

Selected Case stories

1) *The case of Misalie Cluster Level Association*

Misalie CLA is located around Saris Abo, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was established in July 2018 with 8 member SHGs which consists of 127 women.

During the outbreak of Covid-19, the CLA face-to-face meeting was paused for a while but communication continued through cellphones. Then, the CLA members decided to start their monthly meetings in open space keeping social distancing and using sanitizer and mask as recommended by the Ministry of Health.

The CLA has supported poor students with school uniform and stationery by mobilizing resources from the community. In addition, the CLA participated in renewal of three old houses of elderlies by reporting such cases to the concerned woreda offices. The constituent SHGs also reported issues like sewerage problems in their neighborhood to their woreda officials which was bad for their community health and got it fixed in time.



Birr 1500 was mobilized by the CLA from different community members and was given to the woreda Women and Children Affairs office for supporting children in need. In addition, the CLA also requested capable businessmen to lend their hands for the needy organized by government bodies. Accordingly, the businessmen gave 5,000.00 Birr to the Women's and Children Affairs office based on the request of members of the CLA. The CLA also took the leading responsibility of selecting 43 poorest women from their community with big family size and living in difficult circumstances. Thanks to the *Misalie* CLA, these selected mothers were supplied with basic food items of 25 kg of flour, 10 pieces (roles of Spaghetti, 5 liters of liquid soap, 5 liters of cooking oil, 2 liters of sanitizer and masks for each of them.

Beyond this accomplishment the CLA also mobilized 10,000 birr in another round and share feast with their poorest community members (more than 100 people) regardless of their religion, gender and age. Christians and Muslims were invited including elderlies and street boys and girls who were suffering a lot during the pandemic lockdown period. All the woreda officials and stakeholders



were invited and were so happy with the works of the CLA hearing their accomplishment reports and future activity plans in being a role model like their name (*Misallie*).

CLA members devoted their time in reorganizing SHGs who were disintegrated by Covid-19 and related reasons. They also discussed with SHGs to hold interest calculation and give relief loan to group members until the end of the lockdown. Also, the CLA advised SHGs to collect members' savings with representatives and deposit the collected money directly in banks which is not taken as loan by members.

The CLA mobilized funds from potential businessperson and engaged in wise investment by procuring big cooking pot with 7,500 Birr to rent for any social occasions. They aspire to procure additional materials such as chairs, tables, and tent to earn more income and accomplish their mission.

The CLA is grateful for MCDP's supports which are not direct cash but life changing trainings and capacity building supports to enable them become role models in their community.

2) Lewut Alegena meeting community needs

"Lewut alegena" CLA was established by 8 SHGs in September, 2010 in Sebadar Kebele, Womberma district. The CLA has been carrying out different activities to change the lives of SHG members and the entire community.

The community suffered from lack of clean drinking water for cooking and livestock for many years. Women and children in the area travel long more than 30 minutes (2.5 – 3.5 Kms from their village) to fetch water from the river. Children also were not able to attend classes regular due to this. Even after such long travel the water they access is usually shared with livestock and wild animals, which ultimately endangered their wellbeing.

The community reported the problem to Kebele administration and Womberma Woreda Water and Energy office several times but they did not get response.

CLA representatives started to discuss the issue in their monthly meeting in order to bring sustainable solution to this problem. Representatives from "Lewut alegena" CLA approached the Kebele administration and Woreda Water and Energy office and explained the problem of accessing clean water in their village. They kept the discussion and follow up for more than 4 months consistently before getting the right response from the government side. After considering the courageous moves of "Lewut alegena" CLA, the Woreda Water and Energy office accepted their question and planned budget to build water point. The CLA did not stop at this point they mobilized the surrounding community including their husbands and neighbors to select the site and dig wells to access underground water just at their door steps. Following their move the Water and Energy Office of Womberma Woreda built the wells the

community accessed clean water. This hand dug well has been providing clean water for almost 150 households in the area.



The constructed water point

The water supply system serves about 150 households in the area. Clean water means health, nutrition, uninterrupted school time and overall wellbeing for members of the community like members of “Lewut Alegena” CLA. Women in the area who travel long distances to fetch water from rivers, which are unfit for drinking, also were relieved of the burden.

3) Successful SHG woman story from Addis Abeba

Her name is Fantu Yimaneh. She is 56 years old and a widow. She had eight children and yet four of them are not alive. Her four children have got married and leading their own lives. She used to engage in different types of jobs including daily labor work to raise her children and sustain her family. She said there was a time when she had to work on three shifts with only 15 minutes of nap in between. When my children moved out to start their own life’, she said, I felt lonely, and also thought there is nothing I could do about it. The most saddening thing that I felt at the time was that several NGOs were working with the Woreda Women and Children Affairs’ Office to support the poor, and the Woreda invited women in our village for several meetings and yet no one considers me for the opportunity. I was there when these all happen but was invisible to everyone. So I had to sit at the gate of shoe-making shop located in front of my house idle most of the day. Most employees of the shop were young and they consider me as their mother and give me some money. That was the income I used to earn for a living. I also used to beg for Injera, and hence leading a beggar’s life.

One day a community facilitator came to our neighborhood and explained to us about Self Help Group approach. I felt happy because I was considered as one of the members. For the first time, I participated on training about SHG approach followed by social protection training. After these two trainings, I asked myself where I have been all these time. Truly speaking I was waiting for my death. After the trainings, I have been able to see my potential and convinced myself to work hard and unleash this potential.

I started making the regular and social protection savings in my group. This was the first change I realized on myself because previously I do not make any savings. When my group started giving out loan for its members, I took loan amounting to Birr 1,000.00 and started trading incense. This time I was able to see bright future and accessed second round loan amounting to Birr 1,000.00 to expand my business. Currently, I bought electric stove and bake my own Injera. Thank God! I do not beg Injera anymore. Previously, I don't have my own water line but now I have one. Today, I am a different person, and these all happened because of my involvement in SHG initiative. My group name is "ZinawDera" established in December 2014. It comprises 21 women. Our weekly regular saving per member is Birr 5.00. Our current regular and social protection savings are Birr 9,637.00 and Birr 11,481.00 respectively. Besides, our group has revolved loan amount 15,800ETB where every member have an opportunity to access Birr 1,500.00 at a time.



During our weekly meetings, we discuss and address most of our challenges and social problems. Besides, our group is a member of "LimataBehager" CLA operating in Woreda 7. We were invited by the CLA several times to participate and raise our critical problems on community conversations sessions, which were held in the presence of police officers, women and children affairs office representatives and community health workers. Among the problems raised during the sessions, the prevalence of open ditches that caused critical health problems especially affecting children was the major one. We used to think that these problems pertain for years. However, following the community conversation, the Woreda administration solved our problem. Currently, most of the ditches in our neighborhood are fixed and we have relatively clean area.

I am grateful for all things. Today I can see bright future and never afraid of tomorrow because I am among the group members.