

STORIES OF IMPACT

RESILIENT-WE



MESSAGES FROM LEADERS AND KEY PROJECT STAFF



CLAUDIA BERLONI

Vice President, Programs and Policy,
World Vision Canada

It is with great pride that I present the remarkable achievements and stories of success and resilience of participants in the RESILIENT-WE (Reducing Environmental Shocks, Improving Livelihoods, and Inspiring Empowered, Innovative and Thriving Women of Ethiopia) project in the Hararghe zones of the Oromia Region, Ethiopia. The project is funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented by World Vision Canada and World Vision Ethiopia, together with the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations and Kidogo Early Years.

Women in Ethiopia face social, economic and political marginalization, which limits their resilience and adaptive capacity. They are often denied human rights and bear a greater burden of care for domestic needs such as fuel and water collection. During natural disasters, they face increased health and security risks and suffer disproportionately whenever there is conflict over natural resources caused by environmental degradation and climate change.

As primary users of natural resources, women and girls have invaluable insights to offer in climate action, energy transition, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. However, they are often excluded from the structures, policies and processes meant to build solutions.

The RESILIENT-WE project exemplifies World Vision's commitment to addressing these critical issues and creating sustainable, inclusive solutions. The project has been instrumental in increasing women's and girls' resilience to climate-induced shocks and environmental degradation. Through our collaborative efforts, we have witnessed significant progress in empowering these communities, providing them with the skills and resources needed to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity.

This Photobook stands as a testament to the strength, courage, and determination of the individuals we serve, and I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our partners, donors, and the broader community. Together, we are making a lasting impact and paving the way for a brighter future.



KARMEN TILL
National Director,
World Vision Ethiopia

As a mother and development worker, I believe that empowering women paves the way for their children and communities to thrive. By creating opportunities and a supportive environment, we can help them build brighter futures.

The RESILIENT-WE project, a five-year women-focused initiative, aims to strengthen the resilience of women and girls by:

- Enhancing their agency and decision-making power.
- Increasing their role in managing climate risks and natural resources.
- Expanding their access to diverse livelihoods and economic benefits.

This project is already making a tangible impact, particularly for women and children.

In November 2024, I joined His Excellency Joshua Tabah, Canadian Ambassador to Ethiopia, on a visit to see, first-hand, how the project had progressed. It was truly inspiring to witness how our partnerships -- with local government, faith leaders and women-led organizations—are empowering women, shifting cultural norms and transforming lives.

Mothers are now able to feed and educate their children, supported by Savings for Transformation and Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration initiatives. The integration of the Channels of Hope program has further strengthened positive parenting, giving children the freedom to participate and make decisions that shape their future.

I believe that every time we've invested in women, we have seen sustainable returns in generations to come. A heartfelt thanks to our generous donors and partners - your investment is helping build an Ethiopia fit for children.



SABA GEBREMEDHIN
Executive Director,
Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA)

Founded in 2003, the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA) is dedicated to uplifting the economic, social, legal and political rights of women across Ethiopia. Our journey is driven by passionate advocacy, essential socio-economic support and the creation of platforms and opportunities that enable women to actively engage in the country's development process.

At present, NEWA proudly collaborates as an implementing partner for the RESILIENT-WE project, focusing on transformative actions that better women's lives. One of our pivotal initiatives within this project is the prevention and combatting of gender-based violence (GBV). By challenging discriminatory gender norms and attitudes, and empowering women's rights organizations and women-led community-based organizations (CBOs), we create vital platforms where women can collectively advocate for their rights and participate in socio-economic issues.

Additionally, NEWA has been a relentless advocate for the effective implementation of laws and policies that promote women's freedom and socio-economic justice. Through these initiatives, NEWA has made significant strides in enhancing the socio-economic status of the women we serve. Our efforts are evident in the increased participation of women, heightened community engagement in combating GBV, improved capacities of women's rights organizations and the adoption of gender-responsive planning and budgeting by government institutions.

Together, we are building a brighter and more equitable future for all women of Ethiopia.



DAVID MBUGUA
Grant Manager,
World Vision Canada

Through strong partnerships with NEWA, the Government of Ethiopia and Kidogo Early Years, the RESILIENT-WE project is transforming mindsets and improving relationships between women and men in the Hararghe zones of Ethiopia.

I am thrilled when I hear women describe their participation in decision-making at multiple levels, providing leadership in the restoration and protection of degraded environments, mitigating disaster risks and transforming their economic fortunes through greater access to resources and participation in value chains and markets. Men have shared how project interventions have enabled them to overcome socio-cultural barriers that limit their involvement in household chores such as childcare, cooking and fetching water, which are traditionally considered “women’s work”. Both women and men have reported experiencing love and greater harmony through sharing responsibilities in their homes equally.

The project is poised for greater achievements, furthering inclusion and the transformation of gender norms for greater equality and improved well-being. It is our hope that you find the stories in this photobook enjoyable and inspiring.

We are grateful to Global Affairs Canada for financial support.



ASSEFA TOFU
Project Manager,
World Vision Ethiopia

The intersection of gender inequality, climate change, environmental degradation and reduced community cohesion in rural areas of Ethiopia, disproportionately affects women and girls. Deep-rooted social marginalization heightens their vulnerability and undermines their human rights and overall resilience.

The RESILIENT-WE project is designed to address these intersecting challenges using integrated project approaches and models. Across the operational area, the project is working closely with faith-based organizations, CBOs, women’s rights organizations, media and Woreda working groups (public sector ministries) for greater impact.

The lessons we’ve learned so far suggest that gender transformation is possible through proper gap assessment, design and execution involving all stakeholders.



STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S AGENCY & DECISION MAKING



Strengthening Women's Agency & Decision Making

RESILIENT-WE is a gender transformative project that uses a combination of transformative approaches and models to challenge discriminatory social and gender norms, expand opportunities for women and girls and contribute to their empowerment. The activities and interventions that enable these outcomes enhance women's agency and decision-making power over social, economic and environmental aspects that affect their lives.

The project has adopted a multi-pronged approach. It engages men and their spouses (through the MenCare approach), faith leaders (both Muslim and Christian), the media, women's rights organizations, government sector ministries and community members (through Community Change groups) to tackle gender inequality and harmful traditional practices that perpetuate women's discrimination and marginalization. The stories narrated here highlight the impacts of these interventions.

Changing Men's Perspectives - MenCare Groups

"Care for your wife and family, care for others, care for the environment", these are three principles taught at RESILIENT-WE MenCare groups. Abdu (in a blue jean jacket) leads his local MenCare group, where gender equity is a top priority on the agenda. The group meets weekly to discuss issues affecting their families and community, exploring ways to improve gender equality and positively influence the mindsets of the next generation of boys and girls.

"We used to harm our wives both emotionally and physically, and all housework was done by women and girls," says Abdu. "We fought with our wives over money and our children. But a lot has changed. We now have a different perspective; we are living in love now."

Two years ago, this would not have been the case - women had no income, no ownership and no rights. Today, that has all changed. "I see my wife as an equal; she has rights just like me," says Usmel, another MenCare group participant. "Since World Vision came, we have made big improvements. We have more income and more savings, and we support our wives. I even help cook and make injera, it is fun."





You Got To Have Faith

“So their Lord responded to them: ‘I will never deny any of you—male or female—the reward of your deeds. Both are equal in reward.’” (Quran 3:195).

That has never been more evident than in this Channels of Hope (CoH) approach faith leaders group meeting (pictured). Both Muslim and Christian leaders, men and women, meet several times a month to express concerns and encourage one another on the work they are doing in their communities. They discuss how they can better educate people on issues of gender equality, polygamy and child marriage. Although these are not easy subjects to tackle, given the deep-rooted traditions and beliefs in the context in which these leaders live, they continue to maintain an open dialogue.

“In our faith, harm towards women is not taught, but in practice, this is not the case,” says Sheikh Nure, the leader of the group. “Women in our communities used to be oppressed; they had no rights and were often mistreated.”

Sheikh Nure is quite literally practicing what he preaches, as a newly married father to a 10-month-old baby girl. “I want to be an example and encourage others by showing them what it means to treat women better.”

The training seems to be working as the members begin applying what they have learned. “I have started practicing in my home what I have been taught,” says Hamza, another group participant. “When my wife is cooking, I take care of the baby and when she was giving birth, I washed all the clothes and took care of our kids. I have seen so many good changes.”







“Equality” Is Not A Bad Word - GBV Case Management

What is better than having one dynamic, outgoing, powerful woman? Having two amazing and powerful women who are community leaders!

Belkisa, the women’s Congregational Hope Action Team (CHAT) group leader, and Buziye, the GBV Case Manager, are a force to be reckoned with. They come from different generations - Belkisa is 40 years old with eight kids, and Buziye is 18 years old and unmarried. Together, they span every sector of women and girls in their community and relate to what they may be going through.

“I was married when I was only 13 years old, and it was not a good time,” Belkisa explained. “I did not know how to be a wife and mother, I was not ready. We are now teaching our people not to do this. My message to young girls is not to get married so young, to get educated instead and be disciplined.”

The two ladies have been able to stop two child marriages in the recent months and are making sure girls are protected in their community. The CHAT groups are the foundation to help make that change.

“We have seen many big changes in the men in our village,” says Buziye. “They are supporting their wives by helping with kids and fetching water and changing mindsets toward women and girls. I want to teach more people to support young girls and if I get married someday, I want my husband to know these things.”









**MANAGING CLIMATE
CHANGE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
DEGRADATION**

Managing Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

Under this outcome, the project is increasing women's and girls' participation in the management of climate risks and the sustainable use of natural resources. Women and girls are more dependent on natural resources for their livelihood and survival, and they bear the greater burden of domestic needs such as fuel and water collection. They are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and suffer disproportionately whenever there is conflict over natural resources caused by environmental degradation or climate change. Yet, women and girls are often excluded from the structures, policies and processes meant to build solutions.

RESILIENT-WE's interventions mainstream women's participation and voice in the management of natural resources. This includes, for example, participation in decisions on the restoration of degraded areas using Farmer Managed Natural Resources (FMNR), or promoting fruit trees, such as papayas, protecting the environment and improving diets. The use of solar-powered water pumps improves water access for household use and food production, reducing the burden on women and girls.



The Hills Are Alive With Biodiversity: The Sound Of Progress - FMNR+

On the majestic side of a hill in a small rural community approximately 500 km east of the capital, Addis Ababa, there is a climate change revolution happening.

A few years ago, this land was considered unusable because all the trees had been harvested for construction or firewood, leaving the land unprotected from erosion and soil degradation. With overusage from livestock grazing, followed by drought and then extensive rainfall, the soil was further eroded.

As rains came and water flowed down, so did all the fertile soil and nutrients, as there was no tree cover or foliage to protect them. This plot of land was devastated, as was the community that relied on it for their livelihoods and animals.

The extensive soil erosion caused an even bigger issue with the water supply. The water table was affected by the degradation, leaving people with less water for household use. This was one of the primary reasons why the soil regeneration methodology was introduced here.

Geche Gasarethe, a RESILIENT-WE Livelihood Officer, has seen an amazing transformation of this hillside over the past year and is extremely proud of the community for the tremendous amount of work they have put in to make this happen.

“They have rebuilt the hillside using rock wall formations and terraces and have reintroduced trees and vegetation into the landscape,” Geche explained. “This has greatly increased the water retention in the surrounding soil and has begun the rejuvenation of the land.”

The changes have filled community members with hope for the future – and excitement. The now-abundant trees offer plenty of opportunities for climbing!







A Taste Of Success - Papaya Story

“Sustainable natural resource management” sounds like a mouthful but so are the delicious papayas grown to help sustain Kediya and her family.

To this mother of four, healthy fruit and the cash it generates help provide a steady source of nutrition and income for her family. Kediya was initially given 10 papaya seedlings by World Vision. As they matured over the next eight months, she managed to multiply and propagate over 100 more seedlings. Kediya plans to expand her business even further to over 200 papaya trees in the next year. Kediya has also contributed 5,000 birr (\$55 CAD) from selling papayas to her local savings group fund. This amount is expected to grow as the farm expands.

The papaya initiative is not just a solo endeavour. It is also about sharing ideas and fostering community collaboration. As part of the initiative, participants are required to share seedlings with others in the community who wish to participate. Kediya has shared seedlings with over 60 households in the community, promoting unity and mutual support.

Kediya's oldest daughter, Urji, is also part of the project, alongside her husband, Jemmal, who fully supports her in everything she is doing. “I feel very happy because of the improvements in our family and also that my mother has a strong leadership role in the community,” says Urji.







Here Comes The Sun - Solar Powered Water Pumps

We all know that the sun helps make things grow but that's just the beginning. If you add a solar pump into the equation, it dramatically increases crop yields and farming efficiency.

"We used to have to carry water uphill by hand or use a costly diesel pump to get water to our crops," says 24-year-old mother Halima, one of 25 members of her local farmers' group. "It wasted our time and money. It cost us 1500 birr (\$17 CAD) per day to run the diesel pumps, and it was bad for the environment. Now, we use free energy from the sun to run the pump."

In addition to the solar panels and pump, the group received a geo-plastic membrane that holds rainwater year-round and can be used during the exceptionally long dry seasons. This innovation creates multiple growing seasons per year - something that was previously impossible.

"We have never been able to store water before, but with this plastic and pump, we can now produce a variety of crops like avocados and mangoes year-round," says Meyuma (in a yellow and white dress), another member of the local farmers' group. "We are happy with all this progress and want it to grow even further."









**WOMEN'S
ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT**



Women's Economic Empowerment

The primary objective of this outcome is to increase women's access to, and control over, diverse livelihoods and benefits. RESILIENT-WE aims to drive the economic empowerment of women and greater autonomy in their management of productive resources through interventions such as:

- Climate-smart agricultural production
- The participation of women in gender-sensitive crop (e.g. onions and potatoes) and livestock (goats, cattle and poultry) value chains
- Energy-efficient cookstoves production
- Marketing and distribution

The project promotes forming and participation of women in informal savings groups. Savings groups help to instill a culture of saving and to increase financial literacy as a path to financial inclusion and greater participation of women in formal finance. Coupled with linkages to business development and financial services providers, this enables women to establish and expand their micro and small businesses and diversify their income sources. The project also trains women on food preparation and diversification of diets for improved health of their children and families.

Savings For Transformation (S4T)

Having money is great, but saving money is even better. That is the aim of the 25-member Kara women's saving and loans group. Their goal is to start saving on a regular basis then use that money, along with taking loans, to build more wealth in the form of small businesses.

Nejat (wearing a blue head scarf) is a livestock trader who has expanded her business multiple times. "The project has helped us a lot," she says. "At first, we used the money to grow more vegetables on our farm. After that, we took a loan of 30 000 birr (\$330 CAD) to buy several goats. We sold them and we now are selling cows."

Nejat has actively participated in these income-generating activities (IGAs), showcasing sustainable economic empowerment. It's about more than just money. Another group member, Batula (wearing an all-white head scarf), has benefitted greatly from this group, not just financially but in her marriage as well.

"Before this we had no savings," she explains. "We did not even talk about it, and we would fight about money. But now, we have been able to grow our business and have bought cattle worth 100,000 birr (\$1100 CAD) for our business together."

As for young Zeyituna she loves hugging the baby goats, bringing joy to this transformative journey.







Which Came First? The Chicken Or The Beehive?

In this case, it was 300 chickens, but the beehives are in a close second, with a goal of reaching 200 soon.

When it comes to empowering women, both economic livelihood activities are winners, providing income and nutrition for children and families. Mira (in a yellow head scarf) is a 55-year-old mother of seven who joined the group and can't say enough good things about what has come from it.

"We are 15 members in our group and have seen so much improvement," she says. "Since World Vision came, our status has improved greatly. We now have eggs every day that we can use to feed our kids, sell, and even support others in the village."

Producing approximately 250 eggs each day, the group is able to provide for their families, sell the surplus, and contribute to their savings group for future expansion. Another member of the group, 20-year-old Ayantu (in a brown dress), sees big things for the project, and her 4-year-old son. "With the money we are making, we can save, provide loans to others to generate more income, and in the future, we want to expand by opening a flour mill and acquire a tractor for farming."







Smoke-Free Zone: Energy Efficient Cooking Stoves

What if there was “one stove to rule them all”? That is the goal of one RESILIENT-WE women’s empowerment group. These small, curved slabs of concrete have transformed the way cooking has been done for centuries.

Traditionally, cooking involved placing a pot or kettle on stones over an open flame, but now efficiency is the highest priority. With the increasing scarcity of trees for firewood, and the rising time and cost associated with acquiring it, each piece becomes precious - especially when considering environmental and health impacts.

The introduction of energy-efficient cooking stoves has brought significant changes: Smoke production is reduced considerably, which can negatively impact health outcomes for those exposed to cooking smoke. Wood consumption has decreased by more than 50 per cent, which means less deforestation and mitigation of climate change. This innovation, in turn, doubles the return on investment of both time and money, making it an invaluable solution for the community.







Harvesting A Better Future – The Onion Story

This is what “big business” is all about. On just over 10 hectares of land, onion farmers are producing almost 700,000 lbs of green onions, yielding 25 million birr (\$275 000 CAD). That’s what success looks like!

The RESILIENT-WE livelihood project organized 35 producer groups (PGs), consisting of 344 women and 11 men, into focused value chain commodity producers. These groups received training on climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices tailored to address their specific knowledge gaps and needs.

Emagnu, a PG member, shared her experience: “Previously, I struggled for two years with local onion varieties that had low yields and poor disease resistance. These limitations meant our produce was unsuitable for mass market demand.”

However, the RESILIENT-WE project provided four comprehensive training sessions, covering everything from initial bed preparation to post-harvest processes. Additionally, we received training in CSA and participated in an experience-sharing visit to observe the best practices in onion production nearby.

“I harvested 160 quintals and sold 140 of them for a total of 350,000 birr (2,500 birr per quintal), or \$3,900 CAD”

Emagnu and her husband have since invested in three oxen (two at 85,000 birr each and one at 100,000 birr) and two goats (7,000 birr each).







I Believe That Children Are Our Future - Women And Child Health

Smiling babies! What more could you ask for? Healthy smiling babies!

The foundation of any childhood is a nutritious diet and a healthy mother. From bananas and eggs for pregnant mothers, to iodized salt being used to help tackle goiter, knowledge is the key to building a better and healthier environment for kids to grow.

At a health and nutrition training session organized by RESILIENT-WE, mothers learn best practices to help reduce malnutrition and identify locally sourced resources that provide the greatest benefits when included in their diets.

“We can find most of these vegetables in our gardens, like pumpkin, potatoes and bananas,” Hindo, the healthcare group leader, explains. “Then, adding things like salt, honey, milk and sorghum flour makes a very healthy porridge.”

Twenty-year-old Misra has also gained valuable insights into how to prepare nutritious food for her baby boy. “Before, my children were malnourished, I was not feeding them the right foods. We have learned what and how to prepare the best for them, and now cases of malnutrition have reduced in our village.”







RESILIENT-WE

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