Introduction

Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JeCCDO) was established as Jerusalem Association Children’s Homes (JACH) in 1985 as an indigenous, non-governmental, humanitarian organization, in response to the needs of children who were left orphaned, displaced or lacked proper care and support due to man made and natural disaster.

In the year 2000, the organization changed its name to Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JeCCDO). It has been re-registered as an Ethiopian Residents’ Charitable organization under the new Charities and Societies proclamation number 621/2009 and operates in five Community Development Program Offices (CDPOs). Annually, it reaches about 850,000 beneficiaries directly or indirectly. Even so, it strives for a wider coverage.

Since its establishment, JeCCDO has gone through a series of change process to respond to diverse needs of communities as well as to improve the quality of its services. At present JeCCDO implements integrated community based childcare and community development programs through its Community Development Program Offices (CDPOs) in five towns of the country namely Hawassa, Bahir Dar, Debre Zeit, Debre Birhan and Dire Dawa.

The organization has intervened on three core programs: Access to Basic Services, Climate Change Adaptation Disaster Risk Reduction & Livelihood Production And Capacity Development & Grants Management.

After the system Enhancement and Acceleration plan developed in 2012, JeCCDO restructured its organizational structure and focused on Result based management and organizational learning. Consequently, Monitoring, Evaluation and organizational learning unit is added to the organogram of JeCCDO to provide the aforementioned services.

With the intention to share its best practices and success of programs, JeCCDO published and distribute this success stories booklet. This booklet contains the selected stories of beneficiaries of the three major programs of JeCCDO in the last two years. We believe that the stories reflect the results and the achievements of our programs in empowering the community. The stories have been directly translated from beneficiaries’ speech.
Soothing the Broken-Hearted

Tsion Dereje is one of the orphan and vulnerable children whose problems have been addressed by JeCCDO in Bahir Dar city. She is five years old, experiencing mental problem and living with her grandparents on a meager pension that can barely meet their needs. Fortunately, however, her life improved after she became one of the target beneficiaries of JeCCDO’s intervention aimed at supporting orphan and vulnerable children. Her guardian, W/o Lakech Tafere, said that she previously had nothing to generate income with and support the family, including her husband who suffers from serious problem of high blood pressure.

After receiving Business Skill Training and a startup capital from JeCCDO, she started making money by selling injera. She claimed that the training gave her a good sense of how to generate more money. “Currently, I have been able to feed Tsion timely and wash her clothes. Thank God, now I can raise my child with the money I earn from the sale of injera, supplementing the small amount of pension I get,” said W/ro Lakech.

Besides she mentioned that she could save Birr 10 to 15 monthly at the Kebele Saving and Credit service, though her saving sometimes went down to Birr five dictated by very difficult circumstances. On the other hand, she looked depressed that she could not send Tsion to school because of the child’s mental problem. W/o Lakech resentfully said, “Tsion envies other children who go to school and frequently demands to be sent. But, the problem is I do not know where I can find school for children with mental problems. So far I have got no information even though I kept on asking for it.”

Moving Away From Destitution

Hanna Girma is a paternally orphaned and epileptic child. She is 14 years old and a fourth grade student. Hanna’s mother, W/o Selam Shiferaw, could not fulfill school material needs of her daughter due to lack of enough income. However, after becoming one of JeCCDO’s target beneficiaries in its support intervention for OVC and their guardians in Debre Birhan town, Hanna received medical assistance, clothing and a monthly stipend of 200 Birr. W/ro Selam, retrospectively looking said, “I never had a bank account before, but now I am depositing Birr 50.00 out of the stipend” she was pleased that she was engaged in the sale of incense gum and scent stick, which did not require a significant capital. She also used some amount out of the stipend to run the small business, which had enabled her to have some more at her disposal.
She further remarked that all she wishes now is to get more effective medical treatment for her daughter. In the words of W/ro Selam, “There is observable change in her daughter’s life due to support provided by JeCCDO.”

**Breathing a Sigh of Relief**

W/ro Roman Demissie and W/ro Mimi Tsegaye are residents of Kebele 06, one of the most populated areas in Bishoftu town. They had been living in a stinky area where they would also dispose of the excrement in plastic bags in an open field around their houses. W/ro Roman recalled, “Formerly, I used to get latrine service in the compound of people I work for. But most of the time, I would dispose the shit in plastic bags.” Still worse, they used to get accused of polluting the area with the shit thrown away in the open field around.

Even when somebody else did it, they were the immediate targets for blame, since their latrines had collapsed. W/ro Roman said, “I dedicated part of the land under my possession for latrine construction that took place right next to my house because of its significant importance to us.” W/ro Mimi, too, sharing her neighbor’s view stated, “This latrine is so crucial to have that I was willing to pull down one room that I built investing every penny I made under difficult working condition. I prefer my freedom and that of my children to keeping the room, because people used to blame and accuse us for polluting the area even when other people dispose of the shit here.”

They thanked God and wished Long Live to JeCCDO for having them relieved of the trauma they had been experiencing.
Bygone is Gone

In 2004, when W/ro Yeshi came to know about her HIV positive status, she was almost of suicidal tendency, aggravated by her deep sorrow due to the death of her son and her brother. She earned a living by weaving and selling a traditional garment locally known as ‘gabi.’ Of course, she used to sell injera, too, but had to quit that because of the dilapidation of her kitchen. Eventually she found herself emotionally weak and unable to afford appropriate quantity of food which her health condition called for.

W/ro Yeshi HabteGebrel

By virtue of becoming one of JeCCDO’s target beneficiaries of the HIV and Livelihood Project implemented in Debre Birhan town, however, W/ro Yeshi experienced positive changes in her life. After attending awareness raising trainings on HIV/AIDS issues, she became determined to survived, and started to encourage other HIV positive fellow women not to lose hope at all. She also asserted that she could even act out a character in a drama to teach other community members about HIV/AIDS in an entertaining manner.

W/ro Yeshi is now in a better health condition that there is progress in her CD4 count (from 170 to 250). She still sells ‘gabi’ to cover some living costs. Furthermore, she has a plan to generate additional income by selling injera, bread and other homemade food items, if she gets a startup capital and support for the renovation of her dilapidated kitchen. Finally, she extended her gratitude to all those who helped her.

Gaining the Trust of Beneficiares.

W/ro Yeteshayenesu, who is a widower residing in Debre Birhan town, contracted the HIV virus when she was caring for her HIV positive son without taking precaution. Prior to getting infected with the virus, she used to run business like oxen fattening. Nevertheless, she could no longer handle it simultaneously with taking care of her sick son that she switched to selling injera and bread by asking for the cooperation of other people to allow her to use their kitchens. Until the moment she got her house renovated through JeCCDO’s intervention in its Access
to Basic Services Program, she had been living in a dilapidated house that was almost not better than an open space. Even worse, she used to fall ill occasionally and spend long hours of the day in bed due to lack of food; especially one that is appropriate for HIV positive person.

W/ro Yeteshayenesu Dagne

All the same, having enjoyed the opportunity of becoming one of the target beneficiaries of JeCCDO’s intervention in its HIV and Livelihood Project, W/ro Yeteshayenesu came to see progress in her life. Apart from the renovation of her dilapidated house, she received nutritional support. Hence, “I am in a better health condition,” she said, “that I do not stay in bed in broad day light anymore. After getting a startup capital of Birr 2,000.00, I immediately paid back my debt from the profit I made by selling butter, bread and injera. Moreover, now that I have got a renovated house, I am planning to keep on selling bread and injera.” She went on to say that even her neighbors were well aware of JeCCDO’s effort to improve her life and that of her children. “Surely, Jerusalem has saved my life! I witness that loud publicly whenever I sense the euphoria” exclaimed W/ro Yeteshayenesu.

Creating Learning Environment Attitude to Specific Local Needs

Sabian Number Two, which is one of the primary level schools in Dire Dawa city, was tangled with different factors hindering effective teaching-learning process. The School Director, Ato Wondwesen Nigusie and students spoke up approvingly of JeCCDO’s contribution to the realization of a better environment in their school.

Ato Wondwesen mentioned of ninth and tenth grade student told stories related to the severe lack of latrine and library services in the school, and that they used to spread mat on the floor to study in groups for there was no library service. He added that at the movement, they strongly advise their juniors to be smart enough to benefit from the existing conducive situation.
Ato Wondwesen remembers with deep regret that formerly he did not use to come to school when he got sick of diarrhea. Neither would he utter a word when other teachers failed to turn up for work with a similar reason of sickness. He said, “One can say that the school surrounding had been analogous to a latrine for six years (2006 to 2012).” Even so, the problem was alleviated following JeCCDO’s construction of latrines, and getting another one subsequently constructed by the Education Office after the problem was brought to its attention. Consequently, teachers and students started getting improved latrine service. As regards water, he said, “There was only one tap for about 700 students, but now we have got eight of them.”

**Ato Wondwesen Nigusie, School Director**

Students, on their part, mentioned JeCCDO’s contribution to the improvement of their school with gratitude, particularly its concerted effort in building the capacity of students, equipping the school starting from the kindergarten level with necessary educational materials, and providing stationary pads for girl students, not to mention the facilitation of services like library furnished with books, shelves and tables. The support could enhance students’ reading habit and create conducive learning environment for the coming generation of children, too.

Mebratu Alemayehu, who is a seventh grader, mentioned of the poor economic status of the majority of community members in the area that it is hard for them to fulfill educational materials necessary for children in kindergarten. But, with support from JeCCDO these materials have been provided and children enabled to learn. Moreover, Netsanet Chekol, who is a student in the schools, applauded JeCCDO’s support saying, “JeCCDO is taking care of us just like parents do. Apart from the provision of essential school facilities, it trained students on road safety so that they can tackle the threat of traffic accident.”

**Bemnet Lemma and Habtamu Kasa, (from left to right), Road Safety Service Volunteers**

According to Ato Wondwesen, “The students are playing a meaningful role in facilitating the traffic flow and road safety; both in the morning and afternoon shifts, especially during the entry and exit times of students. Owing to this, the Road Transport Authority has promised the school to train 25 students on road safety service for three months.”
Activating Student Capacity for Self Support

Strengthening School Clubs being part and parcel of JeCCDO’s intervention in its endeavor to contribute to the enhancement of quality education delivery and cultivation of active young generation, it provided support to Charity, Environment, Girls and other clubs in the school. Accordingly, even though teachers previously used to play a decisive role in managing the clubs, their role got confined to being merely one of supportive for the sole reason that they had been trained on how to enhance students’ active involvement thereby enabling them run their clubs.

Bantegize Endeshaw, who is a member of Charity Club mentioned affirmatively of the club’s vital role in facilitating the provision of school uniforms and exercise books to needy students through the income generation of membership fee and sale of iced/jalatt. In the 2013 Academic year alone it bought school uniforms for 11 students and the assistance is believed to continue through contacting wealthy people around, and they have already secured pledge of support for 25 students in Dire Dawa and 10 in Harar town.

Getting Back to Life from the Verge of Death

I am Mulu Wubeneh. I would like to share you my story, the ups and downs I passed through and how the successive cracks in my life got fixed.

I was born in a rural village known as Estie Gelawdewos, about 40Kms South East of Bahir Dar. Having spent my childhood with my family, I went to Gondar town where my elder sister lives, for schooling. All the same, I could not go along with her that I decided to do casual labor for a family.

While engaged in offering casual labor, at the age of 13, I was doomed to be raped by my employer and got exposed to unexpected pregnancy. The moment the symptoms of the pregnancy prevailed, I flew back to my rural family and gave birth to a baby girl. I tried to raise the baby with the support of my parents for two years. Then, I left the child with them and went to Bahir Dar city. There, I started to earn living by selling, injera and different sauce meals. In the meantime, I got married to a weaver and established my own family.

Unluckily, my married life was rather stressful. Though our income was enough for a living, we had rocky times most of the time. My husband was an extravagant and irresponsible to his family, besides he was addicted to chat (a costly stimulant plant) and alcohol. Even worse, he started cheating on me that I felt highly disconnected with him. Though we talked a lot about the issue, he showed no progress. I was very much frustrated with his bad habits, specially his unsafe sex practice for fear of infection with HIV/AIDS.

When we got married, I was healthy and chubby. Through time, however, I started to lose weight and feel unhealthy. This change made me doubtful about my health and felt urged to have blood test for HIV. Although I shared my concern of getting tested with my husband, he refused to do so. After repeated advice given by elderly people, however, he went for a check up but in vain for he was found to be HIV positive. Consequently, he became so sad that he preferred committing suicide to facing the reality. He refused to take Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) for fear of disclosure of his HIV positive status. This bad incident worsened our lives. He became even more extravagant and started selling properties like TV set, cupboard and bicycle without my consent.

In the meantime, my pain became so severe that I was not able to handle harder work. Making matters worse, I became pregnant and got scared upon coming to
know that. I was at a loss that I didn’t know what to think or do. Help was on hand though in the form of a doctor, who advised me to take the recommended medicine for HIV positive pregnant mothers, which, of course, I did as per the prescription and gradually began to come to proper terms with the reality of my situation.

Unfortunately, it so happened that my husband saw my medicine and destroyed it. This was the worst incidence since I was in bed, and thus couldn’t manage to get a replacement. Consequently, I was forced to interrupt the therapy- a perilous loss. Finally, in August 2004, I gave birth to twin boys, infected with HIV virus. I named them Yohannis and Yordanos. I really strived to work things out, but life kept going from bad to worse. My husband could not manage the family. He lost hope and committed suicide when our children reached two years of age. In addition to his departure once and for all, he left behind unpaid debts to his customers. Hence, I was compelled to work as a daily laborer so as to pay the debts besides struggling for survival.

It was in such a tough time that JeCCDO came to my rescue, and in that I was provided with financial support, clothes, shoes and free medical supply to my children. Indeed, this support played a crucial role in improving my life and that of my children. I also took a three- day basic business skill training accompanied by a working capital which helped me to be engaged in micro-business.

The support of the organization continued. It also explained my situation to Mr. Stephen who cared to come to my house and dedicated his time to listen to my long story which made him so sympathetic towards me. He promised to give me Birr 400.00 every month. So far, I have received the money four times. It is a big money for me to strengthen my micro business and raise the children better.

He also bought me a Television set that made the whole family very happy, and avoided the mistreatments my children previously, used to receive when they went to watch TV to my neighbors’ houses. Now my children can enjoy watching children’s movies and music freely. Most importantly, I appreciate him for being as good as his words, which made me open my eyes and become a fueling factor for me to work harder.

I am ready to expand my business by supplying more injera and tea for my customers as per their demand. In addition, I have planned to start a petty trade at the gate of my home. Hopefully, the TV set will help me to attract more customers and thus more income which could ensure better life standard for my children. Currently, I have also planned to get my children in enrolled in a private school for them to have access to quality education.

Now that the dark days in my taking care of my life are over, I am healthy by taking Anti-Retroviral Treatment(ART) that is compatible to my health.
condition, instead of the previous one which caused a swelling on my neck. On top of that, my children have been attending their classes effectively, and promoted to grade three—Yordanos standing 10th and Yohannis, 9th. They are attending tutorial classes and receiving support of educational materials. I am happy that my sons are in a good health condition that they have not started taking Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART) yet. Rather they are taking Bacterium tablet and multivitamin Mr. Stephen sent them.

I am now earning a living by selling tea and bread. Subject to additional capital support, I envisage expanding my business. Besides, Mr. Stephen, who I met through JeCCDO is supporting me financially.

My despair from those entire ordeals has passed owing to JeCCDO’s timely support. My boys and I are healthy now and have a bright future. Thank you!

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**How about Scaling up Tutorial Services?**

I am Yohannes Tamirat, aged 14. I used to attend tutorial classes when I was in Sertse Dengel Primary School; from Grade One on. Our tutors, who are very helpful and caring, significantly helped us with Mathematics, English and Environmental Science.

In tutorial classes, I used to revise what I had learnt in the regular classes there by benefiting the most in terms of meeting my specific academic needs. The individual attention paid by tutors helped me resolve my academic problems and thus improving my academic performance and motivating me to work more. The progress in the quality of tutorial classes and the participation of girl students made a difference in students schooling.

I was a top ranking student because of the tutorial classes I attended after school. Currently, I am ninth grader, and stood third when I was promoted to this grade level. However, I am not benefiting from tutorial services anymore since they are merely offered for students of grade one up to six only. Yet, the tutorial service had helped me not only in building a strong academic base but also in preventing me from getting indulged in decadent practices and places. Therefore, I suggest that it will be good if tutorial services are to be scaled up to high school level.
Keeping up on the Ladder of Success

I am Firewoini Tasew, a young girl of 25 living with my mother in kebele 06 of Bahir Dar city. I had been dependent on my mother for the fulfillment of my needs in life until the movement I came to avail myself of the support from JeCCDO to generate income of my own. Now, I have proceeded with that by rendering shower service to residents in my surrounding. I rented the JeCCDO-constructed shower room from the Idir (community based organization) that owns it for Birr 300.00 per month though the rental fee has currently, increased to Birr 600.00, whereby, I raised the service charge from Birr two to Birr three. I also sell soap along with the shower service and this supplements the income we get by selling areqe (local liquor) and tea. With the income I get from the business, I cover our living expenses and medical cost for my injured feet.

Ensuring Scholastic Achievement for the Posterity

According to Ato Assefa Kibret, Director of the Kulkual Meda Primary school, critical problems that used to hinder the effectiveness of the learning-teaching process in the school have been addressed by JeCCDO. He explained that JeCCDO started supporting the school from 2008 on. In its first year of intervention, the Organization provided stationery, education materials, furniture and equipment, such as combined desks, black boards, personal computer and television set. Keeping on with its support in 2008, JeCCDO undertook the construction of girls’ toilet. Students of both sexes previously used to share the same toilet and that it was too problematic for girl students to use. The newly constructed separate toilet helped to ease the problem for a growing number of girls coming to school.

JeCCDO also constructed a standardized library and laboratory with complete furnishings, which helped students to refrain from spending their post school time in unwanted places, thereby enabling them to improve their school results. It also led to a reduced rate of school drop outs.

In 2010 again, JeCCDO provided the school with additional black boards and 180 combined desks which, in turn helped students to comfortably attend their classes. In its attempt to improve the quality of the school’s service delivery, JeCCDO also worked on building the capacity of the Parent Teacher Association. In this regard, teachers were provided with various short-term refresher trainings: one-day training on participatory teaching learning and four-day training on English language teaching. Both trainings were conducted with the intention of capacitating teachers to discharge their duties with ease.

In addition, two experience sharing visits were organized for the Parent Teacher Association members. The first visit was made to Gizba School located in East Gojjam. This experience sharing opportunity helped the Association to learn best practices that could be adaptable in the context of the Kulkual Meda Primary School as well. A good example worthy of mentioning in this regard is the ‘one-to-five-approach’, where one best performing student is assigned for every five students to help them in their study. This mechanism is felt to help in promoting a spirit of team work among students and improving their achievement.
In the same year, again, the association members paid a visit to Gemederssa School found in Harrar city, whereby they drew lessons about pre-formal school class. Families of the Negede Woito who are leading sub-standard lives were enabled to send their children of five to six years of age to preschool classes for free, in which case forty eight girls and thirty boys from this community were enrolled in these classes. So this is the first worthy experience sharing opportunity for the Amhara Region.

Given the fulfillment of all these facilities, the school has become convenient for an improved teaching learning process, thereby subsequently turning its attention to maximizing the quality of education. The percentage of students who were unable to read has currently decreased. Ato Assefa said, "We are also thinking of opening a pedagogical center that can be useful to enhancing the quality of our service. Further, we are striving hard, more than ever before, to improving the School’s communication system, especially in popularizing its achievements and sharing its best experiences so as to attract and mobilize more people and/or institutions to rally behind the development process."

Finally, Ato Assefa remarked that the changes brought about in the school owing to JeCCDO’s intervention are concrete and visible. So far, it has largely contributed for the betterment of the community and the developmental endeavors of the government and its achievements are said to be trans-generational. He went on to say, "We report our performance on bi-monthly meetings we conduct with parents. Hence, the entire community has become aware of JeCCDO’s operation and they are grateful for its support."

Primary School

**Leading Life under a Better Roof**

I am Anguach Mekonnen, a widower of 60. I am earning a living by selling tea and areqe (local liqueur). I used to live with my son and niece in a dilapidated house. Currently, my son has left home in search of job after graduating with a Diploma from Ambo Agricultural College, and my niece went to Addis Ababa for similar purpose, since she could not be promoted to ninth grade.

Now that my son and niece have left the house, I brought my two nieces, Eniyat Yekoye and Samrawit Wale to be with me. They are 8 and 15 years old, respectively. Eniyat is first grader while Samrawit is not learning. The state of dilapidation of my house was so bad that I was forced to serve only few customers. Things improved that I have come to serve my customers under so much better condition, for my house got repaired with JeCCDO’s support thereby becoming protective enough from sunlight and cold weather.
Enyat and Samrawit, in the Renovated House  
(from left to right)

Now, “I am thinking of changing my business, because in spite of the improved housing condition for my business, my current means of livelihood is not paying off as such that I am forced to quit saving. If I get capital, however, I can be engage in other types of profitable businesses,” W/ro Anguach said.

Reaching Out the Marginalized

One of JeCCDO’s major interventions in the Negede Woyito community focuses on organizing women in SHGs. In relation to this, some of the members said that they had got ample benefits because of JeCCDO’s intervention, especially in terms of promoting the culture of hygiene and the provision of clean water. They added that let alone their ancestors; they themselves did not even have access to education, but that a library has been constructed for Kulkual Meda Primary School to enhance the quality of education for their children. Another point which they labeled as worth mentioning is that they, especially women had previously no information at all about saving, which now they do. They stated, “Contrary to the previous situation where women, particularly widowers were considered incapable of purchasing house furniture and clothes. They have currently been enabled to do that, too. They also stated that their weekly meetings, on which they discuss pertinent issues, celebrate community successes and share agonies, were also introduced by JeCCDO.

Partial view of Fetno Derash SHG Members

In relation to hygiene, in the past, young people used to take shower fetching water with jerry cans, but no such laborious task exists anymore owing to the availability of shower services convenient even for women. This
service has also made the community hygiene-conscious. The practice of open defecation has ceased, too, since community members have got latrines now. One member said, “Putting it in simple terms, before the coming of JeCCDO, we were nothing more than the residents of Bahir Dar; there was no change on our lives. Then after, however, we have learnt a lot about ourselves; particularly women came on board by virtue of benefiting from JeCCDO’s effort.” The members continued saying, “It has been more than a year since our SHG was established and we have already started saving. Group members can borrow from our savings to purchase materials needed for traditional handicrafts. Besides, our saving has helped us to cope with the problem of flood caused by the over flow of the Abay River.”

Obviously, had they not saved, they could have done nothing to tackle the crisis. Another member particularly said, “I borrowed Birr 100.00 from my group with an interest rate of 5 percent. Had I not saved, I would have had no one to turn for help when the flood came, but simply accept the consequences of the disaster.”

**Caring For One Another**

Tesfa SHG was established in January 2010; with 20 members. The members have weekly meetings for saving money and discussing issues of concern. They moderate the meetings in turn. The members disclosed the benefit of establishing their group recalling that before getting organized in group, they did not even use to greet each other. But now, they claimed, that they have become friends, visit members who fall sick and celebrate birth of one others’ children.

**Speaking on Behalf of the Voiceless**

W/ro Mare Bayu has also the following to say:

One day on my way back home from training on children’s rights, my neighbor called and informed me that a girl of 15 who had been missing was under police custody. She asserted to me that I should be in charge of attending to it; because I claim to stand for children’s protection and that I am a representative of the group in Cluster Level Associations (CLA). Thus, I had to go to Kebele 14 Police Station, but it was 7:00 PM when I got there that I the police denied me contact with the girl, and thus decided to meet her the next day. While heading back home, I came across a young man taking an eight year child with him to the police station. I felt some kind of discomfort and asked him what was going on. He told me that she had got lost and could not find her way home though he tried his level best in assisting her to find it. Finally, he said he brought her to the Police Station in spite of her persistent request to be left all alone because
it was too risky to do that.

Having heard from him, I followed him back to the Police Station and asked for their permission to take her with me after filling out the necessary forms. Nevertheless, the police said that it is the young man who should take her since he was the one who brought her and reported the matter to them. However, I insisted that the child should not be forced to go with him against her will and took the matter to the Police Chief, who immediately accepted my request as we had acquaintances because of my participation in meetings. The girl hugged me in happiness for she felt at ease to stay with me. Then I searched for the child’s house with the help of other people and lastly found it. Her mother was so much delighted to get her child back and thus thanked me a lot. Yet, I did not simply give her the child back, but rather tried to inquire why she got lost and reminded the mother the need for showing her child places outside home and finished matters with the police.

I got this whole courage and confidence of asserting my position due to my involvement in public affairs. As a matter of fact I am academically 12th grade, but was not assertive initially since the way I had been brought up and educated did not shape me that way. Therefore, taking a lesson from what I had undergone, I am trying my level best at least to ensure a better future for my son, live planned life and socialize with people.

Because of my participation in public life, I have also developed good communication with my husband. I am patient now; I do not use offensive words under the guise of having the right to equality. I also try to in part knowledge and information I get from trainings to members on our weekly meetings, settle disputes if one arises in the group and take more complicated matters to the cluster level and get it resolved there.

Opening up Windows of Opportunity for Enablement and Empowerment

W/o Jemila Ahmed is one of the beneficiaries of the poultry keeping activity encompassed by JeCCDO’s intervention in Urban Agriculture. She briefly narrated about her involvement in poultry program as follows.

I used to run a petty trade in market, but ceased it later due to health problem and my husband is a daily laborer. Since my involvement, I received six chickens; I stopped buying eggs because I got additional food for my children. I buy educational materials for my children with the money I used to spend to buy eggs.

Besides, they keep me busy, that I do not go to my friends’ house to spend my leisure time. I purchase their feed from the income I get selling eggs and preparing it for them as I have got the skill to do that. I get a minimum profit of Birr 100.00 per month. I follow them up very closely and notice any slight change that may lead to negative consequences. The Program offices visit me every two or three months to see how well I am doing. In the future I have a plan to have more chickens, because I have enough space in my compound. May God help me!
Being on the Right Track

W/ro Zenebech Taye used to pull out seedlings that fail to be productive whenever she got frustrated. She took training on how to produce carrot, beetroot, salad and cabbage. She used to believe that one could cultivate vegetables at his/her backyard without taking formal training. Latter, however, she has come to realize how much the training she received helps her in tackling challenges that cause the non-productivity of seedlings.

Furthermore, she received agricultural tools that contributed for her productivity. W/ro Zenebech said, “It has been advantageous for me to participate in Bio Intensive Gardening, because my children have been able to enjoy vegetables of their own choice at a better level than ever before”.

Getting a Lot Better

W/ro Seble used to spend Birr 60.00 per month for the purchase of fuel wood. In addition to its cost, the smoke from the fuel wood caused deforestation, Air pollution and health related problems. W/ro Seble was a victim of such an incidence until the moment she became one of JeCCDO’s target beneficiaries of the fuel saving intervention implemented in Dire Dawa city. Currently, she has abandoned using electric oven for baking injera because apart from its being health-friendly, the fuel saving oven saves money, time and energy. She also invites people to her house so that they can practically observe its use and buy it.

W/ro Seble Gudeta and her neighbor Teyint Yalew helping her with baking injera when W/ro Seble gave birth recently

W/ro Seble said, “I now save Birr 60.00 which I used to spend for the purchase of fuel wood every month because of this fuel saving oven.”
Making it Happening

Members of the Enat Guada SHG, established in November 2013, were women with a minimum exposure to public affairs because of confinement to domestic matters. The group members mentioned that they got motivated to form the group and started saving taking ‘Yemeserach’ SHG as a model. Then they kept on generating income from the sale of tea and bread so as to increase the capital of the group and began to provide loan service to members who want to run businesses, but lacked a startup capital. They also cover medical expenses for members who cannot afford to pay. Other groups who got impressed by the progress made by Enat Guada requested to link them to JeCCDO for capacity building trainings. Accordingly, they were given training on record keeping, home management and HIV/AIDS. After the training, they said that they have come to know how to keep records properly as opposed to their previous practice of keeping records on small exercise book in unorganized manner and also increased their capital. The group currently, has capital of Birr 3,344.00. As a result of the training, the SHG members have been able to maintain good household relationships, become cautious in careful handling of money and noticed that small amount of money can become huge if it is saved.

In the words of W/ro Firehiwot Mulugeta, getting enlisted in the group enabled the members to speak out publicly. Furthermore, she claimed to have experienced progress in her spousal life that she has started to communicate with her husband frankly. Hence, the improvement in her life has a positive spill over effect reflected in her household. She added, “I cannot put the knowledge I got from JeCCDO’s intervention in terms of money”.

Lomi Degefa, a member, expressed what she gained from her membership in SHG saying, “I never had television set this whole time. But after I borrowed from the group, I started selling fuel wood and saved the profit. Similarly, my son had Iqub (traditional saving scheme) and bringing together the income from both sources, we bought a television set.
“In addition,” she said, I had problem of speaking my mind publicly even when I have the knowledge about the point I want to make. This time, thanks to JeCCDO, I can speak freely irrespective of the status of my audience”.

**W/o Lomi Degefa, SHG Member**

In the future, the group members have planned to be involved in functional adult literacy program and maintain solidarity on different socio-economic matters.

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**Enhancing and Mobilizing Community Capacity for a Common Goal**

There was a knowledge gap that hindered residents of the Goro Butujji kebele from engaging in developmental undertakings they are engaged in now.

**Partial View of Village Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Committee, Goro Butujji Kebele**

Ato Fuad kemal, Chair person of the Committee, said that they have actively been engaged in developmental undertakings. He attributes the progress made in their community to JeCCDO’s capacity building trainings that equipped them with the knowledge to utilize human and other local resources to realizing better living conditions. To state the achievements in practical terms, he mentioned the construction of Check dam of 7kms by 100 residents organized in tens. The community members in Goro Butujji kebele took the initiative to construct the dam after observing a similar practice carried out in Addis Ketema kebele. They said, “When we looked
at the check dam in Addis Ketema, we really took it for another nice place we had never known before and got encouraged to adopt it.” Still more, construction of a one-km road and water point has been accomplished thereby solving the multi-faceted problems of the community.

Nursery Site in Goro Butuji Kebele

Another mentionable achievement attributable to JeCCDO’s intervention in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCADRR) is the fact that the community is taking advantage of flood by turning it into useful resource for watering their crops. Besides, they have become on guard against the potential risk of flood by establishing network to alert them at times of flood disaster. In case telephone network fails, they detect the possible danger of flood by closely scanning their environment for indicators of such a crisis and call out one another loud.

Women in Goro Butuji kebele used to undergo miseries for lack of access to clean water and convenient road. They had to loiter around in the town for a jerry can of 20 liters of water. The lucky days for these women are days on which they get two jerry cans of water for their respective entire households. It had been a common practice for them to suffer from water-borne diseases because of drinking water fetched from well. Their cattle, too, were victims of shortage of water in the kebele. The lives of women were worsened by Poor road facility because of its inconvenience to travel seeking for delivery service during labor pains.

Currently, the construction of water point and one kilometer road has helped to solve the whole mess. Female members of the Village Level DRR Committee mentioned that they have come to access 10 jerry cans of water per day; if they want to wash clothes or give water to their cattle, they can fetch 12 to 13 jerry cans. They also claimed to have been relieved of misery they experienced during labor pains for it has become easier for them to go for delivery service.

Water Point Constructed in Goro Butuji Kebele

On the whole the community members acknowledged that they have seen many changes in their lives in two years time only that they would work more to deeply instill the practice in their community at large. They further stated that they had got organized in three groups and started saving; planted seedlings of fruit and other trees and dug water well to conserve water. SHGs in which women got organized facilitate social transformation
since they have given them the opportunity to act collectively for a better life.

The Committee is alert enough to own the undertakings and enhance community involvement for their continuity. In this regard, Committee Members mentioned of their awareness that the intervention would phase out after three years. And thus, got a plan to construct more check dams on the hills not utilized thus far and improve difficult living conditions of their community. To realize this, their network will continue to function actively.

**An Exemplary Experience Worthy Sharing**

The backyard of Ato Eraso Teso has been vacant for the past 25 years despite all its potential to be a source of food and attractive site. Ato Eraso recalled that he never produced any kind of vegetable for the past 25 years, but did so only after attending training on Bio Intensive Gardening for 3 days, which he put in to practice promptly. For the first planting, he used seedlings he received from JeCCDO, but after that he started preparing seedlings of his own by using organic fertilizer i.e. animal dung.

Ato Eraso said that there has been significant change in the family diet; they have got any kind of vegetable to eat. All the family buys from market are salt and red pepper. In fact, according to Ato Eraso, he is trying to grow red pepper, too. Thus, if he succeeds, salt will be the sole item to be bought from market. Ato Eraso said, “Apart from being source of food and income for the family, I am happy that it keeps me busy to have the garden. Formerly, I used to get tired by loitering around in the town or even simply sitting idle. But now I feel strong as I work more.” The change in Ato Eraso’s family has attracted the attention of his neighbors that eight people have started practicing Bio Intensive Gardening, with initiative and skill they got from Ato Eraso. Even people who come to buy vegetables enjoy by watching it as well.
Mihiret Gebru, engaged in embroidery and sheep rearing

Looking Ahead

Mihiret Gebru is an unemployed young girl in charge of helping her mother and father with the income she gets by making embroidery. Mihiret said that she discontinued her business of embroidery and started to working for individuals for her sewing machine failed to function and her salary was not enough to cover its maintenance cost. By virtue of becoming one of JeCCDO’s target beneficiaries in recommendation of Fetno Derash Idir, she received Birr 1500, out of which 50 percent is grant and 50 percent to be paid back. Mihiret said that she spent Birr 300.00 to get her sewing machine fixed and resumed her business buying cloths. She also bought a sheep to fatten and sell.

Currently, she is making embroidery service to her customers in her house since, she does not possess a license which qualifies her to handle it in public places unless she takes. Her customers come to get her service based on information they hear from others. The Idir in collaboration with the kebele is trying its level best to get her a place to work at so that she will be more profitable.

Breaking away from Poverty Trap through Mutuality

Fetno Derash SHG was established with 18 women members in Kebele 06 of Bishofftu town in May 2012. With an average family size of five to eight members, mostly female-headed residents, the area was largely known for hosting youngsters indulging in different bad habits. The women used to earn their living mainly by selling local beverage known as tella-and running petty trade. Even worse, it was very difficult for children to attend school due to socio-economic problems.

Partial View of Fetno Derash SHG Members

When the women were initially organized in SHG through JeCCDO’s facilitation, the members did not even know each other and had complicated social and economic problems Gradually, however, they started to see concrete changes. One of the members of the SHG, W/ro Etenesh Demo, explained that they have managed to save money and discuss their problems weekly. According to her, these practices helped to improve members’ relationship and financial capacity. She also pointed out that the group’s saving capacity had reached Birr 6,842.00. Besides, by getting involved in SHG, members improved their leadership and conflict resolution capacity. She further explained that they had established internal lending system and that most of them have been engaged in different businesses. At the time, each member has accessed a loan of at least Birr 500.00,
which could help them improve their business. Consequently, they have been engaged in different income generating activities such as selling cultural clothes.

In addition, the members have improved the culture of helping each other and that their social and community problems have also been getting minimized. “Thanks to JeCCDO, we have completely cleaned an area that became dirty by chat rubbish and people with bad habit in the neighborhood, and turned it into a very nice playing ground for children by voicing out our concern in this regard,” W/ro Etenesh remarked.

**Achievements of getting organized in SHG kept on thriving by cultivating:**

A. **Solidarity**- Members support each other psychologically and financially in times of various crises.

B. **Economic Empowerment**- In addition to saving, members buy butter, pepper, and edible oil from whole sellers and retail it to group members for a fair price. Members have been able to purchase items for household consumption on credit basis to be paid in three installments. And thus enabled to access items for household consumption for a fair price, on the one hand, and increase income for their SHG, on the other.

C. **Individual Progress**- Some of the members have borrowed up to Birr 500.00 and improved their business. Except two of them, the rest of the group members have been engaged in business activities.

D. **Improved Socio-economic Condition**- Collective effort of the women for progress resulted in substantial attitudinal and economic changes. They developed saving culture thereby scaling up their capital to Birr 6,842.00, developed self-confidence, strengthened a feeling of sisterhood among one another and started exercising leadership role in practical terms.

W/ro Etenesh, who is running business of traditional clothes, witnesses her success and that of fellow members as follows.

I am a single parent bearing dual responsibility of both parents with a very meager means of livelihood. Now thanks to JeCCDO, I have got the key to break out of poverty trap by working together in group and individually. Now there are a lot of changes in our lives due to our weekly meetings, saving, devising an internal lending system, bookkeeping practice, participating in social and community affairs and income generating activities. We also have great vision and plan to flourish more and more in the future.
Building Positive Attitude among Poor Women through SHG Approach

SHG named “Tewerewari Kokebe” (shooting star in Amharic) was established with 17 members drawn from the marginalized poor parts of the Community in Keble 01 of the western part of Bishoftu town in 2009. Their perception of the SHG approach was poor initially. They used to think that the poor could not save, but should only get what suffices for daily subsistence.

After getting sensitized about the SHG approach, however, they were equipped with new skills and supported with clerical materials for the documentation of their upcoming new practices. They started better way of living by pooling together the available resources for their holistic benefit. With such a momentum, they have been enabled to set common goal and strive in pursuance of realizing it. They have also developed positive thinking to realize their potential and capability focusing on the positive aspects of their lives. The members said, “Today, we have stopped to turn off lights to see how dark it is, but we always turn on the lights to see how bright it is.” They have developed and maintained positive attitude towards the SHG approach and self image of themselves. They have also recognized the potential power of skill and knowledge they acquire from various trainings for their holistic development. They believe that skill building trainings are a lot like eating, Saying:” What matters is not how much one eats, but how much one digests. Hence, we concentrate on how we can change our lives with the knowledge and skill we gain from trainings. The SHG approach is like an easily digestible food and triggers the curiosity to learn.”

Here follows a testimony of W/ro Mimi Tsegaye, a woman of 35, on the fruits of trainings,

Through different trainings I attended, I have seen various changes in my life. I have been engaged in different income generating activities and have become able to fulfill the basic needs of my family. As a core achievement, I can mention the capacity developed to renovate my dilapidated house, which brought me to a brighter state of mind.

Socio-economic problems are solved in more sustainable way when members of community assume ownership of developmental engagements in their localities. Members of Tewerwari Kokebe are running a role model SHG doing all they can to make life better and shine out as their name implies to initiate other community members for holistic development.
Ato Metalo Mekuria is an elderly man of 65 living in Mehal Sub-city, Leku Kebele of Hawassa town. Ato Metalo has six children, of whom five are students in need of his parental care, while one daughter is married. He was uncertain about what he could do for living. His monthly pension of Birr 150 and the additional Birr 100 that he earns from guarding a shop could not suffice to manage his family. Though his wife tries to run some petty trade, she cannot handle it effectively due to ageing-induced factors. His meager income coupled with lack of reliable source of livelihood made Ato Mettalo’s life miserable and full of depression.

In cognizance of his miserable living condition, the Fetno Derash CBO recommended him as eligible to access the Urban Agriculture Program of JeCCDO in January 2012 and took training on small ruminant rearing. Facilitators of JeCDDO paid regular visit to and assisted Ato Metalo in developing saving culture. They also enlightened him on the importance of urban agriculture, whereby he joined the urban agriculture self help group and started a weekly saving of Birr 5.00. Then, he was provided with four rams to start agri-business activities. Eventually, he was able to get good sum of money from the sale of sheep after few months of fattening them.

Step by step, he began to cover his daily expenses and spare for saving. After his work as a guard for shops, he started spending all his time feeding and looking after the sheep. Still the time available was not enough that, he decided to quit his job as a guard and dedicated his full time to sheep rearing. With the profit he gained from the sale of sheep, he bought a calf for fattening with Birr 1,300 and which will be ready for sale with expected price of Birr 2000 only after two months of fattening. He also bought two rams for Birr 400 with the intention of selling them for Birr 700 up to 800 after two to three months of fattening.

The success of his agri-business activities encouraged Ato Metalo to expand the business that he requested for long-term loan from his self help group.

At this stage, Ato Metalo stopped worrying about fulfilling the daily subsistence of his family anymore. In fact, he has even been saving for the future.
Currently, Ato Metalo has managed to scale up his engagement by owning a cart and two donkeys; his daily income has increased from Birr 20.00 to Birr 40.00; he has gained better social status in his community, and got a job in a nearby school for a better salary. He has also got Birr 1,600.00 in his saving account.

Reaping Fruits of Partnerships

Ato Abebe Birile, Chief Executive of Goh Lehulum Community Development Association

JeCCDO pursues development approach of establishing partnership arrangements with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for positive impact on the well-being of children. The Goh Lehulum Community Development Association, which is located in Gish Abay kebele, is one of such partner Community Based Organizations (CBOs). According to Ato Abebe Birile, Chief Executive, the Association began to render socio-economic services to the community since 1998. Later it was registered as an Ethiopian Charity organization by the Amhara National Regional State Administration Security Affairs Office. The Association is comprised of four sub-committees; namely, Education, Health, Livelihood Improvement & Urban Agriculture and Child Care and Support. One can easily witness that the association has been capacitated to present its
structure, undertakings and achievements, in graphic and picture forms posted in its office.

The association actively serves the kebele community through its four sub-committees. Whilst extending community development services, the Association follows up the status of beneficiaries by filling out various follow up formats. Results of students who are attending tutorial classes are evaluated for possible change expected from semester to semester, the economic progress of guardians of OVC is tracked in light of their pre and post loan access condition, and similar follow ups are conducted for other capacity building trainings and undertakings through door-to-door visits by sub-committee members, teachers and facilitators. OVC guardians are informed as to when to start and finish the repayment of loans with specification on the amount of monthly repayment. The treasurer of the Association conducts door-to-door visits to investigate reasons for any failure and/or interruption of repayment in case beneficiaries happen to go abroad, face serious problems, spend the money on some promising business they may come across and to take advantage of such a chance, etc. The Association tries to understand their reasons and takes necessary measures to get the money paid back.

Members of the Association believe that what they are doing should yield results to the community. Successful beneficiaries who the association organized and supported to handle small businesses like selling charcoal have become exemplary figures in motivating other community members with low economic standard and commercial sex workers to be engaged in petty trade. This time, these people are approaching the Association with demand for loan which is growing beyond its capacity to lend. In October 2013 alone, for instance, it lent Birr 29,000.00 to 26 individuals. Had these people borrowed from individuals, they would have never afforded the interest.

As regards contact with governmental organs, kebele is the closest governmental structure with which the association maintains good work relationship. The Association has Kebele cabinet representatives who report what the association is doing the kebele community. So they are well aware of the support extended by the Association to children, youth and other community members, and the report reaches the City Administration through this structure. A concrete result to be mentioned in this regard is the resolution of a problem: the Association once had in the purchase of bajaj (a three wheeled vehicle for transportation service) for it was forbidden to have them in Bahir Dar city, but made possible, after negotiation with government organs. This Association is also credited as model on different meetings. In one of the meetings organized for Micro and Small Enterprises, for instance, a young man who had been trained as a tailor by this Association, witnessed that he was running a successful business that enabled him to make capital of Birr 25,000.00. The Association also gained free auditing service from an auditor who has been impressed by its achievements, whereby it was enabled to save Birr 3,000.00 thereby spending it for some other community services.

**Acting as an Agent for Community Development**

Leku Kebele/ 1-03 Idir used to be a small and traditional Community Based Organization (CBO) mainly established to handle funeral services for the surrounding community. However, after becoming a partner of JeCCDO in 2012, the CBO turned to be an important community development actor. After receiving training on leadership, documentation
The previous Leku Kebele/1-03 Idir documentation system used to be complicated and inappropriate, but after attending training on proper documentation, the CBO upgraded its system to be more modern and practical. It also improved its planning and report writing skills.

The Idir has additionally proved successful in screening of beneficiaries eligible for support of the orphan and vulnerable children. All members of the CBO play active role in the selection process, whereby successful way of identifying the right beneficiaries has been ensured. The trainings provided by JeCCDO enabled CBO management to plan their activities in organized and less time consuming manner.

Besides, presently conflicts that may possibly arise, are easily resolved because executive members of the CBO are well equipped with conflict resolution and communication skills.

The CBO was also provided with financial support which enabled it to be engaged in income-generating activities. With this money, the CBO supports orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) and schools in the Kebele. This effort has dual impact of benefiting the OVC and contributing to the development of the area.

Support for orphan and vulnerable children

The CBO has been empowered and enabled to become a sustainable community organisation, with a transparent management. It is in full capacity to implement developmental activities in a sustainable way.

The previous executive committee has currently handed over the pending activities and resources of the CBO to the newly elected executive members comprising of seven (two female) members after conducting internal audit.
By virtue of the trainings offered and the financial support provided by JeCCDO, the CBO has transformed itself from being an organisation simply taking carrying out funeral services to one of a successful development partner playing vital role for a better future of the community.

The Kebele 09 and 07 Community Development Association /CDA/, is one of the Community Based Organizations (CBO) working in partnership with JeCCDO-Debre Birhan Program office. Because of different internal and external problems, like low implementation capacity, low commitment of management committee members, scanty community awareness on the CDA’s vision, mission and objectives and lack of support from different organs and many other ups and downs, the growth of the CDA was hampered for some time.

But after continuous and integrated capacity development supports extended from JeCCDO, through training and experience sharing visits, the CDA gradually started to progress and show better performance. It has now become self-reliant and exemplary, with strategic direction to support its members and community of the kebele at large. It is also sharing its experiences to other CBOs in Debre Berhan and elsewhere.

Institutional capacity of the CDA has been strengthened and it has established feasible Income Generating Activities (IGAs). The number of direct and indirect beneficiaries has been increasing from time to time. In the year 2013, the CDA supplied different types of grains in two shops and grain mill service at one site of the kebele for members and the surrounding residents at a very reasonable cost, which is less than the market price. The executive committee of the CDA reported that its annual profit had exceeded Birr 80,000.00 in 2013.
In the year 2013, the CDA implemented the following core activities:

• Mobilization of 12 foam mattresses from Debre Berhan University and distributing to 12 vulnerable elderly people who were screened by the kebele 09 community care and support network committee members.

• Provision of 20Kgs of teff to 25 vulnerable elders each were provided with. The support helped the elders to get food during the rainy season.

• Distributed 300 quintals of teff and Sorghum to members with 10 percent addition to the initial cost, with the additional amount to be utilized for transportation, loading, unloading and other administrative costs. They also have had a chance to buy grain on credit basis to be paid in five month installments. Supply of grain and grinding mill service helped both the CDA members and other community members to accessing quality grains for fair price. Besides, as the grain bank and grinding mill is very near to their locality, they access the services in walking distance and save more time to attend their household affairs.

In 2013, the CDA management committee members worked intensively on grain bank activities that the management committee members are now assessing the market situation and management systems to establish additional IGA scheme, transportation service by Bajaj taxi to generate more income and give better services to the vulnerable community group of the kebele.
Sample intervention of JeCCDO on water and sanitation

Sample intervention of JeCCDO on Education
OVC Guardian
Economic Empowerment and SHG

Capacity Development of CBO's
Promotion of Urban Agriculture and CMDRR

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Nearly three decades of service to the people of Ethiopia!