



Berhanu, 4, drinks a glass of protein-rich yogurt that his family produced from the cows they received from Save the Children.

An alarming 44% of Ethiopian children are stunted and 29% are underweight. Chronic disasters, such as food shortages and droughts, leave millions of children malnourished and unable to fully develop. Food-insecure families struggle to provide adequate educational opportunities for their children or protect them from the psychosocial traumas of hunger and poverty. Across the country, rain-fed agriculture accounts for 85% of employment, creating widespread vulnerability to disasters. Meanwhile, Ethiopia faces significant challenges to improving livelihoods, including extreme deforestation, soil erosion, and increasing rates of severe flooding due to improper natural resource management. The combination of small land holding, frequent droughts, and environmental degradation has contributed to increased food insecurity for families and children, especially in moisture deficit and pastoral areas.

Save the Children is a key player in food security and livelihoods work in Ethiopia, ranging from life saving food distributions to long-term livelihood improvement and market support. In 2012, **Save the Children's food security and livelihoods interventions reached over one million people through targeted interventions** such as an integrated safety net programme and increased milk production. Save the Children's innovative work in food security and livelihoods is widely recognized by the government, donors, and the wider development community. This includes pioneer work in safety net programming, early warning systems, and innovative livelihood options for pastoralists.

IMPROVE AND PROTECT TARGETED VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

OUR EXPERIENCE

- ❖ With support from USAID, Save the Children provides **food aid for 150,000 people** through the Pastoral Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP).
- ❖ Our Pastoral Livelihood Initiative (PLI), in partnership with USAID, supported **250,000 pastoralists** with integrated water, food, and rangeland management solutions.
- ❖ We piloted **innovative approaches** to natural resource management, including cash and food transfers.

THE PROBLEM Ethiopia's agricultural and livestock production heavily depends on erratic and unpredictable rainfall. Yields are low and post-harvest losses are high, creating widespread food insecurity. Low productivity due to pests and diseases, drought, declining soil fertility, and poor farming methods prevent the creation of stockpiles. Limited options for alternative income due to degraded natural resource base and poor market access have left a majority of Ethiopian households susceptible to negative coping mechanisms, which are exacerbated by the recurrence of severe natural disasters.

OUR APPROACH Save the Children's food security and livelihood programmes target pastoral and inadequate moisture areas of Ethiopia, where levels of child malnutrition and food insecurity are high. Noting the susceptibility of these areas to extreme weather-related shocks, we are scaling up the use of **risk-informed programming** by utilizing Household Economy Approach (HEA) and Cost of Diet (CoD) tools to effectively advocate for appropriate interventions. Relying on locally sourced materials helps communities to more easily **integrate long-term solutions** into pastoralist livelihoods.

MILK MATTERS

Extreme malnutrition in Ethiopia is intensified by poor access to low-cost food sources in dry periods. In response, Save the Children has developed a unique breakthrough to provide more children in pastoral and smallholder households with sustainable access to milk.

- ✓ **We generated evidence for the government and donors to scale-up livestock-related interventions and increase milk availability.**
- ✓ **We are piloting prosopis for goat fodder to increase milk production for poor households.**



Farmers in the Amhara highlands of Ethiopia thresh grain on their farmland.

EFFECTIVE SOCIAL SAFETY NET AND NUTRITION SENSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

Anne-Sofie Helms/Save the Children



Yishak, 9, cares for his family's cow, which provides milk and butter that his mother sells at market.

OUR EXPERIENCE

- ❖ Save the Children **implemented unique research** through the Milk Matters programme to measure the impact of dry season livestock support on milk supply and child nutrition in pastoral areas.
- ❖ We pioneered the **Household Economy Analysis (HEA)**, which is currently the government's primary tool in assessing the food security and livelihoods.
- ❖ We researched the impacts of **integrating water, sanitation, and hygiene** programmes to reduce stunting.

THE PROBLEM Around 2.5 million households in Ethiopia continue to suffer from chronic, transitory, or acute malnutrition. Regional disparities in the prevalence of chronic malnutrition are a major concern. In Tigray, 51% of children were stunted in 2011, which was among the highest rates in the world. Low productivity, inadequate access to food, poverty, large family sizes, and closely spaced births contribute to the high prevalence. Real retail prices of products, such as sugar, cereals, cooking oil, and kerosene, have risen considerably in recent years, leading to increased food insecurity among rural and pastoralist families. In particular, women and children have little control over family resources or income.

OUR APPROACH Drawing on the operational research of Save the Children's Milk Matters project, we can design and implement cost effective livestock interventions to **increase milk production**. Coupled with low cost nutritious food production initiatives and nutrition-sensitive social protection and livelihood programming, Save the Children can significantly improve the nutrition status of Ethiopia's children in areas vulnerable to chronic and prolonged food insecurity. Through advocacy efforts, we can **raise awareness of effective livelihood interventions** and the long-term benefits of nutrition sensitive safety net programmes, laying the foundation for more resilient and adaptable communities.

DID YOU KNOW... Integrating water, sanitation, and hygiene programmes into livelihoods activities can **reduce stunting by 10% over four years**.

INTEGRATED, CHILD-CENTERED DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Colin Crowley/Save the Children



Desalegn, 9, holds up one of his family's baby goats outside his home in Amhara region.

OUR EXPERIENCE

- ❖ Save the Children **pioneered early warning system development** in pastoral areas.
- ❖ We **piloted research on climate change adaptation** to inform community decision-making.
- ❖ Save the Children integrated **crisis modifier interventions** into development programmes that saved critical livelihood assets during emergencies.

THE PROBLEM Increasing variability in weather conditions exacerbates the frequency and severity of droughts and floods, and increases the uncertainty of seasonal rainfall patterns. Natural resource and environmental degradation, climate change, low levels of education, lack of access to basic health services, poor governance, and high population growth rates have significantly reduced the average farm size and per capita food production in Ethiopia. Drought shocks have weakened the productive capacity of pastoral and smallholder farmers, leading to high dependency on humanitarian support. Consequently, many populations have no time to recover and rebuild herds and food stocks between consecutive drought events.

OUR APPROACH Save the Children's food security and livelihoods programming can use **integrated risk aware approaches** to strengthen resilience building of affected households. **Child-centered disaster risk reduction** can build children's awareness and diminish the impact of shocks and stresses on children. By investing in improving livelihoods and risk analyses, and modeling **cost-effective nutrition and social protection packages**, we can help to accelerate community response in emergencies.

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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