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## Executive Summary

The Strengthen PSNP4 Institutional and Resilience [SPIR] program implemented by World Vision and its partners (CARE and ORDA) aims to enhance livelihoods, increase resilience against shocks, and improve food security and nutrition for rural households that are vulnerable to food insecurity in Ethiopia, particularly in Wadla, Sekota, Lasta, Gazo, Gaz Gibla, Dahena, Bugna, Meket, and Tsagelji woredas of Amhara region, Kurfa Chelle, Girawa, Chiro, Gemachis, Daro Lebu, and Siraro woredas of Oromia and Wondo Genet and Malga woredas of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples region. The social unrest in the project's implementation area, especially in Kurfa Chelle, Girawa, Chiro, Gemechis, Siraro, and Daro Lebu woredas, has affected the timely implementation of the project's activities, causing a loss of 1,761 days in the timeline. In addition, communication has also been challenged by the government's shutdown of the internet. Despite extra efforts, including working on weekends and extra hours, this loss has affected achievement of both the target goals and related resource utilization during this reporting period.

## Interventions and Results

**Purpose 1: Increased income, productive assets, and equitable access to nutritious food for vulnerable women, men, and youth**

**Subpurpose 1.1: Increased agricultural productivity of nutritious foods for women, men, and youth small-holder farmers**

*Intermediate Outcome 1.1.1: Increased livestock productivity and diversity*

The production of adequate quantities of good quality, dry season forage that can supplement crop residues and pasture roughages is considered essential in overcoming dry season constraints that affect livestock production. Moreover, the integration of livestock and cropping systems is important for sustainable natural resource management and improved livestock productivity. In this quarter, SPIR provided Training of Trainer (ToT) trainings focused on animal feeding, such as feed constraints, feed resources, forage production, forage utilization, grazing strategies during a drought, and shoat fattening to 297 (48 female) development agents (DA), community facilitators, and Woreda livestock experts participants in the Amhara and Oromia regions at two levels. This training was further provided for 2,648 (1,445 female) project participants. Subsequently, 2,339 (1,280 female) project participants received 7.7 MT of forage seed (eg. Cow pea, pigeon pea, lab and vetch), out of which 1,192 (919 female) received 6,710 split forage seedlings, elephant grass, Desho grass, and *Leucaena leucocephala*). Most of the farmers began production of the forage in their backyard, in some cases intercropping with other crops that will be ready to feed their livestock in the upcoming 4 months.

With the objective of enhancing mother and child nutritional status in PLW households, SPIR provided 14,970 Bovan Brown and Sasso breed pullets (3-month-old chickens) and 33,685 kg poultry feed on a cost-share basis for 2,495 program participant households (2,396 female-headed household). Each participant contributed 360 (25% of the cost) Ethiopian birr (ETB) as a cost share into their VESA to serve as a rotation lending fund for other members. The pullets have grown and started benefiting those targeted project participants by providing eggs for

household consumption and improving household nutrition, as well as helping with income generation. Within this reporting period, out of 13,434 hens that started laying, 523,715 eggs were laid, of which 232,813 (44%) were consumed, and 290,674 were sold. Eggs were sold on average for 2.88 ETB, earning the participants a total of \$30,441 (837,141 ETB). Of the total distributed pullets, 1,053 (7%) died due to a New Castle disease outbreak, and predators. SPIR facilitated a vaccination campaign in project kebeles where the problem was occurring. Compared with the high mortality rate (40–60% according to CSA) in the country, the rate of chicken mortality for SPIR-provided chickens has been very low.

Livestock diseases are the major cause of economic losses to farmers. Although many diseases can be controlled by vaccination, timely recognition of the disease and acquisition of appropriate medications, a shortage of infrastructure facilities to support health services delivery hampers the protection of livestock from diseases. Thus, SPIR supported 62 veterinary posts with vet packages benefiting 56,797 (17,225 female) project participants. In Amhara, two vet clinics were constructed in Wadla and Lasta to serve 2,206 households. In Oromia, SPIR constructed three vet clinics (Kurfa Chelle, Chiro, and Gemechis woredas), inclusive of a pit latrine, cattle crash, and kitchen, and benefiting 4,788 PSNP beneficiaries. Veterinary equipment was provided to these and 7 other veterinary clinics in Gemechis, Chiro, and Kurfa Chelle woredas.

In addition, SPIR promoted set of technologies or management practice to 18,516 [8,954 female] farmers in its implementation woredas. The set of technologies were in the areas of crop production (improved pest management practices and technologies, disease management practices and technologies, soil fertility and water conservation practices and technologies, and post-harvest loss management) and livestock production. The crop related technologies were applied in 3,645 hectares of land.

#### *Outcome 1.1.2: Improved climate-resilient and nutrition sensitive crop production*

In response to the increasing unpredictability of rainfed agriculture in SPIR implementation areas, there is a focus on developing irrigation schemes to profit from year-round river water sources. In Amhara region, 11 small-scale irrigation schemes are nearing completion (~94% complete). The construction includes extended work on FY17 projects in Meket, Bugna, Lasta (Sarzina), and Sekota (e.g. canal extensions and small dams). Out of this, the small dam in Bugna, with a capacity of 25,000 m<sup>3</sup>, the 500-meter canal extension in Gazo, and Sekota's 800-meter canal extension and small dam have been completed during the reporting period. In Oromia, a 400-meter canal lining at two new small-scale irrigation sites and the rehabilitation of two existing irrigation systems have been undertaken. The irrigation and water harvesting structures have been used to irrigate a total of 310 hectares of land to date, benefiting 4,295 project participants.

Because SPIR implementation areas are characterized by water scarcity, supporting the community with water harvesting structures is important to support dry-season livelihood activities. In this regard, shallow-well construction and rope and washer pumps were installed in Wadla, Gazo, Sekota and Gaz Gibla, serving 71 households in the project intervention area. One remaining rope and washer pump in Dahena is 63% complete.

To increase access to diverse nutritious foods and improve the nutritional status of the program participants, SPIR has promoted the adoption of home gardening techniques that focus on households with PLW and CU2 by facilitating a ToT on home garden and perma-garden techniques for 144 (25 female) community facilitators (CFs), DAs, and VAs. Using both practical and theoretical training methods, the training focused on how to produce high-nutrient vegetables using permaculture techniques. The training was cascaded to 3,678 PLW, and on a 25% cost share basis, 3,434 project participant received 373.77 kg of beet root, carrot, and tomato seeds to be planted in their home gardens. In addition, home gardening kits (watering cans and rakes) were provided in West Hararghe for perma-garden beneficiaries on a 25% cost share basis.

The Farmer's Field and Business School (FFBS) focuses on a learning-by-doing approach, putting farmers at the heart of learning and decision making around new agricultural techniques, marketing, gender, and nutrition. During the reporting period, SPIR trained 206 (56 female) DAs, frontline project staff and woreda government experts on the FFBS approach. As a part of promoting the FFBS approach, SPIR established 72 producer-marketing groups (PMG) with 2,042 members based on value chain types, including haricot bean, shoat fattening, oxen fattening and poultry. In addition, a Farmers Training Center (FTC) was constructed in Gemechis Woreda, which helped to demonstrate improved agricultural farming systems for 281 beneficiaries.

The Annual Survey results found that 12,168 individuals used at least the three sustainable agriculture practices (crop, livestock or NRM practices or technologies). Specifically, 15,068 [7,343 female] under livestock, 16,800 [7,969 female] under crop and 16,047 [7,289 female] under Natural Resource Management (NRM).

Subpurpose 1.2: Increased access to agricultural markets for women, men, and youth small-holder farmers

*Intermediate Outcome 1.2.1: Improved access to quality inputs*

SPIR identified four potato and two haricot bean seed multiplication groups in its implementation woredas who had already received training on the agronomic practices of potato seed multiplication and the post-harvest handling and management of seed. SPIR distributed 4.4 MT of potato "Jalene" starter seeds to the groups in Amhara. In Oromia, SPIR provided training in collaboration with Haramaya University and 1.3 MT of Awash haricot bean starter seed for two producer groups engaged in haricot bean seed multiplication. By the end of FY18, these groups harvested 5.9 MT of potato seeds for future planting seasons. The haricot bean seed is at the flowering stage, and seed multiplication farmers groups are applying the required agronomic practices for a successful harvest.

To increase access to improved agricultural inputs, SPIR has established agro-dealers or farm shops in the project implementation woredas. SPIR selected 10 agro-dealers, signed an agreement with them, provided training on agribusiness management, and linked them to regional and national input suppliers. SPIR also supported them with shop set-up supplies such as digital weighing scales, plastic sealers, and shelves. The mobile farm shop concept was also

introduced, where agro-dealers move from their permanent shop into kebele marketplaces and deliver these inputs to farmers in their local vicinity. Most of these agro-dealers have started their businesses and have begun serving customers. In addition, SPIR supported 3,109 organizations to improve organization-level technologies or management practices, out of which 3,017 are community based organizations, 29 profit enterprise, 12 producer organization and 51 water user association.

*Outcome 1.2.2: Women, men, and youth farmers linked to buyers*

To increase the income of farmers and help them become resilient to shocks, SPIR follows a market-based approach that focuses on three value chain commodities and ten income-generating activities that were identified per woreda during a participative market assessment. After selection and analysis of these value chains, regional- and national-level validation workshops were held, with multiple actors along the value chain and other stakeholders (government, nongovernmental organizations, and representatives from USAID) participating.

Poultry, beekeeping, shoat fattening, and oxen fattening were selected as livestock value chains; vegetable, haricot bean, and potatoes were selected as crop value chains. SPIR provided a ToT on value chain development for 200 (63 female) project officers, CFs, and VESA facilitators across its implementation areas. The trainees subsequently facilitated VESA group discussion sessions and supported the process of participants engaging in the selected value chains.

A total of 3994 (2,314 female) VESA group members have identified the value chain they would like to engage in, and so far 3,092 (1,776 female) participants engaged in shoat fattening/rearing, 558 (66 female) in poultry, 151 in haricot bean, 6 (3 female) in beekeeping, and 23 (4 female) participants in wheat value chain activities. Each participant received technical training on their selected value chain commodities, and where possible were linked to commercial input suppliers. SPIR created financial linkages with a formal financial institutions (MFI and RuSACCO) to support start-up capital needs for individual to engage in income generating activities (IGA) such as petty trade and value chain activities such as shoat, oxen fattening and poultry that exceeded the capacity of the average loan sizes currently possible from VESA groups. In addition, a livestock and crop multi-stakeholder platform was conducted with the participation of project managers, agriculture and marketing officers, government experts, output market actors, input suppliers, and research institutions to create a common understanding on the selected value chain and relationship among the different actors in these value chains.

Subpurpose 1.3: Increased access to off-farm and non-farm income opportunities for vulnerable women, men, and youth

*Intermediate Outcome 1.3.1: Increased opportunities for self-employment*

SPIR provided Income Generating Activity Selection Planning and Management (IGA-SPM) training for VESA members at the kebele level in all operational woredas for all VESA project beneficiaries. It was determined that grain, milk, vegetable, poultry and egg, shoat, ox/cattle, handicraft, petty, hot pepper, and fruit trades are among the activities with the most potential in the operational areas. The training was cascaded to 2,797 (1, 076 female) youth participants,

and the trainees were supported to create a personal development plan and based on personal development plan 583 [192 female] youth received training on agricultural related technical skill.

Additional follow-up and technical support was provided to support these self-employment initiatives. A number of these youth were organized into 88 youth VESAs, which have already saved \$13,100 (360,277 ETB), and begun providing loans to their members. SPIR also selected 100 women in Amhara and Oromia to participate in a micro-franchise business model by providing training on the micro-franchise methodology and management. SPIR is piloting micro-franchising to generate off-farm income for program participants by responding to consumer goods and services demand in rural communities.

*Intermediate Outcome 1.3.2: Increased opportunities for wage employment*

SPIR carried out a youth labor market assessment to identify and define the key employment opportunities (self-employment and wage employment) and the required skills needed for youth to engage in the sector. According to the assessment, the primary reasons for unemployment were a lack of available job openings (21%), relevant experience (22%), technical skills (40%), and social capital (2%).

Based on the personal development plans of the youth, SPIR identified 880 youth (223 female) to be linked to TVETs in Amhara and Oromia regions. Of these, 116 youth have so far been linked to TVETs for hard skills training (6 were in woodworking, 6 in metal work, 32 in hairdressing, and 14 in hotel management and cooking). In addition, 63 [23 female] youth have been identified to be placed in work-based learning (WBL) opportunities for building their skills in that context.

**Subpurpose 1.4: Increased use of financial services for vulnerable women, men, and youth**

*Intermediate Outcome 1.4.2: Increased access to mobile financial services for vulnerable women, men, and youth*

As financial service providers generally avoid working with extremely poor households, in part due to perceived credit unworthiness, SPIR has taken an active role in linking project participants to formal institutions such as MFIs and RuSACCOs. Program staff work with local government Development Agents to support the development, review and submission of business plans for evaluation by the woreda Food Security Task Force. Based on this evaluation, the FSTF refers successful plans/proposals to the MFI with a recommended loan package to support these individual plans. Thus far, SPIR has assisted 4,445 (1,777 female) program participants to access \$882,438 (24,267,045 ETB), or an average of \$199 (5,459 ETB) per person from MFI and RuSACCOs to engage in IGA and value chain activities.

*Intermediate Outcome 1.4.3: VESA members have improved knowledge of savings and lending best practices*

In year two, SPIR provided training on the VESA methodology, financial literacy, and IGA-SPM for 355 (112 female) community and VESA facilitators, which was then given to 39,474 (21,314 female) VESA members. In the reporting year, SPIR formed 2,959 new VESAs organized with 70,493 (34,676 female) members. Combined with those started in the first year, SPIR has so far



established 4,876 VESA with 117,690 (59,151 female) members across its implementation areas. From these VESA members, 9,124 (6,057 female) are youth and 55 (23 female) are persons with disabilities. The newly established VESAs have saved \$463,203 (12,738 ETB) for a cumulative amount of \$511,159 (14,056,871 ETB) saved since the start of the project, with 25,110 (11,315 female) program participants accessing \$326,179.47 (8,969,936 ETB) in loans for income-generating activities, such as petty trade, grain, egg selling, tea and coffee services, local beer, and others.

During the reporting year, several VESA groups shared out and restarted their second cycle. With the shared money, members are engaged in different income-generating activities such as goat fattening, poultry production, and petty trades. In addition, VESA groups were formed two RuSACCOs after their share-out, and SPIR supported these newly formed groups by providing capacity-building training and the RuSACCOs' tool kit (income and expense receipts, passbooks, ledgers, and registration books). In addition, SPIR will work on promoting VESAs through the RuSACCOs and on creating awareness among VESA members to join existing RuSACCO members in their kebeles.

*Intermediate Outcome 1.4.4: Vulnerable people, especially women, demonstrate improved financial management skills.*

SPIR promoted financial management skills to vulnerable persons and women in its implementation area by using two approaches. The first was organizing program participants into a VESA group and training them on the VESA methodology, and the second was facilitating financial service linkages to access larger loans from MFIs and RuSACCOs. In this regard, SPIR provided financial training for 70,493 (34,676 female) project participants, covering topics including financial management, financial planning and budgeting, savings, understanding credit, profit calculation, risk management, and insurance. SPIR also established a good working relationship with institutions such as the Amhara Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI), Oromia Credit Saving Cooperative, and rural saving and credit cooperative unions and primary rural saving and credit cooperatives to increase access to financial products for SPIR program participants. As a result, 4,445 (1,777 female) participants were able to access \$882,438 (24,267,045 ETB) from the MFI and RuSACCOs for engagement in the IGA and value chain.

**Purpose 2: Improved nutritional status of children under 2 years of age, PLW, and adolescent girls**

**Subpurpose 2.1: Increased utilization of nutritious food for children under 2, PLW, and adolescent girls**

*Intermediate Outcome 2.1.1: Increased men's involvement and women's improved practice in IYCF*

Using the SURE+ training guide. SPIR conducted a two-tier ToT on IYCF for 1,411 (1,040 female) project participants, including health extension worker (HEW) supervisors, the health development army (HDA), woreda nutrition focal persons, woreda health office heads, primary health care unit staff, VESA facilitators, and food security focal people. The training focused on exclusive breast feeding, complementary feeding, cooking demonstrations, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and nutrition social behavior change communication (SBCC). After the training, lead HDA volunteers and HEWs began implementing food demonstration sessions at the

community public work sites. Furthermore, 427 religious leaders in two SPIR implementation regions were also trained on IYCF practices. Religious leaders have considerable influence over cultural and religious practices such feeding animal products (eggs and meat) for children during fasting seasons and addressing food taboos.

SPIR coordinated this training in Siraro with the USAID-funded Livelihood for Resilience and Growth through Nutrition (GtN) programs. In the Amhara overlap woredas of Wadla and Meket, SPIR conducted this training for all groups, with Livelihood for Resilience (CARE) providing additional emphasis in the VESA groups that they directly supported.

*Intermediate Outcome 2.1.2: Adolescent girls have equitable access to household food*

SPIR included a module on adolescent nutrition in the training discussed above which focused on the interactions between gender and nutrition, with a special emphasis on adolescent girls' nutrition and specifically on the topics of nutrition BCC, how to cook nutritious meals, and nutrition sensitive agriculture. This training was provided to 273 (190 female) HEW supervisors who cascaded the training to 231 (all female) HEWs who attended the optimal IYCF training and further to 559 (48 female) school teachers and 297 (all male) religious leaders. This training helped school teachers disseminate key health and nutrition behavioral change messages for 8,873 (4,500 female) adolescent girls and boys and 302 households from religious leaders in the Amhara region.

SPIR began construction on two school blocks (four classrooms) in the Lasta and Meket woredas, and the construction is at 70% completion as of this reporting period. They are expected to serve 867 (424 female) students and teachers.

*Intermediate Outcome 2.1.3: Increased support from men and improved practice by women on optimal maternal nutrition*

In collaboration with the Save the Children-led GtN program and the CRS & CARE -led Livelihoods for Resilience program, and Federal Ministry of Health SPIR trained maternal nutrition (as part of the training discussed in section 2.1.1 above). The training focused on male involvement in maternal nutrition and gave a special emphasis on making these interventions more practical at the community level. The main objectives of this training were to improve mothers' nutritional status, diet, and lifestyle and to positively influence pregnancy and lactation outcomes. This approach, when successful, will have a lasting positive impact on the health of both the women participants and their children.

The maternal nutrition training was provided for 208 (52 female) HEW supervisors working at health centers in SPIR intervention woredas. The HEW supervisors further cascaded the maternal nutrition training to 454 (all female) HEWs, 559 (88 female) school teachers, 495 (all male) religious leaders and 683 HDAs (all female). Key messages on maternal nutrition were also transmitted by HDAs through VESA groups where they themselves were members.

*Intermediate Outcome 2.1.4: Increased preparation of nutritious food*

SPIR conducted a ToT on diversified and nutritious food preparation using an approach called Community Participatory Nutrition Promotion (CPNP). This approach complements the

existing government CMAM program. A total of 134 (19 female) Health Extension Worker supervisors, nutrition focal people from zonal health department, staff from the Sekota Declaration Federal MOH, and the Amhara and Tigray Region Program Delivery Unit participated in this training. The Health Extension Worker supervisors further cascaded the training to 381 (all female) Health Extension Workers and 151 HDAs (all female). This training empowers community members to rehabilitate children (severe to mild underweight) by using locally available and affordable food in their homes. Additionally, the training included a market study and situational analysis to promote better understanding of the nutritional status of children and assess the seasonal food availability and affordability to also promote understanding of the variation of food costs and their availability. After presentations and practical cooking demonstrations, the trainees went to the field and discussed what they had learned with community members, mapped locally available food items, and prepared diversified energy-dense and micronutrient rich food.

Trained HEWs measured the weight of 603 children under two years in 32 kebles in East and West Hararhge. From the children screened 38 (6%) were referred to health facilities for treatment of acute malnutrition and 338 (56%) were identified as underweight, and admitted to the CPNP rehabilitation sessions. HDAs and VESA facilitators collaboratively mobilized the community to contribute the food ingredients for the rehabilitation sessions. Three hundred and thirty-eight lactating women and 64 men attended the two-week learning by doing sessions where they fed their child and discussed key child caring and feeding practices. At the end of this two-week group session, 325 children gained the expected weight (200-400kg) and were discharged with routine follow up, while 14 children failed to gain the expected weight and were referred for further medical checkup.

In an effort to reach a larger general audience, SPIR also organized cooking demonstrations and mixed flour preparation sessions in 20 market places. These were predominantly attended by PLW and adolescent girls where demonstrations were conducted using available food ingredients found in the local markets. In general, 2,849 [1,463 female] children under two (0-23 months) were reached with community level nutrition intervention through SPIR program.

Subpurpose 2.2: Increased utilization of health and nutrition services

*Intermediate Outcome 2.2.1: Improved health seeking behavior of PLW and CU2*

SPIR held a ToT on timed and targeted counseling for 48 (34 female) participants from all implementing partners, who then cascaded this training for health extension supervisors in both Amhara and Oromia regions.

To increase the uptake of health and nutrition services and behavioral change in nutrition and health-related care practices of PLW and other community members, Gender and Social Development (GSD) and Nutrition Provisions under PSNP4 and counseling skills training was provided to 491 (445 female) HEWs. At public works sites and health facilities, HEWs and lead HDAs facilitated SBCC sessions in 69 kebeles, attended by 16,604 PW participants, 1,615 PLW and 75 caretakers of malnourished children.

Following the PSNP4 nutrition and GSD provision training, 952 PLWs and 75 caregivers of malnourished children were identified and transited to temporary direct support (TDS) beneficiary status. Pregnant and lactating women (738) were linked to health and nutrition services and 642 children under the age of five, and 76 under the age of 2 were identified as having moderate acute malnutrition. Their caretakers received information and started following nutrition and health advice to support the recovery and growth of their children. In total, 2,391 children under two [ 1,136 female] participated in growth monitoring promotion.

To improve access to health services, SPIR also completed construction on two health posts in Girawa and Gemechis that are expected to serve 2,056 households. Also in Meket, a health post is under construction (64% completion) that will serve 1,603 (682 female) households when it is finished. Moreover SPIR facilitated National Nutrition Program (NNP) multi-sectoral coordination meetings with woreda Food Security Task force (FSTF) members. The participants discussed the roles and responsibilities of each sector as it relates to the seven core elements of nutrition sensitive interventions under PSNP. This includes considering poor PLW during retargeting process, and tracking and feedback mechanisms for TDS clients. In this meeting, they also discussed how to ensure the co-responsibility of TDS clients, the regularity of the public work BCC sessions, and the appropriate and timely utilization of the 5% woredas contingency resources for support of families with malnourished children.

#### *Intermediate Outcome 2.2.2: Improved quality of HDAs services*

As a way of providing a platform for dissemination of key health and nutrition messages and encouraging further integration of the local Health Development Army volunteers into SPIR programming, 2,382 HDA volunteers were strategically invited to be members of SPIR VESA groups that were formed this year. HDAs help increase the demand and uptake of health and nutrition services and act as one of the community-level entry points for nutrition and health intervention. They also play an important role in promoting positive behavioral changes for the improved health and nutrition status of vulnerable women and children. Moreover, 3,142 children under five were reached with nutrition specific interventions, including essential IYCF messages, vitamin A supplementation in the past 6 months, and zinc supplementation during episode of diarrhea.

#### **Subpurpose 2.3: Reduced prevalence of diarrhea and water-borne diseases**

##### *Intermediate Outcome 2.3.1: Increased access to safe drinking water*

To increase access to safe drinking water, SPIR constructed 59 water schemes in Amhara and Oromia regions which serve 12, 930 individuals. Water quality tests conducted thus far confirmed the water is potable in 37 of the schemes. Tests for the other schemes are still ongoing. In addition, 1.8 km of pipeline extension work, distribution points, washing basin, and cattle troughs were constructed in the Oromia region.

To ensure the sustainability of water provision facilities, SPIR trained 606 (243 female) members of 89 WASHCOs (59 new and 30 existing) new and 106 existing WASHCOs in the Amhara and Oromia regions on the organizational management and operation of potable water schemes. The training provided information on how to finance scheme maintenance, maintain sustainability, and handle conflict resolution. WASHCOs set their own tariffs, with the woreda

office providing ongoing monitoring and support for the effective implementation of these systems.

In coordination with the Siraro woreda and zone water offices, SPIR conducted a feasibility study for drilling two deep water wells in response to the extremely high potable water access needs in that woreda. The assessment was conducted in four PSNP kebeles and used the following section criteria: number of beneficiaries in need, average round trip distance, and impact on women.

*Intermediate Outcome 2.3.2: Increased number of open-defecation-free villages*

SPIR conducted ToT sessions in the Oromia and Amhara regions for 178 (21 female) project staff, partners, and targeted mothers and caretaker groups on the implementation of community-led total sanitation and hygiene (CLTSH). These sessions included hands-on field experience to enhance the facilitation skills of the participants in triggering local collective action related to sanitation and hygiene. Following the training, CLTSH and post-triggering follow-up was conducted in 53 villages of the Amhara region, with 53 villages (48 in Lasta and five in Gazgibla) declared as open-defecation-free (ODF) villages.

At the same time, the construction of two solid disposal pits, thirteen handwashing stations, and five gender-sensitive latrines are nearly complete in both Oromia and Amhara regions. The latrine design included both handwashing facilities and menstrual hygiene management rooms for girls. In addition, SPIR provided menstrual hygiene management kits consisting of pads and underwear to 230 school girls of age 14 and above in primary schools in the Chiro, Gemechis, Kurfa Chelle, and Girawa woredas.

In addition, 14,355 (6,799 females) community members and 2,219 (560 girls) and fifth and eighth graders participated in a two-day hygiene campaign in 25 PSNP kebeles of the Amhara and Oromia regions and 14 elementary schools in Daro Lebu woreda. During the campaign, SPIR delivered tailored handwashing messages identified through the Design for Behavior Change (DBC) methodology for mothers with children under 5 years of age. Activities of the campaign included cleaning of stagnant water and liquid waste found in their surroundings and burning solid waste collected in waste disposal sites. SPIR also facilitated training on household-level hygiene and sanitation, including solid waste disposal (animal manure) and water quality management for 31 (28 female) HDA leaders, HEWs, DAs, and WASH promoters of five kebeles of the Garawa woreda. In collaboration with the woreda education office, 65 WASH clubs were established to assist as entry points for program-sponsored school WASH interventions in the Amhara and Oromia regions.

**Purpose 3: Increased women's and youth empowerment and gender equity**

Preliminary gender analysis findings were presented and validation workshops held both in Addis Ababa and at the Regional level. Participants in each validation workshop included government food security office personnel (from the kebele, woredas, and zone levels), community participants from the FGDs and KIs, and project staff. During each regional validation, the results and planned activities from this study were shared with community members and stakeholders. Feedback on the results and further ideas from community

members were collected. In general, the regional validations were well received, and most of the results found in this study were agreed upon. The draft report was presented to USAID/FFP in Washington DC mid-February, and the feedback given there was incorporated. The final report was submitted to and approved by USAID/FFP.

Following the gender analysis finalization, gender strategy documents containing an action plan with gender challenges for different targets in SPIR (men, women, boys, and girls), progress markers, and a monitoring tool were developed in collaboration with staff members from different purpose areas.

Subpurpose 3.1: Institutions are responsive to the needs and priorities of women and youth  
*Intermediate Outcome 3.1.1: Increased implementation of gender equity and equality provisions of PSNP-PIM*

SPIR provided a four-day master ToT on social analysis and action (SAA) to 28 participants (15 female) composed of staff from all implementing partners to provide skills for facilitating the empowerment of vulnerable communities through the advancement of equitable gender, social, and power norms using participatory reflections and dialogues. Following the master ToT, SPIR facilitated an SAA ToT for 217 (67 female) CFs, government partners, VESA facilitators and kebele-level food security task force members (core groups). The CFs cascaded the training to 1,509 (358 female) kebele-level core groups (gatekeepers) who are responsible for overseeing the overall SAA implementation within their kebele. The core groups consist of members from various sectors, including the kebele administration chairperson, the kebele women's affairs focal person, HEWs, DAs, school directors, religious leaders, and influential individuals. As a way forward, the core groups reached a consensus to identify additional gender norms and challenge those identified norms with the VESA members so that they could all envision alternatives for positive social transformation.

The PSNP4 GSD PIM provision is a major gender-transformative strategy that SPIR uses to ensure improved participation and benefits for women and other vulnerable groups. To ensure the effective implementation of these provisions and share experience among participants, SPIR conducted GSD review meetings in six of its operational woredas for 599 (168 female) participants representing all government PSNP institutions. Participants discussed the GSD implementation status for each woreda, including challenges faced and lessons learned, and developed action plans for future effective implementation of GSD. SPIR provided GSD PIM provision trainings to 443 (127 female) project participants from government sectors (Women and Child Affairs Office, Health Office, and the woreda Food Security Task Force) and from kebele leaders. Lastly, GSD and PIM provision awareness-raising sessions were conducted for 2,972 (1,210 female) participants in the Amhara and Oromia regions at public gatherings (PW sites).

Subpurpose 3.2: Reduction of workload on women and girls

*Intermediate Outcome 3.2.1: Increased men's and boys' engagement in childcare and household work*  
Men and boys' engagement through peer education is a core element of the SPIR gender-transformative strategy that aims to promote involvement of men and boys in childcare

activities and household chores and end intergenerational gender inequalities. SPIR provided a master ToT to staff on peer education and engaging men and boys around these topics. Following the training, SPIR identified 78 peer education facilitators (11 female) from young people who received youth soft skill training in four woredas. These selected youth received peer education facilitation skill training, and began facilitating discussion groups with 1,706 school youth (804 female). SPIR peer education promotes open discussion among school youth on selected gender issues to help them develop a culture of openness to promote positive social transformation.

In addition, SPIR designed its Men Engagement Manual to guide staff in promoting men's equitable involvement as caregivers in the lives of their children, helpers to their spouses when it comes to domestic chores, promoters of nutrition behaviors, and supporters of gender equality. The manual contains eight major sessions: Welcome Session, Gender Role in a Society, Power and Early Marriage, My Father's Legacy, Care Giving, Division of Care Giving, Understanding Nutrition, and Final Reflection—Father's Web. Based on the manual, a 4-day master training on male engagement was provided for 24 (7 female) gender and nutrition staff of all implementing partners. In the Amhara region, 192 (74 female) CFs and VESA facilitators were trained on male engagement, and 66 male champions were selected. In addition, 23 male groups with 455 members were established.

Subpurpose 3.3: Strengthened aspirations, capabilities, leadership, and decision-making power for women and youth

*Intermediate Outcome 3.3.1: Increased access to income, inputs, and markets for women and youth*  
SPIR helped to facilitate temporary job opportunities in different areas and public works for 809 (257 female) youths in the Dahana, Meket, and Wadila projects. The participants were able to earn \$80,783 (2,221,535 ETB).

*Intermediate Outcome 3.3.2: Girls and boys demonstrate improved life skills*

A gender-sensitive, life skill training manual was developed containing three participatory sessions on gender roles and the impact of gender roles on economic and behavioral components. Issues that came across during the gender analysis were made part of these discussions. One example is that the analysis found that less than 30% of the users of the Government of Ethiopia-funded Youth Fund are young women, and one of the constraints was that animal fattening (one highly sought-after activity) is not considered appropriate for girls. As such, the life skill manual contains a session on how the perception of gender roles and these expectations shape livelihoods, helping youth see this in a different light. Staff members from all implementing partners were trained on this manual.

*Intermediate Outcome 3.3.3: Increased leadership of women and youth in community institutions (formal and informal)*

In FY18, the project has achieved encouraging results in bringing women into leadership positions in newly established VESA groups. For instance, in East Hararghe, out of 1,772 total committee members, 1,086 were women, of which 219 are in a chairperson position. Similarly, in West Hararghe, out of 2,934 key positions (chairperson and secretary) 54% were women.

Further, 1,928 women were elected as leaders to recently formed VESAs and to 55 WASHCOs in the Amhara region. The annual survey found that 16 percent of respondents were in leadership positions in VESAs and WASHCOs

*Intermediate Outcome 3.3.4: Improved actions taken by community groups on gender-based violence (early marriage and removing barriers to girls' mobility)*

The SPIR gender analysis revealed that restrictive gender norms, such as mobility issues, early marriage, polygamy, and female genital mutilation remain the most significant challenges for women and girls in the project's operational areas. SPIR developed a strategy to address gender-based violence (GBV) through awareness raising in public gatherings, in VESA group discussions, and by providing information on referral pathways for GBV service provision. During the 16 Days of Activism (a global advocacy event aimed at ending violence against women) in East Hararghe, there was a one day event with the government's woreda-level office heads, gender focal persons, experts, religious leaders, elders, and administrators, totaling 247 participants (47 female). Similarly, it was celebrated in West Hararghe by focusing on response to and prevention of GBV. In addition, the social marginalization of women, especially around insecure land tenure rights and the prevalence of harmful traditional practices have been found to be among the top social factors contributing to food insecurity. During this period, SPIR staff disseminated messages around gender equity issues and harmful traditional practices to 9,974 (5,622 female) community members during food distribution and public works days.

**Purpose 4: Strengthened ability of women, men, and communities to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from human-caused and natural shocks and stresses**

**Subpurpose 4.1: Improved natural resource management by women, men, youth, and communities**

*Intermediate Outcome 4.1.1: Restoration of degraded communal lands by women, men, and youth*  
SPIR implements farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR) and comprehensive land husbandry (CLH) methodologies to restore degraded communal lands through community participation. In Amhara region, SPIR provided training to 286 (26 female) project staff and government stakeholders on innovative CLH soil and water conservation measures, who in turn, disseminated this to 461 (77 female) community members and 152 (42 female) CFs, VFs, and DAs. Similarly, in Oromia, SPIR also organized a 3-day technical training on innovative soil and water conservation technologies for 203 experts (29 female), and cascaded to 414 heads of household (160 female). Because of the contribution of these trainings, 1,258 hectares of degraded communal land have been rehabilitated. Additional communal land management training was provided to 235 (185 female) communal land users at FMNR sites, with a focus was on bylaw development, fair benefit sharing, and conflict resolution.

Preparatory activities for soil and water conservations, such as input provision, site selection, nursery site clearing, compost preparation, bed preparation, and capacity building were done in support of rehabilitating 729.87 hectares of degraded communal land. During the reporting year, 20,730.50 m<sup>3</sup> of loose stone check dam, 2,541.50 m<sup>3</sup> gabion check dam, 247 m<sup>3</sup> sediment storage dam, 371.07 km farm bunds, 140.67 km of hill side terrace, 3,016 m<sup>3</sup> water ways, 12,655.01 cut-off drains, 73.70 km of bench terraces, 28,681 micro-basins, 2,160 eyebrow



basins, 10,925 trenches, and 6,045 percolation pits were constructed in the Amhara SPIR implementation woredas. In addition, in the Oromia region, 200,000 multi-purpose tree seedlings were planted, and 86,000 splits of Dansho and 88,000 elephant grass species were planted, covering 90 hectares.

#### *Intermediate Outcome 4.1.2: Improved watershed management*

To improve watershed management, SPIR provided multi-purpose tree seedlings for planting on individual farmlands as agroforestry or as enrichment planting in naturally regenerated communal lands in operational woredas in both the Amhara and Oromia regions. To make tree nurseries both climate and nutrition sensitive, support has been provided to 21 nursery sites and helping woreda offices to better understand and request species that offer nutritional benefits while also being able to adapt to changing climates. Multi-purpose trees are included in training topics and guidelines as means to address climate change adaptation and nutrition objectives. SPIR supported public works activities that also included the provision of multi-purpose trees (39 quintals of polyethylene tubes and 22.9 quintals of tree seeds) to plant on individual farmlands as agroforestry or as an enrichment planting in communal degraded lands in Amhara. Likewise, hand tools and other materials, such as 1,344 gabion boxes (2,283 m<sup>3</sup>) and 381 kg of gabion tying wire were provided to the woredas to support nurseries and soil and water conservation measures. In addition, to improve the soil fertility status of the watersheds where comprehensive land husbandry (CLH) is being implemented, 5,346 m<sup>3</sup> of compost and 663 m<sup>3</sup> of animal manure was prepared and incorporated with the soil in these newly created bench terraces. In addition, 3,346 kg of fruit, forage, and forest seeds were provided to the woredas for raising seedlings. From these 7,850,000 different seedlings were produced, of which 5,535,114 seedlings were transplanted in watershed and sub-watersheds as a stabilizer and as a source of fodder, fruit, and soil fertility enhancer. In addition, as a part of introducing these high value fruit trees, SPIR has provided 1,500 apple tree seedlings to 155 households in high land agroecology zones.

In the East and West Hararghe implementation zones, SPIR provided 1,200 gabion boxes with tying wire which were used to control gully erosion and help with rehabilitation in the identified affected areas. SPIR also provided water levels, measuring tapes, labeled sticks, hammers, hoes, digging forks, spades, wheelbarrows, ranging poles, and string as tools for supporting public works and gabion check dam construction.

Using public works labor, construction of a communal pond for rain water harvesting through is almost finalized at Kurfa Chelle, and will be used by 25 landless youth group members (13 female) who have been identified by the local woreda government. The site selected was a severely damaged hill and was handed over to the group for restoration and use for some income-generating activity such as forage development and bee keeping. SPIR constructed a 5,000 m<sup>3</sup> gabion check dam pond in Gemechis woreda, linking with gully reclamation activities to support the surrounding community with water for short-term irrigation to produce vegetables and perennial (fruit and forage) crops that will help improve nutrition and income diversification from natural resources. As part of watershed management, SPIR, along with government and community members, constructed 41 different types of soil and water conservation structures using public works labor in the Grawa, Kurfa Chelle, Gemechis, and

Chiro woredas. In general, 33,414 individuals practiced soil-and-water conservation structures on their own farm and communal lands.

*Intermediate Outcome 4.1.3: Increased utilization of proven energy-efficient and climate smart technologies*

SPIR introduced two energy-efficient cook stoves (*Tikikil* and *Mirt*) to reduce the use of biomass energy, indoor air pollution, and women's workloads in the program's operational areas. Using a 25% cost-share approach, 1,176 of these fuel-efficient cook stoves were provided to household. Monitoring visits showed that users of these newly installed stoves benefited from more than a 50% reduction in time for firewood collection, and the fire wood used reduced by three-fourths compared with their old open traditional stoves. As a result, these technologies directly contributed toward better natural resource conservation, household health, and more cost-effective food preparation. In addition, 471 solar lanterns were also distributed in the Amhara and Oromia regions using the same cost-share approach, where recipients contributed 25% of the cost into their VESA group savings for later use by other members.

Subpurpose 4.2: Improved disaster risk reduction strategies for women, men, and communities

*Intermediate Outcome 4.2.1: Adoption of multi-level emergency contingency plans*

A training session on the Gender Sensitive Climate Vulnerability Capacity Analysis (GCVCA) and Community Adaptation Action Plan (CAAP) was given to 118 (16 female) woreda and zonal government and program staff members. Following the training, an orientation on the analysis process was provided for woreda technical multi-sectoral experts and CFs in SPIR woredas. The main objective of the training was to familiarize participants with climate-change-related terminologies and to initiate the implementation of the analysis in selected kebeles. As a result of this orientation, 10 percent of SPIR kebeles EWR/DRR committees adopted multi-level emergency contingency plans.

*Intermediate Outcome 4.2.2: Accurate and timely weather and seasonal forecasts used by vulnerable communities*

For smallholder farmers who rely on rain-fed agriculture, access to and the use of climate information is critical to their lives, livelihoods, and development. SPIR—in collaboration with the National Meteorology Agency—conducted participatory scenario planning (PSP) and organized a workshop in Oromia for 204 (55 female) participants to show how to obtain an accurate and timely weather and seasonal weather forecasts. In this workshop, the participants agreed that the regional meteorological center would generate and share woreda-level down-scaled seasonal forecasts and use indigenous forecasts' participatory scenarios in presenting and analyzing these forecasts with the communities. VESA groups, religious events, marketplaces, and telephone calls were the primary platforms and channels identified to disseminate this information. Thus far, climate information has been disseminated in this way to 14,700 heads of households to help them make informed livelihood decisions.

In Amhara region, 41 (7 female) members of concerned regional bureaus, project officers, woreda government experts, and community representatives were convened and oriented on the establishment of a regional multi-stakeholder platform for PSP. Action plans were

developed for accurate and timely weather and seasonal forecasts to be used in vulnerable communities in all Amhara SPIR intervention woredas. Thus far, the Bugna woreda project office conducted PSP training and orientation on these plans for 21 (7 female) VESA members. Thus far, 54 percent of SPIR implementation kebeles received early warning and weather forecast information.

*Intermediate Outcome 4.2.3: Effective early warning systems in place and functioning*

SPIR training on PSP and contingency planning with woreda and kebele officials on early warning in East and West Hararghe woredas is improving the flow of early warning data, interpretation, and use. The outcome has strengthened existing government structures to generate timely early warning information and disseminate it through early warning and disaster risk reduction committees at the woreda and kebele level. So far, 29 percent of SPIR woredas have early warning systems with clear trigger mechanisms.

*Intermediate Outcome 4.2.4: Increased social mobilization capacity of vulnerable women, men, youth, and communities to cope with climate change and disasters*

After GCVCA and CAAP training for 21 government staff (two female) and 13 project staff (five female) in West Hararghe, an assessment was completed in three representative kebeles in Gemechis woreda with agro-climatically variation from highland, mid-land, and low land. Due to delays caused by social unrest, assessments for other Oromia woredas will be finalized in January.

**Subpurpose 4.3: Improved effectiveness and social mobilization of PSNP4 institutions**

*Intermediate Outcome 4.3.1: Increased capacity of LNGOs, CSOs, and CBOs to support PSNP activities*

In FY18, a major emphasis was placed enhancing grassroots level participation and more contribution of community-based organizations in the PSNP 4 annual planning process. Related to this, SPIR provided orientations on PIM, social accountability, and basic standards of PSNP for various Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), such as Youth groups, VESA groups, and WASHCOs. While SPIR organized familiarization training for 94 (17 female) new VESA facilitators, government partners took the initiative to disseminate this 3-day PSNP-4 PIM orientation to 803 (171 female) kebele food security task force members from Chiro, Gemechis, and Girawa woredas. In collaboration with the Bugna, Dahena, and Lasta woreda government offices, SPIR facilitated a review meeting on the functionality of local institutions in their role of supporting the local government policies. Following this, 232 VESA members discussed various topics, including grievances handling and early warning issues. Furthermore, SPIR through its commodity support, supported 301,913 [151,966 female] in food for work transfers and 72,677 [43,797 female] through permanent direct support.

In addition, SPIR provided capacity-building support to ORDA, including leadership and project management training, international exposure (Washington DC) and learning visits (Zimbabwe) and targeted commodity management support. The latter is a collaborative effort with CRS/JEOP, in which a Commodity Management expert was hired for a 6-month consultancy to provide targeted support in helping ORDA to improve their policies, systems, structures and field level commodity management. Capacity building efforts have also focused on supporting

ORDA to improve the skills and capacities of field level M&E staff through training and ongoing support.

*Intermediate Outcome 4.3.2: Increased technical capacity of food security task forces and government officials to meet PIM standards*

A major positive change observed this year at the woreda level was when the leadership began to participate and make functional the kebele-level food security task force (FSTF), appeal committees, and social accountability groups, which for quite a while were non-existent. SPIR also participated in regular woreda-level FSTF meetings during this period and used this forum to discuss delays in the procurement process, quality of PW activities, and issues related to food transfers. During the meetings in the Oromia region, the participants also agreed to include focal persons from SPIR in each technical committee (e.g., livelihood, PWs, and food transfers) who could work in collaboration with the food security task force to increase the quality of all activities. In addition, in the process of strengthening grassroots appeal committees, in the East and West Hareghe region, 54 kebele appeal committees (KACs) were newly formed, and 20 KACs were strengthened. Likewise, in the Sekota and Wadla woredas, SPIR provided training for 207 (161 female) KACs and 306 (106 female) kebele food security task force members. GSD execution, targeting and retargeting, and graduation procedures and GRM for 136 (46 female) KFSTF and 25 (seven female) woreda FSTFs and TCs were provided.

*Intermediate Outcome 4.3.3: Increased PSNP responsiveness to community needs*

SPIR organized a ToT on social accountability approaches, tools, and implementation for 102 (10 female) government staff; SPIR also spearheaded ORDA institutional strengthening and social accountability for gender and youth staff to enhance the proper implementation of social accountability at the community level. A launching workshop was held at the woreda level on social accountability approaches for 177 (40 female) participants of committees that had been established in four woredas (Gaz Gibla, Dahena, Wadla, and Bugna). The training was then disseminated to 1,633 (679 female) social accountability committee members and food security task force and community members of the participating woredas.

During this reporting period, SPIR trained 789 (250 female) kebele FSTF and KAC members on GRMs. This helped to make each sector effective in joint implementation at the local level, increase the service efficiency of PSNP, and show how to formally address complaints raised by program participants. During the reporting period, 1,292 complaints were raised on targeting and transfers, of which 1,237 grievances were cases of targeting, transfer, PW, and other safety-net-related issues were reported to the woredas. Kebele FSTF and appeal committees resolved 997 cases (previously, almost all the cases were resolved at the woreda level), while 179 were solved at the woreda level using PIM grievance handling and redressing procedures. At the time of reporting, 91 cases are still in the process of being resolved.

## Environmental Risks and Opportunities

All SPIR trainings that have direct and indirect effects on the environment were reviewed, and environmentally sound management practices were recommended. For instance, small-holder farmers' training on how to improve fodder management and feeding practices, improve

hygiene practices and proper poultry management, develop business and soft skill development, and IGA selection are among some of the programs where sound environmental design and management were considered to make project outcomes sustainable. Environmentally sound design and management training for 23 government staff and 69 project staff on the Climate Risk Management and Pesticide Evaluation Report, and Safe Use Action Plan. Further training on Ethiopian and USAID environmental regulations were also provided to 52 and 14 project and government staff, respectively.

In the reporting period, several mitigation measures were implemented to avoid or reduce negative impacts and ensure sustainability. In addition, supplemental assessments, such as the Road PEA amendment, Small-Scale Irrigation (SSI) PEA, Fumigation Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA), and Climate Risk Screening and Management (CRSM) were conducted in line with the conditions specified by the USAID Bureau Environmental Officer. SSI PEA and CRSM are currently waiting for approval, whereas Road PEA has been approved.

SPIR conducted environmental compliance monitoring site visits to assess the environmental compliance status of ongoing projects against required national and USAID standards. Small scale irrigation schemes were monitored to avoid risks of erosion and conflicts with upstream and downstream users. Where possible, they were also integrated with watershed management activities to reduce erosion that could lead to the siltation of canals and to increase ground water recharge. Similarly, family hand-dug wells and spring development and rehabilitation construction were monitored with water quality tests and chemical, physical, and biological tests conducted, ensuring compliance with the required national and USAID standards. Thus far, all spring capping and shallow well construction in all project woredas were safe for drinking.

As part of mitigation measures to increase the sustainability of project outcomes, training programs on upstream watershed management, community awareness on water-use efficiency, and conflict resolution and fencing off hand-dug wells were conducted. Likewise, SPIR gave environmental consideration in masonry dam construction, such as the displacement of household's farmland, loss of biodiversity, and risks to loss of life (human), were carefully considered during the project planning and monitored during the implementation. As such, all masonry dams constructed were sound in all aspects regarding their associated risks, and are expected to serve the intended purpose for a long period of time. Furthermore, the construction of gender-sensitive latrines, animal health posts, schools, vet posts, FTCs, grain stores, human health posts, foot path construction and improvements, and dry solid waste pits were conducted in an environmentally sound way.

Soil water conservation activities were closely monitored in all project woredas. Different soil and water conservation measures were implemented in the model watershed areas, and all watershed management activities were carefully monitored so that the minimum quality standards for each structure constructed were met. Physical structures were stabilized with selected fodder species and freed from free-grazing animals to avoid damage to the structures.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

SPIR conducted capacity-building training on monitoring and evaluation for relevant staff to enhance the capacity of those staff in understanding FFP indicator reference sheets, the indicator tracking table, indicators, data collection tools, and field-level data collection and data quality. During the reporting period, data collection tools for annual monitoring indicators were refined and sent to the technical leads and implementing partners; their input and orientation was given to monitoring and evaluation staff and technical teams.

SPIR has been working closely with a consulting firm in the design and development of a web-based management information system that will support the collection and analysis of routine monitoring and geospatial data for program planning, management, reporting, quality assurance, and decision-making. At the end of the reporting period the consultants had produced a first level of the web-based data import tools based on the tools provided.

Further, the team responded to FFP comments on the M&E plan and had submitted a revision based on those comments and a response is pending from FFP. These revisions included changes to indicators, data source, targets (both annual and LOA) as well as assumptions in the Theory of Change.

The learning agenda team (IFPRI, Hawassa University and Ambo University) completed formative research, refined the impact evaluation design and completed the impact evaluation baseline survey in FY18. The Learning Agenda Inception Report was completed, and a Learning Agenda workshop was held in February 2018 to review research proposals from HU and AU and finalize plans for the baseline survey. The baseline survey was conducted from February to April. The baseline survey successfully collected data on 3,096 households in 193 kebeles from 13 woredas in Amhara and Oromia. Data cleaning and analysis of the baseline survey were conducted, and the baseline report will be delivered in the first quarter of FY19. HU and AU began implementing research projects and undertook training on qualitative survey methodology in last quarter. Qualitative fieldwork was conducted in Q4, with reports to be written in the first quarter of 2019.

## Internal and External Coordination

SPIR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CRS to outline the roles and responsibilities and related coordination mechanisms for joint or shared programming in the Siraro woreda with the Livelihoods for Resilience activity (funded by USAID Feed the Future/Bureau of Food Security). This collaboration was launched with a meeting in Hawassa with project staff from each organization and CRS's partner—MCS—on November 1, 2017. The initial meetings of the Overlap Management Committee and joint Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment and Learning technical working group meetings were held in December, with a Terms of Reference being developed from these meetings.

Following the signing of the MOU between MCS and SPIR, the Overlap Management Committee met on a quarterly basis to discuss strategic issues and collaborative frameworks. At the woreda level, activity staff met more frequently to address field-based challenges,

including government engagement, security, and programming. One of the key discussion points was the sequencing of interventions and the transition of VESAs to receive livelihoods support from CRS after their establishment and initial financial literacy training by SPIR. To lay the foundation for this transition, close examination was given to conducting on-farm, off-farm, and labor market assessments. In addition, MCS and SPIR staff also co-trained the Siraro woreda officials on the health curriculums of SURE+ and NSA. Because of a misunderstanding, SPIR began establishing and training youth groups, even though this was earlier agreed to be a CRS/MCS responsibility. It was decided that SPIR would complete the remaining youth groups following their youth training curriculum, but with the onboarding of new youth groups in FY19, CRS/MCS will take the lead using its youth curriculum.

In addition, SPIR signed an MOU with GTN to jointly cascade the training at kebele level for HEWs, teachers, religious leaders and HDAs by SPIR only. Furthermore, SPIR is collaborating with the Sekota declaration Phase - I (innovation phase). Out of the total of 16 woredas selected by the Sekota declaration in this phase, SPIR is implemented in 7 of these woredas in Amhara region. At national level, SPIR is working in collaboration with the Federal Sekota declaration team on program review and annual planning processes. A joint review meeting and field visit was conducted with the regional program delivery unit to see the implementation progress. SPIR also trained federal and regional staff of Sekota declaration in one of the innovative approaches that reduces the underweight children through home grown rehabilitation program (CPNP) and complements the existing CMAM and ENA programs.

In Amhara, SPIR went through several iterations of MOUs with CARE with regards to the overlapping woredas with their Livelihoods for Resilience programming in Meket and Wadla. Different from the approach in Siraro, SPIR and Livelihoods for Resilience are simultaneously doing livelihoods interventions in different kebeles in the same woredas. As Livelihoods for Resilience targeted their kebeles after SPIR had already established VESA groups and started programming in YRI, there were a number of coordination challenges of figuring out which groups to hand over to Livelihoods for Resilience from SPIR. This was further complicated by the fact that Livelihoods for Resilience met with the Regional Government in 2018 and agreed to 'give back' some of the kebeles to the government. In this case, SPIR then took up again support for VESA groups that SPIR originally established, handed over to Livelihoods for Resilience, but then received them back after the kebele was transitioned out of Livelihoods for Resilience. After the confusing sequence of events, the final agreement on kebele assignment and roles and responsibilities of each partner has now been finalized and signed by all parties.

## Commodity Management

Food assistance is an integral part of SPIR and contributes to the effectiveness of DFSA resilience and livelihood interventions by meeting the immediate food needs of chronically food-insecure households that may otherwise sell their assets and adopt other negative coping mechanisms to meet their personal and household short-term food needs.

During this reporting period, SPIR received more than 29,188 MT of wheat, pulse, and vegetable oil, including a 5% and 11% contingency at the woreda and federal levels, respectively.

The food was stored in four warehouses in Melkassa, Adama, Dire Dawa, and Kombolcha. In addition, SPIR received commodity transfers of 3,684.42 MT of wheat, 47.5 MT YSP, and 47.5 MT vegetable oil from CRS at the Adama and Kombolcha primary distribution points for meeting the additional requirements for the extended round support for project participants in Priority I hotspot woredas.

In FY18, a total of 34,394.16 MT of commodities was distributed to 509,714 program participants, of which 274,224 were PW beneficiaries, 55,372 were TDS beneficiaries, 37,048 were the 5% contingency beneficiaries, and 143,070 were extra round targeted beneficiaries. Out of the total 27,797.739 MT annual planned regular food distributions, 27,691.734 MT was given to the program target clients in FY18, which is more than 99.6% of the planned amount. In addition, the 5% contingency distribution was completed in all targeted operational woredas, and extra round distributions were conducted for some targeted woredas in the Amhara region. Each woreda's annual distribution summary for the PW, TDS, 5% contingency, and extra round food distribution are as follows:

Annual regular program food distribution (October 01, 2017 to September 30, 2018)

Woreda	PW Distribution (MT)				TDS Distribution (MT)			
	BNF #	Wheat	YSP	Oil	BNF #	Wheat	YSP	Oil
Siraro	-	-	-	-	1,360	183.600	18.360	5.508
Daro Lebu	17,295	733.770	73.377	22.013	2,826	332.205	33.221	9.966
Kurfachelle	14,053	1,264.395	126.440	37.932	3,026	408.510	40.851	12.255
Girawa	-	-	-	-	3,276	442.200	44.220	13.266
Chiro	-	-	-	-	2,314	311.025	31.103	9.331
Gemechis	26,291	2,362.410	236.241	70.872	2,889	389.445	38.945	11.683
Bugna	17,681	1,037.841	103.784	31.135	4,319	583.005	58.301	17.490
Lasta	36,070	2,120.163	212.016	63.605	6,611	887.430	88.743	26.623
Wadla	23,736	1,055.373	105.537	31.661	3,289	462.255	46.226	13.868
Meket	42,870	1,922.103	192.210	57.663	7,002	955.635	95.564	28.669
Sekota	36,461	2,709.345	270.935	81.280	7,122	960.900	96.090	28.827
Dahana	26,177	1,959.129	195.913	58.774	4,967	670.545	67.055	20.116
Gaz Gibla	13,878	1,036.095	103.610	31.083	3,466	467.910	46.791	14.037
Gazo	19,712	885.780	88.578	26.573	2,905	364.890	36.489	10.947
<b>Total</b>	<b>274,224</b>	<b>17,086.404</b>	<b>1,708.640</b>	<b>512.592</b>	<b>55,372</b>	<b>7,419.555</b>	<b>741.956</b>	<b>222.587</b>

Annual 5% Contingency food distribution (October 01, 2017 -September 30, 2018)

Woreda	Actual distribution
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	BNF #	Wheat	YSP	Oil
Kurfachelle	4,215	63.225	6.323	1.897
Chiro	811	18.600	3.220	0.313
Gemechis	5,836	225.750	38.315	3.939
Bugna	5,480	82.200	8.220	2.466
Lasta	7,214	108.210	10.821	3.246
Wadla	1,314	60.930	6.093	1.828
Meket	2,493	37.395	3.740	1.122
Sekota	3,443	136.245	13.625	4.087
Dahana	2,156	98.100	9.810	2.943
Gaz-Gibla	693	51.975	5.198	1.559
Gazo	3,393	50.895	5.090	1.527
Total	37,048	933.525	110.453	24.928

SPIR provided LMMS and Commodity Tracking System capacity-building training to 10 project staff members. The main objective of the training was to improve the staff's capacity, resolve challenges related to the use of the system, and implement and strengthen SPIR food assistance reporting. Moreover, SPIR provided continuous technical support to its partners to improve the quality of the reports.

In addition, post-distribution monitoring has been done in the SPIR implementation area to determine the quality of the program and the beneficiaries' opinions regarding the distribution process at the final distribution point. SPIR conducted focus group discussions and household interviews in 12 randomly selected kebeles. The results included the following:

- Interviewed beneficiaries confirmed that they have fully received their rations and entitlement in all rounds of food distribution conducted in their woreda.
- The program greatly helped the beneficiaries in closing their food gap and protecting their assets. Even when the transfers were delayed, beneficiaries reported that they had the opportunity to take out a loan from cereal crop wholesalers, given the guarantee that these transfers would eventually come, as a part of their payment, or right in the case of PDS or TDS.
- Most beneficiaries traveled to collect their rations on the scheduled days. However, in the few cases that the beneficiaries were unable to collect commodities or delegate another person to collect on their behalf, the commodities were stored at the distribution point, and the beneficiaries' rations were collected for later pick-up, including back-payment-entitled rations in distribution periods. This created trust between the beneficiaries and project.

- Participants raised concerns on late transfers, both late starting of distributions and increased gap (more than 30 days) in between rounds of food transfer. Some of the reasons behind these delays were identified as:
  - Late mobilization of beneficiaries for public work activities, which influences the timing of transfer
  - Late cash transfers that push food transfer months ahead as compared to the normal planned food transfer schedule
  - Scheduling of food distributions only on weekends in some areas contributes to the lengthiness of transfers
  - Beneficiary absenteeism on scheduled transfer dates due to lack of timely information dissemination
  - Late submission of verified and approved PASS and attendance sheet is a very common and serious issue that affects the timeliness of transfers in all DFSA operational woredas.

As such, SPIR has been working with Woreda level stakeholders to develop joint plans to improve the existing situation and to address the issues related to timeliness of transfer.

### Direct Participating HH by Sector

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
	Total Unique direct participating households (Sum B-O)	P1 Only	P1&2	P1&3	P1&4	P2 Only	P2&3	P2&4	P3 only	P3&4	P4 Only	P1&2&3	P1&2&4	P1&3&4	P1&2&3&4
Households	149,237	15,364	5,492	7,526	9,951	3,922			1509	12,895	75,113			9328	8,137

### Challenges, Successes, and Lessons Learned

There were numerous challenges, successes and lessons learned during the annual period. Some select points are listed below.

#### Challenges:

- There was a lack of improved breed pullets from nearby locations for farmers to engage in poultry value chain activities despite a large demand for the same. SPIR is facilitating the establishment of reliable day-old-chick grower agents that are able to be more responsive to the demand of local farmers and back-yard producers in its operational areas.

- Persistent Government staff turnover within PSNP4 institutions created a challenge for SPIR to effectively coordinate at various levels, especially in Oromia Region. New government staff orientation is now done on an ongoing basis, so as to keep SPIR stakeholders well-informed, especially at woreda and kebele levels.

### Successes

- Improved poultry provision and training for pregnant and lactating women has led to both increased household consumption of eggs and additional income for purchase of other household needs with the egg sales. With the establishment of agro-dealers and facilitation of linkages to day-old-chick growers, SPIR expects this activity to expand now through market mechanisms.
- Established and trained WASH clubs are actively undertaking their responsibilities, including regular hygiene and sanitation education sessions, and school compound and latrine cleaning campaigns.
- The intentional inclusion of both husbands and wives in VESA groups has led to increased appreciation and understanding on the part of men, many of whom previously reported criticizing and getting upset with their wives for going out to these meetings and putting money aside in a group for saving purposes. By hearing and discussing important nutrition messages together in the VESA group, the men also report a much stronger buy-in and support for associated behaviors at the household level.
- Strengthening local kebele-level grievance/appeal committees and providing them refresher trainings on the PSNP4 implementation policies and procedures has helped these committees to more effectively address and manage complaints at their level.

### Lessons Learned

- HDA volunteers are important spokespersons for many of the key BCC messages that SPIR is seeking to convey. Their strategic inclusion in VESA groups has created an opportunity for key health and nutrition messages to be naturally raised and included as a part of regular VESA group discussions and for PSNP participants to easily ask related follow-on questions.
- The Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are playing a significant role to speed up CLTSH interventions, with IDIRs (afosha) serving as local law enforcement bodies within the community when it comes to the newly established norms around ODF. Locally available CBOs will be identified at the beginning of triggering exercises in FY19 to assist in this role together with kebele/village level CLTSH committees.
- The need to prioritize youth in FMNR sites requires working closely with the Land Administration and Use office for land use certification for sustainable management and use. This will be done during the site selection, delineation, and management plan preparation phase during the first quarter of FY19.

## Annex I Update on the Learning Agenda

The learning agenda team of IFPRI, Hawassa University and Ambo University made substantial progress on the learning agenda in FY2018. The Learning Agenda Inception Report was delivered in Q1 FY2018. This report included five literature reviews, a summary of formative research activities and a detailed description of the design of the impact evaluation. The literature reviews addressed the following topics: (i) community approaches to improved nutrition and health, (ii) the impact of transfers on women's empowerment and intrahousehold decision-making, (iii) the economic lives of the poor in Ethiopia, (iv) the impact of the PSNP on agricultural productivity and the benefits of community assets, and (v) research on how improving aspirations of beneficiaries can improve wellbeing. The impact evaluation is designed as a randomized controlled trial with four treatment arms that compare overlapping livelihoods and nutrition components of SPIR of varying intensity to a control group of PSNP beneficiaries that do not receive any SPIR programming.

A learning agenda workshop was held in Addis Ababa in February 2018 to review research proposals from Ambo University and Hawassa University, discuss the timing of this research and to further plan for the impact evaluation baseline survey.

Much of FY2018 was devoted to conducting the baseline survey for the impact evaluation. Training for the baseline survey, conducted in February, involved a two-day training of trainers, followed by 10 days of enumerator training. A team of anthropometry specialists participated in the first two days of enumerator training, followed by 5 days of specialized training on taking height, weight and MUAC measurements of young children and adult females. Ethics approval for the survey was received from the IFPRI Internal Review Board.

The baseline survey was conducted in February – April 2018. The baseline household questionnaire collected information on primary and secondary outcomes, basic demographics, indicators that were likely to be predictive of the primary and secondary outcomes, and intermediate outcomes that are relevant for testing different causal mechanisms. GPS coordinates were also collected for each household to assist tracking of households over time for the midline and endline surveys and to allow measurements of distance to public service posts and markets. The baseline household interview took approximately two hours to complete and required the mother or primary female caregiver of the index child (“primary female”) and her husband or partner (“primary male”) of each sampled household to respond to different questionnaire modules. Primary female and male respondents were selected based on the selection of an index child under age 3. The final module of the survey, anthropometry measurements were conducted by trained anthropometry specialists and the index child and primary female were measured.

The baseline household survey questionnaire was administered by enumerators using tablets with a computer assisted personal interview (CAPI) programmed in CSPro. The CAPI enabled enumerators to easily access pre-loaded data, follow interview skip patterns according to interviewee responses, and back-up survey data after each day of interviews.

The baseline survey successfully collected data on 3,096 households in 193 kebeles in 13 woredas in Amhara and Oromia. Analysis of the baseline data was conducted in Q3 and Q4 of FY2018. The baseline report will be submitted in Q1 of FY2019.

Ambo University and Hawassa University began work on several complementary research projects in Q3 and Q4 FY2018. In Q4, a consultant provided training to the AU and HU teams on methodology for conducting qualitative surveys and analysis. Research teams from both universities undertook qualitative fieldwork in September 2018.

A draft report was produced by Hawassa University regarding the progress in understanding key behaviors of undernutrition; data analysis for a baseline survey and on the key determinants of undernutrition has been started jointly with WV

During the period, separate Youth and Labor Market Assessment and Gender Assessments were conducted, with the reports submitted to USAID for review. In addition, a workshop was held in March with participation coming from the learning agenda partner universities and the IFPRI and SPIR technical team to refocus the learning agenda for the SNNP Sidama pilot. Overall, there has been active discussions and collaboration, and as a result of which, the number of proposals has been scaled down to fit the purpose of the SPIR learning agenda

#### Learning exchange visits

A small team of project staff representing SPIR livelihood team members of ORDA, CARE, and World Vision attended a 3-day FFBS experience-sharing visit in Malawi. The visit allowed the program members to clearly understand the concept and practical implementation of FFBS on the ground. During the visit, the team gained practical learning about FFBS as an approach to ease integration among purposes, the importance of a seasonal calendar, FFBS financing, calculating a breakeven point, stakeholders' engagement, video extension, and other topics.

Likewise, SPIR's implementing partner management team representatives made a learning visit to the ENSURE Development Food Assistance Program, a USAID/FFP-funded program in Zimbabwe. The trip was organized with the objective of sharing best practices and Title II experiences with the consortia program in the areas of management structure and monitoring and evaluation systems. The trip allowed the team to learn the importance of a cohesive group for every project intervention, strong partnership and collaboration among implementing partners and stakeholders, decentralization of administrative, and having a robust web-based M&E system (LMMS, SAVIX, and MIS).

## Annex 2 Update on the SNNPR Sidama Pilot

Goal: To contribute to enhanced agricultural production, income, and nutrition for poor households.

Outcome 1: Improved small-holder production, productivity, and nutrition

According to the EDHS 2016 report, the pilot project woredas have been categorized by high stunting and underweight rates comprising 43.4% and 32.9%, respectively. To improve the nutrition condition of the woreda project participants, the project implemented various activities that could potentially contribute to minimizing micro-nutrient deficiency by introducing diversified and improved crop and livestock production technologies without compromising the natural resource base.

Furthermore, the project supported the target community by familiarizing them with different sustainable agriculture practices and techniques such as climate smart agriculture, conservation agriculture perma-garden methods, and nutrition sensitive agriculture methods. By the end of the reporting year 61.7% of the project participants applied these practices to their farmlands (as per the field monitoring report 2018). Further, the project facilitated training of 951 (223 female) project participants with short-term agricultural training, especially on diversified crop and livestock production through managing their natural resources. Of the 374 children under 5 whose mothers/caretakers received BCC interventions for essential IYCF behaviors, 33% of them were moderately malnourished children (6–59 months) and were referred to rehabilitation sessions.

Output 1: Promoted diversified and increased crop production

To promote year-round vegetable production and management and to promote water-use efficiency and soil treatment in households' backyards, SPIR trained 12 DAs and woreda experts who later helped teach these techniques to others. In addition, the project has given capacity-building training to 29 (11 female) agricultural DAs on improved and diversified crop production techniques.

After the training was given to the DAs, they disseminated their knowledge to 142 (32 female) project participants on diversified and improved crop production and management practices for the home gardening of vegetables and potatoes, enabling them to enhance their production and productivity and ensure their food security. After the training, SPIR distributed 200 quintals of improved potato seeds and 59 kg carrot, lettuce, and beetroot each, along with 400 different farm tools, such as rakes, spades, watering cans, and hoes, on cost-share basis through VESAs groups. The project purchased eight water pumps and supported VESAs with close monitoring and follow-up of FTCs. In collaboration with DAs and field officers, mini-assessments were conducted to identify the critical gaps at FTC in the 10 intervention kebeles. Two FTCs were selected and rehabilitated to make an adaptation trial to demonstrate sustainable agriculture. Improved and diversified crop varieties were provided to 200 (50 female) project participants in the case of the Malga woreda and they produced 700 quintals of maize and earned \$12,962 (350,000.00 ETB) from sale of the commodity. Some of the findings include absence of demonstration inputs, chairs, blackboards, tables for meeting halls and lack of readily available training manuals. Moreover, 1 FTC identified to be rehabilitated considering the poor structure of FTC offices in Malga.

Thirty Farmers were trained in perma-gardening and implemented in their backyards after the training. Those who adopted these practices have observed advantage such as when it comes to improve farmland productivity, moisture retention, and weed control. Mr. Shumba Siyamo is one of the project participants from the Aruma KA (Dibora VESA). When asked why he applied this method and the differences between it and the usual production systems, he said, "...this approach improves the soil's fertility and moisture retention and also increases plant population per bed."

#### Output 2: Promote diversified livestock production

To improve the production and productivity of the livestock sector,. SPIR equipped animal health workers with vet packages, capacity-building training for health DAs and experts and the promotion of different grass species for targeted communities/beneficiaries to improve feeding techniques. Specifically, SPIR trained 23 (four female) DAs on forage development and improved feeding techniques. As a result, the diseases and death of livestock have been reduced, improving production and productivity. Diseases such as Ovine Pateurulosis, Shoa pox, Black leg, African Horse Sicknesses have been reduced in incidence/prevalence according to Woreda Livestock and fishery office report, 2018 biannual report.

In this reporting period, the training on forage development was further disseminated to 193 (83 female) project participants in both woredas .One example of application of this training was W/ro Belaynesh who cultivated forage production (Desho grass) in her backyard by purchasing seeds from a nearby supplier using a 650 ETB loan that she took out from the Dibora VESA group.

In this reporting period, 225 PLW received 3-month-old chickens at a two to eight cockerel to hen ratio, along with 1 month of feed, on a cost share basis. The project participants have well managed the poultry provided; as we thought, these chickens have provided for nutrition interventions, and the beneficiaries are now members in the producer and marketing groups (PMGs).

#### Output 3: Promote improved storage and post-harvest technology

As per the Value Chain and Market Analysis study, livestock value chains were prioritized over crop-based value chains. As such, the post-harvest component was not as relevant for these interventions and the project focused on other critical areas in the selected livestock value chains.

#### Output 4: Facilitate the adoption of FMNR and climate smart methodologies

Improved communal land and agroforestry/forest management training was provided for 300 (102 female) program participants residing on degraded lands, and 105 (38 female) project participants were trained on climate smart agriculture practices that focus on empowering women.

Different agroforestry seeds, such as 100 kg of wanza, 15 kg of nim, 200 kg of gravilia, 50 kg of moringa, and 30 kg of kos trees, were distributed to the community and government nurseries to raise seedlings and plants in different degraded areas in the intervention kebeles, including Edo and Aruma. In addition, 5000 grafted avocado seedlings (Hass and Entinger) were

distributed to 816 (M=352) VESA members based on their land-holding size, and on average, each participant received six seedlings.

In collaboration with the woreda Agriculture and Natural Resource Management office, a 650-m gully was treated using a gabion check dam in three different project intervention areas (the Aruma and Edo kebeles from the Wondo genet woreda and the Sintaro kebele from the Malga woreda), and thus a total of 956 hectares of land were protected against the rampant intensification of gorges and gullies that could potentially contribute to land degradation. This intervention has protected 100 (72 female) VESA members and 330 (144 female) non-VESA target households that reside in the lower catchment and are continuously affected by flooding, siltation, erosion, and low productivity. Some of these households have tried to cultivate vegetables and forage now, even in the summer wet months. Regarding sustainability, we discussed the topic of smoothly transitioning to woreda agriculture and how the Agriculture and Natural Resource Management office could integrate biological conservation measures. Accordingly, the participants have integrated biological measures on the physical schemes constructed by the project following a discussion made with stakeholders in the Woredas. In additions, roles and responsibilities have been shared to sustainable manage the check dams already constructed.

Output 5: Increased utilization of nutrition-dense food for children under 2 years old, PLW, and adolescent girls

To empower multi-sectoral integration for the reduction of undernutrition in a sustainable manner, seven (2 female) HEW supervisors, 15 (5 female) school teachers, 39 (8 female) agriculture DAs, and 21 HDA/VESA leaders participated in IYCF, adolescent, and maternal nutrition training from both Melga and Wondo genet under the Sidama pilot program in partnership with GtN.

The training focused on infant and young child nutrition (exclusive breast feeding, complementary feeding, and cooking demonstrations), nutrition-sensitive agriculture, nutrition SBCC, and gender mainstreaming. After the training, these messages were shared with 224 PLW by HDAs, targeting the importance of vitamins, carbohydrates, proteins, minerals, and how to prepare nutritious meal by mixing different types of food items in a recommended amount. Because of the strong counseling and follow-ups from the HDAs, the behavior of the mothers has changed regarding child-feeding practices. Therefore, 224 (115 female) children under the age of 2 have been protected from malnutrition by consuming nutritious foods at an acceptable frequency, amount, and density.

Lessons were given to 223 (106 female) adolescents by trained VESA leaders, and school teachers taught an additional 1,191 (607 female) adolescents in school through newly established nutrition clubs. Intervention on adolescent nutrition has the potential to break a vicious cycle of intergenerational malnutrition, which can help maintain the healthy growth and development of girls.

The rehabilitation of underweight children (at the Melga woreda) has been on track thanks to the successful application of the CPNP approach to community-based underweight child rehabilitation. CPNP training was conducted for 20 (two female) HEW supervisors, and



woreda officers. After this, the training was disseminated to 11 HEW and 25 female HDA/VESA leaders. An initial assessment was conducted at the kebele level, and a total of 150 (72 male) children under 2 years old were screened for malnutrition. Out of 150 children, 50 (18 male) children (33%) displayed a moderate status and were admitted to a 2-week rehabilitation session.

Nutrition corners have been established in 8 health facilities, and two FTCs to provide materials to encourage demonstration of nutritious diet (menu) preparation from locally available foods.

Both trainings on improved sanitation and hygienic practices (including the safe disposal of animal feces) and on adolescent girls and maternal nutrition and demonstration will be cascaded to health workers and VESA members.

In an effort to integrate across sectors, 22 VESA members, 39 agriculture DAs, and 30 teachers were trained on the topics of IYCF, adolescents girls, and PLW nutrition for the reduction of undernutrition and its consequences, showing these beneficiaries how to consume agricultural products and poultry products for their children rather than selling all of their products. In addition, 25 VESA members were also trained on the rehabilitation of underweight children by using locally available foods.

A total of 82 (36 female) stakeholders participated in different ToT trainings, 374 children (181 male) took part in IYCF and undernutrition rehabilitation, and 1,414 adolescents (713 female) both in school and out of school were addressed by creating awareness on the importance of nutritious food consumption for healthy growth and development.

## Outcome 2: Strengthened Agricultural Market and Value Chain System

### Output 1: Facilitated promotion of income generation activities

SPIR conducted VESA group methodology training for 76 (14 female) agricultural DAs and cooperative extension agents and 22 (three female) VESA volunteers. Afterwards, these trainees helped establish and trained 50 VESA groups composed of 1,541 (829 female) members and initiated trainings on financial literacy, business management skills, and IGA identification and selection. After the training was provided, SPIR facilitated 177 (626 female) members to engage in IGAs based on their interests. VESA groups have mobilized savings of 684,536 ETB (\$25,353) in loan funds and 88,847 ETB (\$3,290) in social funds. Out of the mobilized total loan funds, the members have dispersed 487,359 ETB (\$18,050) have been dispersed as loans for 1,177 (626 female) VESA members or 414 ETB (\$15) on average per member. From the collected social funds, 17,330 ETB (\$64) was provided to 88 members who have faced different social problems.

The types of on-farm IGAs in which members have participated include goat, poultry, and vegetable and potato production; other off-farm types of IGAs include selling fruit, vegetable, milk, kale or local cabbage, false banana, coffee, and livestock product trades; a significant

number of VESA members have also been engaged in non-farm IGAs, such as trading in spices, kerosene, sugar, salt, cooking oil, and other consumer goods.

Most women members of VESA who are engaged in off-farm and non-farm IGAs prefer VESA over traditional savings. W/ro Alemitu Ayele, a widow and mother of five children, received a loan from her VESA and engaged in petty trade. She is making a profit from this activity after attending training on financial literacy, small business skills, and IGA identification and selection. She stated the following:

“I am a widow and am raising five children whose father died a few years ago. Previously, I used to save my money in a traditional savings system like the Iqub, from which members can get loans randomly through chance by a drawing that occurs on a weekly or monthly basis. So this way of loan provisioning is not convenient for one who needs money to engage in an IGA and wants to generate income on a weekly basis to cover household expenditures. So it was very difficult for me to get a loan from my own Iqub. After World Vision introduced the other savings type in our village, which provided loans on a monthly basis without any preconditions, it was not up to chance anymore.

Now, my elder boy (Habtamu Hagiriso, who is 15) and I are members of the Kurmane VESA group. After I saved 420 ETB, I borrowed 930 ETB to expand my petty trade that I conduct in my village. Besides accessing loans, I also could learn about how I can manage my earnings, how I can handle my customers, and how I can calculate my profits and allocate my earnings for different purposes. This year, I have been saving in both the Iqub and VESA. In the future, when my Iqub is phased-out and completed its cycle, I plan to shift all of my savings into VESA.”

Another project participant stated, “Before I joined VESA, I couldn’t save money, even during the



**Ato Abebe Dalech while herding his goats**

harvesting season when my earnings were high. All my life, I have never had any plan for how to save. When I earned money from a sale of agricultural product during the harvesting period, I used the money. After this project came to my village and trained me about the benefits of saving, money handling at the household level, and how we can run a petty trade, my idea of what it meant to save completely changed. Now, I am actively involved in saving on a weekly basis; as a result, I have saved 750 ETB over the last 8 months and also have borrowed threefold of my savings amount (2,235 ETB) from the group and purchased four goats for rearing. If I manage these goats for at least 1 year, I will get more than 5,500 ETB. So I can earn around 3,000 ETB within

1 year; imagine how much this amount could be if I kept the goats for 2 or 3 years. Look, this is a small amount of money that I have saved on a weekly basis, but I used to spend my money on unnecessary needs, like drinking a cup of coffee per day.”

Over the last 2 months, 16 VESA groups with 482 (261 female) members have made their own share-out meetings; and distributed 310,051 ETB (\$11,483) to their members. On average, each member has received 643 ETB (\$23.8), and the members who received their money from the groups allocated it toward different IGAs, especially for poultry, shoat, petty trade, and input purchasing, which is supporting the established PMGs under the value chain interventions (shoat and poultry).

Specifically, 57 (32 female) VESA member bought 63 sheep, 64 (51 female) VESA members bought 385 poultry, and six (three female) members bought cattle (four heifers and two oxen). This helped them build their assets and their resilience against shocks as a family and community in general.

The shared-out VESA also started its second cycle of savings, , with 14,680 ETB (\$543) already collected in loan funds and 846 ETB (\$31) in social funds, Loans of 10,510 ETB (\$389) have thus far been provided for 22 (12 female) members. This has demonstrated that the VESA model is self-replicating and is sustaining its operations.

As a result of project initiated VESA groups, three VESA groups with 91 (41 female) members were spontaneously organized based on their own interest without any initiation from the project, and mobilized around 7,000 ETB (\$259) from their members. Ato Henok Sanbato, a resident of Aruma Kebele, is a VESA member and described his feelings of being a member of the VESA group in the following way:

“A year ago, when people began gathering in my village, I ignored them and went on with my activities. In fact, I heard the reason why they were gathering: to form a savings group, which I never heard of before and didn’t expect it to become such a strong functional group in our village. Then, I didn’t have any interest in saving money in such a group because I thought my money might be taken by someone else. Months ago, I heard one of my neighbors, who is a member of the Lopho VESA group, talking about the loan he received. So I asked him how he got the loan from his VESA and what the main criteria are for accessing loans. He told me that the requirements were being a member and being involved actively in saving in the group. One of my problems in every cropping season is a lack of timely credit access for purchasing the inputs needed to run my farm. Immediately after I heard this, I joined their meeting and asked the group if I could be a member. But they refused me because their bylaws stated they couldn’t allow the addition of another person at that time. So I decided to mobilize and convince my neighbors to organize into groups similar to the Lopho VESA group so that we could provide savings and credit services. I spent a few days convincing my neighbors, and finally, 18 household heads and their spouses were willing to organize into a VESA group. Now, we have organized the Dureti VESA group, with our members totaling 33 (18 husbands and 15 wives). Ato Eyamo Edaso and W/ro Mulunesh H/Yesus, the VESA village agents, have provided us with basic training on the methodology. After we received training on the project methodology, we elected a committee of five members. Not only this, but we have also developed a by-law that governs us. We decided on 10 ETB (\$0.37) being the share value of the group, and recently, we have saved 2,050 ETB (\$75); all of the members have become energetic to save regularly.”

Another key focus during this period was providing orientation on the micro-franchising business model. Here, training was given to project staff and the staff of pertinent partners. DAs and VESA volunteers were also trained on micro-franchise basic activities such as salesperson selection, training of sales women, whole seller selection, and route identification. Based on this, 49 women were trained as salespersons and were taught basic concept of and skills to start a business immediately after necessary agreements were finalized from their distributors and whole salers.

#### Output 2: Promote local value chain of potential agricultural products

Shoat fattening and poultry production were both identified as priority value chains during the Sidama pilot value chain assessment. The project also has conducted an assessment to identify potential input suppliers for the selected value chain commodities who can supply pullet, poultry feed, medication, and other inputs.

To implement the value chain component in the pilot area, the VESA discussion module that contains two value chain discussions was conducted in all 50 VESAs, and VESA members were able to get a full understanding of the concept of a value chain. The benefits of being part of a value chain, requirements for engaging in the value chain, and how to choose value chain commodities were discussed. Afterwards, VESA members discussed and selected their own value chain commodities.

To facilitate value chain engagement and provide marketing and quality services delivery to satisfy the buyers and enhance the bargaining power of project participants, PMGs were established in both woredas. Accordingly, 10 poultry PMGs with 628 (553 female) members have been established in both woredas, and five shoat PMGs with 127 (21 female) members have been established in the Malga woreda. To make the established PMGs functional, project participants who select their value chain commodities and members of the PMG (both shoat and poultry) have been trained. According to this 430 (384) poultry PMG members have been trained on poultry production, poultry disease identification and control, poultry house construction, and general poultry management. In addition to this 127 (21 female) shoat PMG members have been trained on shoat fattening techniques, forage development, and shade construction.

An agro-dealer was identified and an extended market agent model (for the poultry value chain) put in place to improve the project participants' access to quality inputs. In addition to this, there are seven pullet growers who have been identified in two woredas (three in Malga and four in Wondogenet) who are linked to the project for obtaining 45-day old chickens and feeds. In addition to this 40 (seven male) poultry PMG members have collected 19,150 ETB (\$708) from their members during their VESAs share-out, and they have been linked to pullet suppliers, where they have purchased and distributed 319 pullets to their members.

Here, the learning agenda on nutrition was conducted in partnership with Hawassa University. DBC assessments were carried out in both woredas, and analysis results are due in November 2018. The preliminary results identified some determinant factors for behaviors associated with the nutrition practices of CU2 and PLW in the target community.