

Education is strongly linked to reducing infant and child mortality and morbidity, while promoting safe reproductive behaviours, family health and planning, and sanitation. In Ethiopia, the government has made significant progress in expanding access to primary education to work toward Universal Primary Education. Over the past two decades, enrolment in primary education in Ethiopia has quadrupled, reaching almost 17 million in 2011-12. Despite this rapid increase and the steady rise in number of professional teachers, student achievement remains low. Access to education is also inequitable across the country. In Somali Region, only 7% of students make it to secondary school. Gender disparities still exist in the distribution of educational opportunities and dropout rates remain high, particularly in pastoralist and remote areas where drought and localised conflict are common.



Anne-Sofie Helms/Save the Children

A student participates in Save the Children's Alternative Basic Education programme in Tigray.

Save the Children works across seven regions and two city administrations to provide over 1.5 million children and youth with quality education and skills training. With a focus on basic education, Save the Children has implemented 46 education projects totalling more than \$50 million since 2008. Other substantial interventions have targeted early childhood care and education (ECCE), education for youth empowerment (EYE) and education in emergencies (EiE). Through these projects, we have constructed 313 primary schools, 272 alternative basic education centres, 20 satellite classrooms, 106 ECCE centres, 86 teacher residences, and 3 woreda education offices, in addition to upgrading latrines, water wells, libraries and school laboratories.

ACCESS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

OUR EXPERIENCE

- ❖ We delivered **school meals** to more than 50,000 children in North Wollo to prevent dropout, resulting in improved attendance and participation.
- ❖ We worked with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to develop strategies on ECCE, **special needs/inclusive education, school health and nutrition, and girls education.**
- ❖ We provided medical services for 6,888 children in schools to **reduce the impact of poor health** on children's learning.
- ❖ In 2012, we supported **27,770** (37% girls) Somali refugee children through ECCE and primary education.

THE PROBLEM Equitable access to education continues to be a pervasive challenge, especially for females, rural and pastoralist children, orphans, children in emergencies, children with disabilities, dropouts, and poor children. Inequities exist among regions, between urban and rural settings, and between sexes. In areas where educational opportunities are readily available, roughly 15% of primary school aged children are out of school. Across Ethiopia, significant variability in net enrolment remains, particularly in regions like Afar (35%) and Somali (64%).

OUR APPROACH Save the Children provides early childhood education, alternative basic education, vocational skills training, and targeted contributions to **address the specific needs of primary school age children**, such as by building wells, latrines, and classrooms. Bringing schools closer to children and designing community-based interventions are two ways we're expanding access. Our strategy further emphasises **strengthening linkages with social protection programmes** to reduce food insecurity, slow-onset disasters, and the prevalence of child labour for marginalised and disadvantaged children.



Several students study together at Eyob Community Primary School.

Jiro Ose/Save the Children

LITERACY BOOST

In 2011, Save the Children began its second year of Literacy Boost programming in the Dendi region of Ethiopia. Literacy Boost extends broad-based community mobilization for education by establishing reading awareness, materials creation workshops, reading camps, and book banks.

- ✓ **In one year, Literacy Boost increased student literacy by 24%.**
- ✓ **Literacy Boost schools outperformed peer institutions in nearly every assessment.**

HIGHER ACHIEVEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children



Somali children walk home with their new textbooks from Save the Children's Bulsho Child Friendly Centre.

OUR EXPERIENCE

- ❖ We successfully piloted Literacy Boost initiatives for **improving the reading skills** of primary school children through better teaching skills and community engagement.
- ❖ We trained more than **17,800** teachers, basic education facilitators, head teachers, woreda educational officers, and parent-teacher association members.
- ❖ We have supplied schools with **2,603,077 textbooks** and co-curricular reading material, 66 science kits, and other educational inputs to support children's learning.

THE PROBLEM In 2007, a majority of grade four and eight students scored below the government's minimum learning competency of 50% on National Learning Assessments. On average, boys scored higher than girls, and children in urban areas scored higher than those in rural areas. In 2010, 69.2% of children in grades two and three in Sidama region were found to be illiterate in their mother tongue. Throughout Ethiopia, at least 80% of children cannot read at the expected oral reading fluency rate. Inadequate access to pre-school education and limited support from parents, most children are not mentally and physically ready for schooling.

OUR APPROACH Save the Children improves the quality of primary education through its innovative Literacy Boost programmes and USAID-funded READ projects. Building on our successes with mobile camel and donkey libraries, we are providing **age-appropriate reading materials** for children in remote areas. We provide **technical and financial inputs** for schools, including teacher-training programs, with **routine assessments of quality learning environments** to measure children's learning and retention.

DID YOU KNOW

50%

of children in our education programmes are girls.

IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

THE PROBLEM A 2009 UNHCR study on the worst forms of child labour in Ethiopia revealed that 41% of girls and 58% of boys between 5-14 years of age are child labourers. Many children are subject to harmful child work due to the significant gap in employment opportunities for 15-24 year olds, who make up 28% of the economically active population. Insufficient education, inadequate skill training for labour markets, inadequate job information, and limited job availability contribute to un- or under-employment. Self-employment in the informal or agricultural sectors typically generates very low levels of income. Across the unemployed youth population, more than 37% are illiterate. Nationally, females face a higher incidence of unemployment (31.6%) than males (16.6%).



Zenabu helps her husband, Belay, weave traditional clothes to sell at market.

OUR APPROACH Save the Children addresses gaps in skills training for youth to promote higher-income generating employment. We provide **business development** and training to disadvantaged youth with start-up and follow-up support in collaboration with local partners throughout Ethiopia. We also offer **literacy and numeracy programmes** through local service providers and life skills training to encourage civic and social participation.

OUR EXPERIENCE

- ❖ We provided 3,018 children and youths engaged in various forms of hazardous labour with **vocational, technical, and business development skills training**. Among these children, 188 were girls involved in sex work.
- ❖ Through the Pastoral Livelihoods Initiative, Save the Children successfully launched a \$6 million programme to promote **economic strengthening and alternative incomes** for vulnerable groups, including youth and women.

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.

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