



TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD IN RURAL ETHIOPIA

Strategic Plan 2021-2025



**Support for Sustainable
Development (SSD)**

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ACRONYMS

CMDRR	Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CRGE	Climate-Resilient Green Economy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HHs	Households
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HO	Head Office
HR	human Resource
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
IGAs	Income Generation Activities
IT	Information Technology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPEW	National Policy on Ethiopian Women
PM&E	Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SLOT	Strength, Limitation, Opportunity and Threat
SLUF	Sustainable Land Use Forum
SME	Small and Micro Enterprises
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples
SP	Strategic Plan
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSD	Support for Sustainable Development
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank

FOREWARD

Some Dads aren't much in the eyes of the world but they are the world for their loved ones. My Dad was a giant to the world and he was the world to me. His loss has left a huge and painful void inside me.

My Dad, Engineer Gebreyes Haile, spent his lifetime working tirelessly for the poor and forgotten communities of Ethiopia. I know first-hand what his work meant to him. He spent so many hard years working under difficult conditions. He worked under the scorching sun and spent nights under the stars in cold weather or sweltering heat – or in makeshift accommodations alongside the very communities he was helping – making sure the work was done on time, on budget and within his high standards of quality workmanship. I remember when I was little in Dubti, Afar region, my mum used to tell me that Dad will not come back home in the evening because *“he is spending the night in the field – the Awash river has risen again, bursting its banks and is threatening the new gravity canal he was building”*. So we would not see him for days on end, as they built canals and embankments to try and tame the mighty Awash. The Afar region and the river Awash always held a special place in his heart – as they do in mine.

“He was a larger-than-life personality who commanded respect,” says Sam Vander Ende, a former Ethiopia-based field representative for Canadian Foodgrains Bank. “He undertook challenges with great passion, energy, vision and leadership.”

Dad designed and built over 150 irrigation systems in Ethiopia; most of them are still running, managed by the communities themselves. Throughout his professional career, my Dad also did something quite important: He built capacity. He trained the people who worked with him: young and not-so-young, women and men. He built a generation of expert canal builders, water diversion experts, irrigation project enthusiasts... Always linking university/college graduates to the realities and the harsh requirements on the ground... Making sure that the work continued long after he was no more.

In 2003, he established Support for Sustainable Development (SSD) – a local NGO specialising in irrigation-based integrated development. SSD thrived and in a short time gained recognition in the country and beyond, thanks to the great support of the late Leo Seguin from Westlock, Alberta, Canada. Leo, through his Alberta based charity, Rainbow for the Future, raised millions of Canadian dollars to help poor communities in Ethiopia with matching funds from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the Canadian Lutheran World Relief. The personal friendship and professional collaboration between these two men meant that they were able to carry out impressive development work, together, in the most difficult and poor corners of the country.

They were close friends, they understood each other and most importantly they loved this country very much. They worked together for decades accomplishing my Dad's dreams and Leo's hopes. And, interestingly, they were called home just weeks apart; Leo passed a few weeks after my Dad. A double tragedy for us all.

Today, through this Strategic Plan, SSD is daring to dream again – slowly getting into the steps of these two giant personalities. We have ambitious plans for the next five years. We have no illusions. It will not be easy. But with the support of all those who admired Engineer Gebreyes’ brilliant work and Leo’s big heart; the generosity of many - from Canada to Switzerland; the will of all those who were part of the efforts to improve the livelihoods of millions; indeed, with the help of all of you, “yes we can” - “ይቻላል”. We can resurrect the dreams and wishes of Engineer Gebreyes Haile and continue to make them reality.

Help us lift millions out of poverty in rural Ethiopia through our development and humanitarian work.

Message from Sarah Guebreyes Haile

In memory of Engineer Gebreyes Haile



Engineer Gebreyes Haile and Leo Seguin visiting a river diversion site, Afar region.
Source: SSD photo gallery

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is SSD's five-year Strategic Plan for the period 2021-2025: Towards a Sustainable Livelihood in Rural Ethiopia. This newly developed Strategic Plan is aimed at enabling SSD to determine where it intends to be in the coming five years and how it will get there. Building on the significant achievements of the past decades, SSD aspires to strengthen its strategies and approaches to achieve desired results and improved outcomes.

Literature review, interviews, focus group discussions, field visits, interactive and participatory consultations, analysis of the data and information gathered were part of this Strategic Plan development process.

Over the past seventeen years, SSD has endeavoured to pursue and deliver on its commitments to vulnerable rural communities in Ethiopia as enshrined in the organisation's vision and mission. An impressive volume of work and significant achievements in nearly two decades of existence of SSD marked the past in a wide range of areas. Indeed, SSD has been able to introduce and initiate innovative and pioneering work that contributed to much improved livelihoods in different areas of the country. These achievements were realized in spite of challenges especially in terms of SSD's internal financial and human resource constraints.

As SSD starts a new period of operation, the organisation seeks to build on the achievements and leaning so far attained in order to consolidate and advance its contribution to improved livelihoods in rural Ethiopia. SSD will continue to work with and for the most vulnerable, food insecure

households and communities (both agricultural and pastoral/agro-pastoral); SSD will further support landless and unemployed youth (young boys and girls of working age).

SSD's programme strategies will focus on alleviating food and income insecurity and climate vulnerability, environmental protection and management as well as provision of improved social services (including WASH and health and education services) and, youth and women empowerment.

SSD will also look inward and address its own institutional capacity building needs, including, improving organisational efficiency and visibility, developing staff capacity as well as creating a strong knowledge management system to track and document learnings and impact.

SSD's Vision is "Pastoralists, farming communities in rural and peri-urban areas free from poverty and marginalisation".

Its Mission is to "Enhance the capacities of communities to become self-sustained through integrated community development programmes".

The total budget required for the implementation of the Strategic Plan is estimated at ETB 170,000,000 approximately USD 4.0 Million for five years. SSD will make significant efforts to mobilise enough resources to finance the planned five-year work programme. The organisation also counts on the generosity and trust of its funding partners, to support the implementation of this Strategic Plan.



SSD constructed irrigation infrastructure, Afar region.
Source: SSD photo gallery

1. WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Support for Sustainable Development (SSD) is a national, non-profit making charity established by the late Engineer Gebreyes Haile in May 2003 with support from family members and friends to benefit poor, neglected and marginalized communities in Ethiopia. Over the past seventeen years, SSD has implemented integrated livelihood & basic social service support programs in Afar, Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and SNNP Regions.

SSD is based in Addis Ababa and its coordination offices are located at grass root kebele level, close to the projects. SSD works with different community organisations such as water user associations, women saving and credit cooperatives, natural resource management committees etc., who support the field staff with project implementation. The local kebele and district leaders as well as other government offices and the target communities themselves also contribute to SSD's project implementation. Major programme areas of the organisation are food security, environmental protection, water development, education support and capacity building.

The General Assembly (GA) is the supreme governing body of SSD and currently has over 40 members of different professions serving the organisation on a voluntary basis. The GA guides and advises the overall development and progress of the organisation. The Board of Directors has seven members and is directly

accountable to the GA. The Board is responsible for ensuring that decisions made by the GA are implemented by the Secretariat; The Board further makes recommendation to the GA on matters of policy and overall operations of SSD.

An impressive volume of work and significant achievements in nearly two decades of existence of SSD marked the past in a wide range of areas. In a very short time, SSD has been able to introduce and initiate innovative and pioneering work that contributed to improve livelihoods in different areas of the country.

With increasing frequency of drought and looming challenges of climate change, alternative forms of livelihood were and are needed. Recurring droughts led to families frequently needing emergency food aid to help them get by. SSD offered for example Afar pastoralists an alternative livelihood. Instead of 'pure pastoralism,' the Afar could also produce irrigated crops and forage. This enabled elderly people and mothers with young children to stay in one place, and children could attend school while the young men took the larger herds to search for grazing.

SSD's livelihood and food security projects promote livelihood diversification through Irrigation based integrated development as an approach to sustainable pastoral & farming community development. Over the past 17 years, SSD has implemented 21 irrigation based

integrated development projects that developed 2,600 hectares of farm land for 7,810 households with direct beneficiaries of 50,765 people in just the Afar region. The Livelihood support programmes have contributed towards poverty reduction creating resilient and food self-sufficient communities in Afar National Regional State.

SSD's also intervened in the education sector with the aim of improving access to education and increasing enrollment of girls and boys. So far, SSD constructed a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) center, and three high-schools in Oromia region with financial support from Rainbow for the Future (RFTF) and the Addis Ababa Rotary Club. A total 2,660 students are getting proper education in these schools. SSD has also been engaged in WASH programmes and benefited over 65,000 people with financial support of RFTF, Care Ethiopia and UNDP.

Similarly, the Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) interventions of SSD built local capacities to prevent and mitigate the impact of hazards on communities at risk helping them to better cope with natural disasters and shocks through risk reduction and mitigation practices such as traditional early warning system, land use planning, better resource management strategies and more importantly through diversifying means of livelihoods. Through Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction projects SSD has built disaster resilience capacity for over 1000 households in Afar Region.

During incidences of disasters such as droughts and floods that cause severe food insecurity and displacement of families, SSD intervened with provision of free food, supplementary food for malnourished children and medicines for livestock. The drought emergency

support in 2008, 2011 and 2016 and flood emergency responses in 2012 and 2014 are among the major emergency response programmes implemented by SSD in Afar Region. This support benefited over 17,583 people.

SSD believes that addressing gender inequality is central to achieving sustainable development. Through various projects, SSD supported women to achieve equitable economic and social positions in their communities through facilitating income generating activities and providing equal opportunities for both women and men. By way of organizing women in saving and credit groups, SSD had economically empowered 1,100 pastoralist women in the Afar Region. As stated by Dr Karin Achtelstetter, Executive Director of the Canadian Lutheran World Relief, *"the spin-off effects of providing pastoralist families with options in how they earn a livelihood means young girls who otherwise would not have gotten an education are now enrolled in school."*

Capacity building is one of the basic project implementation and sustainability strategies of SSD. The organisation has mainstreamed community capacity building activities like trainings, experience sharing and input provisions across all of its programmes and projects in different weredas of Afar, Amhara, SNNPR and Oromia National Regional States.

SSD projects have been financed by various donor agencies. Key funding partners include Rainbow for the Future, Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGB), SLUF/Sida, Menschen für Menschen Switzerland, funding locally from Afar and Oromia National Regional States covering so far 20-30% its irrigation based integrated development projects.

SSD STRATEGIC MAP

Vision

Pastoralists, farming communities in rural and peri-urban areas free from poverty and marginalization

Mission

Enhance the capacities of communities to become self-sustained through integrated community development programmes

Values

Fairness and equity	Inclusiveness	Moral & ethical integrity
Impact oriented	Independence	Communication & collaboration
Accountability	Transparency	Environmentally conscious

Strategic Pillars

Program Strategic Outcomes

I
Increase community resilience and adoptive capacity to climate vulnerability

II
Improved access to social services including WASH, health and education

III
Responding to humanitarian needs

Institutional Outcomes

I
Improved organisational capacity and strong governance

II
Improved communication and networking

III
Sustainable Funding/Financial Security

Overall Goal

To sustainably enhance the livelihoods of target beneficiaries through increased food and income security, promotion of basic social; services and protection of the environment.



Vetiver grass planted along the main canal – SSD river diversion work, Afar region
Source: SSD Photo gallery

2. ETHIOPIA: THE COUNTRY WE WORK-IN

a) The land, people and demography

Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest civilizations and home of over 80 ethnic groups that speak about 80 different languages. The population have unevenly distributed owing to varying physical factors such as altitude and climate and human factors such as type of economic activities. Ethiopia, with a population of 109 million people, population of 196 countries ranks it at 12th position. Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa after Nigeria. As COVID-19 rages across the world, as of April 5, 2021, over two hundred seventeen thousand people in Ethiopia have been tested positive and three thousand people died because of the virus¹.

b) Economic Policies and Performance

Ethiopia is the fastest growing economy in the region. However, it is also one of the poorest, with a per capita income of \$790. Ethiopia aims to reach lower-middle-income status by 2025. Ethiopia's economy experienced strong, broad-based growth averaging 9.9% a year from 2007/08 to 2017/18, compared to a regional average of 5.4%.

Ethiopia's economy has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as shown in increased price of basic foods, reduced household income, rising unemployment, slowdown in growth, and increase in poverty. Ethiopia's real gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed down from 7.7% in 2017/18 to 6.1% in 2019/20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.² It is also estimated that If the current scenario continues, next year's GDP growth could decline by 2.8 percentage points.³

Industry, mainly construction, and services accounted for most of the growth of Ethiopia's GDP. Agriculture and manufacturing made lower contribution to growth in 2017/18 compared to the previous year. Higher economic growth brought with it positive trends in poverty reduction in both urban and rural areas. The share of the population living below the national poverty line decreased from 30% in 2011 to 24% in 2016⁴. Based on past elasticities, poverty as measured by the international poverty line is projected to decrease to 22 percent by 2020⁵. While poverty levels were high pre-COVID-19, the pandemic has only exacerbated situation even further. A study⁶ by the UN Women found out that over 60% of the respondents have either lost all their individual incomes or have experienced reduced incomes

¹ <https://www.ephi.gov.et/index.php/public-health-emergency/novel-corona-virus-update>

² The World Bank in Ethiopia: Overview. Accessed from: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview>.

³ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/109230/download?token=rxippQKh>

⁴ The World Bank on Ethiopia, Overview, Sep 26, 2019

⁵ Ethiopia Economic Update, the World Bank, 2019

⁶ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/abridged_-_impact_of_covid-19_on_gender_equality_and_women_empowerment_in_east_and_southern_africa.pdf

since the onset of the pandemic. Ethiopia's HDI value for 2018 is 0.470 – which puts the country in the low human development category positioning it at 173 out of 189 countries and territories. Although Ethiopia's HDI value shows a 65.8 percent increment between 2000 and 2018 (from 0.283 to 0.470), it is still below the average of countries in the low human development category, most of them in Sub-Saharan Africa. Life expectancy at birth increased by 19.1 percent between 1990 and 2018⁷.

On December 11, 2020, the Council of Ministers of Ethiopia approved the 10 Years Perspective Development Plan officially entitled, "Ethiopia 2030: The Pathway to Prosperity Ten Years Perspective Development Plan (2021 – 2030)". The focus areas in the 10 years' plan include productive sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and

mining, service sectors like tourism, and enabling sectors such as energy, transport, sustainable finance, innovation and technology, urban development, irrigation, and human capital development.

c) Gender

National Policy on Ethiopian Women (NPEW) in 1993 recognizes the role and potential of women in development and improving welfare, but also the challenges in tapping their potential for the benefit of the country and themselves due to political, economic and cultural discriminations. The policy aims to ensure women are treated equally in the labour market; they should not be discriminated against in hiring, pay and promotion. It also stipulates government support to bridge opportunities and skills gaps with better access to education



Supporting the Afar women Source: SSD Photo gallery

⁷ HDR 2019 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2019-report>

and training, career and vocational guidance.

In terms of Gender Inequality Index (GII), Ethiopia is ranked 123 out of 162 countries with a value of 0.508, while only 37.3 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and only 11.5 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 22.0 percent of their male counterparts⁸. Gender inequalities are persistent in the area of health and life expectancy, maternal mortality, and adult HIV prevalence. Women's health is adversely affected problem of access to health care services, poverty and poor nutrition due to financial constraints and cultural believes. They also suffer from low status in their society and lack social support networks. Manifestations of discrimination against women are numerous and acute.

d) Youth

The Youth Policy in Ethiopia defines youth as to include part of the society who are between 15-29 years⁹. According to the Youth Policy, a large number of the youth have, because of economic and social problems, been exposed to juvenile delinquency, addiction to dangerous narcotics, prostitution, beggary, street life and to similar other social evils. On the one hand, this condition exposes them to health problems (HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.) while on the other, pushes them into engaging in criminal acts.

In line with its strategy to absorb the large number of entrants to the job market, the Ethiopian government has established a number of initiatives

to support job creation through enterprise creation. There have been some successes and a number of SMEs have been created that have contributed to employment in the urban areas and, to a lesser extent, in the rural areas. However, a number of bottlenecks remain. Youth Self Employment in Ethiopia uncovered persistent gender gaps both in wage employment and in the creation and maintenance of enterprises. Women tend to be confined to low-margin, precarious micro-enterprises, while men can aspire to higher quality business initiatives. Both genders face similar problems when it comes to raising finance, finding adequate premises, receiving adequate and appropriate training and an education commensurate with the needs of the economy, although women face these challenges to a greater degree¹⁰.

The employment structure of the country has not significantly changed despite the rapid economic growth recorded in the recent past. While economic growth has led to job creation, unemployment remains high—especially in urban areas and for youth and women. Unemployment is in general higher in urban areas, but it also showed a significant decrease between 2003 (26 percent) and 2016 (17 percent). It is also higher among females and youth though it has decreased for all groups (UNDP 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic has particularly affected youths employed in micro, small and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs) in the urban, informal, sector (manufacturing, construction, trading, retail, hospitality and tourism) which have been particularly hard hit during the pandemic¹¹.

⁸ UNDP Human Development Report, 2019 overview, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2019-report>

⁹ Youth Policy in Ethiopia, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, 2004¹

¹⁰ Meeting the Challenge of Youth Employment in Ethiopia, Transitioning from the Public to the Private Sector, Wolday Amha, Tassew Woldehanna, Mane Bule and YisakTafer.

¹¹ <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/covid19/UN-Socio-Economic-Impact-Assessment-FINAL.pdf>

e) Climate and Environmental Protection

Ethiopia is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate-driven disasters, which are expected to increase in frequency and magnitude over time. In addition, conflict has emerged as a growing “disaster” threat to development gains¹².

Ethiopia is experiencing the effects of climate change. Besides the direct effects such as an increase in average temperature or a change in rainfall patterns, climate change also presents the necessity and opportunity to switch to a new, sustainable development model. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has therefore initiated the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) initiative to protect the country from the adverse effects of climate change and to build a green economy that will help realise its ambition of reaching middle-income status before 2025¹³.

To mitigate the climate change impacts that have greatly affected Ethiopia in terms of flooding, drought and food insecurity, the Prime Minister launched a tree planting initiative called, the Green Legacy Challenge project. The ambitious tree planting programme is part of Ethiopia’s aspiration to build a green climate resistant economy by 2030. Under the country’s National Green Development programme—launched in May 2019 in a bid to combat climate change and environmental degradation—Ethiopia reported planting over 4 billion trees in 2019 across the country. Despite anticipated operational challenges due to COVID-19, the country has also planned to plant over 5 billion seedlings in 2021.

The post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) related to green economy will be integrated and implemented aligned with the sectors’ climate resilient green economy development strategy.

f) Food Security

Ethiopia’s economy is dependent on agriculture, however, just five percent of land is irrigated, and crop yields from small farms are below regional averages. Market linkages are weak, and the use of improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides remains limited. Despite these challenges, agriculture-led economic growth that is linked to improved livelihoods and nutrition can become a long-lasting solution to Ethiopia’s chronic poverty and food insecurity¹⁴.

Not only is agriculture the primary source of food, but also source of export generating foreign currency earning, from its products such as coffee, oilseeds, pulses, fruits, vegetables and live animals.

Over 80 percent of the population depends on agriculture for their food and income – significant production losses have severely diminished households’ food security and purchasing power, forcing many to sell their remaining agricultural assets and abandon their livelihoods. Agriculture was not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its contribution to growth slightly improved in 2019/20 compared to the previous year¹⁵.

The country has diversity of Agro-ecologies and climate and rural resource base of land, labour, livestock and water that allows the cultivation

¹² USAID Ethiopia Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) July 2019 – July 2024

¹³ Ethiopia’s Climate-Resilient Green Economy Strategy Nov. 2011

¹⁴ USAID Office of Food for Peace Food Security Country Framework for Ethiopia FY 2016 – FY 2020

¹⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview>



Supporting the Afar women Source: SSD Photo gallery

of wider range of crops and varied livestock rearing, both of which accounted for more than 90% of agriculture sector¹⁶.

The homegrown economic reform agenda for agriculture include¹⁷:

- Enhance productivity of small-holder farmers and pastoralists through provision of modern inputs and services;
- Modernize livestock production through improving veterinary infrastructure, research and innovation, and establishing linkages with other industries;
- Establish effective linkage between agriculture producers and commodity markets as well as the commercial value chain;
- Develop a legal framework for agriculture-specific financial services such as micro-lending, crop insurance and forward contracts.

g) Civil society space in Ethiopia

In 2019, the Ethiopian Parliament adopted a new law governing civil society organisations (CSOs), entitled Organisations of Civil Societies Proclamation No. 1113/2019. The new law changed most of the crippling rules of the old Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009, which restricted significantly the civil society sector, especially those organisations working on politically sensitive issues, human rights, and rule of law including activities such as gender, democracy and children's rights. The new law has opened the space for CSOs to carry out a vital role, particularly in the country's democratization process and human rights promotion. The Federal Civil Society Organisations Agency is tasked to oversee the registration and reporting of CSOs in accordance with Organisations of Civil Societies Proclamation No. 1113/2019.

¹⁶ Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA) 2018, REPORT ON THE ETHIOPIAN ECONOMY - Foreign Direct Investment in Ethiopia: Structure, Performance, and Determinants

¹⁷ A Home-grown Economic Reform Agenda, Sept: 2019: <https://pmo.gov.et/initiatives/>



SSD river embankment protection work in Afar region.
Source: SSD photo gallery

3. PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

3.1 ENSURING FOOD AND INCOME SECURITY

a) Challenges

- *Target rural communities in Ethiopia are vulnerable and food insecure due to their reliance on environment dependent livelihood system of agriculture as well as livestock. These communities face a highly uncertain situation due to climate change and agro-ecological degradation that results in depletion of food security, reduced, destruction of natural resources and market shocks/price variations. The rural economy is mainly subsistence farming which is characterized by inefficient utilisation of labor and land, lack of technology, credit, and limited market access for selling the produce.*
- *Major causes of food insecurity situation in the pastoral communities include drought associated with poor pasture and water unavailability; poor extension services particularly in the area of livestock health service and lack of other livelihood options including employment opportunities.*

b) Strategy

- Link SSD's humanitarian work with the development one – the triple nexus development, humanitarian and peace especially with nomadic/pastoralist people which encroach on farm land and are in conflict with other clans.
- Engage universities and research institutions to ensure that SSD's

food security interventions are researched and identified “as home grown” good practices in fighting poverty and improved livelihoods.

3.2 ADDRESSING CLIMATE VULNERABILITY

a) Challenges

Climate change is affecting livelihoods and the natural resources in areas where SSD is operating. SSD works with communities building their resilience and in disaster risk reduction and management to mitigate the consequences of climate change.

Unexpected disasters happen, natural or man-made disasters resulting in emergency situations affecting entire communities, disrupting their day to day life. Given the prevailing food insecurity and increasing trend of vulnerability, high risks on livelihoods posed by climate change (particularly in the pastoral areas), it is critical for SSD to work with these communities in fragile ecosystems like in the Afar region and to support their adaptation strategies and reduce their vulnerability.

It is also important for SSD to carry out emergency response in these situations.

b) Strategy

The key strategic direction to minimize the impact of climate vulnerability will include:

- Development efforts undertaken with full awareness and with due

consideration of climate and environmental changes. SSD will ensure that all activities contribute towards enhancing the resilience of communities to probable shocks and mitigating their impacts.

- Interventions aligned to on-going national efforts in climate change adaptation in agriculture and natural resources management.
- Resilience building of local communities on preparedness and response to natural hazards and building of sustainable livelihoods;
- Basic institutional readiness built within SSD (technical, administrative, logistical capacity and expertise) for improved emergency response in addition to its existing experiences in the implementation of development initiatives;
- Build strategic partnerships with humanitarian actors that are primarily engaged in and have the capacity of emergency response assistance within or at closer proximity of its intervention areas - to call upon when humanitarian response to emergencies is required.

3.3 HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR CRISIS AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

a) Challenges

Ethiopia continues to face complex humanitarian crisis characterized by chronic and acute needs. Ongoing ethnic based conflicts, desert locust invasion, recurrent climatic shocks such as floods and droughts, and socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 are the key drivers of recent humanitarian needs in Ethiopia. Though drought induced food insecurity and acute

mal-nutrition are the most common humanitarian emergencies in SSD's operational areas, several concurrent and sometimes interconnected crisis also affect populations and disrupt ongoing development programmes.

It's critical for SSD to carryout emergency lifesaving responses and recovery activities in areas where it has strong presence while expanding and responding to increasing needs or a variety of needs in other locations. The decision of scaling up SSD's humanitarian response to locations where it has no prior operational presence will be based on a careful assessments of risks, SSD's capacity (resource, expertise etc.) and comparative advantage/value addition.

b) Strategy

- Build strategic partnership with humanitarian actors such as the UN-OCHA led humanitarian cluster system, Government Disaster Risk Management commission and other Non-governmental organisations engaged in humanitarian response operations
- Prepare organisational Emergency Response Strategy and Preparedness Plan that will guide SSD's humanitarian programming including resource mobilisation, procurement and recruitment process for rapid emergency responses
- Negotiate with donors to incorporate crisis modifiers or contingency funds in the development projects SSD designs to enable quick response in case of a rapid onset emergency
- Where possible, engage in joint humanitarian assessment missions with zone humanitarian coordination offices and other NGOs to better understand

humanitarian needs on the ground and as part of humanitarian fund raising strategy.

- Engage in provision of humanitarian assistance particularly focusing on response sectors SSD has adequate expertise such as food and WASH.

3.4 SOCIAL SERVICES – WASH, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

a) Challenges

- *In Ethiopia, the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) report indicates that only 57% of households (HHs) in rural areas get their drinking water from improved sources and 39% have no toilet facility. The prevalence of diarrhea episodes in the community was reported to be 12%.*
- *Lack of knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) on WASH is one of the most imperative causes for transmission of infectious diseases. Effectiveness of WASH depends not only on the provision of WASH facilities but also, and most importantly, on the compliance of individuals.*
- *Though there were improving trends in the health and education facilities/ infrastructure in the past 10 years, there are still gaps when we see the ratio of health facilities and education infrastructure in comparison with the size of the population specifically in rural areas.*
- *COVID-19 is a grave threat to human health. The State of Emergency proclaimed by the Government in 2020 and respective lockdown measures, restrictions of movement of people from place*

to place, prohibition of gatherings, social/physical distancing are affecting the implementation of planned activities. COVID-19 has also critically affected the day-to-day operation of SSD. This threat may continue in the future.

b) Strategy

The key strategic directions for WASH and Education interventions are as follows – of course always ensuring that these are gender disaggregated and providing disability access:

- Reduced prevalence of waterborne disease through implementing the three key WASH practices: Safe disposal of waste, face and hand washing with soap and safe treatment and storage of drinking water.
- Increasing access to safe and adequate water supply and basic sanitation facilities;
- Providing health education in the general awareness raising training programme of SSD in collaboration with health personnel of the government;
- Engage in building and furnishing of Primary health and education facilities in remote.

3.5 WOMEN AND YOUTH FOCUSED INITIATIVES: CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

a) Challenges

- *Women and youth as well as other vulnerable groups such as persons with disability are particularly disadvantaged within the overall economic and social growth of the country.*

- *In rural areas, culturally defined roles exclude women from accessing many of the services and income generating activities.*
- *Fast growing rural young people have limited access to resources, such as land and other employment opportunities:*
- *Gender inequalities are observed in terms of relations at the household, household responsibilities and chores, early pregnancy and/or marriage, limited mobility and limited decision-making power, educational disadvantages, cultural barriers, access to finance, lack of skill set to apply new improved technologies and approaches, etc.;*
- *Large share of the youth lives in rural areas and therefore, opportunities for rural youth employment continue to be mostly found in agriculture and a large part of rural non-farm activities is still agriculture related, and forms part of the broader problem;*
- *Persons with disabilities experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination because of their impairment, age, sex, religion, family status, and other factors.*
- Empowerment of women and youth through education and training so as to enable them to fully engage and participate in, and benefit from economic and social development. Providing vocational (technical), business, and soft skills development trainings for youth, women, and persons with disabilities and the provision of necessary startup capital in different activities including:
 - irrigation agriculture, fruit, vegetable and spice production
 - beekeeping, poultry, sheep and goat production
- Off-farm jobs could be critical sources of income that provide alternative livelihoods for young and landless individuals in rural communities: off-farm activities/ services such as tailoring, petty trade, cafeteria, beauty salon and more. They could also complement the agricultural sector by creating markets for agricultural produces. SSD will create opportunities for youth and women to seek farm and non-farm job opportunities within and outside of their communities.
- Micro and small enterprises could be important in creating jobs and offering livelihood for unskilled rural youth with limited non-farm options. Therefore, SSD would organize the youth in small groups/cooperatives and setting up credit lines with micro-finance institutions to co-finance their start-up capital to help launch small rural businesses.
- Targeted support to enhance women's capacity for leadership in cooperatives, associations, businesses and institutions and raising their bargaining power to enhance their business positioning in markets.

b) Strategy

Recognizing that gender equality and the empowerment of women and youth have significant positive impacts on sustained economic growth, which are drivers of poverty reduction and social integration, SSD will implement a gender mainstreaming strategy in its various programmatic activities. SSD will further focus on the economic empowerment of women and youth and other vulnerable groups to facilitate their access to productive resources and inputs, skill and market and employment opportunities. The intervention strategies will include:

- Include the experience and concerns of persons with disabilities as an integral component in the design and implementation of programmes, so that they can benefit equally.

3.6 WHERE AND HOW WE WORK

SSD will continue to support:

- the most vulnerable, food insecure households and communities (both agricultural and pastoral/ agro-pastoral);
- landless and unemployed youth (boys and girls of working age), and persons with disabilities

SSD will:

- maintain a manageable scope of operations in terms of location and area of experience and expertise;
- select strategic focus areas based on government and donor priorities
- address power inequities through gender sensitive/transformational and inclusive approach in its programme design and implementation
- ensure high staff commitment and professional staff conduct
- be committed to sustainability and environmental protection



Supporting the Afar women Source: SSD Photo gallery



SSD projects - maize and sorghum production in Afar region.
Source: SSD Photo gallery

4. INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

4.1 IMPROVED ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY AND STRONG GOVERNANCE

SSD is set to demonstrate that it is using its resources in an efficient, accountable and transparent manner. SSD understands that its legitimacy in managing aid resources is closely tied to its accountability to its constituency (and the public at large), its adherence to its mission, the transparency of processes, and its effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate.

In the coming five years, SSD will strengthen its good governance characteristics through the implementation of strong internal accountability measures, i.e., managing complaints, conflicts of interest, official travel, financial management, record keeping, election and accountability of the Board, strengthened leadership of the General Assembly...etc. SSD will reinforce its management and administrative policies during this period to ensure that the day-to-day operation of the organisation is carried out smoothly upholding transparency and accountability.

4.1.1 Organisational alignment

In an effort to fill the technical and institutional leadership gap created with the passing of the late Engineer Gebreyes Haile, SSD has made efforts to fill positions such as the General Manager position, and more recently the PME position.

However, additional technical capacity is required to support and lead the work of project officers in the field. A gender specialist is also needed to support SSD's gender focused activities. SSD will make efforts in the coming period to carry out recruitments to strengthen existing technical capacities.

4.1.2 Staff development and motivation

A staff development policy will be developed in an effort to promote learning within SSD and to assist staff to develop their potential, enhance their capabilities and increase their effectiveness to the mutual benefit of SSD and themselves. Ways of meeting learning needs will vary according to the individual, the situation and available resources. SSD's staff performance management system will be strengthened for an improved reward mechanism.

- SSD will review its remuneration system in line with the labor market. The organisation will seek to provide a compensation package that attracts, retains and motivate competent employees as much as its funding allows.
- SSD is taking measures to ensure the safety of the work place and the wellbeing of staff and their families. The leadership has been following-up on directives and instructions from the Ministry of Health, the Prime Minister's Office and WHO. In an effort to further strengthen its readiness to address

the impact of the pandemic, SSD will develop a **Contingency Plan** aimed at determining actions that SSD would take as the current pandemic evolves. The plan will explain how SSD would continue to function in various contextual situations.

4.1.3 Implementing a PME system

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential component of any project or programme and the organisation as a whole. M&E helps in tracking changes and accounting for progress and resource utilisation. Moreover, M&E generates information and experience for learning and ongoing development. SSD is well aware of that M&E is a management tool – enabling informed decision making. In the upcoming strategic period, SSD will develop a PME strategy and a guideline for implementation, as well as recruiting a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) expert.

4.2 IMPROVED COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING

4.2.1 Enhancing documentation and communication

SSD has a track record of documenting results and achievements of its work with communities through video, still pictures, print and broadcast media. This trend needs to continue and strengthened. SSD has best practices that can be shared and scaled up to others.

SSD will continue to enhance its capacity in documenting its practices. The documentation practice will start from the Field Offices – capturing community story/case studies,

documenting events such as Farmers Field Days, learning and sharing workshops and so on. At the HO level, the field information will be extracted and developed in printed and audio-visual forms depending on the audiences. The refined information will be published and/or uploaded on the website, and communicated to partners in different forums or events. This will significantly improve SSD's image to the public, government and donor agencies.

Deliberate data collection on livelihood improvements, beneficiaries positively affected, successful soil and water conservation efforts...etc. need to be systematically documented. The PME expert and Senior Management need to focus on significantly improving the organisation's knowledge management system – which on its own – needs a strategy endorsed by the Board and approved by the GA.

SSD will also further strengthen the participation of communities in the identification of development interventions, activity planning and implementation not only to ensure ownership but also replication of successful experiences based on community own initiatives. At the same time, SSD will also share and attempt to link up its best practices with government programmes.

4.2.2 Improving SSD's visibility

In previous years, the work of the organisation was recognized at different levels in the country. Two Prime Ministers at the Federal level as well as Regional Presidents, a testament to the credibility and recognition of the organisation and its work, honored the late Engineer Gebreyes Haile. The number of cups and medals of Excellence awarded to SSD is also impressive. SSD further achieved international recognition

for its successful and innovative work, especially about its efforts in improving the livelihood of vulnerable communities in the country.

Going forward, SSD will invest in its branding and overall promotional capabilities including its online presence and visibility.

- Improved branding
Implementing a recognized image for its reports and various other outputs as well as online communication channels.
- Improved on-line presence
SSD will make efforts to increase and improve its online visibility. It will improve the technical efficiency, “feel and look” and content update of its website. SSD will further invest human and financial resources to expand its on-line visibility. A communication strategy that will guide its PR work needs to be developed as soon as possible. SSD will also need to define how and when it will start using aspects of social media to support its institutional promotion.

4.3 STRENGTHENED FINANCIAL CAPACITY

SSD's financial situation needs to improve. The impact of the global financial crisis due to COVID-19 exacerbated the stark funding decline following the loss of Engineer Gebreyes Haile. SSD relies on a very limited number of funding agencies and there is need to broaden its donor base as one critical measure for risk mitigation.

The need for SSD to start working on its resource mobilisation strategy

and plan in order to aggressively engage in diversifying its resource base is very clear. SSD aims to achieve a financial stability through a sound and sustainable resource mobilisation approach. The following are key elements of SSD's strategy of mobilising adequate resources to finance its programme of work:

- Develop a resource mobilisation strategy and plan
- The overall goal of this resource mobilisation strategy is to create a robust pathway towards the financial stability of SSD. The specific objective of the strategy is to provide a framework for action for increasing resources available from all sources to support the implementation of this Strategic Plan and move towards financial sustainability by the end of 2025.
- The first step for financial sustainability is income diversification, referring to the number of income sources that provide SSD's main funding. Deepening SSD's partnership with traditional donors; diversifying, mapping and managing the organisation's donor base; and developing improved capacity to mobilize resources are key actions necessary to expand SSD's resource base.
- Engage with potential new development partners working in the country.
- Strengthen SSD's partnership and collaboration with government institutions and explore means of acquiring government funding earmarked for vulnerable groups, youth and women focused initiatives.



SSD projects vegetable and fruits
Source: SSD Photo gallery

5. RISK MANAGEMENT MATRIX

Risk Type & Risk Description	Potential Adverse Impact	Risk Level ¹⁸	Risk Management and Key Controls in Place	What additional control measures or further action is needed to reduce risk further?	Responsibility
1. Operational – COVID-19 challenges The spread of COVID-19 increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased risk of staff, beneficiaries and partners' illness Reduced income of target people as a result of failure to carry out socio-economic activities Scarcity of funding 	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) measures Comply with rules/guidelines of relevant health institutions Risk response planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness creation Regular updates on the status of risk response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GM AFM Project coordinators All Staff
2. Operational - Government leadership Unclear leadership by Government or lack of capacity, and/or delays in Government processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is delayed 	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular dialogue with concerned government bodies Capacity building on key thematic areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making the issue as an agenda during GO-NGO platforms/forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GM Programme Coordinator Project coordinators

¹⁸ H=high, M=medium, L=Low

Risk Type & Risk Description	Potential Adverse Impact	Risk Level ¹⁸	Risk Management and Key Controls in Place	What additional control measures or further action is needed to reduce risk further?	Responsibility
3. Operational – Funding Lack of sufficient funding to implement planned activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of ability to achieve planned objectives and activities; Downsizing of SSD operation & staff 	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and implement RMS Diversify sources of funding to achieve the set targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare risk response plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GM Programme Coordinator RM & PME Senior Officer
4. Operational – Unpredicted natural disasters Flooding, drought, locust invasion or other natural calamities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of communicable diseases Reduced production and productivity Community displacement 	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide capacity building on early warning and disaster risks reduction mechanisms Risk response planning Dialogue with relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing risk monitoring team (RMT) Improving risk handling capabilities Prepare contingency plan to address humanitarian response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GM Programme Coordinator Project coordinators RM & PME Senior Officer
5. Operational – Political unrest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seized project implementation Risks staff security and safety Community displacement 	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor situations, review and produce regular updates on political trends at both national and regional states levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt conflict sensitive and do-no-harm approaches both in programming and relationship building efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GM AFM Project coordinators All Staff
6. Operational – Rapid inflation and material scarcity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to completion of projects on time with approved budget 	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare project budget in anticipation of price increases during the preparation of Annual plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make bulk purchases where feasible. Monitor and revise budget in consultation of Donors as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GM, AFM Programme Coordinator, Project coordinators

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