



Ethiopia Youth Network

About the Network

Ethiopia has been through a tumultuous past few years, from political transition and civil war to a global pandemic.

Maintaining the social cohesion the country has been known for historically has been a great challenge; peace has become the top priority for most Ethiopians.

To this end, 180 youth volunteers have worked in partnership with the Ministry of Peace, to build the knowledge of thousands of youth volunteers on a variety of topics to help create a national youth community volunteer network for peace and development.

Youth volunteering for development

These young volunteers attend training in life skills, youth leadership, media literacy, social inclusion and gender, social accountability, resilience, entrepreneurial skills, active citizenship, and peace and consensus building. The training included designing a project in response to development challenges they face in their communities.

And this was just the beginning. Of the original cohort, 180 young people also went on to support the same training to 10,000 more youth volunteers, cascading those life-changing skills through a growing network of young peacebuilders.

Covid-19

Youth volunteers collaborated with the national Covid-19 task force. They conducted door-to-door outreach in targeted districts, distributing communication materials and verbal guides to raise awareness of gender-

based violence (GBV) and the support available. This led to many cases, including abuse against children and people with disabilities, being identified, reported and managed.

VSO youth volunteer Lukas describes how quickly youth were able to respond in Ethiopia:

“ We were the first in the city to integrate audio, sign language and visual resources during house-to-house awareness creation campaigns against COVID-19 and GBV.

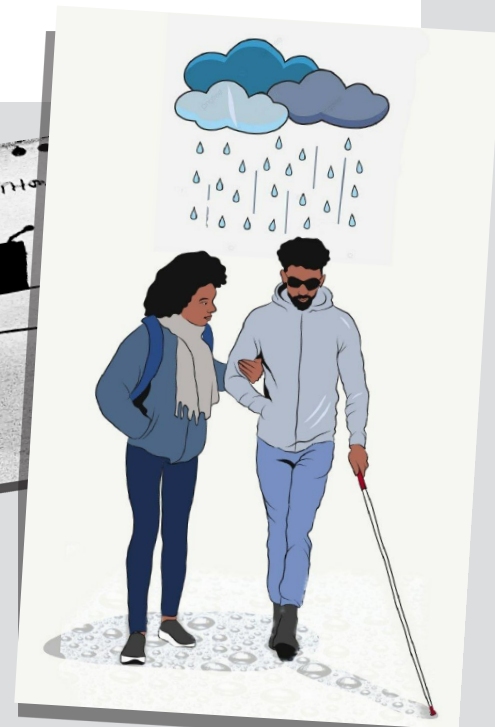
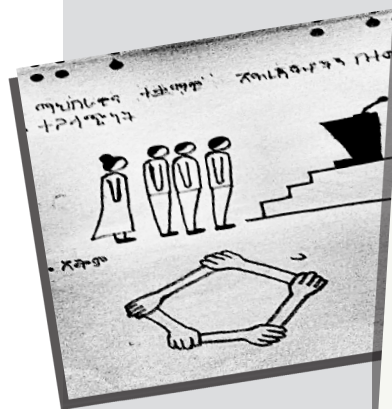
We [also] supported 30 people with disabilities and 40 highly vulnerable women through livelihood recovery. That included vulnerability assessment, intervention design and purchase and provision of start-up kits for them.”

Volunteering against COVID-19 was unforgettable. Beyond serving our community, we have been seen as role models and showed the local government how volunteering plays a key role in development efforts, as well as during emergencies.”

Climate change

Youth champions in Ethiopia collaborated with the Federation of Associations of People Living with Disabilities to harness youth creativity and arts in creating awareness of climate change among the most marginalized populations.

They worked with young people with disabilities to enhance their knowledge of climate change, conducting training on climate science, resilience and justice. They then ran a competition using art and illustration to create awareness of key climate issues.



Fetya's story

I wanted to become the first woman Prime minister of Ethiopia since I was a little girl. I was so sure I was going to achieve that if I studied hard. That was my thought – graduate and live my dream. This training taught me that I had a lot to see first – so much to learn, engage and get out of my comfort zone.

The first thing I learnt was how to engage with all the trainees coming from different parts of the country. I came to know that Ethiopia is filled with different nations and nationalities and this vast diversity must be difficult to handle; one cannot exist with the other.

The job of a prime minister that I took so lightly needs a lot of patience, integrity, and passion. The journey I started years ago by joining university was just the first step; the next big step forward starts now. Now I am open to trying anything, open to do different jobs, travel, volunteer, and set the foundation to get to my dream. I can do that because of this program.

Fetya Shemsu (her peers called her Moforiyat – the then Ministry of Peace)

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