



**FOOD FOR  
THE HUNGRY**

# SASIGA MID-HIGHLANDS ETHIOPIA

## MID-YEAR COMMUNITY UPDATE 2023

Walking with Sasiga Mid-Highlands



**2014**

**2024**

**FH COMMUNITIES  
IN ETHIOPIA**

**9 IN SASIGA  
MID-HIGHLANDS**

**POPULATION**

**28,564**

**HOUSEHOLDS**

**5,950**

**PROGRAM  
PARTICIPANTS**

**7,024**

The nine communities (called kebeles) of the Sasiga Mid-Highlands have been working with Food for the Hungry since 2014 to transform their families, livelihoods, and future opportunities in a sustainable way. In just one short year, we'll celebrate the conclusion of our partnership because these communities will be ready to move themselves on to achieve their next goals.

Many community members who didn't have enough food can now grow vegetables in their backyard as a source of food and sell the surplus to develop family income. Men and women are saving money and gaining greater access to loans through savings groups. Gender equality and equity can be observed in the life of the communities through women's involvement in leadership and income generation. Community leaders and government officials are actively and enthusiastically participating in the development of their communities, mobilizing resources and planning their own community development initiatives.



I was provided with improved vegetable seed to cultivate it in my own garden. The vegetable product has changed my family's food culture. In addition to this, I have been generating my own income—I sold the vegetables to the local market and bought sheep, which has released a glimmer of hope in my family.

- Ebise, Dangalli Gongo



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Prepared by FH Canada



## FROM THE COMMUNITY



Hambisa and his family showing off their coffee harvest.

### A New Future Brewing for Hambisa

Story collected by Bedilu Asmare

Hambisa is married with three sons and one daughter. To make a living, he farmed as well as collected and sold firewood, but it wasn't sufficient to support his family. Hambisa struggled to make his land productive. Land degradation and high soil acidity prevented most farmers like him in Sasiga from growing enough food.

Because of the family's material poverty, they didn't socialize much. Hambisa struggled to provide food and clothing for his family and send his children to school. "When I faced these problems, I felt sad and hopeless. I was [too] discouraged to work hard in order to change our life," Hambisa shares.

In 2017, however, Hambisa decided to participate in FH activities.

Through regenerative agriculture practices, water conservation, and reforestation, FH worked with farmers to restore the fertility of the soil. Hambisa took training in coffee farm management, vegetable production, and private plant nursery development.

"I have learned from being part of the program," Hambisa says. "I have acquired more knowledge on modern agricultural practice, especially on coffee production and management and access to different types [of] improved variety of seed and tools from the program."

Hambisa's living conditions dramatically improved as he developed his coffee farm and vegetable garden. His coffee production tripled! "Previously, I harvested 1 kilogram of coffee per tree; now, that's increased to 3 kilograms of coffee beans per tree! In addition to cash crops, I got knowledge of agricultural diversification such as vegetable and fruit production. As a result, my entire family feels happy, physically strong, and has good health from eating fresh vegetables and fruit in their daily meals. Their spiritual and social bonds are stronger than before."

Hambisa's entire community has transformed over the past decade. Families have access to clean water close to home; farmers apply regenerative agricultural practices; a new school was built; and children are getting a better education.

"The changes in my personal life and community life makes me happy because the changes observed in the community were multidimensional," Hambisa says.



**"The changes in my  
personal life and  
community life make  
me happy!"**

- Hambisa



# Health & Education



Overcrowding in the current classroom shows how ready these students are for their new school building (top right)!



## Building for Better Education

Building new classrooms increases access to education and provides a safe and productive learning environment. It reduces teacher-student classroom ratios, allows more students to attend school, attracts and retains quality teachers, and promotes education and literacy in the community.

The school being used in the Nano Senbeta Dure community was poorly constructed and damaged from years of use. It was also too small to accommodate all of the school-aged children in the area. To address these challenges, FH is helping the kebele build a new, four classroom building. Construction is going well and is about 80 per cent complete!



## Restoring Clean Water Sources!

You need access to clean water to have a healthy, thriving life. FH helped eight communities rehabilitate damaged wells by purchasing and transporting local and industrial materials for the repairs. The local water committees for each water point mobilized the community to provide labour and additional local materials to make these wells usable again.

FH staff trained volunteer health workers and health professionals on caring for mothers and newborns during pregnancy and delivery. Trainees then taught pregnant women how to better care for themselves by improving their diet, getting enough rest, and not carrying or lifting heavy objects—difficult tasks for rural women! But they are persevering—more mothers are choosing to give birth at local health centres, vaccinate their young children, and practice exclusive breastfeeding.



**2,100** children received school stationary

**433** adolescent girls received dignity kits

**21** hand-dug wells fixed to serve 844 households across eight communities

**99** caregivers trained on early childhood stimulation and reducing toxic stress



**The poor mother has got out of the grave by FH! We used to give our children to wealthy cattle owners and collect money monthly, but today, any rich person can't use our children for cattle keeping because they are learning [in school] with support from FH.**

- Wato, Fayine Tarano





# Livelihoods & Leadership



## Cultivating Community Wealth

Rural families living in the Mid-Highlands struggle to access financial institutions and loans. To overcome this gap, FH is working with communities to establish new Savings and Loans Groups, especially with women. Through these groups, families accumulate savings and take out small loans to improve their livelihoods. A number of established savings groups in Sasiga have developed their capital and are currently planning to launch group projects to generate continuous income for the group.

FH trained women on vegetable production and provided seeds to get them started. These hard-working women are already cultivating, eating, and selling their backyard garden produce.



## Working Together for a Brighter Future

When it comes to community development, there are a lot of stakeholders to consider. FH works with farmers, youth, women's groups, church leaders, and school communities, to name a few. All of these individuals and groups participate in the planning and execution of activities to transform their communities. FH puts a lot of energy, time, and passion into capacity building for these hard-working, forward-thinking stakeholders. They provide training on how to work together to achieve common goals, dream and work for a better future, and cultivate a deeper sense of belonging. Sharing common goals and values is increasing the participation of these local leaders and of everyday community members engaged in community-led activities.



**85**

sheep provided to 85 families

**10**

new women's Savings and Loans Groups established consisting of 229 members

**249**

farmers trained in Integrated Pest Management

**45**

youth trained on volunteering in community development



## Thank You!

FH Canada, FH Ethiopia, and the families of Sasiga Mid-Highlands thank you for your generous support! Your gifts have helped create so much life to celebrate—new schools, clean water, increased family wealth, food security, and leaders passionate to take their communities into a sustainable and hopeful future.