



Success Story

Background: Argoba Special district is one of the districts which are found in Afar regional state. Like other districts of Ethiopia, Argoba district is deprived of social and economic services mostly children are denied of their survival and development rights like education, health, food and most are exposed to child labour and early marriage practices. To curve this problem, PADet with PCF and pertinent stakeholders like District Education Office has proposed a three years project entitled improving quality of education in 10 target schools since July 2018. The project aimed at improving access to quality primary education in Argoba Special District and has three outputs i.e. improving teaching learning process, improving the school environment and increasing community participation in education. Among the project activities which have been implementing includes establishment of Child Parliament clubs and enhance participation of children in these established clubs. Children's parliaments have been established throughout Ethiopia to facilitate the participation of children in family, societal, community and government affairs and to enable them to voice their concerns. The first Children's Parliament was inaugurated and became operational in September 2006. In 2017, UNICEF supported the government to revise the National Children's Parliament Guidelines and to revitalize the children's parliament to deepen meaningful participation of children.

Existing situation: before child parliament club came in to effect in Marshet primary school, children didn't have opportunities to exercise their leadership capabilities.

Children were also deprived of collective engagement platform to discuss on their own issues and claim their own rights and ensure safeguarding mechanisms. As a result, children didn't know their rights and responsibilities at the school level. They also couldn't be drivers of change for the community and their own rights and privileges.

Response or reaction to the problem: PADet, in an attempt to create opportunities and solve children challenges such as lack of children participation in co-curricular activities, established child parliament clubs in target schools. Among these established clubs, Marshet primary school is one of the functioning schools with respect to participating children in Child Parliament Club. PADet trained 10 (F=2) civics teachers to help and smoothly run these clubs at target schools. As a result, a total of 54 (F=32) students has been registered and actively participated in Child Parliament club of Marshet primary school. A facilitator [trained teacher] was assigned to facilitate children participations on monthly basis. The club has main speaker and deputy speaker who are responsible to run periodical meetings held among members. The club selected representatives from each sectors such as education, health, agriculture, women and children affair, Justice, etc and children have been participating in different roles of the club. Since then, children were active participants in different issues such as children rights, responsibilities, the effects of child labor and early marriage on children education, gender equality, etc.

Result: accordingly, children's parliament in Marshet primary school is playing significant role in realizing children's rights, and in shaping and reshaping the socio-economics of the Kebele community. As a result, a total of 164 (F=93) school students [non-club members] directly benefited through participating in monthly meetings. In addition, approximately a total of 150 (F=65) parents of the local community indirectly benefited through outreach mass awareness programs on issues of value of education, children rights and combating HTPs. Child Parliament members' active participation has brought some incredible changes, particularly in areas of children's schooling,

promoting children's rights and responsibilities, and violence against children. Children's parliament has been the appropriate means of realizing children's participation rights in the school. Aside creating awareness on children's rights, protecting children's well-being, and monitoring the proper implementation of children's rights, children's parliaments are agents of social change, especially in contexts like Marshet Kebele where communities are less exposed to modern social and economical changes.

Evidence: *The club also helped students in many ways:*

- Students' developed the ability to speak, lead meetings and know different methods of participation
- Students' self-confidence increased
- Improved their academic performance
- Played a great role to produce responsible patriotic citizens
- Students' passion for work has increased
- Students' make decisions based on knowledge and reason
- Students have used their resources to become problem-solving citizens
- Students are actively involved in the class room

In general, it has greatly contributed to the change of students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior.

Additionally, the club produced monthly reports on its activities and prepared the club profile and documented in a separate folder. During both the periodical monitoring and end line evaluation, we have confirmed that each club participant was very active on the different issues of the club. We have recorded their monthly meetings and kept it in video file.



Photo 2: Monthly meetings by members of the children's parliament club led by the speaker



Photo 2: Club Members Participation during Monthly Meetings