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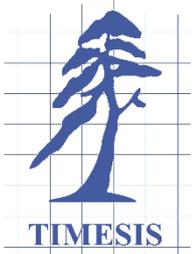
Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo - Ufficio III - Sezione Valutazione

2022 | Summary Report

Ethiopia

Final Evaluation of emergency initiative in favour of vulnerable populations, refugees, displaced persons and migrants to counter the causes of irregular migration

(AID 10677)



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The opinions expressed in this document represent the evaluators' point of view and do not necessarily coincide with those of the client.

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List of acronyms

AICS	Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development
AM	Assessment Matrix
AMREF	African Medical and Research Foundation
AOP	Annual Operating Plan
AWD	Acute Watery Diarrhea
BBS	Basic Business Skills
BPs	Good Practices / Best Practices
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CCM	Comitato Collaborazione Medica
CAI	Centro Italiano Aiuti all'Infanzia (Italian Children's Aid Centre)
CoC	Certificate of Competence
DGCS	Directorate General for Development Cooperation (MAECI)
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GO	General Objective
GOP	General Operating Plan
HR	Human Rights
HRD	Humanitarian Requirements Document
IFSO	Integrated Family Service Organization (Ethiopian NGO)
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IR	Inception Report
LF	Logical Framework
LL	Lessons Learned
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAECI	(Italian) Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MS	(EU) Member State
MWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs Office
SACCO	Saving and Credit Cooperatives
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SINCE	Stemming Irregular Migration In Northern & Central Ethiopia
SO	Specific Objective
SR	Start-up Report
TF	Trust Fund
TL	Team Leader (of the ET)
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TSC	Teatro Sociale di Comunità
TVEDO	Technical and Vocational Enterprise Development Office (previously known as "Small and Micro Enterprise Development office")
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training Center
WASH - CO	Management committees for WASH projects (wells, springs, etc.)
WISE	Women in Self Employment (Ethiopian NGO - Addis Ababa)
YFC	Youth Friendly Center

1 General Context

Ethiopia is an important country of origin for irregular migration to the Middle East, South Africa, North Africa and, to a lesser extent, Europe. The migration rate out of Ethiopia is relatively low compared to other East African countries, but Ethiopia's population, Africa's second largest with about 110 million, makes it important in terms of absolute numbers.

Ethiopia's population has a growth rate of more than 2%. Of that percentage, 29.45% are between ages 25 and 54 and 20.04% between 15 and 24. Of the Ethiopian population, 80.5% are rural people whose economy is mainly based on rain and subsistence agriculture. Agriculture remains a dominant sector (38.8% of the GDP) while the service (46.6%) and industrial sector (15.2% in 2014/15) are increasing. The Ethiopian economy has continued to experience significant annual growth rates of more than 5% over the past decade.

Ethiopia is therefore a rapidly growing country with a young population. National policies are strongly oriented towards accelerating economic growth and ensuring access to basic services and education, especially in rural areas. The most important national development plan that absorbs a large part of the available resources is the second phase of the Growth and Transformation Plan - GTP II. Its main objective is the country's transformation from a medium-low income situation by 2025.

Nevertheless, agriculture still does not generate satisfactory incomes, especially for a young population. The average plot of land worked per family is inadequate. Most of the land is used for food self-sufficiency and to a very limited extent for production of income crops. Migration is seen as a real opportunity to improve the individual and family's economic situation, especially by the young population.

Due to significant migration from Ethiopia, the number of returnees is also high. The movement from Ethiopia to the Gulf countries is largely irregular (only about 30% travel through regular channels), so Ethiopian migrants often face great dangers and are exposed to a wide range of risks during these migratory journeys.

The European Union (EU) and Italian Cooperation consider Ethiopia a priority partner. In 2015, the EU launched the Valletta Action Plan on Migration and Development and set out the conditions for establishment of the Trust Fund on Irregular Migration, based on partnership with countries of origin and transit and the need to address irregular migration's root causes.

In this context, Italian cooperation has defined combating migration as a priority for action. The Italian government cooperates with the EU to improve policies contributing to African development and the management of migration flows. In 2016, the Italian government prepared the 'Migration Compact' proposal. The European Commission (EC) translated this into the "new partnership framework" and creation of the Plan for external investments.

In Ethiopia, these cooperation policies created the first pilot programme "Emergency initiative in favour of vulnerable populations, refugees, displaced persons and migrants to counter the causes of irregular migration" (AID 10677) with a total financial allocation of 2,000,000 euro. It was implemented by 5 consortia of Italian and Ethiopian NGOs in 3 key migration regions. This programme is the subject of this evaluation.

Finally, this first experience in combating migration was followed by numerous similar initiatives promoted by AICS, both with national funding (Development Cooperation and Ministry of the Interior) and EU funding (Stemming Irregular Migration In Northern & Central Ethiopia – SINCE).

2 Programme description and intervention logic

The “Emergency Initiative in favour of vulnerable populations, refugees, displaced persons and migrants to counter the causes of irregular migration” was designed to address the root causes of irregular migration by improving living conditions of the population in areas with high migration potential, returning migrants and host communities to counter irregular migration (General Objective). This was implemented through actions aimed at local development and creation of employment and access to basic services associated with a massive awareness campaign on the risks of irregular migration (Specific Objective).

The Programme was implemented in 16 Woredas of 3 Regions (see Figure 1) of the Country: Amhara (Northern Shewa and South Wollo), Oromia (West Hararghe and Bale), and Tigray (Eastern Tigray), and within it, 8 Italian NGOs implemented 5 projects in partnership with local institutions, NGOs and local communities.

During its 12-month duration (2016 – 2017), the Programme benefited mainly women (50%), young people between ages 18 and 35 (70%), returnees (30%) and potential migrants for a total of 80,072 direct beneficiaries and 580,000 indirect beneficiaries.

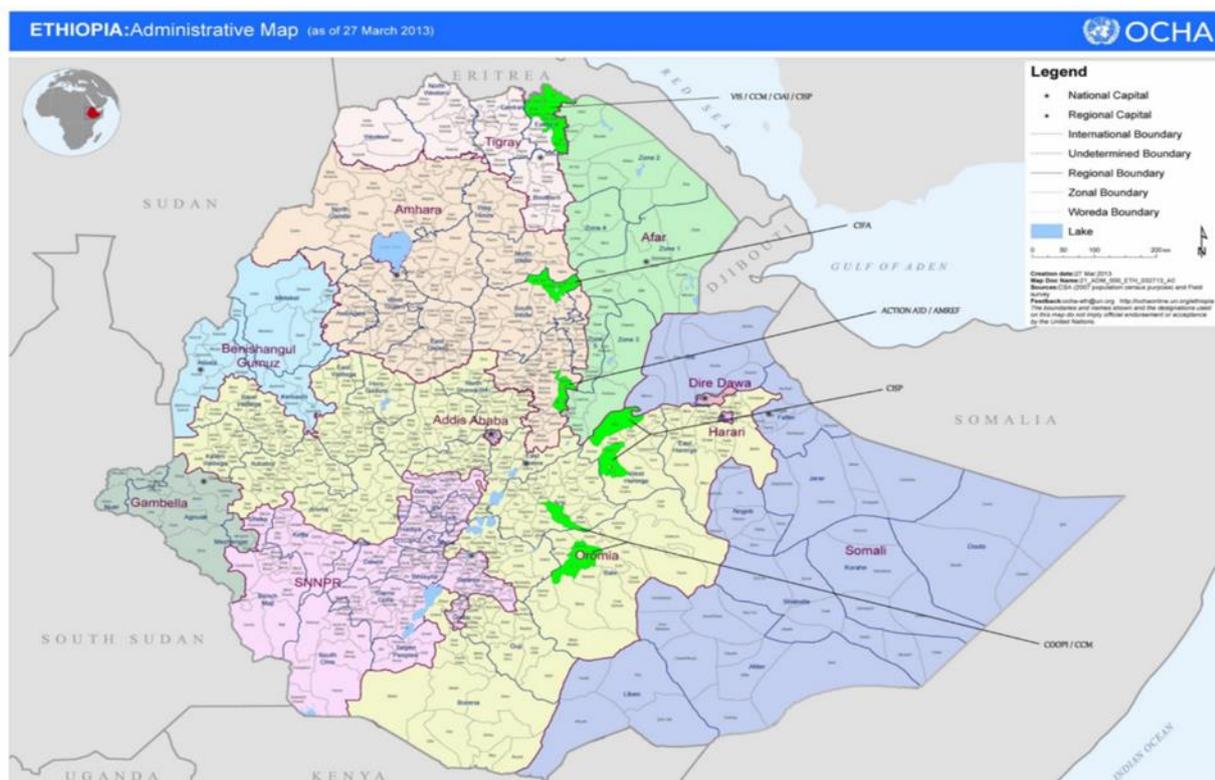
The beneficiaries the Programme reached are mainly women; young people between the ages of 18 and 25; returnees (mainly women); and potential young migrants. Women and young people, normally returnees and potential migrants, were involved mainly through training and support aimed at job creation (Income Generating Activities - IGAs). Minors were involved through awareness-raising activities in schools and basic health at Health Centers and Youth Friendly Centers (YFCs). When interventions were implemented with local authorities and decentralised institutions, these are also identified as beneficiaries and actors to be strengthened for improved access to and dissemination of basic services and implementation of development policies.

The programme was funded under AICS’ emergency provision. Nonetheless, in the national context and within Italian Cooperation, this programme has a clear and innovative strategic development with a manifestly pilot nature, potentially able to drive future actions for combating irregular migration.

3 Objectives, methodology and development of the evaluation process

The evaluation’s main objective is to contribute to strengthening the programming and design of future initiatives in migration and related phenomena. The evaluation helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of this first pilot initiative financed with emergency provisions.

Figure 1 - Programme intervention areas



The **evaluation criteria** mainly follow those indicated by OECD-DAC through the following aspects: a) relevance and consistency; that is, to what extent the initiative's objective and design respond to the needs, policies and priorities of the country's beneficiaries, b) effectiveness of the initiatives, efficiency in the use of resources available and sustainability of benefits achieved; c) impact of the initiative and changes it has contributed to actually or potentially achieving, directly or indirectly; d) any positive or negative synergistic effects originating as a result of the collaboration among the various projects that participated in the programme;

The **approach** was conceived with qualitative criteria; that is, based on the analysis of effective and sustainable and replicable good practices as well as any lessons learned to improve the quality of the design and future programming, assuming that it is not possible to analyse a development action's impact without carefully verifying the main results' effectiveness and sustainability. For this reason, the criterion of beneficiaries' increased knowledge was privileged to manage income-generating activities (IGAs) and the infrastructures of the services promoted at all levels, and to promote awareness of the risks of irregular migration.

The tools developed are based on a qualitative approach: i) semi-structured interviews, ii) Focus Group Discussion – FGD, and iii) analysis of case studies that can capture the beneficiaries' experiences. The assessment tools were designed by beneficiary type, including individual and cooperative producers, credit and service cooperatives (SACCOs), individual and collective IGAs, trained public officials, families benefiting from initiatives with better access to water for domestic and productive use and nutritional education, students and adolescents benefiting from awareness-raising initiatives and access to specific health

services, and communities made aware of migration risks. Regarding children and adolescents, specific questions were prepared and adapted for each project (all tools are attached to the evaluation report).

The **evaluation process** began in February 2021 with preparation and delivery of the Inception Report (16 March 2021), which detailed the phases of the Evaluation Process, Work Plan, Evaluation Questions and the Criteria and Indicators to be used to answer the evaluation questions for the field mission in April that year. However, given the reports the Crisis Unit of MAECI (the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation) and the Embassy of Italy in Addis Ababa provided on the worsening of the security situation and COVID 19 by 31 March 2021, a first suspension of the assessment was ordered until 30 June 2021, and a later suspension until 15 September.

On 14 October 2021, after a series of checks, and note of the (at least partial) overcoming of the critical issues, the MAECI-DGCS ordered the resumption of activities. A new Inception Report was then prepared and delivered to MAECI in October 2021, in which the remote execution mode is approved. The evaluation team located in the capital would contact the stakeholders thanks to the support of international and local implementing NGOs. Thus, during the preparatory phase of the mission to Ethiopia, scheduled for November 2021, the stakeholders were precisely identified thanks to the implementing NGOs' support.

Finally, following a serious resurgence of the armed conflict in November 2021 and the critical issues related to the COVID 19 pandemic, the assessment process was extended until the end of February 2022, and the assessment was set to conclusion by limiting the scope of investigation on a documentary basis and on the information collected so far during the Inception Reports' preparatory phase. The criteria and principles on which the evaluation was based remain the same as described in the methodological section.

4 Evaluation Results

- **Design Relevance and Quality**

The project is of great importance; it has managed to focus a consistent intervention strategy on the local reality and the needs of the population groups identified as final beneficiaries.

In addition, all of this strategy's main components were planned and designed in line with national development policies and the involvement of local institutions responsible for their implementation to create the best possible conditions for investment sustainability.

Local public institutions, beneficiary organisations and reference communities were then involved in numerous capacity development programmes aimed at improving their action's effectiveness in the field.

The choice of beneficiaries and needs' categories was generally informed by the initial analysis operations on the territory conducted by the 5 consortia in cooperation with the development institutions and based on their cooperation experience at the local level. The identification actions therefore led to a focus on the real problems, needs and priorities of the intended target groups, especially potential migrants and returnees, including young people and returnees, mainly women.

The beneficiaries' identification and selection was conducted in cooperation with the local institutions responsible for economic and social development. The Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs Office (selection of women returnees) played a key role.

The choice of intervention areas is therefore consistent with national migration statistics. The 5 intervention areas of the projects approved under the programme are all characterised by the high migration rate and the high percentage of returning female migration (see Figure 2).

The intervention strategy is based on the intervention criteria improving the structural aspects considered the main causes that determine migration ("root causes" approach) and was articulated, as envisaged by the approved projects, in the components of 1) promotion to young people and women of agricultural and non-agricultural income-generating activities (IGAs) and employment opportunities, 2) improvement of access to nutrition, water and hygiene, health and education of rural communities' basic services 3) communities' increased awareness about the risks related to irregular migration and trafficking in people, with children as the main target.

This consistent approach to needs includes several initiatives that integrate and contribute to a response to the target groups' multidimensional problems. This view agrees with the reports of the external monitoring actions conducted by AICS that confirm the good relevance especially regarding income-generating activities (IGAs), always mentioned as true opportunities and alternatives to irregular migration.

We also believe that the three components were designed with due regard to the 'state of the art' and quality standards of the initiatives complemented by systematic training of local technical services personnel (also through local technical services with special Training of Trainers methods) and of the beneficiaries.

The economic component focused on capacity building for IGAs, agricultural (primary production) and especially non-agricultural activities. In addition to the classic training activities, actions were planned to create solid relationships between women entrepreneurs (the majority of IGAs are led by women) and local savings and credit cooperatives – SACCOs (in 3 cases created by the projects).

From the documents of the funded research (and conducted by the local universities) and technical evaluation report (CIFA), the financial allocation to the IGAs (of the project and SACCOs) is considered largely insufficient. This puts in the foreground the long-standing problem of IGAs' impact and sustainability without an adequate credit flow during, and especially after, the project activities' conclusion.

To compensate for this lack of credit, the recommendations of the aforementioned research studies mainly concern good use of family remittances resulting from the migration of some members. These remittances would be actually used mainly for household consumption and much less for productive investments and savings.

The access to basic services component was interpreted very differently according to the needs identified in the various intervention areas. It mainly focused on access to water and hygiene and nutrition education (Northern Shewa), support for the national policy of the Youth Friendly Centers (YFC) of the Ministry of Health (Tigray and Bale) and support for schools (West Hararghe and South Wollo).

The irregular migration awareness component was conceived through the involvement of local public services (Labour and Social Affairs), communities, schools and youth organisations (clubs) also using innovative theatrical and recreational activities.

As already mentioned, this component was enriched by a series of research studies on migration in the areas of implementation and assigned to local universities.

The transfer of knowledge to beneficiaries at all levels has certainly been the most articulated and relevant cross-cutting component. The programme has duly provided numerous and relevant “capacity development” activities (also in “Training of Trainers” mode) for the staff of local technical services to improve the local implementation of national policies including programme intervention components. The offices involved deal with employment creation and promotion of cooperatives, management of migration, and gender, health (YFC and food security) and education policies.

IGA creation was accompanied by solid training of returnees, an aspect considered crucial in view of the rural population’s well-known difficulties in engaging in non-agricultural activities in which they have very limited experience.

The same applies to the creation or consolidation of primary or SACCO-type cooperative organisations having the function of providing production services that public institutions do not provide (by mandate or capacity).

- **Consistency**

The programme was conceived with a good level of consistency with local reality and needs with the country’s development policies and the project’s original assumptions are still valid.

The intervention logic components are well integrated in the legal and political framework prevailing in Ethiopia, such as the anti-trafficking law on irregular immigration, the second Growth and Transformation Plan, National Policy on Women, and Youth Policies.

AICS monitoring reports confirm good coordination with other stakeholders at all levels. At the national level, the initiative was presented to other donors through participation in thematic and sectoral Coordination Tables and Clusters, including mainly the *EU + Migration Task Force*, and the *Ethiopian Humanitarian and Resilience Donor Group* (EHRDG). In these forums, a comparison was initiated among similar initiatives to avoid overlaps.

- **Efficiency**

The programme implementation’s overall efficiency was good. The available documentary evidence shows that most of the means/inputs needed to implement the project (financial, human and physical resources) were provided in a timely manner and of satisfactory quality, and the activities foreseen by the university research on irregular immigration were conducted according to the agreed schedule.

No external events have occurred that required a redefinition of the implementation strategy. NGOs were able to cope with initial delays due to known logistical difficulties (mainly security) and conclude all the activities on time, also thanks to their multi-year roots in the territory and close professional relationships with the institutional counterparts and stakeholders involved in the initiative. In general, there is a good level of compliance with local partner agreements, which have not undergone significant changes.

The AICS monitoring reports and this evaluation exercise considered the implementing NGOs’ capacity more than satisfactory. NGOs have shown considerable experience in the

initiatives' area of interest, as well as in the technical intervention areas, also using other organisations with proven professionalism such as WISE, ISFO, and theatre groups (Stradevarie, Oda Bultum Band, and Community Social Theatre).

Good performance in terms of planned achievement of results is further confirmed by the cumulative financial reports indicating 97% of resources spent, the remaining consist of 0.7% of ineligible costs and 2.3% of unspent grants.

The implementation mechanisms were designed based on consortia of NGOs specialising in specific areas which, as necessary, involve highly professional collaborations with local organisations in a context of solid integration with the institutions responsible for implementing national development policies and programmes. Among these is an interesting cooperation established with the training institutes, the "Technical and Vocational Education Training Center (TVET). "

The initiative has benefited from the added value of consortium work as the components achieved by each NGO were identified based on the capacities and level of thematic specialisation of each participant in the consortia and developed, generally, in an integrated manner. This consortium aspect was appreciated and duplicated by following development programmes on migration (see chapters Impact and Lessons Learned).

- **Effectiveness**

The overall effectiveness was satisfactory. For each intervention strategy component, the initiative's results can be summarised as follows:

Economic Component. Income Generating Activities (IGAs): 1,555 people were trained in topics related to the conduct of economic activities; of these, 640 women were trained and receives capital for the development of individual IGAs, 18 collectives (233 members), 23 credit and savings cooperatives (SACCOs) were started / strengthened and equipped with credit funds.

In the agricultural sector, 12 new primary agricultural cooperatives were formed (240 farmers) and 5 water schemes were created; 2,000 people affected by the drought have obtained nutritional support and 2,634 farmers were provided with agricultural assets and training, 478 being trained in IGAs in agriculture and livestock.

Access to Basic Services Component. 34 wells/water collectors/tanks/reservoirs and 40 water points were built (and water management committees - WASH-CO - were created), 31,238 people and 480 heads of household were sensitised on sanitary hygiene, 24,000 people used chlorine tablets to purify water, 6 "Youth Friendly Service" (YFC) were opened, equipped and provided with medicines and consumables, and 96 health professionals were trained and updated on issues related to reproductive health and psychosocial support.

Awareness on Irregular Migration. 2 theatre communication tools (specific replicable programming), 5 video products, and a new duplicable tool (the GAME) were conceived. Awareness-raising activities involved 120 community representatives (theatre workshops), 12 training workshops for reading, theatre, dance, and drawing for young people were conducted, 18,500 students in schools were made aware of irregular migration (3 theatre shows were created / 32 replicas made, engagement in "The path of life" GAME), 12 Migration Expert Committees were trained, 48 anti-trafficking committees were created and

7 workshops were conducted with community leaders on issues related to irregular migration (about 21,500 participants)

Research on Migration: 7 university research studies were conducted and disseminated and 120 stakeholders participated in the Reflection Forums.

The beneficiaries reached by the Programme mainly belong to the following population groups: **women, young people between ages 18 and 25, returnees, and potential migrants.** Based on the data provided by the implementing NGOs (final technical reports), the composition of the percentage by type has followed what was initially envisaged: 50% women, 70% young and 30% returnees. Women and young people, normally returnees and potential migrants, were involved mainly through training and support aimed at creating jobs and income. Children were involved through educational activities in schools, awareness-raising and health at the Health Centres (Youth Friendly Service).

In the period covered by the initiative, 85,739 direct beneficiaries were reached (+ 7% of the initially planned total), and 579,442 indirect beneficiaries.

An objective analysis of the current effectiveness of the individual development actions and practices is not possible in the absence of field survey data. As mentioned above, this operation was made impossible by the safety conditions of the areas covered by the programme. Therefore, the following analysis is based only on information drawn from the project documentation and related monitoring and evaluation reports external to the projects.

Regarding the **development of IGAs**, the most important aspect of the economic component, it is crucial to consider that in all cases, the beneficiaries considered most suitable were selected in advance and the actions were designed with approaches in line with the good practices recognised and specific to the scope of intervention and implemented by organisations with good experience and knowledge of the territory.

The consortia reports mention an increase in IGA companies' income already at the end of the implementation period (South Wollo CIFA). During the field preparation phase, it was possible to verify that representatives of all categories of beneficiaries were identifiable and, in the absence of barriers due to security, perfectly attainable, which means that after 5 years, some companies formed by the projects were still active.

Regarding possible weaknesses, the documents of the funded research and technical evaluation report (CIFA) indicate that the financial allocation to IGAs (of the project and SACCOs) is considered largely insufficient. This highlights the long-standing problem of IGAs' impact and sustainability without an adequate credit flow during and especially after the project activities' conclusion.

In all likelihood, another critical point could be the need to ensure adequate follow-up of IGA-type enterprises created through project actions. A virtuous practice of CIFA (South Wollo) is noteworthy; it contracted a local specialised NGO (IFSO) to follow up with the trained IGAs.

Also, in both individual and collective small business development, 3 projects have identified as crucial the issue of credit as a permanent and vital need for promoted companies' sustainability. To this end, **existing credit and savings cooperatives (SACCOs) were created and identified**, appropriately established and received capital. In parallel, initiatives were promoted to help IGA women entrepreneurs become literate on credit and to bring

them closer to the market to verify access to credit. These initiatives have achieved very encouraging results.

However, SACCOs are facing a serious shortage of capital to provide loans to their members, or an inadequate amount of what is necessary. This constitutes a serious limit that affects the initiative's effectiveness.

A further aspect related to IGA business development strategy is having established an interesting **cooperation with the training institutes, the Technical and Vocational Education Training Centers (TVET).**

In agriculture, some important structuring factors were the creation of 12 agricultural cooperatives and 5 irrigation schemes. During the field agenda preparation phase, it was possible to verify that some irrigation schemes and cooperatives established were still operational.

The access to basic services component was interpreted very differently according to the needs identified in the different intervention areas.

In Northern Shewa (ACTION AID), it focused mainly **on access to water and hygiene and nutrition education** (UNICEF approach to food security).

The first component was achieved through the creation of water collection and distribution schemes for domestic use with the relative management committee (WASH-CO), some still existing.

The second component addressed the **promotion of better hygiene conditions and nutritional practices.**

The application of such an approach is generally accepted as effective in improving the nutritional status of children under age 5 and nursing mothers or pregnant women.

In the Tigray and Bale areas, priority was given to **improving access to Youth Friendly Centers' (YFC) services**, as a contribution to the Ethiopian Ministry of Health policy. As of the date of this report, Bale's YFC is still in operation.

The irregular migration awareness component was designed through the involvement of local public services (Labour and Social Affairs), communities, schools and youth organisations (clubs) also using theatrical and play activities (for example, see "The Game").

Two theatre communication tools were designed and implemented (programming of specific and duplicable shows on the theme of migration), 5 videos and the GAME, a new tool easily duplicable even by non-communications professionals.

These communication tools received such a high level of acceptance and appreciation that they were massively duplicated in later cooperation programmes, a fairly strong indicator of their effectiveness.

Awareness-raising activities were also conducted in **communities in cooperation with public institutions.** The programme provided for training to strengthen government services responsible for managing migration policies and combating trafficking, and involvement of community leaders and representatives of anti-trafficking committees. These were then reached by a massive awareness initiative that involved about 29,000 people.

Finally, **the 7 university research studies on the situation and causes of the local migratory phenomenon are among** the strengths of the initiative under scrutiny. **The result also materialised in the production of a unique academic research document** presented at national level and shared with other international stakeholders during a workshop held at the end of the programme, and the production of Guidelines useful to guiding the preparation and management of future initiatives on migration issues.

- **Sustainability**

The overall sustainability is satisfactory. Based on the final reports, the five project initiatives provided for the creation of “capacity building” (training) of all the actors involved at various levels. These training activities were designed to transfer the necessary knowledge to stakeholders so that they can continue the initiatives promoted after the end of the programme’s implementation period.

We consider that the stakeholders and local government authorities’ level of involvement and participation was very satisfactory as required by local law, especially health offices, job creation, Social and Labour Affairs, cooperative promotion, water resources offices, youth offices and district sports. Sustainability lies above all in local authorities’ role after the programme implementation phase, the IGAs, the SACCOs, WASH-CO management committees, YFCs of the Ministry of Health and the awareness-raising activities in schools being the most impactful achievements that could benefit most from the support of local technical services.

In the case of the YFCs, services are among the priorities of the regional and district federal health authorities; this could be an excellent driver to ensure the ownership and continuation of services to young people.

In the case of IGAs, the skills and capital acquired are likely to continue to contribute to the improvement of households’ economic conditions; however, strict technical follow-up of local authorities and access to increased credit opportunities are needed.

Similarly, strengthening the existing SACCO system can make an essential contribution to the sustainability of IGAs, provided that the SACCO is ensured the necessary follow-up and support to technical, managerial and additional financial resources.

Unfortunately, follow-up mechanisms are not systematically adopted in the following projects (often in the same areas but with different beneficiaries) which leads to a **reflection on the limits of the “project” instrument with an integrated approach** (multi-component). This is characterised by a precise geographical focus, limited resources assigned to the different components’ numerous activities, and insufficient implementation times for medium-term processes.

In addition, only two actions subsequent to the programme under examination provide for precise measures to increase credit flow to the IGAs.

The **continuation of awareness-raising initiatives in schools** through the innovative communication methods the programme introduced is extremely important for the overall programme sustainability, as it targets children and adolescents at very high risk of migration both for economic conditions and family pressure, and for the dominant narrative that considers irregular migration as an unavoidable or even desirable choice to achieve the expectations of economic and personal growth.

- **Impact**

The programme under evaluation assumes that irregular immigration is caused by an insufficient quality of life that does not allow households' continuity and dignified survival, and that it is not able to meet the new generations' expectations. Therefore, the programme's methodological approach was based on the General Objective (GO) of improving the living conditions of the population in areas at high risk of migration, returning migrants and rural communities. Ultimately, it is an initiative based on medium and long-term economic and social development logics.

Nonetheless, numerous analyses point out that better development levels do not stop migratory flows; on the contrary, they can further feed them, as they increase the resources that families can use to support the migration process (see also the summary document of the research funded by the programme).

Only in the long term could the reduction of development differentials between the territories of origin and destination reduce the need to migrate. The approach focused on structural causes ("root causes") makes sense in this development perspective, but not for immediate reduction and control of migration.

Therefore, this impact analysis considers the potential contribution to the development of the actions conducted. This is also evaluated in light of possible contributions by the pilot programme finalised 5 years ago to designing cooperation strategies and identifying new projects to combat irregular migration through duplication (scaling-up) of virtuous practices (Good Practices) or integration, in the design of new project initiatives, of some of the Lessons Learned during and thanks to the programme implementation being evaluated.

The programme's contribution to the overall AICS intervention strategy can be identified with an enrichment of the "root cause" approach through support actions for the socio-economic integration of returnees and protection of vulnerable groups. Based on the 5 funded research and evaluations conducted on the projects, there is a clear need to support returnees' (mostly women) economic integration and social reintegration (often returnees encounter serious difficulties in reintegration into their communities of origin) and psychological reintegration, especially in the event of violence or abuse suffered during migration.

This approach was adopted by subsequent programmes financed under AICS and the Ministry of Interiors initiatives.

The pilot programme's contribution to multiplying high-impact practices. All the documentary sources analysed clearly underline that the types of intervention and good practices with greater impact perspectives and massively duplicated by subsequent programs are **Income Generating Activities** as true economic alternatives to migration, support to **Youth Friendly Centers** that actually provided important health services favouring young people's social gathering, and the awareness activity implemented through innovative communication approaches of TSC operators ("**The path of life**" **GAME**) and other companies (Stradevarie, Oda Bultum Band, Il Teatro dell'Oppresso, Fekat Circus). This had a strong impact on the beneficiaries, students in the community schools and local authorities, initially all very sceptical and reluctant to act, not knowing and fully understanding the methodology. The simplicity and straightforwardness that characterise the instrument of the game, which does not require special expressive or communication

skills by those who stage it, are the main factors of its massive adoption in all the AICS-funded programmes and projects, which confirms its great communicative effectiveness.

Regarding **support for credit and savings cooperatives** (SACCOs), this is considered an essential practice as it is functional to the growth of IGAs. We found that almost all of the following programmes have continued with the programme approach through support to SACCOs in terms of training and inclusion of the beneficiaries (IGAs) in their organisation.

Nevertheless, some important aspects related to the consolidation of IGAs and SACCOs remain unsatisfactory. For SACCOs, which basically results in an insufficient availability of credit and financial products adapted to the needs of IGAs, and, for both actors, in the need for training and updating for innovation.

Establishing **cooperation with the Technical and Vocational Education Training Centers** contributed significantly to the development of economic alternatives for potential migrants and was adopted by virtually all programmes (SINCE included) to implement vocational training courses for potential migrants adapted to private sector needs or creation of IGAs.

The contribution of the practice of setting up the **platform for the coordination and definition of local public services** regarding migration (employment, awareness-raising and support for returnees) is also considered crucial for the design and action strategy of subsequent programmes to combat migration. This virtuous practice was then systematically duplicated (and supplemented by training programmes targeting public officials) by all projects funded under the sector programmes, and for all components (economic, services and awareness) also to provide counselling and orientation services to the labour market (see SINCE).

The encouraging results of the **support to the Youth Friendly Centers** have led to its duplication in other programmes to combat migration with the undoubted advantage of its high sustainability, since the centres are a priority component of Ministry of Health policy.

In conclusion, some of the aforementioned elements have contributed to **the design of the “Stemming Irregular Migration In Northern & Central Ethiopia” - SINCE programme.**¹ Some of these are adoption of the consortium approach between international and local NGOs with strong local roots and marked thematic specialisation, strengthening of microfinance institutions, and links between training institutions and the private sector to provide training adequate to the labour market’s needs.

- **Gender Equality and Minors Cross-cutting Issues**

Women’s participation in project activities is the most important cross-cutting aspect in protection of the groups at highest risk of migration, focusing on possible alternatives, such as micro-entrepreneurial activities to improve mainly the beneficiaries’ economic conditions.

Regarding **minors**, the projects have focused heavily on the support and awareness component aimed at underage students. Specifically, children were involved in awareness-raising activities through “THE GAME” and theatre activities inside and outside schools. High

¹ 19,845,000-euro programme funded by the EU through the Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing The Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa and implemented through the indirect management mechanism entrusted to Italian Cooperation through the Delegation Agreement.

participation and interest have also been observed among beneficiaries linked to great interest in the services offered by YFCs.

5 Conclusions

- **Design Relevance and Quality**

The evaluation results confirm that the programme is relevant as it directly addresses the beneficiaries' needs, especially potential young migrants and returnees (mostly women).

The intervention logic, focused on the development of economic opportunities as alternatives to migration, access to basic services and young people's and communities' awareness on the risks of irregular migration, was and remains relevant.

Based on the experience of working with returnees from this first pilot programme, the need emerged to support integration processes that beyond addressing the economic component, and deal with social aspects, also considering psychosocial assistance in cases when returnees have suffered trauma and abuse during the migration process.

Without prejudice to the choice of intervention areas, all being characterised by high rates of migration and returning women, the programme, within the needs analysis, has integrated some elements deriving from the humanitarian crisis in progress in 2016. This led to significant losses of agricultural production and put pastoral systems in crisis. The programme's contribution was concentrated mainly in the Northern Shewa area (implemented by the ACTION AID / AMREF /PADet consortium) where substantial resources are dedicated to the construction/rehabilitation of production water schemes and water points, complemented by awareness campaigns on hygiene education, disease prevention and nutrition targeting about 31,000 people in support of primary agricultural production. The initiative design in Northern Shewa is fully relevant and consistent with UNICEF guidance on integrated food security practices.

- **Consistency**

The project is aligned with the country's development policies (the Second Growth and Transformation Plan - GTP II), youth and women's policies, a law against trafficking and irregular immigration and sectoral development strategies, such as creating jobs and developing micro-enterprises and cooperatives.

- **Efficiency**

The efficiency was good. The implementing bodies showed excellent ability in implementation of the activities and in their ability to involve all stakeholders. An interesting cooperation established with the Technical and Vocational Education Training Centers stands out among these.

The initiative has benefited from the added value of consortium work among international and local NGOs.

- **Effectiveness**

The effectiveness was satisfactory. The development of micro-enterprises (IGAs) and the strengthening of credit and savings cooperatives (SACCOs) are at the heart of the

programme's economic component, along with vocational training to access a labour market offered by a dynamic private sector.

Concerning the basic services, access to water for domestic use accompanied by information on hygiene and nutrition practices and the strengthening of the Youth Friendly Centers network are the most successful interventions.

The awareness component of the programme has seen the production of effective participatory communication tools such as THE GAME and theatre shows, built in collaboration with professional and specialised organisations, which have then been duplicated and disseminated in other programmes to combat irregular migration.

- **Sustainability**

Sustainability is the most problematic criterion. The financial and credit grants allocated to the development of IGAs and SACCOs is considered insufficient. This calls into question the IGA and cooperatives' sustainability after completion of the project activities. The strengthening of SACCOs and IGAs is also a medium-term process that needs continuity, which, it seems, the local technical services are not always able to ensure.

Regarding other components, the programme sought to create virtuous processes within true institutional sustainability. The action addressing Youth Friendly Centers is a contribution to national policy that continues to be supported and promoted in terms of resources.

The strategy of promoting the creation of platforms for interinstitutional consultation and cooperation with training institutes (TVET), practices that have then been widely duplicated, presents fewer sustainability issues, as they are based on the mobilisation of the public administration's existing human resources.

Finally, awareness-raising in schools through effective and reproducible participatory communication tools (GAMES and theatre shows) can also, in this case, use available and trained human resources. Unfortunately, although other projects in other areas duplicated these awareness-raising practices, it was not possible to verify whether these initiatives were then continued by the same schools after the programme ends.

- **Impact**

The analysis of the pilot programme's overall impact, which, is characterised by its pilot nature in the fight against migration, focused on the real impact of good practice and lessons learned during its implementation, to improve cooperation strategies and the design of subsequent programmes about migration.

In the economic sector, the main impacts are due to the systematic duplication of Best Practices such as the promotion of IGAs, the promotion of the practice of savings among beneficiaries, and the strengthening of SACCOs to improve financial products and increase the flow of resources via credit and savings to the rural economy.

Regarding access to basic services, rural communities' drinking water availability has increased, with significant repercussions on improving the most vulnerable families' nutritional status and strengthening of Youth Friendly Centers' services in favour of adolescents.

The impact of awareness campaigns in schools and communities has been significant thanks to the use of innovative communication strategies developed by the programme and systematically duplicated in subsequent programmes. Similarly, the creation of interinstitutional platforms on migration has certainly contributed to increasing the coverage and dissemination of messages related to the risks of irregular migration.

In conclusion, implementation of the programme under evaluation allowed greater knowledge of the migration sector and, consequently, of returning women's needs. This has contributed to the improvement of Italian Cooperation's intervention strategy by integrating the migrant social integration and protection components.

Similarly, the programme's lessons learned and good practices contributed to defining the intervention strategy of SINCE, an important European Union Trust Fund initiative.

6 Lessons learned

Major lessons learned include the following:

- Development of IGA micro-enterprises and SACCO cooperatives requires considerably more time than the project duration, especially in terms of continuous training and adaptation of financial products to the needs of new IGAs;
- Efforts towards the growth of IGAs focused on the promotion of savings, and on the integration, as members, of SACCO cooperatives without, however, providing for an adequate increase in their capital. trying to broaden the social base of cooperatives without a corresponding increase in credit resources constitutes a strong limit in terms of sustainability and, therefore, impact;
- The consortium approach with Italian and local NGOs with strong thematic and geographical specialisation contributes to design and implement quality projects;
- The "integrated project" approach is confirmed as a valid cooperation instrument migration control as it addresses a complex problem through multisectoral initiatives but has highlighted its limits when the initiatives promoted require interventions of greater duration and specialisation (see development of IGAs and SACCOs);
- Cooperation between technical vocational institutes (TVET) promoted by the programme proved to be essential for potential young migrants' vocational training.
- The promotion of interinstitutional coordination platforms accompanied by technical training of officials proved to be a practice that has allowed multi-sectoral dialogue and integration in favour of target groups;
- Awareness-raising in schools and communities on the risks related to irregular migration through effective, sustainable communication tools (all implementable with local human resources), and highly appreciated by students and communities has significant impact potential.
- The recommendation of the five research projects on migration identifying the "care drain" aspect as relevant is interesting and should be studied to possibly design specific initiatives.

- The observations of the research concerning better use of family remittances are interesting. These remittances would be used mainly for household consumption and much less for productive investments and savings.

7 Recommendations

- 1) Maintain the consortium and multisectoral approach appropriately integrated with psychological support, protection and social integration for migrant women.
- 2) Identify specific programmes to respond to medium and long-term development needs of actions promoted in the economic component such as vocational training of young people and liaison with the private sector and strengthening SACCOs and IGAs' capacities.
- 3) In the case of vocational training and IGAs of migrants and returnees, carefully evaluate and, as appropriate, improve cooperation with technical vocational institutes (TVET).
- 4) Regarding capitalisation of SACCOs, even if there is room for improvement thanks to additional external support in terms of training, provide for capitalisation mechanisms on an objective basis of credit activity performance to be able to provide adequate loans to members and allow the consolidation and growth of IGAs.
- 5) Strengthen existing links and explore the possibility of linking awareness-raising activities with all relevant local government structures, especially primary and secondary schools, including through the use of the tools developed by the programme.
- 6) Systematise and evaluate in terms of effectiveness, sustainability and impact, and through mainly quantitative and statistically significant methods, information relevant to the improvement of policies and initiative for cooperation and to combat migration. Many good practices were identified by the programme and subsequently duplicated by other cooperation programmes. For example, among the most relevant are the promotion of IGAs, strengthening of SACCOs, support to Youth Friendly Centers, access to drinking water, and awareness in schools.