SELAM "Hello"

NEWSLETTER | FALL 2026

MESSAGE

FROM THE CEO

At a time when so many families across Ethiopia are facing growing uncertainty, your support continues to bring hope where it is needed most. Thank you for standing alongside Ethiopiaid and our local partners.

Firstly, there's the devastating impact of fuel and fertilizer price hikes, driven by conflict in the Middle East. Together, these are driving a worrying rise in food insecurity and cases of malnutrition, while placing enormous pressure on families and the local organizations working to support them.

On top of that, the recent elections are threatening to reignite tensions in the Afar region and shatter the fragile peace that ended the bloody 2020–2022 civil war. Communities in the region are once again bracing for uncertainty.



Sharon in discussion with local government officials in Arba Minch.
Photo by Adam Mengistu ©



Sharon meeting with patients and staff at the fistula ward in Arba Minch Hospital.
Photo by Adam Mengistu ©

Despite these challenges, there is much to be encouraged by. Earlier this year, we completed our annual Monitoring and Evaluation process with our project partners—a valuable opportunity to reflect on what your generosity has made possible, learn from the past 12 months, and plan together for the year ahead.

It was inspiring to hear about the resilience and innovation of our partners, from improving maternal healthcare with new ultrasound equipment to developing sustainable animal feed programs, all while navigating the ongoing fuel crisis.

Looking ahead, preparations are now underway for our third annual Partner Peer Exchange workshop in Addis Ababa this October. Bringing our partners together to share ideas, strengthen relationships and learn from one another has become one of the most valuable parts of our work. It is through this collaboration that local organizations continue to grow stronger and create lasting change in the communities they serve.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Selam and feel proud of the difference your support is making.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us and for helping create brighter futures for women, children and vulnerable communities across Ethiopia.



Sharon

Sharon Elliott
CEO
Ethiopiaid Canada

ETHIOPIAID

A JOURNEY OF HOPE

TEREFECH'S JOURNEY TO BECOMING A SAFE MOTHERHOOD AMBASSADOR

In the SNNPR region of Ethiopia, 28-year-old Terefech Digafie Tadesse once dreamed of finishing her education and building a future for herself. But like many young women in her community, she was forced to leave school in Grade 5 for an arranged marriage.

Everything changed after a long and traumatic labour that lasted one day. Terefech lost her baby and developed obstetric fistula, a condition that left her isolated, distressed, and struggling to survive each day.

For nine months, she lived in silence with the condition, carrying deep emotional pain.

"I had a horrible time with fistula," she says. "I couldn't sleep well, I had nightmares and flashbacks. I lost my appetite, concentration and energy. I had suicidal thoughts. I was hopeless and crying day and night."

Her turning point came when she met Tseganesh Nega, a Senior Safe Motherhood Ambassador with Healing Hands of Joy. Tseganesh introduced her to the truth about fistula and told her that treatment was possible.

"I heard about obstetric fistula and its treatment for the first time from SMA Tseganesh," Terefech says. "I really thank her next to God; it is because of her I got treated and able to stand with you."

Through Tseganesh's support, Terefech was referred to the Hope of Light Fistula Centre, where she received treatment and began her recovery journey.

Surrounded by other women with shared experiences, she slowly began to heal physically and emotionally.

"I am glad to join HHoJ. I am having a great time in here. I like all the trainings," she shares. "After the training, I want to work hard to help and save my community from obstetric fistula."

Today, Terefech has graduated from the 92nd Safe Motherhood Ambassador class with Healing Hands of Joy. Once a woman living in isolation, she is now cured, trained, and ready to return to her community as a Safe Motherhood Ambassador—helping other women find the same hope, treatment, and second chance she received.

PARTNER PERSPECTIVE

LOCALIZATION: THE KEY TO YOUR LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT

One of the most rewarding aspects of working alongside local partners in Ethiopia is hearing directly from the people leading change in their own communities. Their insight reminds us that lasting solutions don't come from outside they come from within.

We don't often share reflective papers, but I found this piece from Valerie Browning particularly thought-provoking and timely, and I wanted to share it with you.

Founder of the Afar Pastoral Development Association (APDA), Valerie has spent more than three decades living and working in Ethiopia's Afar region. In this paper, she explores what localization truly means: shifting power, decision-making and ownership back to the communities who know their challenges best, and who are best placed to shape their own future.

As Valerie says:

> *"More and more I am realizing that the organization I work with, and me as an individual, have no right to spell out the future for another. I need to totally listen to the community, they disclosing the dimensions of the issue and they declaring what is needed to solve the problem."*



Valerie Browning, Founder of the Afar Pastoral Development Association (APDA), speaks with women and children in an Afar community about the harmful impacts of FGM

This philosophy sits at the heart of Ethiopiaid's work. We don't believe in delivering solutions to communities—we believe in supporting solutions that come from communities. Your generosity helps local organizations like APDA strengthen the knowledge, leadership and resilience that already exists, ensuring communities are not passive recipients of aid, but the architects of their own future.

As Valerie writes, real localization means communities have the opportunity to determine their own destiny, building the skills, confidence and resources to manage challenges long after projects have ended. That's the kind of lasting change your support makes possible.

SCAN THE QR CODE
If you'd like to read Valerie's full paper and explore her perspective further.