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RESET Plus

Scaling-up Family Planning for Resilience Building

Our Stories of Change

AMREF HEALTH AFRICA

Amref Health Africa is the largest African-based and led international health development organization serving over 30 million people annually across 35 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Strategically engaging with communities, governments, and local partners for the past 65 years, we work through our European and North American network of sister organizations on program implementation, advocacy, fundraising and partnership. Our subsidiaries include Amref Flying Doctors, Amref Enterprises Limited, and the Amref International University.

Our organization is driven by its vision to bring lasting health change in Africa and its mission to catalyze and drive community-led and people-centered health systems while addressing social determinants of health. Amref believes that the power to transform Africa's health lies within its communities, and therefore strives to ensure that health systems are functioning at an optimal level and communities are empowered to hold these systems accountable for the delivery of high-quality and affordable health care.

Amref has been active in Ethiopia since the 1960s and became fully operational as of 2002. We have been partnering with the Ethiopian government and local communities to co-create solutions and implement diverse health and development project portfolios throughout the country for over twenty years. Aligning with the national Health Sector Transformation Plan II (HSTP II), we work to ensure health equity by serving women and children, reaching the most disadvantaged, inaccessible communities including pastoralist communities and placing an emphasis on youth development.





RESET Plus Scaling-up Family Planning for Resilience Building

In rural Ethiopia, the importance of sexual and reproductive health services cannot be overstated. Access to these services ensures that women and girls can make informed decisions about their reproductive health, leading to better maternal and child health outcomes. It also empowers women to participate more fully in their communities, contributing to the overall development and resilience of the country.

The European Union funded Amref 's RESET Plus Family Planning Project aims to ensure the improvement of social cohesion and increased access to quality comprehensive sexual reproductive health (SRH)/family planning services, particularly for women and adolescent girls. By raising awareness about family planning and promoting attitudinal changes regarding gender equality, the project has fostered a higher demand for family planning among adolescents, youth, men, and women, especially in drought-prone and chronically food-insecure regions. The project's initiatives have contributed to enhancing productive capacity and self-reliance of women and youth in the Intervention regions.

By addressing issues such as demographic pressure and promoting gender equality, projects like RESET Plus play a crucial role in building healthier, more resilient and empowered societies.



Photo: © Genaye E. for Amref Ethiopia

Badewoyde Kebele Women Economic Group during their weekly meeting

The background is a collage of several photographs. In the top left, a woman in a floral dress smiles. In the top center, a man in a white shirt and blue face mask looks on. To his right, a woman in a white headscarf and blue shirt looks forward. In the bottom left, a woman in a striped shirt and grey jacket sits and smiles. In the bottom center, a young girl in a pink shirt and blue skirt sits. To her right, a woman in a plaid shirt and orange headband sits. In the bottom right, a young boy in a red shirt is visible. A large red semi-transparent rectangle covers the center of the image, with the text 'Our Stories' in white.

Our Stories



Photo: © Genaye E. for Amref Ethiopia

Empowered Women Create Healthier and Resilient Community

In the dramatic landscape of Wolaita in South Ethiopia, with its rolling hills, rocky terrains, and meandering roads, a remarkable transformation is taking place. In Bedewoyde Kebele, a small community in Wolaita, 50 women have come together to form, women economic group (WEG) that aimed at empowering women through financial independence and enterprise management training.

One of these women is Adanech Mogiso. By borrowing from the savings of the group, Adanech was able to start her own shop, a venture that not only supports her family but also contributes to the local economy. This initiative is more than just a financial opportunity; it is a lifeline that enhances the health and well-being of mothers and children in the community.

Empowering rural women financially has profound implications for access to healthcare services. In regions Empowering rural women financially has profound implications for access to healthcare services. In regions like South Ethiopia, financial independence can significantly impact health outcomes. Women like Adanech, who can generate their own income, are better positioned to afford healthcare services for themselves and their children. This economic empowerment translates directly into improved maternal and child health, reducing the risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth and ensuring that children receive the necessary care and nutrition for healthy development.

The Bedewoyde Kebele's WEG is a beacon of hope in this picturesque yet challenging environment. The rocky hills and winding roads of their village symbolize the obstacles these women face and overcome. By fostering a sense of community and

mutual support, the savings group enhances financial stability and promotes health and well-being.

In the larger context of South Ethiopia, empowering women through financial independence is a critical step towards achieving broader health goals. Women who control their own resources are more likely to prioritize healthcare, family planning, education, and nutrition for their families, leading to a ripple effect that benefits the entire community.

Initiatives like the Bedewoyde is WEG are essential. They provide women with the tools to overcome economic barriers, ensuring that the health needs of mothers and children are met. Empowering rural women is not just about financial independence; it is about fostering a healthier, more resilient community for generations to come.

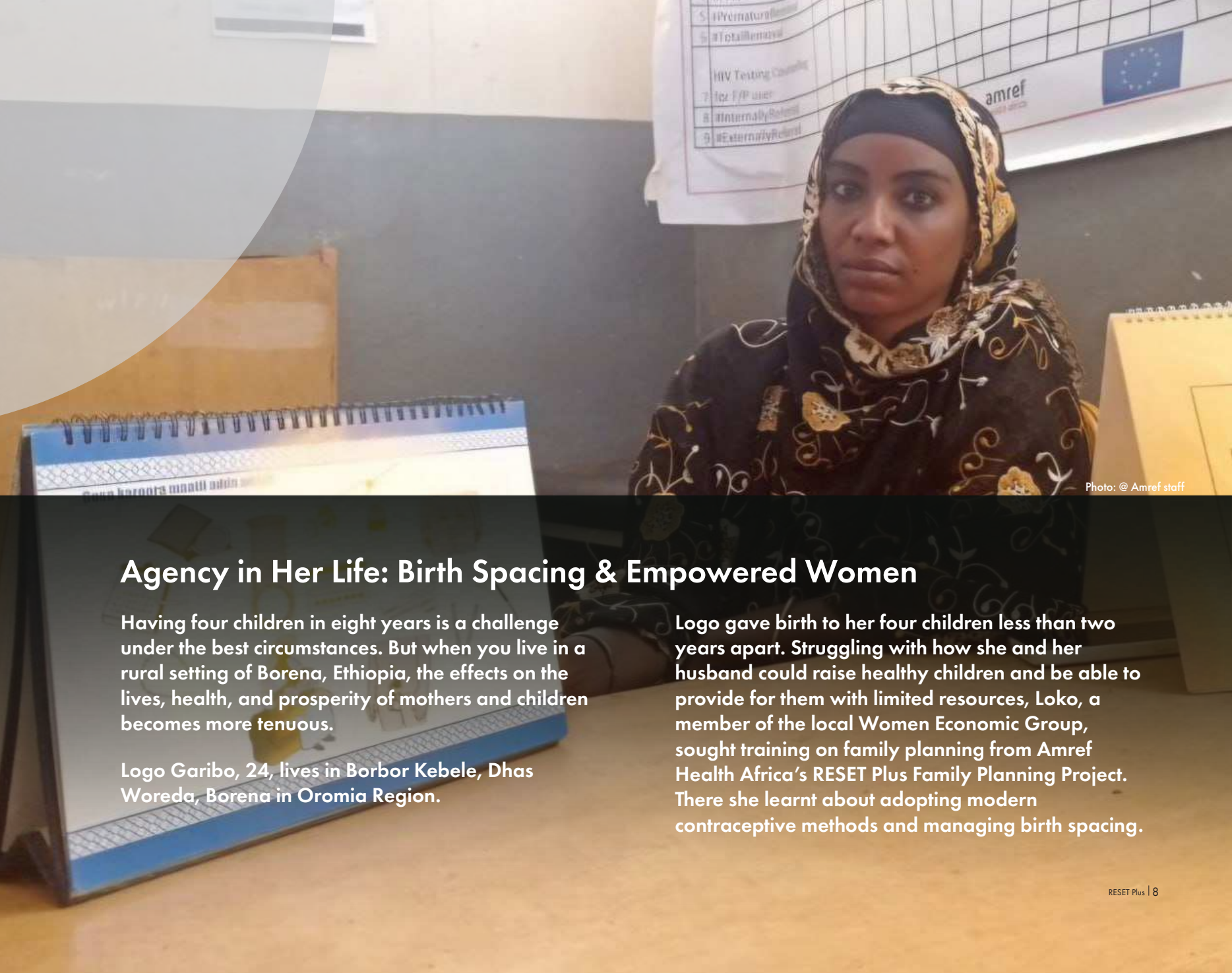


Photo: © Amref staff

Agency in Her Life: Birth Spacing & Empowered Women

Having four children in eight years is a challenge under the best circumstances. But when you live in a rural setting of Borena, Ethiopia, the effects on the lives, health, and prosperity of mothers and children becomes more tenuous.

Logo Garibo, 24, lives in Borbor Kebele, Dhas Woreda, Borena in Oromia Region.

Logo gave birth to her four children less than two years apart. Struggling with how she and her husband could raise healthy children and be able to provide for them with limited resources, Loko, a member of the local Women Economic Group, sought training on family planning from Amref Health Africa's RESET Plus Family Planning Project. There she learnt about adopting modern contraceptive methods and managing birth spacing.

Loko Garibo

Loko's transformation helped her reframe how she could have more control over her life by carefully planning when to expand her family. Understanding this power, she chose a suitable family planning method.

Loko didn't keep the information on her self-transformation to herself. Keenly aware that other women could benefit from exercising the same control she gained over her reproductive choices, Loko became a staunch advocate for

family planning within her community. Now, the women in her support group have a safe space to learn about reproductive health concerns, openly discuss the misconceptions surrounding contraception, and find practical ways to be proactive about their future.

The work of the European Union funded RESET Plus Family Planning Project helps women be the informed decision-makers in their own lives.

From Vulnerability to Empowerment: Youth Advocate for Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health

Samrawit Mola, 16, is a 10th grade student and an active member of Dimtu high school Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) Club in Wolaita.

Samrawit is one of the school club members who received training organized by Amref RESET Plus Family Planning Project on life skill and sexual and reproductive health. She says the training showed club members the road to changing unhealthy behaviors and adopting healthier ones. It also armed them with the necessary skills to facilitate youth sexual reproductive health focused educational sessions to their peers, the main purpose of which is for them to take home the messages, share with others, and raise awareness and understanding.



Samrawit attending her regular class at Dimtu high school

Samrawit Mola

Samrawit attending her regular class at Dimtu high school

"As a young girl, I am vulnerable to sexual harassment. Most of us live in fear. It is not easy for young girls to go to school and back without fear of harassment. My exposure to sexual reproductive health education and life skills training at school has given me the strength to deal with it. The lessons have changed my behavior and the behavior of other members of the club a lot in terms of how we look at and lead our lives as young girls and boys. I have now become a young girl who educates others and who aspires a better life for others and myself. There were students who dropped out of school because of unintended pregnancy. Some would have challenges with menstruation related stress and frustration. I myself had that experience before. With the support of Amref, the school managed to set up girls' friendly safe space where we can rest, wash and change during our menstruation," Samrawit Mola points out.

Samrawit is volunteering to educate other young people in her school so that they could demonstrate healthy behaviors and make better choices in life. With other members of the club, she tries her best to create awareness about teenage pregnancy, family planning, sexually transmitted infections, delaying marriage, harmful traditional practices, and addiction. She is always there for those students who seek for help regarding SRH and other youth related problems.

“Based on the training we took, we prepared ourselves well and educate others. I advise and even

take them to youth friendly services where they can feel comfortable to share their youth related health concerns. Now I can see change is happening. Many of us now talk about sexual and reproductive health related needs and concerns openly in our school and share with others,” she says.

In a bid to reach broader youth, and through them the wider community, Amref’s RESET Project mainly targets schools. Samrawit wants to see many more positive changes happening in and out side of her school. Despite more challenges ahead, she is positive about the future.



Photo: © Zelalem B. for Amref Ethiopia

Samrawit sharing SRH messages with her fellow students

Breaking Barriers: Economic Empowerment and Better Family Planning Outcome

When Tesfanesh, a mother of two who lives in Chama Hembecho Kebele, Wolaita South Ethiopia, joined her kebele's Women Economic Group (WEG) she knew her life would change. She could not have predicted just how much it would change.

The Group was established through the European Union supported RESET Plus Family Planning Project and is led by Amref Health Africa. Programming at the WEG includes apparatus for women to gain financial footing by providing training and access to loans that are difficult for unbanked women to secure, as well as provide information and services related to family planning.

An entrepreneur at heart, Tesfanesh went through the necessary training to get an ETB 15,000 loan to run her poultry and other small businesses. For Tesfanesh, becoming a member of the WEG opened the door for her, her husband, and their children to lead economically empowered lives.

"With the support I got from the WEG, I have been able to beat poverty and lead a planned and healthy family," Tesfanesh says.



Empowering Futures: A Journey of Family Planning and Economic Growth



Photo: Leulseged N. for Amref Ethiopia

Birzaf educating mothers in her neighborhood about family planning

In Waghimra, Amhara Region, early marriage and unintended pregnancy are prevalent issues that often force young girls to drop out of school.

Birzaf Desalegn, a 26-year-old mother of four, resides in Keba Kebele, Sekota Zuria, Waghimra Zone. She was married at the age of 17, and immediately left school behind.

“I gave birth to my first child when I was 18 years old. I had no awareness of family planning and didn’t use any methods until after my third child,” Birzaf reflects. The family’s primary income comes from a small business selling a local brew called Tella.

“I didn’t have much knowledge about business management.”

In order to improve the situation for women and young girls, the RESET Plus Family Planning Project has been focusing on raising awareness about the risks associated with early marriage and unintended pregnancies while promoting family planning services. Through locally established WEGs, members like Birzaf are educated on these critical issues and connected with family planning services.


The RESET Plus Project has targeted women to encourage the use of family planning methods alongside economic empowerment. Utilizing existing grassroots community structures, the project has provided trainings on family planning and seed money to the WEG. As a member of the Keba Kebele group, Birzaf has benefited from these initiatives.

"I received training on family planning and financial management. As a group, we also received seed money, which helped me increase my income. Initially, I took ETB 2,500 loan, and then ETB 5,000 after repaying the first. I now have ETB 6,000 in my account after purchasing a donkey for my husband with ETB 4,000. My husband supports my business and is also engaged in his own venture using the donkey for transportation. The family planning training I received gave me a lot of education about how I could plan my family. Now, after my third child, I am using a three-year family planning method" Birzaf says.

Empowered by her new skills and knowledge, Birzaf aspires to open a small hotel and shop within the next four years. "I am happy to be a member of the WEG and am grateful to Amref and the European Union who brought the RESET Plus Project. Now, I am fully aware of the business management and the importance of family planning. It does not matter if the project phases out. I have already stood on my own feet;"

Photo: Legesse N. T. for Amref Ethiopia

Birzaf & her husband load sack of grain on back of their donkey

A woman, Alemitu Seta, is riding a bicycle on a dirt path that winds through a lush, green forest. She is wearing a white t-shirt with the 'amref health africa' logo, light blue trousers, and a backpack. The path is surrounded by tall trees and dense foliage, creating a serene and natural setting. The image is framed by a large, semi-transparent circular graphic on the left side.

Alemitu delivers health services by using a bicycle as transportation

Bridging the Gap and Transforming Health

Alemitu Seta, a health extension worker in rural Bilate Charicho Kebele Wolaita, South Ethiopia, has been pivotal in transforming the health and well-being of women and children in her community.

Trained by Amref Health Africa, Alemitu has played a crucial role in the success of the European Union

supported RESET Family Planning Project, focusing on enhancing access to sexual and reproductive health services among rural populations. Through her efforts, Alemitu has provided support to mothers, helping them access vital services and knowledge for their family's health and well-being.



Photo: © Genaye E. for Amref Ethiopia

Genet, a mum of two boys, like many women in her community, faced barriers to accessing essential health services due to the remote nature of her village and limited availability of healthcare facilities. But with Alemitu's guidance and support, Genet learned about sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health, and the importance of keeping her children healthy. Alemitu provided her with information on how to protect her children from prevalent diseases such as malaria and other water-borne illnesses as well.

Health extension workers like Alemitu play a critical role in the health of mothers and children in rural areas of South Ethiopia. They are often the first point of contact for women who may not have easy access to healthcare facilities. These workers provide education, support, and sometimes even basic medical care, ensuring that health services reach the most vulnerable populations. Their presence in the community fosters trust and encourages women to seek help, leading to improved health outcomes for both mothers and children.



Photo: © Genaye E. for Amref Ethiopia

In rural areas of Southern Ethiopia, where healthcare infrastructure is often limited, sexual and reproductive health is crucial to women and girls. Access to these services is essential for reducing maternal and child mortality, preventing diseases, and empowering women to make informed decisions about their health and family planning. This is especially important in regions like Wolaita, where poverty and food insecurity are prevalent, and health challenges are exacerbated by difficult living conditions.

Alemitu's role highlights the need for more trained health extension workers to support mothers in rural areas. These workers are essential in bridging the gap between healthcare providers and the community, ensuring that women and children receive the care they need. By expanding the network of trained health workers, more families can access health services, improving health outcomes and contributing to the overall development of rural communities in Ethiopia.

The Cascading Effects of One Changed Life

Yeruk Ayele probably cannot recall the names of all the people whose lives she has changed—after all, that number has passed 16,000.

And it is still climbing.

Yeruk works as a health extension worker in Hilina Korke health post Wolaita. She had been helping her community get access to vital family planning services through training she got from Amref Health Africa's RESET Plus Family Planning Project.

A dedicated health extension worker, Yeruk embarked on a consequential journey when she attended a Comprehensive Family Planning training program organized by Amref Health Africa. She had started in outreach and advocacy about the powerful health and economic benefits of deliberative family planning. Yeruk was then able to provide long-term family planning contraceptive insertions at small community health posts available near the women she served.



However, when women were ready to to remove the insertions, they would have to travel long distances to bigger health centers where those procedures could be performed safely.

The next-level training offered by Amref helped committed health extension workers like Yeruk gain the advanced skills to insert and remove long acting contraceptive methods, thereby being able to provide quality, easily accessible, and compassionate healthcare tailored to the needs of women in the community.

By task shifting the ability to provide long-acting family planning procedures from middle-level or higher medical professionals to frontline healthcare workers closer to the community, Amref took a groundbreaking step of improving healthcare delivery that prioritizes women's health. This has also contributed to spikes in professional growth of healthcare workers as well as the overall health systems strengthening across Ethiopia.

Sixteen thousand and counting.



Nejat, Fafi & Ibrahim

Fatuma & Nejat attending the
EU-delegates' visit at their school library.

Photo: ©Amref Health Africa / Kenaw G.

Uncommon Alliances: Boys & Girls Take on Female Genital Mutilation and Early Marriage

Nejat Ahmed, Fatuma Ibrahim and Ibrahim Yayo are active members of the SRH club at Hayu Primary and Secondary School in Dicheto Kebele, Elidear Woreda, Afar region. Working closely with the school community, health workers, and partners, they passionately support initiatives designed to stop harmful practices among adolescents and youth in their community.

Trained and empowered by the European Union funded RESET Plus Family Planning Project implemented by Amref Health Africa, they gained skills on how to sensitize their fellow students and community members on harmful traditional practices that disproportionately affects girls.

The training enhanced the young people's understanding of how to adopt healthy behavior; they became trusted and skilled peer-to-peer facilitators on sensitive discussion, effectively dispelling taboos young people previously grew up with.



The trainings were enriching and have shaped us in many positive ways. The facilities available help us manage our menstruation and provide safe space built for girls so we don't have to miss classes. Male students' engagement in the club and active participation in different SRH education sessions have made an enormous difference, as most have now begun to play supportive roles. That would have been inconceivable just a few years ago, Fatuma says.



The trio along with their fellow students regularly provide health education to both in-school and out-of-school youths. They visit rural communities to raise awareness about harmful traditional practices (HTPs) and engage in discussions with clan and religious leaders, traditional healers, and community representatives about issues such as early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). So far, they have successfully managed to get more than 10 early marriages cancelled.

This European Union investment has become a community affair bringing together students, teachers, health workers, religious and community leaders, as well as key partners like Amref to bring an end to female genital cutting, early marriage, and unintended pregnancies.

The Quiet Heros on the Frontlines: Health Providers Changing Lives

Musa Ali, a 55-year-old resident of Gawah Kebele in Elidar Woreda, Afar, has been working at the Gawah Health Post for the past five years. Musa recalls the significant challenges faced by his pastoralist community regarding family planning. There was a profound lack of information on birth control methods, including pills, injectables, and long-acting reversible contraceptives.

This lack of awareness led to widespread misconceptions and fears that family planning methods would cause infertility and reduce the Afar population. Additionally, there was limited access to long-acting family planning methods and a shortage of trained health workers and supplies, particularly at the health post level.



Photo: ©Amref Health Africa/Amref Ethiopia staff

To address these challenges, the RESET Plus Family Planning Project provided crucial training for health workers. Musa received training on Implanon NXT, a long-acting contraceptive, at Asaita District Hospital and Logia Health Center. This training equipped him with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to effectively provide family planning services. Inspired by this new expertise, Musa began educating his community about family planning. Utilizing Dagu, a traditional information dissemination method, he successfully spread awareness about the benefits of family planning.

Upon returning to his health post, Musa began offering Implanon NXT insertions. "Over the past six months, there has been a steady increase in the number of clients opting for Implanon NXT insertions, with a notable peak in demand recently," Musa says.

The growing acceptance and demand for family planning services was eventually endorsed by the kebele as well as religious and clan leaders. Musa also noted a significant improvement in the availability of supplies. Quarterly integrated family planning outreach services now cover remote kebeles and villages, ensuring equal access to healthcare no matter where people live.

Looking ahead, Musa aspires to continue enhancing his skills and knowledge to provide even better family planning services. He aims to ensure that every member of his community has access to accurate information and quality services, ultimately improving the overall health and resilience of the pastoralist community in Gawah Kebele.





Breakthrough: Including Men in Women's Empowerment

An extraordinary moment unfolded on June 6, 2023, in a small village in Zarota, Gazgibila Woreda. To a captivated audience of mostly women, Mamo Biadgilign, a father of two, spoke about the

importance of family planning at a Women's Economic Group meeting his wife usually attends. In a country where gender roles are strictly defined, it was a watershed event.

What led up to this transformative occasion was the result of the hard work of the women in the village who organized discussions on how to exert influence on their husbands to participate in non-traditional dialogue on family planning and SRH.

These discussions were embedded in monthly meetings at the village's WEG formed as part of the RESET Plus Family Planning Project. While the broader initiative was to provide women headroom to navigate issues important to them such as financial literacy and savings, they discovered that they also needed to address underlying issues like family planning and SRH that affect their ability to lead healthy and prosperous lives. Taking it one step further, the women understood the buy-in needed from their husbands to include women in decisions that would fundamentally change family power dynamics.

This marked a significant shift in a community where men had previously shown little concern for family planning, and where in fact women had been discouraged from using contraception. Trainings and orientations on how to broach the subject soon produced an inclusive process in decision making.

And so, just as the rainy season was about to usher in a new season in a small village in the Ethiopian highlands, one Mamo Biadgilign spoke passionately about how thoughtful planning has enriched his family.

It signaled the seismic change that is possible when women are empowered.

Not This Time: Fearlessly Facing Down Early Marriage in Afar Region

It's hard to imagine the countless number of young girls in Ethiopia whose dreams of a self-directed life were shattered because of harmful traditional practices such as early marriage.

Too often, girls as young as 14 are married off in order to adhere to traditions despite the obvious & reverberating effects on the physical and mental health of adolescent girls. And all too frequently, girls' potential has been cut short and an otherwise bright future dimmed by forced early marriage.

To thoughtfully reverse this trend, Amref has strategically partnered with courageous community leaders and influencers who, armed with knowledge and determination, have begun to challenge harmful practices and advocate for young girls.

Fatuma Abdulkadir is one such advocate. The 40-year-old leader of the Women's Empowerment Group in Mego Kebele, Afambo Woreda, in Afar region, has made a significant impact in her community after undergoing specialized training on sexual reproductive health, family planning, gender equality, and harmful traditional practice prevention through the RESET Plus Family Planning Project.



Photo: Fisseha for Amref Ethiopia

So, when Fatuma overheard her neighbor discussing an agreement to marry off a 15-year-old girl in ninth grade, she jumped into action. Leveraging her training, she fended off the family's insistence that since the girl's father was deceased, early marriage was the only viable solution. She was relentless, even presenting the family with an ultimatum: cancel the marriage contract or she would escalate the case to higher authorities.

Eventually the family relented, and the young girl continued her education at Afambo Woreda Secondary School, unaware that someone was looking out for her.

Not even deeply entrenched norms could break Fatuma's will who continues to create safe environments for young girls to thrive.

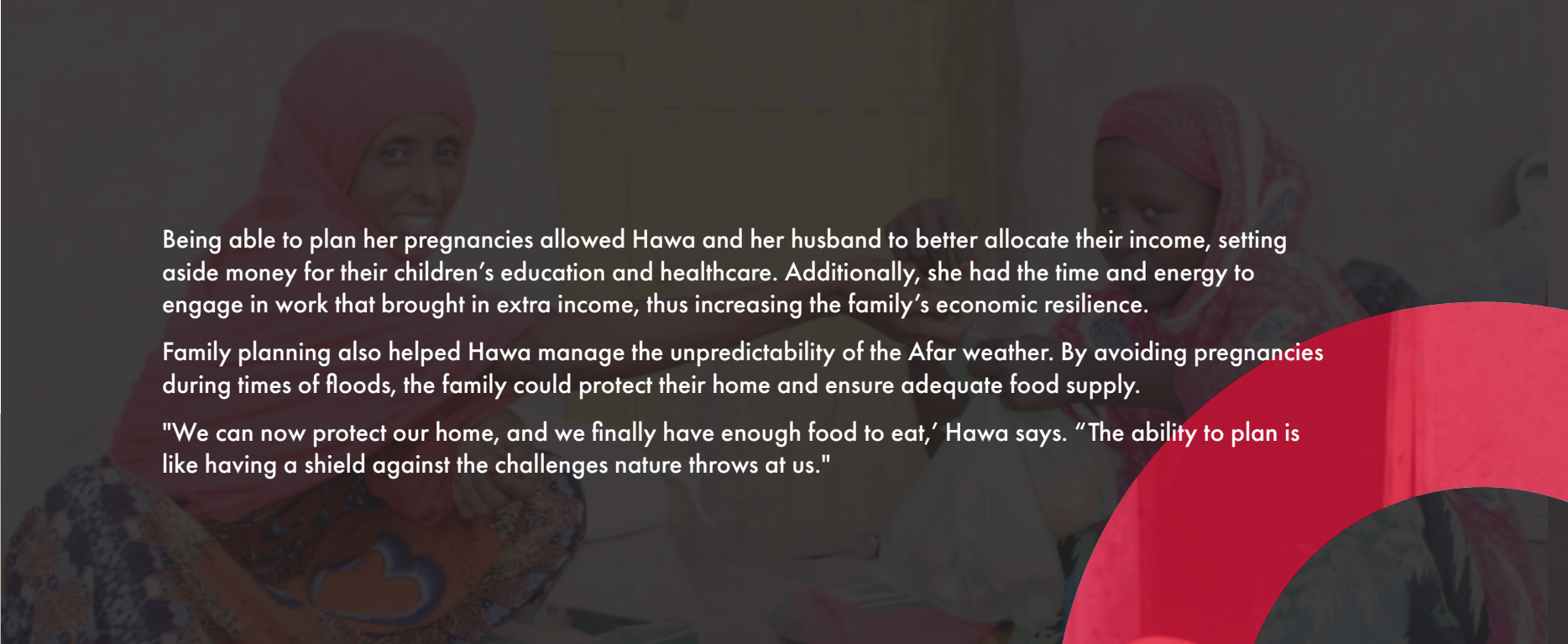
Building Resilient Communities and Creating Stronger Families

The pastoralist life for most women in Afar is already challenging. Hawa Abdulkadir, a 28-year-old wife and mother in Humodita Kebele in the Afambo Woreda of the Afar region was no exception. Facing limited financial resources, living in difficult terrain, and navigating erratic weather patterns that caused frequent floods that would wipe out her home made it difficult for Hawa and her husband to make ends meet.

Added to this was the uncertainty of planning her pregnancies. The increased precariousness of being able to provide a decent life for her family compelled Hawa to seek training on how to efficiently manage her life through sound family planning practices. She enrolled in the RESET Plus Family Planning Project where she found resources on managing her reproductive health. After carefully assessing their situation, Hawa and her husband chose Implanon next generation, a three-year birth control method.



Hawa with her son selling snack



Being able to plan her pregnancies allowed Hawa and her husband to better allocate their income, setting aside money for their children's education and healthcare. Additionally, she had the time and energy to engage in work that brought in extra income, thus increasing the family's economic resilience.

Family planning also helped Hawa manage the unpredictability of the Afar weather. By avoiding pregnancies during times of floods, the family could protect their home and ensure adequate food supply.

"We can now protect our home, and we finally have enough food to eat," Hawa says. "The ability to plan is like having a shield against the challenges nature throws at us."

A Dream Paused: Empowering Women's Education and Reproductive Health Through Family Planning

Asiya Umer

Asiya Umer, who lives in Afambo, Afar Region always wanted an education. But when she got married in 10th grade and quickly became pregnant, she knew her lifelong ambition had to be paused, with no clear plan of how to get it back on track.

"Throughout my pregnancy, I encountered considerable health obstacles that left me feeling extremely unwell and anemic," she says. "This abrupt shift, coupled with the sense of falling behind in my studies, brought about a deep sense of sadness and self-criticism for not being able to pursue my education in the same way my friends were able to."





Photo: Fisseha for Amref Ethiopia

Asiy Umer at her school to get to class

But even through motherhood, Asiya could not let go of the hope of going back to school. When she crossed paths with a health extension worker who advised her about long-term family planning, Asiya was initially excited she could return to class and plan carefully for her next pregnancy after graduating high school. However, she would have to first convince her husband who disagreed with the idea noting misconceptions about family planning.

Unable to give up on her dream, Asiya sought help from health workers who explained the benefits of family planning to her husband. Eventually, he relented after understanding the health and economic benefits of family planning, and together with Asiya they decided on a three-year birth control plan.

Highly trained healthcare workers in traditional communities like the one Asiya and her husband live in not only provide health care services, but also serve as educators, mediators, and advocates. Amref Health Africa and the European Union supported RESET Plus Project have played a pivotal role in training and equipping these skilled and trusted community-based healthcare workers to be champions of health equity.

Asiya returned to high school and at age 20 is finishing 12th grade. The pause is over.



Employing Mobile Tech to Address Adolescents and Youth Health

Abenezer Zebdiyos

Accessing appropriate health services has long been a significant challenge for adolescents and youth in Dimtu town, Duguna Fango Woreda, Wolaita. Young individuals were required to seek care in the adult outpatient department (OPD), which was neither youth-friendly nor tailored to their specific needs. This environment discouraged many from seeking care, especially regarding sensitive issues like sexual and reproductive health.

Youth in Dimtu Woreda faced considerable barriers to accessing health education and services. Traditional methods of health education had limited reach, particularly in remote areas where physical access to facilities was difficult. Many adolescents, especially those who were shy or lacked confidence, hesitated to seek out

youth-friendly services or attend in-person health education sessions. This resulted in a critical gap in essential knowledge about SRH, family planning, and other health issues affecting youth.

Recognizing these challenges, Amref Health Africa, through its RESET Plus Family Planning project, has been working diligently to strengthen youth-friendly health services at Dimtu Health Center.

Abenezer Zebdiyos, a 27-year-old Health Officer and Adolescent and Youth Health (AYH) focal person at Dimtu Health Center, has emerged as a pivotal figure in improving health services for young people in his community.

Abenezer, supported by Amref Health Africa, received hands-on training to bridge skill gaps and enhance the quality of family planning services at the newly established youth-friendly service corner.

In April 2024, he participated in an innovative mobile-based AYH training program called LEAP. "The LEAP training was incredibly helpful for me. It offers a new and effective way to provide AYH information to a large number of youths using their mobile phones. It only requires a mobile network and the registration of participants' phone numbers on the LEAP dashboard, making it both accessible and scalable."

Abenezer aimed to reach 600 adolescents and youth through LEAP and successfully registered 544, with 214 completing the training and benefiting from the services. Despite challenges like poor mobile network connection, he and the Amref team provided ongoing support to encourage participants to finish the training. He observed that the LEAP initiative attracted many young people to the health center, leading to positive behavioral changes. "After the AYH mobile-based intervention, the number of youths visiting our clinic for counseling increased dramatically, from 2-3 to 20-30 per day."

Youths now openly engage in discussions about family planning, unsafe sex, abortion, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and other sexual and reproductive health issues, indicating a significant



shift in their interaction with health services.

Looking ahead, Abenezer envisions expanding mobile-based AYH training to other areas in Wolaita and beyond. He strongly advocates for this approach, stating, "The mobile-based AYH training has the potential to positively impact the future generation of Ethiopia. I believe this innovative strategy should be implemented in more areas to reach a larger youth population and enhance their health outcomes." Abenezer is committed to promoting the broader adoption of the LEAP platform, ensuring that more youths have access to the crucial information and support they need to make informed health decisions.

Partnering with Private Health Care for Improved Family Planning Access

Working in close collaboration with private health facility plays a significant role to optimize adolescent and youth sexual reproductive health (SRH). Youths and adolescents often go to private run clinics for SRH related services. They might feel comfortable there than at government health facility. This raises the issue of working with the private health facilities to widen access to health services for youths and adolescents.

Takele Semayat owns Elishaday private clinic at Gurmokuyesha Kebele in Wolaita Zone. His clinic provides different health care services, which includes family planning. Among his clients, adolescent girls and boys make the highest number. Most of them visit his clinic for family planning and counseling. He always questions why the government (public) health facilities do not want to work in partnership with the private clinics to address at least SRH problems in Wolaita.

Although Ethiopia designed the public private partnership health policy framework, there remains a gap in its implementation. In many sectors, the

Ministry of Health has established a regulatory framework that makes it possible to start and grow collaborative activities with the private health facilities. These include initiatives that already exist for public-private collaboration in the delivery of reproductive health care, quality service delivery, knowledge transfer to the local private clinics, and youth center activities related to reproductive health.

“Our relationship with the public health facility was not good. We were not even asked to report the number of family planning users we have on our recording. The local government does not have any capacity development program for private health workers, neither do have any initiative to support us,” he says.

Aware of this Amref Health Africa organized a platform that brought together the public and private health workers including local authorities to discuss and work together on family planning service provision.



Photo: © Fanuel for Amref Ethiopia

“There has not been any interest to engage us in supporting the government efforts to address SRH. Now this has changed, thanks to Amref Health Africa. We can see an increasing interest from the government health facilities to work with us and we start reporting to health center the number of FP utilization in our clinic. The training equipped us with the knowledge and skills to provide quality family planning services at kebele level. Now we can apply Implanon insertion and removal in our clinic, which was once limited to health center level.”

Amref Health Africa considers public private partnership in the health sector as a key initiative to bring about lasting health change in communities. Regarding sexual reproductive health services, Amref through its RESET Plus Family Planning Project, in addition to providing trainings to private clinic staff along with government health workers, also supplied them with SRH/FP commodities (condom, contraceptive pills, emergency contraceptive, injectable contraceptive...) that can help enhance family planning services in Gurmokuyesha Kebele. “This helps us reach those who do not go to the government health facilities with affordable, quality reproductive health supplies,” Takele noted.

Takele added, “We had scarcity SRH/family planning commodities. Access and unitization of the services was low. Now that has improved. My clinic now provides the service with affordable price and utilization has increased.

Photo: © Fanuel for Amref Ethiopia




The training equipped us with the knowledge and skills to provide quality family planning services at kebele level. Now we can apply Implanon insertion and removal in our clinic, which was once limited to health center level.



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