



From Shattered Dreams TO PROMISING FUTURE

Three years ago, 18 year-old Fasigo Bayuh dropped out of school in Ethiopia. He was only in grade nine. His family was not able to financially support his secondary education. An added challenge was that there was no access to higher education at his home village - the only high school was located 30 kilometres away from his home. "I remember how much unlucky I felt and how my dreams nearly shattered at that moment and did not know what would I do in my life," Fasigo said. In Ethiopia, 25% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed. Many others tend to engage in unpaid family work or low-paid, seasonal, and temporary contract work in the agricultural sector as a result of many factors including the limited access to primary education. Save the Children chose to tackle some of these causes of youth unemployment and underemployment in Africa through the Youth in Action program, a six-year partnership with The MasterCard Foundation. Youth in Action supports 39,850 out-of-school young girls and boys to improve their socio-economic situation in rural areas in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda.

In Ethiopia, Youth in Action's focus is North Wollo in the northern part of the country. It is one of the most vulnerable rural regions, where the population's livelihoods are mainly dependent on income from agricultural activities. Despite the recurrent droughts that hit the area and many other challenges related to access to land policies and youth migration, there is still an opportunity for agricultural development as 24% of its land area remains arable and can be cultivated. In this perspective, agricultural support and development are critical to enable youth to stay and build sustainable livelihoods. **Therefore, Save the Children works in partnership with the Professional Alliance for Development (PADet) to support 9,050 young people aged 15- 18 year-olds through YiA program. It provides them with demand-driven employability skills including life skills, numeracy, literacy, financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills to enable them to make a decision about their future, through offering a choice of pathway options to try out with support and mentorship.**

Fasigo joined the program in 2013 and since then his shattered dreams have turned into a promising future. "Before I join Youth in Action, I did not have any financial skills and did not know even how to make any savings. Now I know more about the opportunities and resources available in my surrounding, including in my family and community. I chose the pathway that will help me to establish my own business. I built strong links within my community which helped me to develop this business", he said. Fasigo started with subcontracting with farmers who own land around the river but were not effectively utilizing their water. He planted onions then expanded his farming to lentil, chili and commercial trees. His first earning was around 3000 ET Birr and his plan is to reach 10000 per each harvesting season. Fasigo managed to make 7800 ET Birr so far, which is significant for him and proves that he is on the right track. Save the Children's Youth in Action Program Manager, Angaw Nurlign said: "Youth prefer the entrepreneurship pathway because of its immediate benefits.

Therefore, Save the Children, together with its PADet introduced a Youth-Led Procurement mechanism, which provides the participants with a small grant to support the set-up of their small business. It addresses the lack of access to credit for agricultural-oriented businesses and allows for more flexibility in the purchase of local goods and services. It also provides a sense of responsibility and ownership for the youth over their projects, turning them into actors of change and not simply recipients of aid" Fasigo is becoming a role model for his peers. He participated in youth governance and media training provided by Youth in Action. He organized meeting with 46 youth from his village to discuss issues affecting them and share his experience. In pursuit of his dream,

Fasigo is now back to school, which is 60 km away from his village. He pays the school fees and transportation from his farming profit. "I have now a more ambitious plan, to become an educated entrepreneur. I do not want to depend only on the onion production. I want to diversified businesses and I know that I will get there. I am so grateful for Youth in Action program for helping me to plan for my future". Fasigo added.



NOTES: ABOUT YOUTH IN ETHIOPIA:

- Approximately 20% of Ethiopia's population (94 million) is between the ages of 15 and 24, of which 25% are unemployed. - Underemployment appears to be most prevalent in rural areas, despite youth's engagement in agricultural activities.
- Over 68% of youth aged between 15 to 24 appear to be engaged in unpaid family work, and hazardous child labour - including activities such as domestic services, mining, fishing and work in the street
- Constitutes a major threat to vulnerable rural youth aged 14 to 18, tempted to migrate to find jobs.
- High rates of youth unemployment can be attributed to restricted access to land and other productive assets; limited formal sector employment, and an education system and curricula that do not meet labour market needs. Other factors include low levels of educational attainment, the lack of access to infrastructures (such as water and electricity), entrepreneurial skills, and initial capital to start a business.

ABOUT YOUTH IN ACTION IN ETHIOPIA: Youth in Action is a six-year, multi-country project funded by The MasterCard Foundation and aims to improve the socio-economic status of approximately 38,500 rural out-of-school youth in five African countries – Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda.

The first stage of the project supports young people to develop their life skills, numeracy, literacy and financial literacy. The second stage of the project offers young people the chance to choose a pathway to success, linked to opportunities within or around agriculture value chains. The project provides five options in Ethiopia including:

- **Education:** Youth are supported to join formal or non-formal education programs
- **Vocational training:** Youth are assisted to enroll in vocational skills trainings and receive a small toolkit
- **Apprenticeship:** Youth are connected to master crafts persons and receive a small toolkit
- **Employment:** Youth are supported to gain access to wage employment
- **Entrepreneurship (Micro Enterprise):** Youth are supported to assess, establish and implement agriculture-based micro enterprises projects.

In Ethiopia, most of the program participants have selected the Micro-Enterprise pathway. It appeared that youth preferred this pathway because of immediate start up and quick benefits. It is therefore in light of this activity that PADet/Save the Children is piloting the Youth-Led procurement mechanism



YOUTH-LED PROCUREMENT (YLP)

Youth-Led Procurement (YLP) is a form of Conditional Cash Transfer Program (CTP) aiming at providing youth with a small livelihood grant to support the set-up of their small business. Not only does the YLP address the lack of access to credit for agricultural-oriented businesses, but it also constitutes a programmatic and operational tool that allows more flexibility for the youth in the purchase of livelihoods goods/services; incurs less logistic and procurement charges for SCI, allowing a greater retribution of funds to beneficiaries; and supports the local economy by ensuring that livelihoods good/services are purchased locally. Upon validation of their business plans by the approval committee, beneficiary youth received an approval letter allowing them to withdraw the money from their accounts in the local branch of a micro-finance institution named ACSI (Amhara Credit & Saving Institution)

