

RETROSPECTIVE IMPACT EVALUATION

SAVE THE CHILDREN'S SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMMING IN WOLISO IMPACT AREA, ETHIOPIA (2002-2010)



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Retrospective Impact Evaluation (RIE) sought answers to six Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs):

KEQ 1. Core programming implemented & current status: *What SC Sponsorship-funded core programming was implemented in the Woliso impact area from 2002-2010, how relevant was it to the needs of children and their families, how well has it lasted, and how well is it functioning now?*

1. Education (BE, ECCD):

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- a. **21 new community-based schools (CBSs)** and additional classrooms for 8 existing schools were built. This was an extremely high need due to widespread lack of (and inequitable) access to education. Early CBSs were built from wood and mud and are severely damaged by termites and cracking. Later CBSs were much more durable and are in generally in good repair. All CBSs are crowded as school enrollments have grown but school expansions have not kept up.
- b. **Desks, chairs and blackboards** were provided to all CBSs. This was high need to make the CBSs usable. Only 5 of 12 sampled kebeles still had furniture and equipment in good or excellent condition. Government had replaced some furniture in a small number of kebeles. Learning materials and resources were particularly problematic, with many now outdated, damaged, lost, or too few for current enrollments.
- c. Approximately **130 young high school graduates were trained to teach in the new CBSs** and later supported to obtain teaching degrees. This was a very high need as there were no teachers available for these CBSs. Some still work in impact area schools; many have advanced into government positions. Impact area schools are now staffed with a mix of SC-trained and other teachers, all employed and paid by the government.
- d. **SC trained about 140 to 150 Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members** for the 21 new CBSs. The need was high for strong PTAs to support and sustain the quality of education, maintain the buildings and equipment, and solve school problems. The vast majority of PTAs were still functioning in 2019. For those struggling, the biggest challenges were keeping up maintenance on buildings and furniture, especially when they needed replacement rather than repairs.

2. Health and Nutrition (SHN):

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- a. **122 water supplies were installed across 32 kebeles.** This was an extremely high need given the lack of clean water and the high prevalence of waterborne illnesses. About 59% of the 80 water supplies in the kebeles we visited were still functional in 2019 and water supplies overall were Good (or better) in quality and adequacy for 7 of the 11 sampled kebeles. SC also trained water caretakers, who were still maintaining water schemes in about half of the visited kebeles.
- b. **2,000 to 3,000 latrines were installed in up to 35 kebeles.** This was a very high need – open defecation had been the norm. Since SC exited, communities, with the support of Health Extension Workers (HEWs), have erected many more latrines (exact numbers unknown). 7 of the 11 visited kebeles had Excellent access to and use of latrines; 3 were in a Good situation.
- c. **Water, sanitation and health (WASH) committees were established in about 32 kebeles and training on hygiene, food safety and nutrition was also provided.** This was a high need – oversight and fundraising for water and sanitation were important for sustainment; also, knowledge and skills in hygiene and nutrition were very low. WASH committees were still active in all the kebeles we visited, supported by HEWs. Some have been more successful than others; finding funding for things the community can't afford have been one of the major challenges.

- d. **Two community health insurance schemes (involving about 100 to 120 women) were set up in two urban kebeles** within the Woliso municipality. With a precarious public health system, these financial safety nets were of high need. Only one of these schemes was reported to be still functioning. Both were reported only to have been partly successful because they did not adequately meet the needs of members, which led many people to quit the schemes.

3. Adolescent Development (AD):

→ p. 54

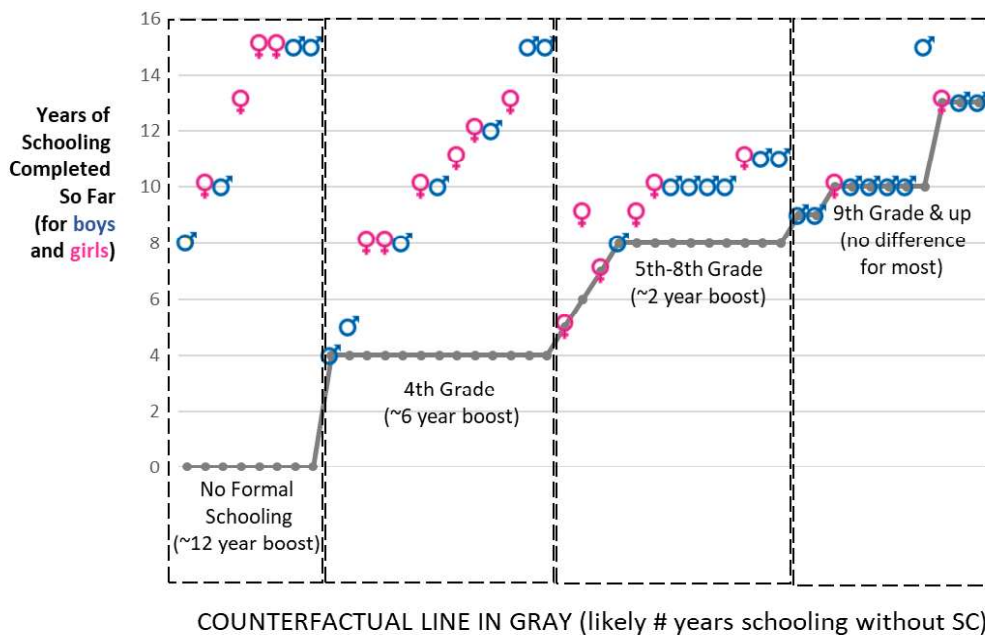
- a. **Two Adolescent Development Centers (ADCs) were established in two kebeles.** These were a moderately high need – at the time there were no opportunities for the impoverished youth to gather and engage in initiatives to develop entrepreneurial and business skills. The evaluation team was able to locate one of these ADCs, which had not been operational for many years. Location (built on a polluted site) and weak programming (youth left to their own devices) were reported to be the two major issues affecting the sustainment and impact of the visited ADC.
- b. **Almost all of the new 21 CBSs were supported by SC to form school youth clubs** focused on health promotion, culture, minimedia, and sports. This was a moderately high need, complementing in-classroom teaching as well as creating income generating activities. All schools we visited still had some clubs operating in 2019, but all had experienced a drop-off in the number, range, and/or quality of clubs due to a lack of up-to-date resources and materials.

KEQ 2. Outcomes & impacts influenced by SC: *How valuable were the outcomes and impacts of these efforts, especially for children and their families, but also for communities, government agencies and their officials? How well have those impacts been sustained or grown over time? Where and for whom did the most powerful and long-lasting impacts occur, and why?*

1. Education, careers, and livelihoods:

→ p. 67

- a. CBSs had a strong effect on educational access. Students completed an average of **4.5 more years of schooling** than they likely would have if a school had not been constructed by SC.
- b. The effect also **reduced educational access inequalities**. Children who would otherwise have had the least formal schooling (a larger proportion of whom were girls) had the largest boosts.



- c. The ~130 young adults trained by SC to become **education facilitators had the most substantial and life-changing impacts on their careers, incomes, and socioeconomic status**. We also heard several stories of their importance as professional role models for children from their home kebeles, as well as their own children. This was particularly true of the women.
- d. The community members trained as **water caretakers** and who were still engaged in this work were also **making a decent living** maintaining water systems outside their home kebeles.

2. Health and wellbeing:

→ p. 68

- a. **Closer access to clean water** had a *very substantial impact* on people's lives and health due to (i) children and family members getting sick less often, and (ii) time/energy saved fetching water.
- b. **Access to latrines, showers, and clothes washing facilities** had a *very substantial impact* on people's lives and health due to: (i) children and families getting sick less often and feeling better for feeling cleaner; (ii) privacy, particularly for girls and women and especially during menstruation; and (iii) people were happy to be living in open defecation free environment.
- c. One **negative outcome**: due to shortages in the water supply, there have sometimes been arguments about how much water each household is allowed to collect.
- d. **Knowledge, skills, and practice of good hygiene and food safety** improved, on average, from Problematic (pre training) to Good (post training) and had been sustained at Good in 2019.
- e. **Knowledge of nutrition and eating a healthy diet** improved, on average, from Problematic (pre training) to mostly Good or OK (post training) and had been sustained at those levels in 2019.

It is important to note that there have been several other organizations and groups that have contributed to these health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly their sustainment.

3. Community Capacity, Empowerment, and Self-Determination

→ p. 69

- a. In kebeles where community-based schools were constructed and **Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)** set up and trained to run them, there had clearly been a substantial shift toward community ownership of K-8 education.
- b. **WASH Committees** set up and trained to oversee water, sanitation, and health have also contributed to the shift toward community empowerment and self-determination – with variation in the capacity and success of these committees.
- c. **Income-generating activities (IGAs)** for youth (through school youth clubs and ADCs) had very weak overall effects.
- d. The two **community health insurance schemes** set up in Woliso town with SC's support produced weak to, at best, moderate impact.
- e. Some of the **education facilitators trained by SC** ended up promoted into positions as government officials, which created the possibility for their communities obtain support from the woreda administration through having that personal connection.
- f. With the **water caretakers trained by SC**, the communities now had the expertise to educate and to install and fix most of their own water systems whereas previously they had not.

4. Government Thinking and Action

→ p. 70

- a. Government took over responsibility for staffing the new SC-supported schools with **government-employed teachers** (the former education facilitators trained by SC).
- b. Government provided support in the form of **HEWs** to collaborate in several SC-led health promotion initiatives and later to support WASH Committees to continue this work.
- c. Some **SC-trained facilitators** moved into senior government roles; their local knowledge of the needs and strengths of the impact area kebeles was helpful for informing government priorities.

- d. Highly likely that SC's early engagement with government and sharing with them the findings of their local **needs assessments** and later on their **intervention strategies** provided useful and practical ideas on how the government could better support these communities.

KEQ 3. Side impacts & ripple effects: *What other actions, reactions, or changes have been inspired or catalyzed by the SC-funded work in the Woliso IA – locally, regionally, and/or nationally – and how important were they, particularly in ways that impacted the lives of children and their families?* → p. 57

At the kebele level, positive side effects related to (i) the development of a **culture of community mobilization** (e.g., saving money to resolve pressing issues in the communities) and (ii) changes in **attitudes towards education, sanitation and hygiene** (e.g., families valuing sending their children to school).

Beyond the impact area, SC's work in Woliso has helped to influence (i) the development of an important **national study** to determine whether schools ensured children read fluently in Grade 3; (ii) the creation of a **national school health and nutrition strategy**; and (iii) (possibly) the creation of a government's community insurance program.

KEQ 4. Value for Investment (Vfi): *Overall, how valuable have the Woliso area impacts been (to children, their families, communities, government agencies and their officials, the region, and beyond) relative to what was invested to obtain them?* → p. 72

SC's US\$22.5 million investment (in 2019 dollars) resulted in several life-changing outcomes and impacts, some of them long-lasting, as described in the answers to KEQs 1, 2 and 3. Just by themselves, it is reasonable to conclude that these changes justify the investment made. However, to provide a more comprehensive answer to this question, the evaluation also included an economic component through the implementation of a Value for Investment (Vfi) analysis. The Vfi study identified three outcomes for which we made estimations of current and future financial benefits for individuals and the society to compare with the financial investment made. The following are the main conclusions:

1. Education Facilitators' Income Streams

SC invested about **US\$1.35 million** to train approximately 130 education facilitators (paraprofessionals) and later support them to obtain teaching degrees. The value of the estimated impacts on past, current, and future income for these former facilitators, plus the value of the plot of land two-thirds of them received from the government, amounted to somewhere between **US\$5.1 and \$6.2 million**. This means that every dollar invested by SC provided a potential return of US\$3.80 in financial benefits to former facilitators in the least optimistic scenario and US\$4.60 for more optimistic scenario.

2. Returns to Investment in Education

SC invested approximately **US\$11.3 million** in Basic Education and Early Childhood Care and Development activities that included building and renovating schools in the Woliso impact area. Our evaluation estimated that having access to the schools built by SC helped ensure additional **4.5 years** of schooling for the children and adolescents who attended those schools. The estimated collective future lifetime additional income for those children/adolescents amounted to **US\$137.5 million**. The conclusion is that for every dollar invested by SC in education there is a potential return of about US\$12 in lifetime financial benefits to the (now) young women and men who attended the schools built by SC.

3. Returns to Investment in Water and Sanitation

SC invested about **US\$4.7 million** in building and maintaining water schemes and sanitation facilities in the kebeles covered. With no primary or secondary data available on the outcomes of this investment, we turned to a WHO study that calculated a return of US\$2.7 to every dollar invested in water and sanitation in sub-Saharan Africa, from: (i) health care savings, (ii) reduced productivity losses, (iii) time saved fetching water, and (iv) premature deaths averted. To avoid overestimation, we discounted a 41% loss for water schemes that were no longer working. We estimated a return of **US\$7.5 million** equivalent in benefits. This equated to an expected value of US\$1.59 in benefits for every dollar that SC invested.

KEQ 5. Sustainability: *What made the greatest difference in ensuring how well core programming outcomes and their long-term impacts were sustained after close-out? What were the gaps or challenges that limited sustainment?* → p. 75

What helped solutions, outcomes, and impacts to last?

1. Durable solutions with availability of materials and parts to repair and maintain them.
2. Sound training of community members in the expertise needed to run and maintain them.
3. Financially sustainable business models to allow their expertise to be used in home kebeles (e.g., water caretakers earning viable incomes from work outside the kebele).
4. Community committees and groups empowered with the knowledge, skills, know-how, and confidence they needed to effectively oversee and manage what had been put in place.
5. Practical support (e.g., HEWs supporting WASH) and some financial support from government.
6. Effective succession planning to pass on knowledge, skills, organization, and commitment.
7. Community determination, commitment, and engagement to keep up the work.
8. SC-trained facilitators in government leadership positions effectively supporting their kebeles.

What limited how long solutions, outcomes, and impacts lasted?

1. Solutions with short expected lifespans and no system for major maintenance/replacements.
2. A lack of future-proofing solutions to meet the needs of future and growing populations.
3. Buildings located in unsafe, polluted, or relatively inaccessible areas (e.g., ADCs).
4. A lack of follow-up support and coaching to ensure effective application of learning (e.g., IGAs).
5. Gaps in the training of maintenance people; certain problems were outside their expertise.
6. Unavailability or unaffordability of spare parts or vehicles needed for repairs and maintenance.
7. A lack of training to help PTAs figure out how to replace learning materials and resources.
8. Communities with very limited capacity to fund repairs, maintenance, and materials.
9. Gaps in the training and support of committees and community groups to help them (i) troubleshoot unexpected challenges; (ii) forge effective collaborative relationships with government agencies; (iii) source funding and support for projects the community cannot afford or effectively implement by themselves; (iv) engage in succession planning; and (v) maintain community engagement and enthusiasm for the ongoing community development work.
10. Weak or patchy government support for ongoing development efforts.
11. High turnover of government support staff and/or committee members (PTAs and WASH committees), resulting in a loss of knowledge, cohesion, relationship quality, and effectiveness.
12. Insufficient numbers trained in ECCD; weak understanding of the importance of this expertise.
13. A lack of ongoing professional learning (refresher training) for teachers and water caretakers.

KEQ 6. Ownership transition and exit: *Looking back, how well did SC's ownership transition processes work to empower communities to better support children after the conclusion of SC's work in the Woliso impact area? What factors made a difference for achieving a smooth and supportive transition?* → p. 60

SC did a very good job in contributing to develop the capacity of many key actors within the communities and schools (e.g., WASH committee, water caretakers, education facilitators, PTAs, youth clubs, etc.) so that important changes produced as part of the interventions could be locally owned and maintained after they phaseout. This strategy produced good results – e.g., most WASH committees and PTAs are still active and water caretakers still maintaining the water schemes in several communities.

However, there were some issues highlighted by stakeholders in half of the 12 kebeles visited by the evaluation team indicating that the transition process did not go as smoothly as expected. Some of them were surprised with SC's exit either because they lacked proper warning (adequate exit conversations with SC staff) or because their kebeles were still in a dire situation on some basic needs.

In the absence of concrete agreements with government authorities and a carefully managed handover process, simply relying on government agencies to take over responsibility to support communities in consolidating and building on the positive changes produced by SC's interventions did not turn out to be a successful transition strategy.



Figure 1. Adolescents and children in a rural kebele stop to see what's going on.

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