Program for Emergency Seed Support

Final Program Results Report

Submitted to: USAID/DCHA/OFDA Washington, D.C.

Organization: Food for the Hungry, Inc.	**Date:** May 7, 2021
Headquarters: Anthony Koomson Sr. Director, Public Resource Development 1001 Connecticut Ave, Suite 1115 Washington, DC 20036 aekoomson@fh.org	**Ethiopia:** Trisha Okenge Country Director Bole Sub City, Woreda 02, House Number 5268, Opposite to Bole Airport Leadership School, adjacent to Skylight Hotel +251-904 031048 or +251-116-167092 tokenge@fh.org
Program Title: Program for Emergency Seed Support **Grant No:** Agreement 720FDA20GR00095 **Country/region:** Ethiopia/Amhara Region **Reporting period:** June 8, 2020 – February 7, 2021 **Total No of beneficiaries:** 144,069 Individuals (28,743 HHs)	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Program for Emergency Seed Support (PESS) is a USAID/BHA-funded seed security activity responding to the 2020 crop failure resulting from the 2019 drought in Wag Himra Zone, Amhara Region. PESS's objective was to improve access and availability of improved seeds for smallholder farmers who could not afford seeds for the 2020 cropping season due to crop failure. Despite political instability and procurement challenges, 144,069 farmers received assistance over the course of the project with food self-sufficiency increasing to 6.3 months from a baseline of five months.

Seed procurement, transportation and distribution were the major activities of this project. 5,006.50 quintals of wheat and 2,758.70 quintals of teff seeds were procured and distributed to 28,743 households (HHs) (20.4% Female Headed HHs) (99.99% of targeted beneficiaries) to address the crop failure. In total, 14,372.47 hectares of land were covered by the two distributed crop seeds. The expected yield from this area of land was 206,108.82 quintals with an average productivity of 14.34 quintals per hectare; however, according to the end line evaluation, 356,521 quintals of yield was obtained. This achievement is 237% of the baseline value of 150,440 quintals from the 2019 cropping season.

In October and November, 569 (170 females) Kebele Early Warning and Food Security Task Force Members were trained on community managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR). In addition to this, the after action review meeting and internalization workshops were conducted in October and November 2020. In this workshop and review meeting 219 (9 females) people participated (detailed further below). Finally, the end line evaluation was conducted by Karamara Consulting service from January 1 to January 10, 2021.

1.SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

Desert Locust

According to the Wag Himra Zone Disaster Risk Reduction Office, swarms of desert locusts first infested crops in all districts of the zone in November 2019. At that time, it was understood that, through the concerted efforts of both community and government, the swarms were controlled. However, desert locust eggs hatched in Sehala and Abergele woreda during the inception of the project. An estimated three hectares of maize and sorghum fields at the early vegetative stage were infested by the swarms in Sehala Woreda but there was no crop damage reported. It was noted that the local government utilized chemical sprays to control the invasion of the locusts and the communities killed the swarm in the first instar stage before they developed into the adult stage. In October 2020 swarms of locusts appeared in Tsagbiji woreda, but the locusts were controlled mechanically by farmers using local materials to kill the swarms of the locusts. Generally, it was concluded that there was no crop damage despite the appearance of swarms. The Office of Agriculture and FH's PESS team closely monitored the fields to prevent large scale damage.

COVID-19

According to a report from the Wag Himra Zone Early Warning and Health Office 4,434 COVID-19 tests had been conducted in all of the woredas of the zone as of October 2020. Of those tested,

165 people were positive for the virus and 163 people have since recovered. Since October 2020, there have not been accurate numbers as the Wag Himra zone stopped testing due to a shortage of kits.

During project implementation, the Government of Ethiopia undertook sensitization activities in the communities to combat the pandemic. FH also worked with the government to combat the pandemic in its TRAIN and JEOP operational woredas (Sehala, Abergele and Ziquala) through the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE). Furthermore, with USAID funding, infection prevention supplies such as sanitizers, gloves, hand-washing jerrycans, and social and behavior change (SBC) materials were provided in addition to the establishment of hand washing facilities. In its programming, FH enforced social distancing, mask wearing, and strict sanitation practices. FH also developed a standard operating procedure to protect staff and beneficiaries from COVID-19 impacts in its operation areas. The prevalence of COVID-19 in FH Addis Office has impacted monitoring and technical backstopping to project staff at project areas. Some staff like Agriculture and Food Security Specialist and Emergency Seed Coordinator were forced to isolate themselves for about two weeks because of contact with a staff member who had COVID-19 in Abergele. The various training like CMDRR and the after action review meetings that could have been conducted at once required additional sessions in different places to ensure that social distancing was maintained. The impact of COVID-19 it exerted pressure on timely execution of project activities.

Security

Following the conflict between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) in the Tigray region, many people were internally displaced. Currently the Emergency Coordination Center of Tigray region has declared that there are over 2,000,000 IDPs in Shire, Mekelle, Axum and Adwa Cities. The conflict forced FH to suspend its operation in Abergele woreda due to its location on the border of Tigray. As of the writing of this report, the security situation is generally stable except for some tension in Tigray border areas, such as Chila and Tsana, where remnants of TPLF forces are fighting using hit and run tactics. Activities in project areas resumed upon the recommendation of the regional officials who participated in the PESS evaluation workshop on December 13, 2020. The PESS final evaluation was safely undertaken because of improvements in the security of the project area. To help ensure staff safety, FH trained Project Managers, Project Administrators, Finance Coordinators, and the PESS team on FH security policies and procedures.

General Food Security Situation

The Wag Himra Zone is known for erratic rainfall, recurrent drought, fragmented landholdings, and severe environmental degradation that constrains agricultural production. Food shortages and malnutrition have long been defining characteristics of the Wag Himra Zone, even during a relatively good cropping season. The 2019/20 situation was different as El Niño resulted in the delayed onset of rain and insufficient moisture that brought a severe drought in all eight woredas. Erratic rainfall distribution was observed during planting, and rains stopped earlier than usual at the flowering stages. This resulted in crop failure, with significant reduction of crop yield. Because of this, over 39,000 smallholder farmers could not afford seeds for the 2020 cropping season. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) forecast confirmed that these areas were mostly classified as Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Out of the total 556,305

population of Wag Himra Zone, there were 106,198 transitory food insecure beneficiaries targeted by JEOP and 151,875 chronically food insecure beneficiaries targeted by Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) in the DFSAs, implemented by FH and World Vision Ethiopia. This indicates that 46.4% of the total population were dependent on external food assistance to cover their food requirements.

The FEWSNET March 2021 forecast revealed that the project areas were found in crisis (IPC Phase 3) from March to May 2021. This is due to many poor HHs having little to no food stocks and being reliant upon the market with below-average purchasing power. The poor start of the belg season is leading to continued low agricultural labor opportunities. Moreover, sporadic conflict in Oromia, Amhara, and a few other areas of the country has also contributed to the decline in labor income in areas affected by conflict.[1] FEWSNET April 2021 report shows that Wag Himra zone is classified as IPC 3-crisis and this situation will continue until September 2021. It seems that the forecast held true as far as the food gap is concerned.[2]

2.ASSESSMENTS

2.1 Baseline Data Collection

Per USAID's requirements, and to confirm rapid assessment data, a baseline survey was conducted in all of the woredas where PESS activities were undertaken.

The baseline employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection tools, including:

- HH Interviews;
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs);
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); and
- Secondary data review

HH interviews were carried out in all eight woredas. Of the total 28,746 HHs directly benefiting from PESS, 400 HH heads (323 males and 77 females) were selected from accessible kebeles for the interviews using random sampling techniques. Thirty trained enumerators, with the use of the Open Data Kit (ODK) application, collected data using mobile phones from September 3 to September 9, 2020. The enumerators were trained before deployment and had conducted a pre-testing exercise before they were deployed to the field. The training was done by the M&E Manager using their telephones. The Emergency Seed Coordinators were also in the field to support and supervise the enumerators.

Semi-structured checklists were employed to guide KIIs with selected members of the Kebele Food Security Task Force. In total, 35 Food Security Task Force members (24 males and 11 females) participated in the KIIs. The KIIs were held at the woreda level with six crop production and one early warning expert. Multiple FGDs were also conducted with the two groups of beneficiaries (men and women). The FGDs were guided by brief checklists designed to evoke

[1] FEWSNET East Africa Ethiopia, March 2021

[2] FEWSNET April 2021 March to May 2021

relevant discussions. Discussions were conducted in a COVID-19 sensitive manner: participants had PPE and maintained physical distance.

A total of 16 FGDs (2 in each woreda) were conducted in the eight woredas. A total of 121 people (60 men and 61 women) from eight woredas participated in the FGDs.

Primary data was augmented by secondary data. Documents such as the 2019 Meher (main planting season) and Belg food security situation assessment reports, crop production reports from respective woreda agricultural offices and crop production progress reports were reviewed. The information on the 2020 cropping season yield was obtained from the desk review of the data from the Zone Department of Agriculture.

The result of the baseline survey indicated that beneficiaries experienced an average of five months of HH food self-sufficiency as a result of the seed system security programming (Result Indicator 1). Through PESS interventions, FH planned to increase this to seven months by providing improved wheat and teff seeds to the beneficiaries. This data was to be corroborated by the HH survey that would be conducted during the final evaluation. The baseline survey data also showed that the number of people directly benefiting from seed systems (Result Indicator 2) was zero. Through its interventions, FH planned to reach 144,069 people and use the project numbers to verify the final number. The baseline data showed that the percentage of HHs with access to sufficient seeds to plant (Result Indicator 3) was 0 and PESS planned to donate enough seed to plant half hectare of land to all beneficiaries targeted for the seed support program. The fulfilment of the planned result was checked through the HH survey conducted during the final performance evaluation. The data from the desk review and HH survey was used as a source of information to support the achievement of the Custom Indicator 4, increased production of major agricultural crops from seeds distributed to target HHs by 37% from the baseline as a result of the project.

Table 1: Result Indicator Baseline Data and Target

	Indicator	**Baseline**	**Source of Information**	**Target**
Sub-sector: Seed System Security				
Indicator 1	Number of months of HH food self-sufficiency as a result of seed system security programming	5	HH survey	7
Indicator 2	Number of people directly benefiting from seed systems/agricultural input activities (measured in terms of sex and age)	0	Project records (Master Beneficiary List)	Male: 74,211 Female: 69,858 Total:144,069
Indicator 3	Percentage of HHs with access to sufficient seed to plant	0%	HH survey	100%

Indicator 4 –custom	Increased production of major agricultural crops from seeds distributed to target HHs by 37% from the baseline as a result of the project	150,440 QT	Post-harvest assessment result of Wag Himra Zone for 2019 cropping season	206,108.82 QT

Source: Baseline data report, Food for the Hungry (FH), October 2020

2.2 End line evaluation

A final evaluation was conducted in January 2021 to assess the performance of the project against the result indicators confirmed during the baseline survey. To conduct this final evaluation, a scope of work (SOW) was submitted and reviewed by the BHA Washington Office in December. Following their feedback, a terms of reference (ToR) was prepared to identify a technically competent consultant. In December 2020, a consulting firm named Karamara Consultancy firm was awarded the contract to conduct the evaluation. The final evaluation was performed from January 1, 2021 to January 10, 2021.

2.2.1 Purpose of the end line evaluation

This final evaluation was conducted with the objective of determining the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of PESS interventions and the progress made towards achieving the planned activities that have been implemented since June 2020 in eight woredas of Wag Himra Zone, Amhara region.

2.2.2 Specific objectives of the evaluation

- To provide an independent assessment of progress achieved during the implementation of PESS and to identify key factors that negatively or positively affected the project performance.
- To identify lessons learnt, record best practices, and to identify challenges encountered during implementation.
- To provide insights on the extent to which outcomes were achieved with the PESS.
- To provide evidence on synergy in partnership, sustainability and cross cutting issues including impacts achieved.

2.2.1 Evaluation tools

- HH/Beneficiary survey;
- KIIs;
- FGDs;
- Secondary Data Review

The HH beneficiary survey was conducted to measure the progress against the indicators. The survey included the post distribution monitoring (PDM) questions to collect beneficiary feedback on the quality, sufficiency, utilization and effectiveness of the seed support provided by PESS. The total number of beneficiaries who participated in the HH survey was determined by sample size formula. Based on the sample size calculation, the number of beneficiaries for the survey was 288 (221 men and 67 women) from the five woredas of the project areas. Abergele and Tsagbiji were excluded from the survey because of security problems and Sehala was excluded due to accessibility issues. Twenty-four enumerators were employed and trained before being deployed

to all survey areas. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered using ODK at each HH by the enumerators.

Ten KIIs were conducted with crop and early warning experts from woreda agriculture offices, development agents at kebele agriculture offices, PESS staff at project site and at the FH Country Office. The KIIs were undertaken in four of the eight Woredas. Eight FGDs were also conducted with separate groups of men and women at the four woredas. It was not possible to conduct FGDs in Ziquala due to the distance of the kebeles from the main road. Seven case stories were also collected in Dehana, Gazgibla, Sekota Zuria woreda. Originally, it was planned to conduct a total of eight case studies from four woredas. The woredas were selected based on productivity (two of the woredas (Sekota Zuriya and Dehana)) were categorized as having performed well, whereas the other two (Gaz Gibla and Ziquala) were considered as poorer performing woredas). Due to the lack of accessibility of Ziquala targeted kebeles during the baseline period, it was not possible to conduct case studies in Ziquala. Additionally, the participants of the case studies were selected based on their performance and sex (50% of the case study participants were supposed to be female). To supplement the primary information collected, secondary data of the crop yield was obtained formally from the 2020 crop assessment conducted by the Zone Department of Agriculture.

3. GENERAL PROJECT ACTIVITIES

3.1 PROGRAM INCEPTION AND PLANNING:

The appeal for seed support for farmers who experienced crop loss due to shortage of rain from the Amhara region was formally communicated to FH in February 2020. Following the appeal, a rapid needs assessment (RNA) was conducted to assess the situation for possible action. The needs assessment revealed the fact that 39,078 HHs were affected by the shortage of rain and they had no alternative source of seed for the coming cropping season. Out of this total number, FH targeted 28,746 vulnerable HHs or 143,730 people in all the eight woredas of Wag Himra Zone. The planning of activities including the selection of seeds suitable for the area were done in collaboration with Zonal and woreda agricultural offices. The project agreement document was signed by FH, the Regional Bureau of Agriculture, Bureau of Disaster Risk Reduction and Food Security and Bureau of Finance and Cooperation.

3.2 IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

PESS was implemented from June 8, 2020 to February 7, 2021. During the reporting period various activities were implemented to ensure the achievement of the program results targeted at the outset. A summary of the implemented activities are below.

1. Recruitment and deployment of 35 seed distributors and four professional staff (one Agriculture and Food Security Specialist and three Seed Coordinators).
2. Signature of PESS Appraisal and Agreement among FH and Amhara Regional Signatory Bureaus (Agriculture, Finance & Economic Cooperation, and Disaster Prevention & Food Security Program).
3. The FH technical team was deployed to the field and held discussions with Zonal and Woreda stakeholders to ensure the intended crop seeds were purchased, transported, distributed and planted in a timely fashion.

4. Certified seeds were purchased from reputable registered Seed Enterprises in Amhara Regional State. During seed purchase, the Agriculture Specialists from the Offices of Agriculture were engaged to ensure the seed lots were of good quality and suitable.
5. FH collected pro-forma invoices to identify eligible suppliers with the best price quote. The selected transporters were awarded contracts and transported the seeds from the sources (Bahir Dar and Debre Birhan) to all eight woredas of Wag Himra Zone distribution points.
6. During the first semiannual project period, 5,006.5 qt of wheat and 2,758.7 qt of Teff (7,765.2 Quintals total) seeds were transported and distributed to farmers in eight districts. Planting of wheat and teff was undertaken from July 4 to July 19, 2020 and from July 18 to August 2, 2020 respectively.
7. In general, 28,743 (99.9% of the target) HHs (Male headed HHs=22,882, Female Headed HHs=5,861) received seeds that were sown accordingly. 20.4% of those who received seeds were female headed HHs.
8. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19, end users received an orientation on preventive methods. Farmers washed their hands at the gate of each seed distribution point and maintained social distancing. FH and government staff wore protective face masks during distribution.
9. A field monitoring visit covering seven woredas out of the eight targets was carried out by FH's PESS Agriculture and Food Security Specialist from July 27 to August 11, 2020. This time was chosen for monitoring to observe the performance of wheat at its growth stage, monitor the distribution teff and address challenges encountered. The following is a brief summary of the visit based on findings from field observation and discussion with farmers, leaders, experts and development agents from Agricultural Offices at zonal and district level.

    - The two improved seeds were very relevant and increased food security.
    - Stakeholders applauded the seed support and appreciated the generosity of USAID. A certificate of appreciation to USAID/OFDA and FH was issued by the Zone Department of Agriculture and a District Office of Agriculture to acknowledge the support.
    - In some Kebeles, community members were involved either in beneficiary selection or in endorsing the selection done by the Kebele task force.
    - Farmers were highly encouraged to plant wheat in rows and to apply fertilizer for the improved seeds.
    - There were some targeting errors as seeds were given to some ineligible beneficiaries.

Table 3: Comparison of Improved Seed Purchase Plan vs. Accomplishment

Name of Crop Seed	Unit	Original Plan	Actually Procured	Reason for Variances
Sorghum	Quintals	4,61.84	0	The required variety was out of stock. Their limited supply had been sold to others by the time the PESS PAL was received.
Wheat	Quintals	6,450	5,006.5	Social unrest in Oromia (due to the assassination of a renowned artist) hampered the purchase and transportation of 1441.5 quintals seed wheat seed from the seed source identified in Oromia
Teff	Quintals	1,796.63	2,758.7	Increased quantity to substitute the sorghum and wheat shortfall
Total		**8,708.47**	**7,765.2**	

Table 4: Amount of seed provided, number of HHs and beneficiaries by Woreda

S/N	District	Seed Distributed		Total beneficiary (HHs)			Family Members		
		Wheat(Qt)	Teff (Qt)	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Sekota Town	375	62.5	789	211	1000	3300	2903	6203
2	Tsagbiji	1144.5	221.5	2387	909	3296	8523	7212	15735
3	Gazgibila	900	300.2	3241	360	3601	9005	7916	16921
4	Abergele	Not planned	437.5	3139	361	3500	9654	8295	17929
5	Ziquala	Not planned	500	3538	462	4000	10157	9878	20035
6	Sehila	Not planned	505.75	2850	1196	4046	10854	10329	21183
7	Sekota Zuria	1012.5	468.75	3939	1161	5100	13605	13703	27308
8	Dahana	1575	262.5	2999	1201	4200	9133	9622	18755
	Total	**5,007**	**2,758.7**	**22,882**	**5,861**	**28,743**	**74,211**	**69,858**	**144,069**

Table 5: Area of land Covered by the Two Seed Types

	Woreda	Area of land covered (Hectares)		
		Wheat	Teff	Total
1	Sekota Town	250	250	500
2	Tsagbiji	763	886	1,649
3	Gazgibla	600	1,201	1,801
4	Abergele	0	1,750	1,750
5	Ziquala	0	2,000	2,000
6	Sahila	0	2,023	2,023
7	Sekota Zuria	675	1,875	2,550
8	Dehana	1,050	1,050	2,100
	TOTAL	**3,337**	**11,034**	**14,372**

Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction Training (CMDRR)

To complement and enhance the food security focus of PESS, CMDRR training was planned for 497 early warning task force members in the 83 target kebeles. The trainers were from Zone

Disaster Risk Reduction and Food Security Department, FHE, Abergele Project Manager and PESS Emergency Seed Coordinators at Abergele and Ziquala. The Early Warning Task Force was composed of Kebele leaders, development agents, health extension workers, community elders, religious leaders, and youth and women representatives. The objective was to improve the capacity of local government staff and community members in disaster risk management. and enhance community participation during the planning and implementation of DRR activities. The training helped to create a strong communication channel to exchange information regarding disasters and help communities to identify and prioritize the most important hazards.

Table 6. Number of training participants

	Woreda	Number of trainees	Sex disaggregated	
			Male	Female
	Abergele	62	46	16
	Dehana	70	50	20
	Sekota Zuria	70	50	20
	Sehala	85	51	34
	Ziquala	63	44	19
	Sekota Town	28	16	12
	Gazgibla	147	108	99
	Tsagbiji	44	34	10
	Total	569	399	170

The training was conducted in eight woredas reaching 569 Early Warning Task Force Members. The resource persons who trained the beneficiaries were from Wag Himra Zone Department of Agriculture and FHE Abergele Project Managers and PESS emergency seed coordinators

Training Methodologies

PowerPoints were used to expound upon the nature of hazards and ways to build resilience after disaster events. The participants then worked in groups to identify hazards and prepare a plan for their respective kebele. To complete the training, they presented on their preparedness plan. The presentations revealed that the most incessant hazards are drought, animal diseases and flood. Through this training, participants planned activities such as strengthening the watershed management approach, planting trees using physical and biological soil and water conservation structures, planting early maturing and drought resistant crop varieties as disaster risk reduction actions. Moreover, strengthening the modern livestock husbandry practices and veterinary service was among the proposed plans to combat the animals related hazards. {participants said the training helped them to build their capacity to identify and prioritize hazards.


Figures 1 & 2: CMDRR training at Abergele Woreda

Figure 3: CMDRR training at Dehana Woreda

Figure 4: Group work on Action plan


Figures 5 & 6: Training participants at Sekota Zuria Woreda

Figure 7: CMDRR training at Ziquala Woreda

After Action Review Meeting and Internalization Workshop

The After Action Review meeting and Internalization Workshop was conducted with participants from the Woreda Agriculture Office, early warning team and beneficiary representatives from target kebeles. FH Abergele Project Manager and PESS Emergency Seed Coordinators at Abergele

and Ziquala facilitated the review meeting and the workshop. The objectives were to evaluate performance and internalize the project design and implementation plan.

Table 7: Number of participants

	Woreda	Number of participants	Sex disaggregated	
			Male	Female
1	Abergele	24	21	3
2	Dehana	29	29	0
3	Sekota Zuria	28	28	0
4	Gazgibla	48	46	2
5	Sekota Town	15	14	1
6	Tsagbiji	21	21	0
7	Ziquala	22	20	2
8	Sehala	32	31	1
	Total	219	210	9

In total, 219 participants (9 women) from all woredas attended the review meeting and the internalization workshop. During the workshop, the summary of the PESS project and the details of activities were highlighted to the participants. Following the presentations by the facilitators the floor was opened for group discussions including reflections and questions from the participants.

Reflections from the participants

- The teff seed was relevant and suitable for the agro-ecology of the woreda (note that wheat seed was not provided to farmers were the woreda does not grow wheat)
- Better yield of teff was expected as compared to the local varieties
- The project supported a significant number of vulnerable HH heads
- The short time given for targeting brought inclusive and exclusive targeting errors
- The exclusion of the productive safety net program (PSP) was not acceptable
- Delay in delivery of seeds affected the timely sowing to some extent
- Some distribution centers were far forcing farmers to travel long distances
- PESS, like other seed response projects, covers only 0.5 ha of land per HH regardless of the amount of land the affected HH may have, however, the participants had expected to get seed for the whole land holding size of beneficiaries. The standard practice in emergency contexts was explained to them.

Figures 8 & 9: PESS project Seed Coordinator & Abergele TRAIN Project Manager presenting project summary and year to date performance status

Review Meeting with Regional and Zonal stakeholders

An evaluation meeting was conducted in Bahir Dar city in the Amhara region on December 13, 2020 to evaluate the performance of the PESS project. The regional bureau heads and the Zonal Officials were among the participants of the evaluation meeting. After an opening remark by Dr. Mulunesh, head of Social Sectors Coordinator and head of Labor and Social affairs office by the rank of deputy regional president, the overall performance of PESS project was presented by FH Ethiopia's Director of National Humanitarian Program (NHP). During the meeting the participants commended the seed support done in the zone. The participants also proposed that FHE and the Amhara Government share the great success of PESS (timely and quality response, collaboration and coordination of FHE and Government Staff) with other INGOs and local NGOs operating in Wag Himra particularly and Amhara Region in general.

3.3 COORDINATION WITH OTHER PARTNERS:

The project was designed in collaboration with pertinent Regional, Zonal and Woreda government bodies. The same spirit of collaboration was present during the implementation of the project activities. In addition to joint implementation, joint monitoring and review meetings were conducted to appraise the progress of the projects towards its intended short and medium term results. Feedback from the monitoring and review meetings were considered during project implementations. The project results could not have been realized without the passionate engagement of project stakeholders.

3.4 COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND SENSITIZATION:

Communities were active in reflecting on their needs during the RNA. The communities were also involved in beneficiary selection. In particular, the community Early Warning Task Force was fully engaged in beneficiary selection and in some cases communities participated in endorsing the selection undertaken by the task force in each kebele. In some instances, ineligible beneficiaries were excluded due to the active involvement of the communities. After the seed distribution, orientation on good agricultural practices were undertaken. Moreover, 569 Kebele Early Warning Task Forces were trained on CMDRR mechanisms and the task forces were also encouraged to prepare their disaster prevention and reduction plans at the end of the training sessions. Communities were also sensitized on COVID 19 prevention and control.

3.5 BENEFICIARY SELECTION, REGISTRATION AND VERIFICATION:

PESS beneficiaries were selected using criteria set jointly with Zonal Agriculture Department and woreda agriculture offices. The criteria was communicated to the woreda and Kebele administration for selection by the Early Warning Task Force. The set criteria for beneficiary selection is as follows:

- PSNP beneficiaries should not be targeted
- Farmers who lost seeds due to the drought and do not have other seed sources
- Farmers who have a minimum of 0.25 hectares of land if they are vulnerable
- At least 30% of beneficiaries needed to be Female HHs
- Youths who are certified land users (must show user right book up on request)
- People with disabilities who have land for cultivation

As described above, these criteria were prepared in collaboration with the Zonal Department and Woreda Offices of Agriculture. The task force selected beneficiaries based on the criteria cascaded down to the kebele. During the beneficiary selection minutes were taken down for transparency in the selection process. These recorded minutes of the meeting were ratified by the members of the Early Warning Task Force who were involved in the selection process. After the beneficiary selection task force had prepared and ratified the minutes of the selection process, it prepared the master beneficiary list and sent it to the woreda office of agriculture for verification and approval. In most cases the communities were involved in approving the selected beneficiaries after the task force accomplished the selection process. However, in some cases communities were not consulted on the accuracy of the targeting, likely due to lack of information that was supposed to be communicated to kebeles from woredas. After critical scrutiny of the selection process, the Agriculture Office endorsed the process and authenticated the master beneficiary list for seed distribution. Following this process, a distribution list was prepared by FH and the Office of Agriculture which beneficiaries signed after receiving the seed from distributors. The distribution list was checked and approved by FH delegated staff during seed distribution.

3.6 Budget Status Report

During this activity, there was seven percent underspending less NICRA. Staff salary and benefits were underspent by 46.1% due to late employment of staff and unutilized salary at Global Office level. Additionally, beneficiary training used only 64.8% of its planned budget due to the low number of participants in the after action review and evaluation meetings. Seventy-six participants were not able to attend the training because of existing commitments by the government staff, damaged roads, and security tensions. The cost savings from seed purchase covered the majority of the increased tertiary transport expenses needed to deliver seeds to the communities due to particularly bad weather.

4 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Goal: Improved food security of the vulnerable disaster-affected farming HHs of Wag Himra Zone of Amhara Region, building their resilience and enhancing early recovery.

4.1 SECTOR 1:

Objective: Improved access and availability of improved seeds
Beneficiaries Targeted Cumulative: 143,730 Individuals (28,746 HHs)
Beneficiaries Served for Reporting Period: 144,069

Geographic Areas Covered: Eight woredas of Wag Himra Zone in Amhara Region (Abergele, Dehana, Gazgibla, Sehala, Sekota town, Sekota Zuria, Tsagbiji, and Ziquala woredas)

The Table below illustrates facts extracted from the final evaluation for each result indicator.

Table 8: Summary of Result-Baseline, Target and Achievement

Sub-Sector	**Seed Systems Security**						
	Indicator	**Baseline**	**LOA Target**	**Achieved (Evaluation Result)**	**Achievement (compared to target)**	**Achievement (compared to baseline)**	**Achieved during reporting period**
Indicator 1	Number of months of HH food self-sufficiency as a result of seed system security programming	5	7	6.3	90%	126%	6.3
Indicator 2	Number of people directly benefiting from seed systems/ agricultural input activities	0	Total: 144,069	Total: 144,069	100%	100%	Total: 144,069
			Male: 74,211	Male: 74,211			Male: 74,211
			Female: 69,858	Female: 69,858			Female: 69,858
Indicator 3	Percentage and number of HHs with access to sufficient seed to plant	0	100%	99.99%	99.99%%	99.99%%	99.99%
Indicator 4	Increased production of major agricultural crops from seeds distributed to target HHs by 37% from the baseline as a result of the project	150440	206,108.82 qt	356,521 qt	177%	243%	356,521qtt

Source: End line Evaluation Report, January 31,2021

4.1.1 Sub-Sector – Seed Systems Security

Result indicator 1: Number of months of HH food self- sufficiency as a result of seed system security programming:

The baseline value for the number of months of HH food self-sufficiency was five months, but the PESS project aimed to increase the number of self-sufficiency months to seven through the provision of improved seeds of wheat and teff. The project managed to increase the food self-sufficiency to 6.3 months (6 months and 10 days), 90% of the target. This is due to the planting of improved wheat and teff seed donated by FH. For this purpose, FH supplied 7,765.2 quintals of teff and wheat seed to target beneficiaries. Beneficiaries, on average, will have enough food for starting from October 2020 to Mid-April 2021.

Result Indicator 2: Number of people directly benefiting from seed systems/ agricultural input activities

According to the baseline data none of the beneficiaries had received improved seeds before the project. With the objective of addressing the dire seed needs of beneficiaries, PESS targeted 144,069 farmers (M-74,211, Women-69,858). To attain this objective, 7,765.2 quintals of wheat and teff were distributed to the aforementioned beneficiaries resulting in nearly 100% achievement.

Result Indicator 3: Percentage of HHs with access to sufficient seed to plant

The initial plan was to create access to sufficient seeds for 28,746 HHs. The seed amount required was calculated based on the amount of land PESS planned to cover for each beneficiary. The amount of seed donated was meant to cover 0.25 hectare of teff and 0.25 hectare of wheat land. For the 0.5 hectare of land, 6.25 kg of teff and 37.5 kg of wheat for each beneficiary was distributed for the same area of land in Sekota, Dehana, Sekota town, Gazgibla, and Tsagbiji Woredas where teff and wheat are produced. For areas like Sehala, Ziquala and Abergele, where wheat does not grow, 12.5 kg of teff was distributed to each beneficiary to cover half a hectare of land. The project planned to support 100% of the HHs with seed sufficient to cover a total of 0.5 hectares. It addressed 99.99% of the HHs.

The discrepancy of the figures of this indicator between our report (99.99%) and the external evaluation report (58%) is due to different reference points for calculating the achievement. FH defined sufficient ‘as the seed amount that covers 0.5 ha of land’, which is the amount of land normally to be covered in agricultural response. Normally for any seed response, the standard is to cover on average 0.25-0.5 ha of land per HH regardless of the amount of land the affected HH may have. The external consultant, however, took the total land owned by the affected HHs as the reference point to compute the results.

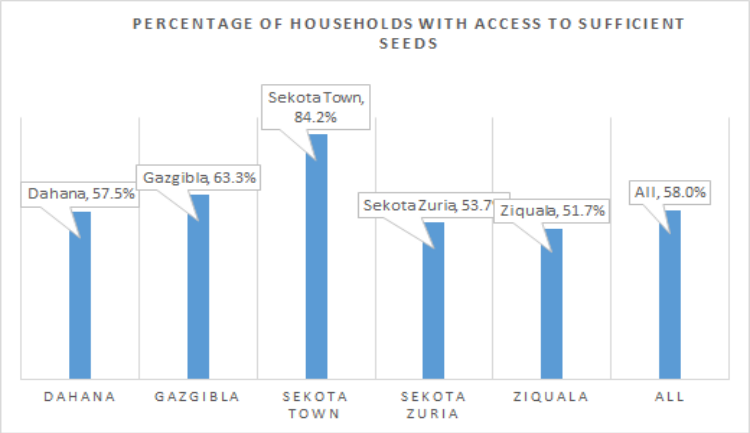

Figure 1: Percentage of HHs with access to sufficient seed

Result Indicator 4 (custom): Increased production of major agricultural crops from seeds distributed to target HHs by 37% from the baseline as a result of the project

PESS intended to increase production by 37% through seed distribution to target HHs. The target yield to obtain from the intervention was 206,108 Qt. However, the HH survey indicates that a total of 365,521 Qt of crop yield was produced or expected to be harvested from the current harvest season. Thus, current season (project period) actual production increased by 77% of the target and 143% of the baseline. This increase in yield was due to improved seed and fertilizer used by the beneficiaries. In addition to this, there was strong technical support from all levels of the agriculture office.

5. Key Challenges

5.1 Challenges

- Sorghum seed was not available at seed enterprises as expected due to shortage of the required variety once the PAL was received. Due to this, sorghum was not purchased.
- The positive COVID-19 cases at the FH Addis and Project Offices forced staff to self-isolate at home and at quarantine centers and forced FHE country and project offices to close in the month of August 2020. This negatively impacted the timely PESS baseline survey data collection and report submission. The after action review meeting and internalization workshop and training on CMDRR and Security Policy were also delayed.
- Seed transportation was slowed down by heavy rain in some locations.
- Seed transporters were not always cooperative and necessitated frequent communications with delay in transportation in some instances.
- The Internet shut down by the government hampered the communication with Project Offices, deployed staff and the Seed Coordinators. As a result, exchange of essential information and activity photos was extremely challenging.
- Due to local government staff turnover, beneficiary selection was delayed and the master beneficiary list was received late despite the early arrival of seed in some districts.
- The social unrest in the Oromia Region halted procurement and transportation of 1,441.5 qt of wheat seed, which resulted in the substitution by teff seeds.
- The project experienced security problems in Abergele and Tsagbiji woredas and accessibility problems in Sehala woreda which halted the final evaluation work.

- The final evaluation report indicated that there were targeting problems. Even though the beneficiary selection was done at kebele level by the Early Warning and Food Security Task Force, some ineligible beneficiaries received seeds. Targeting errors included double targeting (husband and wife from a HH received seed), public sector staff and others who could afford to buy seed were also erroneously targeted. Despite discussions with the Woreda and Zone Department of Agriculture, it was not possible to fully correct the targeting errors.
- The revolving seed scheme was implemented by the local government at a later stage of the project when farmers started harvesting. In this scheme, PESS beneficiaries had to give back the amount of seed they received from the project during distribution. The scheme was put into practice without prior notice or discussion with the beneficiaries bringing grievances from the beneficiaries. The PESS staff tried to connect this scheme to the DRR plan of the communities where the seed can be used for similar interventions if there is a seed shortage next season.

5.2 Actions to overcome the challenges

Despite the challenges during seed transportation and distribution, the project managed the activities by employing various measures like arranging tertiary transportation to some of the kebeles where roads were damaged due to rain. Even though the purchase of wheat seed from Asela seed enterprise was hampered because of turmoil in the Oromia region, the project managed to revise its plan to purchase more Teff to compensate for the shortfall. As a result, the project was able to support beneficiaries that could have been excluded from the seed support.

The delay of the master beneficiary list also affected timely seed distribution in some kebeles but with frequent communication with the office of agriculture and the kebele administration, it was possible to get the list for distribution.

6. Lessons Learned

- Understanding the seed system in the normal and stressed conditions was a key for success in seed distribution. Seed distributions are an effective way to address food insecurity in the Wag Himra Zone, where farmers have enough land for planting, but seed supply through formal channels are not well established.
- Seed distribution needs quality seed, timely distribution and fair targeting. Late seed delivery and improper targeting can lead to harvest failure.
- Involving community members in beneficiary selection minimizes targeting.
- Emergency seed supply should always be needs based and delivered at the appropriate time.
- Involve government counterparts in the seed assessment, quality control and procurement order to increase transparency and ease decision making processes.
- Agricultural activities need to be continuous. Strengthening the technical support of post distribution activities, such as improved weed management, surveillance of crop pests and timely control of pests, are all essential features of successful farming. The timeliness of the harvest and post-harvest handling are also key factors in ensuring high crop yields.
- Creating collaborative relationships with the government is critical.

7. Success Stories

Success Story 1: A female farmer overcomes seed scarcity

For farmers in Gakew kebele of Dehana Woreda, lack of access to seed makes them particularly vulnerable to the effects of food insecurity and lower productivity in agricultural production. Due to lack of extensive arable land, farmers in Gakew village had to operate their farming practices on a very small plot of land.

Seye, 50, along with her 13 year old daughter Mulu (8th Grade) have lived in Dehana woreda for 9 years. Her husband Azexe 40 is a soldier on military assignment in Metema on the Ethio-Sudanese border and sends home a small amount of remittance which is barely enough to sustain the family with enough food and other basic needs.

FH selected Seye as a beneficiary in the seed support project that operated in her village. The project provided her with 37.5 kg of improved wheat seed as well as 6.25 kgs of teff seed which she planted on her 0.5 hectares of land over the previous farming season.

Speaking of her harvest from her plot of land, Seye said, *" Even if there was a problem related to water logging on the fields I have managed to harvest 2.5 quintals of wheat and 2.5 quintals of teff that hopefully will sustain us for the coming five months,"*

To supplement her income from harvest, Seye also started to sell *tella* which is a cottage brewed traditional beer. She said *"I sell a can of tella for 5 Birr twice a week with a weekly income of 60 to 70 Birr earning some 300 Birr per month*."

Figure 10: Seye explaining her success story

She added that she has already reserved enough seed for the next farming season and may not need further support on seed as she can continue to be self-sufficient in seeds.

At the end of our conversation, she wasted no time to thank the project launched by Food for the Hungry in her community. She said, *"I really thank the organizers of the project for the support they provided us with seeds free of charge. This has enabled me not to worry about seed for the coming farming season.* "

The project has enabled female headed families to support their families by benefiting from the seed project. Had it not been for the support they received from the project they could have been forced to take loans or sell their labor to other farmers.

Success Story 2: Children no longer hungry

Zerfu and his wife Teweres live in Debre Woina kebele with three children, Fasika Zerfu, male 18 and 12th grade, Nigus Zerfu, 12 male, 7th grade, Habtamu Zerfu, male 8 and first grade, Netsanet Zerfu, female and 2 years old.

The family of Mr. Zerfu received the standard ration of seed support which is 37.5kg of wheat worth Birr 810 at market price and 6.25 kg of teff seed sown on 0.25 hectares of land.

In recalling his experience, Zerfu said, *"I managed to harvest 3 quintals of wheat and have set aside enough amounts of seed for the next farming season so that I do not need to wait upon anyone to provide me with seeds"*

Figure 11: Zerfu speaking his experience before and after PESS intervention

He plans to harvest more wheat, barley, beans and other legumes on his 0.25 hectares of land after the grain is harvested in the future. He added *"with the wheat we have harvested, our children were able to eat good bread and also porridge to improve their national status"*

Apart from grain production, Zerfu and his family are also engaged in small scale irrigation for ensuring additional income for their family and as a nutrition supplement for the kids in the family. Speaking of his irrigation, Zerfu told the reporter*, "I harvest potatoes, garlic, tomatoes, pepper as a supplement to family nutrition."*

It appears that Zerfu has realized the importance of the seed distribution program from what he has commented on the project, He said, "*we are all thankful for the support we received with seeds from the project and we will try to see more improvement in our livelihood due to the project."*

Success Story 3: A vulnerable woman and family thrive

Asmaru, 60 and her daughter Aster live in Gaz Jibla woreda, Debre Woinal Kebele. Her husband passed away several years back. She received the standard ration of seed support which is 37.5kg of wheat worth Birr 810 at market price and 6.25 kg of teff seed sown on 0.5 hectares of land. Apart from grain production, Asmaru and her family are also engaged in small scale irrigation in order to provide additional income and nutritional supplementation. Although this project is intended to provide support in areas with erratic rainfall and rugged

terrain, it has improved the capacity of families to produce food which could sustain them during the food stress season.

Asmaru said *"The support we got from the project right at our community is very important because the seeds are very good and we receive them free of charge without worrying to pay back."*

Figure 12: Asmaru, a needy woman who received seed support from USAID/BHA funded PESS project