

SELAM

NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2026

"Hello"



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



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



▲ Sharon with JeCCDO project partner Mulugeta touring the streets in Arba Minch.
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 organisations 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 Australia

GLOBAL UPDATE

CONFLICT LOOMS AFTER ETHIOPIA'S ELECTIONS

Upcoming elections risk rekindling tensions in Ethiopia's Afar region.

A fragile peace under threat

Ethiopia's recent general election has heightened concerns that the Afar region could slide back into instability and violence. Tensions have escalated following the Tigray People's Liberation Front's decision to reinstate the pre-war Tigray Regional State Council, challenging the authority of the Federal Government's Interim Administration. This development threatens the fragile peace established by the Pretoria Agreement, raising fears of renewed conflict in northern Ethiopia.

A sensitive time

Rising tensions in Tigray are happening to a backdrop of escalating fuel prices and sweeping cuts to humanitarian aid. Together,



▲ Valerie engaging with the Afar community to discuss education, health, and community-led development.

these are choking off access to essential services including healthcare, education and livelihoods. They are also leaving vulnerable women with fewer resources to heal, rebuild and prepare for what might come next.

A worrying future

The prospect of renewed conflict is devastating for the people of Afar. The 2020-2022 war claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and destroyed livelihoods, homes and critical infrastructure across the region. It left women and girls dangerously exposed to conflict-related sexual violence.

SITUATION UPDATE

FOOD, FUEL AND FERTILISER PRICE HIKES HIT HARD

Conflict is driving up food instability and malnutrition in Ethiopia's most vulnerable communities.

Tensions in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have dramatically slowed shipments of vital fuel and fertiliser to Sub-Saharan Africa and put harvests at risk.

Millions of farmers across the region risk going without fertilisers vital to growing food. A 10% reduction in fertiliser could result in as much as 25% less maize, rice and wheat grown, and an 8% rise in food prices.

Smallholder farmers, who produce 70% of the region's food supply, are particularly vulnerable to fertiliser shortages and price rises.

At the same time, soaring fuel prices are making it harder to transport food, deliver aid and provide essential services in remote regions of Ethiopia like Afar. This is already reducing access to food at the household level and driving a worrying increase

in rates of malnutrition and related illnesses, particularly amongst children.

The longer this conflict and instability continues, the greater the risk of long-term impacts across Ethiopia. These include declining agricultural productivity, deepening poverty, increased aid dependency and health and development related to acute malnutrition.

Thanks to the compassion and generosity of our supporters, Ethiopiaaid is standing alongside communities at this challenging time. While we may be based in Australia, we are constantly talking to our partners in Ethiopia — listening, understanding what's happening in real time, and adapting our support accordingly.



▲ Children in Gondar whose lives are being transformed through Yenege Tesfa's education, nutrition, and child protection programs.

FROM OUR PROJECT PARTNER

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES THROUGH CARE, EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY IN GONDAR

In the historic city of Gondar, Yenege Tesfa Integrated Development Humanitarian Organization continues to stand as a lifeline for some of the most vulnerable children, women, and families. As an Ethiopiaaid Australia project partner, the organisation works quietly but powerfully in the background—strengthening protection, education, health, and livelihoods for those most in need.

During the last quarter, Yenege Tesfa successfully delivered a wide range of integrated programs despite rising inflation and increasing transport costs that continue to challenge service delivery. In its “Home for Tomorrow” program, 84 children in group homes received essential food and hygiene items, while 86 children and caregivers

benefited from new bedding to improve dignity and wellbeing. Caregivers also received psychosocial training to strengthen child protection and trauma-informed care.

At the same time, 43 children in the daycare centre received early learning, nutrition, and safe care, enabling single mothers to work and support their families. Across Gondar and Debark, 602 preschool children continued to receive daily meals, helping improve attendance, growth, and learning outcomes.

Education support remained a key pillar, with 182 students receiving scholarships, sanitary materials, and monthly assistance, ensuring girls in particular can stay in school.

Street children also benefited from feeding programs,

mobile school, library services, and hygiene support reaching thousands of vulnerable children.

Behind these services, Yenege Tesfa is also strengthening sustainability through agriculture, livestock, dairy, and poultry initiatives—generating income that helps sustain feeding programs and reduce donor dependency.

Through all its work, Yenege Tesfa remains committed to building pathways from survival to opportunity, ensuring children and families are not only supported today, but empowered for tomorrow.

Thanks to your generosity, every meal served, every child supported and every opportunity created is helping build stronger, healthier communities across Gondar.

PROJECT PARTNER UPDATE

CHILD PROTECTION AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECT AT ARBA MINCH

Faced with enormous challenges beyond their control, this project has continued to reach crucial milestones in recent months. Delivered by our local partner the Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organisation (JeCCDO), this initiative has the dual mission of protecting the rights of children as well as improving the social and economic status of marginalised women.

A project office for the project has now been set up and a project officer, four community development workers and a cashier have been recruited. Target groups of children and women who will benefit from educational support and economic empowerment activities have also been identified.

Once up and running, the project will:

- Build capacity at two local primary schools by supplying essential learning materials, refresher training for early childhood educators, menstrual hygiene pads for adolescent girls and strengthening girls' clubs.

- Support imprisoned mothers and their children by providing low-cost early childhood education classrooms and supplying learning-teaching materials.
- Provide psychosocial support to the victims of gender-based violence through a one-stop service centre at Arba Minch Hospital.
- Build community capacity and raise awareness of important sustainable development principles.

Progress on this initiative has continued despite devastating floods and landslides in the region in March 2026, which claimed the lives of more than 100 people. Homes were destroyed, key roads were blocked and important bridges were flooded as saturated slopes gave way after days of heavy rain.

It is testament to the dedication and determination of the Arba Minch community, JeCCDO, and you, our wonderful supporters, that this project remains on track in the face of such significant challenges.



▲ Children on their way to school in Arba Minch. Photo by Adam Mengistu ©

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.

FISTULA APPEAL UPDATE

A LIFE-CHANGING GIFT OF HOPE FOR WOMEN LIKE TIRUYE AND ZINESH

You may remember Tiruye's heartbreaking story from my recent letter last month. After a horrific three-day labour that ended in the loss of her baby, she was left with a devastating obstetric fistula.

Like thousands of women in Ethiopia, Tiruye couldn't afford the life-changing surgery she desperately needed. Without treatment, she faced a future of isolation and hardship.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of Ethiopiaid

supporters like you, \$377,622.50 was raised to provide life-changing surgery, care and ongoing support through our partner, Hope of Light, while also helping to strengthen the vital work of Ethiopiaid's other local partners across Ethiopia. Thank you.

Your compassion is already changing lives. Women like **Zinesh**, who also suffered from obstetric fistula, have received the surgery and support they needed to heal, regain their

dignity and rebuild their futures. **Because of your kindness, more women now have the chance to live free from the pain and stigma of fistula.**



▲ A woman at a fistula hospital, either awaiting surgery or recovering following treatment.
Photo by Adam Mengistu ©

GIFTS IN WILLS: YOUR LEGACY IN ACTION

A LASTING LEGACY OF COMPASSION

Every Gift in Will is deeply personal. While some supporters choose to leave a gift for a specific area of our work, others choose to leave an unrestricted gift, allowing Ethiopiaid to direct their legacy to where it is needed most.

This flexibility helps us respond to changing needs and continue supporting trusted local partners like Hospice Ethiopia, whose compassionate care brings comfort and dignity to people living with terminal illnesses.

One person benefiting from this care is 63-year-old

Tsigereda. After suffering a stroke, she was left almost completely blind and unable to care for herself. With the support of Hospice Ethiopia, she receives pain management, essential medical supplies and practical care, while her daughter is given the training and support she needs to care for her safely at home.

A Gift in Will can have a lasting impact, helping ensure people like Tsigereda receive compassionate care when they need it most.

If you are considering leaving a gift in your Will, we'd be honoured to have a confidential conversation about how your legacy could change lives for generations to come.

To learn more about leaving a Gift in your Will, please contact Sharon Elliott, CEO, on (03) 9864 6060 or email wills@ethiopiaid.org.au. We'd be pleased to answer any questions and discuss your wishes in confidence.

HOSPICE ETHIOPIA TRAINING

YOU ARE BRINGING COMFORT AND DIGNITY TO PEOPLE WITH TERMINAL ILLNESSES



▲ A Hospice Ethiopia healthcare worker providing compassionate home-based care to a patient.

Ethiopiaid is dedicated to improving quality of life for the country's most vulnerable people. That is why, with your compassionate support, we are working with local partner Hospice Ethiopia to improve palliative care services across regional hospitals.

Your donations are providing intensive training for 50 healthcare professionals including doctors, nurses, pharmacists and social workers. Topics covered in the program include pain and symptom management, pediatric and geriatric care, end of life care, and emotional and psychological support.

This training is supported by ongoing mentorships of three to five months to ensure it converts into real-world improvements for palliative care patients. There is also support for improving hospital systems around referral pathways, coordination between teams, documentation and reporting.

Your generous support is helping to make the end stages of life as comfortable, peaceful and dignified as possible for people living in remote parts of Ethiopia. Thank you.



▲ Hospice Ethiopia Executive Director Dr Ephrem visiting a patient during a home-based palliative care visit. Photo by Joni Kabana ©



Valerie Browning, Founder of
the Afar Pastoral Development
Association (APDA).

PARTNER PERSPECTIVE

LOCALISATION: 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 localisation 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 realising 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 speaks with women and children in an Afar community about the harmful impacts of FGM

This philosophy sits at the heart of Ethiopiaaid's work. We don't believe in delivering solutions to communities—we believe in supporting solutions that come from communities. Your generosity helps local organisations 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 localisation 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.

