Youth Agricultural Sales Agent (YASA) 
An E-FACE Case Study
About MEDA

Since 1953, MEDA has been designing and implementing market-driven economic development programs that improve the welfare of millions of people around the world. As a leader in financial services and market development, MEDA collaboratively creates business solutions to poverty by working in partnership with the poor and the institutions that serve them.

About E-FACE

Ethiopians Fighting Against Child Exploitation (E-FACE) is a four-year project, funded by the United States Department of Labor, and implemented in collaboration with World Vision, MEDA, and the Mission for Community Development Program (MCDP). Within this project MEDA works to improve the livelihoods of 7,000 vulnerable families and 3,250 youth. Components of this project targeting youth include: provision of training programs and business incentives to business owners and their youth employees to improve working conditions and safety for youth engaged in the traditional textile industry; facilitating access to finance through village savings associations for youth; linking youth interested in alternative livelihood creation with appropriate formal and non-formal education programming and financial services; training and engaging rural youth in income generating activities; and training vulnerable urban youth in life skills, entrepreneurship training and financial literacy.

Abstract

This report is one in a series focused on the E-FACE Project, developed towards the end of the project to assess the changes and benefits of MEDA's youth-oriented interventions in order to learn from and strengthen them for future interventions. This report explores an employment model used to dissuade exploitative child labor of rural youth, instead promoting safe and reliable work that builds skills for future employment or academic opportunities. The other case studies include:

- Youth Savings: Assessing Village Savings Associations for Youth
- Improving Occupational Health and Safety for Young Workers
- Building Skills for Life

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Introduction

Ethiopians Fighting Against Child Exploitation (E-FACE) is a four-year project funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDoL) that seeks to eliminate exploitative child labor, particularly in the Ethiopian traditional weaving industry.

Through the promotion of education for youth, livelihood development for families, and social protection for children, E-FACE addresses the root causes of child labor, which include poverty, limited education opportunities, and low household income.

MEDA’s work on E-FACE targets youth in two critical and interrelated economic sectors – the textile industry and agriculture. In agriculture, MEDA has a two-pronged approach, targeting farmers as well as youth in subsistence households. E-FACE encourages farmers to supplement their income with the addition of alternate crops which require less labor to produce higher incomes.

To provide additional support to local agricultural activities, MEDA trained 250 young people 14 to 17 years old from the Gamo Gofa and Wolaita districts in Southern Ethiopia to provide services as agricultural sales agents in their local communities. The program, referred to as Youth Agricultural Sales Agent (YASA), included providing young people with business skills training to increase their knowledge of markets, as well as life skills training to improve their confidence and communication. The technical and entrepreneurial skills provided by the training program were complemented with start-up kits to transition the youth from exploitative labor to productive work. Most of these youth, now equipped with the skills to start their own small businesses, are working as sales agents, trading in a variety of products, including some with value addition.

This report will present the YASA model, determine its impact on the youth involved and establish which aspects of the program can be replicated. It is our intention to provide information that will be useful to research and practitioner communities interested in understanding how to facilitate positive changes for youth through access to business and life skills training and decent work creation.
Youth Agricultural Sales Agents (YASA)

Youth Agricultural Sales Agent: The Model

Background

During the design of the E-FACE project, the MEDA assessment team discovered that the agro dealers, which included both wholesalers and retailers of farm inputs, generally operated within their immediate surroundings and did not venture beyond their specific areas and communities. This created a gap in access to inputs for rural farmers. Additional assessments by MEDA further exposed the tendency for input suppliers to sell in large quantities in order to maximize their profits. Small-holder farmers in the region have neither the ability to purchase in bulk from input suppliers, nor the appropriate land size to accommodate large input amounts. Another factor which limits access to inputs for farmers is the fact that the government supplies inputs for some crops, whereas the private sector provides others. The government manages inputs for main cereals and grains, while the private sector mainly operates in vegetable seeds, and other inputs.

The Youth Agricultural Sales Agent (YASA) program thus started in 2013 as a pilot approach to address the challenges faced by farmers in accessing appropriate amounts and types of agricultural inputs and information. The E-FACE team identified entrepreneurial youth and trained them on sales methods, financial literacy and small business skills to fill this gap, while providing the young people with income generating opportunities that would allow them to leave exploitative work.

Model Design

The YASA model was developed by MEDA to address gaps in agricultural value chains and to create appropriate income generating opportunities for youth in rural areas. Based on the model, the youth agricultural sales agents were to serve as go-betweens for seed companies seeking to rapidly disburse inputs to farmers in a cost-effective manner. Farmers would then be able to access inputs in small, affordable quantities and improve their productivity.

Understanding the complexities of the market and anticipating the youth sales agents’ interaction with other market actors, the E-FACE team designed the model to be flexible. The youth were provided with training on sales methods, financial literacy and small business management to increase their product and market knowledge, in addition to life skills training to improve their confidence and communication. They were also trained to identify market demands and trends, allowing them to respond to opportunities using the smallest amount of working capital. The project linked the youth to promoters, who acted as role models to guide the youth on business matters. The youth were also linked to brokers and distributors as a source for wholesale supplies. All these intermediaries were meant to mentor the youth and support them in building networks and product offerings.
A Case Study on E-FACE

The YASA program was designed around three assumptions:

**Assumption One:**
A market gap exists in providing quality inputs to many rural farming households

**Assumption Two:**
In each kebele, one intermediary would act as broker/distributor/promoter

**Assumption Three:**
Youth will be able to trade without hindrances despite their age (14-17)

**Benefits of the YASA Model**

The youth are provided with a viable path to income generation, as well as technical and entrepreneurial skills that are transferable to other trades and career paths.

The farmers receive access to smaller and more affordable input packages; direct-to-farm delivery; and a direct source to market information.

The agro dealers and brokers gain access to an expanded market and customer base.
The YASA program was conceived to pilot an innovative approach to address the challenges faced by farmers in accessing agricultural inputs and the lack of decent income generating opportunities for youth in rural areas. As the program comes to an end, it was necessary to explore the successes and challenges faced by these youth agricultural sales agents in order to learn more about the model for future programming. The total sample size for this case study included 22 youth (10 young women and 12 young men).

An initial field trip was conducted in August 2014 to collect information from successful youth agents. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with selected youth, focus group discussions with youth, and observation of the youth interacting with clients at their work locations. This first round of data collection included eleven youth (five young women and six young men) deemed to be the most successful in their entrepreneurial ventures. These youth were recommended by their promoters (community representatives who act as agents to promote and follow up on activities and the progress of the youth), based on their active involvement in their businesses as well as their overall success in increasing their income and expanding their networks. The sample size was designed to be small and to represent the most successful entrepreneurs to accurately identify trends among the top performers.

A second round of data collection took place in November 2014, expanding the criteria of participants in this study to accommodate a more random sample youth agents. An additional eleven youth participated in one-on-one interviews as well as focus group discussions (five young women and six young men).

The data collected and the methods used were largely qualitative, which allowed for an in-depth perspective from the clients and encouraged the interviewed youth to expand on successes and challenges of the program. It should be noted that translation from English to Amharic or other regional dialects, and vice versa, may have impacted the nature and depth of questioning.
Findings

Youth Profile

250 youth were trained as agricultural sales agents

They were selected based on the following criteria:

**Required**
- Youth aged 14-17 who engaged in weaving or agricultural activities
- Youth willing to travel around the kebeles (township) to solicit and sell agricultural commodities
- Youth who have received some education

**Desirable**
- Youth willing to participate in MEDA’s “Building Skills for Life” training
- Youth currently out of school
- Youth who are not a part of any other support/NGO client base

The program’s youth lived in rural communities and came from large families where they had to help supplement their household income. As a result, education was not an immediate priority for many of the youth who were often confronted with resolving more urgent needs, such as food, housing, and medicine. In fact, by the age of 14, many E-FACE youth and those from similar backgrounds shoulder some of the burden for economically supporting their family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. 14 or younger</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. 17 or older</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No, but will go back</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Agriculture</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Animal Retail</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Other (used clothes resale, show maintenance, etc.)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Local Market</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Work From Home</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Other (direct to wholesalers)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of youth interviewed confirmed that they were in school (82%) and expressed a strong desire to continue until higher education. However, concerns over their ability to attend school due to familial pressures and financial burdens were common points raised in discussions.

The primary business for the youth was agriculture-related, with 59% of them engaged in some form of vegetable and fruit-related retail. Other activities involved coffee processing, seed retailing, animal husbandry and repurposing of used materials (e.g., clothes and shoes). The majority of the youth (91%) were selling at open markets and committing on average three days per week to their business venture.
Changes to Youth Lives

The youth sales agents reported various changes and improvements in their lives related to their behaviour, business skills, and aspirations.

1. Improved Life Skills

**Behavioural changes and increased confidence**

Many of the youth noted changes in how they interacted with others in terms of their outlook on life and communication abilities. The constant interaction with adults (such as the promoters, wholesalers, trainers, etc.) led the youth to be more confident and self-aware. This was also reported by their promoters, who witnessed the transformation. Most of the youth also discussed a renewed interest in education and future opportunities, emphasizing their eagerness to invest in their businesses and to continue with higher education.

**Future aspirations**

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

This was measured through questions on participant interest in higher education and career plans. Some of the youth expressed their desire to go on to study at university (three young men and five young women), with the remaining mentioning some form of future business venture using the business skills they developed in the program.

**Knowledge transfer**

One unintended outcome of the project was the knowledge transfer by the youth sales agents to their communities. When asked about providing tips to other entrepreneurial youth, all of the youth interviewed expressed a desire to pass on the skills that they had learned in the program. At the time of the interviews, none of the youth had mentored other youth in the community; however, their eagerness to pass on their experiences and to share knowledge was present. Two of the youth did mention sharing their newfound business skills with their parents – specifically record keeping.

“Before I had no dream, but now I have a dream. Before, I had no savings or understanding about it, but now I have a savings and a dream. My dream is to be an engineer in the future. By continuing to trade poultry, I want to maximize my profits and expand my business to reach my goal.”

Fanos Kulcho, 16

**Increased resilience and ability to take care of themselves**

In terms of other impacts related to involvement in the YASA program, youth reported being able to afford personal items for their own use. This allowed for more of the household funds to be allocated to other areas such as garden expansions, home renovations, and medical bills. Youth expressed their pride in being able to afford to take care of themselves, and many noted being more confident and vocal about their wishes for the future.
Before the program, I was dependent on my family. I relied on them to purchase clothes and educational materials (exercise book, pen, pencil) but now I am proud of myself. I can buy my own clothes and materials, using my own money. I have increased my self-confidence.”

Fanos Kulcho, 16

2. Improved Income Generating Skills

Improved Marketing Skills

One of the main points raised by all the interviewed youth was their satisfaction with the business skills and life skills training that they received. One example where the youth were excelling was in their ability to analyze the market. When asked how they determined their prices, all youth interviewed exhibited an in-depth understanding of the market factors in relation to pricing. Some of the youth were basing their prices on the current market rate, while others were determining prices based on the cost to purchase a product, plus a mark-up amount. Another youth sales agent used feedback from customers to help set a regular price. Yet another youth was checking the availability of the product to determine the amount of mark-up that should be added. All youth confirmed that the analytical problem solving and negotiation techniques were skills learned through the YASA program.

When asked about record keeping, all but four young women of the interviewed youth confirmed that they kept records of their sales. Other categories that they recorded included profits, regular customers, supply costs, and market days. It was also noted that the majority of the youth who did keep written records in their notebook were currently enrolled in school, and had completed a minimum grade 6 level of education. Those who recorded this type of information recognized the importance of analyzing this data and adjusting their business based on their assessment.

Physical record keeping was not the only method used. One young woman from Shelle Mella Kebele confirmed that she did not record on paper, but memorized the information instead. When asked why she chose this method, the young woman stated that record keeping was too time-consuming but that she wanted to begin taking down the information. For the youth who did not keep records, they explained that their lack of experience in recording the appropriate information was a major obstacle and that they were not receiving help from the promoters on how and what to record in their books.

“The business skill training I received helped motivate me to engage in a business activity. Other trainings I received helped me learn to deal with customers and how to manage my time and budget.”

Youth agent

This information supported the decision to target youth with some level of education. To perform business activities and develop a successful business venture, basic arithmetic reading and writing are necessary skills. All the targeted youth, regardless of their current academic status, possessed a minimum grade four education.

Improved Financial Management Skills

All the youth sales agents are also members of Village Savings Associations for Youth (VSAY)⁴. Their involvement in the savings groups increased their awareness and understanding of financial products and services. This was particularly evident as most of the interviewed youth mentioned being linked to a microfinance institution (MFI) through their VSAY, in addition to their small weekly...
contributions for personal expenses such as hygiene products, school materials, transportation costs and snacks. In addition to their regular savings (mainly done through their VSAY-linked MFI account), some of the youth also mentioned that they held separate individual savings accounts for additional capital that they would access only for further business expansion — a recommendation from their promoters after the training.

3. Reduced Engagement in Exploitative Labor

The most obvious change in the lives of the youth was the reduction in poorly paid and/or exploitative labor. Due to their involvement in the program, the youth were no longer engaging in labor simply to supplement household income. As a result of training, the youth began to identify entrepreneurial opportunities rather than menial, often dangerous, work. The youth are seeking more ways in which to build their skills for a better future (e.g. marketing, goal setting, record keeping, etc.) and these could provide enough income for savings, business expansion investments, and educational costs.
Success Factors

Design and Flexibility of the YASA Model

When examining the different roles and businesses adopted by the youth sales agents, it became apparent that the youth participants had made adjustments to the YASA model to better suit their realities — a clear indication that the market trends and opportunity identification trainings were being applied by the youth. The majority of the youth were buying small amounts of agricultural inputs at markets in neighbouring kebeles from multiple vendors rather than a single source. The youth had adjusted their procurement process to align with a more realistic approach to their situation, such as their limited purchasing and bargaining power.

The youth were either selling back to the local markets in their areas or adding value to the goods and re-selling at a premium, such as cleaning fruits and vegetables, offering delivery services, etc. In another instance, one young man from Genta Bonke Kebele developed a partnership with other sales agents. The group combined their capital to purchase poultry in neighbouring kebeles. They would then raise and sell fattened chickens to the local markets during the holiday season for a higher price. Not only were the youth exhibiting a good understanding of purchasing power, they were also demonstrating knowledge of business partnership models and the distinction between buying and selling locations.

When asked about their main motivation for adjusting their strategies, the youth were upfront about obstacles that were challenging their ability to operate. The most cited challenge was their age. Other obstacles included inexperience in the industry, lack of purchasing power, and challenges in linking with agro dealers.

One challenge observed by E-FACE staff that the youth did not identify was the lack of technical support from promoters. The youth reported that support from the promoters generally came in the form of savings training rather than support with linkages to markets or the technical know-how needed to compete as agricultural sales agents. This resulted in motivating the youth to work with a broader market instead of focusing solely on inputs for farmers. This key adjustment to the model proves that the youth understand the concept of market segmentation and long-term sustainability of business ventures.

Relevancy of Trainings to Address Life and Business Skills

Youth sales agents received a five-day business and life skills training program based on MEDA’s Building Skills for Life methodology. In addition, they participated in a vendor networking event which linked the youth to established agricultural vendors. The goal of the training and networking event was to boost the confidence of the youth by: increasing their product knowledge; training them on how to interact with customers and suppliers; and creating business opportunities with established input suppliers.

When asked about the training and preparation received, all interviewed youth confirmed that the business and life skills training prepared them well to become successful sales agents. The training component most referenced and appreciated by the youth was the financial literacy/savings (mentioned by 50% of those interviewed), while customer service and access to markets were also cited as useful.
Establishing a Supportive Environment

1. **Intermediaries**
Intermediaries included promoters, brokers and distributors. In the initial design of the YASA model, the promoter was positioned to act as an intermediary between the agro dealers / input suppliers and the youth. The promoters, who are community representatives that act as agents to promote and follow up on activities, were also intended to serve as suppliers and / or mentors to the youth sales agents. When asked about the involvement and support of promoters, all but one of the youth confirmed that they were receiving regular support from the promoters; however, the type of support varied. Only four of the interviewed youth stated that their promoters helped them locate inputs and input suppliers and advised on business-related or technical issues. The majority of the youth explained that the main support from their promoters was focused on saving, both in terms of monitoring their saving and promoting better saving habits.

2. **Suppliers**
Suppliers included input suppliers such as agro dealers, seed growers and others. Based on their original position in the YASA model, the suppliers' role was to work with the promoters, who would supply the youth with products that they would sell directly to farmers. However, adjustments to the model removed the intermediary role, allowing the youth to work directly with the suppliers. Youth feedback was varied on the role of suppliers and the type of benefits they provided to the youth. Some examples of positive support received by the youth from their input suppliers included:

- **Training** – this involved product knowledge discussion, quality identification, customer retention techniques, etc.
- **Credit** – this involved allowing youth to purchase in bulk on credit, longer repayment options, etc.

A few of the youth mentioned that no support was received from their suppliers and that the interaction was more of a traditional business relationship.

3. **External Support Systems**
The youth sales agents who received no support from their input suppliers and minimal support from their promoters were asked about other external support systems that they accessed outside of the YASA program. These youth relied heavily on family connections, such as parents or siblings already in the trade, or community ties, such as neighbors engaging in similar activities. The youth who were making use of these external connections were the ones successfully locating input suppliers when seeking to expand their product offering or switching the services they offered. Although not assessed in this case study, government support for the youth also exists; however the extent of this support is unclear and was not referenced by the interviewed youth.
Conclusion & Recommendations

There is strong evidence that the YASA program, and the wider E-FACE youth component, is having a positive impact on youth in the intervention areas and creating an environment for change. Research for this case study and other ongoing project monitoring activities identified several areas where the model can be focused and enhanced for future replication:

Commit to Additional Training for Promoters

The promoters should receive additional business skills and development training in order to effectively support the youth. During interviews, it was noted that some youth were not keeping records because they lacked the knowledge on what to record and how this information should be captured. Promoters could have better supported the youth sales agents with further capacity development. To support promoters more effectively, it would be valuable to provide additional ‘training of trainers’ sessions or have the newer promoters ‘shadow’ more experienced promoters.

Incorporate a Mentorship Component for the Youth

Almost all the youth interviewed confirmed a willingness to advise other youth on the tips and tricks of business start-up. Furthermore, the best training resource for any activity is someone who has already been through the activity. A mentorship program between the first cohort of youth, or ‘champion sales agents’ and struggling second cohort youth could provide valuable support. The youth agents struggling in the program could then use their mentors as an additional support system on issues such as locating input suppliers, retaining customers, recordkeeping, and other relevant topics. In addition, acting as a mentor can build confidence and leadership skills.

Promote Business Partnerships among Youth

Since most of the youth are operating their businesses in open markets, encouraging business partnerships with other interested youth could reduce the risk of failure by allowing them to share expertise, knowledge, and resources. Furthermore, partnerships would help boost their confidence when interacting with suppliers and clients; increase their purchasing power; and lighten the burden of promoters, who could visit groups of partners instead of individual youth.
Model Flexibility to Address Local Realities

Most of the youth operated their businesses in markets rather than the agent-to-farmer model originally developed for the YASA program. This occurred as a result of the cultural and social realities faced by youth (i.e., lack of confidence, difficulty locating vendors, and unwillingness of brokers to work with youth). Those seeking to implement a similar program should approach the sales agent model as a guideline. Flexibility is key to developing a successful model that will allow for modifications.

The YASA program has succeeded in its overall objective, which was to divert vulnerable youth from exploitative activities and provide them with decent income generating opportunities. The youth previously engaged in hazardous work, such as day laboring and charcoal production, are now involved in entrepreneurial ventures that have enhanced their skills, developed their confidence and created safe and reliable income generating activities. Though the model was adapted from its original conception, many pieces contributed to the success of youth in their ventures. Future iterations can build on these successes, and as described above, incorporate additional support mechanisms and opportunities for youth leadership.
Improved Business Skills: Chuchu Beyene

One of E-FACE’s youth interventions in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR) targets youth engaged in or at risk of child labor through the Building Skills for Life program. This is a training program that encourages youth to understand themselves, develop decision-making capacity, improve communication skills, and develop business skills. After undertaking the training program, they are equipped with skills, knowledge and start-up kits (scale, bag, calculator etc.) to expand existing businesses or start up new ones as youth sales agents. The youth are also organized into Village Saving Association for Youth groups to practice financial management, sound decision making, good leadership, and effective communication. Chuchu Beyene is one of youth sales agents who participated in the Building Skills for Life program.

My name is Chuchu Beyene and I am from Shochora Fisco Kebele in Humbo Woreda. I am 16 years old and currently in grade 10. My mother and father are daily laborers with seven children to provide for. Our household income was insufficient to feed and send us all to school. I was struggling to attend school before the project.

For my business I started first selling fruits such as bananas, which depended on seasonality. I then expanded to buying and selling maize and coffee beans. I buy the maize and coffee beans in bulk from the local market and then sell them in smaller quantities in the local market. I set up a place on the ground and display my goods. My daily profit averages between ETB 20-30 (USD 1.00-1.50) and my average weekly profit is ETB 50-80 (USD 2.50-4.00). I am involved with my business up to three days a week and travel up to five kilometers by foot to buy my goods at the best prices.

Through the training I received, I learned how to manage my money and the importance of saving. This kind of discipline has been beneficial for my business and my overall financial situation. Before participating in the training program I had no knowledge about saving money and was dependent on my family. Now that I am earning my own income, I can pay for my own expenses. I no longer rely on my family to pay for clothes or other personal needs. I can fulfill my own priorities by myself, which I am proud of. When my family needs assistance, I can help with expenses and sometimes provide short-term loans for my family.

Before the project, I did not have my own business and had no knowledge or skills in business management. Training was crucial for me because I learned about selling and buying mechanisms and customer handling. These topics are very important and practical to run a good business. My future plan is to own a large wholesale warehouse. I also want to eventually attend university.
A Journey to Realizing Entrepreneurial Dreams: Afework Milku

Afework Milku is only 16 years old, but he already has major responsibilities. When he was just 14, both his mother and father passed away. As the oldest boy living at home, he took on the role of sole provider for his younger brothers. Forced to leave school and support his family, Afework learned quickly how to use his skills to make enough income to provide for his family. However, it wasn’t until joining the E-FACE project that Afework was able to develop his entrepreneurial skills into legitimate income-generating activities.

One year ago I was introduced to the E-FACE project. I joined under the Youth Sales Agent program and received technical and entrepreneurial skills training. When the training ended, I decided to invest the travel and accommodation money provided by E-FACE into a poultry trade business. Using the business skills and customer management lessons, I began selling poultry at the weekly town markets. With my neighbors’ and brothers’ support, I found poultry suppliers in surrounding kebeles and I began making USD 4.00-5.00 a week. I also kept records of my purchases, customers, and profits, which helped me to determine the prices I charged for my products and reasonable rates for purchasing my supplies.

With the new skills I had acquired from the program, I also began to apply some of the marketing techniques to my own potato production. After beginning the poultry trade, I saved some of my earnings and built my capital. I then located input suppliers using the market access training. Recently, I harvested my potatoes and sold them to a vegetable wholesaler for USD 200.00. I have decided to save USD 50.00 and will use the remaining money to purchase an ox.

I am extremely happy with my businesses and I have big plans for the future. I want to save as much as possible and open a taxi business. At the moment, I have saved USD 60.00 and I plan to continue saving until I can purchase a motorbike for my taxi business. I am confident that I can do this and will use the training I received in the E-FACE project to guide me along the way. Now that I no longer have to worry about supporting my family, I can focus on my business ideas.

My name is Afework Milku and I live in southern Ethiopia with my two younger brothers. About two years ago, both my parents passed away and I was left to care for my brothers. Although I do have an older brother, he had his own family to support. It was at that time I decided I had to make my brothers’ needs my priority. For one year I engaged in petty trade and other small activities, making around USD 2.00 per week. I also produced potatoes for personal use on the land my parents used to farm. This was barely enough to cover my needs, much less those of my two brothers, and I was sometimes forced to ask my brother for help.
Annex II

Interview Participants

**Gamo Gofa Zone**
- Tamirat Mesele (M) Genta Bonke Kebele (Poultry trade)
- Gamale Gaje (M) Genta Bonke Kebele (Used shoe trade)
- Temesgen Zekarias (M) Shelle Mella Kebele (Shoe maintenance)
- Mihret Wazima (F) Genta Bonke Kebele (Vegetable retailer)
- Dandaye Dama (F) Shelle Mella Kebele (Banana trade)

**Wolaita Zone**
- Abebe Bedeke (M) Humbo Woreda Schochora Fisho Kebele (Livestock trader)
- Afework Mohammed (M) Humbo Woreda Abala Faracho Kebele (Shoe maker)
- Tesfaye Milku (M) Sodo Zuria Woreda Delbo Wogane Kebele (Poultry trader and vegetable producer)
- Fanos Kulcho (M) Humbo Woreda, Shochora Fisho (Poultry)
- Getachew Mekele (M) Humbo Woreda, Shochora Fisho (Livestock trader)
- Abreham Basa (M) Humbo Woreda, Damot Gale (Used clothes reseller)
- Ashenafi Dana (M) Humbo Woreda, Damot Gale (Sugar cane retailer)
- Mamush Timotiyos (M) Humbo Woreda, Damot Gale (Cereal and seed retailer)
- Mesay Sata (M) Humbo Woreda, Damot Gale (Poultry and livestock trader)
- Addisalem Yeakob (F) Sodo Zuria Woreda Kokate (Vegetable retail)
- Etalem Altaye (F) Sodo Zuria Woreda Kokate (Onion retailer)
- Selamawit Belete (F) Damot Gale Bale Koisha (Cereal)
- Chuchu Beyene (F) Humbo Woreda, Shochora Fisho (Fruit and coffee retailer)
- Birtukwa Dada (F) Humbo Woreda, Shochora Fisho (Spice retailer)
- Zinabwa Arba (F) Humbo Woreda, Shochora Fisho (Coffee retailer)
- Aynalem Adole (F) Humbo Woreda, Damot Gale (Butter maker)
- Mimi Feleha (F) Humbo Woreda, Damot Gale (Coffee retailer)
# Youth Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woreda/Kebele</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Saved to Date</td>
<td>ETB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Occupation</td>
<td>Father: /Mother:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Siblings Living With</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Products, Sales, Customers

1. What products are you selling? What is the approximate proportion of sales in each category (% agriculture inputs vs household goods, etc.)?

2. How did you decide what you wanted to sell?

3. Have you added products based on what you heard from your customers? If so, what were those?

4. Where do you sell? Describe the overall area that you cover.

5. Are you traveling around or within the village?

6. Are you competing with other youth agents or other people selling the same products to the same customers?

7. Do you keep track of your sales? If so, how? Do you track customers, products sold, prices sold for, etc.?

8. How do you establish your prices? Is it based on cost and markup percentage? Or recommended prices from your suppliers? Or based on what you believe the market prices are?

9. Which of the products that you sell are the most profitable to you?

10. Are there other products that you want to sell that you haven’t been able to source yet? If so – what are they?
11. After you paid for your purchases, how much did you earn last week? Are you happy with that or what do you need to do to increase this to a point that you are satisfied with?

### Sources

12. Where are you buying what you are selling? Single or multiple sources?

13. Have these sources been supportive of training you on their products?

14. How do you purchase? Do you have to pay when you buy, or do they let you pay later after you have sold?

15. Are you selling items that you are not carrying with you, such as showing pictures or brochures of products and taking orders?)?

### Your Business

16. Are you actively working in this business? How many days of the week do you attend to this business?

17. What hours do you work each day?

18. Are you also doing other work, or involved in other regular income generating activities, in addition to your sales agent work?

19. Are you pleased with how your business is working?

20. Are you planning to change your products or territory that you work in?

### Your support and preparation

21. Did your sales agent training (Building Skills for Life) help equip you to be a successful sales agent?

22. What was most helpful?

23. What areas do you still think you need more help with?

24. Are you working with a promoter to help you?

25. How does that work? Do they provide you with inputs, or just direct you to sources?

26. If you were advising other youth to be successful as a sales agents, what would you recommend to them?
Acknowledgments

This report would not have been possible without the expertise, hard work and dedication of the MEDA E-FACE team, who implemented innovative programming and piloted new approaches in youth programming. We specifically would like to appreciate the efforts of the E-FACE team in Addis Ababa and Arba Minch, namely Meron Kidane, Ephrem Tadesse, and Ephrem Kelemwork.

We would also like to acknowledge the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), who has funded this initiative, and World Vision Ethiopia and the Mission for Community Development Program (MCDP) for partnering with MEDA on this project.

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End Notes

1. For information on all the E-EFACE case studies, refer to the following link: http://www.meda.org/media-eface/publications-eface

2. Kebele: The smallest administrative unit of Ethiopia, similar to a ward or neighbourhood. To be considered a kebele, there must be at least five hundred families (equivalent to 3,500 to 4,000 persons). "Kebele." Definition of “kebele”. Collins Dictionary, n.d. Web.

3. For more information on this program, refer to E-FACE Case Study on Building Skills for Life, at http://www.meda.org/media-eface/publications-eface

4. A community-based saving group composed of 10-20 working youth between the ages of 14 -17. The group members save small amounts out of their earning during weekly meetings. Please see Youth Savings report for more information on the VSAYs.

5. The prevailing current average exchange rate of ETB 20 for USD 1 was used for this report.
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