



Kiros, 28, with her daughter Lilti in the village of Freweini in Tigray Region.

WHAT WE DO

Save the Children works to protect children from:

- ❖ Sexual abuse and exploitation
- ❖ Physical and humiliating punishment
- ❖ Neglect
- ❖ Harmful traditional practices
- ❖ Exploitative child labour

We believe that children have a right to safety. We target the most at-risk populations, including:

- ❖ Children in migration, emergencies, or internal trafficking
- ❖ Children with disabilities
- ❖ Orphans and children in child headed households
- ❖ Children in child care institutions

Poverty, high levels of unemployment and limited access to social services mean that thousands of children are vulnerable to exploitative labor, commercial sex work and human trafficking each year. Save the Children is working to protect girls and boys from abuse, exploitation, harm and neglect by targeting at-risk populations and establishing prevention and response services throughout Ethiopia. We aim to strengthen awareness, collaboration, advocacy and protection mechanisms for children within families, communities, school environments, the health sector, the judicial system and law enforcement services. Currently, we work with more than 30 partners and implement over 40 child protection projects throughout Ethiopia.

EFFECTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

OUR EXPERIENCE

- ❖ Save the Children worked with the government to develop a **National Plan of Action on Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation**, as well as several other manuals and policies to strengthen child protection.
- ❖ We organised, trained, and supported over 300 community child protection committees (CPCs), involving **more than 3,000 community members** to take action against child abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

THE PROBLEM There were 225,000 child-headed households (CHHs) in Ethiopia in 2010, in which roughly 675,000 children relied solely on the care of siblings under the age of 18. Girls are often disproportionately tasked with care of siblings, forcing many to resort to coping mechanisms, such as commercial sex work, to pay expenses. In childcare institutions, children are marginalized and frequently subjected to physical, sexual, exploitation, and psychological abuse. Without a uniform licensing or monitoring system for these institutions, many children remain without access to basic services, such as education and health care.

OUR APPROACH We provide **psychosocial services**, including temporary shelter, counselling, referrals to medical and legal services, and school support for victims of abuse. We offer **family tracing and reunification services, family-based care and support** for separated and unaccompanied children in emergencies, and **access to social protection services** for families in disaster-prone situations. Our programmes emphasise strong parental childcare or promote kinship care and local adoption for separated children. Through our research, monitoring, and evaluation initiatives, we support the government in developing inclusive, family-based childcare interventions.

A GENDERED CRISIS

The situation for Ethiopian girls and young women is alarming, with **68% reporting abuse and violence at some point in their lives**. An estimated **55% of girls are subjected to female genital mutilation**. Nearly half of all girls in Ethiopia are married by the age of 16.

- ✓ **Every Save the Children Child Friendly Center offers psychosocial services to girls at risk of abuse and exploitation.**
- ✓ **Save the Children worked with more than 51,000 Ethiopian girls to combat harmful traditional practices in their communities.**



Amina, 13, stands before a group of tents in Helewyn refugee camp, where access to basic services is limited.

EMPOWERED ADVOCATES FOR CHILD PROTECTION



Anab Aden, 13, reads aloud from the blackboard to her fellow classmates.

THE PROBLEM There is little coordination amongst child protection actors in Ethiopia. The lack of clear responsibilities for duty-bearers and functional cross-sector coordination systems weaken the viability of child protection. Girls and boys are often excluded from discussions on how to protect children from violence, abuse, and exploitation. Efforts to include children and families in the design and evaluation of child protection programmes are inadequate, allowing for significant gaps in services. The absence of a national child protection monitoring system and insufficient referral mechanisms further prevent timely and effective responses to violence against vulnerable children.

OUR APPROACH Child participation is key to effectively addressing the concerns of children. By including girls and boys in the shaping and reshaping of solutions, our programmes can impact children in the most hard-to-reach areas and respond to needs that often go unacknowledged. **Engaging children** in the development, monitoring, and evaluation of our programmes, Save the Children can contribute to the continued growth of meaningful child protection initiatives, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Through **stronger efforts to include children in their own safeguarding**, we can better identify and respond to gaps in protection and ensure greater accountability of duty bearers.

OUR EXPERIENCE

- ❖ We established and actively supported **child-led groups**, through which children participate in studies, child-led awareness raising activities for peers and local communities, and reporting child abuse.
- ❖ In North Wollo zone, Save the Children provided trainings on unsafe child migration and exploitative labour to **47,000 adults and children**.
- ❖ Save the Children used **evidence-based campaign strategies** to promote child protection efforts for **three million adults**.

DID YOU KNOW...

1 million

Ethiopian children benefitted from our child protection programmes in 2012.

STRENGTHENED PREVENTION AND RESPONSE SYSTEMS



Children play in a Save the Children Child-Friendly Center (CFS), which provides a protective environment for play.

THE PROBLEM In Ethiopia, there is currently a lack of standardized child protection mechanisms for identifying and monitoring violence against children, leaving many girls and boys at risk to harmful traditional practices and the worst forms of child labour. Protection services operate largely independently of one another, preventing a coordinated multi-sectoral response and widespread information sharing. Children who have been abused or neglected often do not have adequate access to appropriate means of judicial recourse. Others who have experienced harm may be unaware of available psychosocial resources. To better prevent and respond to violence against children, greater awareness, advocacy, and cooperation at all levels are necessary.

OUR APPROACH We train service providers to better respond to the needs of children. By establishing functional **child-friendly coordination mechanisms** and stronger referral linkages, children who have been abused or exploited can have access to vital psychosocial and judicial resources. Through **capacity building initiatives** and **support to existing national strategies**, we can further raise awareness of key risks to children and encourage active monitoring to prevent children from being harmed.

OUR EXPERIENCE

- ❖ In partnership with the Federal Supreme Court, we successfully advocated for the **scale-up of child friendly courts and services** across Ethiopia.
- ❖ Save the Children **trained partners and stakeholders** in child protection practices to strengthen linkages to the law enforcement, judicial services, health and education centres, and governmental offices.

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organisation for children. Our vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development, and participation. Our mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

CONTACTS

Tsion Tefera
Head of Child Protection
tsion.tefera@savethechildren.org

John Graham
Country Director
john.graham@savethechildren.org

