

**Ethiopians Fighting Against Child Exploitation (E-
FACE) Project**

**Study on the Effectiveness of Youth
Employment Interventions and the
Creation of Sustainable Employment
Opportunities for Youth
A Research Paper**

**By HESA International Consultancy and Training Services
PLC**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction: This research report was prepared and submitted to World Vision Ethiopia (WVE) on behalf of HESA International Consultancy and Training Service PLC. The research was conducted over a three month period from July – September 2015 and involved over 440 youth participants. .

Research Objective: This research helps decision-makers review and analyze data on the effects of the project's youth employment interventions. As indicated in the project's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP, p.29), the E-FACE (Ethiopians Fighting Against Child Exploitation) youth employment intervention effectiveness research helps decision making bodies determine whether the strategic objective of improving the child labor knowledge base in Ethiopia was effective or not. This study is one of the related research interventions set to address key information gaps on child labor-related issues. As such, it assessed the effectiveness of these interventions in enhancing employment opportunities and reducing work place hazards in the weaving sector, as well as other measures.

Research Methods: To undertake this cross-sectional descriptive research, the firm utilized both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select respondents from two regions (Addis Ababa [AA] City Administration and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region [SNNPR]), three zones (Gullele sub-city, Gamo Gofa and Wolaita zones), two target intervention groups (youth and business owners) and three E-FACE project partners (WVE, Mennonite Economic Developments Associates [MEDA] and Mission for Community Development Program [MCDP]). The research utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data collection tools included literature review and review of project documents, key informant interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, direct and simple observation and case story documentation. The research team utilized simple statistical methods, such as tables, charts, figures, percentiles and cross-tabulation correlation, to capture and analyze the quantitative data. For qualitative data, researchers used tally sheets to collect information from respondents of key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) to identify different viewpoints and generate a summary of core ideas. After disaggregating all the data, the research team triangulated the findings and generated this comprehensive report.

Findings Overview: All the measurement indicators and information collected from the beneficiaries, stakeholders and project implementation staff in this research showed that the project has been effectively designed and achieved its overall goals and objectives. The project has contributed to the national initiative to reduce exploitative child labor. The percentage of target beneficiaries still engaged in child labor, following the E-FACE project youth employment intervention, decreased by 99% compared to the baseline value and the project successfully eliminated any beneficiary participation in the Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL). Key contributing factors to this reduction in child labor included economic empowerment and increased opportunities for youth, a reduced work day and improved working

conditions, enhanced child labor legal frameworks and increased community awareness on issues of child labor.

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) intervention has opened doors to self-employment for the majority of youth. Additionally, youth's wages have also changed significantly. 56% of the responding youth have experienced an increase in their wages after the project intervention with most reporting not only an increase but an actual start in receiving wages. There has also been a great improvement in the saving culture, seen in the Village Savings Youth Associations (VSAYs) and expressed aspirations of youth in the FGDs and KIIs.

Furthermore, the project has also created strong partnerships with other NGOs, government officials and businesses, as evidenced in the integration of project activities into their partners' strategies and work plans, leading to sustainable, positive outcomes for youth.

Key Learnings and Recommendations

- Provision of refresher and additional advanced support, such as market linkages, work spaces and shade access, is essential for youth participating in life skills training.
- Strengthen linkages between Youth Agri-Sales Agents and promoters as well as bazaars and exhibitions.
- Extend complementary opportunities for TVET trained youths such as access to additional input suppliers and seed money that can help them to start their own businesses.
- Continue flexibility in future project designs to mitigate unforeseen challenges and adverse effects, as exemplified by the Youth Agri-Sales Agents (YASA) project model. The YASA program met its overall objective to redirect vulnerable youth from exploitative activities and provide them with decent income generating opportunities. However, most of the youth operated their businesses in markets rather than through the agent-to-farmer model originally developed for the YASA program. This developed as a result of the cultural and social realities faced by youth (i.e., lack of confidence, difficulty locating vendors and an unwillingness of brokers to work with youth). Those seeking to implement a similar program should approach the sales agent model as a guideline and evaluate future project designs in context to ensure local realities can be addressed in a flexible manner.

Lessons from E-FACE project Youth Employment Interventions tell us that program leadership and team building has a paramount effect for project success. It is also worth noting that it is critical that all actors fully understand the key problem the project seeks to address to ensure full collaboration and a sense of ownership.

ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| ADP | Area Development Program |
| BDS | Business Development Services |
| BO | Business Owners |
| BoFED | Bureau of Finance and Economic Development |
| BoLSA | Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs |
| BoWCYA | Bureau of Women Children and Youth Affairs |
| CL | Child Labor |
| CMEP | Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan |
| CPC | Child Protection Committee |
| CSA | Charities and Societies Agency |
| DBMS | Direct Beneficiary Monitoring System |
| ECCE | Early Childhood Care & Education Program |
| EEPCO | Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation |
| E-FACE | Ethiopians Fighting Against Child Exploitation |
| FECC | For Every Child Campaign |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GGIE | Geneva Global Inc. Ethiopia |
| GOE | Government of Ethiopia |
| GRAD | Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development |
| GTP | Growth and Transformation Plan |
| HABP | Household Asset Building Program |
| HESA | Health and Educational Service Activities |
| HH | Heads of Households |
| HICoTS | HESA International Consultancy and Training Service PLC |
| IAs | Implementing Agencies |
| IGA | Income Generating Activities |
| ILAB | Bureau of International Labor Affairs |
| ISEAL | International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling Alliance |
| KA | Kebele Administration |
| KII | Key Informants Interview |
| LFA | Logical Framework Approach |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MCB | Ministry of Capacity Building |
| MCDP | Mission for Community Development Program |
| MEDA | Mennonite Economic Development Associates |

| | |
|---------|--|
| MFI | Micro-Finance Institution |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| MOLSA | Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs |
| NAP | National Action Plan |
| NGO | Nongovernmental Organization |
| OCFT | Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking |
| OSH | Organizational Safety and Health |
| OVC | Orphan and Vulnerable Child |
| PAVE | Pathways Advancing Viable Education |
| PSNP | Productive Safety Net Program |
| PTSAs | Parent Teacher Associations |
| REMSEDA | Regional Micro and Small Enterprise Development Agency |
| RUSCCO | Rural Savings and Credit Cooperatives |
| SNNPR | South Nations Nationalities and People's Region |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Science |
| SRP | School Readiness Program |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| TPR | Technical Project Reports |
| TVET | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USDOL | U.S. Department of Labor |
| VSAY | Village Savings Association for Youth |
| VSLA | Village Savings and Loan Associations |
| WCYA | Women, Children and Youth Affairs |
| WFCL | Worst Forms of Child Labor |
| WFTO | World Fair Trade Organization |
| WVE | World Vision Ethiopia |
| WVI | World Vision International |

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Conceptual Framework

The following conceptual framework for the youth component of the E-FACE project has been adapted from the Theory of Change section in the Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) for use in the research component.

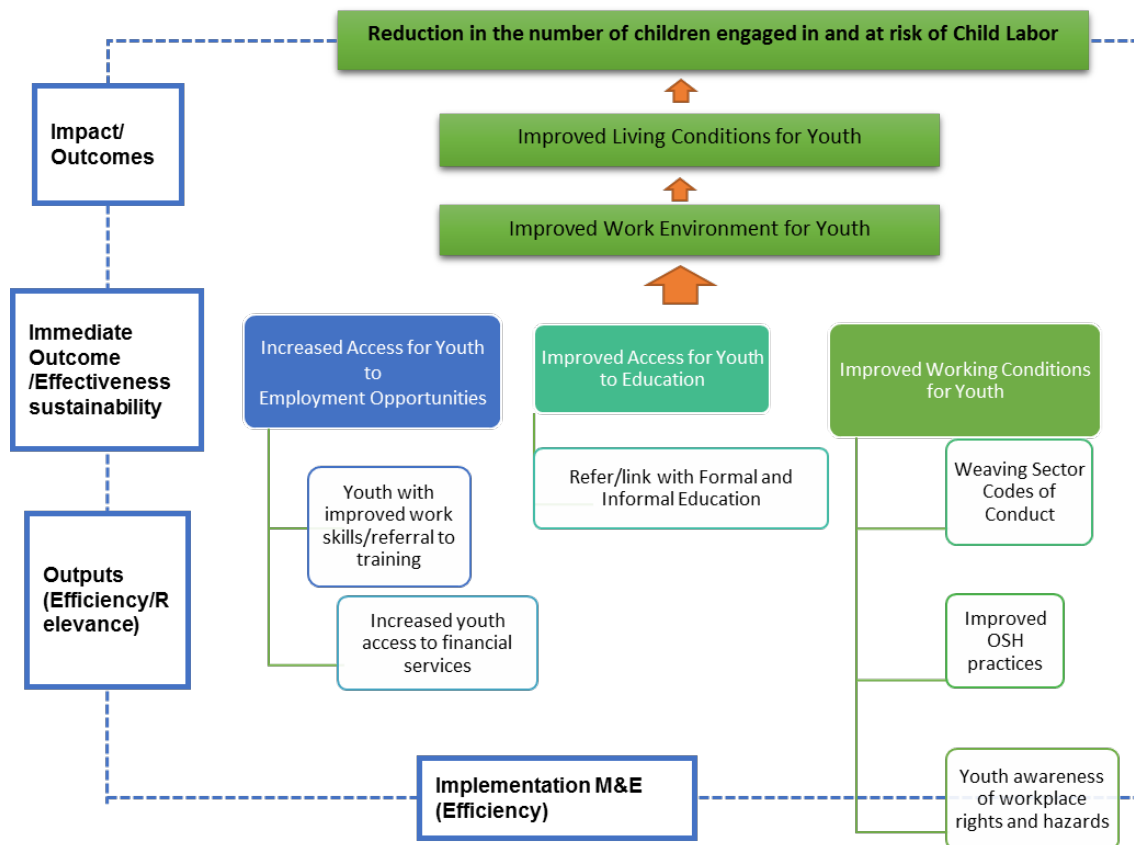


Figure 1: The Study Conceptual Framework Source: Adapted from the E-FACE project Theory of Change

The cumulative effect of these project outputs and outcomes in turn resulted in achieving the broad goal of reducing the number of children engaged in and at risk of engagement in child labor in the weaving and agricultural industry. This can be attributed primarily to improvements in the working environment and living conditions of targeted youth.

Thus, this has validated the project’s conceptual framework and is helpful in mapping the research findings to assess the degree and level of both internal and external factors on the project outputs and outcomes.

Definition of Terms and Research Questions

Different scholars, especially the DAC,¹ stated relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as “Criteria for Evaluating/Assessing Development Assistance” and the “Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance.” In brief, the definition of these terms in the context of this project are as follows

1. **Relevance:** Relevance is about the extent to which the project activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. For example, in assessing the relevance of the E-FACE project youth employment interventions, we saw the validity of the project idea from the Theory of Change, the project budgeting, location and beneficiaries’ selection criteria and process. The research has considered the following questions throughout the process: To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid?
2. Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the project’s goal and objectives?
3. Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

Effectiveness: Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which the project attains its objectives. In evaluating the effectiveness of the E-FACE project Youth Employment Interventions, the team considered the following questions:

1. To what extent were the objectives achieved/are likely to be achieved?
2. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or failure of the objectives?

Efficiency: Efficiency measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs to see whether the most efficient process is undertaken.

While assessing the efficiency of the interventions, it is useful to consider the following questions:

1. Were youth employment intervention activities effective?
2. Were the objectives of youth employment interventions achieved or did they meet the target?
3. Were the E-FACE project youth employment interventions implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative options?

Impact/Attributions of Change: The positive and negative changes brought by a youth development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. While evaluating the impact of youth employment intervention of the E-FACE project, the research considered the following questions:

¹Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD-DAC), commonly called DAC. The terms accessed on 28 Dec 2011 at website: http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1_1,00.html#

1. What has happened and changed as a result of the E-FACE project youth employment intervention in the lives of targeted youth and business owners?
2. What effects have occurred as a result of the execution of the targeted youth employment intervention on direct and indirect beneficiaries, collaborating actors and the surrounding community in terms of knowledge, attitudes and practices to reduce CL?
3. How many and which category of youth have been positively or negatively affected or impacted most in terms of livelihood, occupational safety and health (OSH) and behavior?

Sustainability: Sustainability, as criteria, concerned with measuring the benefits/results of the interventions that are likely to continue after the withdrawal of donor funding. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. In assessing the sustainability of the interventions, the team considered the following questions:

1. To what extent might the results in the lives of individuals and households of the E-FACE youth employment interventions continue following the discontinuation of donor funding to the E-FACE project?
2. Are there any outcomes from the E-FACE project youth employment intervention that will continue after the project ends?
3. What phase-out strategies and hand-over mechanisms are in place to support the project intervention to ensure its impact continues after the E-FACE project ends?

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

This report is submitted by HESA International Consultancy and Training Service PLC, the contracted firm that conducted this research. The research is one component of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) funded E-FACE project drawn from the terms of reference (ToR) developed by WVE in partnership with MEDA and MCDP and the ensuing inception report prepared for this specific task as part of the service contract with HICoTS PLC.

1.2. Country Situation

According to the literature review completed by WVE and other E-FACE Project partners, youth (working age children 14-17) in Ethiopia struggle to find decent work opportunities and many engage in the Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL)² despite the efforts of the government of Ethiopia and partnering non-government bi-lateral and multi-lateral actors. Youth are often employed in hazardous workplaces that operate below the minimum organizational safety and health (OSH) standards and often engage in exceedingly difficult jobs, both physically and without sufficient rest (31%). The situation is worse for those working in the informal sectors. According to research by the University of Gondar (2013) conducted in Central and Southern Ethiopia and focused on the weaving, farming and fishing sectors, youth sleep in their workplace (10%), work in poorly ventilated environments (36%), have no, or poor, access to toilets (37% and 52% respectively) and do not have adequate food (21%). Many are deprived of education; notably, children working in the informal weaving sector have illiteracy rates of 35%. Others are lured and trafficked on the premise of a better education and work opportunities.

To mitigate the aforementioned concerns, the government of Ethiopia has sought to improve employment opportunities for youth, increase access to education, improve workplace environments as well as occupational safety and health and improve social protection. Some of these efforts have manifested legislatively, as seen in Article 36 of the Ethiopian Constitution, Labor Proclamation 377/2003 (employee/employer relationship), Vital Event Registration Policy, Ratification 21 of the 180 ILO conventions to date, Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention (concerning the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and child exploitation among others). Additionally, there have been nationwide action to reduce human trafficking. The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) addresses child protection and development issues, especially in its Health Sector Development Program IV (2011-2015) and Education Sector Development Program IV (2011-2015). The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) also approved the National Plan of Action to eliminate the WFCL and issued a directive on prohibited jobs for young workers (2013).

² Research by University of Gondar (2013), Research and Documentation on Workplace Hazards and How to Regulate Standards in the Formal Sectors in Central and Southern Ethiopia

1.3. The E-FACE Project

The E-FACE project is funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), Office of Child Labor and Human Trafficking (OCFT). The project is being implemented by a consortium of three NGOs, namely World Vision Ethiopia (WVE), Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) & the Mission for Community Development Program (MCDP).

The E-FACE project has been addressing the challenges facing youth through the creation of educational opportunities, facilitation and support of technical and vocational training and the provision of financial services, including Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), business development services (BDS), Microfinance Institution (MFI) linkages. Additionally, the E-FACE project has enhanced OSH via training for business owners and youth and improved workplaces through providing weaving input materials, improved weaving facilities and incentives for business owners who employ youth. Provision of technical training, market linkages and awareness raising services for agri-sales agents is also provided. These efforts have been improving the marketability of youth to successfully start their own businesses or find better work employment opportunities. The E-FACE project also works to reduce the Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL) through creating educational opportunities for children who are at risk of or engaged in child labor, improving the livelihoods of their families, enhancing social protection systems and increasing the communities' knowledge base on child labor. As defined by the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 182, the WFCL are “(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery...; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution...; pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities; (d) work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.”

In addition to ILO 182's working definition, E-FACE will consider any productive, exploitative or household work that prohibits children from attaining an education through formal, vocational, or alternative learning programs as exploitative child labor.

Project Goal and Objectives

Goal: E-FACE aims to sustainably reduce the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labor in seven woredas and two city administrations in Gamo Gofa and Wolaita zones of SNNPR and five woredas of Gullele sub-city in Ethiopia; with special emphasis on the traditional weaving sector.

Purpose: Children engaged in exploitative forms of child labor and at risk of the worst forms of child labor are educated, improving their household's livelihoods and prospects.

Expected Project Outputs:

1. Reducing exploitative child labor through the provision of direct education services, including provision of school materials for children to attend formal education, education strengthening services, social protection, and promotion of sustainable livelihoods and improving youth employment services.
2. Strengthening policies and institutional capacity on child labor, education, sustainable livelihoods and social protection.
3. Raising awareness on exploitative child labor, its root causes, and the importance of education, social protection and reasonable work standards for youth of legal working age.
4. Supporting research, evaluation and the collection and dissemination of reliable data on child labor, its root causes, and/or effective strategies to improve knowledge base on child rights.
5. Promoting long-term sustained efforts and strategies to combat exploitative child labor and improve livelihoods.

Specific Project Objectives

- Increase access to quality education services through the creation of formal and informal educational opportunities for children, improved school facilities, increased teachers' pedagogical skills and strengthened community based clubs and associations.
- Improve household livelihoods through increased income generating options for households, implementing value chains and directing households to government social protection plans.
- Improve youth work environment by promoting OSH issues in their work place and creating youth employment opportunities.
- Improve policy environment for education and child labor reduction through promoting existing child rights policy and addressing child labor issues and including them in national, regional and local level work plans, budgets and programming.
- Increase institutional capacity at local and national levels to address child labor.
- Improve access to and enhance social protection systems for children at risk of or engaged in child labor through creating local level by-laws and improved law enforcement vigilance on child trafficking.
- Increase awareness on the causes, effects and consequences of child labor at local, regional and national levels.
- Improve collection of accessible and reliable data to inform practice and policy to reduce child labor through research and dissemination of valuable information.

Project Target Areas and Groups/Beneficiaries

In Ethiopia, the E-FACE project operates in four woredas and one town administration of Gamo Gofa Zone, three woredas and one town administration of Wolaita zone and five woredas of Gullele sub-city in Addis Ababa City Administration. The specific locations are as follows:

1. Gamo Gofa Zone: Chench, Dita, Arbaminch Zuria, Arbaminch Town, Western Abaya
2. Wolaita Zone: Soddo Zuria, Soddo Town, Damot Gale, Humbo
3. Addis Ababa Gullele sub-city: woreda 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6

The main targets of the project are children aged 5-17 years who are at risk of or engaged in child labor and their households who reside in 14 selected districts of SNNPR and Addis Ababa City Administration. The project aims to serve 20,000 children at risk of or engaged in child labor and 7,000 households in the target areas.

The project beneficiaries include households with children at-risk of child labor and/or engaged in child labor, children already engaged in child labor, as well as their families, communities, schools, policy makers and leaders in the targeted areas. This group includes teachers, parents, local government officials, community leaders, existing NGOs, community based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), trade unions and employers.

1.4. E-FACE Youth Employment Intervention Activities

The project's youth programming has different intervention targets set for the program. . Major activities under this intervention are;

1. **Occupational Safety and Health Support:** Occupational safety and health (OSH) training was facilitated for 1,523 business owners employing 2,000 youth. The goal of the training topics was to create improved work places that are clean and organized and also improve work environments related to communication, payment and educational opportunities for the working youth related to their employment such as vocational training or apprenticeships for working youth. After the training, the business owners and youth attended a joint Code of Conduct (CoC) workshop in which business owners and youth mutually agreed to implement the CoC which stipulates OSH improvements in their work places.
2. **Business Owner Incentives:** The business owner incentives plan rewards the compliance of business owners who apply and implement the CoC standards. The main activities are
 - **Financial Services for Business Owners (BO);** the project now has 80 BO Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) groups with total membership of 942 BOs.
 - **Business Development Services:** In coordination with the Textile Industry Development Institute (TIDI), business owners accessed training on topics such as quality production, product

development and entrepreneurship. In addition to the training provided, this linkage with TIDI allows for engagement in its future plans for growth in this sector. The training has motivated participating business owners to utilize resources efficiently, improve customer service as well as time management and financial skills.

- **Work Place Improvements and Access to Cheaper Inputs:** After CoC compliance assessments, business owners received inputs for work place improvement including the following:
 - i. Lighting improvement support (solar lights and transparent roof sheets) to improve work place conditions. Business owners contributed their own funds to paint their walls in bright colors to provide brighter and more welcoming spaces for workers. This has resulted in a reduction in the strain on workers' eyes, necks, shoulders and backs and has also inspired business owners as the work space fosters productivity and creativity. .
 - ii. Weaving technology upgrades such as loom components were promoted using voucher subsidy schemes; business owners procured these technologies and accessed loom components for their weaving work with the intention of cutting down the time needed to produce items
 - **Linkage with Market Players:** To create market access for weavers that complied with the CoC standards, weavers were linked with traditional cloth traders and designers.
3. **Education Intervention:** This includes Building Skills for Life (MEDA's 100 hour training program, provided to 245 youth) and access to financial services including the Village Saving Association for Youth (VSAY), links to Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) and business skills training as well as support in the form of uniforms and school supplies.
 4. **Youth Agri-Sales Agents:** The E-FACE project targets rural youth (age 14-17) for a youth economic strengthening interventions with the intention of providing them access to safe and reliable work. Under this intervention, the project targeted a total of 250 youth in the Gamo Gofa and Wolaita zones of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR).

To date, through September 2015, the project has undertaken the following youth employment interventions:

Table 1: Project Beneficiaries by Results Category

| Youth Employment Interventions - Indicators/Descriptions (as of September 2015) | # of Project Beneficiaries |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Youth linked to financial institutions | 858 |
| Youth linked to VSAYs | 1,730 |
| Number of Building Skills for Life (100 hours) youth training participants | 245 |
| Number of youth targeted for formal education (not including vocational) | 2,495 |
| Number of high-risk youth participating in vocational programming | 908 |
| Youth Engaged in Rural Income Generating Activity as agri-sales agents ^[1] | 250 |
| Occupational safety and health support for business owners | 1,523 |
| Access to finance facilitated for households | 6,336 |
| Number of business owners who introduce at least two OSH practices to mitigate workplace hazards | 1,066 |

^[1]These youth are already assessed in the outcome survey undertaken by MEDA.

1.5. Effectiveness Assessment Research

The Research Purpose: To assess the effectiveness of youth employment interventions to enhance employment opportunities that contributes to organizational learning and improve the national knowledge base.

Objectives of the Research: The overall objective of the research is to assess and measure the effectiveness of E-FACE youth employment interventions in achieving the intended outcomes. The specific objectives of the research are to assess:

- **Effectiveness:** The effectiveness of the major youth interventions in creating sustainable employment opportunities for the youth via:
 - Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) support;
 - Progressive incentives for business owners or employers to improve their work places and ensure occupational safety and health;
 - Educational interventions (Building Skills for Life, TVET and school support);
 - Access to financial services for youth;
 - Economic strengthening support through youth agri-sales agents.
- **Outcomes:** Assessing the intended and unintended effects as a result of the implementation of these interventions to identify:
 - The percentage of targeted children of legal working age in businesses with minimum occupational safety and health standards;
 - The percentage of targeted children of legal working age that complete informal education programs;
- **Efficiency:** Assessing the cost effectiveness and timeliness of delivered services.
- **Sustainability:** Assessing the interventions technical, organizational, social and financial sustainability.

Furthermore, the research also assesses:

- Project documents
- Demographic information of target youth, intensity of the training, type and place of employment, working conditions, measures skill gaps, the youth's perception of the interventions' qualities and relevancy, relevance of the interventions against the labor market demand, change in the lives of the youth, and sustainability of these interventions for the future marketability and entrepreneur skills; and
- The extent to which these interventions aligned with and influenced government initiatives (policy initiatives, directives, and structures);

This intent of the research was to also develop recommendations and a way forward for improvements to the interventions (for organizational learning purpose) and suggest alternative youth employment interventions.

Significance of the Study:

- This research highlights the effectiveness of youth employment intervention programs (e.g. occupational safety and health support, youth education and access to financial services and engagement in income generating activities);
- The outputs of this research are expected to provide valuable information to assess the appropriateness of youth intervention projects and increase the national knowledge base on the worst forms of child labor;
- The study could inform the effective implementation of child labor conventions, policies, laws and programming at all levels (national, regional and district);
- The findings and recommendations could also help the E-FACE project implementing partners (WVE, MCDP and MEDA) to develop other youth employment interventions to improve future programming in the Ethiopia's weaving sector.

Finally, this study, acts as a research intervention to address key information gaps on child labor-related issues and to also assist decision making bodies determine whether the strategy used to improve the knowledge base on child labor in Ethiopia has been effective (See Project CMEP, p. 29).

II. Research Methods

2.1. The Study Design

The research is a cross sectional descriptive study and, by design, utilizes mixed quantitative and qualitative research methods of data collection to assess the contributions of the youth employment intervention. The research team chose this approach over an evaluative approach which instead focuses on factors like relevance (structure), effectiveness, outcomes/attributions and sustainability of achieved results. All beneficiaries, including both BOs and youth, are considered as source population (N) in this effectiveness research.

To undertake this cross-sectional descriptive research, the firm utilized both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select respondents from primary and secondary sources for the data collection. In light of this, the major data collection tools include literature and document reviews, direct and simple observation, key informant interviews(KII), questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGD) and case story documentation. The main methods of data analysis used for the present study was simple

statistical methods of preliminary analysis by using tables, charts, figures, percentiles and cross-tabulation correlation.

2.2. Data Sources

Primary Data Source: Primary data was generated from direct project beneficiaries through questionnaire, KIIs, FGDs, and direct observation. The direct beneficiaries are of legal working age (14-17), child laborers, employed youth and other business owner groups in project target areas and other direct project stakeholders.

Secondary Data Source: Secondary data collected through literature review from available government sources including at the federal, regional, woreda and kebele level and from Bureaus and offices of the Women, Children and Youth Affairs (WCYA), Education offices, Regional Micro and Small Enterprise Development Agency (REMSEDA), Agriculture, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), related literature reviews, online resources, project offices (WVE, MEDA, MCDP, Charities and Societies Agency (CSA), elders, community representatives, CBOs and FBOs, etc.

2.3. Study Unit Selection Criteria

The study units are representatives of each target group addressed through different data collection tools. These are selected based on the following criteria:

- 1) Interventions and/or services delivered to youth in target intervention areas
- 2) Number of beneficiaries
- 3) Types of interventions undertaken
- 4) Convenience sampling³
- 5) Implementing partner recommendations

2.4. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size Determination

The sample size was allocated proportionally based on the number of target respondents' population in each selected woredas of the 2 regions (SNNPR and AA city administration). The selection of study participants and different categories of beneficiaries (BOs and Youths) used the simple random sampling method until the allocated sample size was reached. This controlled for sex, service categories, geographic distribution and level of involvement. Selected participants participate in the survey based on their willingness. If they were unwilling, three attempts are made before categorizing the participant as non-responsive.

³ A process of selecting subjects or units for examination and analysis that is based on accessibility, ease, speed, and low cost. Units are not purposefully or strategically selected (Cohen D, Crabtree B. "Qualitative Research Guidelines Project." July 2006. <http://www.qualres.org/index.html>).

The qualitative portion of the study utilized purposive and convenience methods, as depicted in the following schematic representation (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Schematic Presentation of Sampling Methods

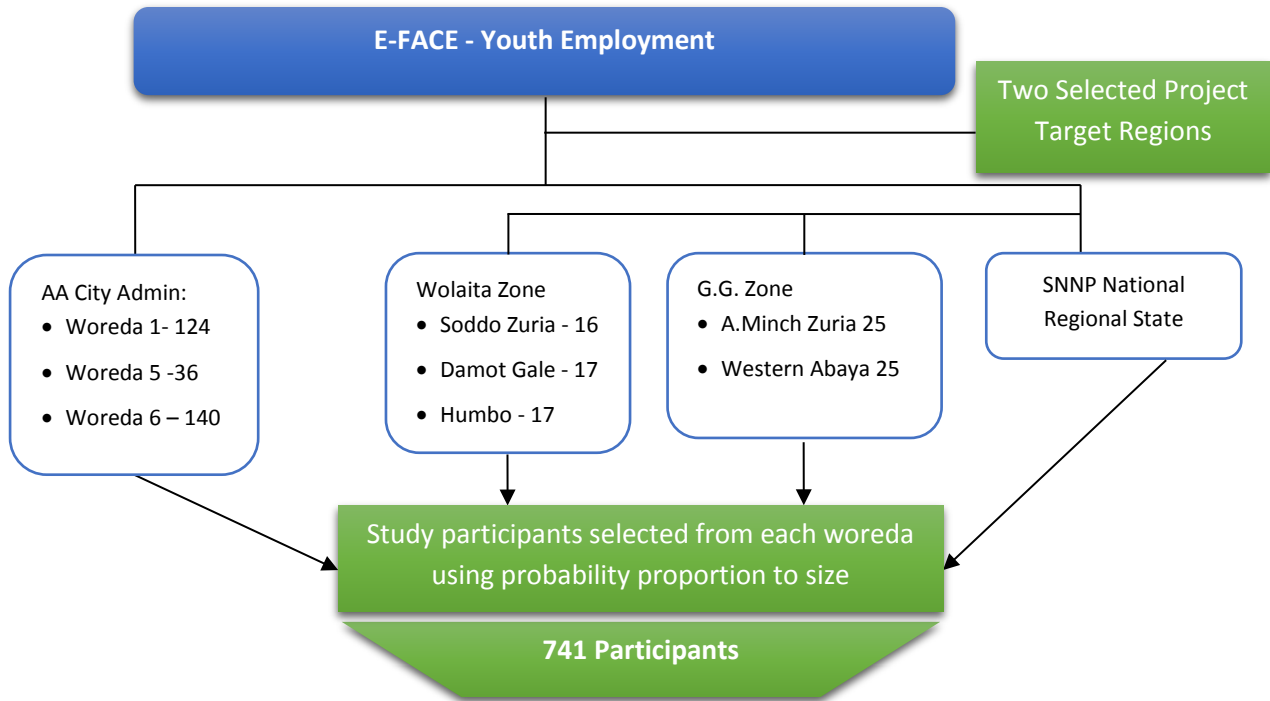


Table 2: Youth Agri-sales agents sample size distribution per woreda

| Intervention Woredas | Total number of Youth Agri-sales Clients | Total sample size per woreda |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Arba Minch Zuria | 62 | 25 |
| Damot Gale | 42 | 17 |
| Humbo | 43 | 17 |
| Soddo Zuria | 40 | 16 |
| Western Abaya | 62 | 25 |
| Total | 249 | 100 |

Table 3: BOs sample size distribution per woreda

| Intervention Woredas | Total number of BOs | Total sample size per woreda |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| woreda 1 | 629 | 124 |
| woreda 5 | 185 | 36 |
| woreda 6 | 709 | 140 |
| Total | 1,523 | 300 |

Table 4: Addis Ababa sample size distribution of Youth groupings by intervention types

| Youth groups by intervention types | Total number of targeted youth | Sample size |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Keep-Safe | 2,000 | 225 |
| TVET | 548 | 62 |
| 100 Hours | 212 | 24 |
| Formal Education | 265 | 30 |
| Total | 3,025 | 341 |

For the qualitative portion of the study, the team conducted 20 FGDs (15 at AA, 5 at SNNPR) and 15 KII/in-depth interviews (ten at AA and five at SNNPR) capture feedback not included in the quantitative survey. Each FGD included nine participants, on average, and each KII interviewed two informants on average. The team consisted of principal/lead consultants, trained expert supervisors and expert data collectors. The principal consultants trained the data collectors and supervisors on the study's objective,

interview techniques, questionnaire completion, data cleaning, and interview techniques and re-direction. Focus has been predominantly on the data quality and the dependent research variables as key components of this study.

Questionnaire: The team administered 750 copies of the survey questionnaires, to three categories of direct project beneficiaries (working age children/ youth 14-17, Youth Agri-sales Agents and BOs). The questionnaire, was structured and semi-structured with both open ended and closed questions and derived data on different aspects of youth employment interventions related to child labor, child abuse, employment interventions and its effects. The questionnaires were classified by major project activities. Accordingly, the core data has been generated by the survey method mainly focused on the effectiveness of the following interventions:

- a. Occupational Safety and Health issues in the workplace
- b. Direct Education Support (formal, TVET, Non-Formal) and link to education programming
- c. Financial Services Support for Youth
- d. BO's business support and incentives
- e. Agri-Sales Agents' business support

Literature and Document Review

The team reviewed current government labor laws, procedures and policies, Ethiopian Government Child Labor guidelines, Child protection policy, income generating activity (IGA) guidelines, annual reports, national youth policy assessment, working age youth assessments, regional and national socio-cultural and economic profiles, donor reports, guidelines on the establishment and functioning of the Youth Support Committee, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan (CMEP), baseline survey, mid-term E-FACE project evaluation report among others. . .

Key Informant Interviews (KII)*

The team conducted interviews with the following key informants:

- a. Project Partners: MEDA, MCDP
- b. Woreda, town/kebele administrators,
- c. NGOs (working in same areas)
- d. Livelihood Specialist
- e. Project Coordinator
- f. BoFED
- g. BoLSA
- h. BoWCYA

Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

The team conducted a total of fifteen FGDs, three (20%) of which were among representative groups from each target zones of AA, GG, & Wolaita, and the remaining 12 (80%) among beneficiary groups. Each FGD was composed of 6-12 participants.

Table 5: Number of FGD and KII to be conducted per region

| Region | | FGD | KII |
|--------------------|-------|------------|------------|
| Addis Ababa | Youth | 5 | 3 |
| | BO | 5 | 2 |
| SNNPR | Youth | 5 | 3 |
| Total | | 15 | 8 |

Observation

The observation component mainly focused on physical facilities, OSH conditions at BOs' premises, youth (14-17) at work, and TVET training centers where target youth were participating in trainings of the sampled woredas/kebeles, using an observation checklist.

2.5. Data Quality Control

- Questionnaire has been pretested on 5% of targeted sample population and necessary changes have been made accordingly. The questionnaire has been made anonymous to minimize the effect of social desirability bias.
- During data collection, any unclear ideas and terms were clearly explained to respondents in their local language.
- The tools have been rigorously checked on the spot by supervisors and principal consultants.

2.6. Data Entry and Analysis

Analysis of Quantitative Data

The quantitative data has been edited, cleaned, coded and entered into SPSS version 20. The frequency distribution of both dependent and independent variables has been worked out; bi-variate cross tabulation analysis applied to see if there is any association between two or more categories of variables. The data has been described and presented using tables, various charts and graphs. A 95% confidence interval and 5% level of precision has been utilized to check for required level of association between variables.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

The collected qualitative data was manually coded to identify common themes. Through the coding process all the text and other data that have associated with some thematic idea were tallied and collected together and different cases has been compared. Participants' comments have been collated into descriptive summaries.

2.7. Data Triangulation

With non-statistical methods, it is especially important to obtain data from multiple sources and compare them to see if the findings are consistent. Even with statistical methods, comparing data from several sources or methods can increase confidence that the findings are accurate. This comparison of multiple methods or measures is called data triangulation. Data collecting experts raised questions for focus groups participants and key informants about the major causes of child labor. Similar results across the data collection methods or measures increases the level of confidence that these findings represent what is really happening among the research target populations.

2.8. Ethical Considerations

Upon review, the technical bid proposal, inception report and study instruments were reviewed by the client and determine to have no ethical concerns. During the data collection process, participation was based on participants' willingness with the ability to withdraw their participation from the research. The data collectors provided the appropriate responses at the end to clarify any misunderstanding or incorrect answers given by the participants. All the data collectors indicated they were willing to clarify and provide appropriate information for all anticipated responses. Measures were also taken to align with child protection standards when conducting interviews and gathering information from children/youth.

2.9. The Study Management

HICoTS properly collected both primary and secondary data to ensure the quality of the result of the effectiveness assessment. The firm also submitted draft and final copies of the inception report, study instruments, data collectors' training program and work schedules, as needed, to the client.

Inception Reporting: The inception report prepared and presented to the E-FACE project team and presented at the consortium representatives' meeting included an elaborated research protocol, encompassing definition of the survey instruments and specification of target groups, participant recruitment methods, the ethical dimensions of the research, types of study instruments to be used, data analysis methods to be applied and a detailed plan of action.

Supervisors and Data Collectors' Recruitment and Training: The qualitative data collectors, employed in this study, are highly experienced researchers with master degrees in the appropriate disciplines, with experience in different national surveys. The team also recruited and trained experienced college graduates and enumerators for quantitative data collection portion of the study. The principal investigators provided an orientation to the data collectors and the supervisors on the objective of the research, how to interview, how to complete the questionnaire and how to handle the questions asked during the interview. During the data collection process, each questionnaire was checked by the principal investigators and on a daily basis by the supervisors for completeness and accuracy.

Thus, 16 data collectors (8 from Addis Ababa and 8 from SNNPR) were selected, trained and deployed in each three target zones (GG, Wolaita, & Gullele) in collaboration with WVE head quarters' focal person, project coordinators, local administration and sector offices.

Selection Criteria for Supervisors and Enumerators: All supervisors and enumerators are university graduates with sufficient prior experience in data collection and interview techniques. They also are all fluent in the local languages used in the FGDs and KIIs.

Training Style: Interactive, participatory and facilitative techniques were utilized. Plenary sessions, group exercises and discussions, brainstorming, and case analyses constituted the principal methods. Prior to conducting the questionnaire portion of the study, the team formed into pairs to complete the questionnaires on each to ensure familiarization of the instrument.

III. Findings and Discussions

3.1. Overview of the Youth Employment Interventions

3.1.1. Overview of the National Policy Framework on Child Labor

The Ethiopian labor law defines a “young worker” as a person who is at least 14 years of age but not over 18. The law prohibits anyone from employing anyone under 14 years of age. The law also prohibits young workers from:

- Night work between 10p.m. and 6a.m.
- Overtime work
- Working on weekly rest days or public holidays Exceeding normal hours of work (more than seven hours a day).

Young workers are also prohibited from:

- Work in transportation services (both passengers and goods) by road, railway, air and internal waterway, docksides and warehouses involving heavy weight lifting, pulling or pushing or any other related type of labor.
- Work with electric power generation plants, transformers or transmission lines,
- Underground work, such as mines, quarries and similar work
- Work in sewers and digging tunnels

E-FACE was designed to reduce child labor in Gamo Gofa, Wolaita and Addis Ababa over four years by using an integrated approach that leverages the expertise of each partner and other key stakeholders to reach 3,250 youth and 7,000 households. The project address child labor mostly in the traditional weaving industry, which is a complex phenomenon involving trafficking of children for work from Gamo Gofa and Wolaita to Addis Ababa.

The youth programming targeted what the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation defines as “young workers” - those aged 14-17 who are in legal working age, but still defined as children. Interventions focused on supporting those engaged in hazardous labor - particularly, but not exclusively, young weavers and spinners in the traditional textile industry.

The youth employment intervention has targeted a total of 3,668 youths with the major intervention areas of OSH improvements, developing and managing a "youth link referral service" with a focus on youth (14-17) engaged in rural IGA. The following table shows the types of interventions and number of beneficiaries by the project over the last four years.

Table 6: Youth employment intervention types

| SN | Youth employment Intervention types | Number of youths targeted |
|--------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | # Children engaged in or at high-risk of entering child labor enrolled in informal education services provided education or vocational services | 2,245 |
| 2 | # Children engaged in or at high-risk of entering child labor enrolled in formal education services provided education or vocational services | 265 |
| 3 | # Children engaged in or at high-risk of entering child labor enrolled in vocational services | 908 |
| 4 | # of children above legal work age (14-17) that receive basic skills training and start up inputs to become agricultural sales agents | 250 |
| Total | | 3,668 |

3.2. Survey Respondent Demographics

Socio-Demographics of the Youth in Addis Ababa: Analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the 391 sampled youths in Addis Ababa (Keep Safe, TVET, and Building Skill for Life) revealed that the average age of the participants was 15.55 years; 60.9% were male and 39.1% were female. Almost all (96.6%) of these youths were in school and have some form of education. 46.8% were enrolled in primary school, 47.3 in secondary school and a significant number of them also attended colleges like TVET institutions. About 50% of these children had graduated from primary school.

Table 7: Youth socio-demographics in Addis Ababa

| Variable | Category | N | Percent |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| Sex of Respondent | Male | 238 | 60.9 |
| | Female | 153 | 39.1 |
| | Total | 391 | 100 |
| Age | Less than or equal to 15 | 182 | 46.5 |
| | 16-20 | 193 | 49.4 |
| | Greater than 20 | 16 | 4.1 |
| | Total | 391 | 100 |
| Education level | Unable to read and write | 2 | 0.5 |
| | Able to read and write | 11 | 2.8 |
| | Primary school | 183 | 46.8 |

| | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| Secondary school | 185 | 47.3 |
| College | 10 | 2.6 |
| Total | 391 | 100 |

Socio-Demographics of the YASA: Analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the 100 sampled youth sales agents in SNNPR revealed that the average age of the participants was 15.48 years; 58% were males and 42% were females. Currently, all of these youths are enrolled in school. This is a great outcome given the fact that some of these youth had completely withdrawn from school before joining the YASA program. As the survey data in Table 9 conveys, the majority (76%) of these youth are enrolled in primary school.

Table 8: Education level of YASA youths

| Education level | N | % |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| Primary school | 76 | 76 |
| Secondary school | 24 | 24 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

3.3. Relevance of the Youth Employment Intervention

The qualitative portion of the research indicated that youth employment interventions are highly valued by the respondents and meet a relevant need in the communities in which they are active. Addressing the issues youth face when engaged in hazardous or exploitative labor was deemed important to key informants

Reduction in Child Labor: The quantitative research data revealed a significant decrease in child labor within the project period (2012-2015). The proportion of children (14-17) in child labor decreased by 99% compared to the baseline value and children participating in the WFCL was completely eliminated. The major contributing factors indicated by this research for the attributed changes include economic empowerment of youths, reduction in work hours for youth, improvement in child labor legal frameworks and increase community awareness on child labor, among others.

Improved Working Conditions and Employment Opportunities for Youth:

The execution of appropriate youth employment interventions, such awareness building campaigns targeting employers, employees, parents and community on child labor issues have contributed overall improved working conditions and child protection. For example, the proportion of youth working long hours has significantly been reduced by 56.42% (4.83 work hours per day) compared to the reported work day length (11.07 hours per day) prior to the intervention. Almost all FGD and KII respondents confirmed

that most of the beneficiaries now had time for play, study, rest as well as holiday breaks; a dramatically different situation than before the intervention. Improvements in accommodation (better lighting and seating) have also been made. The TVET intervention has also created many new self-employment opportunities for youth. A number of key youth informants interviewed from Woreda 2 of Gullele sub-city noted that "... though we all are not supplied with equipment and business facilities, the vocational and skill training we received from the E-FACE project has opened job opportunities to us. For example, most of us here are working in hair styling, mobile maintenance and restaurants which we couldn't have imagined before."

Wage/Income Improvement: Respondents emphasized a significant improvement in wages for beneficiary youth as well. An assessment conducted prior to E-FACE project youth employment interventions indicated that many youth were not receiving any wages. However, the current assessment indicates that 56% of the youth indicated they have received an increase in their wages after the project intervention or actually began receiving wages. 23% confirmed that there has been an increase of 10% in their wages whereas the majority (58%) indicated that they are currently earning 20% more than prior to the project intervention. A significant proportion of youths (18%) received more than a 20% increase in their wages compared to their previous wage.

Improved Saving Culture and Future Goals: Most youth reported that their participation in VSAYs resulted in positive attitudinal changes towards saving, resulting in the development of a saving culture. The majority of youth have also been connected to formal financial institutions and have opened group saving accounts as a step forward after getting trained. The data also points to an upward trajectory in the length of (long term vs. short term) and amount of savings generated by youth.

Most youth FGD respondents expressed their desire to continue their studies at the university level. The majority of them have a short term plan to expand their current business, grow new business and become profitable so they are able to economically support themselves and their families. One of the major indicators of the effectiveness of the project interventions and a key outcome from the YASA program is the ability of youth to plan for a better future and encourage them to begin thinking about their career and life paths.

3.4. Youth Employment Intervention Effectiveness and Outcomes

Effectiveness of the youth employment intervention has been measured in consideration of the three main youth employment project interventions namely 1) *Occupational Safety and Health*, 2) *Youth Link Referral Service*, and 3) *Youth (14-17) Participating in Rural Income Generating Activities*.

3.4.1. Occupational Safety and Health

Keep Safe and OSH Training Program: As evidenced in the document review and KIIs, these interventions met their set objectives. The main goal of the intervention was to reduce the number of youth engaged in exploitative work by supporting business owners and their young employees in the textile industry to develop enhanced awareness about OSH and to improve working conditions and safety for youth engaged in spinning and weaving. The project has targeted 2,000 youths and 1,523 Business Owners (BOs) with the objective of establishing acceptable working conditions and environments for youth through targeted interventions for BOs and youth.

Table 9: Project Target Accomplished by Intervention Type

| Keep Safe Program | OSH Training and BO Incentives |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train youths via an intensive six module, 20 hour training package. ▪ Identify and educate youth (ages 14 to 17) on safety issues and wellbeing in the workplace ▪ Provide access to practical education that leads to further work opportunities ▪ Develop their capacities in decision making and communication skills. ▪ Following completion of the program, youth workers must develop a CoC with their employers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target business owners (BOs) who employ youth in textile production; ensure their young employees also attend the Keep Safe Program. ▪ Ensure BOs who agree to improve working conditions for their young employees and implement their agreed-upon CoC are rewarded with a graduated incentive system that enhances their business skills, improves workspaces and provides improved access to inputs and high-end markets. |

The primary research data shows that all 323 respondents interviewed (255 youth and 68 BOs) confirmed that they received Keep Safe and OSH training, respectively.⁴ Furthermore, they explained that the training enhanced their awareness about OSH, helped them to improve working conditions and safety for youth engaged in spinning and weaving. The youths’ awareness of acceptable, safe working conditions has also improved as a result.

Response to the Keep Safe and OSH Training:

As shown in Table 4 below, both the BOs and youth were asked to rate their satisfaction with the Keep Safe and OSH training. The average result in mean score 4.14 and 4.45, rated from 5 point on the Likert scale, for Keep Safe and OSH, respectively, indicating a high rate of satisfaction with each program.. Similarly, the qualitative portion of the research corroborated this with all FGD and KII respondents indicating that the trainings were participatory and beneficial.

Table 10: Reported satisfaction with the Keep Safe and OSH training

⁴Bos and youth were interviewed separately.

| Satisfaction Indicators | Mean score | |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| | Keep Safe | OSH |
| Overall, I benefited from the training. | 4.49 | 4.54 |
| The training was presented in an engaging manner. | 4.45 | 4.34 |
| The trainers were knowledgeable and were able to answer questions effectively | 4.43 | 4.49 |
| I feel my level of knowledge on the subject matter has increased. | 4.52 | 4.56 |
| The training met my needs. | 4.33 | 4.31 |
| Total average | 4.44 | 4.45 |

Developing a participatory Code of Conduct (CoC) is the second component of OSH. Following the completion of either the Keep Safe or OSH training, young workers and their employers have to develop a CoC. CoC is a minimum set of conditions under which children of legal working age can work and a standard set of rules developed in a participatory manner that aim to improve workplaces and working conditions. E-FACE project staff then monitors the implementation of the CoC, which also forms the basis of the Business Owner Incentive Plan. The survey results are presented in the table below (Table 11) further depicts that almost all of the youths (99.4%) confirmed that they have seen a change in their employer as a result of the CoC.

Table 11: Effects of Code of Conduct

| Variable | Category | Number | Percent |
|---|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Do you believe that the implementation of CoC positively influenced your employers to make changes? | Yes | 320 | 99.4 |
| | No | 2 | 0.6 |
| | Total | 322 | 100.0 |

According to a review of E-FACE project documents and discussions with MEDA youth employment officers, the following major activities of the CoC promoted the 'child safe' seal of product certification standards in the weaving sector:

1. **Development of a Voluntary Code of Conduct.** After a series of consultation meetings, E-FACE, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, developed a voluntary code of conduct to set standards and design the initiative. In addition to the substantive rules, the code outlines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and stipulates detailed implementation, inspection and monitoring procedures. Moreover, an inspection check list is one of the code's tools which assesses the eligibility of interested applicants and also functions as a guide for inspection officers.
2. **Establishment of the first Ethiopian Fashion Designers Association.** Based on the project design, an Ethiopian Fashion Designers Association was designated as the key driver of this labeling venture. Hence, MEDA took the initiative to create an association of designers and strengthen it to

make it capable of assuming the responsibility of managing this label and branding effort.

3. **Signed MOU between Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Ethiopian Fashion Designers Association.** This document solidified this partnership to ensure the effective implementation of the child safe certification and labeling venture. The MOU outlined the parties' shared commitment in implementing the child safe venture and stipulated each party's rights and responsibilities.

BO Incentive System: BOs received solar lamps, transparent roof sheets and loom components as an incentive to be able to upgrade their businesses and join village savings and loan associations after completion of the OSH awareness raising program and development of the CoC. For example, as part of creating market access for weavers that complied with the CoC standards, weavers were also linked to traditional cloth traders and designers. In addition, weavers also participated in marketing opportunities through exhibitions and trade fair opportunities. Key informants' from the project staff and beneficiaries' groups observed that this has significantly enhanced the BOs' household income.

Outcomes and Attributed Changes

1. Reduction in Child Labor: Improvements/Changes

The quantitative research portion (Table 11) highlights the significant decrease in child labor trends during the project period (2012-2015). The percentage of children in child labor decrease by 99% compared to the baseline value and children's participation in the Worst Forms of Child Labor was eliminated altogether. During the KIIs, woreda level community development workers also noted that "as expected, children engaged in exploitative forms of child labor and at risk of the worst forms of child labor received educational opportunities and seen livelihood improvements in their households due to the project interventions."

Table 12: Outcome and Attributed Changes in Youth Labor Status

| Labor Status Outcome Indicator | Baseline Value (in %) | Assessment Results (in %) | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| | | Apr-14 | Oct-14 | Apr-15 |
| % of children in Child Labor | 85 | 20% | 4% | 0.12% |
| % of children in Worst Forms of Child Labor | 10 | 3% | 2% | 0 |
| % of target children in ⁵ Hazardous Child Labor | NA | NA | 4% | 0.09% |
| % of trafficked children | NA | 10% | NA | 1.34% |

⁵Hazardous work includes night work, long working hours, heavy loads, exposure to sexual abuse & STDs, work underground, in confined space, use of machinery meant for adults, use of chemical like pesticides, mental and physical hazards, food poisoning, deep sea fishing... (Source: Analysis of the list of hazardous occupations for children in Ethiopia (2011): MOLSA. Draft paper)

Contributing Factors in Reducing Child Labor

Economic Improvements: Most children are obligated to work because of their family's economic status and their labor is necessary for their family members' survival. In order to address the root causes of child labor and trafficking, improving household and youth incomes was taken as a major project intervention. According to MEDA's youth employment officers, the creation of new linkages with bazaars and exhibitions, facilitated through intermediaries, greatly supported households' ability to sell their products at a better price, improve their incomes and be able to send their working children (youth aged 14-17) to school and keep their working hours within legal limits. Data from Table 13 was used to substantiate the above findings on the effectiveness of market linkages in improving incomes and, particularly, enabling BOs to send their employed youth to school and limit their working hours, allowing for adequate time to study.

As seen in the survey data presented below in Table 13, the average monthly wages of the youth increased by 116.85% compared to the wages earned prior to the intervention.

Table 13: Changes have occurred in your business as a result of the project intervention (N=339)

| Youth | Before Intervention | Currently | Absolute difference | Difference in % |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Average monthly wages/ET birr | 16.44 | 35.65 | 19.21 | 116.85 |

Improving the Legal Frameworks to Combat Child Labor: As clearly demonstrated in the E-FACE project progress reports, the project intervention has positively influenced changes in the legal framework, both nationally and regionally, that better protect children from child labor. An interview with MEDA senior staff noted that:

'...this can be further explained by the consensus reached by MoLSA to approve the National Action Plan (NAP) to eliminate worst forms of child labor in addition to the development of a final draft on National Child Policy and Criminal Procedure Code, which incorporates special protection for child victims and penalties for offenders. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Proclamation No.737/2012 was approved by Parliament in April 2012. The protocol is the first universal instrument that addresses all aspects of human trafficking. The Vital Events Registration Proclamation No.760/2012 was also approved in July 2012, further strengthening the rights of children and increasing their protection from trafficking.'

Improved Work Environments and Work Day Length for Youth: Focus group and key informants also noted that improved work environments and shortened work days were key project outcomes. The survey data presented below further details these changes.

Table 14: Youth Work Day Length (N=345)

| Working hours | Before Intervention(a) | Currently (b) | Difference in %(c=a-b) |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Full days | 62.9% | 4.7% | 58.2 |
| Half days | 28.4% | 20.1% | 8.3 |
| Full day till midnight | 2.3% | 1.2% | 1.1 |

The majority of youth respondents confirmed that there is an observable reduction in their working hours, with many reporting 2-4 hours of work during school days and up to 7-8 hours during non-school days.

Table 15: Percentage change in length of youth work day

| | Before Intervention (N=339) | Currently (N=339) | Absolute difference | Difference in % |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Work hours per day | 11.07 | 4.83 | -6.25 | -56.42 |

The percentage of youth working full days has been reduced. In general, the findings depict that the existing work hours were reduced to 4.83 work hours per day.

As indicated in Table 16 below, most of the youth confirmed that they now had extra time for playing (63.8%), study (86%), rest (76.1%), weekends and holiday breaks (58.9% and 37.6% respectively), a significant change since the intervention.

Table 16: Time Use by Working Youth

| Available Time for Youth: | Pre-Intervention (N=333) | Post Intervention |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Playing Time | 27.6% | 63.8% |
| Study Time | 32.1% | 86.0% |
| Rest Time | 20.7% | 76.1% |
| Weekends/Days off | 24.6% | 58.9% |
| Holiday break | 50.2% | 37.6% |
| Others | 0.6% | 0.3% |

Key informants and FGD participants also noted that reduced working hours has led to multiple positive outcomes for youth, allowing them more time for studying, personal hygiene and care, more socializing and ample play time. Respondents in the FGDs and KIIs emphasized that increased school attendance was one of the key outcomes of a reduced work day for youth. Community workers who participated in FGDs in Addis Ababa, Gullele and Wored 5 also verified that more youth are regularly attending school—most are now attending school five days a week, as compared to only three days a week prior to the intervention.

Improved Work Relationships: Youth representatives at FGDs and KIIs also noted a significant improvement in their employer/employee relationships. The survey further substantiated this, as the majority of youth (86.4%) noted that they have developed good relationships with their respective BOs, likely due to a significant reduction in employer verbal and physical abuse. Following the intervention, reported physical and verbal abuse fell by 42.9% and 42.3%, respectively as have other harsh tactics such as meal deprivation, reported by 4.3% before the intervention and now by only 1.4%.

Table 17: Business Owner and Youth Employee Relationships (N=347)

| Reported Employer Behavior (N=347) | Pre Intervention(a) | Currently/Post Intervention(b) | Difference in % (c=b-c) |
|--|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Good: No verbal abuse, physical abuse | 25.40% | 86.40% | 61% |
| Physical abuse | 54.80% | 11.90% | -42.90% |
| Verbal abuse | 45.80% | 3.50% | -42.30% |
| Depriving of meals | 4.30% | 1.40% | -2.90% |

Business owners also attested to this change in their relationships with their employees during FGDs, training and in the development of the CoC which promoted better communication between the young workers and their employers and creating relationships that had not previously existed. For most participants, this project provided a firsthand opportunity to discuss each other’s expectations and to reach a common understanding.

Both qualitative and quantitative results depicted a significant change in the youth’s wage history. These changes are in line with the expected project outcomes.

Table 18: Wage History Pre and Post Intervention

| Category | N | Percentage |
|----------|---|------------|
|----------|---|------------|

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Up to 10% increase | 52 | 24% |
| 20% increase | 128 | 58% |
| More than 20% increase | 40 | 18% |

A significant percentage of youth (56%) indicated an increase in their wages after the project intervention, with most reporting not only an increase but an actual start in receiving wages. 23% of respondents noted an increase of 10% with the majority of them (58%) indicating that they were currently earning a 20% increase in their wages following the project intervention. A significant percentage of youth (18%) received more than a 20% increase in their wages. Though wages increased significantly from worker to worker, starting to receive a salary or an increase in wages added value to the youth’s work – both from perspective of young workers and their employers.

The qualitative responses and observations indicated that young weavers feel that their work is important and they are also motivated to put in their hours and improve the quality of their work in order to be paid, with the possibility of their wages rising in time. The employers also confirmed, in interviews, that the training provided by the project changed their perceptions regarding the work being done by their young employees. The training and code of conduct facilitation made them realize the value of their employees’ work and made them want to pay their workers accordingly. Wages for the young workers has not only increased their work ethic and motivation to work, but it has also instilled a sense of pride in the weaving work done by their families and communities.

Improved Lighting and Seating: Based on the assessment and observations made prior to the E-FACE project intervention, project beneficiaries live in traditional mud and wood houses which serve as both living and work spaces. The houses typically have dark walls and small windows, which makes it difficult to follow details and patterns during weaving. Home typically have only one light bulb, making it difficult to see and work into night, a challenge for most participants who reported working until 10 p.m. Following the project interventions, 79% of working homes report adequate lighting. The workspaces have also shown an improvement from poor (32% before the intervention) to better quality facilities (56.9%) after the intervention, an improvement of almost 15%. Better seating is available, with 25.9% rating it as uncomfortable prior to the intervention and 42.9% workers noting they now have more comfortable and improved seating. During one of the focus groups with business owners, a BO from Gullele woreda 01 said “...before the E-FACE project, we didn’t know anything different. We were living in the dark. But now it is different and we have started to improve things with this new knowledge. We began to learn how to work safely and help others, especially our youth employees.”

Business owner incentives, such as lighting support, via solar lights and transparent roof sheeting, now means that young workers are not straining their eyes as they work. Most employers have painted their inner mud walls, covered the floor with plastic and now open windows during working hours—all of

which provides better ventilation and lighting for them and their workers. During the assessment, many youth confirmed that the solar lamps and improved lighting at night meant that they could also complete their school work on time.

Table 19: Reported improvements in lightning, seating and facilities

| Pre Intervention (N=333) | | Post Intervention(N=333) | |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
| Condition of Facilities | Percent | Condition of Facilities | Percent |
| Dim light | 86.9% | Adequate light | 79.0% |
| Poor Facilities | 32.6% | Improved facilities | 56.9% |
| Uncomfortable seat | 25.9% | Improved seat | 42.9% |

The majority of youth now work on benches with wooden pedals that do not require constant bending down or awkward and uncomfortable foot positions. As part of the CoC, most employers have using their own funds to purchase a work bench and foot pedal. Adopting the wooden foot pedal also requires the looms to be raised to ground level, which has resulted in the removal of dug-out seating pits which were always damp, dusty and hazardous to the health of employees and employers.

3.4.2. Develop and Manage "Youth Link" Referral Service

3.4.2.1. Educational Support

Technical and Vocational Education Training: The Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) is a short-term training program run by the Government of Ethiopia and other external organizations. TVET is designed to support working youth in gaining the necessary education to experience successful future employment. The main objective was to establish a "Youth Link" referral service to connect youth with appropriate employment services. E-FACE targeted 908 working youth (548 in Addis Ababa and 360 in SNNPR) for access to TVET over the life of the project. To date, all 908 youths have graduated from TVET through E-FACE's support.

Table 20: Types of TVET youth training (Addis Ababa)⁶

| TVET training | N ⁷ | Percent |
|------------------------------|----------------|---------|
| Hair dressing | 14 | 33.3 |
| Electrical installation/work | 8 | 19 |
| Carpentry | 4 | 9.5 |
| Food preparation | 15 | 35.7 |

⁶ The SNNPR TVET participants had not completed their training during the research phase of this project, therefore data is available for only the Addis Ababa cohort.

⁷ It was planned to interview 55 representatives out of 548 participants but due to the nature of the TVET training intervention most of the participants were scattered in different places and the research team was only able to identify 42 youth for interviews. This is considered an adequate sample size for this research.

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Other | 1 | 2.4 |
| Total | 42 | 100 |

E-FACE links youth with a TVET program of their choosing. As the survey data shows, programs include hair dressing (33.3%), electrical installation and electrical work (19%), carpentry (namely furniture) (9.5), food preparation (35.7%) and other areas of study. The training has been given over a two-month period, with subjects ranging from service-based careers to retail and entrepreneurial programs.

Satisfaction with TVET Training: As Table 21 depicts, youth were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the TVET training delivered and/or facilitated by the project. The overall average result in mean score of 4.68 out of 5 indicates that the youth were very much satisfied and that the delivered training was participatory, benefitting the youth by increasing their knowledge level in their chosen field. A project beneficiary from Gullele woreda 3 affirmed this "...the TVET trainees selected their own type of training. We are all happy with the training."

Table 21: TVET training satisfaction

| Satisfaction indicators | Mean score (Out of 5) |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Overall, I benefited from the training. | 4.59 |
| The training was presented in an engaging manner. | 4.72 |
| The trainers were knowledgeable and were able to answer questions effectively. | 4.67 |
| I feel my level of knowledge on the subject matter has increased. | 4.72 |
| The training was as per my need and choice | 4.72 |
| Total mean score | 4.68 |

Once youth have completed the training, their next step is to pursue internship or apprenticeship opportunities with hotels, hair salons, mechanics and other businesses. TVET Training provides youth with a skill set that empowers them and makes them competitive in the labor market and elsewhere in the country.

Table 22: Self-employed status of TVET trained youths (Addis Ababa)

| Variable | Category | N⁸ | Percent |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Are you currently self-employed due to | Yes | 26 | 61.9 |

⁸ ibid

| | | | |
|--|--------------|-----------|------------|
| the TVET training you received? | No | 16 | 38.1 |
| | Total | 42 | 100 |

Table 22 indicates that a significant percentage (61.9 %) of TVET trained youth were self-employed. TVET Youth are government certified in their field of study, increasing their marketability throughout the country. This clearly shows that the youth are securing permanent positions, leading to employment and livelihood security. The qualitative responses from Gullele woreda 2 and 3 also showed that most of the TVET training graduates expected business facilitation support like availing work space, provision of working capital and machineries to improve their marketability.

3.4.2.2. Formal Education

So far, 265 youth engaged in and/or at risk of child labor have received formal education support services under the education component of the project. This support includes school supplies, uniforms and tuition fees so that youth can enroll in formal education programs and continue their schooling.

Survey results show that more than 93.5% of the targeted youth are currently enrolled in some type of educational program. The support is very significant as without it, most of the targeted youth would not be able to finish their education. The major outcome here is more sustainable employment prospects through the project's support.

3.4.2.3. Building Skill for Life Program

Building Skill for Life is an integrated training and asset-building program offered to youth aged 14 to 17 in Addis Ababa. The objective of this program is to improve the level of knowledge and skills of the youths and includes training on financial literacy, entrepreneurship and life skills, as well as practical skills development, such as improved weaving techniques. To date, the program has trained 265 youths (112 males and 153 females) .Upon completion of the Building Skill for Life program, the project facilitates access to financing for youth clients by grouping them into VSAYs. The survey results show the majority of these youths have started regularly saving, been linked to formal financial institutions and have opened a group savings account.

Satisfaction with Building Skill for Life Program: As the Table 24 depicts, 26 youth rated their satisfaction with the Building Skill for Life program delivered and facilitated by the project. The overall average result (mean score 4.2) indicates a high level of satisfaction with the program.

Table 23: Satisfaction with the Building Skills for Life Program

| Satisfaction | Mean score Out of 5 |
|--|------------------------|
| Overall, I benefited from the training. | 4.11 |
| The training was presented in an engaging manner. | 4 |
| The trainers were knowledgeable and were able to answer questions effectively. | 4.19 |
| I feel my level of knowledge on the subject matter has increased. | 4.42 |
| The training was as per my need and choice | 4.19 |
| Total mean score | 4.2 |

Curricula and training materials for the Building Skill for Life program were informed by MEDA’s “100 Hours to Success” methodology. The “100 Hours to Success” subject areas were chosen after extensive research with youth and employers, as well as MEDA’s experience from previous projects. Financial education, life skills and business and entrepreneurship skills were identified as the most significant gaps and those most important for young people’s future success. As shown in the table below, the survey data further indicates that the majority of youth in the Building Skill for Life program responded participated in life skills (69.2%) training and the rest (26.9%) received business skill training.

Previous case studies conducted by the project on “Building Skill for Life” indicates that employers found most young people they hired lacked “life skills”—including time management, communication skills and appropriate workplace behavior and stated that young people who had been trained in these areas had a much easier time transitioning into the workplace. Financial literacy and the knowledge and behavior associated with such, including increased savings behavior and improved budget management, equip young people with the ability and confidence for long-term planning and increased engagement in the larger economy. Business and entrepreneurial skills were found to be valuable whether a young person ultimately becomes an employee or an entrepreneur. Therefore, all participants received both life skills and business training.

Table 24: Most beneficial training by type

| Variable | Category | N | Percent |
|--|-------------------------|----|---------|
| From which type of training have you benefitted the most? | Life skills training | 19 | 73.1 |
| | Business skill training | 6 | 23.1 |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| No response | 1 | 3.8 |
| Total | 26 | 100 |

Table 26 highlights the value 73.1% of youth placed on the life skills component of the training, identifying it as the most important benefit overall in improving their lives.

Table 25: Material support provided as part of Building Skills for Life Program

| Variable | Category | N | Percent |
|---|--|-----------|------------|
| What other support did you receive from the project? | Weaving equipment/kits | 19 | 73.1 |
| | Shade access | 4 | 15.4 |
| | Training on improved weaving technology ⁹ | 2 | 7.7 |
| | No response | 1 | 3.8 |
| | Total | 26 | 100 |

Most importantly, the project delivered additional material support other than training. The majority of youth participating in the survey (73.1%) received weaving equipment/kits like loom components, loom frame winding tools etc. Training on improved weaving technology (7.7%) was delivered as an additional service.

Project record data shows 20%, or 50 youth, in this Building Skill for Life program have accessed work spaces/shade covers constructed by the government. This access, which was facilitated by the project, has resulted in a number of improvements in working conditions, including improved air quality due to concrete vs earth structure, cleanliness and large windows that could be opened or closed providing better lighting from both natural light) and ceiling lights.

The introduction of metal hybrid looms allows youth to sit upright and use foot pedals, eliminating serious health issues related to poor posture and foot pain and deformation from using traditional weaving looms with leather straps twisted around their feet and toes. Traditional looms also required them to sit with their feet in a dug-out hole all day long, irritating their skin, causing infections and chronic back pain from working in an awkward position.

Future Goals and Aspiration:

⁹ Not all youth who received weaving equipment also received training on improved weaving technology. This is because the training was sometimes delivered before the input distribution.

A major impact of the project has been to allow youth to develop their one goals and dreams, as indicated during the FGDs:

“We are now relieved from the extreme exploitation of employers and parents thanks to the MEDA project. Until now, we didn’t get even the smallest of breaks but now we have adequate break time and the work environment has improved. We used to worry because of the intimidation of and punishment by our employers and parents but now we hope for the better future’. **Building Skill for Life Focus Group Discussion - Woreda 6**

Increased Income and Savings: Prior to the project, youth could not rely on a regular income beyond a subsistence level. With the Building Skill for Life program, every member of the association is required to save 5 birr a week or 20 birr a month. Outside of this, they also have individual savings.

3.4.2.4. *Village Savings Association for Youth (VSAY)*

This is a Financial Education service to link youth to appropriate financial services (savings) to support livelihood development. VSAYs are composed of 10 to 20 working youth between the ages of 14-17. These associations provide youth with a means to develop saving habits from an early age; access financial services relevant to their situation; build capital through their weekly contributions; and prepare for future plans, be they entrepreneurial or educational.

Table 26: Youth participation in the VSAY program

| Variable | Category | N | Percent |
|--|--------------|------------|------------|
| Are you currently participating in the VSAY program? | Yes | 347 | 88.7 |
| | No | 44 | 11.3 |
| | Total | 391 | 100 |

As seen in Table 28, of the total number of youth participants in the survey, 88.7% have begun to participate in VSAYs. Furthermore, the project’s data indicates that out of the total number of youth participants in the Keep Safe and Building Skills for Life programs, 69% (1,549 youths) have begun to participate in VSAYs.

3.4.2.5. *Outcomes/Impacts of the Program*

Improved Youth Saving Culture: VSAY members reported that their participation in VSAYs resulted in a change in their attitude towards savings. It was evident from meetings and visits with the youth that a savings culture exists. The majority of these youth have also been linked to formal financial institutions and have opened a group saving account. Unlike savings groups for adults, the VSAYs do not lend to one another. Instead they collect and accrue their savings with the objective to either share-out their savings at the end of a cycle (usually once a year) or to start a group business/income generating activity.

Table 27: Length of time participating in VSAY savings

| Variable | Category | N | Percent |
|---|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| How long have you been participating in a savings group? | New, less than a month | 4 | 1.2 |
| | For the last 3-6 months | 53 | 15.3 |
| | For the last year | 211 | 60.8 |
| | For the last 2-3 years | 79 | 22.7 |
| | Total | 347 | 100 |

Further analysis of the savings timespan by youth shows that the majority (60.8%) of youth were saving for the past year. although some of the youth have recently started saving. Nonetheless, there is a significant number of youth (22.7%) that have been saving continuously for the last 2-3 years.

Table 28: VSAY savings amount (Ethiopian Birr)

| Saving Amount /ETB | N | Percent |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| Less than 300 | 221 | 63.7 |
| Between 399-599 | 108 | 31.1 |
| More than 599 | 9 | 2.6 |
| No response | 9 | 2.6 |
| Total | 347 | 100 |
| Mean saving amount =240 ETB | | |

As the data in Table 30 shows, majority of youth have savings of less than 300 ETB. The average total savings is about 240 B = a very significant amount when one considers the starting point of youth without real salaried work and no savings culture. .

The majority of youth stated that they were not brought up with an emphasis of saving as many families lived at a subsistence level from one day to the next. However, the majority of youth interviewed agreed that the VSAYs have helped to develop a savings culture among them... Overall, the data points to a significant change in the prospects for youth. In addition, VSAY groups are at a mature level and can continue their regular saving without relying on the project.

Youth Aspiration and Goals: During the FGDs, almost all of the youth explained their business plans and ideas for IGA in the future. The VSAYs do not lend among themselves hence, there is a growing amount of group savings with each passing week – an amount that they can share out at the end of one year or that they can invest as a group. Almost all VSAYs want to use their group savings to invest in

some form of group income generation activity. During the FGD, all of the youth noted that this has helped them plan and set goals for their future.

“Yes, this is the first time in our lives we have participated in this activity. We want to be good citizens; we now want to be self-reliant as we used to have to depend on others for our education. We want to pursue our education and we want to change ourselves through education. Had it not been for our saving experiences, it would be difficult for most us to get support from our parents/guardians because they would rather take advantage of our labor,” FGD with VSAY Woreda 6 AA.

Group Cohesion and Communication: There were no regulations on entry and exit to and from the group. These youth have the freedom to speak their ideas as members of the association respectfully to one another. They are enjoying this freedom of expression as they are able share their ideas and work through ideas together. They have also learned how to communicate with other people and encourage others to work together as well as mentoring them in building their skills. Knowledge transfer and experience from one youth to another is also part of the benefits that these youth received from the VSAYs.

Youth explained during the FGDs, and at other points during the project that many of them were not able to directly talk to their parents or communicate with them about school or other matters. After participating in a VSAY, they felt that their parents regarded them as more trustworthy and responsible and that they felt they could more freely talk to their parents. Likewise, parents feel that their children are now able to communicate with them and better express themselves.

Despite these positive outcomes, VSAYs are not without their limitation. As they are an informal association, they cannot access particular services of formal financial institutions. Nonetheless, the VSAYs are a stepping stone for youth to experience success as they participate in a savings culture, leading them to continue developing their financial acuity. Despite the above outcomes, however, this intervention has many challenges. VSAYs are informal, which are not acceptable by formal institutions or allowed to act as a group and have access to services and products of formal financial institutions. This was a challenge to the project to link as much group as possible to formal financial institutions.

3.4.3. Youth (14-17) Engaged in Rural Income Generating Activities (IGA)

3.4.3.1. Socio-Demographics of the YASA

Analysis of the socio-demographics of the 100 sampled youth sales agents revealed that the average age of the participants was 15.48 years; 58% were males and 42% were female. Currently, all of these youth were enrolled in school – a significant change as some of the youth had completely withdrawn from school prior to joining the YASA program. . As the survey data in Table 31 indicates, the majority (76%) of these youths were enrolled in primary school.

Table 29: Education level of YASA youth

| Education level | N | % |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| Primary school | 76 | 76 |
| Secondary school | 24 | 24 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

3.4.3.2. Project Services Delivered to YASA

In the case of rural entrepreneurial youth, E-FACE youth employment intervention’s goal is to have them build household resilience through safe, efficient economic activities. The project trained and equipped 250 Youth (138 male, 112 female) to become youth agri-sales agents. They were selected based on the following criteria:

Table 30: Required criteria for selection of VSAY youth for the YASA program

| Required Criteria | Desirable Criteria |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth aged 14-17 engaged in weaving or agricultural activities ▪ Youth engaged in child labor ▪ Youth willing to travel around the kebeles (township) to solicit and sell agricultural commodities ▪ Youth with some formal education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth willing to participate in MEDA’s “Building Skills for Life” training and cooperate with the project ▪ Youth currently out of school ▪ Youth who are not a part of any other support/NGO client base |

The training focused on motivating youth to become entrepreneurial, with topics on goal setting, business idea generation, marketing and sales. These youth also received financial literacy training on cash management, as well as training on agri-inputs relevant to their locations. They were provided with start-up support and began, collaborating with the project’s package of agri-based inputs.

As Table 33 below depicts, these youth were also asked to rate their satisfaction level with the training delivered by the project. The overall average result (4.14 mean score) shows that the youth were very much satisfied by the participatory nature of the training which they felt benefitted them.

Table 31: Satisfaction level with YASA training

| Satisfaction Indicators | Mean |
|-------------------------|------|
|-------------------------|------|

| | score¹⁰ |
|--|---------------------------|
| Overall, I benefited from the training. | 4.44 |
| The training was presented in an engaging manner. | 4.05 |
| The trainers were knowledgeable and were able to answer questions effectively. | 4.08 |
| I feel my level of knowledge on the subject matter has increased. | 4.09 |
| The training was as per my need and choice. | 4.02 |
| Overall average score | 4.14 |

3.4.3.3. YASA model: Design and Validity

YASA Model Design: MEDA initially developed the YASA model to address the gaps in value chain and to create appropriate youth income generating activities in rural areas. Based on the model, the youth agriculture sales agents serve as go-betweens for seed companies seeking to deliver inputs to farmers in a time- and cost-effective manner. Farmers are then able to access inputs at small, affordable quantities and improve their productivity.

The project provides business skills and training for youth sales agents in order to increase their product and market knowledge, in addition to life skills training to improve their confidence. The project also links the youth to brokers/distributors/promoters who act as wholesale suppliers. These intermediaries mentor the youth and support them in building networks and product offerings. The model has the following basic benefits:

- The youth have a viable path to income generation and to empower them with technical and entrepreneurial skills that are transferable to other trades and career paths.
- The farmers receive access to smaller and more affordable input packages; direct-to-farm delivery and a direct source of market information.
- The agro dealers and brokers gain access to an expanded market and customer base.

The model was designed with the following three basic assumptions:

- A market gap exists in providing quality inputs to many rural farming HHs.
- In each kebele, one intermediary would act as broker/distributor/promoter.
- Youth will be able to trade without hindrances, despite their age (14-17).

YASA Model Validity:

The design of the YASA model was with the intention of organizing the needy youths aged between 14 - 17 years and train them in agri-sales to sell and distribute various agricultural inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizer, and other agriculture related inputs to the farmers and entire rural community.

¹⁰5=Very good, 4=Good, 3=Neutral, 2=Poor, 1=Very poor

However, the activities are fully dominated by the government, which also limits the employment options for youth under 18... Because of this, the YASA strategy needed to be adapted to the local context.

When examining the different roles and businesses adopted by the youth sales agents, it became apparent that the youth had made adjustments to the YASA model to better suit their realities. The majority of youth were buying small amounts of agricultural inputs at markets and in neighboring kebele from multiple vendors rather than a main source. The youth were then either selling back to the local markets in their areas or value-adding or then selling at a premium.

When asked about their main motivation for adjusting their strategies, the youth were upfront about certain obstacles that they had not been warned would challenge their ability to operate. Most mentioned their age as a factor. Other identified obstacles included a lack of experience in the industry, lack of purchasing power and the ability to link with high-level agro dealers. One observed challenge that the youth failed to mention was the lack of technical support from promoters. The youth reported that support from the promoters generally came in the form of savings and VSAY training rather than support with market linkages or the technical know-how needed to compete as agricultural sales agents. As a result, many of the youth were retailing to a broader market instead of farmers.

3.4.3.4. VSAY Outcome/Impacts

Increased Entrepreneurial Skill: As most of youth explained during the FGD, there are changes in terms of entrepreneurial skill. Some of them have started with small petty trades like hens, and are now moving onto buying and selling goats. They are able to buy clothes, school materials; and some have even started supporting their parents and other dependents as they can enjoy some of the profits from this business.

As the table below indicates, many of the YASA youth were engaged in agriculture output sales, rather than selling inputs to farmers. When asked about their trade, most of the youth explained they engaged in their chosen field based on previous experience or witnessing the success of neighbors. Of the total youth that participated in the survey, 12% engaged in vegetable and fruit retail.

Table 32: YASA business activities

| Selling products (N=98) | Responses | |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| | N | % |
| Vegetable and Fruit Retail | 12 | 11.3 |
| Livestock and Poultry Trade | 38 | 35.8 |
| Other | 56 | 52.8 |
| Total | 106 | 100 |

With regard to their customer base, the majority (60%) of these youth were getting their supply from producers (mostly farmers). Traders are their other main supplier.

Increase Income from Business Activities: As the survey data in Table 35 noted, there is an income generated from different IGA activities. In total on average, youth have generated an average annual net income of 2,639ETB.

Table 33: Profitability from YASA business activities

| Business Type | Average Total Cost | Average Total Revenue | Average Profit/Net Income /Year |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Butter Trading | 150 | 200 | 50 |
| Vegetable and fruits | 5,752.05 | 7,754.26 | 2,002.21 |
| Livestock(small ruminant) | 1,722.65 | 2,309.84 | 587.19 |
| Total | 7,624.7 | 10,264.1 | 2,639.4 |

In terms of involvement in the YASA program, youth reported being able to afford personal items for their own use. This allowed more of the household funds to be allocated to other areas such as garden expansions, home renovations and medical bills. The youth expressed their pride in being able to afford to take care of themselves, and many noted being more confident and vocal about their wishes for the future.

Enhanced Financial Literacy: The survey result indicated that all of these youths were and all the youth sales agents were members of the Village Savings Associations for Youth (VSAY) and started saving to help them with their agri-input start up. As per the data generated from the survey, the average saving for youth is calculated at 410ETB, per individual, per year. Each of them have also started saving on a monthly and regular basis at Omo Micro Finance Institution.

Their involvement in the savings groups increased their awareness and understanding of financial products and services. This was particularly evident in that all of the youth were linked to a microfinance institution (MFI) through their VSAY. In addition to their regular savings (mainly done through their VSAY-linked MFI account), some of the youth also mentioned separate individual savings accounts that they would access only for further business expansion. This is one of the major indications of the project's effectiveness in terms of increasing saving culture among these youth.

Enhanced Self-Esteem and Future Goals: The youth were asked to share their future hopes and dreams. Most of them expressed their desire to go on to study at university. In the short term, they have a plan to expand their current business, involve themselves in new businesses and become profitable to enable them to support themselves and their families. This is one of the major indications of the project's effectiveness

as one of the most desired outcomes of the YASA program was to inspire the youth to plan for a better future and encourage them to begin thinking about a career and life goals.

During the assessment, these youth noted that the lack of working capital/seed money is a challenge. During the FGD, the majority of participants indicated their involvement in trading various cereals like wheat, barley, and maize and the constraints that a commitment to saving three birr per week put on their ability to expand their business due to a need for more working capital.

“If we were financially strong, we could have increased the amount of cereals to up to two or three quintals which would significantly improve our income, however the limited profits we get currently doesn't even cover our monthly expenses” FGD - **Wondra Gale Kebele, Damot Gale**

3.5. Sustainability of the Youth Employment Intervention

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has ended. The team assessed the project's sustainability in consideration of the following key issues.

Continuity of the Projects Change/Effect or Results: Based on this assessment, the objective of sustaining the achieved results with respect to increased access to employment opportunities and improved work environments for youth was achieved by the project. Key to this was the project's ability to link all interventions to a local government stakeholder. The project has been working with the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs to strengthen the existing linkage of youth agri-sales agents and establish new linkages between the youth and agri-input suppliers, to follow-up on the status of the linkage with input suppliers and provide ongoing support for the youth.

Furthermore, the project has involved and linked the activities with child protection committees and government stakeholders to support and monitor the retention of youth in school and ensure they benefit long after the project ends. The transfer of training knowledge to partners and stakeholders to undertake OSH training and child labor monitoring is also another key area of achievement that can sustain the project's outcome. For example, during the data collection government stakeholders explained they have plans to expand and integrate these trainings, including training on CL, into the government structure.

Phase-Out Strategy and Turn over Plans: As part of the phase-out strategy, the project has identified sustainability challenges and implemented mitigation actions. Following the development of the phase-out strategy, the team took steps to mitigate key risks after identifying key challenges impeding the sustainability of increased access to employment opportunities for youth. Some major risks and challenges identified by respondents include lack of adequate working stations, lack of access to start-up capital, difficulty cascading policy and regulations to lower levels of administrative structures at the government

level, and lack of proper coordination and collaboration among key partners. To address some of these challenges, as part of the sustainability, the project has collaborated with government stakeholders to advocate for ongoing support for the youth and held continuous discussions and meetings with MFIs and Women, Youth and Children's affairs office. Discussion with the formal financial institutions will continue to demonstrate the strong saving habits and literacy of all the saving groups so that the institutions treat them as groups and provide financial services.

Government stakeholders facilitated access to improved workspaces to prevent youth from working in exploitative conditions. The project also established connection points with designers, master weavers and businesses interested in supporting the youth through skill development orientations and/or market orders.

As a part of the implementation of the phase-out strategy, the project successfully handed over all youth client lists, training manuals and other documents to the respective local government stakeholder offices.

Strong collaboration with other NGOs, GO and Businesses. The efforts to collaborate with partners, such as other NGOs and government entities, will go a long way in creating sustainable livelihood changes. To this end, the project is focused on partner capacity building to create a participatory environment for stakeholder involvement. This creates an avenue for joint and coordinated ownership efforts in the E-FACE project. Additionally, the project supported NGOs and government organizations in pursuit of their local development agenda.

IV. Recommendations and Conclusions

4.1. Recommendations

Despite the project's many successes, the research indicates several areas for improvement that could be addressed by local stakeholders as they continue their efforts to eradicate child labor in Ethiopia and offer youth viable education and employment opportunities. Specific recommendations for key stakeholders are presented below:

MoWCYA and MoLSA, at all levels

- Take up leadership in sustaining such programs as a matter of priority to reduce the major burden on children at risk of and engaged in CL, especially in industries like the textile industry. Leadership by the local government offices is essential to achieving the objectives of the project and sustaining the project's impact in the years to come.

WVE, MEDA and MCDP

- Focus on systems strengthening and capacity building of woreda and zonal offices who can act as mentors, coaches and provide supportive supervision to emerging associations like EFDA so they can eventually take ownership in driving programs to improve youth employment outcomes and OSH.
- Create stronger partnerships with the zonal and district government offices, MFIs, youth saving and credit groups and business owners to ensure joint planning, collaborative implementation, and streamlined monitoring and evaluation to most effectively address child labor and issues affecting youth.
- A more robust capacity building program should accompany youth employment interventions in the future, including provision of additional follow-up trainings on saving, organizing into groups, obtaining loans, entrepreneurship, market linkages and business management. This type of follow-up support is not provided will support sustainability of activities and ensure youth are effectively linked to services that will benefit them in the long-term.
- The project should plan and budget for experience sharing activities to allow project staff to visit other regions and partners in the different areas to learn about best practices and lessons learned to support them in improving interventions in their own areas.
- Youth working in outside markets still lack connections to market opportunities, such as selling their wares in bazaars and exhibitions or being part of a design network, such as EFDA. Future projects should prioritize creating sustainable linkages to these opportunities for youth.
- Youth participating in TVET and other such training programs need complementary resources, such as access to seed money or workspaces from which they can launch their own businesses. Though the TVET training is a critical first step in their career development, additional resources will increase their chances of successfully staying in business and continuing to invest in their businesses.
- The YASA program succeeded in its overall objective, diverted vulnerable youth from exploitative activities, providing them with decent income generating opportunities. Most

of the youth operated their businesses in markets rather than the agent-to-farmer model originally developed for the YASA program. However, the YASA component faced challenges in its implementation. Data from both the survey and the FGDs and KIIs indicated that existing social, geographical and cultural realities, such as lack of confidence, the unwillingness of brokers to work with youth and difficulty locating vendors, hampered the project's original plans. Though the sales agent model had to be adapted due to unexpected local conditions, program flexibility was key in developing an alternative action plan that garnered the same results. This is a recommendation for future programming to ensure this type of flexibility and openness to course-correct as needed over the project life.

Community:

- Strong participatory planning between the program and communities is important to gaining community buy-in of the project initiatives and motivate community members to fight against child labor in Ethiopia.
- Communities should prioritize reduction of child labor by pushing for execution of government policies and guidelines around child labor at the household level.

4.2. Conclusion

This research aimed at informing concerned decision making bodies on the effectiveness of the E-FACE project youth employment interventions and whether or not specific objectives were effectively accomplished. The research found that all the indicators and information collected from the beneficiaries, stakeholders and project implementing staff, shows that the project has been meticulously designed and achieved its goals and objectives. The main objective of the project was to contribute to the reduction of exploitative child labor, which it successfully did, as evidenced by the 99% reduction in child labor and complete elimination of children in WFCL.

The project has also exceeded its target youths with efficient utilization of the allocated budget. The project's theory of change was validated in that the project outputs and outcomes/attributions of changes have been not significantly affected by any internal and external factors.

Another indicator of the project's effectiveness has been the reduction in work day length for youth. The TVET intervention opened doors for the majority of youth (61.9%) to be self-employed. The wage history of the youth has also shown significant changes in that 56% of the youth responded that they have seen an increase in their wages after the project intervention, with most reporting not only an increase but an actual start in receiving wages. Additionally, there is significant improvement in saving culture and future aspirations of the youth.

In conclusion, the project designed and implemented its interventions in such a way that the results achieved to date can stand on their own even after donor funding ends. As part of the phase-out plans, the project has identified sustainability challenges and has put in place appropriate mitigation actions. Furthermore, for all interventions, the project has created strong, collaborative partnerships with other NGOs, government agencies and businesses, which have taken ownership of these activities and have incorporated these strategies and efforts into their work plans and budgets.