

Enhanced Rural Self Help Association (ERSHA) Profile

ABOUT ERSHA

Enhanced Rural Self Help Association (ERSHA) is a civil society organization (CSO) established in October 1997 and became operational in January 1998. The organization is re-registered in June 2019 as a local organization with registration number 1111 as per the new Civil Society Organization (CSO) Proclamation 113/2019. The organization was founded by a group of concerned professionals who had a great concern on the plight of the rural poor to join hands with like-minded actors to contribute their part for the development of the country.

ERSHA works with rural communities, in general, and poor households, in particular. ERSHA gives major emphasis to women and women-headed households, children, youths, PWD and social minorities.

VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND OBJECTIVE

Vision: ERSHA wishes to see a poverty free Ethiopia where women and men equally enjoy a dignified life

Mission: to ERSHA aims to work with and for underprivileged rural communities to enhance standards of livelihood through supporting community-based initiatives and building grassroots capacity through deliberate partnership.

Goal

The organizational level goal is to improve the institutional competency to effectively and efficiently respond to the needs and aspiration of its constituencies while the programme level goal is geared to improving the livelihood situation of the target communities

Programme objectives

- Enhance food and nutrition security of the target households with the aim of building their resilience capacity to shocks and stresses;
- Enhance the natural resources conservation and management practices of the target community;
- Enhance communities' access to basic social services (water and sanitation, education and health);
- Improve socio economic situation of women and children;

- Create capable, competent and responsible community level grassroots organizations as well as building the service giving capacity of concerned government sector offices.

VALUES/PRINCIPLES

- Promoting participation:
- Local capacity building:
- Partnership development:
- Gender mainstreaming
- Integrated approach to development
- Sustainability

Core program areas

1. Women, Children and Youth Development

- Children Care & Development
- Youth development and entrepreneurship
- Women empowerment

2. Livelihood and Food Security

- Improving crop and livestock practices
- Irrigation
- Income generation
- Water and Sanitation
- Displacement and Emergency responses

3. Community Empowerment

- Education
- Health
- Community Institutions (CBOs, SHGs, Idirs, etc.)
- Governance and social accountability
- Capacity Building

4. Environmental Management and Climate Change

- Afforestation and Reforestation
- Promoting renewable energy sources
- Community mobilization and education on environment
- Promote environment and climate friendly schemes

Cross Cutting Issues

- Addressing gender related socioeconomic and socio cultural issues through gender transformative approach
- Deliberate disability and social inclusiveness (including age, sex, culture, and other social norms) across all functions, programmes and projects designed, adopted and implemented by the organization.

List of active projects

- 1. Project Title: Ambo farmers Cooperative Union capacity building project**
 - Location: Ambo and Kutaye woredas, West Shewa Zone of Oromia region
 - Funding partner: SOS FAiM Belgium
- 2. Project Title: Angolela na Tera Community Centered Development Programme (ATCCDP)**
 - Location: Amhara Regional State, North Shewa Zone, Angolela na Tera Wereda
 - Funding partner: Kindernotilfe (KNH).
- 3. Project Title: Sustainable Land Management for Combating Desertification in the Deme-Omo Watershed**
 - Project Location: SNNPRS, Gamo Zone, Dita wereda
 - Funding partner: BMZ/KNH
- 4. Project Title: Angolelana Terra WaSH project**
 - Location: Angolelana Tera woreda, North Shewa zone of Amhara region
 - Funding partner: Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER) and Swiss Water and Sanitation Consortium (SWSC)
- 5. Project title: Sustained engagement of CSOs for responsive and accountable governance toward equitable resource use of maintenance of healthy environment in Lake Tana Watershed, Amhara Region**
 - Project location: Liobokemkem, Fogera and Bahir Dar Zuria woredas of Amhara region
 - Funding partner: CSSP2
- 6. Emergency WASH response project to conflict affected IDPs and host communities in Efratana Gidim, Amhara Region**
 - Project location: Amhara Region, North Shoa Zone, Efratana Gidim Woreda

- Funding partner: - Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI)

7. WVL- Women empowerment project:

- Project location: Amhara Region, North Shoa Zone, Angolelena tera Woreda
- Funding partner: Plan International Ethiopia

5. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS/OUTCOMES

ERSHA has been implementing activities related to food, income and nutrition security, natural resources conservation and management, basic social services, women and children socio-economic development and local capacity building and has achieved remarkable changes in the lives of the target communities. The major achievements/outcomes are summarized below;

Food security

To improve crop production and productivity, the respective field programmes have been facilitating the provision of agricultural inputs such as improved seeds and promoting the use of improved practices and technologies.

To mitigate the negative effects of moisture-stress and recurrent drought on crop yield, several households were assisted to engage in irrigated farming by financing the construction of small-scale irrigation schemes. The schemes are managed by the respective Water Users' Associations. The users grow both food and cash crops at 2-3 times a year. As a result, they are in a better status in terms of meeting their food and financial needs. Production and productivity of the area increased due to the support of improved crop varieties, training and experience sharing visits and technical supports. They have started building better houses, sending their children to school and cover their medical expenses. Their saving culture improved and have started to invest some of their returns on income generating activities/initiatives.

With the major aims of diversifying crop production and income sources and improve household nutrition, ERSHA has been promoting vegetable/fruit and cash crops production by improving the target households' access to seeds/planting materials and providing training on improved production and management practices. The initiative was widely adopted with encouraging benefits. Household nutrition/diet is improved as farmers are assisted to produce vegetables and fruits. Farmers are also assisted to establish a sustainable access to seed as they are linked to input suppliers

Livestock husbandry is one of the major means of livelihood of the target community. However, the production and productivity of the sector is constrained by multi-dimensional factors. Besides, number of cattle and small ruminants has been depleting due to lack of animal feed during drought and farmers continuously sale their cattle to cover the food gap. As part of the response, ERSHA planned and implemented the following major activities to improve the performance of livestock in its program areas.

- Eight veterinary posts constructed to improve health services;
- One animal health clinic established at Dita woreda
- Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis association established and strengthened at Kutcha woreda of SNNP region to address the epidemic in a sustainable manner;
- Improved bull service support provided to enhance production and productivity of local breeds and thereby resulting in asset building and better income;
- Better livestock production and management practices adopted and the contribution of the sector in the household economy very much increased;
- Several farmers assisted to produce improved forage by providing seeds and seedlings;
- Different groups (men, women, youths, and elders) assisted to engage in sheep and goat rearing using traditional in-kind resource sharing system where the first beneficiaries transfer the first born to the second beneficiaries on the waiting list;
- Training/workshops organized on livestock production and management to equip the trainees with improved livestock husbandry practices.
- The different intervention in the livestock sector reduced the incidence of livestock diseases, traction power improved, milk and meat production increased, cost of medication reduced, production and productivity increased which in turn brought significant change among the target households in the area of food and income security;

To enhance the purchasing power of the target households, several women and men are assisted to engage in different on and off-farm income generating activities by providing intensive trainings on business and entrepreneurship skills and other related topics, organizing different income generating cooperatives (Pottery, weaving, blacksmith, tannery, fuel saving stove), supporting seed capital and linking them with different stakeholders.

In terms of improving the credit service, women were assisted to establish saving and credit cooperatives. In one of its programs, Doba Community Centered Development Program, a saving and credit cooperatives union having 67 primary cooperatives having 9,351 members and a working capital of 1,604,273 birr established and is serving its

members. The union is the first of its kind in the area and is governed by General Assembly and Board of Directors. As part of the capacity building support they were given seed money and training on basic business skills. This time their business is bringing them better income and their saving culture is very much enhanced.

To improve farmers' access to remunerative market, ERSHA started intervening in the area of value chain promotion activities in one of its programs, Ambo and Tokke Kutaye Community Based Development Programme. The program established and strengthened 14 Farmers Marketing Organizations (FMOs) and formed an umbrella union called Torban Kutaye Farmers' Market Organization Union which helps to link the FMOs with different market chains and ensure their sustainability. At present Torban Kutaye union has 1,817 members (450 female), about 5,300,000 birr capital including fixed assets (office and warehouse, one truck and other materials). At present, the union is a member of Oromia Farmers' Cooperative Unions Federation and has share with different financial institutions including the Oromia Cooperative Bank and Oromia International Bank.

To improve efficiency and effectiveness of the value chain promotion project, ERSHA in partnership with ICCO also introduced ICT in the value chain initiative which focuses on providing computers and accessories to FMOs to enable them improve their data base management and documentation, search agriculture and market information through SMS and internet services and the like. The farmers got different basic computer skills, market information collection and dissemination; IT based book keeping and other tailor made trainings. In general, the promotion of Farmers' Market Organizations and their Union enabled the farmers to get reasonable farm get price and the ICT project helped to improve increase efficiency and effectiveness of the value chain promoters.

Natural resources conservation and management

ERSHA believes that depletion/degradation of natural resources is one of the contributing factors for food and income insecurity. With this background, ERSHA has been designing and implementing different activities and achieved some results as summarized below;

- Community awareness/understanding on natural resources degradation, its implication on food security and the need for natural resources conservation and management increased through an approach called community conversation;
- Several groups/households engaged in soil and water conservation practices and different physical and biological soil conservation measures constructed on individual and community owned degraded lands;

- Multi-purpose seedling plantation and management adopted by the community;
- The use of fuel saving stoves promoted and helped in reducing the pressure on natural resources;
- Target communities and government partners at district level capacitated to deal with disaster risk reduction;
- Early warning structures strengthened to effectively plan and implement disaster risk responses;
- Through a community conversation approach, community conversation groups established and have started preparing by-laws to deal with natural resources conservation by mobilizing the public;
- Establish school environmental clubs to create the awareness of school communities and surrounding villages on environmental management, climate change and related issue;
- Climate change adaptation measurers are being implemented to help the communities minimize the impacts of climate change and these actions include, among others, the promotion of improved technologies and diversifying alternative income generating options;
- Integrated development activities planned and implemented through a watershed management approach to ensure sustainable land use;
- To rehabilitate degraded areas some areas closed and protected from human and livestock interference;

Improving communities' access to basic social services

ERSHA has rich experience in the area of providing basic social services (water, education and health) to the target communities and has registered considerable achievements;

Water supply, sanitation and hygiene

The association is highly engaged in rural water supply projects with the major objectives of improving households' access to clean drinking water, reducing the incidence of water-borne diseases and minimizing the workload on women and children.

As a result of the initiative;

- Construction of 200 m³ tanker, 4.9km pressure line and 24 km distribution line, d/t water points to provide clean pipe water access and benefit more than 35000 people (8,652 (4,240 F water scheme users, 2,190 (1,095 F) school children and 25,556 (12,522 F)

people served by health care facilities of the health institutions found in two kebeles & surrounding the two kebels).

- Several springs, shallow-wells and boreholes developed and protected providing clean drinking water for more than hundred thousand people;
- The implementation of water projects has considerably improved the situation of women and children and helped to make sure that the households are active and healthy to do their jobs
- Improved sanitation and hygiene practices adopted by the villagers;
- The implementation of the projects considerably reduced the workload of women and children
- The incidence of water born diseases reduced leading to less medication cost, girls school attendance improved and women saved time and energy for other productive purposes;
- Community based water scheme management system put in place to ensure the sustainability of the benefits;
- The villagers capacitated to address similar problems and linked with the concerned actors for continued support;

Education service

In the area of education, ERSHA has been mainly promoting alternative basic education with the objective of providing basic education for out of school children. ERSHA is supporting alternative basic education through a system called ACCESS, which is an acronym for 'Appropriate, Cost-effective Centre for Education within the School System', equivalent to alternative basic education

Alternative basic education is a non-formal educational approach to deliver basic education for school age children who are devoid of learning opportunities in the formal schooling system for various reasons. ERSHA has contributed much in the effort to increase access of school-age children to basic education.

In the area of improving education quality, different supports were provided including construction of standard blocks, expansion and renovation of formal primary schools and furnishing the classrooms, providing reference materials/books, constructing separate toilets for girls and boys, constructing laboratory rooms, etc. Because of the interventions, the district Education Offices were able to provide basic quality education for the students. As a result, enrolment rate increased, girls attendance improved, dropout reduced, better learning and teaching environment created these all leading to

improved education quality and increased coverage.

Health service

With regard to health, the interventions mainly focused on providing primary health care education and this is because if communities' awareness on primary health care enhanced, they will be less exposed to diseases. With this background, farmers were trained on primary health care and assisted to adopt the practices. In addition, traditional birth attendants trained on safe delivery practices and are serving rural mothers in a better manner (this is prior to the government started to focus on institutional delivery through professionals).

Recognizing the unprecedented effects of HIV/AIDS, ERSHA formulated a workplace HIV/AIDS Policy and incorporated HIV/AIDS as one of its programme components. The intervention has made its entry point on the prevention aspect through awareness creation on the pandemic so that the communities are able to stop or at least minimize its spread.

Awareness raising workshops were conducted for different community groups and community dialogue sessions were organized to make the HIV/AIDS issue a public agenda. Information education communication and behavioral change communication materials on the transmission and prevention mechanisms were produced and distributed. In addition, some locally tailored documentary films mainly focusing on HIV/AIDS mode of transmission and harmful traditional practices prepared and used as teaching materials to raise public awareness.

Communities were mobilized for VCT to reduce the infection, stigma, and discrimination. In some places, pre-marriage voluntary testing for HIV/AIDS started. Social groups are organized to fight against norms that are considered as risk factors for HIV infection.

To reach those who do not have access to health facilities, ERSHA supported the construction of six health posts serving 30,150 community members.

Family planning and reproductive health education were also addressed in all programmes. Training/awareness creation sessions were organized for a number of farmers to sensitize them on the importance of family planning and mechanisms of child spacing. Those who decided to use the services are linked to the family planning service providers. Communities' attitude to family planning improved and most of the target groups became family planning users.

To prevent and control the impact of COVID 19; awareness creation workshop, were organized different sanitary materials distributed in all our program/project areas including schools, health centers.

Besides construction of the WASH facilities, ERSHA in collaboration with Swiss church and Swiss water & sanitation consortium has been implementing a hygiene & sanitation project activities with a new approach named Blue School and CHAST (Child hygiene and sanitation training) approach. The approach uses strategies such as Community Led Total Sanitation & Hygiene (CLTSH), Behaviour change, Sanitation Marketing, Empowerment of girls by promoting Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in schools, Integrity Management (IM) toolbox, and health care activities.

Improving the socio-economic situation of women and children

Women are the most deprived section of the society. They are denied of their rights to have access to resources, decision-making, and control over resources. Mostly they are deprived of using from the benefits of development undertakings. Generally, women are not economically, socially and politically empowered and are not able to exercise their right.

Therefore, to overcome the multi dimensional problems of women, and to enhance their participation in development endeavors, ERSHA is implementing Women's empowerment initiative through two major strategies: by mainstreaming issues of women in all its programmes and designing women focused projects to address their specific issues. ERSHA succeeded with the former strategy as women issue is one of its indicators to evaluate its projects and programs. ERSHA has also been implementing different women focused projects. In addition, ERSHA also assisted some women to engage in different income generating activities by providing training on basic business skills and seed money/working capital. Different women focused projects implemented and the implementation of the initiatives has tremendously improved the socio-economic situation of the target groups;

As part of women empowerment initiative through self help group approach, the outcomes could be sited as good practices in the area of women development

- 179 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and 18 Cluster Level Associations (CLAs) having 2,958 members established and strengthened. Currently, the group have a total capital of Birr 1,264,547.00;
- Enabled women to build transparent savings and credit groups through simple, practical women's village banking;

- Fostered action-oriented, group institutional learning, while women save together in small groups;
- Enabled women to borrow from their savings to develop micro-enterprises; and
- Enabled women to generate income from their group lending, through interest on loans that remain with the economic group members' control;
- Basic business skills of target women improved and are now engaged in different income generating interventions;
- Women's access to financial services improved and they became free from the exploitation of local money lenders;
- It also tried to implement women functional adult literacy component to help the women develop their life skills which will help them to become productive;
- The approach helped the members to build their saving culture;
- Contributing the weekly savings has enabled women to build a solid base from which they draw up on at times of need;
- Learning about small enterprise development has also encouraged women to build business in different petty-trade activities;
- Women gained a marked experience in their confidence about their abilities;
- They benefited enormously from having regular association with other peers outside homes and discuss social issues affecting their situation;
- They have become more aware of their rights , and in many cases, they have modified decision making patterns in their homes;
- Orphan and vulnerable children assisted to improve their economic situation and continue their education;
- Awareness creation sessions conducted to sensitize the community and children themselves on child rights and child protection.

Institutional capacity building

ERSHA uses community based institutions as entry and exit strategy to enable the target communities plan, mobilize communities and the required resources, implement, monitor and evaluate and manage their development initiatives with minimum outside support and thereby ensuring the sustainability of the programme/project benefits.

ERSHA has established 3 Woreda and 30 kebele level community based organizations in three intervention areas. The community organizations enabled to help their respective communities to voice their needs and aspirations and to be heard and recognized. At present, the community based organizations are implementing and managing community initiated projects and their capacity in the project management is taking the lion's share while that of the field programmes is diminishing

Different capacity building supports such as training, exposure visits, by-law development, facilitating the legalization process, and supporting office construction were provided to the targeted community based organizations to help them plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate development initiatives.

Similarly, relevant Woreda offices were supported to enhance their service giving capacities by organizing different training programmes, exposure visits, financing their project initiatives and providing logistics support.

Humanitarian Assistance

ERSHA has been engaging in the following areas to contribute to the effort of reducing the disaster risk;

- Based on the request of the communities and the local government partners, ERSHA in collaboration with ActionAid Ethiopia has implemented emergency response projects by providing seeds, veterinary drugs, supplementary food to children and lactating mothers and sponsoring cash for work initiatives;
- Capacity building support was provided to the district early warning unit to help them plan, implement, monitor and evaluate emergency response initiatives
- ERSHA also implemented an emergency seed support project in one of its programme with a financial support of Debre Genet MedhaneAlem Ethiopian Orthodox Church based in USA which addressed the seed needs of 1654 farmers (264 female);
- ERSHA with the support of Ethiopian Humanitarian Fund through COOPI Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) is currently implementing Emergency WASH response to conflict affected IDPs and host communities in Efratana Gidim woreda of North shewa zone, Amhara region in collaboration with HEKS (Swiss Church Aid) and COOPI
- ERSHA, with the support of ICCO and KNH implemented a Disaster Risk Reduction project at Doba district focusing on water supply, income generation and sheep/goat rearing;
- with the financial support of KNH, ERSHA has Implemented a Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction project in Diksis Woreda of Oromia region with a major aim of enhancing the resilience capacity of the target farmers to different shocks and stressors. The activities implemented, among others, include improving household food security, water supply, sanitation and hygiene, income generation, natural resource conservation and management, supporting emergency

response initiatives and strengthening the kebele and district level early warning units;

- With the support of BMZ, ERSHA has implemented a project in Ditta district to combating desertification through sustainable land management, climate change adaptation
- Effort is being made to mainstream DRR in the regular development programmes by focusing on climate change adaptation interventions such as promoting irrigated farming, provision of improved seeds, livelihood diversification and household asset building.

PARTNERSHIP/ MEMBERSHIP

In terms of networking, it is a member of different national forums, networks and umbrella organizations including

- Consortium of Christian Relief & Development Association (CCRDA),
- Basic Education Network (BEN),
- Population Health and Environment consortium of Ethiopia (PHE-EC), \
- Consortium of SHG approach Promoters (CoSAP),
- Climate Change Consortium Ethiopia (CCCE).
- Global Network of Disaster Reduction (GNDR)

MAJOR DONORS/DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

- Kinder Not Hilfe (KNH),
- German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
- Swiss Church Aid / Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen der Schweiz (SCA/HEKS) and Swiss Water and Sanitation Consortium (SWSC)
- SOS FAIM Belgium
- Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI)
- Plan International Ethiopia

- CSSP2

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