

The Keranyo Family and Community Strengthening Program Impact Report



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Supporting families in Keranyo

Keranyo is a poverty-stricken suburb on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, home to over half a million people. The community is known to be a destination for migrant families leaving their homes in rural areas due to climate-related shocks such as droughts and disease outbreaks and ongoing armed conflict in Northern Ethiopia. The deteriorating agricultural conditions and violent conflict are pushing these families to the city in search of greater security and educational and employment opportunities. However, upon arriving in Keranyo, they face overcrowding, few job opportunities, and limited access to electricity, clean water, health and education services.

Women-headed households in Keranyo face additional challenges as they grapple with the absence of affordable childcare, often facing a tough choice between earning a living and caring for their children. This dilemma sometimes leaves them with no option but to leave children unsupervised or bring them to work. Additionally, these mothers contend with rising food costs due to high inflation rates (30%), causing malnutrition among many as they struggle to provide balanced meals.

The Keranyo Family and Community Strengthening Program

Since 1997, SOS Children's Villages in Keranyo has been implementing a Family Strengthening Program that includes a fully staffed Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Community Centre actively supporting families in need. The program's main objective is to provide services to the most vulnerable and protect children while also socially and economically empowering marginalized caregivers so they can independently meet their families' needs. This is achieved by:

- Increasing the use of comprehensive ECD services, making them more accessible to vulnerable children by offering free holistic childcare services.
- Improving parental care for vulnerable children by providing social and economic empowerment opportunities for women through skills development and business training.
- Improving the safety of women and children in the community by strengthening the capacity of community-based organizations to prevent and respond to rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, and strengthening the capacity of the community to protect children and support vulnerable households.





Key program results and activities

The program has significantly impacted the lives of 393 caregivers (388 female and 5 male) and their 413 children. The program expanded its economic empowerment support to 122 adults (117 female and 5 male). We provided technical support and training to local community-based organizations and schools to address barriers that prevent women's participation in the labour market and girls' access to education. The project achieved the following:



194 children received quality early childhood education through the Keranyo Early Childhood Development and Community Centre.



161 caregivers and community members attended trainings on positive parenting and child safeguarding.



194 children received three meals per day and basic health screening. Children showing signs of malnutrition or other health complications were referred to healthcare services through community partners.



104 of 122 caregivers have reported sufficient income to meet their family needs since joining the program.



47 caregivers (44 female, 3 male) have attended business management training.



75 caregivers (73 female and 2 male) enrolled in vocational training in hospitality (food preparation and catering) or beauty care (hairdressing).



34 individuals completed their vocational training and gained successful employment with training centre partners and local businesses or have started their own businesses.



A computer lab was established to improve the digital literacy skills of caregivers. SOS Children's Villages staff presented essential information and communication technology (ICT) training to 28 participants to improve typing, internet searching skills and using Microsoft Word and Excel desktop applications.

Early childhood development services

The Keranyo Early Childhood Development and Community Centre is the only community ECD centre in the area and was established to provide holistic childcare services to vulnerable children.

Full-day ECD services are provided to single mothers and other caregivers free of charge; all children receive three meals daily. This service helps ensure that children under five receive the health, nutrition, education, and care they need to develop and that women have the support they need to work or pursue their education and employment opportunities. The ECD centre takes care of 194 children, and each year, about 50 children will graduate from the ECD centre and enter primary school, where new children will be accepted into the ECD centre in their place.

All children received a physical evaluation from a primary physician. Five children were malnourished and received additional food and medical referrals to improve their health.

Parents with children participating in the ECD centre are encouraged to volunteer one day a month and support the childcare professionals working there. Each day, about six caregivers will volunteer at the centre. This is an opportunity for mothers and caregivers to develop different early childhood education skills, network with other women and contribute to the development of their community.

As a result of ECD services provided by SOS Children's Villages, children graduating from the ECD centre and entering primary school tend to have higher academic performance than their peers. The quality of education the children receive helps their cognitive development, and their language and math learning skills set them up for success in primary school. The children are healthy and receiving their nutritional needs thanks to the daily meals provided at the ECD centre.

Positive parenting and life skills courses

To support soft skills development, the program offers workshops and coffee gatherings where women develop their self-confidence and leadership skills and learn about women's empowerment. They share best practices and learn from other working mothers.

Since 2022, 15 conversations over coffee ceremonies have been hosted, reaching 716 caregivers (95% women). The discussion topics included child safeguarding, positive parenting, and preventing infectious diseases like COVID-19, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

Positive parenting training offered by SOS Children's Villages seeks to support caregivers in improving their interactions with their children. Highlights include:

- Introduction to positive parenting and non-physical discipline
- Identifying long-term parenting goals and parents' stress responses

- Understanding the impacts of negative emotions on children and how to control stressful situations
- Providing a caring home for children
- Communicating effectively with children
- Providing structure and positive discipline
- Parenting skills during pregnancy

Positive parenting training benefits include stronger parent-child relationships, improved academic performance amongst children, fewer behavioural problems, and improved mental health. Ultimately, we saw increased self-efficacy in parents and caregivers, more resilient children, less abuse in the community and general improvement in caregivers' mental health.

Economic empowerment for vulnerable mothers

Women participated in professional development workshops at the community centre or partner vocational training centres to support business skills development based on their needs, interests, and skills.

So far, 75 caregivers attended vocational training in sewing and garment design, food preparation, and hairdressing. To date, 51 caregivers have completed their training and examinations and are supported in finding a job placement through their training institution. Since 2022, 34 individuals have gained successful employment with training centre partners and local businesses or have started their own businesses. For those who have not yet found employment, SOS Children's Villages continues to support them with their job search.

In addition to vocational training, another 47 caregivers (44 female, 3 male) have attended business management training that prepares them to establish a small business. Highlights include:

- General introduction to owning a business
- Generating business ideas and developing a business plan
- Determining business costs and identifying funding sources
- Understanding pricing, marketing and selling of their products and services
- Building their management skills and effectively managing their business
- Engaging in economic self-improvement



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Empowering caregivers is a powerful investment in the future of our children and our communities. By providing early childhood development services and economic empowerment programs for caregivers in the most destitute situations, we can break the cycle of poverty, promote healthy child development, and build a more prosperous and equitable community.

Solomon Kidea, Program Coordinator
SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia

Strengthening community responses and preventing child rights abuses

SOS Children's Villages sensitizes community members and partners to the importance of women's and children's rights and strengthens their ability to prevent and respond to violence.

We believe that when communities improve their capacity to respond to family violence, there is increased accountability to protect children, reduced fatalities and injuries and a better sense of a safe community for everyone.

Since 2022, SOS Children's Villages successfully achieved the following:

- Four community-wide sensitization **events on child protection**.
- Workshop with community partners to **map local child protection mechanisms** and support services for vulnerable families.
- **Capacity building on gender mainstreaming** to 17 local community-based organizations, where SOS Children's Villages staff facilitated conversations promoting women's rights and inclusion in the community and workplace.
- **Capacity building on safeguarding** to 31 Community Care Coalition members, learning to recognize and respond to protection issues, including sexual and gender-based violence.
- **Technical and financial support** to the local protection committee developing a child safeguarding report.
- **Feminine hygiene products**, including sanitary napkins and hand soap, were provided to the local primary school, meeting the needs of 100 girls.

As a result of SOS Children's Villages programs, the awareness of child rights and gender abuse has increased significantly, and there has been an increase in both reporting cases of abuse and acknowledgment from the greater community that more work is required to create a safer environment for women and children. All program participants left the training confident in identifying and reporting signs of abuse.

Gender discrimination and traditional gender roles are common within this community. Through

gender mainstreaming training, we educate and encourage community leaders to provide women with more opportunities for employment outside the home and view women respectfully as equal to men in their abilities and skills. Community leaders have gained knowledge about women's rights and are interested in continuing to learn about them and how they can support women in gaining employment and economic independence.

Challenges

Over the past year and a half, the Keranyo Early Childhood Development and Community Centre has faced challenges that have made implementing some program activities more difficult.

As part of the program's economic empowerment strategy, SOS Children's Villages planned to support participants who completed their business training with access to loans and credit cooperatives. Most participants could not access loans because they did not have official documents such as birth certificates or proof of address needed to apply for a government ID.

The inflation rate has increased alarmingly, and the operation costs of running the Keranyo Early

Childhood Development and Community Centre have significantly escalated. The purchase of essential food items for the children's meals and ensuring staff salaries meet the increased cost of living have been the biggest costs to the budget. While we continue to run the program into 2024, increasing the overall budget is necessary to continue providing quality nutrition to the children in our care and to meet the needs of our staff in Ethiopia.

These challenges have been noted, and the 2024 budget and project activities have been adjusted accordingly.

Conclusion

The Keranyo Early Childhood Development and Community Centre has achieved notable results, where over 400 children have accessed early childhood development services, more than 100 caregivers (90% women) have benefitted from economic empowerment opportunities such as vocational and business training, and the community has grown in their capacity to respond to child rights abuses and gender-based violence.

Women in Ethiopia and within the Keranyo community continue to bear the burden of poverty, lacking access to control resources and limited decision-making. They are often responsible for household chores, child and elder care and agriculture work but often lack access to economic opportunities. Through SOS Children's Villages programs, more women can access free childcare,

economic and skills development opportunities and better advocacy for their equal rights and inclusion. Community and individual development are ongoing efforts, building more resilient and independent families.

Overall, SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia's efforts to improve the lives of vulnerable children and their families in the Keranyo community through the Keranyo Early Childhood Development and Community Centre have proven successful. This program has reached those living in the most challenging situations and enabled them to live a life with dignity and care for their family. We thank all our partners for their efforts to grow this initiative and for the positive impacts they have helped to create for the community and families of Keranyo.

Women's economic empowerment in Keranyo: Amara's story

Before Amara found her path to success, her husband, a security guard, was the sole earner. His income only covered the cost of rent, leaving the family struggling to meet their basic needs.

Recognizing the need to contribute to her family's financial wellbeing, she enrolled in the Keranyo Family and Community Strengthening Program, which provided her daughter with care, meals, and education while she received economic empowerment and parenting support. The program enabled Amara to focus on her development and she joined a vocational skills training program in food preparation.

Through this training, Amara gained the necessary knowledge and skills to pursue a career in catering. With her newfound expertise, she established her own catering business, serving delicious meals and snacks for various events and occasions. As her reputation grew, so did her client base. Amara's hard work and dedication paid off, enabling her to generate a steady income.

The impact of Amara's success reached beyond her professional achievements. She became an

invaluable support to her husband, significantly contributing to the family's financial stability. With their combined earnings, they could cover their household expenses more comfortably and save for the future.

Amara's story is a testament to the transformative power of education and vocational training. Acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge, she improved her life and secured a better future for her child and husband. Her journey emphasizes the importance of empowering individuals through access to education and training, enabling them to break free from financial constraints and build fulfilling lives.

Your support has helped to positively impact lives like Amara and her family. By ensuring wider access to early childhood development and community centres, we are opening the doors of opportunity for struggling families to thrive, providing children with a brighter future and empowering parents to provide for their loved ones.

A bright future through education: Mekdes' story

Despite facing numerous challenges, Mekdes never gave up on her dreams and worked hard to create a better life for herself and her four-year-old daughter.

Mekdes' life improved significantly when she gained access to the Keranyo Early Childhood Development and Community Centre. She could pursue part-time employment as a housemaid with peace of mind, knowing her daughter was safe and cared for.

Recognizing the importance of acquiring new skills, Mekdes enrolled in a vocational training program in hairdressing. With the support of SOS Children's Villages, she completed the training and gained expertise in hairstyling and beauty techniques.

With her newly acquired skills, Mekdes attracted the attention of several beauty salons, resulting in multiple job offers. After careful consideration, she accepted a position at a reputable beauty salon. With her talent and creativity, Mekdes quickly built a strong reputation, leading to a steady stream of customers.

Mekdes' life transformed rapidly. Consistent income allowed her to meet her family's essential

needs and invest in her daughter's education, securing a better future for them both.

As Mekdes continued to excel in her career, she gained self-confidence and empowerment. She embraced the opportunities that came her way, attending workshops and seminars to enhance her skills and stay updated on the latest trends in the beauty industry. Mekdes' dedication and professionalism earned her the respect of her peers, opening doors for further growth and career advancement.

Mekdes' story serves as an inspiration to other single mothers facing similar challenges. Through her determination, resilience, and the support she received from SOS Children's Villages, Mekdes transformed her life from one of struggle and uncertainty to stability and fulfilment. She proved that with hard work, perseverance, and access to opportunities, it is possible to overcome adversity and achieve success.





Thank you for your support!



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