

FINAL EVALUATION OF “REINTEGRATION OF STREET CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY-BASED CHILD PROTECTION IN SNNPR, ETHIOPIA”

Tilahun Girma, February 2016

Retrak 

No child forced to live on the street

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Acronyms

CLA	Cluster Level Associations
CWC	Child Wellbeing Club
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
MSC	Most Significant Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SHG	Self Help group
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

Introduction

Retrak has over two decades of experience of working with children on the streets in Africa and about one decade operational history in Ethiopia. Retrak Ethiopia works with children living full-time on the streets to give them a real alternative to life on the street. In 2012 Retrak's records showed that a significant proportion of children met in Addis Ababa came from Ethiopia's southern region (SNNPR) particularly from the town of Hossana and the surrounding areas. As a result, a plan was developed to address some of the push factors that were leading many children to come to the city. With support from Cordaid, a 3-year pilot community project was implemented (2012-2015). Adjustments to the project were subsequently made and a new drop-in centre in Hossana town was established to reach out to children before they arrive in the capital.

The project objectives were outreach and service provision to children living unsupported on the streets; participation of children in education, psychosocial counselling and life skills at drop-in centres; and reintegration of children with their families in SNNPR and support to caregivers. Interventions were also established in vulnerable communities to enrol vulnerable women in Self Help Groups (SHGs) leading to greater economic security and participation in family and community decision making; establish child-led Child Wellbeing Clubs (CWCs) to raise awareness of child protection issues; and community education to promote child protection awareness and response. The goal of the final evaluation is to build on the mid-term review in order to assess achievements of the project, to guide decision-making on next steps for the project and to generate learning for informing similar projects in future.

Methodology

The final evaluation is based on ongoing monitoring data (child wellbeing assessments, economic household surveys, community child protection mapping, Most Significant Change stories and annual results reports), as well as primary data collection through specific tools such as focus group discussions with representatives from SHGs and CWCs and key informant interviews with selected government officials, religious and community leaders and other relevant stakeholders. The methodologies applied involved participation of beneficiaries in the evaluation process so as to hear feedback on the project services and outcomes directly from the project beneficiaries (both children and adults) and major stakeholders (government line offices).

Findings

Drop-in centres and reintegration

- Over the three year project period, 335¹ children living unsupported on the streets from SNNPR realised their rights to services (health care, education/skills training, and psychosocial support); 251 children were reintegrated into a family context, and 633 children received catch-up education and life skills.
- The major cause that pushed children to street life was economic distress. Nevertheless, poverty was not a standalone reason: family disintegration, peer pressure, and lack of awareness of child protection issues were also among the driving factors that pushed children to street life.
- Results of the child wellbeing assessment showed an almost complete elimination of risks and improvement in wellbeing during children's time at the drop-in centres. When comparing children's wellbeing when they are placed back into the care of their family to their wellbeing at follow-up there is again an overall improvement. As measured by the child wellbeing

¹ These include children from SNNPR at both Hossana and Addis Ababa drop-in centres

assessments 79% of children at the drop-in centres had improved in access to education and 59% improved in social behaviour. Whilst 89% of reintegrating children showed an overall improvement in wellbeing.

- The drop-in centre is a very effective setup in providing feedback necessary to plan and implement prevention of children leaving their homes and coming to the streets. The child protection mechanisms based on the information gathered has enabled Retrak to actively engage in prevention activities in local Woredas where child migration was rampant.
- The follow-up activities after reintegration were constrained by resource limitation. Results revealed that the percent of children followed-up was lower compared with the achievements in the other activities.

Self Help Groups

- Over the three year project period, 350 women became Self Help Group (SHG) members and participated in savings and loans activities as well as child protection sessions leading to a greater understanding of children's needs and parenting skills and, correspondingly, 66% of their children showing an improvement in parental care.
- Comparison of the results between the two economic surveys with SHG households revealed encouraging results in terms of the amount of savings, which increased more than 200%, in all the Woredas. The proportion of women who took loans from their SHGs has also increased almost consistently across all the Woredas. Increase in savings and loans resulted in increase in food security, and in an increased investment in livestock, especially small ruminants.
- The SHG members are confident of being able to manage their group and sustain working together and supporting each other.
- The officials in all the three Woredas underlined that the SHGs organised by Retrak are much more successful than any of those organised through government offices.
- The members of SHGs have addressed not only their members' economic problems, but also have effectively empowered members to strengthen their social bond and address their children's wellbeing and education. The SHG members are also supporting other women in the community to form similar SHGs.

Child Wellbeing Clubs

- Over the three year project period, nearly 300 children participated in Child Wellbeing Clubs (CWCs) and led peer-to-peer education which reached over 13,000 children. As a result the children reported a greater awareness of child protection issues and ability to influence positive responses to risks, often through informal channels. The schools reported lower dropout rates.
- The CWCs conduct meetings about once in a week and then the school arranges a convenient time to enable the club convey its messages to the school community. The CWCs raise awareness on child protection, labour and trafficking and traffic rules and regulations, as well as monitoring children dropping out from school and mobilising resources to support orphans.
- From among different school clubs, such as HIV/AIDS education, sports, environment, science, etc, the CWCs are the most active at all the schools visited for this evaluation.
- The CWCs are actively working to educate the school communities, and the CWCs' activities are recognised as best practice for replication to other schools in the Woredas.
- The CWCs' activities have significantly contributed to the reduction in the school dropout rates. Data from one school in Gibe Woreda revealed that the dropout rate has reduced significantly during the last three years, this was attributed to the impact of the CWC at the school.

- The current strategy of fundraising is that Club members take the lead to contribute money and call for both teachers and students to raise funds to support children that are economically unable to cover school expenses.
- The school community, and in some occasions the communities outside the school, have appreciated the role the CWCs are taking during special events in educating the communities with drama and songs regarding child protection issues.
- This evaluation has shown that the CWCs are socially sustainable as there exists widespread acceptance of the Clubs among head teachers, schools and communities, this is likely to ensure their long-term sustainability.

Community Education

- Over the three year project period, 812 community members participated in community education workshops, which led to a greater understanding of children's needs and improvement in parenting skills and to 140 children being rescued from traffickers by police and bus workers.
- From among the several NGOs operating in their area, Retrak's community interventions have contributed in changing behaviour of the community to an extraordinary degree, this has been recorded by government office evaluations on the role of NGOs in their area.
- The interviewed stakeholders have conveyed that they are fully positioned to have a strong role as child protection advocates. Besides this remarkable achievement pertaining to the community education, building a strong child protection network at a Woreda level is essential so that duty bearers are held to account.

Conclusion

The evaluation of the drop-in centres revealed that the best interest of the child are maintained across all services, with case-by-case, flexible and participatory consideration to ensure children's welfare and safety. There are also very effective systems to monitor the improvements in the wellbeing of reintegrated children and their families and to gather feedback to plan and implement prevention activities.

The SHGs have accomplished remarkable achievements in addressing economic wellbeing of households, strengthening social cohesion and improving child wellbeing, thus ultimately paving the way to prevent children separating to go to the street. Retrak's approach of organising SHGs without giving hand-outs, unlike the common practice among most NGOs, has been shown to be effective. In addition the community education and CWCs have made a tremendous contribution to improve the level of awareness and develop positive attitudes towards child protection among the community and the major stakeholders.

The approach adopted by the project is undoubtedly the best any project of this magnitude could have adopted. In particular, the involvement of local stakeholders, such as the office Women and Children's Affairs and the police, is critical in making the child protection interventions work on a small and large scale. Overall, this pilot project has had remarkable success against all its objectives. All projects activities were implemented effectively and generated outcomes worthy of scaling up and replicating in other communities.

Recommendations

The evaluation has shown that Retrak Ethiopia's project has registered successes in the area of providing services to the children on the street and improving child protection in target communities. Bearing in mind that three years is a short period to register such tremendous achievements, it is

recommended that the project be replicated to other Woredas where child migration and trafficking are prevalent and the duration of the project at the current Woredas be extended to allow it to be scaled up to more rural Kebeles and to build local capacity for sustainability.

Specifically it is recommended that Retrak considers:

- **Holistic support to children aged below 14 years of age**, including provision of meals during the weekend to prevent these children from being exposed to child labour inappropriate to their age.
- **Establishing referral links** in Hossana, to allow children who choose not to reintegrate back to their families to be referred for vocational training, as happens in Addis Ababa.
- **Exploring potential to collaborate with other organisations** to provide some of the services linked to the drop-in centre, to allow Retrak to focus on facilitation of core activities of reintegrating children and gathering information on the nature and pattern of children coming to the streets to strengthen prevention activities.
- **Strengthening the drop-in centres** with further funding so as to ensure the project's continuation in the same way it is being done. It is too early to consider an exit strategy as the work has yet to become consolidated, particularly on the prevention side, so there is still need to reach out to children on the street.
- **Strengthening follow-up of reintegrated children**, as this was not successfully implemented especially where families are not located within intervention areas, due to limitation of resources. A telephone based follow-up strategy should be designed for children reintegrated outside the operational areas.
- **Collaborative support for SHGs with stakeholders** to build on the strong roots of forming SHGs and pooling savings to allow utilisation of these savings for building microenterprises. This requires considerable support from line offices and other stakeholders (such as Women and Children's Affairs, micro and small businesses, cooperatives, and microfinance institutions) with Retrak monitoring activities and providing of technical support whenever the need arises.
- **Production of documentary films** to motivate and empower newly formed SHGs and to aid scale up of new SHGs at rural and urban Kebeles.
- **Strengthening school based activities that create spaces for children to freely participate in child protection interventions** across the remaining primary schools. This could attract the attention of children and schools to allow further education on child protection.
- **Encourage greater girls' participation in CWCs** to ensure even levels of participation.
- **Empowering the CWCs to generate their own funds** through public shows and competitions to ensure long-term sustainability of the Clubs.
- **Increasing project duration** to allow partners to develop and strengthen their capacities and competencies in order to scale up components of the project within the context of their Woredas.
- **Focusing on building the capacity of stakeholders** (such as Office of Education, Women and Children Affairs, police, micro and small business, and others) so they can scale up and replicate the project activities, and lay the basis for sustainability of the project outcomes.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

Retrak has 20 years' experience of working with children on the streets in Africa, including eight years operational history in Ethiopia. Retrak Ethiopia works with children living full-time on the streets to give them a real alternative to life on the street. In 2012, Retrak's records showed that a significant proportion of children met in Addis Ababa came from Ethiopia's southern region particularly from the town of Hossana and the surrounding areas. As a result, a plan was developed to address some of the push factors that were leading many children to come to the city.

With support from Cordaid, a pilot 3-year community project was planned in the area (October 2012-September 2015), as well as support for reintegrating children into the area from Addis Ababa. Adjustments to the project were subsequently made to include a greater emphasis on education at the Addis Ababa drop-in centre and to start a new drop-in centre in Hossana town to catch children before they reach the capital.

The long term project objective is to improve the wellbeing, support and protection of 2,964 vulnerable children and increase the knowledge, abilities and wellbeing of 1,013 household caregivers and community members. In doing this the project will change attitudes and behaviours, reduce stigma, and respond to and prevent further abuse and exploitation of children in target communities. The project comprises six objectives:

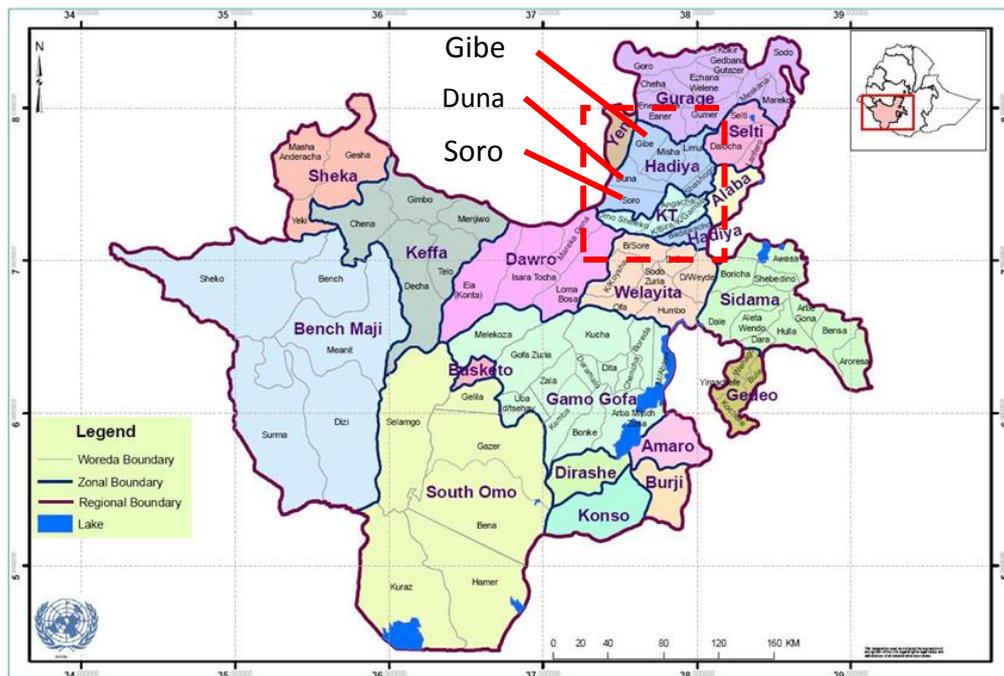
1. Outreach and service provision to street children living unsupported on the streets in Addis Ababa and Hossana;
2. Participation of street children in education and life skills at drop-in centres in Addis Ababa and Hossana;
3. Reintegration of street children with their families in SNNPR and support to caregivers;
4. Participation of vulnerable women in Self Help Groups (SHGs) leading to greater economic security and participation in family and community decision making;
5. Establishment of child-led Child Welfare Clubs (CWCs) with a focus on child protection issues; and
6. Community education to promote child protection.

Based on recommendations from the local authorities, the project targeted three Woredas: Duna, Gibe and Soro, within Hadiya zone, as show in figure 1. A Child Vulnerability Survey undertaken at the beginning of the project highlighting particular needs which could be addressed by the project. This was followed by more detailed community child protection mapping to identify issues at the very local level. A mid-term review, using baseline and first round data was conducted in 2014 to inform the ongoing development of the project.²

The drop-in centre and reintegration work in Addis Ababa has been running since the beginning of the project in October 2012. After obtaining the necessary permissions from authorities at a national and regional level, the community work in the 3 Woredas began in June 2013. The first Self Help Groups (SHGs) were registered in July 2013 and the first Child Wellbeing Clubs (CWCs) started in October 2013 (once the school year had started). Additional permissions had to be obtained for the Hossana drop-in centre, which opened its doors to children in May 2014.

² Retrak (2014) *Mid-term review of "Reintegration of street children and community-based child protection in SNNPR, Ethiopia"*, Manchester, Retrak

Figure 1: Map of SNNPR showing location of project Woredas



The work in the three Woredas is managed by a Project Manager, and each Woreda has a Community Development Worker (CDW) who resides in the area and oversees all the SHGs, CWCs and community education activities. The Project Manager is part of Retrak Ethiopia’s Senior Management Team (SMT) and reports directly to the Country Director. The Hossana drop-in centre is managed by a Centre Manager, and has a team of one social worker, two outreach workers/teachers, a cook, purchasing officer and 6 guards. The Centre Manager reports to the Addis Ababa Centre Manager who is a member of the SMT. There is in addition a Finance Officer based in the Hossana office.

1.2 Purpose of final evaluation

The goal of the final evaluation is to build on the mid-term review in order to assess achievements of the project, to guide decision-making on next steps for the project and to generate learning for informing similar projects in future.

The key guiding questions are:

- **Activities and Outputs:** What activities and outputs have we achieved compared to targets? What are the reasons for any under/over achievement?
- **Outcomes:** What progress have we made against the project outcomes? Do we have evidence of any unintended outcomes?
- **Special focus on SHGs:** In what way are the SHGs empowering the women involved to become advocates of social change within their communities? In what way are the SHGs impacting on child protection within the households? Are SHGs self-sustaining at the end of project period?
- **Special focus on CWCs:** What have we learnt about CWCs? What have the CWCs achieved in terms of changed attitudes and behaviours about migration of children? What impact has this had on the school community? (Is there any hard evidence of change in drop-out rates, enrolments in schools?) Are the CWCs self-sustaining at the end of project period?
- **Special focus on Hossana drop-in centre:** What unique results are we able to see through this Zonal level drop-in centre work? What are the challenges of this zonal drop-in centre? What lessons can we learn about zonal drop-in centre programmes?

- **Community education strategies:** How has the community education programme impacted on child protection mechanisms and implementation in targeted communities? What lessons can be learnt about community education in rural areas?

1.3 Methodology

This final evaluation report is based on a review of ongoing monitoring data, as well as additional primary data collection to understand the changes in the lives of the beneficiaries. The methodologies applied involved participation of beneficiaries in the evaluation process. Accordingly opportunities were created to hear directly from the project beneficiaries (both children and adults) and major stakeholders (government line offices) to provide their feedback on Retrak’s work and to receive information on the final outcome of the evaluation. Therefore the methodology for this evaluation included participatory tools such as:

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with representatives from each SHG. Three FGDs were conducted, one session per Woreda with 12 women participating (two representatives from each SHG);
- FGDs with CWC representatives from schools. Three FGDs were conducted, one session per Woreda at a selected school with 8-12 children participating;
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with selected government officials, religious and community leaders, and other relevant stakeholders.

As part of the final evaluation the following monitoring data collected in the course of the implementation of the project were also reviewed:

- **Child wellbeing assessments:** Wellbeing assessments were undertaken with children at the drop-in centres and as they move through the reintegration process. The wellbeing assessments were based on the Child Status Index, developed by Measure Evaluation³. The tools were adapted to track changes in their wellbeing from the streets, through transitional care and into family and community reintegration. This tool has become a standard part of Retrak’s monitoring toolkit to show the level of success of reintegration in terms of wellbeing. In addition, wellbeing assessments were also done with the SHG members and one of their children. The children’s wellbeing assessments look at six service domains and 12 sub-domains (see figure 2). Definitions are given for each sub-domain on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is very bad and 4 is good. A child or caregiver scoring 1 or 2 (very bad or bad) is considered to be at risk, and immediate action should be taken.

Figure 2: Child wellbeing assessment domains, sub-domains and goals

Domain	Sub-domain	Goal
1. Food and Nutrition	1a. Food Security	<i>Child has sufficient food to eat at all times of the year.</i>
	1b. Nutrition and Growth	<i>Child is growing well compared to others of his/her age in the community.</i>
2. Shelter and Care	2a. Shelter	<i>Child has stable shelter that is adequate, dry, and safe.</i>
	2b. Care	<i>Child has at least one adult (age 18 or over) who provides consistent care, attention, and support.</i>

³ O’Donnell, K et al (2009) *Child Status Index: a tool for assessment the well-being of orphans and vulnerable children – manual*, Chapel Hill, NC, MEASURE Evaluation

3. Protection	3a. Abuse and Exploitation	<i>Child is safe from any abuse, neglect, or exploitation.</i>
	3b. Legal Protection	<i>Child has access to legal protection services as needed.</i>
4. Health	4a. Wellness	<i>Child is physically healthy.</i>
	4b. Health Care Services	<i>Child can access health care services, including medical treatment when ill and preventive care.</i>
5. Psychosocial	5a. Emotional Health	<i>Child is happy and content with a generally positive mood and hopeful outlook.</i>
	5b. Social Behavior	<i>Child is cooperative and enjoys participating in activities with adults and other children.</i>
6. Education	6a. Education performance	<i>Child is progressing well in acquiring knowledge and life skills at home, school, job training, or an age-appropriate productive activity.</i>
	6b. Education access	<i>Child is enrolled and attends school or skills training or is engaged in age-appropriate play, learning activity, or job.</i>

- **Economic Survey:** A two round economic survey was conducted: one 6-9 months after SHGs were established (April-June 2014) and the other at the terminal stage (December 2015). The survey covered nearly all SHG member households. The purpose of undertaking an economic survey was to bring out information related to changes in income and assets as a result of SHG involvement, and the impact this has on children's education and work. Household questionnaires were used, which were developed to gather information in relation to: assets and possessions; income and expenditure, savings, debt, loans, support, future plans; children's work and education.
- **Child Protection Mapping:** The aim of this community mapping was to understand about Child Protection risks, prevention and responses in the locations where Retrak works, and to see if the project influences prevention and responses during the project period. The mapping included both key informant interviews and focus group discussions with community leaders and members to highlight child protection issues, child protection risks and child protection mechanisms in the project locations.
- **Most Significant Change stories:** The aim of using the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique in this project was to learn about changes in caregivers' knowledge and skills as a result of their involvement in SHGs and community education, in particular the project was interested in hearing about the impact of changes in knowledge and skills in parenting, child development and child protection. As part of this project it was decided that stories would be gathered in each Woreda and that the project staff in Hossana would act as the first level of selection and the senior management team (SMT) in Addis Ababa would be the second level. Formal collection, selection and analysis of stories was undertaken in September 2014 and again in October 2015. Initially CDWs collected a number of stories of change in different domains of the programme as told by beneficiaries (or story tellers). Then the project team which comprises all CDWs and the Project Manager filtered the stories and sent them to the SMT in Addis Ababa. These stories were used for thematic coding and analysis to show changes in caregivers' and children's knowledge and skills as a result of their involvement in SHGs, CWCs and community education.

In this report the project outputs are those results which were achieved immediately after implementing the activities as reviewed from annual reports. The project outcomes, on the other hand, are documented both through outcome monitoring (such as child wellbeing assessments,

household survey, community mapping and MSC stories) and through evaluative primary data collection (such as FGDs and KIIs) taken after some interval and following project completion; these are the change at the ground level because of the project activities.

Analysis is also made on the effectiveness of the project, which is a measure of the quality of attainment in meeting the set objectives. Since effectiveness of a project is a measure of the capacity of the project and its components, we look at the goals of those specific processes and measured the effectiveness of the project based on the accomplishment of the activities. The key factors in analysing the effectiveness and success of the project also include the qualitative results of the end term assessment with regards to satisfaction of the beneficiaries, major stakeholders, and employees. Based on which analysis is made on the derived benefits of the project, organisational learning, and effectiveness of the management process.

Sustainability of the project, the ability of a project to maintain its operations, services and benefits after the project is phased-out is also analysed within the context of the presence or absence of the factors that are likely to impact, either positively or negatively on the prospects of sustained delivery of project benefits. The major challenges and lessons learned were also analysed based on the available information from the various sources mentioned above.

1.4 Limitations

The evaluation was undertaken according to the plan. While there were a few changes to the original fieldwork schedule, all identified FGDs and interviews were carried out. This review utilised data generated by several tools used to monitor the project outcomes. These data were collected by staffs who were at the same time implementers of the project activities, the general principles of the quality of evaluation data indicates that there are possibilities of bias in cases where evaluation data is collected under such situations.

The mid-term review and the final evaluation utilised household income surveys to measure the outcomes of the project. The measurement of household income presents larger challenges than the measurement of consumption. Income is a sensitive topic to many respondents⁴. Income surveys, in some cases, proved that it encountered conceptual and practical difficulties in measuring household income that lead to underestimation of household incomes. Experiences from income and expenditure surveys support this claim. It is often seen that estimates of income from the surveys are substantially lower than estimates of consumption. For instance, in a recently conducted Baseline Survey on Engaged, Educated and Empowered Ethiopian Youth Project of the World Vision in SNNPR and Amhara regions the reported figure on household income was much lower than the corresponding figure on household expenditure in both regions⁵. Incomes need to be recorded for all household members and for all kinds of incomes (incomes from household business or agriculture, informal incomes from part-time activities, returns on assets, etc.). Respondents may not be able to report income or expenditure of the other members of the household. In addition, fluctuation in income level is common and it is difficult to capture these with cross-sectional surveys.

It is expected that the body of this evaluation report needs to be understood within the context of its limitations. The evaluation report, therefore, focused more on the process of the implementation of the project activities, its collaboration with the major stakeholders, and the beneficiaries to guide

⁴ United Nations (2005) *Household Sample Surveys in Developing and Transition Countries*, Studies in Methods Series F No. 96, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division, pp 559-560

⁵ World Vision (2015) Baseline Survey on Engaged, Educated and Empowered Ethiopian Youth (E4Y) Project in Amhara and SNNPR

future directions; and to show social relevance of different components of the project based on qualitative sources.

1.5 Organisation of the report

The following report is organised into three sections. Section 2 presents findings pertaining to reintegration and the different components of the activities of the drop-in centres. Sections 3 to 5 present evaluation result pertaining to the community-based child protection activities using information gathered from several sources. The findings are presented separately for each component: Self Help Groups, Child Wellbeing Clubs, and community education. The findings related to each of the activities are presented in accordance with the thematic areas of the evaluation such as outputs, outcomes, effectiveness and sustainability. The final section presents conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the project's terminal evaluation.

2 Findings: Drop-in centres and reintegration

In addition to Retrak's existing activities at the drop-in centre in Addis Ababa, a new drop-in centre was established, also for boys only, along with the community intervention in Hossana town, SNNPR region. This section of the report deals with presentation of the outputs, outcomes, its effectiveness, the challenges both centres have encountered, and the lessons that were learnt through the process of the implementation of the programme at the drop-in centre and in reintegrating children during the operational period (October 2012- September 2015).

2.1 Activities and outputs

Over the three year period of the project implementation, over 300 street children from SNNPR living unsupported on the streets were able to access services at the Addis Ababa and Hosana drop-in centres, including shelter, health care and psycho-social support). Of these children 251 were reintegrated into a family context. A total of 633 children from across Ethiopia received catch-up education and life-skills (table 1).

Table 1: Output results for Objectives 1-3: Drop-in centres, education and life skills and reintegration

Output indicators	Y1-3 Target	Y1-3 Result	Y1-3 Result Male	Y1-3 Result Female
Number of Street children from SNNPR reached through street visits	395	880	880	0
Number of Street children from SNNPR stayed overnight at shelter	288	335	335	0
Number of Street children participated in education & life skills ⁶	656	633	633	0
Number of Street children from SNNPR counselled at drop-in centre	308	317	317	0
Number of Street children from SNNPR received medical care at drop-in centre clinic	308	305	305	0
Number of Street children reintegrated to SNNPR	126	251	251	0
Number of Street children followed up & supported in family reintegration	244	234	234	0
Number of care-givers of street children received counselling, guidance, parenting training or economic support	212	407	191	216
Number of siblings benefitting from Retrak support to families	308	601	315	286

The outreach service at the Centres is an important step in identifying beneficiaries to the availed service. This service extends from identification of the child on the streets (areas around bus stations), approaching them with dignity and love, letting them receive the necessary information on the dangers of street life and the possibilities of being supported and reintegrated back to their families and communities. Children coming to drop-in centres have various backgrounds. Selected stories of the children who participated at the FGD sessions at Addis Ababa and Hossana drop-in centres are summarised in table 2.

⁶ This activity was fully funded by Cordaid and included all children in the centre. The other activities only included those from SNNPR

Table 2: Selected background stories of children at drop-in centres

ID ⁷	Stories
A1	I left home (Gojam, Amhara) when I was 10 years old, now I am 15. My mother died while I was very young. I was living with my sister. It was difficult to cover living costs and I dropped out of school while attending grade 2 and start life on the streets.
A2	I was born at Wolayita, Araka. I left home when I was 11. I am the eldest child, there are three others at home. I was grade 6 student. First I went to Sodo then took a bus and come to Addis. I met children from my home village at the bus station and started life on the street
A3	I am 15 years old, I came from Ambo, west Shewa zone of Oromia. My father died while I was too young. I am grade 7 student, life was terribly difficult with my step farther. We had frequent conflict. He used to hit? me all the time. Finally I decided to leave the family. I saved money for transportation and came to Addis with 6 others from our village. Two of them got employment (cattle management) around Sululta (suburb of Addis), four of them go back home; and I remain here in the streets of Addis.
A4	I came from Wolayita Bele Woreda. I was 13 years old when I left home. It has been more than a year since I left. I was 4 th grade student. Both of my parents are alive and are farmers I have three young siblings. I lived 5 months at Hawassa. Life in Hawassa was very difficult, I was not able to get work, food and housing cost was not affordable. One of the friends I had told me that life is easier in Addis then I came here.
A5	I came from Gondar, Ebnat Woreda. I was grade 6 student when I came here. I am 13 years old now. I was attending school and do some income generating activities while I was at home. It was unfortunate that my parents got divorced. I was not happy to live with a step mother. My mother also got married to another man and he was not willing to support me. I picked 250 Birr from his pocket and went to Bahir Dar. I stayed there for a while and later I came to Addis looking for better opportunities.
H1	I was 10 years old when I came to Hossana from Sodo Woreda. My parents are farmers. I have been studying in grade 1. The reason I migrated was because my parents were not willing to buy school materials that I need. Children in our village told me that they were planning to go to Addis, then I decided to migrate with them and came to Hossana. However I couldn't get money for transportation to go to Addis then I stayed here at Hossana and the Retrak officers found me.
H2	I came from Sodo Woreda. I am 13 years old. I am grade 2 student. My parents are very poor, that they are not able to help me. I came here to work for one year and I planned to go back to my family and start schooling next year.
H3	I came from Duna. I am 11 years old. My parents are farmers. They have 8 children including me. I don't have clothes; my parents were not able to buy school materials. My plan when I came here was to do some <i>shikela</i> ⁸ to get money to buy clothes and to support myself with stuffs that I need.
H4	I am 13 years old. I came from Duna. Both of my parents have died. I was studying grade 2. I was not able to buy materials I need for schooling. My friends tempted me to go to urban areas and work whatever is available. I asked my uncle some money, actually I didn't tell him the reason why I needed the money, I lied him that I wanted to enjoy with my friends, he gave me 20 Birr. I used the money for transportation and came here with my friends. My friends went back home in few days later, but I remain here failing to pay for transportation back home.

A review of the above stories reveals that most of the children had access to school but failed to continue education; the migration destination is mostly to the major towns, but their move is not direct, it involves steps, going to the nearby major town then moving on to bigger cities; almost all the children came to the urban areas crossing long distances using the available public transportation. The major cause in most cases is economic distress. Nevertheless, poverty was not a standalone reason,

⁷ IDs beginning with 'A' are children at drop-in centre in Addis Ababa while ID beginning with 'H' are children at Hossana drop-in centre.

⁸ Casual activity to earn money

family disintegration, peer pressure, and lack of awareness were also among the driving factors that pushed children to street life.

2.2 Outcomes

In this section the analysis of the results of the child wellbeing assessment is utilised to reveal the progress that has been made against the project outcomes (table 3).

Table 3: Outcome results for Objectives 1-3: Drop-in centres, education and life skills and reintegration

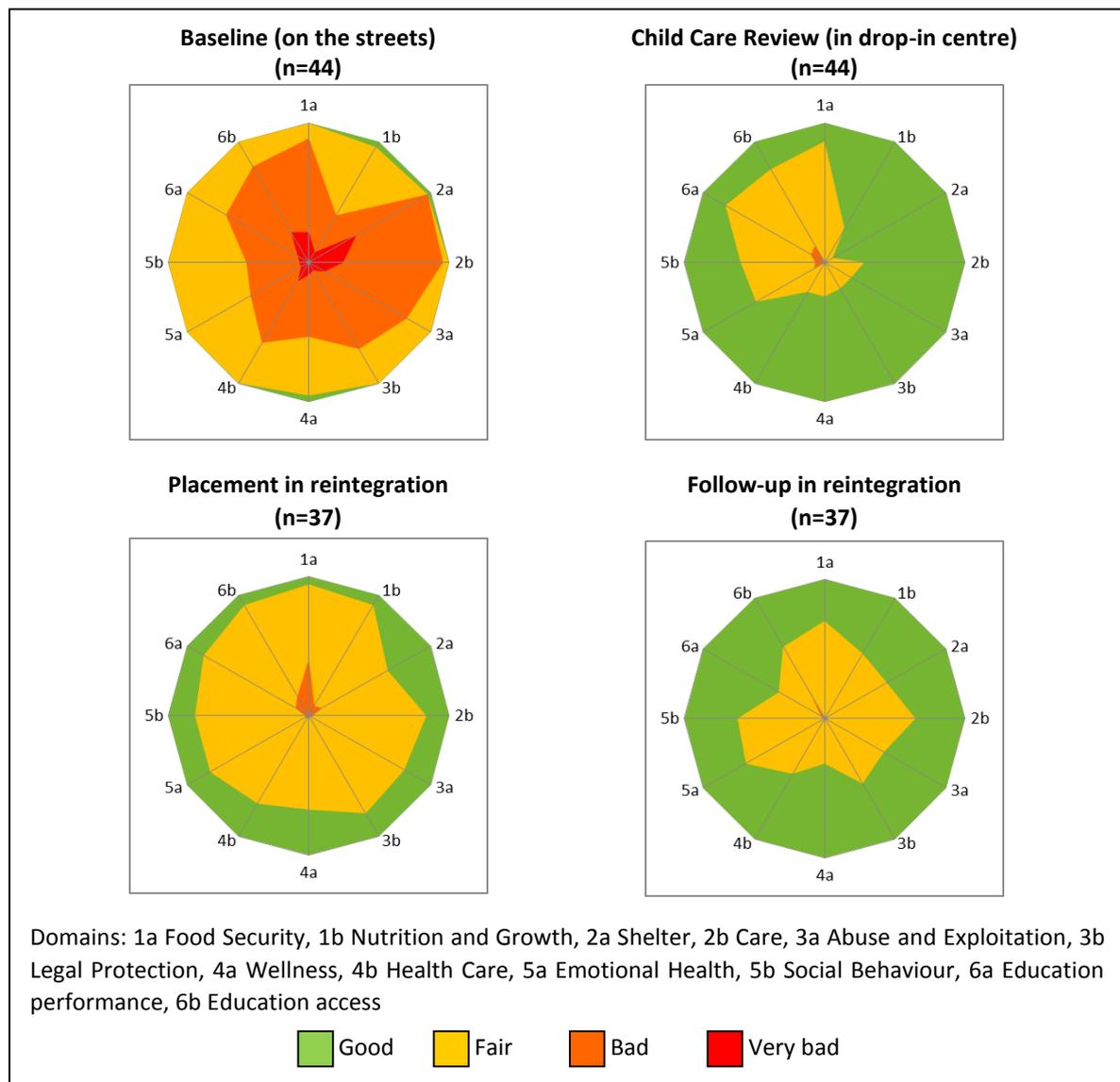
Outcome indicator	Outcome result (Y1-3 October 2012-September 2015)
Over a three year period, 395 street children living unsupported on the streets realise their rights to services (health care, education/skills training, psycho-social support)	335 children from SNNPR previously living on the streets received services, leading to 100% of children showing improvement in wellbeing ⁹
Over a three year period, 126 street children are reintegrated into a family context in SNNPR where they are happy to remain, contribute to family wellbeing and receive holistic care and support.	251 street children were reintegrated into a family context in SNNPR
Over a three year period, 656 street children will receive catch-up education classes and life skills in line with national education curriculum and progress by one or more grades.	633 street children received catch-up education and life skills, leading to 79% of children improve in access to education and 59% improve in social behaviour as measured by child wellbeing assessments
Over a three year period, 80% of children have improved wellbeing whilst in their family and/or community	89% of reintegrated children showed an improvement in wellbeing

Child wellbeing assessments of children met by Retrak Ethiopia on the streets reveal the changes in these children's lives as they participate in the drop-in centre and return home. The spider diagrams (figure 3) show the domains of wellbeing on individual axes, with each axis charting the cumulative proportion of children who score 1 (very bad) to 4 (good). The scores are colour coded red=very bad (1), orange=bad (2), yellow=fair (3) and green=good (4). A child scoring 1 or 2 (red or orange) is considered deprived or at risk.

The results of the wellbeing assessments show an almost complete elimination of risks, but with some issues around education, psychosocial wellbeing and food security persisting. When looking at children's wellbeing when they are placed back into the care of their family and comparing it to wellbeing at follow-up there is again an overall improvement. It is also noted that there is a decrease in wellbeing between the centre and home. This is to be expected for the reason that Retrak Ethiopia provides a higher quality of care from trained staff, and is required by law to meet certain standards, while the families cannot guarantee to match this level of services, though improvements are made over time with the minimal income generating support they were provided with.

⁹ There was an error in calculations when reporting this figure during the mid-term review. Having found the mistake, this result has been amended to match the number of children receiving shelter at the drop-in centres during the life of the project.

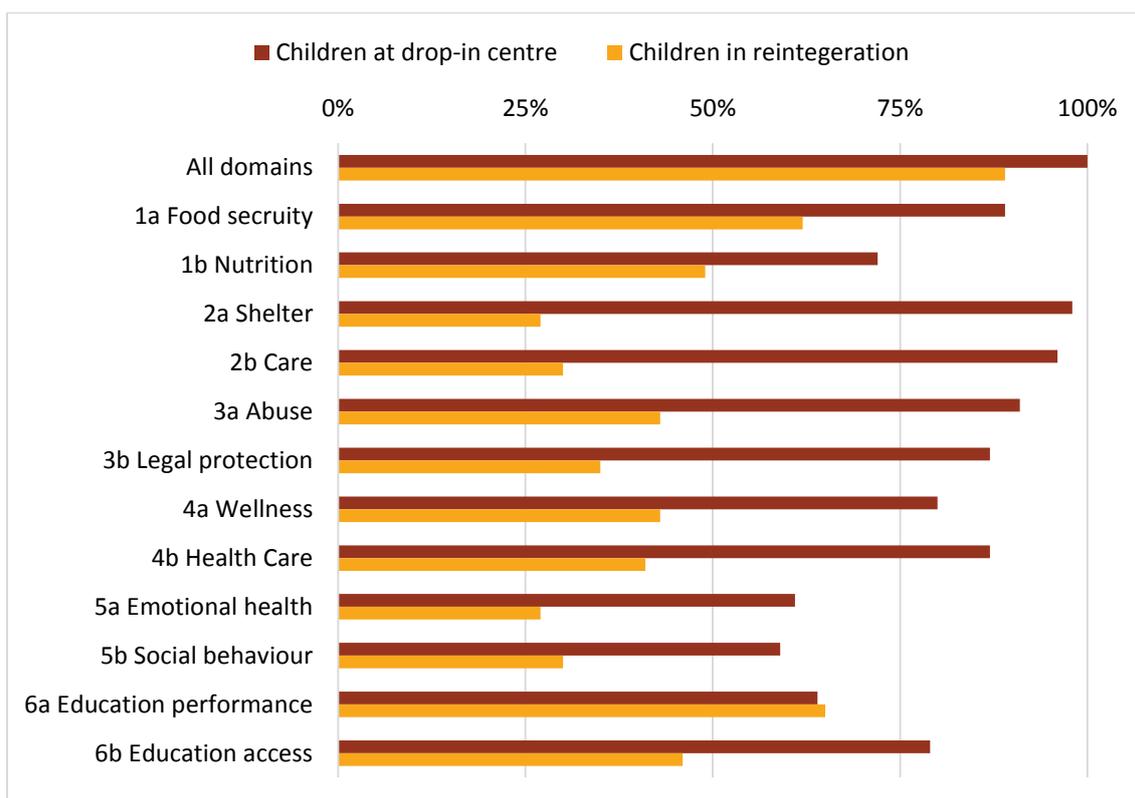
Figure 3: Child Wellbeing Assessment spider diagrams for children at drop-in centres and during reintegration



A slightly different way of looking at the wellbeing assessment data is to track the percentage of children who experience improvements in wellbeing, this considers not only improvements in at risk scores (1 or 2 to 2 or 3), but also improvements from fair to good (3 to 4), between the first and last assessments. This is between baseline (streets) and Child Care Reviews for children in the drop-in centres, or between placement and follow-up for reintegrating children. These results are shown in figure 4 below.

As revealed in figure 4 chart 100% of the children in the drop-in centres show improvement in wellbeing in some domain, as do 89% of reintegrating children. Amongst the children in the drop-in centres, 79% had improved access to education and 59% had improved social behaviour. Reintegrating children show lower levels of improvement in wellbeing.

Figure 4: Children improving in wellbeing at drop-in centres and during reintegration



2.3 Effectiveness

Analysis of the effectiveness of the drop-in centre is made in relation to the accomplishment of the specific components of the activities of the centre such as outreach services, health care, education/skills training, psychosocial support, catch-up education and life skills, and reintegration. The analysis, in this regard, is done based on satisfaction of the beneficiaries, major stakeholders and project employees expressed during FGDs and interviews; child wellbeing assessments conducted in due course of the implementation of the project and the organisational learning.

As indicated in the previous section the drop-in centres have achieved most of the outputs that were planned for the project period. Through the implementation of the project activities the centre has provided the services to the planned number of children.

The outreach workers contact the children on the street and build relationships in order to understand their situation and invite those who are willing to participate in the programme, which is all consensual. Outreach workers bridge the entry to the centre. When asked how they were contacted most of the children mentioned that the outreach workers approached them at streets along the bus station, while others came to the drop-in centre with the information that they received from their friends. The waiting time for children at drop-in centre in Addis Ababa was as low as 3 days and in some situations it reached one month from the date of the initial contact. The outreach workers explained that the waiting time depends on factors such as limited space in the accommodation and due to the priorities given to those who are malnourished, sick and new arrivals as per Retrak’s Outreach SOPs. During the discussion with the staff at Hosanna drop-in centre they reported that the Outreach SOPs are applied to their situation and adjusted to the local context. Being flexible in applying SOPs to local circumstances is, in fact, one parameter of effectiveness of the project. Being a pilot project feedback from the experience will help to refine the SOPs to fit local situations.

Once children enter the centre, they pass through similar procedures and services at both centres. Children are provided with night shelter, food, counselling, catch up education, life skill training, recreational activities, full medical care¹⁰, hygiene facilities, etc. All children are equally privileged to get these services, and all the children who participated in the FGDs at both the centres explained the benefits they received from the services.

A very positive evaluation of the counselling programme and the life skill training was noted during the FGDs at the drop-in centre in Addis Ababa. One of the children said “The life skill training enabled me to identify what is good and what is bad”; and another child said “I regret what has passed with negligence, now I know how to shape my future”; and another discussant said “the counselling sessions enabled me to forget the sufferings I passed through”.

It was learned through observation while conducting the FGDs that most of the children in drop-in centre in Addis Ababa have travelled a long way and have spent relatively more years away from their parents. They were observed to have more aggressive behaviour and were frequently confronting each other even while we were conducting the FGDs.

Children who have lived in the streets are one of the most vulnerable groups, they face difficulties while living on the streets and develop their own ways to overcome such difficulties. They have some common characteristics but they still have their own uniqueness that distinguishes one from the other, depending from which cultural group they originate and the length of time they spent away from their families. For instance, the situation of children at Hossana drop-in centre was quite different. These children were so quiet and humble. Their behaviour is very similar to children living with their own families and they appeared more eager to go back to their families and communities. One of the discussants explained the benefits he received from the centre in his own words “Before, I never wash my hands when I eat, now I know how to care myself, I am now working and saving money. I will buy sheep and goats and will also be able to give money to my parents”. The children have aspirations to live with their parents, continue education and to find jobs such as a teacher, an engineer, a police, a doctor or a pilot.

It was also learned that the children from the centre are expected to work and cover their food expense during the weekend. This sometimes conflicts with the life skill training they get at the drop-in centre, which has changed their behaviour in this regard. Children at Hossana drop-in centre were inspired by the life skill training and they started saving money that they get from labour activities that they were engaged with during the weekend. They save the excess of what they need to spend to cover food expense during the weekend. The attempt Retrak made to provide meals to children below 14 years of age during the weekend should be supported to prevent these children from being exposed to child labour inappropriate to their age.¹¹

It is well acknowledged that social workers at the drop-in centre are working closely with the children for about 2 to 3 months, so as to enable the children to choose and plan their future. The options being either to return to family or to pursue some kind of vocational training to enable them to lead

¹⁰ The medical services at the centre are restricted to what the nurse can do, if treatment is beyond nurse’s capacity, the children are referred to specialist medical facilities.

¹¹ As per the ILO standard, for each day worked in economic activities if the child (aged 5-11) actually work for more than one hour per day and if a child aged 12-13 actually work for more than 2 hours per day and If these activities are carried out in the evening or during the weekend or on holidays it will be regarded as child labour. On the other hand, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs prescribed transportation of loads of goods (beyond some weight) to market or storage by a young worker is categorized as one of the hazardous child labour.

their life independently. Children returning to their family or community will also be provided with small business skills training. The choice of attending vocational training is available only to those aged 14 or above.¹² The type of the training children are provided with is advised by the social worker based on suitable options considering employability and the current market. Offices of micro and small enterprises and Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutes may be sought to take part in this regard in the future. Sharing learning or seeking collaboration with World Vision Ethiopia's project "Engaged, Educated and Empowered Ethiopian Youth (E4Y) Project", which is being undertaken in SNNPR (Hossana Town, Lemo, Gombora, and Shashego Woredas of Hadiya zone) could also be of great help for future collaboration.

The drop-in centre is a very effective setup in providing feedback necessary to plan and implement prevention of children coming to the streets leaving their home. The child protection mechanisms based on the information gathered has enabled Retrak to actively engage in prevention activities at the local Woredas where child migration was rampant (an assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention at community level is presented later in this report).

It was also learned during the FGDs at both drop-in centres that some of the children came to the drop-in centre through the information they received from their peers. Given the challenges associated with natural calamities and the continuing economic crisis at household level may contribute further to push a number of children to urban streets, it is essential that the recruitment and selection criteria be refined further so as to focus on children who are most vulnerable and in a great need of services.

The staffs at Hossana drop-in centre were asked if the manpower and other resources were sufficient to conduct activities in line with the project objectives. The discussants revealed that they have enough resources to carry out the routine activities at the drop-in centre. They, however mentioned that the follow-up activities after placement are constrained by limited resources. It was learned from the annual reports that the percent of children followed up was lower as compared with the achievements in the other fields. The staffs at Hossana drop-in centre also mentioned that they do some of the follow-ups during other placement visits, if the location is close by or along the route. Some of the follow-ups, especially to children reintegrated at locations that were not accessible, were being done through phone interviews, and there are a few children that have never been followed-up. The limitations of phone interviews for follow-up was emphasised during the evaluation discussion with the drop-in centre staff. They highlighted that when caregivers are asked questions regarding the wellbeing of the household and the child they mostly report problems, such as indicating their troubles to feed the child and to support schooling. The merits of onsite follow-up in such situation will be significantly compromised, such as not being able to observe the condition of housing, livelihood and health of the child, or asking neighbours about the household.

2.4 Sustainability

Sustainability generally refers to the continuation of benefits once major assistance has been withdrawn and probability of continued long-term benefits. The results of this evaluation revealed that the project made a significant impact on the wellbeing and education of the children and the wellbeing of their families. However, the drop-in centre may have some negative impact as it could attract children from economically distressed households, especially with recurrent drought and a continued economic crisis at household level. It is expected that more and more children will migrate to the streets and this will clearly put pressure on resources. However the drop-in centre's activities

¹² This reflects the Ethiopian labour law which does not allow children's employment for those aged below 14 years.

have led to more strategic thinking on the best use of limited resources, including the shift towards prevention work.

The major stakeholders of the drop-in centre activities are Women and Children Affairs Office, town police, health centre, and Department of Zone Finance and Economic Development. However these major stakeholders were not involved at all the stages of the planning, monitoring and evaluation. The Office of Women and Children Affairs and Department of Finance and Economic Development collect reports and check progress vis-à-vis the planned activities and budget utilisation. Services of the police are being utilised as required in the process of accomplishing routine activities. For instance, the participation of police (as reported in the interview with staff of the drop-in centres) is mostly based on requests with formal letter to gain the attention of the police for security reasons when the outreach workers are out to meet children and conduct educational activities on the streets. However, since the police have a child protection unit in its structure the drop-in centres' plan needs to be integrated with what the police are performing so that the activities can be routinely reviewed and the stakeholders take ownership of the project activities. Involvement of the stakeholders at all levels of the project would be essential to lay the groundwork for sustainability of the project activities.

The existing capacities of the drop-in centres needs to be strengthened with further funding so as to ensure the project continues the way it has been. It is too early to consider an exit strategy at this stage of the project¹³. Besides work with children on the streets will probably always require the continued injection of funds, as all social services do. However, hopefully the federal and regional governments will one day have the will and capacity to provide them.

¹³ Despite the fact that the drop-in centres are well established with regards to systems, manpower, and other materials, the housing condition seems not sufficient for the intended activities. The drop-in centre in Addis Ababa, for instance, lacks space for children's activities and it is located at a business corridor where rent is expensive.

3 Findings: Self Help Groups

The Self Help groups (SHGs) are self-governed, peer-controlled small and informal association of the poor women, usually from socio-economically homogeneous families who are organised around savings and credit activities. Funds for credit activities are coming through regular savings deposited by its members on a weekly basis. In the meetings they discuss issues that are common problems to all the members and plan solutions, share information and make efforts to improve their social ties. In this evaluation analysis is made to show in what ways the SHGs are empowering the women involved to become advocates of social change within their communities and to reveal in what ways the SHGs are impacting on child protection within their households and in their community. Discussions are also made on sustainability issues of the SHGs at the end of project period.

3.1 Activities and outputs

This section presents the activities and outputs that have been achieved compared with the targets. All targets have been achieved and many surpassed. A total of 18 SHGs were established, with 350 women participating as members.

Table 4: Output results for Objective 4: Self Help Groups

Outputs	Y1-3 Target	Y1-3 Result Total	Y1-3 Result Male	Y1-3 Result Female
Number of new SHGs established	15	18	n/a	n/a
Number of vulnerable women participating in SHGs	225	350	0	350
Children benefitting from Retrak support through mother's SHGs	675	1,584	833	751
Number of Cluster Level Associations (CLA) established	Not set	3	n/a	n/a

3.2 Outcomes

This section presents what measurable progress have been made against the project outcomes based on evidence from the wellbeing assessment and changes in assets and savings as revealed in the economic surveys. Two-thirds of children in households of a SHG member showed improvements in wellbeing, which was revealed to be linked to improvements in parenting skills, understanding of children's needs and greater access to financial resources (table 5).

3.2.1 Household economy

The economic survey is undertaken to bring out information related to changes in income and expenditure as a result of SHG involvement. In the context of the economic surveys in this evaluation comparison is made on the average quantity of domestic animals per household between the two economic assessments (mid-term and final evaluation). Some analysis is also done pertaining to the savings and loans experience of households. As revealed in table 6 there is an overall marginal increase in the average quantity of animals (cattle, goat and sheep) and a slight decrease in ownership of chickens among the beneficiary households. However, none of the changes were significant in statistical terms (see the values of the t-test below table 6).

Table 5: Outcome results for Objective 4: Self Help Groups

Outcome indicator	Outcome results (October 2012-September 2015)
Over a three year period, 308 caregivers gain knowledge and skills in parenting, child development and child protection	<p>350 SHG members have participated in sessions leading to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% of children in SHG households show an improvement in parental care wellbeing • A greater understanding of children’s needs and improvement in parenting skills, as mentioned in many most significant change stories
Over a three year period, 225 women and their families (675 children) have an increased income	<p>350 women (and 1,584 children under their care) participated in SHGs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81% of women reported increased income • 99% reported increased savings and 99% have plans to increase their income. • 100% women reported ability to save, which was a 3% increase from what was reported during 2014 survey. <p>To date a total of 281,563 Birr has been saved across the SHGs and 648,597 Birr has been issued in loans.</p>
Over a three year period, 80% of children have improved wellbeing whilst in their family and/or community	98% of children in the community showed an improvement in wellbeing
Over a three year period, 308 caregivers and their families have improved wellbeing	Of the 325 women who completed the wellbeing assessments, 93% caregivers show an improvement in wellbeing

The results of the survey reveal different outcomes pertaining to each Woredas. For instance, in Duna the average quantity of domestic animals revealed marginal decrease for all types of domestic animals, the decrease in average quantity was significant for chickens and it was not statistically significant for other types of animals. In the case of Soro the reverse is true, the mean quantity has increased for all types of animals between the two periods, but the increase was not statistically significant for all types of animals except for chickens. At Gibe, the findings suggest that there was a significant increase in the average quantity of cattle the beneficiary households have while the marginal increase in average quantity of small ruminants (sheep and goat) was not statistically justified. On the other hand, the decrease in the average quantity of chickens in the households at Gibe was statistically significant.

Despite the fact that the time gap between the two surveys is very short and household investment in cattle and small ruminants needs substantial resources, the positive increase in the average quantity of cattle and small ruminants among the SHG member households can be considered as an indicator of a positive impact on the household economy of members. The findings here are also an indicator of the fact that enhancing asset ownership of poorest of the poor is possible, but the outcome is a slow process.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of ownership of domestic animals by the households¹⁴

Ownership of animals per household	Duna			Gibe			Soro			Total		
	\bar{x}	N	s									
Mid-term review (2014)												
Cattle	0.79	116	1.123	0.57	106	0.936	0.17	103	0.430	0.52	325	0.925
Goat	0.26	116	0.770	0.05	106	0.254	0.24	103	0.693	0.18	325	0.626
Sheep	0.33	116	0.985	0.08	106	0.529	0.11	103	0.503	0.18	325	0.726
Chicken	0.96	116	1.815	1.03	106	2.219	0.24	103	0.955	0.75	325	1.782
Final evaluation (2015)												
Cattle	0.66	105	0.918	0.72	109	1.017	0.30	106	0.719	0.56	320	0.911
Goat	0.24	105	0.581	0.12	109	0.466	0.29	106	0.915	0.22	320	0.681
Sheep	0.28	105	0.778	0.10	109	0.407	0.20	106	0.723	0.19	320	0.656
Chicken	0.69	105	1.266	0.38	109	1.231	0.74	106	1.894	0.60	320	1.497
Calculated t value for changes between mid and final evaluations ¹⁵												
	Duna			Gibe			Soro			Total		
Cattle	-1.882186			2.197437*			1.759932			0.545758		
Goat	-0.398814			1.400846			0.96635			0.602524		
Sheep	-0.943121			0.466934			1.675685			0.279664		
Chicken	-2.092929*			-5.033198*			3.80588*			-1.211471		
	t_{tab} at 95%, df 104 =1.983			t_{tab} at 95%, df 108 =1.982			t_{tab} at 95%, df 104 =1.983			t_{tab} at 95%, df 120+ =1.96		

Analysis of the saving and loans behaviour of members is revealed in table 7 and table 8 respectively. Comparison of the results of the mid-term and final economic survey revealed encouraging results in terms of the amount of savings, an increase of more than 200% (table 7). The amount of savings has increased significantly at all the Woredas but it was very dramatic at Soro. The proportion of women who took a loan has also increased almost consistently across all the Woredas, the highest proportion of women borrowing from their SHG was again revealed at Soro (table 8).

Increase in savings and loans will result in increase in food security, and an increased investment in livestock especially small ruminants as it is empirically witnessed in this survey and the wellbeing assessments (in the following section). Small ruminants especially sheep and goats can easily be managed around homes by feeding them kitchen wastes or at most times leaving them to graze on surrounding herbs and shrubs. Small ruminants are of economic importance to small-holder households and for landless households especially women-headed households¹⁶. Rearing small ruminants would also provide employment and income as a subsidiary occupation. This is because

¹⁴ \bar{x} ' is the average quantity, 'n' is the number of households, and 's' is standard deviation

¹⁵ '**' represent the statistical significance of the difference (at 95% confidence level) in the average quantity of the ownership of the animal between mid and final surveys. The following formula is used to estimate the calculated value of 't' in showing the statistical significance of the changes between the mid and final evaluations

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{(N_1 - 1)s_1^2 + (N_2 - 1)s_2^2}{N_1 + N_2 - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}\right)}}$$

¹⁶ Oluwatayo, I. B., & Oluwatayo, T. B. (2012). Small Ruminants as a source of financial security, a case study of women in rural southwest nigeria. *Institute for Money, Technology and Financial Inclusion (IMTFI), Working Paper, 1.*

small ruminants provide the easiest and most readily accessible source to meet immediate social and financial obligations.

The findings revealed that there is an overall improvement in household savings and the practice of taking loans. The positive changes in this regard are consistently revealed at all the Woredas. Though it is marginal, there is also a positive growth in the quantity of households' ownership of small ruminants and cattle.

Table 7: Changes in average savings between the mid and the final evaluation

Woreda	Mid-term (2014) savings			Final (2015) savings			Increase in savings	
	\bar{X}^1	N ₁	s	\bar{X}^2	N ₂	s	%	t _{cal}
Duna	205.4	116	166.87	635.5	105	512.23	209%	8.5782*
Gibe	211.4	106	202.77	664.1	109	339.69	214%	11.8492*
Soro	283.3	103	143.65	1007.6	106	799.09	256%	9.0786*
Total	232.1	325	175.88	767.7	320	601.89	231%	15.4031*

Table 8: Changes in percent of households taking loan from the SHGs

Woreda	Mid-term (2014)		Final (2015)		Confidence interval at 95% probability ¹⁷	
	p1	n1	p2	n2	C ₁	C ₂
Duna	31.6%	114	78.1%	105	0.34863	0.58137
Gibe	18.9%	106	88.9%	108	0.60479	0.79521
Soro	43.1%	102	95.3%	106	0.41779	0.62621
Total	31.1%	322	87.5%	319	0.50176	0.62624

3.2.2 Child and caregiver wellbeing

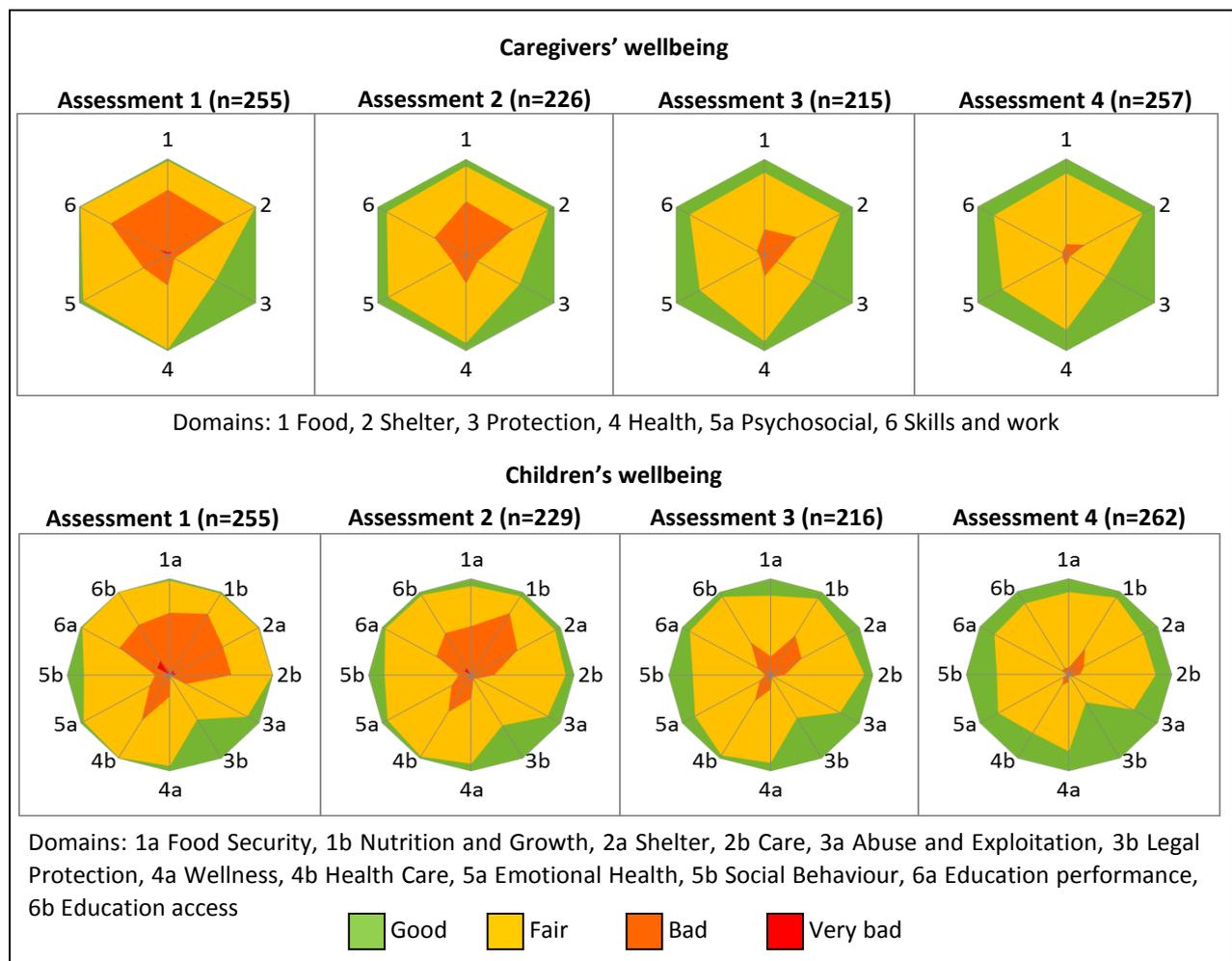
Comparison of wellbeing of the caregiver enrolled in a SHG and one of their children at four points was made. Point one refers to 6.5-8.5 months after registration into SHG, point two refers to 11-13 months after registration, point three at 18-21 months and point four at more than 24 months. The results of the change in wellbeing are shown on the spider diagrams below (figure 5). Each diagram shows the cumulative proportion of caregivers/children who score 1 (very bad) to 4 (good) in each domains (in this case there are 6 domains for caregivers and 12 for children). For both children and caregivers, an individual scoring 1 or 2 (red or orange) is considered at risk. The results of the four consecutive assessments revealed that there is a gradual improvement in wellbeing of both the caregivers and children (figure 5). An immediate improvement in children's wellbeing in relation to the care they receive can be seen by comparing bad (score 3) for domain 2b at points 1 and 2. A similar improvement is noticeable for caregivers' skills and work (domain 6). Overall risk is largely eliminated in all domains for children and caregivers during the project life span (scores 1 and 2).

¹⁷ The following formula is used to test for the change in proportion at 95% confidence level

$$\bar{P}_2 - \bar{P}_1 = \pm 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{\bar{P}_1(1-\bar{P}_1)}{n_1} + \frac{\bar{P}_2(1-\bar{P}_2)}{n_2}}$$

C₁ and C₂ are statistical figures representing the lower and upper limits of the difference between the two proportions, the hypothesis being that P₁-P₂=0 and the alternate hypothesis here is P₁-P₂≠0. Since both C₁ and C₂ are different from 0 for all the Woredas and for the total of the beneficiaries, the result suggests that there exist a significant change in the proportions of beneficiaries who borrow money from their SHGs between the two periods.

Figure 5: Caregiver and child wellbeing assessment spider diagrams for Self Help Groups



The converse reduction in risk can also be seen when comparing the number of areas of risks at each assessment point. The cumulative percentage of beneficiaries scoring numbers of domains at risk is shown on a line graph, from 12 or 6 on the left, to zero on the right (figure 6). A variance in the line on the graph to the right shows a decrease in the number of domains at risk. The graphs for risk in caregiver and child assessments below show a clear overall improvement for both caregivers and children (movement of the line on the graph to the right shows a decrease in the number of domains at risk). Less than 10% of caregivers and children remain at risk in half or more wellbeing areas at point 4 (3 areas out of 6 for caregivers, 6 areas out of 12 for children), compared to over 50% at point 1 (figure 6).

As figure 7 shows the majority of both caregivers and children from SHG households improved in their wellbeing overall – 93% of caregivers and 98% of children. This includes a 66% improvement in parental care of children (domain 2b in figure 7). The strongest areas of wellbeing are in food, shelter, health care access and education access.

Figure 6: Caregiver and child cumulative percentage of domains risk for Self Help Groups

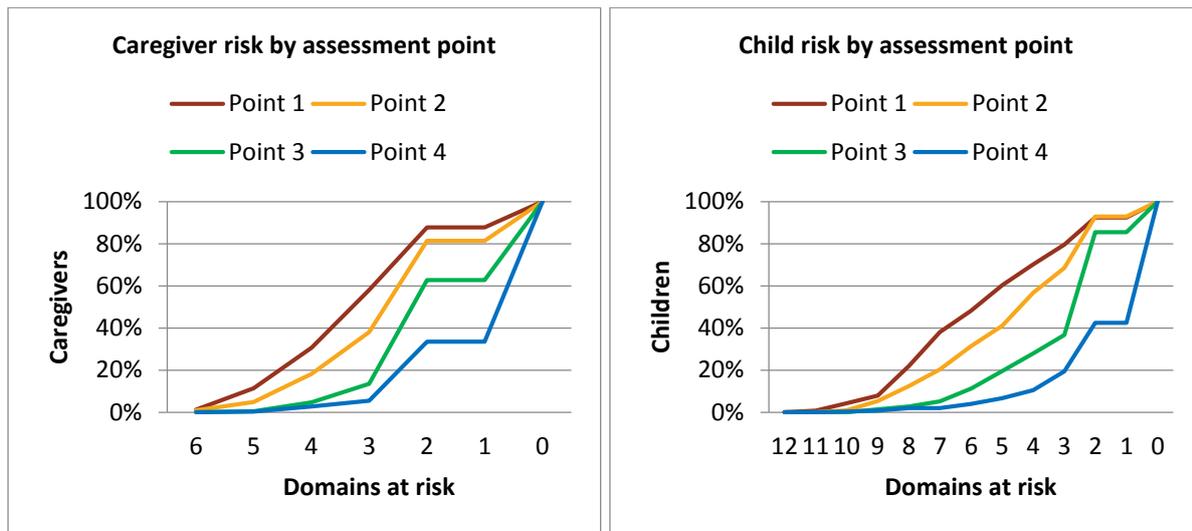
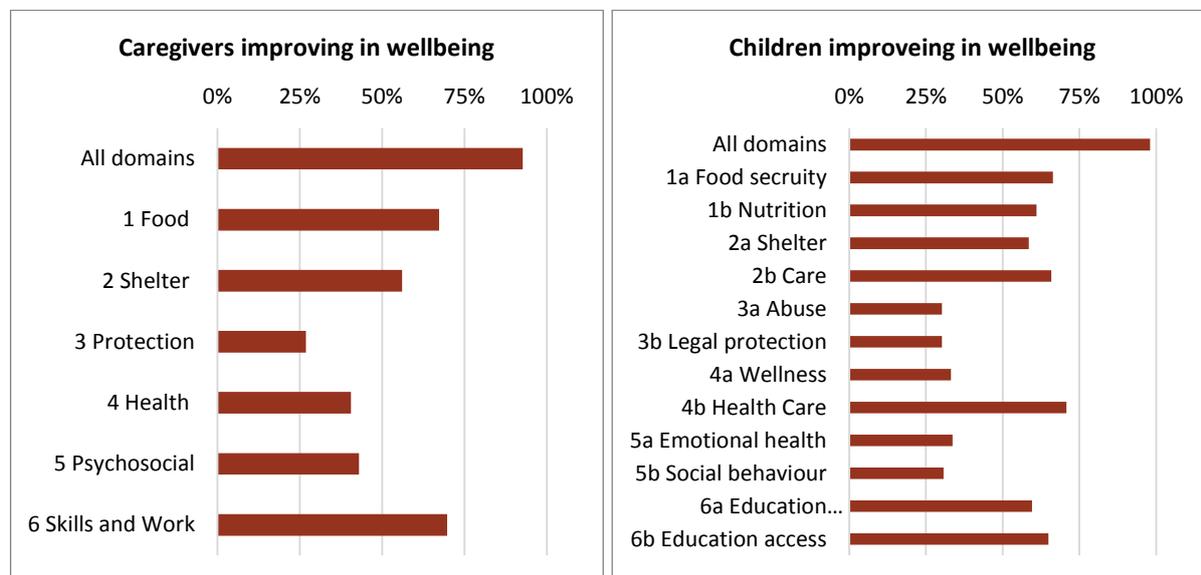


Figure 7: Caregivers and children and improving in wellbeing from Self Help Groups



3.3 Effectiveness

The basic idea underlying the SHG model is that members of SHGs will start with small savings from their own income and will work towards gradually registering as cooperatives and take larger loans from microfinance institutions and commercial banks to operate on bigger businesses and earn more stable income.

SHGs often benefit from supports such as trainings focussing on entrepreneurial skills, women’s empowerment, financial management, basic education, etc. from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government bodies. SHGs are created with the underlying assumption that when individuals join together to take action toward overcoming obstacles and attaining social change, the result, as reviewed in this project, is empowerment of women at both the individual and collective levels. SHG members typically use strategies such as savings, credit or social involvement as instruments of empowerment.

In this evaluation the effectiveness of the SHGs was critically analysed in relation to the objectives for which they were established, namely, empowerment of women, improving the livelihood of the

household and being able to provide better care to their children. We conducted three FGDs with participants representing six of the SHGs at each Woreda; the discussants were members of the Cluster Level Associations (CLA) of the SHGs which were formed during the previous quarter.

Not all the women who were sensitised at the beginning of the project actually registered to be members and continued to benefit from the SHGs. There was a negligible number of women who changed place of residence and dropped out from SHGs after the groups were operational. As one SHG member notes:

We were selected from among poorest of the poorest and there were so many others like us at the first sensitisation. Only those who appreciate the trainings and the idea of the SHGs remained to be members, many others who were sensitised at the beginning left the programme as soon as they learn that there will be no direct grant.

Similarly, a discussant at Duna explained what her ambition was when she registered to join the SHG

Initially many of us never had a positive mentality about the SHG and I was about to terminate. My wish was to get financial help, but now I get knowledge necessary to support my family. Some of our husbands were against us, prohibiting us to attend the meetings, now they all know how important it is, they even alert us to go to meeting place on time. They take care of the children and let us be free to attend meetings. We never had money to buy school materials, but now our children are in school. We grew without knowledge on how to manage ourselves, we get married and have children... we never knew how to raise them... we never had business skills... we never knew how to manage money and our resources. Those who never had been in business are now doing business and earn income, those who were previously doing small business are now able to increase the size of their business and are able to earn better income. We never had been able to speak our cause in front of men, now we are empowered to do that.

The SHGs are yielding further positive impacts on the women, far beyond economic empowerment. A women at Gibe described it as follows:

We are neighbours, but we never had such close relationship, the project has contributed much to our social bond, we discuss issues related to the wellbeing of our children and their schooling.

The participants at Gibe also witnessed that the members of the SHGs not only support their members, they are also supporting other women in the community to form similar SHGs and prevent separation of children from their family. They stated:

No child has dropped out from school and none has migrated from among member households of our groups. We have organised other women in our area to form similar group – we are now working to do what the Retrak officers do. Though it is not easy to change community behaviours, we also counsel other women whenever we came across those deploying their children to hazardous labour.

The discussant at Soro also mentioned:

The SHG is not meant for only addressing our economic problems but to also address our social ties. We have a separate contribution to serve for social affairs so that we will be able to help each other and to maintain our social bond. We contribute 1 birr per week per member to address social problems (delivery, funeral and obituary, referral for medical, support to sick member, etc.) of our members every week. We

also contribute and save money well ahead for holidays that helped us to celebrate holidays without facing financial distress to cover expenses. We don't put this kind of money in bank, we keep it with one of us and utilise it whenever the need arises. We also discuss on how our members are looking after their children – to avoid child labour, school dropout and child migration. There was a case of a woman who let her children migrate to other areas and got employed. The SHG gave her loan and she was convinced to bring them back home and the children are now in school.

These changes were also brought out in the Most Significant Change stories which were collected as part of the project's monitoring. Below is an example of one woman's story.

Most Significant Change story: Retrak's Self Help Group helping poor women

This is a story of XXX who has seven family members that she supports. She mainly involves in petty trade in bare road line in small town. Previously if she faced challenges she had no saving or had no one to turn to. Her only option was a money lender who lends with exorbitant interest rate. The group members mainly express this loan as "Yechenk Woled" to mean extremely worrisome loan. In one SHG meeting XXX shared her painful experience.

"On one occasion my first born got very sick, we visited the local health centre twice but end up with no solution. At last the local clinic referred my boy to hospital for further medication. I had to go to many friends and relatives to borrow money for my son's medication but it was not easy. Finally, I went to a money lender and gave my only cow as collateral and took 2,000birr. After two months I hardly managed to pay the loan and had to pay 3,200birr by selling our family cow. Following this after a year I heard that Retrak has launched the SHG approach in my town. I was the first women to register. I was serious and used to attend all the concept sharing meetings. Then I decided to actively start weekly saving. After certain period, I saved 200birr and was able to borrow 400birr from the group and started some petty trade in my small town. From this borrowed money I was able to earn 800birr gross profit after four months. I paid my loan with 4% interest and finished my loan. The interest I paid is insignificant compared to the money lenders' unreasonably high interest rate. After a while I was able to save 3,200birr. Consequently, I took for the second time 6,400birr loan. This happened since there was no other person who wanted to take loan when I requested the second time. I am working and paying this as well and left with only one month loan to pay. I am so thankful to Retrak's community worker who is teaching us every week and encouraging us."

XXX starts each day with hope. On a good day she earns a net profit of 100 to 150birr. When business is low, her profit sometimes goes down to 50 to 75birr. Even in such days she is more efficient and work without worry since the interest of the SHG is reasonable (which is 4% per month) and payable compared with the money lenders. She is happy to refund comfortably the group loan. As she expressed it "after all am helping and capacitating my own group". Her success is in no small part due to her own tireless hard work, but she also attributes it to the care and advice she receives from community workers.

XXX is currently helping her six children to continue their school. Her dream for her children is to become educated and live a healthy life. She hopes that one day she will have a big, permanent supermarket in one of the busy roads of her small town.

The FGD participants at Duna also explained how the SHGs changed their mind-set in preserving families and preventing children from running in to the streets:

Child wellbeing, livelihood, child migration, etc. are our discussion agendas. Previously we appreciate children when they bring commodities from Addis Ababa or Hossana but now we learn how they get the money and how much their future is affected, and we are now well aware of the abuse on the children. We never knew what a household economy is, we never knew how to operate business. Now we are dressed with clean clothes, our children are attending school, our livelihood is greatly improved. We got skills on how to care our children, now we can speak about

ourselves in public we are so empowered, our livelihood is improved, some of us are heads of our household we are supporting our children's schooling. We thank God, Retrak, and government for supporting us.

Describing how they utilised their savings and the money they get from loan one of the participants at Gibe said "We get loan to diversify our small business operations". They also utilise the money to cover family expenses. One of the women at Gibe described how she benefited from the available loan opportunity to get medical treatment for her husband who had been critically ill, and that she never had other sources to cover the expenses. With the availed loan her husband got treated and was able to go back to work, and now he is supporting the family.

The women at all the Woredas witnessed that the government officials especially Women and Children Affairs Office visit them most of the time whenever the SHGs and CLAs conduct meetings. In relation to the assistance they obtained from the Office a discussant from Duna Woreda explained the support they were getting from government offices, but unwilling to work with microfinance institutions:

Women and Child Affairs head and other professionals from her office and health extension workers frequently attend our SHGs and the CLA meetings. They encourage us. Officers from the office of Finance also visits us. Staffs from a microfinance institution also come to us and asked us to transfer our saving to the microfinance institution and get loans, but our preference is saving at a bank where we can easily manage our money, but none of us were willing to do that. We do not see the benefits of microfinance institution.

The SHG members are confident of being able to manage their group and sustain working together and supporting each other. As explained by one of the discussants at Soro:

We have learned how much relieved we are when we borrow from our own savings than passing through bureaucratic procedure of microfinance institutions to get loan. Our loan interest rate is very low 1-3% (with slight variation between SHGs), originally it was 5% but as we get the financial strength now it is reduced to a very low level. There were few who default in paying back, but now nearly all of the members respect the bylaws and pay timely. We got trained to take loan in small amount, pay timely, and increase loan amount gradually as we get experience to pay back bigger loans. Our SHG has passed through lots of practice to manage bigger loans. For instance, we have one of our members who started business with 1,500birr loan but now she has more than 10,000birr capital.

The SHGs at Duna have a unique type of organisation for generating income for their savings. The SHG members work together in their group to generate income that they put to their saving. In addition to the regular weekly meetings the group meet more times to perform income generating activities such as preparing enset:¹⁸ "enset mefak", collecting a harvest from farms: "nedo magaz", and the likes. They also meet whenever there is a social cause such as to visit a woman who has delivered a baby,

¹⁸ Enset is a plant native to Ethiopia that is often referred to as the false banana because of its resemblance to the banana plant. Processing enset is very labour intensive, and is usually done by women. The processing involves - cutting and harvesting the mature plant; digging and lining a pit for fermenting the pulverized root; scrapping the outer sheaths of the stem to remove edible parts; fermentation time ranges from 2 – 6 months; and it can then be baked and eaten.

or to attend funerals of the member households. The expression of one of the FGD participants at Duna was indicative of the long term impact of the project on women's empowerment:

The project doesn't give us commodities or money; it gave us "food of the mind". It changed our mind-set, inspired us to work, save, and manage the wellbeing of our children and the family. The project empowered us, and inspired us to look for the bright future, and it makes us to aspire for big, to get out from stagnation! Our plan now is to grow and be owners of big businesses.

The discussants at Gibe mentioned that the women have ideas of starting different businesses such as distribution of commodities, poultry, vegetable trade, etc. Only few of the SHG members have the ambition to take loans from microfinance institutions to do business. Most of them believe that loans from microfinance institutions are not manageable to pay, due to very high interest, and also due to fear of failure to pay back on time and its consequences endangering foreclosure of family businesses or assets.

As the smaller SHGs became successful Cluster Level Associations (CLAs) have emerged. It was not initially expected that the SHGs would reach this point, but this unintended outcome allows harnessing of the energy of the smaller groups to advocate for further growth of the groups and to provide them with the leverage to negotiate with government bodies on potential support that the SHGs deserve. When asked the benefits of the formation of the CLAs, the discussants at Soro explained that it is a very strategic set up that is enabling them to move forward to meet their common objectives. The CLA chair women at Soro explained how they manage the CLA and its perceived benefits:

We contribute for the CLA (10 birr per month) and we have a separate account for it, we have a meeting twice a month, we operate the account with three signatory (Retrak and two CLA members). Now we can get trainings together and cascade it to the members later, we resolve some of the challenging problems in any one of the member groups through CLA, now we have the forum that is much helpful to address our common problems. When we have difficulties in one of the groups we usually assign members of the CLA and send them to counsel the defaulting member. Whenever the SHGs have internal problems we assist leaders to solve the challenges they encounter.

The officials at all the three intervention Woredas mentioned during the interview that the SHGs organised by Retrak are much more successful than any of those organised through government offices. For instance, at Gibe Woreda there are 444 women development groups and 13,320 members in these groups that were organised with the guidance of the government offices, while Retrak organised only 6 groups per Woreda, each consisting about 20 members. The officials mentioned that the total of the savings by 444 women groups organised by the government offices is much lower than the amount of the saving by the six of the SHGs organised by Retrak.

The officials who were interviewed also described that the SHGs have improved the livelihood of poor households. They pronounced the effectiveness of the model the project implemented, especially that poorest of the poor women were organised in groups and were able to save hundreds of thousands of birr. They also mentioned the other benefits that the SHGs were able to accomplish, such as addressing social problems, empowering other women to form SHGs, actively involving in child protection matters, etc. The official at Gibe stated the peculiar nature of the project and commitment of their Woreda to sustain the outcomes they attained.

Self Help Group theory has been with us for a long time, but only the ones supported by Retrak are successful. Retrak has organised the groups, empowered the women,

they started saving, now they can bring the money to microfinance institutions and get larger amounts of loans to do a more organised and profitable businesses. We are aware the women have some fear in taking loan but we have planned to give them the awareness on how to use loans and start their own projects.

The Most Significant Change stories also revealed that households empowered with child protection awareness and economic empowerment are safe havens for children to grow. The economic strengthening testimonies reveal that it took hard work to change attitude that hamper escape from poverty. Thus because of changes in attitudes and skills women can testify to economic empowerment and better social wellbeing. As a result we are seeing economically empowered and safe household that protect children in family by addressing the issue of poverty that encourage children to migrate in the first place. As one women said "The transition I made from being a burden to my families to business ownership is a miracle for me". As a result of participating in SHGs women also develop better parenting skills. The stories exhibited that community members gaining skills around problem solving, money management and money saving.

Generally, assessment of the effectiveness of the SHGs is focused on economic and social empowerment, child protection and prevention of family separation. The results of this evaluation revealed that the SHGs are functioning and meeting the objectives they are established for. The members of SHGs have addressed not only their economic problems, but the groups have also effectively empowered women to strengthen their social bond and address children's wellbeing and education.

3.4 Sustainability

Findings from the qualitative synthesis of women's perspectives on benefits that they received from SHGs suggest various pathways through which SHGs have achieved the positive impacts. The positive effects of SHGs on economic and social empowerment run through the channels of familiarity with handling money, financial decision making, solidarity, improved social networks, knowledge on child protection, and respect from the household and other community members. The findings of this evaluation also suggests that women participating in SHGs perceive themselves to be well empowered psychologically.

As described in the previous section women organised in SHGs in the operational areas are functioning very effectively. During the FGDs the participants, at all the Woredas, described that they are well empowered to manage the SHGs by themselves seeking for only slight follow-up and technical support. The SHGs are operating only at the level of the available resource in their own group saving account. It was learned that nearly all of the SHGs were not ready and willing to take larger loans from microfinance institutions. The widespread Tearfund SHG model in Ethiopia suggests that in countries where millions of people live in extreme poverty SHGs are a low cost solution that is proven to work. The results Retrak achieved with this regards are remarkable. However, since the financial scale at which the SHGs are operating is very low it may take longer to realise significant economic benefits to all members of the SHGs.

The process of organising the current SHGs could be used as a model for scale up to other communities. The role of Retrak in the next phase needs to be on developing the operational model for replication and on monitoring the groups' progress. The sector offices at Woreda level need to strengthen the SHGs, facilitate loan opportunities and access to other resources (such as land). In order to move on the ladder of household economic growth members of the SHGs may also need to be briefed by relevant government offices about the benefits of working with microfinance institutions.

The current amount of loans that the SHG members can receive is only enough to support them cover their routine expenses at a household level and to finance very small scale domestic businesses. The groups need to be empowered to seek for larger loans and to do business operation at a higher level. Retrak has played a sufficient role at the formation and development of the SHGs until they form CLA and start operating independently. Regarding the current groups Retrak's involvement need not go any further.

4 Findings: Child Wellbeing Clubs

This section presents what is learnt about the activities of the Child Wellbeing Clubs (CWCs), the achievements of the CWCs in terms of changed attitudes and behaviours about migration of children, the impact of the CWCs on the school community and the community at large, and sustainability factors of the CWCs upon the termination of the project.

4.1 Activities and outputs

As this was a pilot project it was hard to set targets for these activities, especially for the larger education activities such as the peer education from CWCs. These activities were able to reach many more community members, both children and adults than had been anticipated (table 9).

Table 9: Outputs results for Objective 5: Child Wellbeing Clubs (CWCs)

Outputs	Y1-3 Target	Y1-3 Result Total	Y1-3 Result Male	Y1-3 Result Female
Number of new schools engaged in child led child wellbeing programme	15	18	n/a	n/a
Number of teachers recruited as mentors for vulnerable children	30	40	21	19
Number of child led CWCs established in schools	15	18	n/a	n/a
Number of children participating in child led CWCs	150	299	181	131
Number of pupils received peer education through CWCs	1,500	13,334	7,311	6,023

However it should be noted that there is a slightly lower proportion of girls participating in CWC activities. As shown in table 9, 42% of club members are girls, and 45% of children receiving peer education are girls.

4.2 Outcomes

It was intended that the project would track reporting of child protection issues and completion of at least one year of education as outcomes of the CWCs. However, in practice it was not possible to measure these indicators quantitatively. However through the community child protection mapping and the Most Significant Change stories, as well as interviews with school principals, the following results were recorded (table 10).

Table 10: Outcome results for Objective 5: Child Wellbeing Clubs (CWCs)

Outcome indicator	Outcome results (October 2012-September 2015)
Over a three year period, 20% increase in the number of children reporting child protection issues following CWC guidance	Children report a greater awareness of child protection issues and of being able to influence positive responses to risks, often through informal channels.
Over a three year period, 20% increase in children completing at least one year of formal education or training	Schools with CWCs report a reduction in school dropout rates

4.3 Effectiveness

On a general level, it can be concluded that the CWCs had a positive impact on the awareness and knowledge of the child protection issues in the schools where the clubs operate. In addition at times the club members are impacting on their surrounding community. The activities of the CWCs include: awareness raising on child labour and trafficking, follow-up on children dropping out from school, awareness on traffic rules and regulations, and mobilising resources to support school materials for

orphans. The CWCs are organised and led by club mentors who are volunteer teachers who have received training from Retrak. The CWCs also working with children living with caregivers who are not their parents, especially where they are lacking access to education. During the rainy season school break CWC members are given assignments to promote child protection issues in their communities. The evaluation results shows that the level of awareness and knowledge on child protection issues is higher among CWC members.

Many of the children in the communities have a plan to migrate to Addis Ababa, South Africa and other urban areas. Children as young as 15 years want to migrate to South Africa and girls may also look to migrate to the Middle East. The CWCs are well aware that a number of children of their age have died on the route to South Africa. One of the FGD discussants at Gimbichu primary school, Soro Woreda said:

We are happy to be members of this club, we get knowledge and we are also empowered to counsel others in and outside the school. If we were not aware of the negative impact of child migration we would have migrated ourselves. But now we are helping others in changing their mind.

School principals and club mentors at the visited schools mentioned that Retrak organises three meetings in a year with participants from different schools to discuss how to strengthen the CWC activities, with the goal of reducing dropout and monitoring child migration. The meetings are conducted at the beginning of the year (introductory meeting), the second meeting at the end of first semester (mainly on experience sharing) and the final meeting at the end of the academic year (to evaluate the annual performance of CWCs).

From among different school clubs (such as HIV/AIDS sensitisation, sports, environment, science, civics, mini media, gender, Red Cross, literature, children's parliament, and population) the CWCs facilitated within this project are the most active ones at all the schools visited for this evaluation. The CWCs are actively working to educate the school communities and the club's activities are recognised as best practice for replication to other schools in the Woredas.

The CWC activities have significantly contributed to the reduction in dropout rate. Data revealed from Gibe Woreda Gembe primary school club mentors and school principal revealed that the dropout rate has reduced significantly during the last three years. As per the available statistics during 2012/13 there were 24 dropouts, 2013/14 there were only two dropouts, and there was no dropout during 2014/15, the major reason was reportedly the intervention of the CWC at the school.

The club activities are supported by Retrak and funds are also being generated internally. The club leaders report that they get material support such as a ball, a microphone and stationery from Retrak. However they mentioned lack of costumes to play drama at different occasions. The CWC visited at Soro mentioned lack of financial resource to organise campaign on awareness creation to the surrounding communities.

The current strategy of fundraising is that club members take the lead to contribute money and call for other school communities (both teachers and students) to raise funds to support children who are economically unable to cover expenses for school materials. With the funds raised at Gimbichu primary school it was made possible to bring back to school two students who were planning to migrate to Addis Ababa looking for job. Through the counselling effort of the CWC members a girl who got a passport and visa decided to cancel her trip to Middle East. She is currently one of the active members in the CWC. The following Most Significant Change story also tells how a migrant girl came back to school

Most Significant Change story: A model of change

In 2013, I was just 13 years old. At that time, my parents had no the capacity to fulfil my needs of scholastic materials. In Hamola Kebele, a place where I live, many children go to Addis Ababa in search of job. When they come back to their family every year for holidays, they bring different stuffs. One day, my mother saw two of my girl friends who dropped out of school and went to Addis Ababa, came back for holiday with food, oil and kerosene for their parents. Then, she said to me 'those two girls are at your age, but look what they have done for their parents and to themselves; they came back dressed well and they also brought food, oils and kerosene'. After I heard this, I felt sad and decided to go to Addis. Then, I asked my friends about the city and they told me that if I drop out of school and go with them they can get me employed. Therefore, I went with them to Addis and as they promised, they got me a job in a household. However, things did not go the way I expected. I started missing my family and most of all, I couldn't cope with the burden I carried. I always woke up at 6am and work non-stop until 10pm.

After a year, that is in September, 2014, I went back to my family for a holiday. Fortunately, after I arrived there my school friends told me that they were celebrating a school opening day and the school's Child Wellbeing Club members were showing dramas, short plays and presenting artistic literatures. They invited me to join them and so, I went with them. The drama was titled 'the missing child', which was pretty much similar to my story. While I was attending the drama, I started crying because it just looked like I told them my story and they were playing it on stage. After the programme was finished, I went to speak with the club members and their coordinator. I told them that I want to restart my education and asked them if I could be a member of the Child Wellbeing Club. They were very much happy about my decision and helped me to get registered and also they accepted my request for membership.

Currently, I am continuing my education from where I stopped, grade four. With hard work and dedication I stood first from my class and the school awarded me for being a 'good role model'.

Retrak helped me to have a very good understanding about child exploitation and the negative impact of child migration at early ages. I have also a better knowledge about child wellbeing, child protection, the risks of child trafficking and street life.

The CWCs conduct meetings about once in a week, the school arranges a convenient time to enable the club convey its messages to the school community. For instance, the CWCs at Gimbichu primary school are given 5 minutes every morning at the beginning of the day, and 15 minutes during the break hour to communicate its message to the school communities through different means (such as drama, poems, and the likes). Club mentors mentioned that lack of attention by some of the students towards the club activities at the beginning is greatly improved through time.

4.4 Sustainability

In the context of this evaluation, sustainability of CWCs refers to institutional, social, financial and ownership issues. Institutional sustainability refers to incorporating the clubs within the structures of the school system. The evidence from this evaluation suggests that in part the continued existence of the CWCs in the schools is related to the support that they receive from the school administration. Where the clubs have received support, they have thrived with potential benefits to wider society. The case of visited schools is illustrative that the schools have allowed the children to participate in the management of their own clubs. The key lessons from the visited schools are that children have the capacity to manage their own affairs under responsible adult guidance; children know their own needs and can properly articulate them; and children from lower grades can play an effective role in learning and teaching about the responsibilities and rights of the child.

As was seen in this evaluation the CWCs are socially sustainable as there exist widespread acceptance of the clubs among the communities. The school community, and in some occasions the communities outside the school, has given greater appreciation to the role the clubs are taking in special events.

The continued existence of the CWCs is in part related to the strategies that the clubs themselves are taking to generate their own funds. In this evaluation, financial sustainability of the clubs' operation is fundamental. It will be important that the CWCs in schools have the ability to mobilise and efficiently utilise resources to achieve their objectives. The CWCs in the schools are not financially viable to meet their needs. With the amount they generate they succeed in funding some of their activities, the need for support from outside will still be there.

Ownership of the clubs by the schools is more likely to ensure the long-term sustainability of the clubs. At present the head teachers in schools are involved in the operations of the CWCs. In at least three of the schools visited the head teachers were closely monitoring the activities of CWCs. This is viewed as what has mainly contributed to the ownership of the CWCs by schools.

5 Findings: Community Education

According to the mid-term review of this project, there were different forms of child abuses that were prevalent and practiced in the intervention communities. The common and widespread child protection risks include physical punishment, humiliating and degrading treatment, sexual harassment, child labour exploitation, trafficking, and neglect. This violence is fuelled by family disintegration and poverty. This section of the evaluation will explore how the community education programme has impacted on the child protection mechanisms in targeted communities.

5.1 Activities and outputs

A series of public education events has been conducted within this project, targeted at changing the mind-set of community members. The activities are designed and implemented as a mechanism for implementing policies to sustainably fight all forms of abuse against children in the operational areas. Close to twice the number of planned community members participated in workshops during the project period (table 11).

Table 11: Output results for Objective 6: Community education

Outputs	Y1-3 Target	Y1-3 Result Total	Y1-3 Result Male	Y1-3 Result Female
Number of community workshops on healthy parenting and child protection	15	22	n/a	n/a
Number of community members who received child protection and healthy parenting training	450	812	573	239
Number of communities who agreed and documented a community child protection policy	5	0	n/a	n/a

5.2 Outcomes

The evaluation has revealed that community members have gained greater understanding of parenting skills and issues around child protection (table 12). Education of bus drivers and conductors has led to many children being rescued from traffickers.

This project used Community Child Protection Mapping as a key monitoring tool for understanding and tracking change in community child protection risks and mechanisms. This was a new method for Retrak. For this final evaluation, a second mapping exercise in the three project Woredas was undertaken between November and December 2015. The results from this exercise were compared to those from the mid-term review which was done in July and August 2014. The participants in the final evaluation mapping exercise were almost the same people or from the same offices as were involved during mid-term review mapping. They were nine people representing local government stakeholders (Office of Justice, Police, and Women and Children Affairs Office). In addition four FGDs were conducted involving members from three SHG groups and children from one CWC.

Table 12: Outcome results for Objective 6: Community education

Outcome indicator	Outcome results (October 2012-September 2015)
Over a three year period, 20% increase in the number of children reporting child protection issues following CWC guidance	Community members report greater awareness of child protection issues, especially the importance of positive parenting skills. In addition there is greater use of formal child protection mechanisms for dealing with incidences. (reported in Community Child Protection Mapping)
Over a three year period 450 community members gain knowledge and skills in parenting, child development and child protection.	<p>812 community members have participated in workshops, this has led to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater understanding of children’s needs and improvement in parenting skills, as mentioned in many Most Significant Change stories and in the Community Child Protection Mapping. • 140 children has been rescued from trafficking and one trafficker has been prosecuted. A reduction in child trafficking has been also reported in Most Significant Change stories.

The findings of the mapping exercise revealed that the top three risks identified by adult participants (SHG members) of FGDs were labour exploitation, poor parenting and emotional abuse, neglect and death of parents. As per the findings of the FGDs with child CWC members it was revealed that family member alcoholism, corporal punishment and poor parenting skills were the top three sources of child protection risks. In the mid-term review neither SHG members nor CWC members identified poor parenting skill as one of the top child protection risks.

The source of harm for children in these three communities identified in the previous review were similar. New additions to source of risk in this review include divorce, polygamy, stealing of children for trafficking, family conflict, early (child) marriage, inappropriate use of social media and technology, peer pressure to entice children into criminal activity and addiction.

If a child in these communities is affected by a child protection risk, the response is the same as the findings of the mid-term review report. The first alternative is to use the traditional child protection mechanism. However, the level of satisfaction on the outcome or punishment of the perpetrator is always low. This is because the level of punishment is not equivalent with the level of abuse on children. The other alternative that is available is the formal (legal or governmental) child protection mechanism. In this mechanism most stakeholders are satisfied because of the level of punishment is equivalent to the crime and therefore educative for the potential offenders.

According to key informants the communities have developed a good level of awareness about government child protection mechanisms. Key informants testified the change in acceptability of this mechanism in the last couple of years. But still there remains much work to be done. According to participants in this participatory evaluation, building cooperation and free flow of information between the formal and traditional mechanisms of child protection is of utmost importance. Providing child protection training for relevant bodies, assigning a focal person who can serve as a bridge between governmental bodies and traditional child protection actors is also vital.

In general, to strengthen ties between these two mechanisms, gaps between them are supposed to be narrowed by setting in place an arrangement that helps the two mechanisms to come together and work in collaboration. In addition, the traditional mechanism needs to be modernised. Another factor

identified in this mapping process is providing continued training for community leaders to empower them. Some of the major recommendations forwarded by community members during the mapping exercise were:

- Providing ongoing community education for relevant community representatives and the general public in child protection issues and on their effect, so that communities take a strong stance against child abuse;
- Establishing referral links for victims of child abuse to the formal mechanism rather than only handling it in the traditional manner;
- Empowering the community members to be the vanguard of child protection and avoid collaboration with perpetrators and traffickers, and to empower them to be determined to expose the criminals to law enforcement bodies;
- Helping families engage in positive parenting practices, empowered to have constructive and free discussion with their children; and
- Strengthening the legal system to avoid leniency and to put strict punishments on abusers.

5.3 Effectiveness

Government offices, such as Women and Children Affairs, police and transport at all the operational Woredas, revealed that Retrak's presence has contributed much to the wellbeing of children in their respective Woredas. They were bold enough to mention that the level of child migration from their areas has decreased significantly. Previously, students register at the beginning of the year and then they leave. But now throughout the year students are attending with only few or no dropouts at most schools where the project is actively working. The transport sector is actively involved with the protection of child trafficking, and the police are well integrated with other stakeholders. Retrak has done much in changing the behaviour of families on how to raise children and on mechanisms to generate livelihoods. Retrak has also given emphasis to improving the livelihood of the minority group: the 'Fuga community'. Officials at Gibe Woreda described that among the several NGOs operating in their area the impact that Retrak's community intervention contributed in changing behaviour of the community was extraordinary, and this has been witnessed while the offices conducted evaluation on the role of NGOs in their area.

The officials also described that the community awareness activities Retrak conducted with major stakeholders has greatly facilitated good parenting. The officials affirm that Retrak has taught them how to deal with the issues of child protection, the line offices themselves are inspired to work for a better future for the children, and are having discussions among the Woreda cabinet to allocate a budget and follow the same model to further strengthen child protection issues in their areas.

Officials at all the Woredas agree that the project achieved a lot in SHGs, CWCs and awareness creation on child protection among the communities and stakeholder organisations. However they argue that the project needs to run for a longer period of time in order to demonstrate sustainable outcomes. The line offices expect the pilot level project activities be scaled up so that CWCs to be established at all schools, SHG to be scaled up to reach poorest of the poorest women at rural Kebeles, and awareness creation activities also be scaled up to reach communities at remote Kebeles.

Most Significant Change stories collected showed that community based child protection is in the making in these communities. The stories that demonstrated the impact of community education show that child protection issues are being reported to the police and traffickers are now being brought to justice. Children are telling other children the danger of migration, trafficking and life in the street. Greater knowledge and changes in behaviours of children, teachers and parents has been confirmed in these stories. Due to these changes in knowledge, attitude and practice in these

communities, children are returning home and to school due to the influence of their student friends. We see in these communities the change in perceptions where we observe an actual story that demonstrated that migration to cities does not change their lives. Community members now see that children need not leave home to live a better life. Rather communities have started to see migration and trafficking as a greater risk. As one girl said: “I dropped out of school and go with them (friends)” to get employed. Through awareness creation, this girl realised that school dropout is not the solution. Rather she realised being in school and doing well in school is the solution.

Most Significant Change story: Protecting children from traffickers

My name is XXX. I work as a bus station conductor in Duna Woreda. Since I started working at the bus-station, on average, I have seen people trafficking five children every day. Since these children were not with their biological parents, I and my friends at the bust station used to talk among ourselves about what would happen to these children. We speculated things about where they might be going and with whom. In these discussions, my friends told me that some of the children were going to Addis Ababa to start a shoe shining business and some others were moving to get a daily labour through brokers. At that time, I had a positive feeling that these children were going for good reason assuming that they might go somewhere and do something to change their life and then return to their family.

Nevertheless, one day we were invited by Retrak’s Community Development Worker to an awareness raising training. The training was about preventing child trafficking. The trainer gave us a very good insight about what it means to be a child, why children are leaving their family and the challenges they face when they depart from their family and community. I learned a lot from the training and my attitude has changed ever since. Therefore, I made a personal decision and commitment to stop the children from being trafficked, abused and exploited.

Two months later, while I was on duty at the bus station, I saw six children coming out of a bus one by one and went to a nearby cafeteria. I followed them closely and I asked one of these children who was buying them tea and why? The child told me that there was a man in the cafeteria who was taking them to Addis Ababa to get them hired by employers and that is the reason why he was doing this. As I was talking with the child, the trafficker came out of the cafeteria and started running. I chased him for about 500 meters, shouting for the help while pursuing him. Other people who heard me helped me and caught him. Then, I handed over him to the police for legal actions.

By and large, the stories validated the emergence of communities that are endowed to be sensitive in the protection of its own children. Before the intervention, child wellbeing was not an issue. Now we start to see communities that are beginning to act proactively and sensitively to its children’s needs and protection. This is expressed by community members who started to show vested interest on the wellbeing of children. This demonstrates community engagement in dealing with the root cause of the problem. In these stories, the root causes of migration and trafficking are being dealt with. These stories validated that as long as communities are empowered and take ownership of child protection they can actively engage in protecting their own children and the effect is self-perpetuating and sustainable. The reasons for this change as revealed in the stories are due to change in the knowledge, attitude and practice adults and children gained through the project interventions. Due to these changes children become active agents in terms of educating other community members, and parents are being more protective of their children. Thus the root cause of the problem is identified as the lack of knowledge and the prevalence of false belief that acted as self-aggrandising factor in reinforcing child abuse and trafficking. These stories now validate that communities are taking ownership of project and their own destiny.

5.4 Sustainability

The interviewed stakeholders have conveyed that they are fully positioned to have a strong role as child protection advocates. Besides this remarkable achievement pertaining to the community education, building a strong child protection network at a Woreda level is essential so that duty-bearers are held to account. Retrak's partnerships with the concerned government offices at the Woreda level may need to focus on building the capacity of the child protection stakeholders in order to ascertain sustainability of the outcomes. Findings of this evaluation have revealed that local leaders are very instrumental in championing child protection issues in the community. The line offices should bear the responsibility of scaling up the project activities, while the role of Retrak should focus on building their capacity. The major stakeholders dealing with child protection need to be strengthened and equipped with information through sensitisation to address cases of child maltreatment, so as to enable them to deal with conditions that predispose children to street life. Equipping these line offices with the necessary information about child vulnerability, and the means to protect children, clearly helps to prevent child migration and trafficking.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The evaluation of the drop-in centres focused on Retrak's efforts towards enabling vulnerable children, living and working on the streets, to return to life in a caring and stable family environment. The evaluation revealed that the centres maintained the best interest of the child across all the components of its services. Children are consulted to know and decide on their best interests. The best interests of the child are considered on a case-by-case basis. Operational rules and guidelines are flexible, and the project workers are encouraged to use good judgment to detect cases where the general procedures are in line with the child's welfare and safety.

The drop-in centres are a very effective setup in providing feedback necessary to plan and implement prevention activities and to establish a system to monitor the improvements in the wellbeing and education of reintegrated children and their families. The information gathered from children at the drop-in centres has enabled Retrak to integrate child protection activities in to its interventions at local Woredas where child migration and trafficking are rampant.

Child protection is one of the most critical concerns attracting national and global attention. The findings of the evaluation in this regard indicated that the project has made significant steps in child protection in the operational areas. The approach of integrating community education and the organisation of the CWCs at selected primary schools has made a tremendous contribution to improve the level of awareness towards child protection and child trafficking among the community and the major stakeholders. From the evidence gathered through discussions and interviews with the stakeholders, the community members are now much more aware and have developed a positive attitude towards child protection.

The SHGs organised to address the economic wellbeing of households, to strengthen social cohesion among women and to improve the wellbeing of children and prevent them being pushed into street life have accomplished remarkable achievements. Retrak's approach of organising SHGs without giving hand-outs, unlike the common practice among most NGOs, has broken the challenges that recurred during the start-up phase of the project. The members of SHGs have witnessed that the project has changed their mind and addressed not only their economic problems, but also have effectively empowered poor women to strengthen their social bonds and address their children's wellbeing and education, and ultimately pave the way to prevent their children separating to go to street life. The lessons from the SHGs can also be a tool to learn how to meet obligations in terms of paying back loans, and it can prepare members to seek for larger amount of loan and to become clients of microfinance institutions at a later stage.

The approach adopted by the project in the design and implementation phases is undoubtedly the best any project of this magnitude could have adopted. In particular, the involvement of stakeholders such as Women and Children's Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs, the police, religious leaders, the parents, children and the general community is critical in making the child protection interventions work on a small and large scale. The study findings also reveal that child protection is not a one day activity. It takes time and requires significant commitment and resources from all the stakeholders and donors.

Overall, the pilot project has made remarkable success pertaining to all its objectives. The outreach and service provision at the drop-in centres and reintegration of children from the streets with their families and communities has achieved all the planned activities. The prevention activities at a community level such as establishment of CWCs, participation of vulnerable women in SHGs , and

community education to promote child protection, were all implemented effectively and generated outcomes worthy of scaling up and replicating in other communities.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Overall Recommendation

The evaluation has shown that Retrak Ethiopia's project has registered successes in the area of providing services to the children on the street and improving child protection in target communities. The communities where the project was implemented are now more aware about their responsibilities in child protection and the major stakeholders, such as the government line offices and police, are also more responsible in handling child abuse cases, especially child trafficking cases. Bearing in mind that three years is a short period to register such tremendous achievements, it is recommended that the project be replicated to other Woredas where child migration and trafficking is prevalent and the duration of the project at the current Woredas be extended to allow it to be scaled up to more rural Kebeles and to building local capacity for sustainability.

6.2.2 Specific Recommendations

Holistic support to children aged below 14 years of age: The age of many children at the drop-in centres is below 14 years of age. Care should be taken not to let these children engage in child labour outside of the centre's activities. Allowing children of this age to work might expose them to different forms of abuse including effects that can jeopardise their growth and development. The attempt Retrak Ethiopia has made to provide meals to children below 14 years of age during the weekend should be encouraged and financially supported to prevent these children from being exposed to child labour inappropriate to their age.

Establishing referral links: In Hossana, once the basic services at the drop-in centres are provided, and if a child chooses not to reintegrate back to his families, referral to other organisations for vocational training and other support should be provided. This is already happening in Addis Ababa.

Exploring potential to collaborate with other organisations: Provision of all the services along the continuum might lead to the need for huge resources and possibly compromise efficiency. While the centre's focus should be on facilitation of the core activities of reintegrating children to their families, the potential to provide children with specific services (such as school material, food, clothing, housing, etc.) through collaboration with other organisations should be sought. In addition the drop-in centre should focus on reaching out to a limited number of street children through refined selection criteria, in order to gather feedback information on the nature and pattern of children coming to the streets and identifying the causes, so as to strengthen prevention activities.

Strengthening the drop-in centres: The existing capacities of the drop-in centres need to be strengthened with further funding so as to ensure the project's continuation in the same way it is being done. It is too early to consider an exit strategy at this stage of the project. The work has yet to become consolidated, particularly on the prevention side, so there is still need to reach out to children on the street.

Follow-up of reintegrated children: The attempt to conduct follow-up to all the reintegrated children was not successfully implemented. This was especially in situations where the follow-up site is not located within the proximities of the intervention areas, mainly due to limitation of resources to cover per diem and transportation of officers. This might remain to be a challenge if the plan for future intervention continues in the same way. It is recommended that the follow-up visits be conducted to only children reintegrated in the operational areas and a telephone based follow-up strategy be designed for children reintegrated outside the operational areas.

Collaborative support for SHGs with stakeholders: The experience from current SHGs, which have now taken strong roots, suggests that forming SHGs and pooling savings is possible. However, utilisation of these savings for building microenterprises requires considerable support from line offices and other stakeholders (such as Women and Children's Affairs, micro and small businesses, cooperatives, and microfinance institutions). Their collaborative support could pave the way for the SHGs to grow and sustainably address the livelihood of member households. Retrak's role, in this regard, could be monitoring the collaborative activities of the line offices and facilitation and provision of technical support whenever the need arises to assure fruition of the SHGs.

Production of documentary films: Production of documentary films could be a very helpful media to motivate and empower newly formed SHGs. The documentaries could also be a very helpful media to be used by the previous intervention Woredas to scale up the formation of new SHGs at rural and urban Kebeles.

Strengthen school based activities that create spaces for children to freely participate in child protection interventions: This evaluation indicates that CWC members were highly creative in their approach to communicating essential messages to the school community and communities outside school through drama, music, and dance. Organising CWCs across the remaining primary schools could attract the attention of children and schools to educate children and communities about child abuse and child protection, and could give rise to competitions in organising drama, music and dance between and among schools to further promote the messages.

Girls' participation in CWCs: While the proportion of girls in most primary schools is high, their participation in CWCs is lower than boys. Therefore, it is recommended that CWCs should encourage more girls to participate in the club activities.

Generating funds for CWCs: Empowering the CWCs to generate their own funds through public shows and competitions (drama, poem, music, dance, etc.) would be essential to ensure long-term sustainability of the clubs.

Project duration: Although the project was effectively implemented within the allocated time of three years, there was not sufficient time to effectively achieve and build a sustainable base. Projects of this nature in future require additional period for the partners to develop and strengthen their capacities and competencies so as to enable them to scale up the components of the project within the context of their Woreda.

Focusing on building the capacity of stakeholders: Empowering stakeholders (such as Office of Education, Women and Children Affairs, police, micro and small business, and others) should be given priority so as to scale up and replicate the project activities, and thus to lay the basis for sustainability of the outcomes of the project. This empowerment could be achieved through developing operational manuals for SHGs, CWCs, and community education, and then sharing these with and providing training to government offices. This should be accompanied by strengthening the Retrak office at Hossana with materials and the necessary staff to provide technical support to stakeholder offices and to conduct associated planning, monitoring and evaluation activities.

7 Appendices

7.1 Complete output results

During verification of results as part of the final evaluation activities, some errors were discovered in results reported in the mid-term review or yearly reports to donors. These are highlighted in the footnotes. In addition this table shows only new beneficiaries or activities each year, allowing the project actual to be calculated by adding together the three project years. Where these results differ from those previously reported they are also highlighted in the footnotes.

Output indicators	Project Target (Y1-3)	Y1 Actual (Oct1-Sep13)	Y2 Actual (Oct1-Sep14)	Y3 Actual (Oct1-Sep15)	Project Actual (Y1-3)	Project Actual MALE	Project Actual FEMALE	Target v Actual
Addis Ababa and Hossana drop-in centre								
Number of Street children reached through street visits	395	166	305	409	880	880	0	223%
Number of Street children stay overnight at shelter	288	117	120	98	335	335	0	116%
Number of Street children participate in education & life skills	656	117	330 ¹⁹	186	633	633	0	96%
Number of Street children counselled at drop-in centre	308	105	114	98	317	317	0	103%
Number of Street children receive medical care at drop-in centre clinic	308	117	90	98	305	305	0	99%
Reintegration								
Number of Street children reintegrated to SNNPR	126	58	102	91	251	251	0	199%
Number of Street children followed up & supported in family reintegration	212	39	85	110	234	234	0	110%
Number of care-givers of street children received support	244	84	155	168 ²⁰	407	191	216	167%
Number of siblings benefitting from Retrak support to families	308	123	248	230	601	315	286	195%
Self-Help Groups								
Number of New Self Help Groups (SHG) established	15	12	6	0	18	n/a	n/a	120%
Number of vulnerable women participating in SHG	225	232	123	0	355	0	355	158%

¹⁹ Reported as 227 in Y2 report to Cordaid, this is the correct figure, as per the mid-term review.

²⁰ Reported totals in Y1-3 reports to Cordaid differ, these are the correct figures as per the mid-term review and monitoring records.

Output indicators	Project Target (Y1-3)	Y1 Actual (Oct1-Sep13)	Y2 Actual (Oct1-Sep14)	Y3 Actual (Oct1-Sep15)	Project Actual (Y1-3)	Project Actual MALE	Project Actual FEMALE	Target v Actual
Children benefitting from Retrak support through mother's SHG	675	1119	430	35 ²¹	1,584	833	751	235%
Number of Cluster Level Associations (CLA) established	no target set	0	0	3	3	n/a	n/a	no target set
Child Wellbeing Clubs								
Number of new schools engaged in child led child protection programme	15	2 ²²	11	5	18	n/a	n/a	120%
Number of teachers recruited as mentors for vulnerable children	30	4	18 ²³	18	40	21	19	133%
Number of Child led child protection committees est. in schools	15	2	11	5	18	n/a	n/a	120%
Number of children participating in child led CPC	150	47	155	97 ²⁴	299	174	125	199%
Number of pupils received peer education through Child Protection Committee (CPC)	1500	0	2,082	11,252 ₂₅	13,334	7,311	6,023	889%
Community education								
Number of community workshops on healthy parenting and child protection	15	8	9	5	22	n/a	n/a	147%
Number of community members who receive child protection and healthy parenting training	450	189	347	276	812	573	239	180%
Number of communities who agreed and documented a community child protection policy	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%

²¹ Amended from Y3 report to Cordaid to show new only

²² Amended from mid-term review as figure was accidentally missed out

²³ Amended to show new only

²⁴ Y2 and Y3 amended to show new only

²⁵ Amended to show new only

7.2 Complete outcome results

Outcome indicator	Outcome result Y1-3 (October 2012-September 2015)
Objectives 1-3: Drop-in centres, education and life skills and reintegration	
Over a three year period, 395 street children living unsupported on the streets realise their rights to services (health care, education/skills training, psycho-social support)	335 children from SNNPR previously living on the streets received services, leading to 100% of children showing improvement in wellbeing ²⁶
Over a three year period, 126 street children are reintegrated into a family context in SNNPR where they are happy to remain, contribute to family wellbeing and receive holistic care and support.	251 street children were reintegrated into a family context in SNNPR
Over a three year period, 656 street children will receive catch-up education classes and life skills in line with national education curriculum and progress by one or more grades.	633 street children received catch-up education and life skills, leading to 79% of children improve in access to education and 59% improve in social behaviour as measured by child wellbeing assessments
Over a three year period, 80% of children have improved wellbeing whilst in their family and/or community	89% of reintegrated children showed an improvement in wellbeing
Objective 4: Self Help Groups	
Over a three year period, 308 caregivers gain knowledge and skills in parenting, child development and child protection	350 SHG members have participated in sessions leading to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% of children in SHG households show an improvement in parental care wellbeing • A greater understanding of children's needs and improvement in parenting skills, as mentioned in many most significant change stories
Over a three year period, 225 women and their families (675 children) have an increased income	350 women (and 1,584 children under their care) participated in SHGs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81% of women reported increased income • 99% reported increased savings and 99% have plans to increase their income. • 100% women reported ability to save, which was a 3% increase from what was reported during 2014 survey. <p>To date a total of 281,563 Birr has been saved across the SHGs and 648,597 Birr has been issued in loans.</p>
Over a three year period, 80% of children have improved wellbeing whilst in their family and/or community	98% of children in the community showed an improvement in wellbeing
Over a three year period, 308 caregivers and their families have improved wellbeing	Of the 325 women who completed the CSI, 93% caregivers show an improvement in wellbeing

²⁶ There was an error in calculations when reporting this figure during the mid-term review. Having found the mistake, this result has been amended to match the number of children receiving shelter at the drop-in centres during the life of the project.

Outcome indicator	Outcome result Y1-3 (October 2012-September 2015)
Objective 5: Child Wellbeing Clubs (CWCs)	
Over a three year period, 20% increase in the number of children reporting child protection issues following CWC guidance	Children report a greater awareness of child protection issues and of being able to influence positive responses to risks, often through informal channels.
Over a three year period, 20% increase in children completing at least one year of formal education or training	Schools with CWCs report a reduction in school dropout rates
Objective 6: Community education	
Over a three year period, 20% increase in the number of children reporting child protection issues following CWC guidance	Community members report greater awareness of child protection issues, especially the importance of positive parenting skills. In addition there is greater use of formal child protection mechanisms for dealing with incidences. (reported in Community Child Protection Mapping)
Over a three year period 450 community members gain knowledge and skills in parenting, child development and child protection.	<p>812 community members have participated in workshops, this has led to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater understanding of children’s needs and improvement in parenting skills, as mentioned in many Most Significant Change stories and in the Community Child Protection Mapping. • 140 children has been rescued from trafficker and one trafficker has been prosecuted. A reduction in child trafficking has been also reported in Most Significant Change stories.

7.3 Most Significant Change Stories – final round of collection (October 2015)

Story 1: Protecting children from traffickers

My name is XXX. I work as a bus station conductor in Duna Woreda. Since I started working at the bus-station, on average, I have seen people trafficking five children every day. Since these children were not with their biological parents, I and my friends at the bust station used to talk among ourselves about what would happen to these children. We speculated things about where they might be going and with whom. In these discussions, my friends told me that some of the children were going to Addis Ababa to start a shoe shining business and some others were moving to get a daily labour through brokers. At that time, I had a positive feeling that these children were going for good reason assuming that they might go somewhere and do something to change their life and then return to their family.

Nevertheless, one day we were invited by Retrak’s Community Development Worker to an awareness raising training. The training was about preventing child trafficking. The trainer gave us a very good insight about what it means to be a child, why children are leaving their family and the challenges they face when they depart from their family and community. I learned a lot from the training and my attitude has changed ever since. Therefore, I made a personal decision and commitment to stop the children from being trafficked, abused and exploited.

Two months later, while I was on duty at the bus station, I saw six children coming out of a bus one by one and went to a nearby cafeteria. I followed them closely and I asked one of these children who was buying them tea and why? The child told me that there was a man in the cafeteria who was taking them to Addis Ababa to get them hired by employers and that is the reason why he was doing this. As I was talking with the child, the trafficker came out of the cafeteria and started running. I chased him for about 500 meters, shouting for the help while pursuing him. Other people who heard me helped me and caught him. Then, I handed over him to the police for legal actions.

Story 2: From migration to education

My name is XXX. I am a student at Hage Dage primary school in Duna woreda. I am also a member of the schools child wellbeing club. Before I joined the club, I have no idea about street life or child abuse. Therefore, like many other children in our area, I believed that anyone can easily change his/her life by going somewhere and do something. I also believed that, once children moved to another area in search of labour, things would go smoothly and they would find what they wanted. But after I became a member of the CWC, I realised that all these presumptions were wrong. In fact, I found the truth from Retrak’s CDW and our mentor about all the challenges children would face when they leave their family. I started sharing this knowledge first with my family and then with children whenever I find them at school or church.

A year after I joined the club and started educating people, my brother who had left our home for three years and went to Addis in search of employment, came back home for a holiday. Two days after his arrival, I began asking him about what he was doing in the Capital and what he brought with him. Then, he told me that he just came empty-handed. Even though he was not willing to tell me all he went through, I told him that I’m aware of the kinds of challenges he might have had faced. Then, I said to him “when you went to Addis, I was in grade 6 but now look I am in grade 8. You thought you can be successful by dropping out of school and choosing a shortcut, but it didn’t work out. You neither kept your education nor succeeded in Addis and if you decided to go back again, things will get even

worse". He was very surprised to hear all what I have said and then he agreed to stay with the family and continue his education.

Story 3: Reduction in school dropout rate

My name is XXX. I am the Principal of Ansho primary school in Duna woreda. Before the establishment of the Child Wellbeing Club through Retrak's support, school absenteeism, dropouts and disciplinary problems were major challenges to our school. The teaching learning process had been affected due to high dropout rates, movement of children from rural areas to the urban centres and unnecessary conflicts between the students and teachers. However, since the establishment of the club, members of the club have been reaching out their peers and the school community using the school mini-media. This has brought change in attitudes by educating about the rights of children, types of physical and psychological abuse of children, women's rights and types of children's rights protected by the law. Moreover, they have been addressing issues such as street life, human trafficking, and effects of school dropouts using dramas and poems.

Because of this work of the club, this year's annual report shows that, the school drop-out rate which was 19 % before the establishment of the club, has reduced to 3%. We have also seen that conflicts between school teachers and students as well as violations of rights have significantly reduced. Girls in our school have now started to speak freely about their rights and started reporting whenever there is any violation of right.

Likewise, at different meetings we had with parents, they have informed us about the changes on their attitudes towards their children. They reported that, due to the lessons they gained from the club, now they cannot simply trust anyone and give away their children.

Story 4: Children's matters are a matter of concerns

Until I took part in the workshop Retrak organised, I had no fair understanding regarding the issues of child trafficking, the terrible situation of life in the streets and child abuse. However, after the workshop I got clear understanding of the situation. Sometime after the workshop, I saw a passenger who came from Hossana with four children. When I looked at them there was no facial resemblance between the children and the adult. Therefore, I approached the person and asked him if he was the father of the children. Then, he told me that they were not his children but he was taking them to towns to get them employed. He also told me that I can take one of them if I'm interested. Somehow, I controlled my emotions and kept quiet for a while until I found a policeman. When I found two traffic policemen, I explained the situation to them and got him arrested. Finally, I heard that the court charged six thousand (6,000) birr and released him.

Another time, while I was at Hossana bus station, I found four boys and one girl, aged between 7 and 8 without adult caretaker. When I asked them where they were going, they couldn't tell me clearly. So, I thought there must be a trafficker behind them but I couldn't find him. Therefore, I contacted a policewoman who works at the bus-station and handed over the children to her.

Retrak is playing an important role in preventing the movement of children by educating and raising the awareness of the community using school CWCs and SHGs. Therefore, people in our Woreda, including myself who once had no awareness about child abuse and child trafficking, became very informed and responsible citizens in securing children's wellbeing.

Story 5: My SHG helped me to recover from my sickness

Before I became a member of XXX SHG, I and my husband had been working as a daily labourers. Since we had no saving practice, we had been spending all we got immediately. When I was recruited by Retrak from our village to establish our SHG, I was very delighted because I thought there would be financial hand-outs. But, after we finished the meeting, I realised that it was not about providing hand-outs and I couldn't believe what was going on. Back in the day, I had a high dependency attitude. Nonetheless, after I learned the benefits of being a member of the SHG, the importance of saving to run a small business and overcome challenges of poverty, my preconceived dependant attitude has entirely changed.

Between 2013 and 2014, after I became a member of the SHG, I was suffering from a tumour that was in my mouth. Especially, towards the end of 2014, I was almost incapable of taking foods and drinks freely and I was suffering from a severe headache. My group mates who have seen my situation, discussed the matter among themselves and decided to lend me some money to get medical treatment. Therefore, the group provided me with 3,000 birr of which 2,500 birr was a loan and the remaining 500 birr was a contribution from the group members from their pockets.

With their moral support and the money collected, I successfully had my surgery at Hossana Hospital and got my health back. When I look back to my past, I feel that I was very dependent, hopeless and wasteful person. But thanks to the advice and lesson given by the Retrak's CDW, I am free from all those past negative attitudes and problems.

Story 6: Change in community

My name is XXX. I live in Gimbichu town and I work at the bus station. I have participated at different trainings that was organised by Retrak on child trafficking (its causes and impacts). Having this knowledge, I have been assigned along with my partners and take more responsibility to prevent the problem. I remember that, in the past, there was severe problem of child trafficking in the area. Because of ignorance, the community itself encourages its children to move to adjacent regions and towns. Because of this, at least 10 children every day are trafficked to different urban areas and exposed to labour exploitation and different health risks. However, since we got the training about the issue, we have been educating the community, counselling the children who were ready to be trafficked and help them return back to their home in collaboration with the police officers. Retrak not only provided the training but also followed-up and continues to support following the training. This helps us to do our work with motivation.

Story 7: Awareness change in the Child Wellbeing Club

We are members of Gimbichu Junior School child wellbeing club. It has been three years since our club was established and it has 20 member and 2 mentors. Before the establishment of this club, we had been observing different problems at our school. School dropouts were one of the major problems. This was partly because of the existence of unrealistic, exaggerated thoughts about city life among the children and their parents. This attitude had created a comfortable ground for child traffickers to easily convince parents and take their children to different urban areas. Due to this, many children have been sexually and physically abused. This experience had a huge impact on parents, children and the country at large.

The establishment of our club has brought significant positive changes in this regard. During the first year of the club's establishment, our main target was to change the attitude of our peers at the school.

We used different art shows. To reach the largest number of people possible, we also used events such as parents-teachers meetings and Parents' Day. After a year, we have seen that there is a huge change in attitude. The desire among children to drop out of school and move to urban centres has gradually declined. Now, there is a belief among the children that they can work hard in their education and achieve their dreams. They also started educating and changing the attitude of their parents. Currently, parents do not comply with the request of others to raise and look after their children.

We give huge credit for Retrak and its staff members for this change. From the start, we have been supported by them technically and financially. Thanks to them, today, the rate of child trafficking incident has reduced significantly.

7.4 Most Significant Change Stories – first round of collection (September 2014)

Story 1: From a ruthless punisher to a caring mother

This is a story of a woman called XXX. XXX has seven daughters and two sons. Except the two girls who are 15 and 14 the rest of the children are very young. Her husband has no job and he is old. She takes care of her household by selling 'injira' (local food). XXX is a member of a self-help group which has 20 members, and is one of the six groups found in Soro woreda. Since XXX became a member of this SHG, within a few months she was able to save Birr 345 and was able to take loan from her group. She then successfully returned the loan with the interest on time. Currently she is waiting to get her group's approval for the second round loan. She is economically empowered to request as much as 700 Birr to scale up her petty trade.

In the SHG meeting women also receive trainings on parenting skills among others. This is believed to give them the skills in how to raise their children in safe and caring environment free from abuse. They also learn about type of abuse that affects children and learn better ways of handling misbehaviour through behavioural management lessons. This is a story as told by XXX on how the parenting education brought a significant change in her life.

After successive education on parenting skills by Retrak community worker, one day XXX got up in one meeting to witness about her experience as follows:

"I raised my children far from what has been taught to me here since the first day of our lesson". She continued saying "I used to punish my child by hit them hard, accuse them for all mistakes, curse and insult them unceasingly, chase them with an axe, tied them using rope and hit them, use my teeth to bite them, and mostly without mercy I hit them hard. But I never thought this could harm them or that I could be wrong in the eye of the law. Despite what I tried however this way of handling my children never worked for me. It rather made them very angry and worse. They even fight with me and with each other. My children usually are known for their disturbance by our neighbours, [they] never cares for me and they just create mess in the house."

She also told her group members how this behaviour affected her 14 year old daughter. One day her 14 year old daughter made mistake. She was so afraid of the punishment and the curse that would come from her mother. As a result she left home and went to the neighbour's home and decided to spend the night there. Although she thought of going home the next day, nevertheless, having spent a night out of her home coupled with her previous mistake made her to anticipate an even more severe punishment. Thus she decided to stay one more day. Days passed this way and she tried to assess whether her mother has forgiven her but she heard that her mother has become angrier than ever. XXX was looking for her child everywhere to punish her. After a while and sadly, XXX's daughter became pregnant at the age of 14. Her mother heard the news and whenever they see each other in the neighbourhood she used to chase her with axe to hit her.

While XXX was attending one of healthy parenting education in SHG meeting, she came to understand that hitting a child with any sort of material is a physical abuse and she could be accountable in the eyes of law. She also confessed that she has contributed to the problem her children are displaying as follows "my children are not the one who made the mistake. It is me who made the mistake. Had it been I continued with this way, all my children could have left home and gone to the street." She then left the meeting deciding to call her pregnant daughter to come back home. She then invited her daughter to come and live with her. Currently XXX is taking care of her daughter and trying to create a safe environment. There is an improvement in the way she is treating misbehaviour and her children are becoming less aggressive and happier.

Her children are currently learning with a good spirit. She is also giving her children better care. Her daughter also testify this change:

“My mother has changed a lot. I never thought of staying away from her, no matter what she may do to me, she is still my mother and I always prefer to stay with her than facing other people. My mother has changed a lot. She still gets annoyed but she become calm quicker. She has stopped her former way of hitting us all. I have also decided to continue my education next year. My mother has become kind to me.”

Parents are inherently good to their children. However, due to lack of education and information they could also become potential push factor in terms of exposing children to unsafe environment. This would make children feel abandoned and come to the street. This story is one of its kind that demonstrate how Retrak SHG is helping very poor women to be empowered financially, socially and behaviourally to become better parents.

Story 2: Retrak’s Self Help Group helping poor women

This is a story of XXX who has seven family members that she supports. She mainly involves in petty trade in bare road line in small town. Previously if she faced challenges she had no saving or had no one to turn to. Her only option was a money lender who lends with exorbitant interest rate. The group members mainly express this loan as “Yechenk Woled” to mean extremely worrisome loan. In one SHG meeting XXX shared her painful experience.

“On one occasion my first born got very sick, we visited the local health centre twice but end up with no solution. At last the local clinic referred my boy to hospital for further medication. I had to go to many friends and relatives to borrow money for my son’s medication but it was not easy. Finally, I went to a money lender and gave my only cow as collateral and took 2,000birr. After two months I hardly managed to pay the loan and had to pay 3,200birr by selling our family cow. Following this after a year I heard that Retrak has launched the SHG approach in my town. I was the first women to register. I was serious and used to attend all the concept sharing meetings. Then I decided to actively start weekly saving. After certain period, I saved 200birr and was able to borrow 400birr from the group and started some petty trade in my small town. From this borrowed money I was able to earn 800birr gross profit after four months. I paid my loan with 4% interest and finished my loan. The interest I paid is insignificant compared to the money lenders’ unreasonably high interest rate. After a while I was able to save 3,200birr. Consequently, I took for the second time 6,400birr loan. This happened since there was no other person who wanted to take loan when I requested the second time. I am working and paying this as well and left with only one month loan to pay. I am so thankful to Retrak’s community worker who is teaching us every week and encouraging us.”

XXX starts each day with hope. On a good day she earns a net profit of 100 to 150birr. When business is low, her profit sometimes goes down to 50 to 75birr. Even in such days she is more efficient and work without worry since the interest of the SHG is reasonable (which is 4% per month) and payable compared with the money lenders. She is happy to refund comfortably the group loan. As she expressed it “after all am helping and capacitating my own group”. Her success is in no small part due to her own tireless hard work, but she also attributes it to the care and advice she receives from community workers.

XXX is currently helping her six children to continue their school. Her dream for her children is to become educated and live a healthy life. She hopes that one day she will have a big, permanent supermarket in one of the busy roads of her small town.

Story 3: Result of Healthy Parenting Education in Community Prevention Programme

Healthy parenting education is given for SHG and community members. This is the story of the result of healthy parenting education in one of the SHG. It is a story of a mother called XXX and her son YYY.

XXX is active member in her SHG. She attends all the group meetings and put her weekly savings consistently in the group. Before her husband divorced her she used to live happily with him raising her son. After her husband divorced her and left home she had to take the burden of being a mother and a bread winner for her son and herself. She tried to work as a housemaid, as a cook, washing clothes for people and collecting wood to sell but despite this the money was not enough to feed her child. She had such a poor living condition.

Looking at the situation someone she knows suggested she could let her 11 year old son go with him to his family in the countryside and work for him so that he can send him to school. He promised that he will make sure his needs are met and that he would send him to school. At last XXX was persuaded to send her child to get hired and get access to education due to pressure of living cost. Little did she know that it was a false promise.

After a while she happened to hear about the SHG group and she became one of the fortunate women who is willing to be part of the SHG. While taking part in different meetings she had the chance to learn about healthy parenting, child exploitation and neglect. This is her first experience to hear about such issues.

One day at the end of one SHG meeting she decided to bring her child back home. She said “at the end of each lesson that Retrak’s Community Worker was teaching it made me to realize and understand how I abandoned my son in uncertain situation. I started to visualize how he is living so as a result I decided to bring my son and care for him by myself”.

She immediately went the next morning. She had to travel to a far rural village to the family she gave her son. She greeted the family and it was clear that they were not happy with her surprise visit. She asked to see her son but he was not at home. While waiting for his arrival she asked to see his exercise books from school. They were tongue tied and could not give her any. It was clear to her that he was not being sent to school. When the child arrived home to her surprise he has lost weight tremendously, and she found out that he has lost appetite since he stays the whole day keeping cattle.

When she told the people that she is planning to take her son back they tried to intimidate her saying that they will sue her. She went outside to look for help and had a chance to talk to neighbours in the village. The villagers told her that they were sad to see how the child is neglected. They helped her to talk to police and assisted her as witnesses and finally she was able to take her son back. She finally came back to SHG and told her story to the rest of the members.

Currently, YYY is 12 year old and is enrolled in school and got promoted to grade two. Other mothers in the group followed in XXX’s footsteps and have decided to bring their children back home to give them safety and care.

Story 4: A Remedy within

The two SHGs in Gimbichi were formed in 2013. Since the formation, with weekly minimum saving of 5 birr (0.2 \$) one group’s capital is 7800 birr (410\$) and the other’s is 7506 birr (395\$). Some members save up to 30 birr (1.5\$) depending on their income per week. There is remarkable consistency in the group saving.

Members of these SHG live in a village where there are lots of women who are widows and migrants. The community is very poor, many live under Kebele houses that are unfit for human dwelling. The

locations are messy and are less comfortable or of a lower quality to live in. Most people are uneducated and frequently fight and argue a lot with each other. As a result children are prone to modelling antisocial behaviour. As to their financial status most women in the village sell local drinks and engage in petty trade. Due to the level of poverty in the past this village was under so many development initiatives where these people have developed dependency on aid.

However since the commencement of the SHG effort these very poor women have worked together to bring change. They are negotiating with their local government officials as to how to get renovation for houses that are falling down. They also put requisition so that toilet could be built for them in their community. Currently they are waiting to hear positive response from the government. They were also able to organize a burial association for themselves in order to support each other during funeral times by saving a certain amount every month. This is believed to be used if there is any one encounter emergency or sickness. They have also worked together to handling their children's dropout of school and lack of scholastic material. They discussed that since new year comes with holiday expenses that they have to put aside money to cover school expenses and minimize school dropout of children due to lack of money. They decided to save per week any amount they can get. They were able to save 2994 birr (157\$) in one SHG and 3200 (168\$) in another, in addition to the SHG weekly contribution mentioned above. With this money they were able to send 13 children who were at home without school and 30 children went to school with full scholastic material.

Today these women feel proud and could not be happier with the amount of money they were able to save and use. They are able to understand that change can come from themselves without being dependent. Retrak's training and project has brought lots of change on their life. They would have end up in deep poverty but currently they are happy to see how they support each other. They are smiling and speaking with pride about the change coming within themselves without depending on handouts. They know that poverty is not going to be tackled today but they have hope that life will not be the same if they persist on this effort and have commitment. They are happy that they no more beg around and they are working and productive.

Story 5: Breaking Ethnic Discrimination Barrier through SHG in the Community

This is a story of one women who benefited from the SHG programme. A SHG in Homicho town consists of 15 members out of which seven come from the ethnic group called Fuga. This ethnic group has for so long been treated by other ethnic groups in the southern region as minority. People from this ethnic group get excluded by the society so as not to take part in any form of social events. Other ethnic groups do not drink coffee with them or go to their home to visit. They also think they have less right to speak in public. Moreover fear of discrimination from other ethnic groups means others do not marry a person who is from Fuga ethnic group. Such discrimination came since this ethnic group led their life predominantly through pottery, and metal work. They were also involved in local goods preparation that requires hard work and labour. In this region farming and petty trade is a well-respected type of work and Fuga's are not involved in it. However if a person in the community who is from Fuga starts to be involved in petty trade due to discrimination no one buys from them and they end up losing their benefit as a result they do not usually start such trade. And eventually they happen to think low and have a very low self-esteem.

Aware of this issue the topic was a high priority during SHG weekly meetings so that people could talk openly about this type of discrimination. Due to the lesson given to SHG members, they were able to understand that discriminating against people based on ethnic difference was not right. They were able to understand that poverty does not choose background. Unless they fight poverty together it could get difficult to tackle individually. There were consecutive meetings where the group discussed about discrimination which later led them to have coffee together and care for each other. Thus such

lessons is benefiting people from Fuga ethnic group who are able to join the group and is getting the benefits of SHG.

Members of SHG who are from Fuga ethnic groups have said “a day has come for us to be recognized and taken as part of the community thanks to Retrak’s SHG effort. We could have been lost in our community and miss such a golden chance that enable us to lead better in life”.

Story 6: “Let’s save those walking to death”: preventing children coming to the street with school clubs

Through the Child Wellbeing Clubs, parents are targeted as an important part of bringing a positive impact in the lives of their children. The clubs use different school events, parent meeting days, and special occasion in the school to raise awareness of parents about street life and its negative influence on children. They mainly use drama using equipment provided by Retrak to create the actual experience of street life through their action. They also read poems to audience about child trafficking and the side effects of street life.

There were seven family members in Gibe Woreda who made a decisive decision after taking part in such event. Following the above type of event these families decided to bring back their seven children who went to Addis Ababa to work on the street. These children were pushed by their own parents to go to Addis Ababa to earn and bring money to their parents. Since their parents had their contacts it was not difficult to trace the children. Their parents told their children to come and visit them for holiday and used the chance to advise them to stay and they were successful. For these parents what they heard from their children how they were suffering was a confirmation of the message they heard from school club members. Their children expressed that they were starved, the difficulty of getting work, had to sleep in small room with many other people, were exposed to disease and how they felt lonely and helpless.

Currently the children are enrolled in the school and learning. The effort has helped children and their parents to prevent children from coming to street life leaving home and getting pressured by peer influence.

Story 7: The effect of Community Education in Rescuing Children from Street

This is a story of a woman called XXX and her son who got the benefit from the community education initiative. XXX lives in Duna Woreda and is a SHG member. YYY is the adopted son of XXX. He is 15 years old and a grade 8 student. One day YYY asked XXX to go to Addis Ababa with his friends by dropping out from school. When she heard this she was sad and she understood that her son was under peer pressure. She tried to convince him to stay and continue his education, however her effort end up in vain. She said “since he was not my natural born child it was hard for me to convince him and felt I might pressure him”.

After YYY left XXX happened to become part of the SHG. On weekly meeting session the community educator teach members on child related issues. One day she heard the lesson about the side effect of street life and what actually happens to children once they are on the street. She was terrified to hear that they may not access their basic needs and could potentially face different type of child abuse. XXX was really shocked to hear about this and decided to ring YYY to come back. She also understood in no way he could have access to continue his education and that he will end up illiterate.

She immediately communicated with him and told him to come back. She promised that he will be treated as one of her children and that she will provide him his needs as best as she can. Following such offer YYY returned back home and reunited with his family. She said “When YYY came home I felt

sad to see his torn out clothes, he looks thinner than ever and his face has changed to black due to the wind and sun exposure. When he saw us his eyes were full of tears”.

After a while he told his stepmother the street experience with eyes full of tears as follows.

“I went to Addis Ababa with my friends hoping to get money by engaging in shoe shining. I had hope to bring back money however things are far from what we fantasizes. My dream of having good life and work opportunity to full fill my clothes need and helping you could not come true. I felt hunger a number of times, it felt very cold to sleep in the cold, and no one cares if you get sick or anything happens to you.”

YYY stayed on the street for about 4 months under unbearable circumstance. When he first met the community educator he shared his street life as follows

“ It would have been better had it been I stayed with my adopted mother, street life is difficult, at home I had access to my basic need, children in Addis while I see them going with their school uniform and bags I envied them. I felt embarrassed to come home since I refused my step mother when she told me to stay. When I heard from my mother I was happy immediately and was willing to come back home. ”

Now he is assisting his family by different activities and currently he is ready to start his school.

Story 8: A woman who search out for hand-out end up to be economically independent through SHG

XXX lives in Duna woreda. She raises 9 children by working as a daily labourer. One day she heard about the SHGs and came with a mind set up to get financial aid. Once she arrived what she heard was far from her expectation. It was not a hand-out service but a service that can help her to be independent through letting her to be part of SHG. She understood from community worker’s teaching that saving a small amount of money in collaboration with others can bring lasting change in tackling poverty. She further understood that each SHG member has an obligation to come to their respective weekly meetings in order to save and take lessons. The amount of loan member’s can ask for depends on their savings. In addition they are also expected to bring letter that explains what they are intending to do with the money they take as loan. Once they start working as per their agreement they pay their debt to their group.

After attending for about three weeks she decided to be part of the SHG. XXX has continued to attend the group meeting seriously and started saving every week. She eventually increased her saving and managed to save 250birr and asked the SHG for loan. Based on the regulation of the group she was able to take 500birr as a loan from the group’s saving. She stopped her daily labourer work and started petty trade. She started getting better income since she started this petty trade.

Within two months of her start of petty trade, she additionally has started taking butter and cheese to Hossana town to sell. She has now gradually started to fulfil her own and her children’s needs. Besides this and due to the parenting education she got, she has started treating her children with care and love. Currently she has changed her dependency attitude and she has become productive. She is even now supporting her husband to continue his education. She is now able to provide her children a meal twice a day unlike before. XXX is now in a better position economically and is able to buy school material and send her children to school.

7.5 FGD and KII Guides

7.5.1 FGD guide for SHG members

1. When was the SHG established? How many members do you have? Are there members who left the group since it was established? Why did they leave? How frequently do you meet? What issues do you discuss in your meetings? Do you discuss child protection issues? How frequently?
2. What are the benefits you get from the SHG?
 - Does the SHG improve the livelihood of your household? How?
 - Does it help you control/reduce child migration from your household? How?
3. Who are helping the SHG? What do they help? How helpful was their support? Did you get the help that you demanded? If not, why?
4. What are the challenges you encountered at different stages of the formation and management of the SHG?
5. What is your plan of the future? What assistance do you want from others to make your plan a reality?
6. Do you have any additional point which you want us to discuss?

7.5.2 FGD guide for CLA members

1. When was the CLA established? How many members do you have? How frequently do you meet? What issues do you discuss in your meetings? Do you discuss child protection issues? How frequently?
2. What are the benefits you get from the establishment of CLA?
 - Is CLA important for SHGs? How?
 - Does it help you control/reduce child migration from your household? How?
3. What are the challenges you encountered at different stages of the formation and management of the CLA?
4. What is your plan of the future? What assistance do you want from others to make your plan a reality?
5. Do you have any additional point which you want us to discuss?

7.5.3 FGD guide for CWC representatives

1. When was the CWC established? How many members do you have? Are there members who left the club since it was established? Why did they leave? How frequently do you meet? What issues do you discuss in your meetings? Do you discuss child protection issues? How frequently?
2. What are the benefits you get from the CWC?
 - Does the CWC change the attitudes and behaviours of students in the school about migration of children? How?
 - Does it help you control/reduce dropouts from your school? How?
3. Who are helping the CWC? What do they help? How helpful was the support? Did you get all the help that you demanded? If not, why?
4. What are the challenges you encountered at different stages of the formation and management of the club?

5. What is your plan of the future? What assistance do you want from others to make your plan a reality?
6. Do you have any additional point which you want us to discuss?

7.5.4 KII checklist for Stakeholders²⁷

1. What is child protection to you? Why do you think child protection is a concern? How does your organisation understand the causes related to migration of children? What should be done to strengthen families so that children can remain at home and school?
2. What plan do your organisation/office/ community have to address issues of child protection? Who are the major stakeholders in dealing with the problem? Do you have a child protection committee? Who are the members? How efficient is the coordination among them? What is the plan and policy direction of the committee? What is the role of NGOs in this regard? Which NGOs/FBOs are you working closely with?
3. Are you familiar with Retrak? What services are they providing to help children remain at home and school? Is their activity in accordance with your expectation? What are Retrak's strengths? In what ways is Retrak unique among NGOs working with children? What are their challenges? What should be their future direction?
4. Do you have any additional point which you want to mention?

²⁷ Women and Children's affairs office, Police, Religious and community leaders, transport coordinators, and school principals



No child forced to live on the street

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