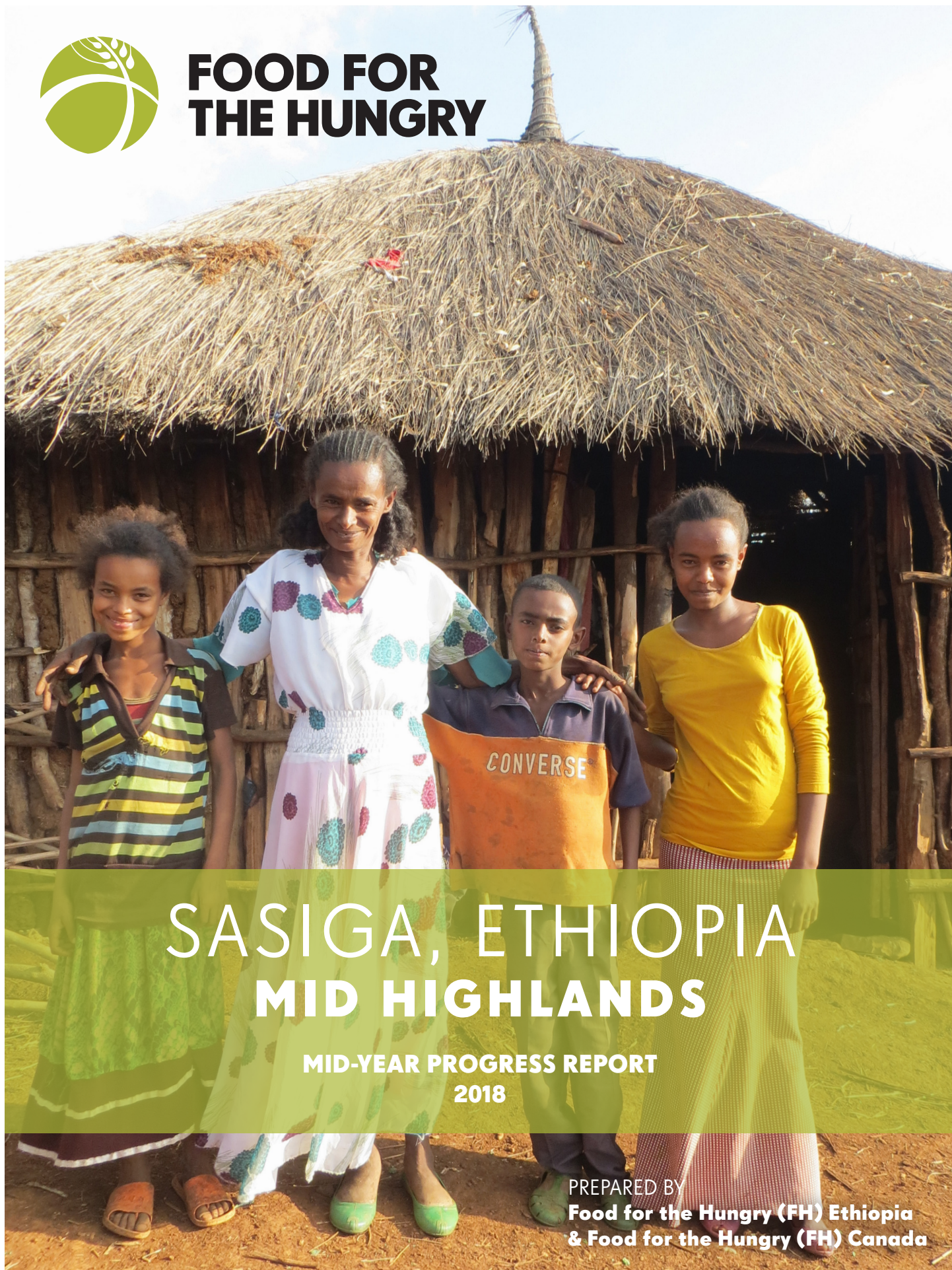




**FOOD FOR  
THE HUNGRY**



# SASIGA, ETHIOPIA MID HIGHLANDS

**MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT  
2018**

PREPARED BY  
**Food for the Hungry (FH) Ethiopia  
& Food for the Hungry (FH) Canada**





Ebiša Akati and his family enjoy fresh water!

## INTRODUCTION

Child Focused Community Transformation (CFCT) programing is ongoing in the Sasiga Mid Highlands toward the goal of ending poverty for the 25,371 people living there. Currently, 1,132 orphan and vulnerable children are being directly supported to enable them to attend school. Activities open to all community members in the areas of education, health, livelihoods, and leadership training are working together to improve the quality of education, better nutrition and disease prevention, increase economic opportunities for families, and equip community leaders. By working on all four fronts at the same time, FH Ethiopia is able to effect substantial change in the lives of families toward self-sustainability. The Sasiga Mid Highlands anticipate graduating from FH programing in 2025.

FH Ethiopia is celebrating the successful construction of five water points at springs in the communities. While only four were planned, the project was managed so efficiently that they were able to proceed with a fifth water point at no additional cost! These water points are providing clean water access for 113 households, approximately 565 people.

Political instability combined with multiple local government staff meetings slowed down some of the planned activities for this reporting period. FH staff continue to persevere, however, and programing in all areas continues to move forward.



# EDUCATION

FH Ethiopia is working to improve access to and quality of education for children. This involves improving physical school structures, the quality of teaching, the physical health of the students, and addressing the gender gap in child education. FH organized student competitions where children competed on general knowledge questions and various school-related skills. FH helped provide prizes for the winners. FH also equipped community schools with physical education equipment like soccer balls, volleyballs, nets, ball pumps, and referee whistles. School sports clubs used the new equipment to organize sports meets among the schools within the Sasiga Mid Highlands.

Training was conducted with teachers and school directors to improve the quality of education in the communities. These trainings equipped school directors and teachers with educational management skills to bring changes in the teaching-learning process and improve the academic achievement of the students. In the first half of the year 70 (54 male, 16 female) educators participated in this training. One of the trainees—a school director of Galo Primary School, Gemeda—reported that, after the training, they already see an improvement in the management of their school.

FH staff helped organize a Christmas day celebration with parents, children, and school communities. It was a special day of celebrating the birth of Jesus and God's good gift of children. There was preaching, singing, and much joy. Families were encouraged to continue supporting their children in education and life in general.

One of the mechanisms to enhance environmental protection in the Mid Highlands is to train the students in the concepts of restoration and preservation. The idea of environmental protection is new to the communities. This lack of awareness is the reason most farmers continue to clear cut trees which causes rapid deforestation. To begin changing the culture, FH conducts training for youth environmental clubs that are organized by the schools.

FH works closely with all schools, involving the environmental science teachers by inviting them to chair the school clubs. Each club aims to have 30 students for a total of 452 (252 male, 200 female) students trained. The participants have already begun initiating responses to the problem of environmental protection in the schools and at home. To encourage and equip the students to take action, FH provided hand farm tools and tree seeds to the schools for the production of tree seedlings.

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FH continues to support sponsored children through home visit in which they encourage students to persevere in their studies and parents to support their children's education. FH staff focus especially on building relationships with the families of children who face particular challenges. Field staff continue to visit schools to monitor attendance and promote education.



*Students enjoy special presentations at their Christmas celebrations.*

# HEALTH

Communities have traditionally been uninformed about the health benefits of personal and environmental hygiene. Community members are unaware of what practices cause many of their common illnesses. FH has been working to improve the health status of the communities through sanitation and hygiene training, including using latrines and handwashing. A total of 313 (149 male, 164 female) people were trained in this reporting period. In addition, 100 households learned how to create waste pits and received concrete latrine slabs to cap their very own household latrines. These efforts will improve sanitation and health in the community. Another area of impact was in raising awareness that diseases can spread when humans and animals live close to each other. Some of those who participated in the health training decided to construct animal shelters separate from their houses to improve the sanitation of their homes and yards.

The communities of the Sasiga Mid Highlands were collecting their water from unprotected streams and rivers. This resulted in widespread illness from waterborne diseases, especially in children. FH is working with the communities to improve access to potable water to reduce sickness, and lighten the workload of women by decreasing the distance walked to collect water. The fiscal year plan was to construct six hand dug wells and four springs.

In collaboration with the Sasiga district water office and the communities, five springs were constructed—two in Dangali Gongo, two in Oda, and one in Fayine Tarano. This is one more than was planned. The project has been managed efficiently, allowing the extra spring to be constructed with no additional budget required. FH established water committees that mobilized local resources and labour to assist in the construction process. Together with the local administration, the water committees will continue the protection and maintenance of the water points. The water points impact 113 households, approximately 565 people.

Hand dug well construction just got started at the end of March 2018 when the bid process to hire a contractor was completed and

an agreement signed. Water committees for the hand dug wells were also established. The committees will be trained in water point maintenance early in the second half of the year.

FH provided educational training to 192 (100 male, 92 female) community members on the realities and dangers of HIV/AIDS. Young people, community leaders, and Faith Based Organization (FBO) leaders participated in the training with the intention of bringing the information back to their respective spheres of influence.

In this reporting period, 180 (44 male, 136 female) community members were trained on fuel efficient stove construction and



*A capped spring provides a clean, protected, and stable source of fresh water. One small trickle has a huge impact.*



mud brick shelf construction. Women in the communities must walk long distances to collect firewood that they use to prepare meals over open fires. Smoke inhalation from these fires is a significant health risk to mothers and their children. Cooking by this method rapidly consumes fuel, contributing to deforestation in the area. Fuel efficient stoves and shelf construction help mothers improve their own health and decrease the use of trees for firewood. Using mud bricks to build kitchen shelving also helps protect vanishing lumber resources. After receiving theoretical training the trainees prepared a sample stove to develop and practice their new skills so they can confidently build their own at home.



# LIVELIHOODS

Beekeeping is a long standing practice in the farming communities of Sasiga; the income obtained from the sale of honey is significant for many families. However, around 99 percent of farmers are estimated to use traditional methods of bee breeding and local bee hives. Upgrading the techniques of beekeeping production will increase the quality and quantity of the honey harvested. In addition to training, FH plans to provide modern bee hives to the communities, impacting 134 (127 male, 7 female) beekeepers.

Sasiga Mid Highlands is known for the production of organic coffee. Outdated management techniques, however, result in a low production rate where the plants only bear fruit every four to five years. FH has been working with farmers to improve production through pruning techniques, distributing 370 saws to farmers in the first reporting period. FH staff have tried to source a variety of coffee better suited to the Mid Highlands' climate from the national agricultural research centre, but have not yet been successful.

To help women in the community gain access to resources, FH trained 182 women on vegetable and fruit production for the purpose of earning their own income. The participants were provided with 125 kgs of improved vegetable seeds for their home gardens. In addition to working with communities to shift their understanding of the capacity of women, economically empowering women will significantly contribute to the development of the whole community.

Unemployment is a critical problem for educated youth who have graduated from school but still live at home. FH is addressing this problem by training young entrepreneurs to be creative job makers. From October 2017 to March 2018, 90 (54 male, 36 female) unemployed youth participated in two days of training in two communities—Gallo and Fayine Tarano. They learned how to start their own businesses, skills in business plan preparation, risk management, business opportunity, market creation, and customer handling.

Livestock production develops food for consumption as well as income. This year FH emphasized improving indigenous breeds of animals through artificial insemination, training 165 (150 male, 15 female) farmers in this practice.

Sustainable agriculture is economically viable, resource efficient, environmentally sound, promotes justice to both the human and



*Training for farming families on soil health, hardy crop varieties, and improved cultivation methods has led to flourishing crops.*

non-human creation, and builds community while providing food and fibre for humans for long periods of time. Most farmers in Sasiga, however, use conventional agricultural technology that is capital intensive and not highly sustainable. These practices have contributed to land infertility, termite infestations, and soil acidity resulting in persistent food shortages.

To address these life-threatening issues and rejuvenate the land, improve the fertility of the soil, and make the land more productive, FH trained 174 (146 male, 28 female) local farmers to economize their scarce resources. This training raised awareness on exploitative agricultural practices such as excessive cultivation. It also raised awareness on proper utilization of natural resources, and rehabilitating and improving soil structure with improved agricultural techniques.

FH conducted another three day training focused on compost



## **FARMING METHODS FOCUSED ON LOCAL CHALLENGES AND STRENGTHS IS LEADING TO FOOD SECURITY FOR FAMILIES.**

(organic fertilizer) preparation which was attended by 164 (139 male, 25 female) farmers from all nine kebeles. High-quality compost is one of the essential organic matters used to manage soil fertility.

Since it is prepared from locally available materials there is no cost to the farmer except family labour. During the training session the trainees practiced preparing one sample of compost on a farmer's private land.

FH also trained 148 (134 male, 14 female) farmers in bio-intensive gardening. This method links people with creation, reconciling farmers with God by reclaiming and redeeming the resources that support agriculture. Even though this is labour intensive most of the trainees have already started to apply the principles to their land.

Irrigation frees farmers from dependency on rainfall and allows them to cultivate during the dry season; it is a key component to achieving food security in the Mid Highlands. FH has worked with 11 groups consisting of 12-15 members toward this goal. With the provision of hand farm tools and improved vegetable seeds farmers have been able to take advantage of longer growing seasons enabling them to produce enough to feed their families and develop income from produce sales.

To more effectively minimize termite infestations which destroy houses, crops, and trees FH trained 140 (118 male, 22 female) people on pest management, including using additional compost in the soil and planting multipurpose trees with watershed management.

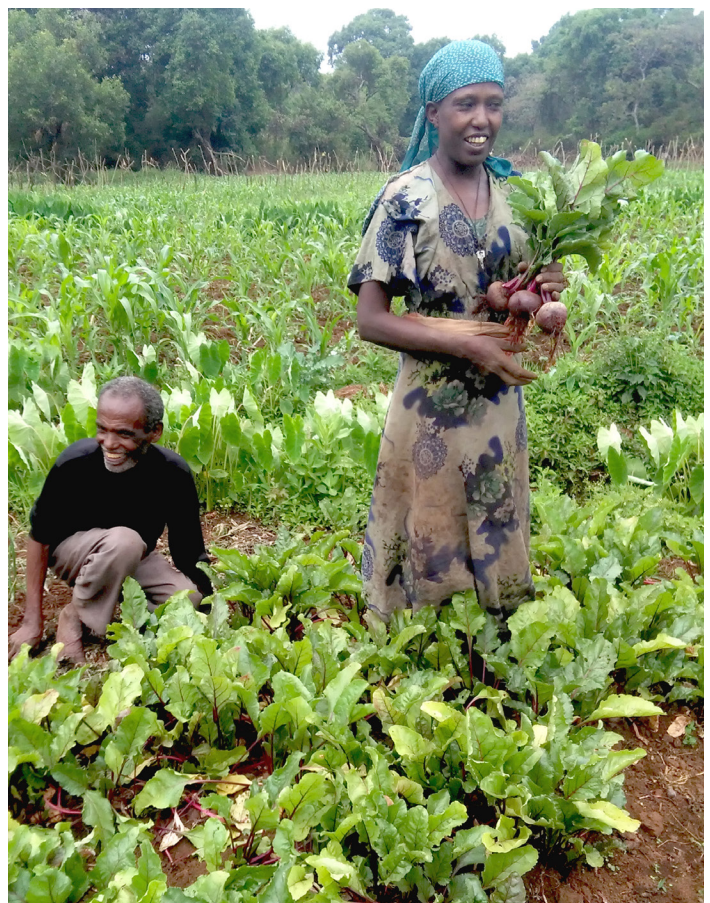
FH trained 80 (67 male, 13 female) farmers on how to incorporate agroforestry with farming to help conserve soil and water, as well as improve the climate. FH continues to work on improving the environment of the Mid Highlands by providing training and multipurpose tree seeds. A three-day training for 115 (109 male, 6 female) farmers taught them how to establish private seed beds and nurseries, collect seeds from indigenous trees, manage seedlings, and transplant seedlings to community land. After the training, the participants received hand farm tools and 350 kgs of multipurpose tree seeds like Grevillea, Neem, and Spatoda. FH also provided four government managed nurseries with 63 kgs of Grevillea, 10 kgs Neem, and 10 kgs Spatoda.

At harvest time, families enjoy a time of plenty and many of their

needs are met. But many families do not have the capacity to plan for the future when crops are not ripe or if drought hits. Surviving crop-to-crop also makes it difficult for rural farmers to save food, seed, and money. To support the farmers in this area, FH offered resource management workshops to 262 (207 male, 55 female) farmers to equip them to more effectively save for the future.



*Farming demonstrations hosted for farming families.*



# LEADERSHIP TRAINING

FH staff met with local government stakeholders to assess the status and progress of development in the Mid Highlands, and identified areas in need of more attention.

Equipping leaders to be innovative problem solvers and vision oriented in their approach to community is necessary to bring about change in the life of the wider community. FH is training up strong, motivated leaders skilled in mobilizing natural and human resources, modeling a good work ethic, and establishing good governance in their communities. In the last reporting period, 101 (83 male, 18 female) leaders were trained.

FH conducted work ethics training with 21 (18 male, 3 female) government workers in the Sasisga district. In addition, 278 (209 male, 69 female) community members participated in work ethics training that encouraged them toward productivity and efficiency.

FH trained 75 (68 male, 7 female) leaders from Faith Based Organizations (FBO's) to increase their capacity to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of development activities in their communities. These leaders have the potential to influence a large number of the population toward positive, long term change by mobilizing resources and human power. FH also works specifically with churches and their leaders on development activities including sponsorship registration with the local administration. Because of FH's biblical foundation, there is a strong spiritual connection in the areas of gender equality and environmental protection which weave through every activity. In the reporting period FH worked with 24 protestant churches.

Equal participation of the sexes is necessary for meaningful, sustainable development to take place. In most Sasiga communities, however, women are still not invited by the male members of the community to participate in trainings and activities. To transform this attitude and foster equality of participation and equal resource distribution, FH provides leadership training on the principles of gender and development. FH strives for gender balance in every development activity FH leads, be it inputs or capacity building.

In the area of education, FH trained 72 (34 male, 38 female)



*Community members participate in leadership training.*

leaders on how to prioritize girls' education. This is not a widely accepted norm yet as girls are expected to carry a heavier workload in the home than boys. The training raised awareness around the value of girls' education and asked for a commitment from leaders to work with families to provide their daughters with the same schooling opportunities they give their sons.

Young people from all nine kebeles were selected for volunteer training to support community social workers as they carry out development projects; 41 (31 male, 10 female) young people participated. One of the primary goals of the training was to create local contact people that social workers can turn to and rely on when they need help conducting project activities in the community. This training also creates a support base of people in the community who are invested in the development activities.

FH is working to create awareness among community leaders and government stakeholders concerning disaster risk reduction and equip them to plan ahead. One hundred and sixteen (90 male, 26 female) leaders were trained on disaster preparedness and early warning signs to prevent or mitigate future events.

**EQUALITY TRAINING  
HAS MORE WOMEN  
AND YOUNG ADULTS  
ENGAGED IN  
LEADERSHIP ROLES.**



## COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT:

# A Life-Changing DIY Project

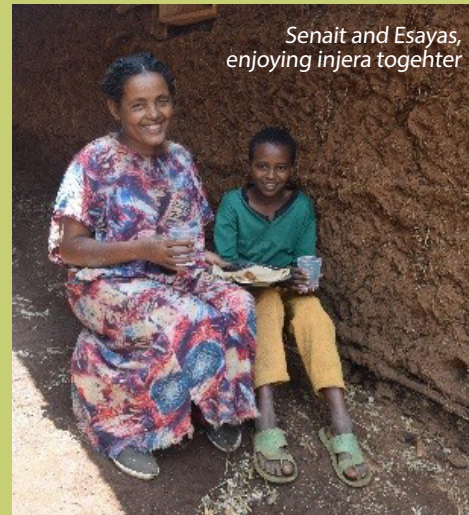
Every morning, Senait woke up before dawn to cook breakfast for her large family in the cool of the day.

Bending over an open fire, she stirred familiar sauces and poured injera batter—that ancient bread. To some of us, this may sound like an idyllic morning on a good camping trip. But for Senait, breathing thick wood smoke day in and day out was a potential death sentence.

Microscopic particles from the smoke can aggravate the respiratory system, causing burning eyes, runny nose, and even illnesses such as bronchitis. They worsen the asthmatic symptoms and can trigger full-blown asthma attacks. Fine particles can also cause heart attacks, stroke, irregular heart rhythms, and even heart failure.

Cooking meals over open fires is one of the most dangerous tasks mothers in developing countries undertake, and they do so on a daily basis.

Senait had to wander long distances to find, collect,



Senait and Esayas, enjoying injera together

and carry firewood home. She faced the risk (and realities) of burns from the open flames and even falling into the fire when she became lightheaded from the carbon monoxide. Worst of all, she inhaled incredible amounts of smoke daily, for years. At just 32 years old, Senait was already extremely vulnerable to heart, lung, and gastric diseases. And so were her children.

So when she visited her friend Alemimesh one day and watched her cooking on a fuel-efficient mud stove, she was understandably intrigued. The fuel-efficient stove conserves firewood, dramatically reduces the amount of smoke in the kitchen, and has the added benefit of baking injera to perfection.

That same day she contacted the Food for the Hungry



Senait prepares injera, while her son Esayas peaks in from outside.



**“When I cooked in the traditional way I had to rise early to bake injera because the heat is unbearable during the daytime. But now, I am baking at lunchtime, as you see me now.”**



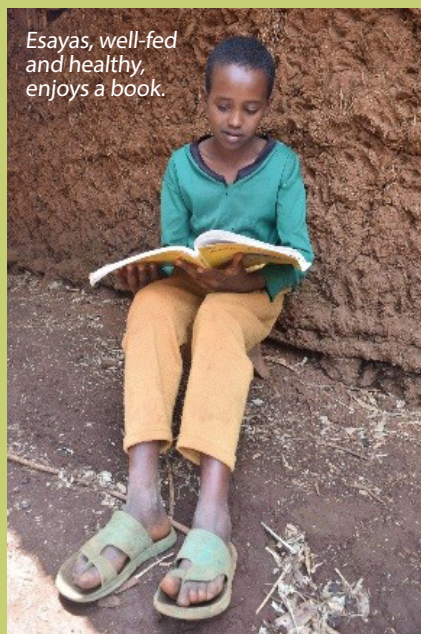
(FH) staff member living in her community to find out how she could get one for herself. With advice from the FH worker, Senait bought her own cement and quickly began building a fuel-efficient stove. Talk about a life-changing DIY project!

Senait is thrilled with her new stove.

"When I cooked in the traditional way I had to rise early to bake injera because the heat is unbearable during the daytime. But now, I am baking at lunchtime, as you see me now."

Senait's health is steadily improving.

Household activities are becoming easier as her breathing normalizes; her burns are few and far between. And she doesn't have to spend so many hours foraging for firewood. Fuel-efficient stoves introduced by FH are rescuing hundreds of mothers (and children!) from the dangerous effects of breathing wood smoke from open fires.



Esayas, well-fed and healthy, enjoys a book.



## THANK YOU

FH Ethiopia and FH Canada, together with the families and children of the Sasiga Mid Highlands, thank you for your continued support. Your generosity is improving the health of mothers, helping girls go to school, providing clean water, equipping farmers to thrive, and inspiring communities to change. Thank you for walking with these nine kebeles!