



Muru Mohammed– Afar Region

Themes [Emergency Nutrition Response, Outpatient Therapeutic Program Centre]

Child Mohammed Issey [male, 7 months], Elidaar district, Emergency Nutrition, WASH

Summary Muru Mohammed is currently seven months pregnant and has a two year old son Andahey Ahmed. Her husband lives in Asayita Woreda which is 170 kms away from Elidaar where she currently lives with her son. Because of the hardship of life in Elidaar he is forced to work in a government-owned farm where he earns some money to support the family. Because of her recent pregnancy she has been included by Save the Children as part of the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program (TSFP) where she is receiving the Corn Soya Blend (CSB) mix that could help her and her unborn child from being malnourished. As an expecting mother, Muru is also following up her antenatal check-ups at the Elidaar health centre.

In Afar, only 32.3% of women receive any kind of antenatal care from skilled providers and only 2.7% from health extension workers. Delivery in a health facility is low with only 6.8% of women in the region having institutional deliveries, and only 7.2% of deliveries are assisted by a skilled provider.

Muru's story in her own words

My name is Muru Mohammed Gerdu. I am 20 years old. I have one daughter who is two years old and her name is Andahey Ahmed. Three of my children have passed away due to unknown illnesses. I am 7 months pregnant. I'm following up my vaccination here at the health centre and receiving the Famex (Corn Soya Blend (CSB) that they give me. My daughter's health is good. My husband is in Asayita Woreda here in the Afar region and works as a farmer. He's hired there and comes whenever he can.

My daughter and I mostly eat bread made out of wheat. I breastfed Andahey until she turned one. I also try and feed her rice. We get ground water which is more than two hours one way. We use donkeys in the community to bring the water back to our homes. The rainy times were good. Now this place is getting to be unbearable. I have five goats which my dad helps me take care of. Before, my family used to live in Toure Village. It was there that a health worker referred me to come to this health centre.

I think education is the key. I wish that my baby could one day help support me through the education. I'm going to make her go to school. There is school in our area which goes up to fifth grade and I definitely would want her to get an education.

Interview conducted by Amerti Lemma during the recent communication assignment to Afar region in June, 2013

Project background

The two main rainy seasons in Afar are Karma and Sugum. Early cessation of the regular Karma (long) rains in late 2012 and disruption of Sugum (short) rains in March/April 2013 resulted in critical water shortage, very poor pasture, low livestock and agricultural production and irregular migration, severely affecting the food security and livelihood status of the communities. The major affected areas are in Zones One and Two which



are located in the northern and north-eastern parts of the region. Five woredas (Afdera, Erebti, Kori, Bidu and Elidaar) have been prioritised by the regional government as suffering from critical water shortage and food insecurity. Save the Children have on-going programmes in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), nutrition, health and education in Afar.

An emergency nutrition programme funded by HRF started in April, 2013 in six hotspot woredas. OTP is delivered in conjunction with government health workers and Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) is delivered directly by Save the Children. So far 1,204 severely malnourished children have been admitted to OTP sites and 40 cases transferred to the stabilization centres and received treatment. A total of 4,325 moderately malnourished children and 4,428 PLWs have been admitted to the SFP.

Drought has become a frequent and persistent phenomenon in the Afar Region causing serious impairments in livestock production, the main source of livelihoods for pastoralists. In the past 10 years the region has been hit by three severe droughts — in 2002/03, in 2004/05, in 2007 and now this latest drought. Many fear that this will continue to further deteriorate the condition of the Afar people and worsen their abilities to recover from these continuous shocks. The situation requires a large-scale response within the next three months to overcome and prevent further immediate casualties in terms of both human and livestock lives. The Afar Region requires long-term investment to reduce the impact of further droughts and provide sustainable water resources to communities. Save the Children has responded to this crisis by providing water trucking to the affected regions over the last month, and aims to do so until August when it is hoped the rains will come. Save the Children is also working with partners such as UNICEF to support the sustainable development of water resources in this area, and reduce communities' dependence on trucked water.

Location Background

Afar region, situated in the North Eastern part of Ethiopia with a population of 1.4m, is a drought prone area which suffers from chronic water shortages. The majority of Afar people are pastoralists (90%) or agro-pastoralists (10%) who rely on livestock rearing and rain fed agriculture for their diet and livelihoods.

Basic service provision in the pastoral areas of Ethiopia has historically been problematic, with less than one-fifth of pastoral communities in Ethiopia having access to basic social services such as health care and education; Afar is no exception. In Afar, there are shortages of trained health staff at all levels as well as a basic lack of infrastructure — the fact that there are only 39 health centres and 4 referral hospitals in the whole region (96,707 square kilometres) means families have to cover vast distances by foot to reach lifesaving care.