

MISSION REPORT



November
2019

The Hunger Project Ethiopia

Report about visit of The Hunger Project Ethiopia by Alexandra Koch in November 2019.

Mission Report

THE HUNGER PROJECT ETHIOPIA

INTRODUCTION

The Hunger Project is committed to the sustainable end of hunger. The Hunger Project Switzerland (THP-CH), which is part of the worldwide The Hunger Project network, is certified by ZEWO. This means, that THP-CH has to select, monitor and evaluate its own projects in the program countries.

We are doing the report because THP-CH invested USD 463,602 in the last phases of the Epicenters Mesqan and Jaldu (thereof CHF 400,000 by the individual investor Dr. Peter F. Mueller). Thereupon, THP-CH mandated the country director of Switzerland, Alexandra Koch, to carry out a mission in Ethiopia during the period of 22nd – 26th November in order to do an evaluation of the funded programs. Alexandra Koch was accompanied by the two Swiss volunteers and investors Doris Ragettli and Adrianos Moros. The mission was very well prepared by the local THP team in Addis Ababa.

The objectives of this mission were:

- To participate at the celebration of self-reliance in the Epicenter Jaldu
- Get insight into the ongoing activities of the Epicenters Jaldu and Meskan, learn about their achievements and difficulties

THP-ETHIOPIA

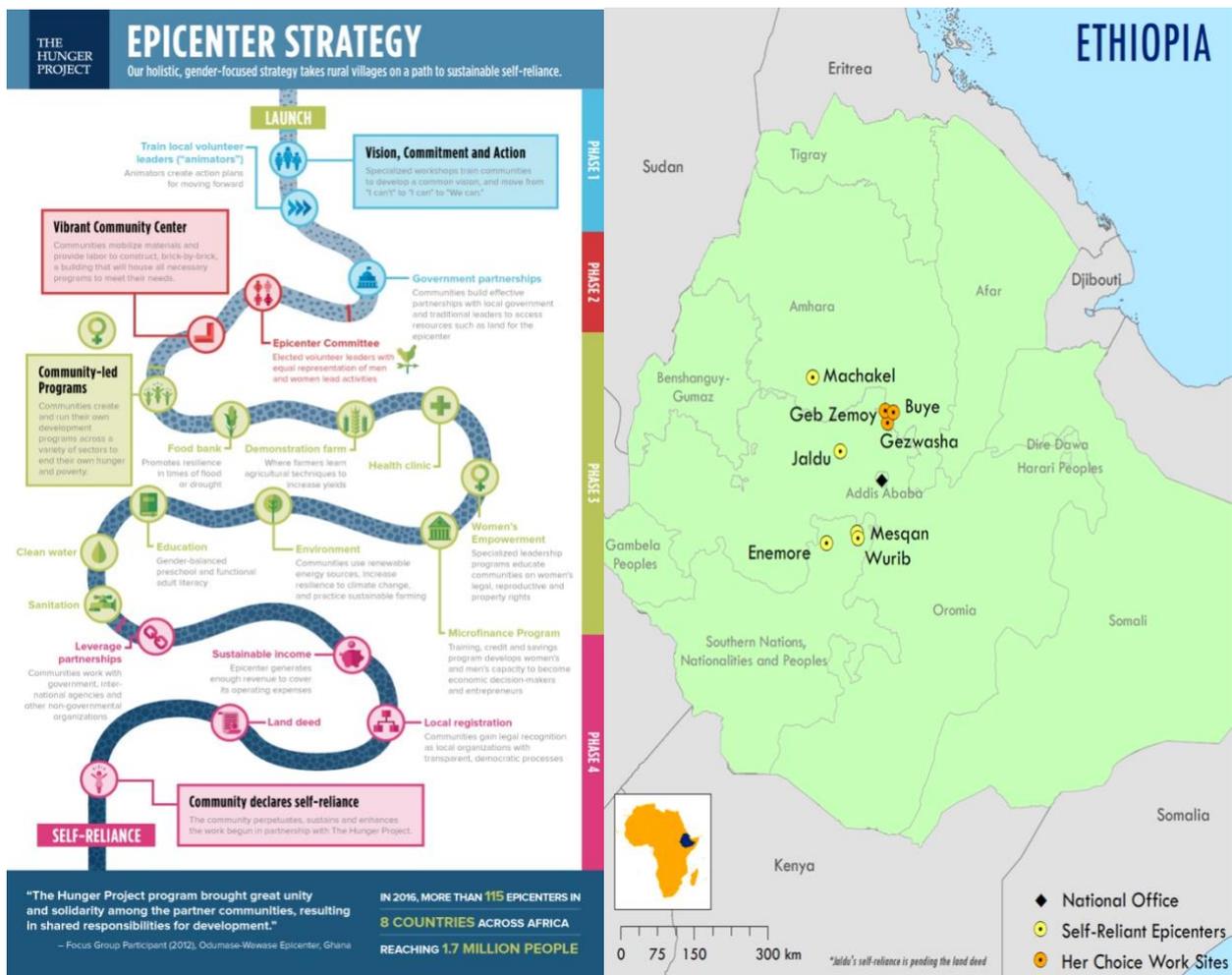
THP has been working in Ethiopia since 2004 with the objective of creating a sustainable end of hunger and poverty in the country working in partnership with the respective communities through the establishment of epicenters (community centers). Eight epicenter programs have been implemented in three regions: Oromia, Amhara and South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPR) reaching around 130,000 people. The country office of THP-Ethiopia (THP-E) is based in Addis Ababa and runs its projects in eight project offices in Machakel Woreda of East Gojjam, Merhabiete Woreda on N. Showa, Ensaro Woreda of N. Showa, Jaldu Woreda of W. Showa, Enemore o Woreda of Guragie Zone, Mesqan Woreda of Guragie Zone and Wurib. THP-E has been implementing integrated rural development projects in the aforementioned project areas putting women and elimination of poverty at the center of the agenda.

MEETINGS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The previously planned meeting with the Swiss Cooperation Office (SDC) in the Embassy of Switzerland and another meeting with the program officer of Icipe (partner of the NGO “Biovision”) for exchange didn’t take place due to time collisions. The country director of THP-E, Teshome Shibru, will follow up with them to schedule new meetings.

VISITED PROGRAMS

We visited the two Epicenters Jaldu and Meskan because THP-CH funded them in their last phases to become self-reliant. Meskan declared self-reliance in 2017 and Jaldu became self-reliant in 2018.



EPICENTER JALDU

The Epicenter Jaldy is located in the region of Oromia, in the zone West Shoa and consists of 5 villages with 19,055 community partners (9545 women and 9510 men). The project started in 2004. In November 2018, Jaldy declared self-reliance by achieving a **Self-Reliance Score of 84.29**.

We visited the Epicenter Jaldy on Saturday, 23rd November 2019. After a five-hour drive (147 km north west from Addis Ababa, thereof 40 km unpaved road) we were warmly welcome by hundreds of partners with music and a ribbon which the country director of Switzerland was able to cut together with the governor of the local government. A sign for the start of the celebration. We were guided to the assembly hall where a lot of speeches from the country director of THP-E, the SACCO (saving and credit cooperative) leader, the governor, the agroforestry officer and us took place. After that we were able to enjoy a typical Ethiopian injera dish and were shown around the epicenter.



Achievements / Benefits of THP until Self-Reliance in 2018

Community Mobilization:

- 3450 (1365 women) people attended Vision-, Commitment & Action Workshops
- 413 (214 women) trained as voluntary general animators (they are volunteers that engage themselves along with The Hunger Project (THP) to train and inform the community members and to develop their environment)
- 1173 (659 women) trained directly in Income Generating/Livelihood Activities
- 86% community members have participated in the most recent local or national election
- 77% of the community individuals believe they have the ability to change their community

Education:

- 78% children attend primary school (up from 47.8% in 2005)
- 90% of the children attend secondary school (up from 14.5% in 2005)
- Proportion of households with at least one literate person reached 91% from 46% in 2005

Food Security, Nutrition and Agriculture:

- Functional food bank exists at the epicenter compound
- Prevalence of stunting of 0 - 5 year old children down to 0 in 2018 from 41% in 2005
- 113 Food Security & Agriculture animators trained, who serve as peer educators and community mobilizers
- 878 villagers trained on food security & agriculture,
- 99% of the smallholders utilize improved inputs on farming
- 100% of the smallholders apply improved farm management practices
- Proportion of households below the poverty line declined from 39% in 2005 to 22%

Microfinance:

- SACCO has 746 (425 women) active clients, 34,705 USD saving portfolio, and 100,473 USD outstanding loan portfolio. From 2005 – 2018, it has benefited 4856 community members by dispersing a total loan of 488,241 USD.
- 73 Livelihood Animators trained, , who serve as peer educators and community mobilizers in using the saving & credit service and diversify livelihoods
- 3645 members of the community attended financial services and Income Generating Activities Trainings.
- 55% of the rural households own non-farm businesses (up from 10% in 2005).
- Severe or moderate hunger has been reduced to zero due to improved access to off-farming activities.

Women Empowerment:

- Women empowerment index (composite index designed to measure progress in the multidimensional women's empowerment and is tailored to meet the unique needs of THP's programs) reached 74% (up from 60% in 2005).
- Antenatal Care Coverage reached 87% from from 24% (2005), which means the percentage of women from rural households that had antenatal visits in health centers;
- Proportion of births attended by qualified health care professionals has reached 68% (from 2% in 2005).

- Ratio of girls to boys enrolled at primary school reached 1.01:1 i.e. the number of school girls is slightly higher than the number of boys in schools.
- 1,062 (587 women) community member has been trained in the Women's Empowerment program.
- 2,472 (2,087 women) community members attended financial services training.
- 36% of women are aware of their HIV/AIDS status compared to 34.74% men.
- 42% of the women in epicenter villages are micro & small business owners compared to 14% men.
- 45% women have access to financial services compared to 36% men.

Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS:

- 289 latrines constructed, installed, and rehabilitated.
- Proportion of individuals using clinics/health workers during illness reached 90%.
- 90 health animators trained, who serve as peer educators and community mobilizers
- 92 nutrition animators trained, who serve as peer educators & community mobilizers;
- 114 voluntary HIV/AIDS animators trained, who serve as peer educators and community mobilizers

Water and Sanitation

- 12 Water points/sources constructed/rehabilitated, which include water schemes to cover many households in the villages.
- 66% of population has access to a basic drinking-water source up from 6% in 2005.
- 85 WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) animators trained. They educate the community members in proper utilization, operation and maintenance of the water schemes.
- 73% of the households apply proper waste management techniques.
- There is a public toilet and functioning potable water point in the epicenter compound.

Challenges / concerns of the community

The land right deed is still missing, but they are confident to solve this issue.

The main concern of the community is access to clean water and sanitation: It is still difficult and needs to be improved. The villages Goro and Urga are ok, the other 3 villages are still limited. Urga gets the best water, because they have a huge water tank from a fresh water source.

Regarding clean drinking water, it is even a national debate. It is a technical issue, like plumbing. It needs technicians from the water offices, they are pushing that issue with the water committees. When pipes are installed by the government it may only go for 5 km and they leak often. So they don't know how to fix it and the pipes don't reach the rural communities. The government asks development organizations for help in this regard.

Overall impression of the visit

The epicenter Jaldu made a good impression on us. It looked green with the apple, mango and avocado trees and the teff field (a grain which serves for the national dish "injera") that the agro-forestry officer Workneh Edesa showed us. The compound of the epicenter serves as a demonstration farm. There is also a potato food bank, a water pump, a water collecting system to gain rain water to water the fields, and a solar energy plant. Apart from that we saw that milk processing, a bakery as well as a barber shop serve as income generating activities. Moringa is also a source of income, when they harvest it in spring. We were told that the community partners learned to make honey and make it at their homes. The community seemed

engaged, even though we didn't see many women at the celebration. Women are apparently very shy there. We found out that Jaldu people are farmers and highlanders. They live more than 2000 meters above sea level. They accept change more slowly compared to other epicenters. Since progress takes longer, it took them longer to become self-reliant. But we are confident that they will succeed in being self-reliant. We feel that solidarity among the community partners is strong.



EPICENTER MESKAN

The epicenter Meskan is located in the South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPR), in the zone Gurage, and consists of the 4 Kebeles (in Switzerland: Gemeinde) Dobi, Degagot, Goyban and Lemech-Meqicho with 37,459 community partners (24,325 women and 13,134 men). The project started in 2006. In December 2017, Meskan declared self-reliance by achieving a **Self-Reliance Score of 83.43**.

We visited the epicenter Meskan on Monday, 25th November 2019. After a four-hour drive (142 km south from Addis, 7 km unpaved road) we were warmly welcome by 7 community partners (photo on the front page together with Teshome Shibru, Country Director of THP-E on the left). We were guided to the chicken farm, the demonstration farm, and the assembly hall. We were able to have an interview with the Chair person of SACCO Shitaye Mohammed (left photo below), who lives in the Goyban village. Link to the interview with German subtitles: <https://youtu.be/kWMBP95s-44>



Here is the interview in written:

What was the biggest change in your life in the last years?

Before we never left our houses, now we interact with the community, save money and send our girls to school.

What were the consequences of this change?

A new and better house! Before we had a thatched roof, now we have a corrugated roof, which is sturdier and does not leak and lasts longer, it is better.

What would you need to experience more positive change in your life?

Before I was scared to ask for a small loan, now I learned to take larger loans for income producing activities and then save money. Saving is the key! We learned to trade and do business. Now the capacity of the micro credit bank is even limited and women have to wait in line for small loans.

How could you give more credit?

By saving more, then we can give more credits to more women.

What does working for SACCO mean for you?

I am happy! Before I was limited to my kitchen, now I am serving the community and I am outside with the people.

What was your biggest success this year?

As a group of leaders we educate women to come out and also educate their girls. 1 woman empowers 5 others to come out and participate in the community. We convinced many women to join the savings and credit program to encourage them with their small businesses.

What do you expect for the near future?

To produce better and more crops and enroll more women in the savings for change program.

What is your biggest challenge?

Because most people are illiterate, the trainings take longer.

How do you overcome that?

We just keep on going with this process, there is no short cut. It might take more than 2 years but that's the process.

What income producing activities do you do?

Petty trading. For example, food producing at home and selling them on the local market, or buying animals to fatten up and sell them later.

How did you feel about becoming self-reliant?

I am very happy, there is nothing like being self-reliant!

Dependency is bad, it is great to come here on my own and get a small credit in my name.

What would you like to tell our investors?

I cherish my freedom!

Today I can reach into my pocket and pull out some money. You got me out of my kitchen and into the community. I am thankful to you for that!

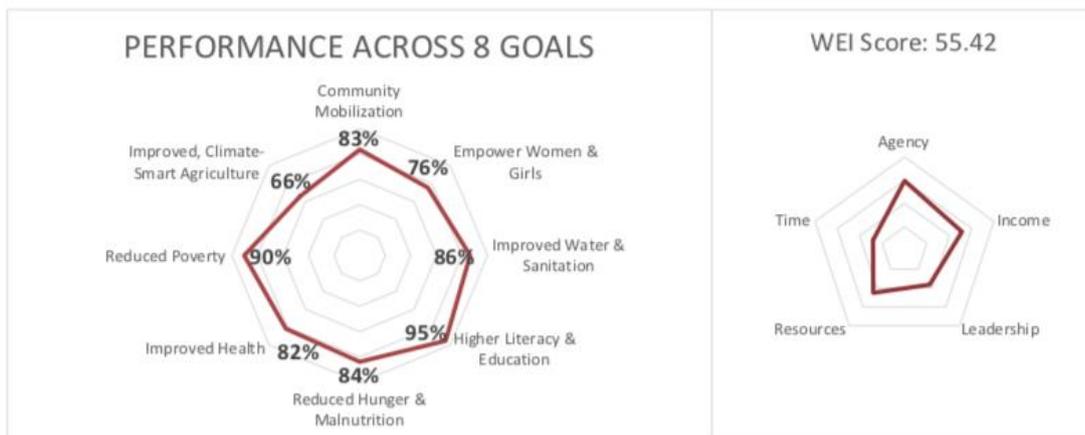
Achievements / Benefits of THP until Self-Reliance in 2017

Statistics of Note

- 8% Households with moderate hunger
- 0% Households with severe hunger
- 7% Diarrheal disease in children under 5
- 75% Children age 4-18 attending school
- 82% Households with at least one literate person
- 86% Births attended by licensed health care professional
- 92% Individuals using clinics/health workers during illness



<p>3,286 Community members trained in VCA workshops</p>	<p>1,588 Latrines constructed, installed, or rehabilitated</p>	<p>1,585 Community members trained in women's empowerment workshops</p>	<p>Community Mobilization</p>
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Challenges / concerns of the community

They encourage the women to go to adult literacy classes, but old women refuse. They feel they are not worthy and tell that their children should learn. In the epicenter there are functional adult literacy classes. THP promotes that at least there should be one person in each family who can read, write and calculate. The goal is 100%, currently it is around 90%.

Overall impression of the visit

We were impressed by the agility Shitaye Mohammed responded to our interview questions. The epicenter seemed to be busy with the chicken farm and the microfinance bank, which is open most days of the week. In addition, the soil of the model farm was recently cultivated and we liked the beautiful fake and real banana trees planted side by side for fertility reasons. Chili is also planted.



We found out that Meskan people have a more trader character, which could be the reason that they became faster self-reliant than Jaldu people. It is very important to know that the collaboration with the local government is very important. THP trains people to make specific demands to the local government. Meskan people were able to engage government to build schools closer to their villages. This reduced over 7km of walking for children and give them more time to help their parents on the fields. This is a way of catalytic functioning of THP. This request and vision came from the villagers themselves. It came out of the Vision, Commitment & Action workshops. It was not a plan of THP-E. This example shows how THP empowers the vision of the people and does not say what to do.

MEETING WITH THE TEAM IN THE THP-E OFFICE

On the last day of our trip, on 26th November, we were able to meet most of the THP-E team members in their office in Addis Ababa and ask about their challenges. The THP-E team consists of 9 people as core staff (country director, M&E officer, executive secretary & administration assistant, finance officer, accountant, micro-finance program officer, program officer, food security and community development officer, and epicenter coordinator), 3 part-time drivers and 2 part-time cleaners.

What are the specific challenges of THP-E?

- Women mobilization is a challenge.
- 30% of children are still stunted, because the mothers were malnourished.
- Our challenge is mainly at the beginning of the epicenter strategy, because other NGO's come with money and tell them what to do. We need to convince the people in the villages that this is not the methodology of THP. As soon as they understand that THP comes to support the knowledge and vision of the people, they get excited and engage proudly. We teach people that it is the duty of the governments to provide clean drinking water and education. They learn about their rights and how they place their demands at the local government.

- Future focus should be community forestry to fight climate change and become climate smart, and fighting early marriage in the epicenters. At the beginning of our work our focus was married women, but early childhood marriage and early motherhood should become a focus in our work.
- The L-shape building of the epicenter is too foreign, we would like to build a local type of building. In the three projects that have been financed by “Her Choice” since 2016, we don’t build an epicenter. Her choice finances the women empowerment programs to fight child marriage. Part of it is building confidence, avoid school drop out, empower public schools to become girl friendly, encourage community conversations in schools about HIV, child labor, early girl marriage. We train the priests in this too, because they are the ones who foster child marriage. We teach them about the legal ramifications the national law has about marriage before 18. Actually, the only thing we need a building for is the SACCO (microfinance bank). The women need their micro credit place like an office to meet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Once again, we are convinced that the epicenter strategy approach works. We have seen that, as in our projects in India, it is also important in Ethiopia to learn to make demands on the local government to get schools and clean water. It is good that THP acts as a role model for water supply and pre-school in the epicenters. THP often builds a prototype of water tanks and then the communities demand it from the governments to be built in other villages. This is the duty of the government.

After discussion with the country director of THP-E we recommend for the future linking the Her Choice projects with the microfinance project. The microfinance projects work very well in Ethiopia. We at THP-CH could imagine further support in this area. The country director of THP-E will send us the formulated needs in early 2020.

We would like to thank the THP-E team for their most valuable support and efficient preparation of our mission.

