



ALGP: Amhara Local Governance Program working to make citizens agents of their own development.

Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with more than 80% of the population residing in rural areas which lacks basic service provision. In Amhara region, as is the case all over Ethiopia, local communities' direct involvement in the budgetary and development planning processes is limited to non-existent making inclusiveness of the limited available services questionable.

QUICK FACTS	
Location	Amhara region
Duration	1 st October 2022 to 31 st December 2025
Budget	€2,672,908
Implementing partners	Amhara Development Association (ADA), Megbare Senay Children & Family support Organization (MSCFSO), Wag Development Association (WDA), Amhara Women Association (AWA), Women Empowerment Action (WE-Action), and Bahr Dar University (BDU)
Funder	HELVETAS and Austria Development Agency
Beneficiaries	48,351 individuals (24,175 female)
Contact	yordanos.zelalem@helvetas.org

A principal element of Ethiopia's vision of attaining middle-income country status by 2025 is a significant improvement in the provision of basic services. And as response the Ethiopian government has emphasized the need for direct engagement of citizens in local development to improve service delivery. In the federated administrative structure of Ethiopia, this gap between the executive planning and the community needs is meant to be filled by locally elected direct representatives, council members, from the Kebele to the Regional levels. However, communities remain passive recipients of government and donor sponsored inputs and services. There is insufficient institutional capacity to reach and engage communities into planning and budgeting at the local level. Additionally, gender determines access to basic services, with women still having limited participation role in decision-making processes.

However, Wereda and Kebele councils are made up of elected representatives and have remained passive and unable to exercise their power and responsibilities. Elected councillors are not fully aware of their mandated power or responsibility and therefore, do not feel empowered to demand that the executive respond to the communities' priorities as well as to legislate and provide oversight on local government budgets and community contributions are spent in a transparent and accountable manner.

The aim of HELVETAS's Amhara Local Governance Program (ALGP) is to ensure communities benefit from improved basic services that are planned and budgeted for in a participatory manner and are delivered in a way that is accountable to the community. The project focuses on strengthening the capacities of the elected representatives to ensure that communities have their say in what goes on in their area, are able to take control of what is prioritized in development programs; while ensuring the governance mechanisms required to effectively deliver inclusive and better-quality local services are in place. By strengthening the capacities of the elected representatives, the project aims to bring about governance mechanisms required to effectively deliver inclusive and better-quality local services and ensure communities have their say in what goes on in their area.

To achieve this, HELVETAS in collaboration with local CSOs focusses on:

- 1) Political accountability: support dialogues between elected representatives and citizens so that community representatives closely engage with their constituency, and
- 2) Administrative accountability: strengthen the legislative and oversight capacity of the council, so that they can demand more responsive service delivery for the community they represent.

in East Gojjam, West Gojjam, South Wollo, Central Gondar, Wag Hemra and South Gondar Zones, HELVETAS with local CSOs have formed a strategic partnership bringing together complementary competencies to address the complex governance issues in the respective zones. The project accordingly focuses on the demand- and supply-side of local level service provision as well as the long-term sustainability and replication beyond its duration and target area to complement government's efforts.

"Before the training, I was passive. Now however, I am an active participant, I speak courageously on whatever I think is relevant for women and the community at large" Melkam Aemiro, 31 years old, Wereda Council member.

Ensure through oversight and regulation that citizens' feedback and interests are mobilized and accommodated.

