



GEA/SPI Semi-Annual Report – Jan to July 2023



2023 Burji District Drought Relief

Prayers of the people was answered with abundant rainfall and harvest of crops



DBCO/GEA Ladies' Farm – Teff harvest on 1-hectare of land



SUMMARY

Great news, DBCO/GEA was registered in Ethiopia in May 2023 as an international NGO with Registration Number 6898. We are very excited about this opportunity and the doors it will open to serve more clients. Please, joins us, and together, let us plant the seed of change.

GEA friends, partners, supporters, and collaborators, 2022-23 has been quite challenging for our clients in the Burji District. The severe drought had killed thousands of animals and destroyed planted crops forcing people to the brink of starvation. Thanks to and with the help of many kind-hearted individuals, sons of the area, and volunteers, GEA conducted two different fundraising campaigns to purchase and distribute food to the drought-impacted families in eight Burji villages in March and May 2023. We temporarily relieved these families from starvation until food was abundant in the next harvest.

Meanwhile, the core GEA projects that provide access to quality education, clean drinking water, essential health service, and the use of agriculture to improve livelihoods are progressing.

For the remainder of 2023, GEA will focus on school initiatives, including introducing a hands-on science laboratory, library upgrades, and start menstrual hygiene management initiative for grades 9 to 12th girls.

The following is a highlight of our 2022-23 activities:

Drought Relief campaigns

In Southern Ethiopia, the lack of consecutive three to four years of rainfall resulted in a severe drought that killed millions of animals and forced hundreds of thousands of people into starvation. The drought spread like wildfire in the prairies of the Borana zone, impacting the pastoralist livelihoods and reaching the highlands of the Burji District, killing animals and forcing the subsistent farmers to the brink of starvation.



Burji District - Cow carcass near GEA farm



Mother and a daughter stripping wild berry for food

In response to the drought, GEA conducted food relief drives around Yavello town in April of 2022 and two different food distributions in the Burji District in April and May 2023. The GEA team distributed grain and cooking oil to 300 households (2100 individuals) in the Borana zone and 1672 households



(10,032 individuals in eight villages) in the Burji District.



Relief food distribution: HarWayu- Borana Zone

Werdaya - Burji District

GEA is thankful to all that contributed to this humanitarian effort and the volunteers who made our campaigns successful. We are creating change and hope for those who need it most.

Education

GEA is partnering with the Burji District education department to improve school infrastructure and provide access to modern learning materials. GEA is renovating the Bila Kebele elementary school building, which has a dirt floor, missing doors, and windows, and the wall covering is falling. At the high school level, GEA addresses the lack of modern teaching materials essential for science and technology, engineering, and math (STEM) for grades K to 12th. To accomplish these tasks,



Bila elementary school

GEA is working with all concerned governmental and societal bodies to introduce hands-on science labs, engineering, and math learning. In Soyama town, at HareWanji school, GEA built new computer labs using 75 desktops and is connecting these computers to the internet.



Harewenje Computer lab



Parent's Day at HareWanji High School

We are also refurbishing the HareWanji high school library with new shelves, furniture, reference books, and computers for future e-library capability.



Handing over new purchased reference books at HareWanji High school library new reference books

GEA has selected Harewenji high school as a model school equipped with modern learning materials and will replicate the learnings in the remaining high schools. We need all interested parties' hands on board to make this project a reality.

Clean Drinking water

Clean drinking water is a precious commodity in the Burji District, with less than 30% of the community having access to clean drinking water. Most of the community uses water from open sources or rainfall catchments that exposes them to waterborne diseases. Waterborne diseases such as typhoid and diarrhea impact many children, pregnant women, and seniors. We can and should help these people access clean potable water. It is the right thing to do. GEA is partnering with international NGOs working on accessing potable water. For example, GEA partnered with [WaterCharity](#) to deliver borehole water one kilometer up a steep hill to the Harewenji village using a submersible solar pump. As a result, Harewenji school-age girls and women now spend their time on more productive tasks instead of

fetching water for two to three hours. GEA wants to partner with other NGOs to bring clean water to more Burji communities.



Gotche village girl fetching open-source drinking water



Borehole water delivered to the center of HareWanji Village

Basic health service

The Burji District, with a population of over one hundred thousand, does not have a fully functioning hospital. Instead, it relies on five ill-equipped clinics and health posts for medical needs. GEA is partnering with all interested parties, local and regional health offices, to address the primary health service needs. Rural health posts face challenges with frequent loss of electric power for hours and days. Imagine a health post servicing four villages where pregnant women frequently arrive at night for delivery. Performing the delivery process in the dark can be pretty challenging for the health of the mother and the baby. There was a case in the Gotche Village Health Post where the electricity was off, and the alternative solar power was not functioning due to a lack of care. GEA hired a technician from Kenya to repair and replace the solar power energy system, enabling the post to continue its service.



Repairing and upgrading Gotche Village Health Post Solar Power

GEA also works with the regional health office and Burji communities to equip the newly built hospital with essential medical equipment, beds, and office furniture. In addition to health posts and hospitals, GEA focuses on school-age girls' menstrual hygiene management (MHM). School-age girls often miss two to four days of class during their menstrual period. Most girls fall behind in their schoolwork and eventually drop out before finishing school. This situation forces the girls to fall into a cycle of poverty. MHM is a fixable problem that impacts many young girls' livelihoods. GEA is working with schools, parents, and key stakeholders to give girls access to sustainable, reusable pads to stay in school and finish their education for a brighter future. Let us give these girls the opportunity to live their potential.

Rural Agriculture for livelihood improvement

1. Small Animal Distribution:

Distributing small animals such as goats and chickens that multiply rapidly and growing nutritious vegetables are two of the most applied solutions to improve the livelihoods of poor rural families. GEA is utilizing both of these tools to improve the lives of families in Ralya (Bila and Gotche) villages and Soyama town. In Bila, GEA distributed three goats per family to over one hundred families and organized



Ayelech Anno family 3 months after receiving three goats in 2016, and changes by 2021

a twenty-five-member group of unemployed girls and boys to raise chickens for eggs and meat. The goats have multiplied, and the chickens have grown and begun laying eggs. Some goat recipients sold a few of their goats and purchased cows.



Bila youth training on chicken raising Chicks growing and healthy

The lives of Beneficiaries are changing for the better every day, and their perceived wealth is growing. We can set a family on a path of success for just USD 150.

2. Vegetables and cereal farming:

On the farming front, GEA is working with a group of fifty ladies containing internally displaced people (IDP) and local in-need families. These ladies were organized into a government-registered cooperative. In addition to the ladies' group, one hundred twenty-seven individual farmers from the Ralya Gotche

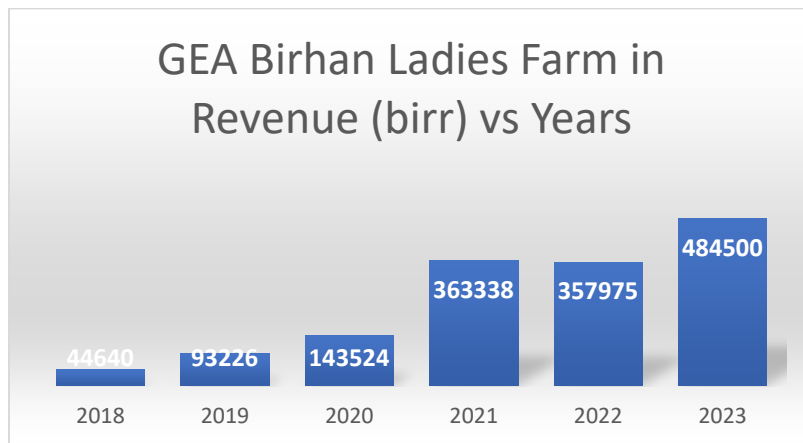
village were trained and supplied with farm tools, seeds, and agrochemicals to grow nutritious vegetables, fruits, and cereals using a furrow irrigation system. With modern agriculture, we can help improve rural farmers' livelihood and nutritional value.

i) GEA Birhan Ladies Vegetable and cereal farm

The ladies' cooperative has access to a borehole water and grows vegetables on one hectare of land year-round using drip irrigation powered by a submersible solar pump system. The ladies' also farm teff and quinoa and beans on one hectare of land using seasonal rainfall. Vegetable harvests have increased year over year for the ladies, while rainfall-fed teff and quinoa yields have lagged behind due to the lack of rainfall. The 2023 spring growing season saw sufficient rainfall, yielding an abundant harvest of teff and vegetables as shown in Table 1. Unfortunately, the stagnant water from excessive rainfall damaged some of the bean plants and reduced the harvest yield. Overall, this harvest has brought much hope and confidence for our Ladies' to overcome last year's drought challenges. Thanks to your support, our ladies are on a sustainable path of self-reliance.



Birhan Ladies' Vegetable harvest



ii) Gotche Vegetable Farm

The local government built the furrow irrigation by damming a small creek between Gotche and Bila village. The farmers harvested an abundant yield in the Spring of 2022 when it rained, and the creek water was available for irrigation. In the Fall 2022 growing period, the severe drought reduced creek water to a dry state. This lack of sufficient rainfall and insufficient water for irrigation negatively impacted the Fall 2022 year's harvest yield. Planted potatoes and vegetables dried out, and the yield was negligible.



Gotche vegetable farm June to October 2022: Tomatoes and Red Beat plots with sufficient water for irrigation



Gotche Vegetable Farm – Nov 2022 to Feb 2023: Severe drought, no irrigation water negatively impacting harvest yields

With the harvest loss, the farmers had no income or food for their families and were waiting for the next rainfall in severe hardship. Fortunately, the rainfall returned as expected during the Spring 2023 planting lasting from March through May. As shown in the photos below, farmers that planted seeds were rewarded handsomely with the potential for abundant harvest yield. In the future, we plan to introduce



seed varieties that are drought resilient and have shorter maturation times. Steadily, our clients are adopting modern farming for increased productivity and wellness.



Gotche vegetable farm – May 2023 Potatoes plot



Beans plots



Gotche vegetable farm – May 2023 Jalapeno plot



Banana field

Acknowledgement

GEA is grateful for the continued partnership and support of Seed Program International and its leadership in supplying funds, vegetable seeds, technology for growing vegetables, and mentorship.