

COLLABORATIVE ACTION FOR PEACE IN GEDEO AND WEST GUJI PROJECT



Gedeo youth supporting Guji's older farmers by collecting coffee.
Photo by Alemayehu Bensa, November 28, 2020.

YOUTH PEACE BUILDING ACTIVITY REPORT

December 14, 2020

BACKGROUND

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| Project outcome | Increased support and opportunities for youth to participate in peacebuilding |
| Project output | Youth Peacebuilders trained and supported to contribute to peacebuilding through the implementation of Peacebuilding Action Plans |
| Project activity | Support Youth Peacebuilders to conduct a conflict analysis using the SSA approach and develop and implement a Peacebuilding Action Plan in their communities |

Inter-communal tensions erupted in early June 2018 along the border areas of Ethiopia's Gedeo Zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's region (SNNP) and the West Guji Zone in Oromia region. This resulted in internal displacement and associated humanitarian needs. The conflict has also negatively affected relationships and trust among people in the affected communities.

This project aims to restore social cohesion and promote reconciliation between Gedeo and West Guji communities. In order to achieve this goal, World Vision is training Youth Peacebuilders to engage in different peacebuilding activities in their communities.

In October 2020, 675 youth from nine districts selected by World Vision and district officials took part in peacebuilding training. At the end of the training, youth from each district drafted an action plan to take back to their community. As part of their action plan, youth from Yirga Chefe (Gedeo Zone) committed to mobilising other youth to help families in West Guji harvest their coffee crops through a traditional custom known as "debo".

The word "debo" means "to combine labour to support what a neighbour is doing" regardless of ethnic or religious differences. This is a common custom in many parts of Ethiopia. If a farmer needs help with his fields, he may invite his neighbours to help and in return provide them with food and drink on the day and contribute his own labour when others need help. Debo was common in the Gedeo and West Guji communities before conflict erupted in 2018.



Gedeo youths getting orientation on how to collect the coffee.
Photo by Alemayehu Bonsa November 28, 2020, Chito.

In November 2020, Youth Peacebuilders from Yirga Chefe mobilised 182 youth to help West Guji farmers collect their coffee.

Organised into two groups, the youth gathered early in the morning and spent half a day helping families pick their coffee. One of the farmers who received this support said that this act of kindness would help to restore trust between the two communities.

Girma Fekadu, one of the youth who participated in the "debo", said "had it been before the conflict, we youth would have reduced so many casualties". He also said he will continue to do similar acts of kindness to contribute to peace in his community.

Other youth who completed the training are initiating similar peacebuilding activities in their own communities.