



Civil Society Fund III



Empowering Citizens for Enhanced
Development and Democracy
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NEWSLETTER

EU CSF III Newsletter
Issue no 1

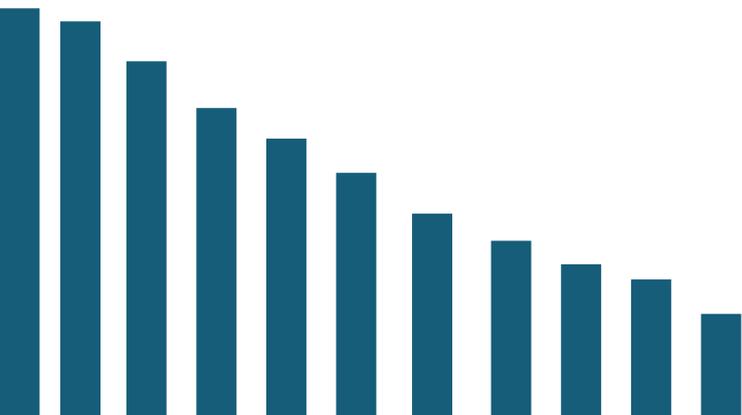
Foreword

To all our grantees and other partners, greetings from the Technical Assistance Unit! Although the third phase of the EU supported Civil Society Fund has been operational for some two and a half years, with the turmoil brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, and delays in implementation across all components of the programme, we are only just now producing our first newsletter. As such, it contains a lot of background information. However, moving forwards, with subsequent six-monthly editions, we will focus only on current events at the time. In the meantime, I hope you find this issue informative, and if you have any suggestions on content for the next edition, please let us know. Finally, as usual, we would urge all our grantees to press ahead with their accelerated action plans, and as much as possible, make up for the time lost due to covid, and in some cases, insecurity in project implementation areas.

Best wishes and stay safe!
Andy Neill and the TAU Team

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EU-CSF III: Introduction

The civil society sector in Ethiopia has played significant economic, social and political roles despite the diverse challenges it has faced throughout its history. Although notable achievements were registered by the sector both in humanitarian and development terms, regulatory, financial and operational capacity constraints have limited the extent to which it has delivered results in these areas. There is enormous expectation within civil society, and amongst citizens and other sectors regarding the potential for an enlarged space and role for CSOs. To be able to step up to this expectation, the sector needs to demonstrate its ability to connect with, and speak to, and on behalf of, the citizens.

The European Union's (EU) support to the civil society in Ethiopia stems from its conviction that a genuinely independent, pluralistic and vibrant civil society is central to the country's development and stability, to ensuring democracy and human rights, building inclusive societies and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The EU-supported Civil Society Fund (CSF), which is a joint initiative of the European Union and the Ethiopian Government, started in 2006 and was implemented up to the end of 2018 in

two phases. Following the successful implementation and lessons learnt from the two previous interventions, CSF-III began operations in November 2018.

The overall objective of CSF III is to increase the contribution of citizens and CSOs in the development and democratization process of the country. The programme aims to help civil society gain a stronger foothold in policymaking and implementation and encourages the government to establish a closer partnership with CSOs and the people. It intends to strengthen the engagement of CSOs in Ethiopia by going beyond their usual role of service provision and seeks to enhance their intermediary role between state bodies and citizens. Whilst the main means of pursuing CSF III's objectives is the provision of Action and Direct Grants (of which 27 have been signed to date), the programme also implements non-grant support interventions, especially in relation to capacity-building.

This is the maiden issue of the EU CSF III Newsletter, which will from now on be produced every six months.

EU-CSF III Technical Assistance Unit

A Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) was established under a contract with the European Union which commenced operations on 13 November 2018. The lead contractor for performing the service contract is International Consulting Expertise (ICE), in consortium with INTRAC, FCG International, and Cideal Foundation. The technical personnel of the TAU, and their contact details, are listed below.

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The Mobile Hub Staff on a Field visit



The TAU's Key Experts

TAU's Mobile Hub

In an effort to provide effective, timely and consistent technical, financial management and other capacity building field services to CSF III grantees, the TAU has established a Mobile Hub based in Addis Ababa. Although the initial plan was to establish one or two field offices in a regional location with a high concentration of grantees, the fact that most grantees' offices are situated in Addis Ababa, and their project implementation sites are widely spread across the country, made this option unviable. Hence a Mobile Hub, serving all projects in all locations, was based in the TAU's office in Addis Ababa. However, the two positions under the Mobile Hub, namely its Coordinator and Grants Finance Officer, spend most of their time out in the field, monitoring and providing technical support to the grantees.

The Mobile Hub, with support from the Key Experts in the TAU, provides hands-on practical assistance to grantees in dealing with project implementation, thereby helping to ensure that Actions adhere to contractual obligations. The hub staff provide initial guidance to Coordinators in preparing their technical and financial reports before they are submitted to the TAU for the review of the Key Experts. The team at both field and office levels also conducts initial verification of documents on technical and financial expenditure and advises grantees in applying EU procedures in their financial management and reporting. In addition, the Mobile Hub constitutes the programme's ear on the ground and facilitates two-way communications between the TAU and the grantees.

Recent initiatives organised by the TAU

Policy Influencing and Advocacy

Unlike the previous phases of the EU CSF programmes, which focussed on building the overall capacity of CSOs to effectively implement their mainly service-oriented projects, phase III has been designed to put more emphasis on enhancing CSOs' and CSO networks' capacities in policy influencing and policy monitoring. While the implementation of many CSF III projects involves action research and policy influencing strategies, the TAU engaged a Policy Expert to conduct a capacity assessment of advocacy and policy influencing with 5 grantees, and 2 non-grantee CSOs. This led to the production of a comprehensive reference manual on policy influencing by civil society which will soon be published and widely distributed both electronically and in print. The TAU also organized a two-days' training facilitated by the Expert on Advocacy and Policy Influencing

in two rounds, on 7-8 and 12-13 April 2021 in Addis Ababa. 30 participants (7 female) representing CSF III grantees and 4 non-grantee CSOs attended the training. Further to this introductory training, a larger-scale mentoring and coaching programme will be rolled out over the coming six months, focussing on three coalitions of grantees dealing with priority, policy relevant issues. This intervention will scale up the work of individual CSOs, strengthen their collective voice, and enhance their intermediary role between state bodies and citizens.



Participants at the Advocacy and Policy Influencing Training, 12-13 April 2021

Media Panel Discussion and Spot Message on 16-days of Activism to Fight Gender-Based Violence

On the occasion of the International 16-Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that took place from 25 November to 10 December 2020, the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia with the support of the TAU for CSF III conducted a media campaign to support the call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. The campaign included a panel discussion of 50-minutes on Fana TV and Radio, with panellists from PADet, OSSHD, EWLA and NEWA. The recording was made on Friday 04 December at Fana BC TV studio and was broadcast twice on Fana TV and Fana FM Radio. The subject of GBV was rigorously discussed, thereby achieving the objective of raising the awareness of the general public and highlighting the extent of the problem. The debate underlined the importance of the issue as a priority area for the public, the government

and other stakeholders to address. The work of civil society in the fight against GBV was illustrated and the support of the European Union was acknowledged when the panellists described their interventions in this area under the CSF III programme. The campaign also included a 60-seconds message on Fana Radio highlighting what is meant by GBV and its consequences, and what the public and victims should do when it occurs. It also called for all to play their part in fighting GBV. The message was broadcast five times between 04 and 08 December 2020 at prime time, just before the six O'clock News. Watch the panel discussion in the following link:

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CSO Mapping Study - 2021

The 2021 CSO Mapping study, a follow-up of the previous mapping exercise which took place in 2014, commenced in May with the purpose of undertaking a comprehensive study to provide updated, multi-dimensional information on CSOs in Ethiopia operating at National and Regional levels. This major national endeavour is being implemented in partnership with the Federal Agency for Civil Society Organisations (ACSO) and the multi-donor supported Civil Society Support Programme Phase 2 (CSSP2). The three senior experts recruited for the assignment have already had extensive consultations with all stakeholders, including selected representative CSOs, governmental counterparts, including the legislative and target beneficiaries, development partners and individuals. The field work was conducted by the consultants and experts from ACSO during the whole of July 2021, covering all regions except Tigray due to its inaccessibility because of the current conflict situation. A Reference Group for the mapping exercise, comprising members from the partner organizations (CSF-III, CSSP2, and ACSO) and the Ethiopian CSO Council, is overseeing the process and providing the necessary guidance. The report is currently being drafted for presentation in a national validation workshop planned for 22 October 2021.

Support to ACSO in Enhancing its M&E Capacity and Drafting of Directives

The Agency for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO) is restructuring itself in an effort to achieve its objectives of creating a conducive environment for civil society organizations. Among the initial activities ACSO plans to implement towards fulfilling its mandate is the development of an effective institutional Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System. Following a request for support, the EU CSF III programme deployed an M&E Expert during November and December 2020 to conduct an M&E capacity assessment within the Agency, consult relevant CSOs and government agencies, and design an M&E system with appropriate tools. Moreover, the Expert trained relevant ACSO staff on the main elements of the proposed system in a two-days' workshop in two rounds. Testing of the system has been conducted by ACSO to ensure its effectiveness, and further areas of support are being discussed between the TAU and the Agency.

In addition, EU CSF III supported ACSO in the drafting of 8 directives to facilitate the implementation of the Civil Society Proclamation (No. 1113/2019). Two Legal Experts were assigned to prepare these documents which will soon be validated in a workshop with relevant stakeholders.

Mainstreaming Gender in the Work of CSOs

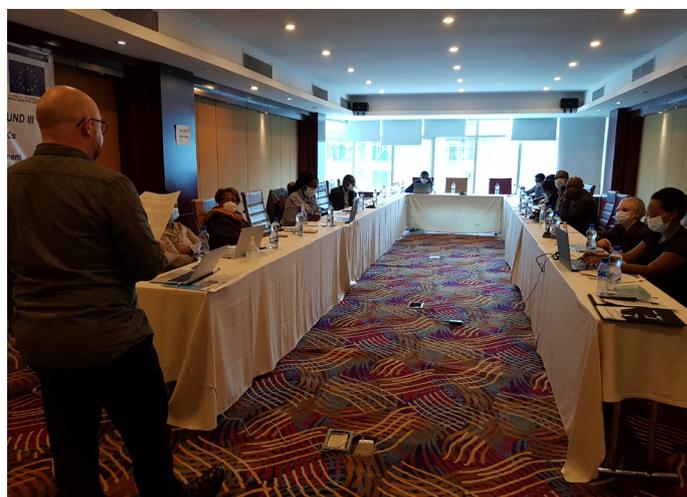


Women and girls, especially in rural areas, remain amongst the most excluded sections of the population in Ethiopia. In recognition of this fact, Gender Equality is designated as a “significant objective” of CSF III, and its activities are directly relevant to SDG 5 (‘achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’).

Whilst CSF-III aims to support all types of local CSOs, special attention is given to reaching those working on gender equality, and women’s empowerment and women’s groups. In line with this, one of the three lots of the Call for Proposals (CfP) for large grants (2019) launched under CSF III focused on gender equality, and women’s and girls’ empowerment and protection. As a result, four CSOs were awarded grant contracts under this lot. In addition, gender was a required cross-cutting theme in the other two lots and their sub-themes, under which another 19 grants were awarded. CSF-III has also provided Direct Grants to four Actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and two of them are being implemented by Women’s Organizations.

In order to support the programme and its CSO beneficiaries in further mainstreaming gender issues into their work, two experts were engaged by the TAU. To date their work has included the conducting of a GEWE Situational Analysis within the CSO sector, Training Needs Analyses with five CSF-III grantees under Lot 3 and Focus Group Discussions with a

representative sample of stakeholders, leading to the development of a draft Strategy and Action Plan. These outputs were discussed at a validation workshop on 30-31 August 2021 at the Inter-Luxury Hotel in Addis Ababa. The participants, representing non-beneficiary CSOs, grantees, government agencies and development partners, provided valuable feedback. Once finalised, the strategy will guide progress towards systematically and effectively mainstreaming gender and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in both CSF III programmatic activities and organizational policies and practices. It will also be underpinned by tailored training in priority areas and further mentoring.



Support to the CSO Council

The Ethiopian CSOs' Council was established during its first General Assembly (GA) held on 31st Dec 2020, attended by 300 founding members and invited guests, ACSO and the Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Forum (ECSF). Since its establishment, the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Council has made an exerted effort to address the legal and institutional setup requirements of the council. These have included the drafting of Bylaws, a CSOs' Code of Conduct and draft five-year strategic plan. Following the submission of a draft proposal by the ExCom to the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) for EU CSF III, both parties have been discussing the possibility of supporting relevant activities under the programme. Accordingly, a Work Plan and Budget has been endorsed by the European Union. The expected outcome of this support is to create an independent,

influential, accountable and transparent Council with the capacity to lead, implement and manage the mandates, responsibilities and functions vested in it by the appropriate laws. The TAU and the ExCom of the Council are working towards implementing the agreed areas of support, including establishment and start-up activities, finalization of the Council's Strategic Plan, publication and promotion of the code of conduct and bylaws, support to its resource mobilization efforts, communications and visibility, engagement and policy influencing activities. The TAU will provide the necessary experts and cover incidental and communication and visibility costs under this agreement. The TAU and the ExCom are currently in the process of recruiting the required experts.

CSF III Grantees' Platform



Sharing lessons, new knowledge and practices among CSF III grantees and soliciting any additional support required within the remit of the TAU, are important for improving collective effectiveness, especially for those working in similar thematic areas. Likewise, the sharing of these lessons is equally important for the sector and other stakeholders at large for scaling up successes and addressing challenges. Therefore, the TAU organized a two days' workshop, 22 to 23 July 2021, at Best Western Plus Hotel, Addis Ababa, with the overall objective of improving individual project and collective programme effectiveness and added value. The objectives of the first CSF-III Grantees' Platform Meeting were to establish the platform, to exchange experiences, lessons and

good practices towards collective and individual effectiveness, and to agree on actions related to sustainability, policy, communications and visibility, for the next six months. Participants of the platform comprised 39 (6 female) CSF III Action Coordinators' Executive Directors/Project Coordinators and their implementing partners (1 selected co-applicant from each Action). The discussions were facilitated by the TAU Experts and a Policy Non-Key Expert. The two-days' platform meeting was divided into four sessions: Session 1: Implementation Issues; Session 2: Policy Influencing; Session 3: Sustainability, and Session 4: Way Forward. Participants discussed three priority policy influencing topics in three groups and developed each group's policy influencing actions for implementation in the next six months before the second platform meeting. The three groups also discussed the challenges, good practices and recommendations to ensure sustainability of CSF III projects. The meeting also discussed the objectives, working modalities, functions, structure and assigned roles of the platform. The platform was formally established by electing a 5-members' executive committee to follow-up and coordinate the implementation of the actions agreed in this platform over the next six months.

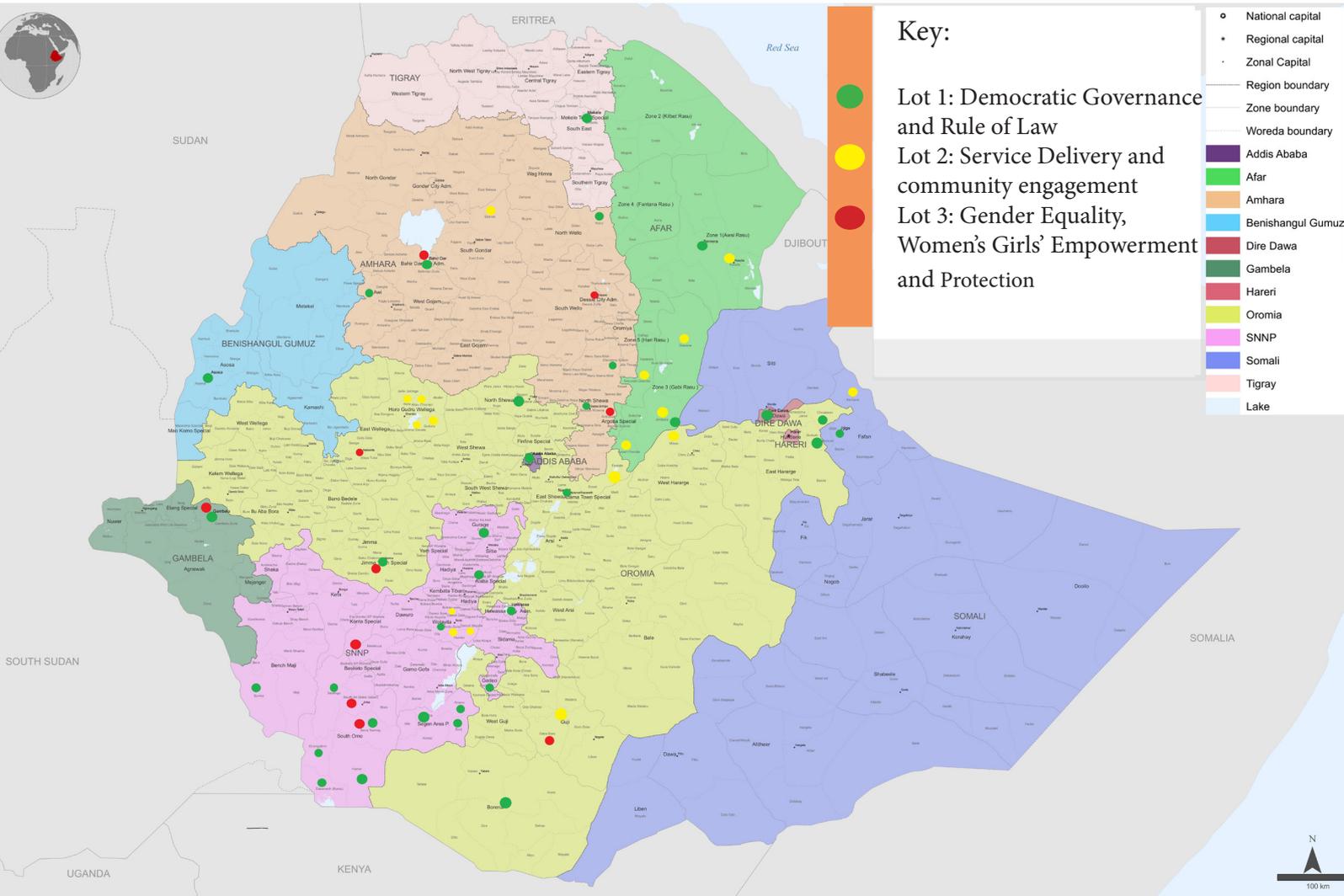
CSF-III Grants Portfolio

Since the EU Civil Society Fund initiative commenced in 2006, around 125 CSO projects have been supported. Under the current phase, the EU has committed a total grant amount of EUR 10.9 m. This was awarded to 23 lead CSOs and their networks (along with 36 partner organisations) to support interventions in democratic governance and rule of law (12); service delivery and community engagement (7); and gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment and protection (4). In addition, the programme provided a further EUR 850,000 as four Direct Grants to CSOs

responding to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. The grant component therefore now totals EUR 11.75m and is benefiting 27 lead and 39 co-applicant CSOs and their networks. As the map below reveals, these 27 Actions are spread across the country, and involve around 60 different implementation sites, while four may be described as national in scope. (For detailed information on each project, please refer to the CSF III Grants' Profiles document, which is available on our website.)

Geographic Distribution of CSF-III Actions

Ethiopia: Administrative map (August 2017)



boundaries and names shown on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
 Date: 15 August 2017 Map Name: 21_ADM_ETH_081517_AD Sources: CSA, UNCS, Field Survey Feedback: ocha-eth@un.org www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/ethiopia www.reliefweb.int

Grantee's Corner

This Edition's featured project: Don Gianmaria Memorial Development Association (DGMDA)

Don Gianmaria Memorial Development Association (DGMDA), a local civil society organization based in Jijiga, is implementing a project entitled “Building Pastoralists’ Resilience on Climate Change in Somali Region”, with its co-applicant Volenteriato Internazionale Per Lo Sviluppato (VIS). The overall objective of the project is to address the impacts of climate change on pastoralists of the project area in Awbere and Harawa Districts, Fafan Zone of Somali Regional State. The action aims to manage and protect the environment and natural resources and to reduce vulnerability and improve adaptation and mitigation strategies of pastoralists on climate change. After a 3-day training on the impact of climate change on the environment and their livelihoods, Nuria Ahmed, an agro-pastoralist community member in Kebri Nuno Kebele of Fafan Zone, became aware of the damage caused by cutting trees over many years. Like Nuria, the community living in this Kebele have seen it with their own eyes: the land is bare, the wind is getting stronger, the rains are becoming

shorter, and the heat is increasing. It was after the training by DGMDA experts that they realized why and the fact that they are contributing to these changes. The community members were organized into irrigation and nursery action groups. The EU-financed project supported the establishment of a tree nursery site, irrigation water provision, a store and onion seeds. They proudly show visitors their nursery site where they have planted thousands of indigenous trees, vegetable and fruit seedlings, soon to be transferred for plantation once the rains expected in August arrive. They have also planted red onions in place of sorghum and maize, which have not been productive due to the shortage of water and strong winds. During the last production season, the group members managed to achieve an income of 348,160 Ethiopian Birr from the sale of onions, which was unprecedented in their lifetimes. They have already planted a large area and have started harvesting. The demand for this product is so great that they can demand high prices from the traders, whose vehicles come to the farm gate for collection.



Women Beneficiaries Proudly Showing Off Their Onion Products, Kebrinuno Kebele, Somali Region

Many years ago, the area had a good coverage of trees. However, over time, with the demand for firewood and the added pressure from refugees arriving in the woreda, the trees have disappeared. With awareness of the impact of cutting trees on climate change, the community has planted significant seedlings, and has committed to continue this activity. As part of the EU-financed project, DGMDA is also preparing to support the community in implementing physical soil conservation activities and producing and selling energy-saving stoves. Community action groups are extending membership to more and more villagers to ensure that most benefit. Sustainability measures are already in place through supporting the groups to manage their activities on their own. They are currently making savings to buy seeds for the next planting season and have established a bylaw ensuring that at least half of the income should be saved. Half of the members actively participating in the management of their group are women.

Other news from EU CSF III Grantees

Toll Free Telephone Platform for Disability Information

On January 2021: ECDD launched “Minch Telephone Platform” (6768), a one-stop Disability Information Interactive Voice Response (IVR) toll-free telephone platform, under its EU CSF III supported project entitled, “Disability Rights for Increased Voice and Empowerment (DRIVE) in Ethiopia”. The platform can be used by regular mobile or landline phones to share and acquire information in Amharic on disability-related topics, such as inclusive health, education, vocational skills training services, and inclusive work and employment/livelihoods opportunities for persons with disabilities. In future, it is planned to make the platform more interactive by including sign language.

School Participation in Conflict Resolution

JeCCDO organized an awareness-raising programme on dispute resolution and the value of peace from January 14 to 25, 2021 at Chinakson, Babiley, and Efratanagidim, Oromia and Amhara regions. The programme serves 1,250 (589F) students from 26 different schools in the area. The training was delivered using interactive and participatory methods and covered topics such as Dispute Resolution, Conflict Resolution, and the Value of Peace. The JeCCDO EU CSF III project focuses on empowering students, who, armed with the necessary knowledge and awareness, will play a significant role in peacebuilding in Oromia and Amhara regions.

Advocacy Sessions on Women’s Labour and Sexual Abuse

CETU organized advocacy sessions from December 2020 to February 2021 to raise awareness on women's labour and sexual abuse, and the legal provisions to protect women's rights in industry. Ninety people (73 women), with the majority of them being in high-risk groups, from Bishoftu's floriculture farms and industrial parks attended the session. The three-day advocacy event is also expected to prevent abuse of groups at risk and rehabilitate and reintegrate people who have already been abused.

Establishment of Women & Children Friendly Court System

PHE's EU CSF III-funded project is supporting the establishment of three women and children-friendly court systems. In addition, the project has rehabilitated one existing court by providing materials like office furniture. It is also supporting the establishment of a joint committee that can coordinate the functioning of the women/girls and children-friendly court system. The committee was formed with representatives from various religious groups, Police, the Attorney General's office, Court, Area Administration, the Women's and Children's Affairs Office, and Health Office. The project is supporting the efforts in the court system to make it accessible to women and girls through arranging separate spaces and juries and works on awareness among communities towards equal access to justice.

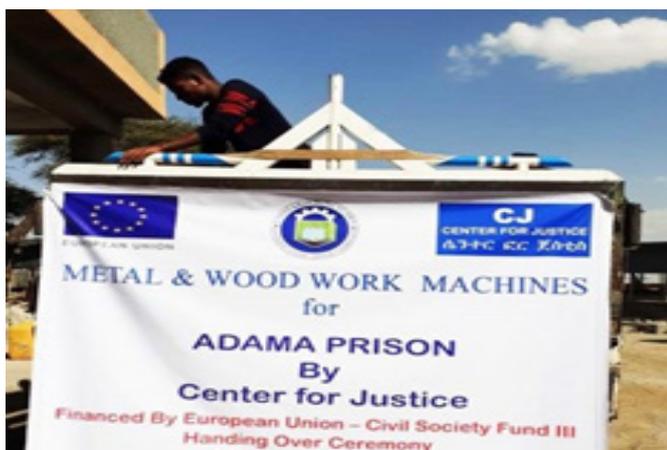
Policy Review of Pertinent Social Protection Schemes

From February to April 2021, the UPSNP National Social Protection Policy was reviewed by an independent consultancy agency commissioned by CCRDA to identify gaps in service delivery and targets. The review examined service delivery gaps and addressed the challenges of policy and programme implementation. Following its completion, five policy dialogues are planned, with the expectation that policy recommendations will be used to influence policies and allow key players to address gaps and challenges.

Promoting Positive Healthy Aging

A National Healthy Aging Club was established with a membership of 120 older People (54 women) through the Ethiopian Elderly and Pensioners' National Association with financial support from EU CSF III. The aging club will be a centre for healthy aging activities and advocacy efforts. In the future it is planned to link the club with MOH and Addis Ababa Sport's Commission. Focal persons have been assigned to support the members technically to have healthy aging activities and age-friendly physical exercise. The project aims overall to enhance the role and participation of older people and their institutions in the development and democratization process of Ethiopia.

Material Support for Vocational Trainings in Prison



On February 25, 2021, the Center for Justice handed over woodwork and metalwork tools and machines for vocational training in East Shewa Adama prison. The project is supporting capacity building efforts within prisons for vulnerable groups. An assessment was conducted in collaboration with the Adama Prison administration and TEVET to identify the necessary tools and machines that would be helpful to support the rehabilitation of the prison. Prisoners are also currently benefitting from the training provided under the project.

Hand and Face Washing Day

Kelem Ethiopia organized hand and face washing events in all its EU CSF III project implementation villages in order to create awareness on personal hygiene and sanitation. Woreda health office experts, selected community groups, students, and teachers participated in these events. A question-and-answer session took place and an award was given to the winners. The initiative also addressed the current global challenge of COVID-19 by providing information on the severity of the pandemic and prevention mechanisms such as hand washing. This activity is undertaken every month in school compounds, lead by a health extension worker and the WASH club.

A Panel discussion with Media Houses



Transparency Ethiopia conducted a panel discussion with media house representatives aimed at promoting the media's roles in democratic governance and rule of law. The panel discussion gathered media house owners, general managers, and key media personnel and discussed issues around being responsible, transparent, and accountable. Furthermore, the project has started to work with a committee from the media house owners and managers which has 7 members to work on the project's objectives by motivating the media personnel to engage themselves in the anti-corruption movement.

Women Watch Groups to Fight Negative Norms

PADet, Action Aid, and RCWDO have established 20 Women's Watch Groups (WWGs) with 311 members under their EU CSF III-funded project. The WWGs include 63 targeted females from Ankober woreda and 248 (215 females) persons from Seba Boru woredas. These groups will play an important role in increasing women's institutional, leadership, and case recording capacities, as well as ensuring horizontal and vertical linkages with key stakeholders through reporting, referral linkages, sharing best practices, and facilitating grassroots communication. The WWGs approach initiated by the project implementers supports efforts to empower women and girls to protect themselves from negative social attitudes and norms against women.

CETU Provided Training to Private Domestic Workers' Employers



of work, wages, leave, payments, etc.) and the importance of written employment contracts for DWs under proclamation number 1156/2019 and decent working conditions under the ILO convention 189/2011. During the training, one informal employer's network was established in Addis Ababa with 26 (21-female) members with the aim of encouraging employers of DWs to adopt recruitment practices that comply with national legislation and international standards. As a result of this training, participants have agreed to these national and international standards in creating decent working conditions and respect the rights of DWs. Following the training, the participants managed to convince many of their peers and got 2,368 private DW employers to sign written contracts with their DWs in line with national labour legislation.

CETU, as part of its EU CSF III project, organized training on applicable decent work standards and the rights of Domestic Workers (DWs) for 72 (55 Female) private employers in Amhara and 128 (21 Female) Private Employment Agencies (PEAs) in Addis Ababa in two sessions. The training covered the provisions of Proclamation 1156/2019 regarding working conditions (hours

Upcoming Events Under CSF III

Events	Tentative Dates (2021)
Finalisation of GEWE Strategy and Action Plan	Mid September
Training on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	End September / October
Validation Workshop of the CSO Mapping Study	22 October
Policy Influencing actions of Grantee Platform sub-groups	End September / October
Follow-up on ACSO M&E systems & Training (ACSO & CSOs)	October / November
Follow-up Training on Financial and Grant Management Procedures	4th Week of October
Validation Workshop of ACSO Directives	TBD
Context Analysis Techniques for policy advocacy and influencing work	December
Training in Resources Mobilization	December

European Union Civil Society Fund III Technical Assistant Unit



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