



Alganesh Milash – Tigray Region

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- Child/adult** [Alganesh Milash, 41, Female, Beati-aqhor village, Basic Education integrated with Food Security]
- Themes** [Basic Education]
- Photo references** [picture ref numbers]
- Related interviews** [N/A]

Summary

Alganesh Milash, 41, is a widow and mother of six children (three boys and three girls). They live in the small rural village called Beati-aqhor, in the Kilte-awlaelo district of the Tigray region, Ethiopia. Three years ago Alganesh lost her husband due to a long illness and since then she was forced to shoulder all the responsibilities of the family on her own.

Before, life was very tough for Alganesh and her family. She had difficulty providing enough food and school materials to her children. As a result Alganesh was forced to make and sell a local drink to support her children. Save the Children through its Basic Education integrated with Food Security project provided Alganesh with a dairy cow that enabled her to produce enough milk to feed her children and helped her to earn money by selling dairy products.

Alganesh’s story in her own words

Three years ago I lost my husband due to a chronic illness. Since then, I shoulder all the responsibilities of the household on my own. Currently, together with my four children, I live in a small house that I rent for 100 birr a month (approximately \$ USD 5) at Beati-aqhor village, in the Tigray region. Before, I used to not make enough to cover the expenses of life and was unable to provide my children enough to eat. At the time, I used to support my family with the money I earn by selling Tella (locally brewed drink). Selling Tella has a lot of associated problems, but it is life that we have chosen. I don’t have any other means to support the family.

Before we were provided with the dairy cow, I was required to attend a three days training in Wukro town on how to care, how to maintain the hygiene and how to properly manage the cow. With the knowledge I received from the training, I have been able to better care and manage my cow. When I bought the cow she was eight months pregnant and after she had the calf I used to get more than ten liters of milk a day for almost six months. I sell one liter of milk for 8 birr (approximately \$ USD 0.50). I also give the remaining milk to my children. Now due to six months pregnant, the amount of milk my cow produces has decreased and so I only get 2 liters a day. I sell one liter and give the other one for my children. With the money I saved, I bought four sheep that cost a total 2,000 birr (approximately \$ USD 100) and I was also able to buy clothes and school materials for my kids. In addition, I also started a savings account for my children at the nearby saving and credit association. This way they will both have money for their future. I did this mainly because of lessons I got from the community about the importance of saving for children. Tedros’ saving has reached 50 birr while Gebretsadkan’s is 10 birr. My own saving has reached 2,065.99 which was opened in December 2009. I’ve paid off all my loan of 7,000 birr.



One of my sons stopped school at 10th grade since he didn't get good grades. One of my daughters also stopped at 8th grade. They both left to Saudi Arabia in order to find a better life. However, because of the recent Saudi government decision to repatriate foreigners from Saudi Arabia, they both returned and are now in Addis Ababa. My two sons Gebretsadikan Atsbeha who is 14 and his brother Tedros, 10 years old are in grade seven and grade four respectively.

Now with Save the Children's support our lives have changed for the better. I want my children to finish school and be able to build a house so we can stop worrying about the monthly rent.

Interview conducted by Seifu Assegid and Amerti Lemma, during a recent communication assignment to Tigray region in [December, 2013]

Location and background

Tigray is located in the northern part of Ethiopia. It is home to a total population of 4.3 million, of which about 51% are female. The estimated population of children between 5 and 9 years is 1,752,374 (868,052 female), those between 1 and 4 years old are 511,210 (251,414 females), and children under one year are estimated at 118,307 (58,532 females). Among the 46 districts/ woredas Save the Children reaches only five. Hintalo Wajirat is one of the districts that Save the Children has long been implementing its educational program. Maicheka and Shimena villages are located in this district. Majority of the population is reported to be directly dependent on rain fed agriculture and dry land farming as a livelihood means.

As a result, Tigray region is characterized by dry climatic condition, severe natural resources (land, water and vegetation) degradation and cyclical droughts. Traditional farming practices and inadequate involvement of women in all aspects of development compounded with the above factors have significantly affected the performance of the regions' agricultural production and productivity. Consequently, numerous rural households have been subjected to chronic food deficit failing to feed their family in general, their small children in particular throughout a year and over years.

Tigray region has long been among the major war zone of the country during the civil war which lasted nearly two decades and claimed many lives. The area has been impacted heavily by the war and is most remembered by the drought that affected many livelihoods in the area. Because of the war many schools have been destroyed and children were forced to drop out of school. This has influenced the access to education and leaving the region to be among the least developed regions of Ethiopia.

Project background

Since 2006, Save the Children through its Basic Education project has constructed more than 46 primary schools and 12 Early Childhood Care and Development Centres and 72 intervention schools for SHN in Tigray Region of Ethiopia with funding support from Save the Children Italy. So far the project has benefited more than 36,500 children. Save the Children is working with the Ethiopian Government to improve the quality of education through construction of schools, provision of in service training for teachers, capacity building of community representatives, woreda expertise and supply of books and vital equipment to educational institutions.

Save the Children Basic education integrated with Food Security project provides economic support to those families who are food insecure which enables them to send their children to school.