



SASIGA MID-HIGHLANDS, ETHIOPIA

MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Sasiga Mid-Highlands, Ethiopia

Communities:
9

 Total Households:
5,950

 Total Population:
40,835

 Program Participants:
28,564
14,567 females; 13,997 males



Walking With Families and Leaders in the Sasiga Mid-Highlands

2014

Entered Partnership

2024

Graduation

Now in year seven of their 10-year partnership with Food for the Hungry (FH), the Sasiga Mid-Highlands are steadily advancing toward graduation in 2024. FH continues to joyfully walk with families, leaders, and churches as they innovate and strengthen their communities in the areas of education, health, livelihoods, and leadership development through a holistic method called Child Focused Community Transformation (CFCT).

FH's work in Sasiga reaches 28,564 people across nine kebeles (communities), and directly supports about 2,060 orphan and vulnerable children (1,056 girls, 1,004 boys), enabling them to attend school. Community members engage in activities that regularly address issues of gender equality, environmental protection, and spiritual connections in every realm of life.



"I'm grateful to God for his provision of resources to solve the problems of (our) communities," Fayisa says. "I hope to send my children to the highest level of schooling and produce sufficient food for my family."

—Fayisa

Read more about his story on page 13!

INTRODUCTION



COVID-19 UPDATE

Although COVID-19 has slowed some community activities, FH staff continue to find safe and creative ways to carry out good work in Sasiga. FH and community members practice preventative measures like wearing face masks and physical distancing when meeting together. Thankfully, schools are partially open, again, with children attending in shifts. FH has distributed a lot of support materials (see the charts on page 8 & 11!) to help families prevent the spread of the virus.

REGARDING THE CRISIS IN TIGRAY

The Mid-Highlands communities are far from Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, and thus safe from the ongoing conflict there. FH Ethiopia, however, has a strong presence and positive connections across the entire nation and is partnering with local and international organizations to respond with practical support to Ethiopians fleeing violence. Over half a million people have already been helped!

For more information on what FH is doing to respond in Tigray, please visit blog.fhcanada.org or contact an FH Canada representative.



A couple affected by the crisis in Tigray receive some much appreciate hygiene and food supplies.

EDUCATION

“Toxic stress” is a significant threat to children, especially those under the age of five. Defined as “repetitive and unrelenting stress without adult protection which causes great hardship for the child”, toxic stress disrupts brain development in children five years of age and younger, stunting the child’s brain development with lifelong impacts. It can cause reduced working memory, poor attention, low math and literacy skills, lack of self-control, and a loss of skills to manage difficulties. By reducing toxic stress, FH can greatly improve a child’s opportunity for educational outcomes and a healthy, resilient life.

Caregivers have the greatest influence on the thoughts, values, and hopes of children. Improving parent engagement and helping communities build support systems to remove, mitigate, and reduce toxic stress is key to creating a thriving future for children. FH solicited an education expert from Wollega University in Ethiopia to equip primary school teachers to train caregivers on new ways to support their children. Such training empowers caregivers toward positive interactions with the child, strengthens the whole family, and honours the caregiver’s authority in the child’s life.

FH began construction on a new primary school in the community of Gemene and provided desks, chairs, and tables to Nano Sanbeta Dure Primary School. These furnishings significantly improve the teaching-learning process. Child sponsorship support provided stationery materials like exercise books, pens, and pencils to children who would otherwise not have the resources to participate in classwork. It also covered school fees for children whose families are under financial strain.



Sports and activities days are encouraged by FH Ethiopia staff as a way to build friendships, encourage healthy sport, and have fun - a day enjoyed by the entire community. Of course, achievements are awarded!



EDUCATION

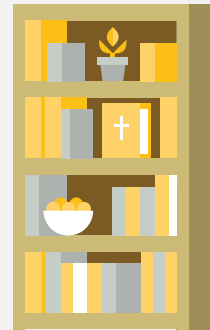
ACTIVITIES

108 desks and chairs provided for teachers and students.



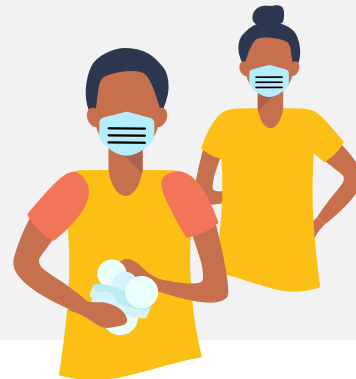
50 teachers trained on math and literacy instruction.

108 caregivers trained on childhood development and toxic stress.



2064 students provided with learning materials.

44 youth trained in volunteerism.



2047 sponsor children's families received soap to help them stop the spread of COVID-19.



Workshops for local teachers on improved teaching methods, organizational skills, and more empower teachers and help elevate the level of education for students.



HEALTH



"I am grateful to God for providing resources for the construction of the hand-dug well. Thanks to FH for the effective implementation of the water points. Now my family has improved our personal hygiene and environmental sanitation. We also eat more vegetables and the health of the whole family has improved!"

—Alemu

FH aims to improve the health of children and mothers in three key areas: promoting healthy behaviors through training and support, clean water for all, and disease-preventing sanitation practices.

The Cascade health group model breaks intergenerational cycles of malnutrition, particularly in children, and pregnant and lactating mothers, by empowering women with critical nutrition, micro-nutrient, and hygiene knowledge. This year, group leaders learned how to purify and store safe drinking water, handle and store food, and the importance of washing hands at five critical moments during the day and using latrines. All these actions work together to prevent the spread of disease and improve nutrition, thereby reducing malnutrition.

FH developed three springs by capping the water sources and installing pumps to protect the water from contaminants (like animal dung). This provided another 150 families with clean water to reduce waterborne diseases. Another 13 wells are in progress and will be completed before the end of the year.

FH introduced a new training methodology called Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) that empowers community leaders to determine the underlying causes of open defecation in their communities and create relevant plans to address those obstacles. Because it recognizes local leaders as the experts best positioned to create effective solutions for their communities' challenges, CLTS has huge potential to overcome rural sanitation and hygiene hurdles. Participants in the FH CLTS training developed action plans to increase household access to latrines to improve latrine use and handwashing. When implemented, their plans should totally eliminate open defecation in at least five communities, thereby improving family health.



A capped spring creates a protected reservoir for fresh water and brings many smiles to the community!

LATRINE COVERS

During the **10 year partnership**, FH is committed to providing concrete **latrine covers** to every family that joins sanitation training, digs a latrine pit, and sets up a clean toilet!



66%

1,651 FAMILIES SO FAR



2,500 GOAL OF CLEAN TOILETS

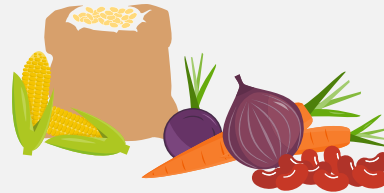


HEALTH

ACTIVITIES

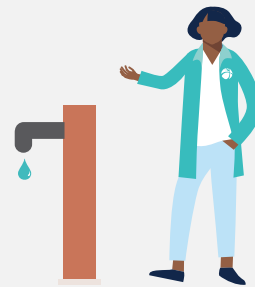


23 Cascade leaders trained on essential **nutrition and health**.



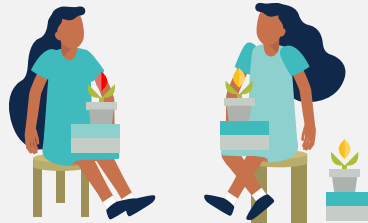
125 mothers trained on essential care for mothers and newborns and the **importance of breastfeeding**.

47 community leaders from 9 communities trained in **Community-Led Total Sanitation**.



193 faith leaders and students trained on **HIV/AIDS awareness**.

800 **dignity kits** distributed to school girls.



3 **springs** developed.

138 **latrine slabs** provided to families.





HEALTH

IN THE EFFORT TO STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 FH STAFF DISTRIBUTED THE FOLLOWING THROUGH THE COMMUNITY:



Handwashing stations at public gathering sites	16 stations
Liquid soap for public handwashing stations	41 bottles
Waste disposal basket for public handwashing stations	50 baskets
Soap for the most vulnerable	450 people
Face masks and sanitizer for health volunteers and professionals	1,149 people
Cleaning alcohol for health facilities	75 bottles
Face masks for health facilities	1,825 masks
Sanitizer for health facilities	210 bottles
Soap for health facilities	750 bars
Clean gloves for health facilities	50 boxes
Blankets for health centre isolation rooms	10 blankets
Heavy duty gloves for health centre isolation rooms	30 pairs
Surgical gloves for health centre isolation rooms	50 boxes
Mattresses, bed sheets, protective goggles, and boots for health centre isolation rooms	10 mattresses, sheet sets, goggles, pairs of boots





LIVELIHOODS



“Before, I used to practice deforestation but now I understand that plants are life! I developed the skill of problem solving approach from training, and I began improving income from the sale of plant seedlings.”

—Amsalu

Unemployment is a critical problem in the Sasiga Mid-Highlands. Many of the young people are educated but jobs are few. FH is working with youth to see themselves as “job creators”, encouraging young adults to create opportunities rather than wait for them to appear. A professional from the local university visited to conduct entrepreneurial training for young people. At the end of training, participants generated ideas and prepared their own business plans.

Continuing to address a lack of economic opportunities and land productivity, FH offers workshops and inputs to vulnerable families so they can kick-start their livelihoods. Composting, organic farming, vegetable gardening (especially for women), biodiversity, and coffee production are a few of the training options FH provides.

Deforestation to fuel cook fires and expand farmland is a primary factor in soil erosion. To halt and reverse damage to the land, FH trained farmers on how to establish and manage tree nurseries. With the seeds and farm tools provided by FH, many participants developed their own seed beds to start seedlings. They will transplant the seedlings to their own land and sell some to neighbouring farmers.

Apiculture (beekeeping) is a traditional source of nutrition and income generation. To help farmers increase their honey production, FH has introduced modern beehives and apiculture management workshops. Participants have begun preparing beehives and food for the bees which will decrease the instances of honeybees leaving the hives to find new homes.

Domestic animals produce organic (and free!) fertilizer, significantly contributing to the health of agriculture in a conservation farming system. Thus, FH works with farmers to improve the rearing and production of livestock which helps them improve their harvests and raise their overall household income. In addition to this broader training, 40 women farmers were provided with sheep to raise.



Sibilu using his newly learnt agriculture skills on his farm to great success.



LIVELIHOODS

ACTIVITIES

10 new Savings and Loans groups established (76% of members are women).

30 farmers trained in beekeeping.

37 youth trained in entrepreneurship.

102 women trained in vegetable gardening and sales.

159 farmers trained in coffee production and management.

48 farmers trained in plant nursery management and provided farm tools and 150 kgs of Grevillea seed.

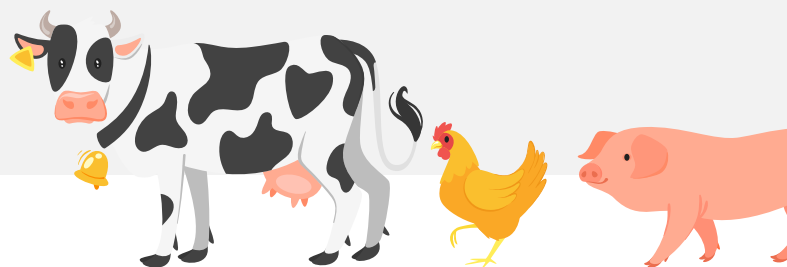
162 farmers trained in composting and conservation agriculture.

40 women provided with sheep for future income generation.

140 farmers trained in livestock management.



A regular Savings and Loans group meeting in action.





LEADERSHIP

FH does not work alone. Together with government stakeholders and community leaders and families, FH plans, implements, and evaluates development activities. Stakeholder feedback and input is critical to the success of FH initiated programs. Thus, regular review meetings with stakeholders to report on past activities and future plans dramatically improves the effectiveness of FH work. FH works closely with local leaders and enjoys a strong partnership with the communities.

FH journeys with community church leaders, offering them biblically-based workshops to strengthen their faith walk and leadership skills. These leaders often volunteer to facilitate child sponsorship, distribute inputs (like seeds and farm tools), recruit farmers to participate in training, and more. Faith leaders mobilize resources and labour for community projects, like digging wells or building homes for vulnerable people, such as widows. This year, faith leaders felt ready to conduct their own training that equipped potential youth leaders to participate in community development. Participants developed their own action plans to teach what they had learned to fellow youth in their respective churches.



Working one-on-one is essential. This farmer has enjoyed training sessions, coaching, and visits to his farm over his years of involvement with FH. Preserving dignity is also key; here this farmer gives consent for FH to share his story and photo.

STOPPING COVID-19



Trained FH staff on basics of COVID-19	23 people
Oriented community-level government staff on basics of COVID-19	42 people
Oriented community-level leaders on basics of COVID-19	27 people
Oriented community-based organization leaders on basics of COVID-19	23 leaders
Training for COVID-19 task force/health workers at health facilities	9 events



LEADERSHIP

ACTIVITIES

40 community leaders trained.



45 local government leaders participated in the annual review meeting.

9 churches trained 1,319 of their youth.

38 community leaders participated in community managed disaster risk reduction.



40 leaders trained in gender integration.

46 faith leaders trained in youth leadership.



The community rallies its manpower to help erect a new building for a neighbouring families in need.

HOPING FOR HEALTHY

Sasiga Mid-Highlands, Ethiopia

“I’m grateful to God for his provision of resources to solve the problems of (our) communities,” Fayisa says. “I hope to send my children to the highest level of schooling and produce sufficient food for my family.”

—Fayisa

It’s hard to get much done when you’re always getting sick. Debilitating stomach cramps, chronic fatigue, and the embarrassing need to run to the washroom every 15 minutes tends to get one down.

Fayisa’s family struggled with repeated bouts of illness. His four children were especially affected. Because they didn’t have a latrine at home they had to find places outside to use the toilet; obviously there wasn’t any water under the trees to wash hands. This lack of access to sanitation and hygiene, combined with having no choice but to drink contaminated water, caused the children to have chronic diarrhea. Without easy access to transportation, it was challenging for Fayisa to get his children to the local health centre. He and his wife spent much of their limited income on medicine to treat the family’s sicknesses. And instead of working their farm, Fayisa used a lot of his time to take his children to the doctor or stayed home to care for them.

Stuck in this holding pattern of chronic illness, Fayisa struggled to have hope. “I felt that nobody was ready to support me except God,” he shares. Unable to get his children healthy, he grew pessimistic and lost the courage to lead his family.





Then, in 2017, Fayisa participated in FH training on hygiene and sanitation, vegetable production, and how to establish a plant nursery. Along with the training, FH provided a concrete latrine slab to Fayisa's family so they could have a clean and safe toilet at home. Fayisa also received farm tools and vegetable seeds to start a home garden, and seedlings to get his nursery going. In addition, FH helped the community dig a freshwater well near Fayisa's house so he and his neighbours could start drinking and cooking with clean water.

As Fayisa and his family embraced these changes, their health began to improve. Drinking clean water prevented them from getting dangerous parasites in the first place. Using a clean toilet and washing their hands afterward stopped the passing of sicknesses between family members. Their home garden began to grow, and as fresh vegetables became a regular part of their diet, everyone's nutrition improved. The family started having more energy and more time for school, play, farming, and living!

Thank You

FH Canada, FH Ethiopia, and the families of the Sasiga Mid-Highlands thank you for your continued support of their journey out of poverty! Your generous contributions are reducing toxic stress for children, providing sanitation that eliminates common sicknesses, energizing young people to create their own opportunities, and equipping leaders—young and old—to raise up their communities. Thank you!