

SPIR II's Impact in Ethiopia

# Restoring **Hope**, Building Resilience

June 2026











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## Message from the Leaders



**Karmen Till**  
National Director  
**World Vision Ethiopia**

As Ethiopia continues its journey towards greater resilience, the lessons, partnerships, and evidence generated through the Strengthen PSNP Institutions and Resilience (SPIR II) project offers a strong foundation for what comes next. Over the past five years, SPIR II has brought together communities, government institutions, donors, and consortium partners in a shared commitment to improve the lives and futures of Ethiopia's most vulnerable children and their families. Across Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray, this collective effort has strengthened resilience, expanded opportunities, and helped communities better withstand and recover from shocks through integrated approaches that improve livelihoods, increase access to essential services, and create enabling environments in which children can survive, thrive, and realise their potential.

The true legacy of SPIR II lies not only in what was delivered, but in the systems strengthened, capacities built, and partnerships forged to sustain impact well beyond the life of the project. Together, we have demonstrated that scalable transformation is possible when investments are locally led, evidence driven, and centered on the needs and aspirations of children and their families. SPIR II has shown that resilience is not a destination, but a continuum shaped by sustained investment, local leadership, and collective action. As this chapter closes, we call on government, donors, the private sector, development partners, researchers, and communities to build on the evidence, partnerships, and local capacities strengthened through SPIR II. Together, we can scale proven approaches, deepen locally led solutions, and ensure that more children and their families across Ethiopia have the opportunity not only to withstand future shocks, but to thrive contributing to a more resilient and prosperous Ethiopia that is fit for children.



**Precious M. Mubanga**  
Senior Manager,  
Food Security &  
Livelihoods Sector,  
**World Vision USA**

As World Vision USA, we wish to express our profound gratitude to the United States Government for its generous investment and steadfast partnership in supporting the Strengthen PSNP Institutions and Resilience (SPIR II) project. Over the past five years, this journey has reflected our shared commitment to supporting Ethiopia's most vulnerable households. What began as a focused intervention has grown into a collaborative effort that has strengthened resilience and restored hope across Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray. Together with our partners, we have gone beyond activity delivery to strengthen systems, build lasting relationships, and promote integrated approaches that will continue benefiting communities well into the future.

We are especially proud of the collective dedication demonstrated by our consortium partners, government counterparts, and the communities themselves. Through this collaboration, we have improved access to essential services, enhanced livelihoods, and fostered more supportive environments for families to thrive. The strong foundation established, rooted in trust, local capacity, and community ownership, positions these communities to continue advancing toward sustainable resilience. As World Vision USA, we remain confident that the lessons learned and partnerships built through SPIR II will continue to guide and inspire future development efforts.





**Alemayehu Wassie (PhD)**  
Executive Director  
**ORDA Ethiopia**

ORDA Ethiopia would like to convey its sincere gratitude to SPIR II consortium partners for the incredible journey of learning. Over the past five years, we have contributed to strengthening resilience among vulnerable communities across nine districts in Waghimra and North Wollo zones of Amhara region. Despite the significant challenges posed by conflict and natural disasters, we remained committed to ensuring that communities receive integrated support without any interruption. Working closely with the government stakeholders at all levels, we helped strengthen systems and deliver holistic interventions that improved food security, restored livelihoods, and protected psychosocial wellbeing and mental health.

We are deeply inspired by the strength of the communities we supported, who have continued to rebuild their livelihoods and stand by one another despite significant challenges. Through close collaboration with World Vision, CARE, IFPRI, and government partners, we have established a strong foundation of trust, strengthened local capacities, and promoted community-led solutions that will continue beyond the project. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all partners and communities and remain committed to building on this progress to advance sustainable development and long-term resilience.



**Mahteme Mikre (PhD)**  
Country Director  
**CARE Ethiopia**

CARE Ethiopia's contribution to SPIR II has been instrumental in advancing resilience among vulnerable communities in five districts across East and West Hararghe zones of Oromia region. Working in a context marked by conflict and recurrent climate-related shocks, CARE Ethiopia consistently demonstrated flexibility, innovation, and strong field presence. Through integrated interventions spanning livelihoods, health, nutrition, WASH, and natural resource management, the project ensured that vulnerable households received comprehensive support to improve their well-being. Its targeted efforts in these districts helped strengthen household capacities, enhance access to essential services, and promote inclusive development outcomes, even under challenging circumstances.

In close partnership with government institutions and consortium members, CARE Ethiopia played a key role in reinforcing systems and delivering coordinated, community-centered solutions. This collaboration enabled the project to remain responsive while building local ownership and sustainability. The commitment to working hand in hand with communities fostered trust, strengthened resilience capacities, and encouraged long-term behavioral change. As SPIR II concludes, CARE Ethiopia's contributions leave behind strengthened systems, empowered communities, and a lasting foundation for continued resilience and development in the region.





**Daniel Gilligan**  
Unit Director, Poverty,  
Gender, and Inclusion Unit  
Principal Investigator,  
SPIR II Learning Agenda  
**IFPRI**

IFPRI was pleased to provide overall leadership in advancing the SPIR II Learning Agenda, in close partnership with SPIR II consortium partners. The Learning Agenda was developed to generate timely evidence to inform SPIR II program design and implementation, establish new evidence on the effectiveness of project components, and strengthen partnerships and the community of practice among Ethiopian researchers and institutions.

During the Research and Innovation phase, six formative studies were conducted to inform program adjustments during the main implementation period and to guide the design of subsequent impact evaluations. Building on these findings, IFPRI and its partners implemented five rigorous impact evaluations to assess the effects of key project interventions on a range of economic, nutrition, health, and resilience outcomes among PSNP beneficiary households. The Learning Agenda also implemented a competitive small grants program designed to support Ethiopian-led research. Six studies were selected for funding by a panel of national and international experts from more than 100 research proposals.

Through this body of work, IFPRI has generated important evidence on key development challenges, including barriers to education, child feeding practices, women's empowerment, mental health, and livelihood development among rural households. Through close collaboration with consortium partners and government stakeholders, IFPRI has ensured that research findings have informed both program implementation and broader policy dialogue. The knowledge, partnerships, and evidence generated through the SPIR II Learning Agenda will continue to support resilience-building efforts and can inform future development programming in Ethiopia.



**Daniel Abbott**  
SPIR II Chief of Party  
**World Vision Ethiopia**

I reflect with deep gratitude on the journey we have shared with communities across Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray through the SPIR II project. With the generous support of the American people, SPIR II has worked alongside households, community structures, government partners, and local institutions to improve food security and nutrition, expand access to essential services, strengthen livelihoods, support natural resource management, and build resilience in the face of conflict, climate shocks, and other challenges.

This progress has been made possible by the determination of families and communities themselves, and by the dedication of SPIR II staff, consortium partners, government counterparts, and frontline workers who have served with commitment under often difficult circumstances. It has been an honour to walk alongside these communities, and I remain inspired by their strength, leadership, and continued efforts to build more secure and resilient futures.



## Acronym

|                |                                                   |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CLTSH</b>   | Community-Led Total Sanitation and Hygiene        |
| <b>CPNP</b>    | Community-based Participatory Nutrition Promotion |
| <b>DRM</b>     | Disaster Risk Management                          |
| <b>ESAP</b>    | Ethiopia Social Accountability Program            |
| <b>FMNR</b>    | Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration               |
| <b>gPM+</b>    | Group Problem Management plus                     |
| <b>GRM</b>     | Grievance Redress Mechanism                       |
| <b>IFPRI</b>   | International Food Policy Research Institute      |
| <b>IPT-G</b>   | Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Groups            |
| <b>IPTT</b>    | Indicator Performance Tracking Table              |
| <b>IWM</b>     | Integrated Watershed Management                   |
| <b>IYCF</b>    | Infant and Young Child Feeding                    |
| <b>JRIS</b>    | Joint Review and Implementation Support           |
| <b>LASS</b>    | Linkage to Available Social Services              |
| <b>MHPSS</b>   | Mental Health and Psychosocial Support            |
| <b>MIS</b>     | Management Information System                     |
| <b>MT</b>      | Metric Ton                                        |
| <b>MUAC</b>    | Mid-Upper Arm Circumference                       |
| <b>NCG</b>     | Nurturing Care Group                              |
| <b>NDRMC</b>   | National Disaster Risk Management Commission      |
| <b>NMA</b>     | National Meteorology Agency                       |
| <b>NRM</b>     | Natural Resource Management                       |
| <b>PSNP</b>    | Productive Safety Net Program                     |
| <b>SBC</b>     | Social and Behaviour Change                       |
| <b>SPIR II</b> | Strengthen PSNP Institutions and Resilience II    |
| <b>SV</b>      | Sexual Violence                                   |
| <b>SWC</b>     | Soil and Water Conservation                       |
| <b>US</b>      | United States                                     |
| <b>VESA</b>    | Village Economic and Social Association           |
| <b>WASH</b>    | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene                     |



## Executive Summary

Strengthen PSNP Institutions and Resilience (SPIR II) is a five-year, approximately US\$200 million Resilience Food Security Activity (September 2021–June 2026), led by World Vision in partnership with CARE, ORDA Ethiopia, and IFPRI. Funded by the U.S. Department of State, it aimed to improve livelihoods, resilience, and food security for rural households in Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray. All interventions aligned with Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), strengthening systems and household well-being.

SPIR II delivered integrated, multi-sectoral support across health, nutrition, WASH, food assistance, livelihoods, and natural resource management. By the end of its fourth year, the project surpassed its participant reach target (107% achievement), reaching 830,324 people. This was partly due to non-PSNP community members benefiting from SPIR II-supported infrastructure, including newly constructed and rehabilitated health posts, water supply and irrigation schemes.

The project improved maternal and child nutrition through Nurturing Care Groups, community-based participatory nutrition promotion, Family MUAC, home gardening, and local mixed flour production while mental health and psychosocial support addressed stress and anxiety. It strengthened sanitation and hygiene behaviors alongside expanded access to safe water, and enhanced food security and incomes through food assistance, market linkages, cash transfers, and financial literacy. By rehabilitating watersheds and improving early warning and planning systems, SPIR II helped communities better prepare for and respond to shocks. In addition, the project strengthened local systems, institutions, and government capacities to sustain support for vulnerable households beyond its lifecycle.

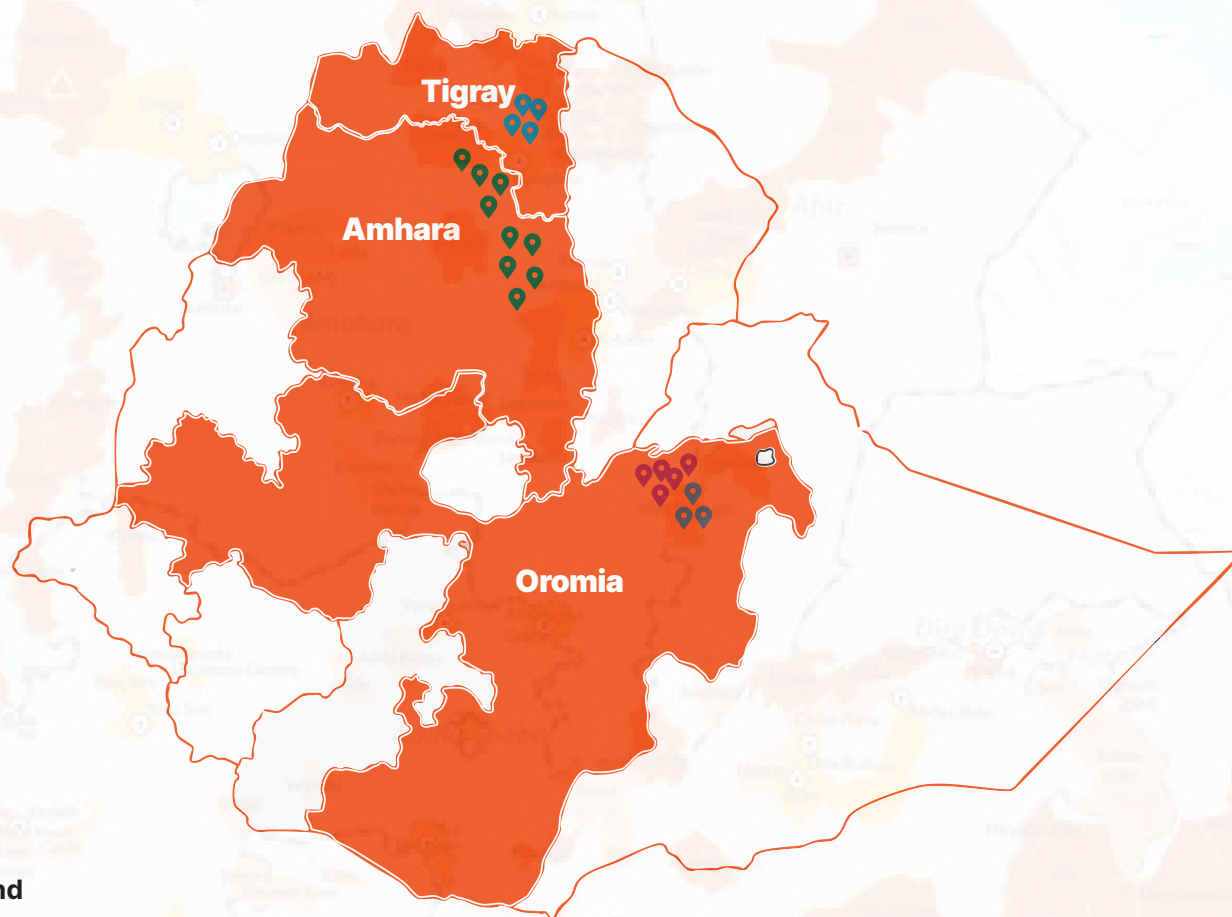
IFPRI's learning agenda generated evidence to inform program design, implementation, and policy by assessing integrated, nutrition-sensitive interventions combining livelihoods support, cash transfers, and behavior change communication. The findings showed that these approaches improved diet, consumption, and household assets while strengthening resilience and women's empowerment. It also provided insights on key challenges such as education access, child feeding practices, and mental health to guide future resilience strategies.

Together, these achievements demonstrate SPIR II's contribution to strengthening PSNP systems, improved household well-being, and sustained resilience for Ethiopia's most vulnerable communities.



## SPIR II Operational Areas

SPIR II operated in 21 districts (Woredas) across the Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray regions, working in consortium with ORDA Ethiopia, CARE, IFPRI and World Vision.



### Legend



ORDA Ethiopia's operational districts in North Wollo and Waghimra zones, Amhara region

Bugna, Lasta, Gazo, Meket, Wadla, Sekota, Gazgibila, Tsagbiji and Dahena



World Vision's operational districts in Tigray region

Enderta, Samre Tsaeda Emba and Kilite Awlaelo



CARE's operational districts in West and East Harraghe zones, Oromia region

Gemechis, Gurawa, Kurfa Challe, Chiro and Doba



World Vision's operational districts in West Harraghe zone, Oromia region

Daro Labu, Boke and Habro



## SPIR II Purposes and Achievement (September 2021 – June 2026)



**830,324**

Total participants  
(54% female)



**133,364**

Children under five  
reached with core  
nutrition interventions

**Purpose 1:** Provision of a sufficient quantity, quality, and diversity of food for vulnerable households at all times through SPIR II's comprehensive health, nutrition, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), as well as Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) interventions.



**127,520**

Metric tons of  
food distributed to  
567,541 participants



**51,707**

People received  
community-based  
mental health support



**130,636**

Pregnant and lactating  
women reached  
through Nurturing  
Care Groups via group  
sessions and home  
visits



**34,270**

Caregivers are  
growing vegetables  
at home



**52,008**

People have access to  
clean drinking water  
near their homes



**32.3**

Metric tons of  
nutritious,  
Easy-to-use mixed  
flour produced and  
sold to caregivers of  
children aged  
6–59 months

**Purpose 2:** Transforming the livelihoods of vulnerable communities through targeted interventions that strengthen the resilience of individuals and households, protect and build household assets, and promote sustainable engagement in diverse livelihoods.



**3,651**

VESAs established  
and strengthened



**58,029**

Participants engaged  
in different productive  
value chain activities



**13,508**

Participants accessed  
\$3,046,378  
in loans from financial  
institutions

**Purpose 3:** PSNP systems deliver accountable, effective, and shock-responsive services through the implementation of Natural Resource Management interventions and capacity-building activities in the Amhara and Oromia regions. In Tigray, the primary focus was on strengthening the PSNP system to enhance its resilience and responsiveness.



**46,540**

Area of watershed  
rehabilitated (in  
hectares)



**46,476**

People using climate  
information or  
implementing risk-  
reducing actions to  
improve resilience



**90 million**

Seedlings planted,  
including forage, fruit  
and forest species

## Health and Nutrition

SPIR II Health and Nutrition intervention strengthened food and nutrition security among PSNP households through an integrated approach that combined reliable food transfers to stabilize consumption and intake of diversified diets. SPIR II equipped families with knowledge, skills, and changes in social norms and promoted equitable intra-household food distribution and the consumption of animal-source foods during fasting periods, supported by fathers and religious leaders. Families gained better access to diverse, nutritious foods through practices such as vegetable and fruit gardening, poultry production, maternal cash grants, and the production and sale of Easy-to-use mixed flour.

The Nurturing Care Group (NCG) promoted optimal IYCF and child stimulation, while Community-Based Participatory Nutrition Promotion (CPNP) and Family MUAC built caregivers' practical skills to prepare nutritious diets and enabled early detection and referral of malnourished children for timely treatment. Together, these measures enhanced child and maternal nutrition outcomes, ensuring that PSNP households had consistent access to sufficient, diverse, and quality foods, while also building resilience against future shocks and supporting asset building and poverty reduction.

### Key achievements



**27,989**

Malnourished children under five maintained weight gain three months after the CPNP intervention



**32.3**

Metric tons of nutritious Easy-to-use mixed flour produced and sold to caregivers of children aged 6–59 months



**34,270**

Caregivers are growing vegetables at their homes



**130,636**

Mothers reached through Nurturing Care Groups via group sessions and home visits





## When Love with Knowledge Leads

In Habro district of West Hararghe, in Ethiopia's Oromia region, lives Jeneti, a mother whose life is defined by quiet strength and an unwavering love for children. She is a mother of six, two of whom she welcomed into her heart and home through adoption. For Jeneti, motherhood has never been limited by blood; it has always been guided by compassion.

In 2022, Jeneti's life changed when her husband became seriously ill and could no longer work, leaving her solely responsible for supporting the family. That same year, her family was enrolled in Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), supported in her woreda by the SPIR II project.

Jeneti volunteered as a Nutrition and Care Group (NCG) member, becoming a source of guidance for other women. Through NCG, supported by SPIR II, Jeneti learned about antenatal care, safe delivery, infant and young child feeding, nutrition, hygiene, and early childhood development, knowledge she had never had access to before.

Jeneti herself had given birth to her older children at home, unaware of the importance of prenatal care or health facility deliveries. She fed her children whatever food was available, not knowing the value of dietary diversity. Her household lacked even a proper latrine. But learning changed everything.

When she became pregnant with her youngest child, Berki, Jeneti applied what she had learned. She attended antenatal care, ate a varied diet, and gave birth safely at the health center. Today, Berki is three years old, healthy, active, and thriving.

Jeneti also transformed her home. She established a small vegetable garden, growing carrots, Ethiopian kale, and beets. These vegetables became an essential part of Berki's complementary feeding from six months onward. Selling the surplus provided income, allowing her to buy nutritious porridge prepared by SPIR II-trained micro-franchise women, blended flours rich in grains, legumes, and sesame seeds.

Today, Jeneti is not only raising her children but also leading by example. She has built a safe, permanent latrine. She speaks confidently to other mothers about nutrition, care, and resilience. She is working tirelessly to create a brighter future for her children, one filled with opportunity, education, and proper nutrition.







*What I like most about the NCG is the illustrated book we use during our discussions. It helps me and other mothers remember what we learned and refer back to it whenever we need.*

**Jeneti**





## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

SPIR II built on the PSNP framework by implementing community-wide and systems-level WASH interventions to address rural poverty and improve resilience. It goes beyond basic service delivery by targeting enteric diseases and sanitation gaps, strengthening households' and communities' ability to cope. The intervention improved access to safe and multiple-use water, sanitation, and hygiene practices, which are critical for better nutrition outcomes. To ensure sustainability, SPIR II integrated market-based solutions through WASH Business Centers (WBCs), providing sanitation products and operations and maintenance services, while promoting behavior change through platforms such as NCGs, VESAs, schools, and community campaigns.

In addition, SPIR II invested in water infrastructure, governance, and long-term sustainability. It supported the development and rehabilitation of water sources while strengthening WASH Committees (WASHCOs) in management and service delivery. By linking WASHCOs with WBCs and local government offices, it ensured ongoing support and introduced fee-based maintenance systems. The intervention also created livelihood opportunities through water-related work and combined demand creation, market solutions, and community-led approaches to reduce disease, improve nutrition, and enhance resilience, contributing to long-term food security and poverty reduction.

### Key achievements



**52,008**

People now have access to clean drinking water near their homes



**130,000**

People received awareness on water, sanitation and hygiene practices



**54**

WASH business centers established



**646**

Communities (villages) within SPIR II target areas have been officially verified as open defecation free (ODF)





## Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

SPIR II integrated Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) into Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) to address the interconnected emotional, social, and economic needs of vulnerable households. In contexts affected by climate shocks, conflict, and limited access to mental health services, depression, anxiety, and chronic stress undermine productivity, family stability, and recovery. Through its integrated approach, the project supported participants in improving daily functioning, strengthening relationships, and building resilience in the face of ongoing adversity.

SPIR II delivered two evidence-based, community-level interventions, Group Problem Management Plus (gPM+) and Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Groups (IPTG), through trained non-specialist facilitators, expanding access to quality mental health care in resource-constrained settings. Project staff, Health Extension Workers, and frontline personnel are trained using standardized manuals and digital tools adapted into local languages, supported by structured supervision and monitoring. By embedding MHPSS within a national social protection platform, SPIR II demonstrated a scalable, cost-effective, and sustainable, systems-based model for delivering mental health services aligned with government structures.

### Key achievements



**24,399**

Clients reached through Group Problem Management Plus (gPM+) and Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Groups (IPT-G)



**26,798**

People reached through community awareness and other psychosocial support



**510**

Clients with critical cases referred for specialized care, advancing mental health access and sustainability





## **“I Thought My Life Had Ended, But It Was Only Bending.”**

My name is Emebet. I am 40 years old, a mother of five, and I live in Habro district, West Hararghe, Oromia. This is the story of how my life began to change through determination and an opportunity.

March 2022 broke me. That month, there was a day when I wished death would take me quietly in my sleep. I was told that my daughter had died. I felt as if my heart had stopped beating that day. Before I could heal from that wound, I had already buried another child. In just two years, I lost two children. Tell me, how can a mother survive such pain?

From that moment on, I was no longer the same woman. I left Boke district, the place where I was married, where I gave birth to all my children, where every road, every house, every sound reminded me of the two children I buried. Everything in Boke spoke their names. So I left and came to Habro district, carrying my children and my broken soul.

Still, life did not stop. My children needed food. They needed a mother. But I was weak. I spent my days chewing Khat/Miraa (A plant whose leaves are chewed for a mild, alertness-boosting effect), and my nights were sleepless, staring into the darkness. I was alive, but I was not living.

Then God sent help. In June 2024, district government officers enrolled me in the Productive Safety Net Program. Soon after, Worknesh, a trained community health facilitator from the SPIR II project, came to my home. She asked me questions about my sleep, my sadness, and my thoughts. Then she said, “You are carrying too much pain alone. You need to join a group.”

I joined.

For five weeks, we met every week. That group became a place where I could breathe, a place where I could cry without shame. When I shared my story, tears poured out of me like rain. The other women listened. They understood. They carried my pain with me. I learned how to manage my thoughts, reduce stress, and slowly return to my daily activities.

My strength gradually returned. I began to sleep again at night, and I could care for my children with patience and energy. I finished the sessions feeling as though I had overcome something heavy. I was able to work again and take advantage of new opportunities.

Now I stand on my own feet. I work. I plan. I dream. For me, that is a victory.







*I lost much, but I found strength again, and today, I am building a future for my children. For me, that is a victory.*

**Emebet**



## Food Assistance and PSNP Service Delivery

The SPIR II project aligned closely with Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP 5), which supports chronically food-insecure households with seasonal food or cash transfers. These transfers are provided either through participation in community public works or through temporary or permanent direct support for clients unable to work, including pregnant women, people with illnesses, older adults, and people with disabilities. To complement PSNP transfers, SPIR II imported more than 30,000 metric tons of U.S.-sourced food commodities each year to deliver life-saving assistance to targeted households.

SPIR II strengthened key PSNP service delivery systems, with a strong focus on the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and the timeliness of transfers. Before SPIR II, GRM systems had low visibility, limited capacity, and slow response times, leading to unresolved complaints and targeting errors. SPIR II addressed these issues by training local committees, raising community awareness, and using the PSNP MIS to better track and resolve grievances.

A comprehensive needs assessment revealed gaps such as irregular review meetings, low sectoral coordination, limited frontline training, and weak readiness for components such as Linkage to Available Social Services (LASS). SPIR II responded through targeted training, mentoring, system strengthening, and close collaboration with government partners at the federal, regional, woreda, and kebele levels. This combined approach enhanced institutional capacity, improved accountability, and contributed to more effective, coordinated, and sustainable PSNP service delivery.

### Key achievements



**567,484**

People received  
food assistance



**127,520**

Metric tons  
of food distributed  
to project  
participants









## Rebuilding a Life, Embracing Hope

At just 27, Angatu has overcome significant challenges, showing remarkable strength, resilience, and determination. She lives in Habro district, Oromia, Ethiopia. As a dedicated mother of five, she is determined to break the cycle of poverty and early marriage that she experienced in order to provide a better future for her children.

Angatu, the fourth of ten children, was forced into marriage at 15 after her parents separated, as her mother hoped it would ease the family's burden. However, she soon faced hardship, her much older husband was unemployed, leaving her to support the family through small-scale khat farming, while his addiction made home life unsafe.

After the birth of her fifth child, Angatu chose to leave the abusive situation. She moved out with her children and began rebuilding her life as a single mother, working as a day laborer while renting a home.

"I was doing everything I could to meet my family's basic needs, but with five children, it was incredibly hard," Angatu says.

In 2021, Angatu enrolled in the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), which provides food and financial assistance to help stabilize her household. Delivering food to PSNP households throughout the lean season is a critical component of SPIR II.

This support helps families meet their basic food needs while avoiding harmful coping mechanisms such as selling productive assets. As a PSNP client, Angatu receives monthly food aid, including sorghum, split peas, and vegetable oil, for herself and her children. Despite their limited income, her children are healthy and well-fed thanks to these food rations.

Today, Angatu supplements her income by working on farms and hopes to move into small-scale trading. She believes that this will provide enough financial support to keep her children in school. Angatu remains determined. She is committed to ensuring that her children have a proper childhood and access to opportunities that she did not have.







*My biggest dream is for my children to finish their education and live a better life. I do not want them, especially my daughters, to experience the hardships I faced.*

**Angatu**





## Livelihood

SPIR II's livelihood interventions aimed to improve the lives of PSNP households by building resilience, protecting assets, and promoting diverse on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm livelihoods. Key approaches included Village Economic and Social Associations (VESAs) for savings and community dialogue, Producer Marketing Groups (PMGs) to strengthen collective input purchasing and sales, and partnerships with private actors to ensure timely access to inputs. Extended Market Agents (EMAs) link farmers to markets.

The project also supported PSNP clients with a US \$300 cash transfer, along with financial, business, and technical training, helping those without access to formal loans. Financial forums improved coordination between financial institutions and government, enhanced loan access, and tailored products for PSNP households. As a result, households increasingly access formal finance and engage in value chain activities.

SPIR II promoted women's empowerment through microfranchising and supported youth with skills training and job linkages. Overall, these interventions supported men, women, and youth in building skills, increasing productivity, and participating effectively in market systems.

### Key achievements



**3,651**

Village Economic and Social Associations (VESAs) established and strengthened



**58,029**

Participants engaged in different productive value chain activities like poultry, shoat fattening and ox fattening



**\$11,773,291**

Sales generated from those different value chain activities



**13,508 (51% female)**

VESA members accessed \$3,046,378 in loans from financial institutions









## Senait's Growing Hope

Senait is a mother of two living in Kilite Awlalo district in the Tigray Region. For years, life was a daily struggle. Without farmland or a stable source of income, Senait depended on irregular day labor to support her mother and her young son. Every day was uncertain, and providing food, education, and hope for her family felt like an uphill battle.

In 2024, PSNP activities in her community were supported by the SPIR II project, opening new opportunities for Senait. She became a member of a Village Economic and Social Association (VESA) group and was identified as one of the poorest households in her community. Through SPIR II, she received \$300 in cash support, an amount that would become the seed for lasting change.

Senait began with four goats and received training in business management, livestock production, and poultry farming. Within four months, she exceeded expectations by selling 25 chickens for 17,800 Birr (\$114) and reinvested in 75 more chicks. As her business grew, she secured 60,000 Birr (\$385) in additional capital and expanded her poultry enterprise.

After five months, she sold 25 chickens for meat, earning 18,000 Birr (\$115), and reinvested in 100 chicks. With continued support from SPIR II-trained market agents and veterinary services, she maintains healthy livestock and reliable access to inputs.

Now a member of a Producer Marketing Group, Senait produces about 30 eggs daily, keeps five for her family, and sells the rest, ensuring a steady income and improved food security.

Beyond income, Senait's nutrition improved through Nurturing Care Group sessions. She grew vegetables like Ethiopian kale, carrots, and beets, enhancing her diet during pregnancy and generating extra income from surplus produce. Now, she prepares nutritious porridge for her six-month-old daughter using locally available ingredients, giving her a healthy start.

Senait's progress has inspired her son to continue his education and dream of expanding the family business into dairy production. Senait plans to expand her business by building a proper poultry house and investing in dairy, securing a better future for her family.







*The cash support was an important seed in growing my business, and I am grateful for it and for all the skills I gained through the project.*

**Senait**



## Natural Resource Management and Disaster Risk Reduction

SPIR II strengthened Natural Resource Management and Disaster Risk Management through an inclusive, landscape-based Integrated Watershed Management approach. The project supported local watershed teams in identifying degraded areas, developing inclusive management plans, and implementing soil and water conservation measures such as terraces, bunds, check dams, and agroforestry.

PSNP households actively contributed through public works activities, including FMNR, enrichment planting, fodder development, and organic farming. At the same time, livelihood opportunities such as beekeeping, tree seedling production, and small-scale irrigation helped ensure that restoration efforts translated into improved incomes and enhanced resilience for PSNP households. The project also promoted joint household decision-making through Couples-Based Sustainable Land Management.

To strengthen resilience to climate and economic shocks, SPIR II enhanced early warning and disaster risk management systems by improving coordination among national and local institutions and expanding access to climate information. It built the capacity of local committees to monitor risks, develop contingency plans, and coordinate timely responses. Through integrated watershed rehabilitation, strengthened early warning systems, and community-driven planning, SPIR II improved soil productivity, enhanced ecosystem health, reinforced local institutions, and supported sustainable livelihoods for PSNP households.

### Key achievements



**46,540**

Area of watershed rehabilitated (in hectares)



**90 million**

Seedlings planted, including forage, fruit and forest species



**46,476**

People using climate information or implementing risk-reducing actions to improve resilience









## Restored Land, Renewed Futures for Youth

The Ifabass Youth Group was formed in February 2023 as a Youth Village Economic and Social Association (VESA), bringing together motivated young people to improve their livelihoods through saving, learning, and collaboration. By meeting weekly and pooling small savings, members built trust and financial discipline. Training in shoat fattening, financial management, and business development equipped them with practical skills to turn their ambitions into income-generating opportunities.

Their progress was supported by the rehabilitation of the 15-hectare Oda Leku watershed in Daro Labu district, implemented through the PSNP with support from SPIR II. Since 2022, the initiative has benefited 215 households by improving water availability and increasing fodder supply, strengthening both environmental sustainability and local livelihoods.

The improved watershed directly enabled the group to adopt a cut-and-carry system for goat fattening, ensuring sufficient feed while protecting the land from overgrazing. This approach allowed environmental restoration and livelihood activities to reinforce each other, creating a sustainable foundation for the group's business growth.

Building on this momentum, seven members established a small enterprise. With a loan of 175,000 Birr (\$1,112), they purchased 14 goats and later sold them for 300,000 Birr (\$1,900). They reinvested their profits, growing their savings to 140,000 Birr (\$878) and total capital to 320,000 Birr (\$2,000). The group now aims to expand into ox fattening and increase their capital to more than one million Birr (\$6,000).

At the individual level, 23-year-old Fami Jemal embodies the group's impact. After her father's death, she became the primary provider for her family and joined the PSNP to cope with hardship. Alongside farming on the family's one-hectare land, she engaged in small-scale trade to sustain her household.

Through VESA savings and loans, Fami began goat fattening and eventually opened her own shop with 170,000 Birr (\$1,080) in capital. Now financially more secure, she plans to expand her business further. Together, Fami and the Ifabass Youth Group demonstrate how training, access to finance, and collective action can empower young people to build resilience and transform their futures.







*Oda Leku watershed is now green, with grass and trees brought back to life. We can now fatten goats, earn income, and easily access fodder and water.*

**Fami**





## Family Engagement

SPIR II strengthened family-based support and protection through community and school approaches that challenge harmful norms and promote positive behaviors. The Family Engagement Approach engaged groups of 15–20 men, also from PSNP households, including leaders, in discussions on gender equality, caregiving, and shared decision-making using a structured manual.

In schools, Critical Reflection Sessions involved adolescents in biweekly peer discussions on early marriage, violence, substance abuse, and menstrual hygiene, improving girls' confidence, participation, and well-being.

These efforts created safe spaces for dialogue, encouraged positive behavior change, and strengthened relationships within PSNP households. They also helped increase girls' participation and reduce harmful practices.

The project also improved services for survivors of sexual violence through upgraded One-Stop Centers, safe spaces, and stronger coordination among service providers. It trained local committees, raised awareness through community groups, and reduced access barriers with transportation support.

In Tigray, the SV Pocket Guide mobile app supported frontline workers. Together, these efforts enhanced the quality of care, strengthened protection systems, and promoted safer, more supportive communities.

### Key achievements



**35,094**

Men trained as allies in supporting women and girls to challenge negative social norms, attitudes, and practices



**10,040 (5,389 girls)**

Students trained on preventing early marriage, sexual violence, menstrual-hygiene challenges, and substance-abuse risks



**1,384**

People received medical, psychosocial, and legal support through SPIR II-supported One Stop Centers









## Shamila's Change of Heart

Shamila and Seada, a couple living in Boke District, are parents of five children. For years, their family struggled to meet even the most basic needs. Their sole source of income came from their small plot of land, where Shamila cultivated khat. Although Seada worked tirelessly alongside him, her contributions were limited to labor; she had no voice in decision-making, especially when it came to finances.

"As the head of the family, I believed it was my responsibility to control everything, our assets, income, and decisions," Shamila recalls. "My wife had no say. I did whatever I wanted, when I wanted. I also treated her with a lack of respect and dignity. I mismanaged our income, spending it carelessly without saving."

Shamila spent much of his time chewing khat, and his behavior often led to conflict and violence at home. Life in the household was defined by hardship, fear, and inequality, until a new opportunity for change arrived.

Through the SPIR II project, Shamila was invited to join the "Walgargarsa" men's group, where he attended eight discussion sessions with other men in his community. The sessions challenged harmful norms and encouraged equality, shared decision-making, and better family practices, transforming his perspective.

"I am grateful that I attended the sessions," Shamila says. "I learned that being a good husband and father means more than providing income. It means caring for my children, supporting my wife, and working together as a family. I now understand the importance of promoting good nutrition, equality, and respect at home."

"If I had to describe it in a few words, I would say it is like our home went from darkness to light," Seada says with a smile. "It feels like I am living in a dream."

Shamila gradually abandoned his harmful behaviors. He began sharing household responsibilities, caring for the children, and, most importantly, inviting Seada into discussions and decisions that shape their lives. Their relationship evolved into one built on respect and partnership.







*Growing up in a culture that suppressed women led me to believe my actions were right. Looking back, I hurt my wife and children and failed myself by distancing her. I have since apologised for not being a good husband and father, and we now live peacefully together.*

**Shamila**



## **SPIR II's Learning Agenda**

Over five years, SPIR II's implementation research, led by IFPRI, generated critical evidence to guide adaptive programming in Ethiopia. The learning agenda was delivered through three complementary streams: 12 IFPRI-led studies focused on impact evaluation and policy influence, 8 implementer-led studies by World Vision supporting real-time program adjustments, and 6 small research grants exploring emerging issues and local innovations. Within this framework, flagship IMPEL Graduation Model randomized controlled trial found that combining livelihoods cash transfer, nutrition counseling, and monthly maternal cash transfers improved child nutrition, resilience, and economic outcomes. Children achieving a Minimum Acceptable Diet rose by 120%, household consumption by 10%, savings and assets strengthened, and stunting fell by 7 percentage points, while in the control group stunting increased from 37% to 57%.

Conditional cash transfers for youth increased secondary school enrollment and reduced child marriage, particularly when introduced before primary school completion. Sustainable land management interventions improved adoption of climate-smart practices by 20–30 percentage points, boosting production and women's dietary diversity. In fragile and conflict-affected areas, cash transfers improved economic outcomes, while combining them with group-based therapy strengthened both economic and psychosocial well-being. Importantly, the delivery of mental health interventions through government Health Extension Workers showed outcomes comparable to project-led delivery, supporting sustainability and scale through public systems.

Formative research and pilot studies enabled continuous program refinement and practical adaptation. Evidence highlighted barriers to complementary feeding, education access, and maternal nutrition, leading to targeted program improvements such as revised Nurturing Care Group materials and expanded scholarship support. Pilots such as Family MUAC demonstrated that simplified, cost-effective training models could achieve substantial accuracy improvements, while narrative group therapy showed strong reductions in trauma symptoms. Overall, SPIR II's learning agenda confirms that integrated, evidence-based, and adaptive approaches are essential for achieving sustained improvements in resilience, nutrition, and livelihoods in complex contexts.







## Environmental Safeguarding

Environmental safeguarding was at the heart of SPIR II's approach to sustainable implementation. Moving beyond compliance, the project integrated proactive measures such as ecosystem restoration and community resilience building to meet environmental standards, minimize negative impacts, and promote sustainability. Its implementation process included developing Initial Environmental Examinations (IEEs), establishing environmental guidelines, delivering training for partners, conducting environmental and social screenings, preparing site-specific mitigation plans, ensuring continuous monitoring, and learning from best practices. Field visits conducted across West and East Hararghe Zones in early 2024 provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of these efforts.

The project recorded notable achievements in FY 2024, including the completion of 33 Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plans (EMMPs), 570 screenings, and capacity-building support for development agents. Field observations highlighted environmentally sound water supply schemes, successful tree nurseries, and effective natural resource management initiatives. Livelihood support activities, such as composting, contributed to reduced emissions, while commodity warehouses applied appropriate fumigation and safety practices. The project integrated natural resource management into water projects, strengthened community ownership, and used indigenous practices like pest management and vermicomposting to boost sustainability and resilience.









## Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)

Over its five-year life span (2021–2026), the SPIR II project successfully embedded Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) into its core operations, strengthening evidence-based decision-making and program responsiveness. Rather than treating CLA as a standalone function, the project integrated it across all components to enhance collaboration, promote continuous learning, and enable timely adaptation. Key achievements included establishing a dedicated CLA team, developing a five-year CLA strategy, launching a centralized Knowledge Management (KM) portal, and implementing a project-wide communication approach. Through strong partnerships with government and nongovernment stakeholders, as well as community engagement platforms, SPIR II fostered a culture where data and evidence consistently informed project adjustments.

The project generated more than 20 studies and learning products, conducted regular analyses such as IPTT reviews and mini-KAP surveys, and institutionalized reflection through pause-and-reflect sessions. These efforts led to practical program improvements, such as rescheduling WASH activities to increase participation. SPIR II also strengthened institutional memory through its KM portal, exit interviews, and documented best practices, ensuring knowledge is preserved for future resilience and food security initiatives in Ethiopia. Overall, its CLA approach leaves a strong legacy of adaptive management, strategic learning, and effective knowledge sharing for future programming.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) and Management Information System (MIS)

SPIR II has been diligently focusing on digitalization to gather data through mobile devices, aiming to enhance data quality within the monitoring and evaluation system through various phases of piloting and rollout to 8 out of 21 districts. Data was effectively collected in five of these eight districts during the last reporting period, demonstrating a notable improvement in data quality through the digital system. The data collection utilized CommCare as the data collection tool. Subsequently, the data was stored in SQL server for staging, and visualize using Power BI, thereby establishing a comprehensive MIS framework.









## **SPIR II team**

SPIR II is delivered through a strong consortium of World Vision, CARE, ORDA Ethiopia, and IFPRI, supported by a diverse team of 1,459 qualified and dedicated staff. This workforce brings together a wide range of technical expertise, including health, nutrition, mental health, WASH, livelihoods, social development, youth engagement, natural resource management, learning and measurement, enabling the project to deliver truly integrated, multisectoral interventions. The combined strengths, perspectives, and commitment of staff across all partner organizations have been fundamental to SPIR II's success, ensuring high-quality delivery, innovation, and responsiveness to community needs. Together, this diverse team has played a critical role in strengthening systems, empowering communities, and advancing resilience across Ethiopia.

### **SPIR II Sector Leads**

#### **World Vision USA**

1. Precious M. Mubanga - Food Security & Livelihoods Sector, Senior Manager
2. Daniel Assafa - Sr. Legal Grants & Contracts Officer
3. Michael Assamoha - Sr Finance Program Manager
4. Michael Wagg - Design Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist
5. Shimali Senanayake - Senior Communications Program Officer
6. Beryl Oranga (PhD) - former Senior Program Research Specialist

#### **World Vision Ethiopia**

1. Daniel Abbott - SPIR II Chief of Party
2. Michael Mulford (PhD) former SPIR II Chief of Party
3. Tadele Taye - Operations Director
4. Adugna Tafa - Admin and Finance Director
5. Retta Gudisa - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Lead
6. Natinael Tadesse - Food Assistance Manager
7. Tigist Mamo - Health and Nutrition Technical Advisor
8. Robel Araya - MHPSS Technical Advisor
9. Kibret Mamo - NRM, DRR/ CCA Technical Advisor
10. Roba Fantalle - PSNP5 Strategic Engagement Advisor
11. Barasa Berhanu - Environmental Compliance Lead
12. Henok Metaferia - Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) Lead
13. Melkamu Negassa (PhD) - Project Manager/ West Harrarghe zone, Oromia region
14. Haftu Girmay - Project Manager/ Tigray region

#### **CARE Ethiopia**

1. Sarah Hurlburt - Deputy Chief of Party, SPIR II Project
2. Mohammed Kebede - SPIR II Project Coordinator
3. Asrat Kelbessa - Agricultural Livelihoods Senior Advisor
4. Kalkidan Bekele - Social Development Advisor
5. Solomon Girma - Youth Employment and IGA Advisor
6. Lelisa Mitiku - Financial Linkage Advisor
7. Abdulfetah Adem - Agricultural Production and Market Linkage Advisor
8. Netsanet Bekele - East Harrarghe Zone Project Manager
9. Melaku Girma - West Harrarghe Zone Project Manager



**ORDA Ethiopia**

1. Mequanint Dagnew - Project Manager/ Amhara region
2. Destaw Negussie - Lasta Cluster Manager
3. Moges Dessalegn - Wadla Cluster Manager
4. Getiwe Sefiew - Sekota Cluster Manager

**IFPRI**

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2. Melissa Hidrobo - Sr. Research Fellow
3. Jessica Leight - Sr. Research Fellow
4. Hellene Tabet - Sr. Research Analyst
5. Lucy Billings - Sr. Project Manager

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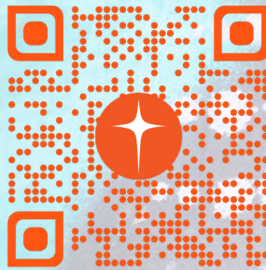








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