

Dorcas *Ethiopia*

Building a future for the
poor and marginalised



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We are Dorcas

Dorcas is a faith-based organisation that provides humanitarian assistance and facilitates development cooperation. We invest in sustainable change in the lives of people who are marginalised. In the event of poverty, exclusion or a crisis, we create opportunities for them to flourish.

What we believe
We believe in the value and God-given potential of every single person. We are called to demonstrate God’s love for those in need. This is how we follow Jesus Christ.

What we see
We see a world where poverty, exclusion and crisis marginalise people. We also see the potential of these people and their communities to flourish despite their difficult circumstances.

How we work
Accountable: We do what we say, work transparently and use resources wisely.
Compassionate: We see those in need and stand next to them.
Determined: We have an entrepreneurial spirit and do not give up.
Locally led: We work through local leadership, staff and partners.

What we do
We empower people who are marginalised to develop their talents. And we enable disadvantaged communities to flourish. We equip individuals and communities to promote and ensure participation of all.
We create hope and long-term perspectives in volatile and complex situations. We meet people’s basic needs in times of crisis and increase their ability to overcome poverty and exclusion. We persist despite frequent setbacks and invest in durable relationships to realise sustainable change.
We are part of a global movement of individuals and organisations working for a just and fair world. We recognise and appreciate everybody who supports our work. And we actively partner with others to create synergy and amplify our impact.

Theory of Change

Dorcas views poverty as a condition in which people cannot realise their intellectual, material, physical, social and spiritual needs and capacities. This kind of poverty is often related to exclusion mechanisms and barriers within society. We want to contribute to the protection, inclusion and resilience of people living in poverty, experiencing exclusion or caught in a crisis. Our Theory of Change recognises that transformation is needed at the individual, community and societal levels. We seek to realise a six-fold impact that results in flourishing people and communities.

Dorcas works towards change on three levels:

1. Individual

We create opportunities for people and, if necessary, we also provide for their basic needs.

2. Community

We invest in resilient, self-organising communities; we strengthen the position of certain groups, such as older people, people with disabilities and minority groups, and we encourage community members to support each other and stand up for themselves.

3. Society

We cooperate with local authorities and partners and motivate them to take their responsibilities. We tackle taboos by ensuring that everyone has a voice and that everyone is included.

The Dorcas Theory of Change is translated into programme concepts that create impact,

demonstrate our added value and inform the programmatic priorities set by each Country Office.

The three programme concepts are:

Humanitarian Assistance and Recovery

Humanitarian Assistance and Recovery focuses on saving people’s lives and preserving their dignity during disasters or crises. People’s immediate needs are met, communities are enabled to become resilient to shocks and governments are actively involved in contributing to safer and more peaceful communities.

Social Empowerment and Protection

Social Empowerment and Protection seeks to ensure that the poorest and most marginalised have access to basic services, like health and education, and are empowered in their social development. This is realised by organising and mobilising communities to solve their own problems and work on opportunities through asset-based community development processes.

Inclusive Entrepreneurship

Inclusive Entrepreneurship enables disadvantaged people and groups to acquire the attitudes, competences and skills they need to earn an income and build their dreams. This is realised by creating social and economic value through entrepreneurial livelihoods and applying it to self-employment, small businesses, member-based entities or social enterprises.



Dorcas in Ethiopia



Dorcas Aid Ethiopia (further referred to as DAE) has worked in Ethiopia for more than 20 years. DAE focuses on poor and marginalised community members, especially unemployed youth, women, children, people with disability, grannies, and food-insecure households. In the five regions and two city administrations where we work, we seek to improve the resilience of individuals and communities and empower people to solve their own problems. All our programmes are in line with Ethiopia’s development policy.

We use three programme concepts in our work: Humanitarian Assistance and Relief (HAR), Social Empowerment & Protection (SEP) and Inclusive Entrepreneurship (IE).

HAR focuses on relief operations that include but are not limited to food distribution, cash transfers and emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) support. This concept also works on increasing household resilience to disaster through strengthening grass root institutions, promoting alternative income generation, engaging communities in peacebuilding and constructing WASH facilities. WASH is the main component of our HAR concept and DAE has significant experience in this area. Thousands of people affected by armed conflicts and drought have benefitted from this programme.

SEP seeks to transform the lives of highly vulnerable

children and grannies from very poor households who live in urban slums. Most of these households are headed by widows, children and/or guardians. This concept supports hundreds of these children and grannies.

IE strives to unleash people’s potential and enhance their social and economic inclusion. IE projects work towards enhancing youth employability through micro and small enterprise development and short-term vocational training. They also address challenges associated with youth unemployment, like migration and social unrest.

Our overall aim with these programmes is to change people’s lives by improving their economic and environmental resilience, increasing their food security and strengthening their social empowerment and protection.



Shashamane Inclusive and Enterprising Solutions Project

Shashamane Inclusive and Enterprising Solutions Project (SHINES) is all about increasing the social and economic inclusion of underprivileged people. The project mainly targets youths living in slum areas. SHINES builds on lessons learned from past interventions and is aligned with government policies related to youth employability. The project targets an equal number of male and female youths and indirectly benefits far more people from the target community.

More than 220 young people currently attend vocational skill training at the local TVET centre in Shashamane. There they acquire business and entrepreneurship skills and develop a more positive mindset. Within the group they are allocated to, they also work on planning and starting a group business.

Moyale Conflict Early Warning and Response Project

Moyale Conflict Early Warning and Response Project (MCEWRP) is a component of the EU-funded project “Enhance a Bottom-up Policy Engagements of Citizens and Civil Society Organisations to Promote Peace, Democracy, and Sustainable Development”. The project works towards peaceful coexistence of two clans (Borana and Garrii) that inhabit two neighbouring Districts of Moyale (Moyale-Oromia and Moyale-Somali). They are often embroiled in conflicts over resource use. A socioeconomic and political assessment was carried out to define the context and to learn lessons from past conflicts and the traditional practices of responses to conflict early warnings. Based on these findings, capacity-building workshops were organised for the relevant district officials working on Conflict Early Warning and Response (CEWR) to teach them

about the concept of Conflict Early Warning and Response System (CEWRS). Next, the project facilitated the establishment of the CEWRS along with a situation room in both districts. Each situation room was equipped with the logistics and office equipment required. The target districts also assigned a trained focal person entrusted with the responsibility of collecting, analysing, and using information on impending conflict early warning signs. This is helping the districts to come up with approaches for quick action and countering tensions through dialogue, negotiation, and other strategies to be identified in the planned CEWRS.

The project has made a significant contribution to the peaceful coexistence of the two clans in the area. It has also demonstrated the unique potential of the people and institutions to support peacebuilding and conflict mitigation. From an economic viewpoint, projects like these are worth their weight in gold. Research by the Institute for Economics and Peace has revealed that each dollar invested in peacebuilding leads to a 16 USD decline in the cost of conflict.

Emergency Response Projects

Many crises occur in Ethiopia that kill thousands of people and cause millions of others to lose their livelihoods and become displaced. The open war in the northern part of the country, the armed conflicts in the western and southern regions, and the prolonged drought in pastoralist, lowland areas are the most serious events of recent years and have traumatised the lives of many Ethiopians.

Dorcas Aid Ethiopia has mobilised resources from its partners and taken actions to address the social, economic and psychological needs of those affected. For example, vulnerable households in Borana, Somali,



SNNPR and Amhara regions have been reached through unconditional cash transfer, WASH, emergency shelter and psychological advice.

Overall, thousands of households and their family members have accessed lifesaving food and water, received a safe place to stay (shelter) and obtained psychological support to ease the anguish caused by the war and terrorist acts by militants as people fled. People’s psychological wellbeing has been restored, enabling them to return to their homes and start rebuilding their lives.



Impact Story

Frehiwot starts a successful dairy business



Frehiwot is 40 years old and a mother of four children. She lives in the city of Hawassa and often struggled to juggle the responsibilities of being a mother and running a business. Her work provided the family with a modest income but kept her away from home. A different approach was needed and she took a decision that completely changed her life.

Seven years ago, Frehiwot started a business in the spice trade. This meant she had to travel a lot, but she could not get away as often as the business required. It was impossible to combine travelling with caring for her family. After several years of struggling, Frehiwot decided she needed to find work that would generate a fair income and allow her to care for her children.

Therefore Frehiwot started a small traditional dairy farm with just one hybrid cow and one heifer. She did everything herself without any equipment to support her. Despite her hard work, the poor milk yield meant her income was very low. That all changed when a dairy consultant visited her. He advised Frehiwot to find suitable training and additional equipment to support and improve her business. So she seized the opportunity to attend a

training course in dairy farm management provided by a partner organisation.

Serious business

Now Frehiwot owns more than ten hybrid cows, half of them producing an average of 25 litres of milk per day. Her business has grown into a serious enterprise. Besides producing her own milk, she buys over 100 litres of milk every day to make various dairy products such as butter, cheese and yoghurt. In the future, she wants to acquire even more cows, expand the workspace and upgrade the farm with modern milking equipment. She also plans to build a better house for her family and rent a store in town to sell her dairy products. With the advice she received, she’s well on her way to realising her dreams.

Sustainable Development Goals: Leave no one behind

Our programmes in Ethiopia are directly linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, most notably:



Dorcas in Eastern Africa

Dorcas is active in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Tanzania. These countries in Eastern Africa share borders but also cross-border root causes of poverty: conflicts, fragile ecosystems, the impact of climate change, disasters, food insecurity, youth unemployment and migration.



Our work

In Eastern Africa, Dorcas operates on the Triple Nexus of humanitarian aid, development and peace and reconciliation. We foster resilience through climate entrepreneurship, youth employment, WASH, entrepreneurship, agricultural value chain development, peacebuilding and community empowerment. We provide life-saving assistance to people afflicted by conflict and droughts. At the same time, we work towards strengthening social protection for vulnerable groups throughout the region.

Partners in Ethiopia

Our Programme Partners:

- Addids Hiwot Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation (AHISDO)
- Bole Kifle Ketema Ideroch Council
- Ethiopian Guenet Church Development and Welfare Organisations - various locations
- Ethiopian Mulu Wongel Amagnoch Church Development Organisation - various locations
- Selam Awassa Business Group

Our Strategic Partners and Donors:

- START Network
- Save the Children
- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Woord & Daad
- Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO)
- IOM
- ZOA
- Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER)
- PerspActive Ethiopia
- GIZ
- EU
- CCRDA
- Dutch Embassy
- MARA Foundation
- Swiss Contact

Partner with us!

I am Fikru Tarekegn, Country Director of Dorcas Aid Ethiopia. I enjoy working with both (inter)national and local partners. Are you interested in a possible collaboration or wondering what contribution your organisation could make? Then please get in touch with me. I look forward to exploring the opportunities for a partnership with you.

Do you have any other questions about Dorcas' work in Ethiopia or would you like more information about a specific topic? Then please visit dorcas.org/ethiopia or contact us.

Partner with us! Together we can realise lasting changes in the lives of people in need.



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We fight poverty, exclusion
and crisis. We empower
marginalised people and
communities to flourish.
This is how we follow
Jesus Christ.