might seem unlikely,” he says quietly confident. “But my dream is to own a huge factory one day that creates good jobs for people and benefits me as well,” he said.



Suspicion gives way to Collaboration among Producers

In their small Bahir Dar office, at the mouth of the Blue Nile, the 32 members of the newly formed Nile Edible Oil Company discuss their big plans for the future. For the first time, the government is making industrial land available to them and they plan to move their home-based oil production operations to a common factory at the industrial site. This is a very different scene from four years ago, according to the members, when there was no trust among them.

With cheap imported edible oils flooding the national market, unhealthy competition for oil seeds and sales rose among Ethiopian producers. Through the programme, producers like the members of the Nile Edible Oil Company got the chance to visit major production companies in Addis Ababa. This was followed by training and financial support to upgrade their skills and equipment in-line with new standards. Links were also developed with farmers and buyers. Having significantly boosted their own operations, the Nile Company producers are now ready to think about the next step. Each of them has contributed money towards the company and, combined with a bank loan, they plan to open their new factory. By pooling their resources and jointly refining, packaging and marketing their edible oil, they hope to extend well beyond Bahir Dar and reach new markets across the country.



Trained Farmers linked to Producers

777

farmers were trained in better oil seed growing techniques. Meanwhile, 71.3 quintiles of improved seeds (linseeds) were distributed to farmers through the Oromia Bureau of Agriculture to increase the seeds available for the next cropping season. In addition, 4.53 quintiles of better performing local varieties of Noug edible oil seeds were distributed to farmers in Amhara region through the Bureau of Agriculture. Field days were also organised for 206 farmers in Amhara region to share good management practices of edible oil seeds.

Two

agreements between farmer's cooperative/ unions and producers have cut out the expensive middle-man and created a reliable supply of fresh seeds for the production process. Farmers are now more motivated to produce quality edible oil seeds as a result of this partnership.

Production Standards on the Rise

92

micro, small and medium scale producers participated in trainings and exchange visits and are now aware that traditional processing practices are inadequate and fail to comply with national standards and regulations. As a result, to refine crude oils, processors are enhancing their machinery and equipment, as well as work practices.

Suspicion gave way to Greater Cooperation among Producers

Two

new business associations shows that trust and cooperation is replacing suspicion and unhealthy competition for oilseeds and sales among producers. These associations are supported by the financial contributions of members, demonstrating strong ownership and commitment.

Two

companies were also established by association members. The aim is to create common facilities, such as refining and packaging plants and to jointly purchase raw materials and spare parts.

Two

industrial zones have been approved, with the government providing land for these. Interested producers have agreed to relocate to the centres with the aim of increasing the overall efficiency of their operations, and to extend safe practices meeting national and international manufacturing norms.

Producers have Brighter Lending Prospects

Three

lines of credit were opened by the Development Bank of Ethiopia, which is now willing to consider requests for loans from producers. This demonstrates that the negative perceptions financial institutions had about the sector as being un-bankable are fading.

NEXT STEPS

The lessons learnt and good practices identified through the implementation of this programme will now be used to strengthen the edible oil industry in other parts of the country. The government is also looking at ways of applying the holistic value chain approach to other agro-industries with the potential to reduce poverty among farmers and producers.

Securing Childrens' Health

Hunger and malnutrition among children is declining in Ethiopia. Yet, 44% still suffer from stunting, affecting their physical and mental development.



“The most important resource for a country is its intellectual resource. Nutrition has an impact on the education of our children and Ethiopia cannot afford to lose this resource.” –Professor Afeework Malugeta, Department of Public Health, Mekelle University.

Focusing on vulnerable mothers and children in 16 drought-prone districts, the *Children and Food Security programme* strengthened the long-standing National Nutrition programme by targeting the key factors causing child malnutrition today. These factors include a lack of knowledge among parents and affordable, locally-available complementary food for infants. The programme also assisted in developing greater therapeutic support and a national information system for better managing and responding to malnutrition. For the first time, the government drew on the combined expertise of four UN Agencies to:

- **Create** sustainable outpatient services in communities to treat children with severe acute malnutrition.
- **Improve** mothers' caring and feeding practices.
- **Develop** the production and use of local food to complement the diets of infants.
- **Strengthen** the national nutrition information system.

An Innovative Recipe for Healthy Children

The barren earth outside Maichew health post in Axum is an unlikely site for factory-style production. Yet, every 15 days, women from the surrounding villages, some with children strapped to their backs, converge here and transform this brown patch into a production line of de-husking grains, roasting beans, peeling vegetables, mashing, mixing and cooking. They are following a scientifically designed recipe to make something that was unavailable here before – infant food.

Maichew is among four districts testing the idea of involving local mothers in producing nutrient-rich, affordable and locally available infant food. Since the trial started, mothers here say they have seen physical improvements in their children. This successful test might signal a breakthrough for tackling the persistent problem of child malnutrition in Ethiopia.

In 2008, the Government launched the National Nutrition programme. As part of this programme, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, WHO and

four national universities piloted a number of measures to tackle child malnutrition. The focus was on rural areas where 46% of children under the age of five are stunted, compared to 32% in urban areas. One of the innovations was the local production of complementary infant food. An initial survey across 16 districts revealed that “children ate whatever their parents ate”, missing out on vital nutrients, said Professor Negusie Retta, Dean for the College of Natural Science at Addis Ababa University. “Poor nutrition affects mental and physical development and we have realised that money spent on education and health is meaningless unless you address the problem of malnutrition,” he said.

The survey also showed what affordable foodstuffs were available locally and year-round, enabling the Professor and his team, with technical support from FAO, to develop 16 nutrient-dense recipes that mothers could easily replicate at home. To help mothers learn about child nutrition and how to prepare

the food, UNICEF/FAO mobilised women’s groups. “Every two weeks, they were expected to bring two kilos of whatever ingredients they had. After processing the food they got three kilos of the food to take home,” Professor Retta explained.

Meanwhile, in urban areas, UNICEF/FAO encouraged mothers to form associations, process the food for sale, and make a small profit. This allowed the mothers involved to provide a much-needed product, whilst also improving their incomes.

“This approach is unique because it is formulated using materials that are familiar to the community and the mothers themselves are involved, so when they go back home they have the experience to make it,” Professor Retta said. “The other important thing is that children like it!”

With the approach a proven success, the government, UN Agencies and the universities are now planning to expand the production of complementary food to another 20 districts under the government’s existing National Nutrition programme.



The practice of providing discharge rations to children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition after they have received treatment, but before their next screening, is a good practice that has been developed by the effort and can be replicated.



The Incidence of Underweight Children Dropped

54%

of children living in the districts covered by the programme participated in growth monitoring, while their mothers received counselling on caring techniques. This contributed towards a 10% decline in underweight prevalence among participating children in the areas covered by the programme.

Local Institutions Strengthened

Four

universities were involved with developing the complementary food initiative. This is now part of their curricula, not only strengthening the universities, but sustaining on-going research and development in this area.

A more Robust National Nutrition Information System

One

gap assessment and a series of trainings for national, regional and district health centre staff on data management and reporting resulted in a more robust national nutrition information system.



NEXT STEPS

The newly revised National Nutrition programme now includes a stronger emphasis on complementary feeding for infants as a direct result of what was learnt through this effort. With support from the Canadian International Development Agency and the Netherlands Development Cooperation now secured, work is underway to expand the production of locally-based complementary feeding from four to 20 districts in 2013. In addition, many more partners are being brought in to make the production and distribution process even more sustainable and locally owned. These new partners include community based organisations and non-government organisations. Also, as part of the scaling up process, agricultural extension workers will be brought in to assist with the supply of ingredients for the complementary food.

Tapping Ethiopia's Cultural Riches to Beat Poverty

With more than 80 different ethnic groups and a rich cultural heritage, Ethiopians stand to gain by developing their cultural industries and tourism potential.



“For the moment we are selling to local people and we are planning to expand and sell scarves and other items to tourists too. Even though we haven’t made much money yet, we are full of hope for the future.” – Kahsay Tesfay, embroidery cooperative chairman and programme beneficiary.



The *Harnessing Diversity for Sustainable Development and Social Change* programme was all about demonstrating, for the first time in Ethiopia, that culture can be a powerful force for development. To assist this sector to emerge, the programme helped devise and revise policies and legal frameworks. It also focused on improving the conditions for cultural industries and creative communities, such as weavers, potters, and musicians. Meanwhile it encouraged dialogue between different religious and cultural groups to foster greater tolerance and to develop strategies for protecting natural environments and common heritage. Specifically the programme:

- **Supported** new or revised policy frameworks and increased governance capacities in the field of culture.
- **Improved** the conditions for cultural industries and creative communities, such as weavers, potters, and musicians, helping many to organise themselves into associations making them stronger and more able to produce and market their work.
- **Encouraged** dialogue between different religious and cultural groups to understand shared values, foster greater tolerance and to develop strategies for protecting their natural environments and common heritage.

Culture now Considered a Force for Reducing Poverty

As a growing hub for conferences and as a jumping off point to several key attractions, the town of Wukro in Tigray attracts national and international tourists alike. Wukro is also home to many artists and crafts people who now have more opportunities than ever to tap into the growing tourism market, says Berhanu Mertus, the coordinator for the *Harnessing Diversity for Social Change programme* in Tigray.

In six geographic areas across Ethiopia, this programme, which is based on the innovative idea that culture can be a powerful force for reducing poverty, has helped traditionally vulnerable handicraft workers such as weavers, potters and leather workers on a number of fronts. They have gained support to improve their craft through trainings, also to start their own associations and launch business with the backing of start-up capital. Young talents, struggling to find employment,

have also been fostered. In Wukro, for example, a music troop supported by the programme is now earning a good income performing at hotels and conferences.

As a result, decision-makers, especially in Ethiopia's regions, now see the potential of the cultural sector to drive economic development and improve incomes among some of the country's most vulnerable people.

Mr. Mertus says the next step in Wukro is to open the new Living Resource Centre, which is one of four established nationwide through the programme. The centre is envisaged to become an incubation centre for creative activities, with 100 artisans expected to work there. It will include a demonstration site and shops where tourists can purchase cultural products and see first-hand how they are produced.



“Bringing UNESCO’s cultural promotion expertise together with UNDP’s knowledge in economic empowerment enabled the programme to demonstrate to decision-makers, particularly at the regional level, the potential of the cultural sector as an agent of economic development and wealth creation.”

– *Eugene Owusu, UN Resident Coordinator.*



Stronger Cultural Industries

876

cultural workers, including women and young people, have improved their incomes. The programme also helped artists and crafters organise themselves into associations, hence making them stronger and more able to produce and market their work.

One

centralized database, detailing the handicraft industry and linked to an interactive website has been developed and launched. The database consists of information about the quality and quantity of products and services available from Ethiopian cultural workers, enabling them to reach wider national and international markets.

Four

Living Cultural Resource Centres were built, providing artisans with a platform to receive training (technical skills, marketing, sales, accounting and management) and use equipment to design and produce handicrafts. These Centres are also used to display the products and sell to tourists and other customers.

10

trade fairs were organised, giving craft producers the opportunity to promote their products and to create market links.

Cultural Heritage Better Protected and Promoted

Four

Ethiopian World Heritage Sites now have new management plans. Meanwhile, local communities and grassroots organisations are more aware and now actively participate in the management, protection and utilization of cultural heritage (including indigenous knowledge).

Greater Tolerance and Understanding among Different Groups

16

dialogue forums involving people from different cultural and religious backgrounds reduced tensions and created better understanding about shared values and the practices of others. People from different faiths also came together to rebuild religious institutions destroyed by conflict. For example, in Oromia, Muslims and Christians collectively rebuilt a church.

National Capacity Enhanced

58

training sessions enhanced national capacities to protect and manage cultural heritage. Meanwhile, the legal framework of the cultural sector was reinforced, thanks to the elaboration of key legal documents that have been submitted to the Government and will be presented to the parliament. These include: Idioma Policy of Ethiopia, the Cultural Industry Investment Code, and the Cultural Industry Development Strategy.

NEXT STEPS

A reinforced legal framework is now set to strengthen the culture sector with parliament ready to consider the newly developed Cultural Industry Investment Code and the Cultural Industry Development Strategy. Work is also underway to finalise the revision of the country's cultural policy.

Lessons from the Field

The five programmes demonstrated that Ethiopia's complex development challenges cannot be tackled in isolation. **Development and transformation require a holistic understanding of the range of interconnected challenges** – such as lack of skills, productive resources, geographic or social isolation – that individuals and groups face. To address these varied challenges, government sectors must come together at national, regional and district levels. This inter-sectorial approach fosters policy dialogue among institutions and relevant partners for an effective response to the multiple dimensions of development. Likewise, leveraging the resources and expertise of different UN Agencies around common goals is critical and means powerful and often innovative development outcomes can emerge.

“The interaction among different actors allowed focusing on the entire edible oil value chain through a holistic and a truly integrated approach using the leverage and core expertise of each UN agency and the Ministry to address bottlenecks in the pre-harvest, production, post-harvest and marketing phases.” – programme results brief, 2013.



The five programmes also demonstrated that **social attitudes and perceptions matter** and that these need to be considered and addressed if changes are to last. At an individual level, the positive effects of improving people's knowledge, skills and strengthening economic capacities are likely to be more sustained if accompanied by building new confident attitudes, relationships of trust and behavioural changes.

“When we first started these discussions, it was too hard to make the antagonists believe because they thought we were trying to change our culture. But after having discussed for years about the difficulties that early married girls can face, the community is agreed that girls under 18 shouldn't marry.” – Atsedo Sahle, beneficiary of the Leave No Woman Behind programme.

Anchoring efforts in existing government structures and aiming them at national priorities fosters institutional ownership and government leadership from the outset. Government leadership and strategic guidance is key. Only with the government in the driver's seat could the programmes achieve such results within three short years. Government leadership also means that proven approaches are more likely to be adopted and expanded. Likewise, involving other partners, such as the private sector, or a wider range of national institutions, can spark further innovation.

“It is possible for the sector ministers and bureaus to scale up some of the best experiences [out of these programmes]. For example, the local production of complementary food ... can be scaled up without much additional support.” – Yonas Getahun, expert at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Ensuring that **beneficiaries participate and are included in decision making** is also a key factor for fostering ownership and the sustainability of development gains.

“We accepted the addition [to the complimentary food recipe] of fenugreek by the mothers ... It is a good source of protein and we believe it has a medicinal value. So we can say they have participated in the formulation of the locally available complementary foods.” – Professor Afeework Malugeta, Department of Public Health, Mekelle University.



The five programmes also advanced the UN's own work to support Ethiopia in meeting its development goals. Since 2008, the UN in Ethiopia has been part of the global ***Delivering as One*** effort, aimed at improving the organisation's ability to be a better partner to governments and peoples around the world and respond to new and growing development concerns. The five programmes were a timely opportunity for the UN to begin doing business differently. UN Agencies researched and planned actions in close collaboration, rallying their wide range of expertise around tackling clear development challenges. The comparative advantage of each UN agency enriched the five programmes and significantly amplified development impacts for women, pastoralists, children, farmers, producers, handicraft workers and their communities. Working more closely together also revealed areas where UN Agencies need to do more to align operational procedures and systems. New methods, such as shifting the management of cash transfers from a system of rigid controls to a risk management approach were introduced. These changes have moved the entire organisation towards greater harmonization. New ways of working together more effectively were identified and are now informing the next generation of joint programmes.

A clear division of labour was key to implementing the five programmes with their wide range of partners. This required a lot of coordination at different levels to avoid duplication; to maximise varied expertise; and to ensure that all partners were on the same page; and consensus was reached and common approaches adopted. This led to some degree of delays for all the programmes and showed that three years was indeed a challenging time frame to implement such complex programmes.

Conclusion

The past three years has seen the five programmes supported by the MDG Achievement Fund successfully pilot new development approaches in Ethiopia. Many of these approaches are already beginning to assist the government and its development partners to reach out more effectively to some of the country's most vulnerable people. New, holistic ways of assisting women, farmers, small-scale producers and tackling child malnutrition have all been incorporated into wider-scale government efforts.

While the five programmes successfully tested new approaches, they also delivered concrete development results for individuals, communities and national institutions. They empowered thousands of people through new knowledge alongside economic, social and health opportunities. At the same time, the programmes helped establish or strengthen community groups among women, pastoralists, farmers, small-scale producers, crafters and artists. These included economic groups, such as cooperatives and savings associations, which are now helping their members to increase their incomes or to reach new markets. These also included self-help organisations that built confidence among members and positively influenced wider community attitudes.

Where national institutions are concerned, better knowledge, capacities and policies are enabling them to respond more effectively to the needs of the communities they serve.





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