

# The Keranyo Family and Community Strengthening Program

2025 Report



**SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES**  
CANADA



**SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES**  
ETHIOPIA

## Executive summary

The **SOS Children's Villages Keranyo Family and Community Strengthening Program** continues to be a vital source of support for children and their caregivers living in difficult circumstances in the Keranyo community of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This program enables caregivers, particularly single mothers with multiple dependents, to achieve social and economic empowerment, helping them build resilience and meet their families' needs.

Thanks to our generous supporters, the Keranyo Family and Community Strengthening Program has successfully responded to the needs of families facing social and economic hardship. This response **includes** providing holistic childcare services, such as health and nutrition, while also offering economic empowerment opportunities through skills training tailored to single mothers and other caregivers.

The program aims to sustainably uplift the social and economic status of marginalized women caregivers and enhance early childhood development for children aged 3-5. Thanks to supporters like you, we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of these families.

**In 2025, 194 children, their 186 caregivers, and 30 community members engaged in various program activities, including early childhood education, vocational and business skills training, and child safeguarding sessions.** Our activities and enrollment rates are progressing as planned, with targets on track to be met within budget.

The following sections provide a detailed summary of this year's key achievements, activities, challenges and a story highlighting the impact on a participant's life.

## Key program results and activities



**98** children graduated from the Early Child Development Centre and started primary school in September 2025.



**69** caregivers enrolled in vocational and/or business skills training.



**24** caregivers accessed startup funds for their own business.

# Key program achievements

## Increasing the use of comprehensive early child development services, making them more accessible to children

Early childhood education remains a powerful force for change in Ethiopia, especially for children from low-income families. In their early years, children build the curiosity, confidence, and social skills that shape how they learn and connect with the world. For families facing daily challenges, access to quality early education provides not just learning opportunities, but also care, stability, and hope for a better future. By investing in Ethiopia's youngest learners, we help open doors to lifelong growth – breaking cycles of poverty, strengthening families, and nurturing communities where every child has the chance to thrive.

This year, the SOS Children's Villages Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre continued to be a safe and joyful place for **194 vulnerable children, 105 boys and 89 girls**, welcoming them each weekday for learning, play, and care. Children's ages range mostly between 3 and 4 years old, which are critical years for growth and learning. About two-thirds of the children have been with us for two years. This figure underscores the impact and quality of our programming, as caregivers build trust with SOS Children's Villages and witness the positive effects of early childhood education on their children's development. In September, **98 children proudly graduated from the centre. As they began their journey into primary school, 96 new learners joined in the fall of 2025** to take their place and begin building their own foundations for the future. New uniforms for the children were also procured this year, a welcome addition to the centre.

Each child at the centre receives **three nutritious meals and snacks each day**, along with nurturing care and **age-appropriate learning in subjects such as mathematics, Amharic, and English**, all guided by dedicated and experienced childcare professionals. Working closely with the local government health centre, the team also ensures that every child benefits from regular **health checks, nutrition monitoring, and vaccinations**. One child was found to have food intolerances, and the ECD staff quickly adapted by providing gluten and dairy-free meals,

reflecting their commitment to meeting each child's individual needs with care and attention.

### Caregiver feedback:

Participant engagement and feedback are core values of SOS Children's Villages, and ensure the program meets the needs of the community. This year, 30 caregivers participated in the ECD feedback survey, representing 34 children enrolled in our daycare program.



The survey results paint a deeply encouraging picture of progress and joy in learning:

- **97% of caregivers said their children interact well with others, showing how the ECD Centre helps children build friendships, cooperation, and confidence.**
- 93% of caregivers shared that their children can already recognize shapes and colours, a strong foundation for early learning.
- Nearly all caregivers noted that their children are becoming more empathetic, learning to share, help others, and understand feelings.
- Every caregiver reported that their children are learning to follow instructions and engage positively in class activities.



Overall, 97% of parents said they are either “happy” or “very happy” with their child’s development. Only one caregiver expressed concern, regarding a child with identified learning challenges who is now receiving specialized support.

When asked about the most meaningful benefits of the ECD program, caregivers most often mentioned:

- Socialization and friendship building;
- Nutritious daily meals; and
- Learning progress in languages and math.

Together, these responses highlight what caregivers value most: a safe, nurturing place where children can grow, play, and thrive while receiving the nutrition, care, and early education they need for a strong start in life.



## Abel's journey: Supporting a child with autism

During routine health checks at the ECD Centre, one child, Abel, was identified as showing signs of autism.

To better understand and respond to Abel's needs, the ECD team reached out to the AllStar Psychological Support Provider Organization, a local organization specializing in holistic support to children with special needs, where he underwent a screening that revealed the need for speech therapy. After two speech therapy sessions, specialists recommended further evaluation.

A treatment plan was developed in collaboration with Aha Psychological Service Provider. This certified professional psychological services organization works with international organizations, including SOS Children's Villages, where Abel will continue receiving the specialized care and support he needs.

Supporting a child with autism is about giving them the chance to grow, learn, and be understood. Every child deserves to feel valued and included, and with the right care and encouragement, children with autism can build the skills and confidence they need to thrive. Early support not only helps them communicate and connect with others but also strengthens families and communities by fostering compassion and inclusion.





## Key program achievements continued

### Improving parental care for children by providing social and economic empowerment opportunities for women

Since the start of the social and economic empowerment component of the Keranyo Family and Community Strengthening Program, our focus has been on helping women build lasting independence and stability. Through access to **financial resources, practical skills training, and strong community support**, the program provides women in vulnerable situations with the tools they need to improve their livelihoods, support their families, and create brighter futures for themselves and their children.

### Women's Economic Empowerment Program objectives:

**Increase access to financial services for women entrepreneurs:**

- **24 caregivers received financial support for their business startup, including mentorship support.** This is an increase from ten participants last year.

**Provide vocational and skills training tailored to local market needs:**

- **40 participants completed vocational training** in fields with high employment potential, including tailoring, hair dressing, and food preparation. Training curricula are designed to meet local market demands, ensuring graduates are well-positioned for income generation.

- **30 participants, including 29 women, attended business workshops** covering topics such as financial literacy, bookkeeping, and basic marketing.
- **Market access initiatives:** Partnerships with local markets created opportunities for women's products to reach new customers, driving increased sales and income stability.
- **Digital literacy training:** As part of employability training, an external consultancy that specializes in professional competencies provided an introductory lesson to digital literacy at the SOS Children's Villages computer lab for caregivers.

**Strengthen community awareness of the value of women's economic participation:**

- **30 participants, including 15 women, engaged in need-based training sessions on gender mainstreaming**, delivered through community-based organizations. The training facilitated discussions on the value of women's economic participation within the community.

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*Before SOS Children's Villages, I used to carry my daughter with me while I sold goods at the market. It was very dangerous for her, but since she joined this program, I can work without worry, knowing she's safe and cared for.*

Program participant



## Economic opportunities for mothers: Building a brighter future

Providing women with practical business training remains a cornerstone of the program, helping them build lasting financial independence and confidence. Through hands-on sessions in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, marketing, and management, women gain the tools they need to run and grow their own businesses successfully.



By the time their children graduate from the ECD Centre and transition to primary school, many mothers and caregivers are already in a stronger financial position, able to support their families and meet their needs with greater stability and confidence.

In 2025, **40 caregivers enrolled in vocational training** in areas such as food preparation, hairdressing and hospitality. After graduating from these

4-6 month programs, trainees are expected to find employment, with past participants having the most success in the wedding industry, event catering and hairdressing. Vocational training is provided through partnerships with local institutions, including the Helen Beauty Training Institute, the Four Seasons, the Chu Chu Beauty Training Institute, the East Africa

Hotel Training Institute, and the Cool Fashion Design Institute. These institutions have positively impacted the lives of women by providing them with training and support in their job search.



This year, caregivers have benefited from the Digital Learning Centre, using the computers to strengthen a range of digital skills essential for their personal and professional development.

The computer lab continues to be a valuable hub for learning, offering both caregivers and young people opportunities to build digital confidence and broaden their future prospects.

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*We've received an update from a previous participant who took part in vocational training for hairdressing – during her time with the program, she took both vocational training and business training, which led to her starting her own business. A year later, the mother continues to run a successful business and has enrolled her daughter in private education. The family is earning sufficient income to meet both their basic needs and invest in education.*

**Tsedenia, Project Officer  
SOS Children's Villages Ethiopia**





## Positive parenting and life skills courses

In 2025, **185 participants attended community discussions** held in the traditional coffee ceremony format. During the coffee ceremonies, dialogue focused on preventing communicable diseases, family planning, vaccinations, positive parenting and child safeguarding – raising caregivers' awareness of children's rights and positive discipline, including discussions on violence-free upbringing and strategies for managing different child behaviours. Part of the presentation included a trauma-centred approach, how to prevent child abuse, and how to report child abuse, harassment, or exploitation. Participants raised questions based on their personal experiences and concerns about child protection in their community.

One coffee ceremony included a presentation from a local microloans and grants cooperative, which

discussed the benefits of participating in savings and credit associations. The caregivers responded positively to the idea of being part of such a collective and agreed to continue the conversation.

A formal agreement is currently being developed to secure opportunities for caregivers to join a microloan and grants program starting in November 2026.

SOS Children's Villages delivered training on positive parenting and child and youth safeguarding to **25 caregivers at the Keranyo ECD Centre** and **29 caregivers at the Woreda Youth Centre**, in collaboration with the local Woreda child-protection authorities.

This training is designed to enhance caregivers' skills and knowledge in fostering a safe and supportive environment for children and youth.





## Key program achievements continued

### Improving the capacity of the community to prevent and respond to child rights violations in Keranyo

This year, SOS Children's Villages hosted child and youth safeguarding training for community leaders. **All 26 attendees, including 17 women, were highly regarded elders holding important positions.** Given their influence in the local community, their participation was crucial to raise awareness around child safeguarding and women's inclusion in the workplace. Through the program, SOS Children's Villages works to sensitize community members and partners to the rights of women and children and strengthen their ability to prevent and respond to violence against women and children.

Child and youth safeguarding training sessions were held for community-based organization (CBO) and community care committee (CCC) members, facilitated by internal staff. The training aimed to strengthen local child protection mechanisms and enhance the capacity of community-based, child-focused support providers. **A total of 30 participants, including 15 women, engaged in discussions and activities designed to deepen their understanding of safeguarding principles.** The training equipped them with essential knowledge and tools to better protect children and young people in the community, while reinforcing the importance of collaborative efforts to create a safe environment for all.

A total of 30 CBO and CCC members, including 15 women, participated in gender-sensitization training. This session introduced fundamental concepts of the gender policy and encouraged open dialogue around gender-related issues within the community. Participants actively engaged in the discussions, deepening their understanding of how gender norms influence daily life and community structures. After the session, attendees expressed their gratitude for the valuable information shared and recommended expanding this training to reach a wider audience.



## Challenges and solutions

### The importance of community collaboration

To launch a microloan and grants initiative, SOS Children's Villages is partnering with a local cooperative to provide participants in its economic empowerment program with easier access to seed funding. Collaboration with local community partners is essential to ensuring long-term success.

For many caregivers in the Keranyo community, obtaining a bank loan is not feasible due to barriers such as missing documentation, limited credit history, and lack of formal employment.

While SOS Children's Villages explored creating its own savings and grants system, consultations with government contacts clarified that this could only be achieved by working with established cooperatives. SOS Children's Villages is finalizing an agreement with a local microloans and grants cooperative, expanding opportunities for program participants to access community loans and start their own businesses.





## Conclusion

The Keranyo Family and Community Strengthening Program has continued to deliver strong results. Over the past year, 194 children accessed early childhood development services, and more than 200 caregivers, 90% of whom are women, benefited from social and economic empowerment initiatives, including parenting training and vocational and business training. In addition, the community has further strengthened its capacity to prevent and respond to child rights violations and gender-based violence.

Women in Ethiopia, including those in the Keranyo community, continue to face disproportionate levels of poverty and limited control over resources and decision-making. Although they shoulder

most of the household responsibilities, caregiving duties, and agricultural labour, access to economic opportunities remains restricted.

Through SOS Children's Villages' programs, increasing numbers of women now have access to free childcare, livelihood and skills development, and stronger advocacy for their rights and inclusion.

We express our sincere appreciation to all our generous donors for their ongoing and invaluable support. Your commitment is helping women in Ethiopia build economic independence and giving children the opportunity for a brighter future. Together, we are laying the groundwork for lasting change and a more equitable society.





## Empowered to thrive: Afia's story

Afia is a devoted single mother raising three daughters—twins and their younger sibling. Every day used to be a struggle. Living in a challenging environment, Afia worked tirelessly to put food on the table and keep her children safe and healthy.

Before finding SOS Children's Villages, Afia collected plastic bottles for recycling to earn an income. It was gruelling work, and she often had to bring her twins along because there was no one else to watch them. The long days under the sun and exposure to unsanitary conditions put them all at risk. Despite her determination, steady work was nearly impossible to find, with many employers turning her away because of her responsibilities as a single mother.

That all began to change when Afia and her children joined the SOS Children's Villages Early Childhood Development Centre. For the first time, her children had a safe place to learn, play, and grow. They received nutritious meals, care, and education that gave them the foundation every child deserves. One of Afia's daughters, who had been struggling with malnutrition, regained her strength thanks to the food support provided by SOS Children's Villages.

While her children flourished, Afia found new hope for herself as well. Through the business skills training offered by SOS Children's Villages, she gained confidence and the tools she needed to start her own small business. With a small grant of 5,000 ETB (approximately 45 Canadian dollars), Afia began selling clothes at the local market.

Her business took off. With her determination and hard work, Afia built a loyal customer base and began earning a steady income. Today, she can provide for her family, send her daughters to school, and invest in their future.

The transformation in Afia's life is significant. Her children are thriving in a safe, loving environment, and she has found the stability she once only dreamed of. More than that, Afia has become a source of inspiration to other single mothers in her community, proof that, with support and opportunity, it's possible to rise above even the toughest circumstances.







**Thank you for your support!**



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