

SOS SAHEL

Working for the better future of smallholder farmers and pastoralists

ETHIOPIA



Trout Fishing in Bale

Working with the people of Ethiopia to tackle poverty through better management of their environment and Value Chain Development

FACT SHEET



Who we are: Background, History and Transformation

SOS Sahel International (UK) started work in the Sahelian Drylands Zone, both in Western and Eastern Africa in 1984. In Ethiopia, it began rural development projects focusing on food security and Community Based Resource Management (CBRM) five years after its establishment in 1989.

In 2005, SOS Sahel Ethiopia was registered (No. 1986) as an independent national NGO by the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice. SOS Sahel Ethiopia is a national NGO with 18 years of experience in working with rural communities and the Ethiopian government to tackle poverty. More specifically, the agency is working with smallholder farmers and pastoralist people of Ethiopia to tackle poverty through Sustainable Natural Resources Management and Value Chain Development.

The general assembly is the highest governing body of the organization and a seven member Board of Trustee gives the overall guidance on policy and programmatic functions, and mentoring the senior management of the organization. The management team is led by an Executive Director, who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the business of the organization and for the oversight of projects.

Vision - SOS Sahel Ethiopia envisions a world without poverty

Mission - SOS Sahel Ethiopia is dedicated to improve the living standards of smallholder farmers and marginalized pastoralists through better management of their environment and improved access to fair and sustainable agricultural markets. SOS Sahel Ethiopia aims to eliminate chronic food insecurity and for ensuring environmental sustainability. The environment is crucially important to the livelihood security of farmers and pastoralists, and SOS Sahel's work to date supports its view that improved environmental management can reduce community vulnerability and help them to climb out of poverty. Poverty is not simply an issue of income; it is also about the vulnerability of the poor, their exclusion by the state and society and deprivation of their basic rights. Thus, central to SOS Sahel Ethiopia's development interventions is empowering the poor to exercise their environmental, social, civil, cultural and economic rights.

Core Values: We highly value community empowerment, learning from the community and others, equity and environmental justice. Partnerships, networks and forums are central to our integrated and multi-sectoral approach. We are a learning organisation, committed to learning from past experiences and partners. The Boran saying 'We take our animals to the fora [distant pastures] collectively, but at the end we milk our own cow individually, meaning that by taking care of the environment collectively, each person gains individually best illustrates SOS Sahel Ethiopia's belief in partnership.



Our Approach: How we make a difference

Our approach is complementary to the core values. We follow a three pronged approach, to bring lasting difference to the lives of smallholder farmers and pastoralists:

- **Innovative interventions** - implementing innovative field interventions with the participation of multiple actors; community, appropriate structures of local, regional and federal government, and other like-minded development actors.
- **Action Research** - documentation and dissemination of field level empirical evidence and community good practices. Such is used for quality programme design and increased policy engagement. Most researches have been undertaken in collaboration with nationally and globally credible research institutions, and other development actors.
- **Networking and Policy Influencing** – we are a member of the Sahelian Alliance of organizations specializing in semi arid and arid areas. We are highly networked with other Civil Society Organizations (CSO) within the country, regionally and globally.





What we do: Core business of the organization

Environmental Conservation and Management:

Reverse environmental degradation and ensure environmental sustainability by promoting processes and actions for participatory, equitable and inclusive management and use of natural resources.

Improve Household Food Insecurity

Reduce chronic food insecurity by building the asset base and improving livelihood capacities of the most vulnerable farmers and pastoralists

Build the Capacity of Government Institutions: Build /strengthen the organizational capacity of partner government institutions to deliver responsive and effective services and engage with their local constituencies.

Empower Community-Based Organizations (CBOs): Empower smallholder farmers and pastoralists and their institutions to make effective to claim and obtain services, and actively engage in self-reliant local development.

Action Research: Undertake action research in partnership with African and European Academic Research Institutions to generate empirical evidence that informs policy making process.

Value Chain Development

We support individual farmers and farmers' organizations to access fair and sustainable agricultural markets. We enhance their technical and managerial capacity so that they can identifying their development priorities, and actively engage both in national and global value chain development.

Policy Advocacy and Lobbying

Engage in policy dialogue with government and funding agencies on issues of poverty, rights, equity, and sustainable development, applying the lessons of practical field experiences and findings from an action research works.

Humanitarian Assistance: The agency provides emergency assistance when humanitarian crises occur.



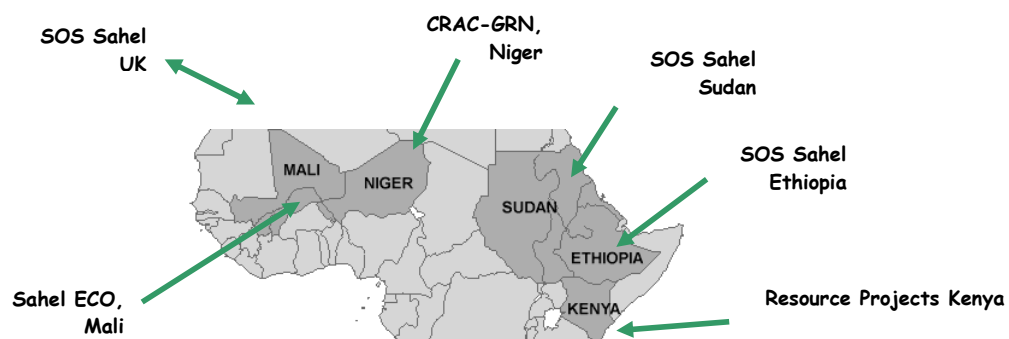
How we work

SOS Sahel Ethiopia believes and works in partnerships. We work closely with multiple actors; local communities and their institutions, and government agencies at all level. SOS Sahel Ethiopia also works with academia, the private sector, financial and research institutions, and local and international funding agencies.

SOS Sahel Ethiopia is the first chair and the founding member of the Sahel Alliance. The Sahel Alliance is an informal network of NGOs working in Africa's drylands who believe in the value of shared learning and collaborative action. Despite important differences, the countries of the Sahel face very similar challenges. By uniting their efforts, Alliance members believe that they can help build a critical mass of organisations that are working towards the same end – i.e. policies and practices that are better informed by the realities of life in Africa's drylands.

The Sahel Alliance evolved out of a process of devolution within SOS Sahel UK. Its members are for the most part SOS Sahel UK's former country offices, now independent national NGOs which value and wish to maintain the links between them. However, membership of the Alliance is dynamic and open to any Africa-based organisation, which shares its aims and values.

The Sahel Alliance: current members:



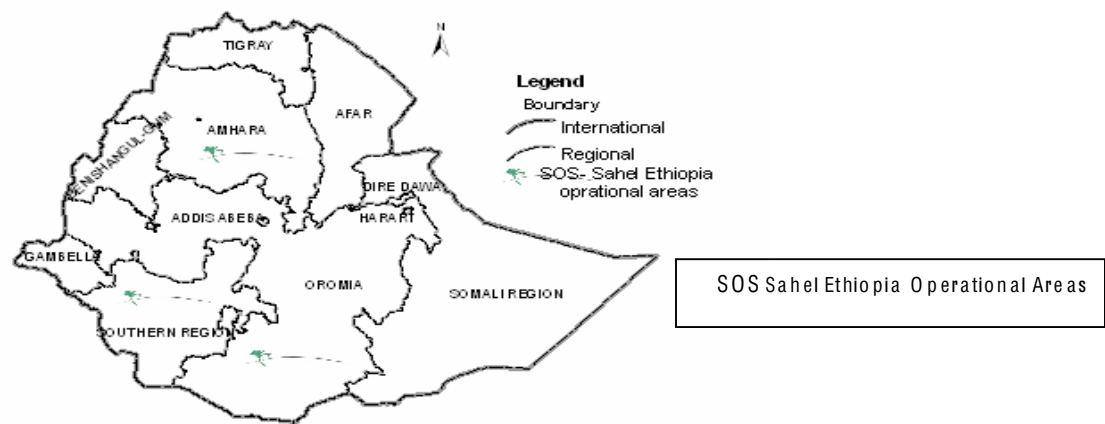
Members of the Sahel Alliance have the following qualities in common, and it is these, which make it distinctive:

- Cutting-edge experience in participatory management of dryland common property resources at the local level.
- A commitment to scaling up this experience, and thus institutionalising sustainable, long-term change within governments and other institutions.
- An interest in linking practitioners in West and East Africa – regions which are all too often separated by their different languages and historical paths.
- Experience of, and commitment to, supporting African-led action research.



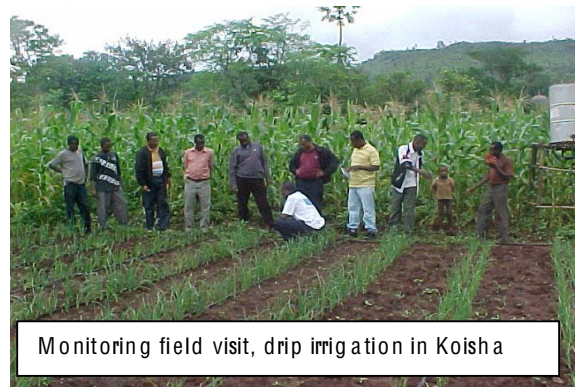
Where we work and our achievements

SOS Sahel Ethiopia works in extremely remote rural areas with smallholder farmers and marginalised Pastoralist communities in SNNPR, Oromia, Amhara, Afar and Somali regional states. The impact areas of SOS Sahel Ethiopia are indicated in the map below.



Koisha Smallholder Wealth Creation Project

SOS Sahel started its first operation in Ethiopia in the Koisha district of SNNPR in 1989. In its long journey, the organization has been engaged in relief, rehabilitation and integrated rural development projects. Through time it has developed a comprehensive and multi disciplinary development approach which allowed the local people to take the lead in land use planning, and managing and protecting the critical watersheds. Training of trainers was provided for regional and local government departments in Farmer Led Integrated Watershed Management (FLIWM) approach. Its work includes creating gender and HIV/AIDS sensitive seasonal employment, popularly known as Employment Based Safety Net (EBSN) for vulnerable households, to enable them to protect assets. It also piloted and supported the institutionalization of social protection mechanisms through *idir* funeral associations. As a result, the majority of smallholder farmers have diversified their farm income. Lessons have been documented, published and disseminated within the country on farmers' soil fertility management in Koisha and effectiveness and impact of cash/food employment schemes on poverty reduction.



Monitoring field visit, drip irrigation in Koisha



Currently, there is an ongoing Smallholder Wealth Creation Project in Koisha. The project aims to enable small farm households to increase agricultural production, generate income, and improve the quality of life. It focuses on supporting the households to improve the productivity of high value crops by engaging in irrigated agriculture, helping them access better markets for their produce, and creating alternative income generation opportunities (honey and small livestock development) for those smallholders who do not have easy access to water resources.

Food Security Capacity Enhancement Programme (FSCEP)

The Food Security Capacity Enhancement Programme was designed to consolidate the previous work on Farmer-Led Integrated Watershed Management (FLIWM) and to build the capacity of local implementing partners.

The programme focuses on building the capacity of decentralized government structures to respond effectively to local needs as well as strengthening the ability of local communities; CBOs and kebeles in Lanfaro, Kachabira and Shashego to demand services from the government and to manage their own development initiatives.



Key impacts of the project include:

- Local partners' capacity to implement Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) strengthened;
- Improved agricultural productivity, diversified and increased incomes from on-farm and off-farm activities;
- Developed local social protection mechanisms, and micro best practices in food security programming linked to macro (both regional and national) policies and strategies.



Smallholder Livelihoods Creation Programme (SLIP)

SLIP is a joint SOS Sahel Ethiopia and International Development Enterprise (IDE) Ethiopia initiative. It was launched in September 2006 and will be implemented over a four-year period. It aims to improve the food and livelihood security status of smallholder households in three target woredas: Awassa Zuria in Sidama Zone and Meskan and Mareko woredas in Guraghe Zone of the SNNPR.

The SLIP will introduce and adopt the *Poverty Reduction through Irrigation and Smallholder Markets* (PRISM) approach to enable smallholder farmers to become entrepreneurs who transform natural resources (land and water), human resources (labour and know-how), and agri-inputs into high value agricultural products that can be marketed at economically rewarding prices. The introduction of Affordable Micro-Irrigation Technologies (AMITs) in the target woredas will allow increasing productivity and will integrate smallholders into the market system. The achievement of these strategies will enable small farm households to increase agricultural production, generate income, and improve their quality of life. The project is fully coherent with the Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Community Initiative Promotion (CIP), Kafa Development Programme

SOS Sahel Ethiopia through CIP has piloted and developed alternative development models on how best to work in partnership with multiple actors (NGO, community institutions and the private sector and the government). It has been working in Kafa zone by building the capacity of farmers' organizations to enter into a new business specialising on three high value crops: coffee, spices and honey.

This is a new experience and opportunity for the country in working with commercial projects with smallholders. Kafa zone in SNNPR State is known for its Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) and is ideal for cultivation of the same with high amounts of precipitation over nine months of the year. However, poverty remains entrenched among marginal groups in Kafa like the *Menja* and *Manna*, and the potential for income generation is not exploited. An important part of the CIP is to enhance the social and economic status of women, and to address the social exclusion of marginalized groups from development. The CIP approach is to link economic gain to social inclusion so that economic activities benefit all sectors of Kafa society in general, and in particular those discriminated groups to become fully engaged in local development.





Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project (BCFMP)

This was one of the first collaborative forest management programmes that has succeeded in putting the community at the centre of natural resources management, by working in close partnership with the regional and local government departments and the traditional Borana *Gadda* institution. This project has helped transform conventional, government-led natural forest management to a Participatory Forest Management (PFM) approach; enabling local people secure their resource rights. For the local communities, involvement in the PFM process is their first real experience of ownership of a development process. The practice has become a strong incentive for the local people to protect the forest on which their livelihoods depend. This project has made a significant contribution to changing the view that pastoralism is damaging to the environment in Ethiopia.

The second phase of BCFMP; Participatory Forest Management Programme (PFMP) is a collaborative effort with FARM-Africa, who are involved in similar PFM initiatives in Bonga (SNNPR) and Chillimo (Oromia).



Participatory Forest Management in Borana

A PFM manual has been developed by the programme and adopted by regional and federal governments in Ethiopia. In addition to this, based on lessons and challenges on piloting PFM, SOS Sahel Ethiopia and FARM-Africa in collaboration with other stakeholders organized an International Conference on *Participatory Forest Management, Biodiversity and Rural Livelihoods in Africa* in March 2007 which brought together prominent figures from academia, development circle, key government policy makers from Ethiopia, different African Countries and other global forestry based institutions (please visit, [www. Pfmp-farmsos.org](http://www.Pfmp-farmsos.org)).



Bale Eco-region Sustainable Management Programme (BERSMP)

BERSMP is a tripartite initiative involving SOS Sahel Ethiopia, FARM-Africa and Oromia Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development. The programme will be implemented in two phases from 2006-2011. It targets 14 woredas in Bale and West Arsi zones, Oromiya Regional State. Implementation of the first phase programme started in February 2007 in four priority woredas: Goba, Harena Buluk and Mena from Bale, and Nensebo from West Arsi.



This Programme focuses on integrated eco-region management and improving livelihoods through natural resources based rural enterprise development. The Bale Eco-Region Sustainable Management Programme seeks to enable local communities to play a central role in sustainable natural resources management supported by government services, across the whole Bale Massif. The goal is to mutually enhance the unique biodiversity and vital ecological processes of the Bale Mountains Eco-region, and to improve the social and economic well being of the communities dependent on the eco-region's natural resources.

Pastoralist Food Security Partnership Project (PFSP)

This is a three-year joint SOS Sahel Ethiopia and Action for Development (AFD) collaborative project launched in September 2006. The Project is under implementation in Borana zone - Yabello, Arero and Dirre *Woredas* and in Guji Zone-Liban *woreda*. The overall objective of the project is to improve food security by improving pastoralist livelihoods in southern Oromia. The project will combine the distinctive development approaches of AFD and SOS Sahel Ethiopia and builds upon their extensive experience of working with Pastoralists in Borana and Guji zones.

Pastoral Livelihood Initiative (PLI) Drought Cycle Management

SOS Sahel Ethiopia has been working as a technical advisor in NRM and transitional livelihoods for the Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative-PLI- being implemented in pastoral areas of both Oromia and Somali regional states since 2005. The agency is building the capacities of a consortium NGOs through training, field based technical support and on participatory pastoral resource mapping, problem identification and analysis. The consortium getting SOS Sahel Ethiopia's support brings together Save the Children US, Save the Children UK, Lay Volunteers International Association (LVIA), Pastoralist Concern Association Ethiopia (PCAE), Ogaden Welfare and Development Association (OWDA) and GAYO Pastoral Development Initiative (GPGDI).



Gender and Pastoral Development Action Research

The Gender and Pastoralism Action Research Programme aims to support better understandings of gender and ways of working with NGOs, government and partners to provide communities with increased information and capacity that will help them make better decisions about their future, and allow them to be more demanding from development service providers.



Women's income generating activities

This project is financed by IDRC and Oxfam GB, and is under execution in four pastoral communities, Borana, Somali, Afar and South Omo. Activities under this program include:

- Conducting Youth Forums;
- Women's Enterprise Training; and
- Exchange and learning visits within the country and to Somaliland.

Smallholder Apiculture Development: Bees Products Trade Promotion Programme

The smallholder Apiculture Development Programme was born out of more than a decade of experience in Meket Woreda, Amhara Regional State in developing technologies and participatory approaches to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. The first phase of the Bees Products Trade Promotion Programme started operation in 2003, covering four Woredas: Meket, Bahir Dar Zuria, Gonder Zuria and Dangila. Later it was expanded to another two new woredas; Gozamin and Woreilla in the second phase.

The programme focuses on promoting the production of high quality bee and wax products, linking smallholders to domestic and international markets. Since July 2003, the project has organized and legally registered six Beekeepers Cooperatives and a union, created with links to credit facilities. These cooperatives own and lead the project with the technical backing from SOS Sahel Ethiopia. The introduction of adapted Top-Bar hive technology into these cooperatives has dramatically improved honey production by reducing the time spent on harvesting, and increasing the quantity of honey traditionally (5 - 8 kg) produced to 30 - 40 kg per hive. High quality processing, packaging and transportation techniques have also added value and the marketing cooperatives are proud owners of the *Amar* organic honey brand, beeswax and other products now available in many supermarkets in Addis Ababa. Market surveys have shown that there is a promising opportunity for *Amar* honey to become a valuable international export.



The agency has developed a regional Resource Centre at Bahir Dar to provide technical and marketing information to a wider group of beekeepers (for more information please see: www.zembababees.org).

Action Research and List of Publications

Our research focus is on increasing smallholder production, developing appropriate technologies for marginal areas, and the integration of indigenous values, local knowledge and practices into the development interventions. Our research to date has succeeded in creating forums among policy makers, researchers, and practitioners to promote more appropriate and effective policies. SOS Sahel Ethiopia's action research thematic areas include: soil fertility management, food security, natural resource management, policy research on land rights and extension, and gender and pastoralism. Findings from such action research are published nationally and internationally, and disseminated to various actors. Some of our publications are:

- *Farmers Perceptions of Soil Fertility Change and Management* - This is a book focusing on the key problems of Ethiopia's soil fertility management and narrates on how to mobilize local farmers' knowledge. It is a book widely used in Ethiopia and outside.
- Contributions to the *Securing the Commons* series of IIED and SOS Sahel International UK, in particular on sources of conflict and shared management mechanisms between stakeholders of pastoral areas.
- *Experience of Cash for Work in Kindo Koisha*, published by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Critical assessment of the impact of employment programmes in protecting asset depletion of the resource poor households and creating community assets. This publication had significant role in the design of the ongoing government led PSNP in Ethiopia.
- *Action research on Land Titling - Can it work for the poor?* - A question of huge strategic significance for Ethiopia and other African countries with similar socio-economic development-carried out with International Institute for Environment and Development (www.iied.org).
- *Action research on the silting of Awassa Lake*. As a result of this research first steps are being taken to conduct problem analysis, devise strategies for managing the catchments of Awassa Lake, one of the Rift Valley Lakes with diverse fauna and flora, is increasingly silting up. SOS Sahel is leading an initiative to bring together all the other government and civil society actors to address this challenge.
- Gender and Pastoralism : Rangeland and Resource Management in Ethiopia ; Vol. 1
- Gender and Pastoralism : Livelihoods and Income Development in Ethiopia : Vol. II
- Gender and Pastoralism : *Economic Social and Cultural Change in Ethiopia*
- Field Manual in Gender and Pastoralism
- Video showing the positive images of pastoralist women



What makes us different; areas of expertise

Our strength combines experience in community based natural resource management including forestry, rangelands management, soil fertility, land and water development, agriculture, food security, pastoral and dry land development, cooperative promotion, action research, gender, marketing, private sector development, humanitarian response, participatory technology innovation, training and technical support for CBOs and government departments.

Key lessons and Future strategies

We have piloted, scaled up and institutionalised innovative approaches in community based NRM, value chain development, and farmer led integrated watershed management and PSNP. Having been transformed from being an international to a national NGO, our immediate plans are to build on past and ongoing work in the following areas:

- Pro poor value chain development
- Community based NRM
- Participatory Forest Management (PFM)
- Enhancing the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) implementation capacity of the government partners

Sheep rearing by rural women

Sukare Nasir (left) and Shifite Ramiso (Right), live in Hule Gutancho Kebele of Shashogo Woreda, SNNPR. Shifite received two sheep under FSCEP credit scheme in September 2005. The sheep gave birth to two lambs, which Shifite handed over to Sukare five months later, according to the scheme.



After she paid back her credit, she obtained three more lambs and currently she has five sheep. Sukare who was on the waiting list for one year received two sheep from Shifite. She now has a total of four sheep together with the kids. Two sheep that were given before one year have now become nine and we believe that this figure will continue to grow and show significant impact in the lives of such rural poor women.



From an International to a National NGO

In 2002, SOS Sahel International UK (of which SOS Sahel Ethiopia was a country programme) began a process of transformation in which its former country programmes have become independent African NGOs partnered to each other as members of the Sahel Alliance. This change reflects a wider shift in the international development sector towards locally led development initiatives that are no longer dominated by the North. It is also very appropriate to Ethiopia's local context where power has been decentralised from federal to regions and lower government structures within Ethiopia. The UK organisation continues to provide training and capacity building support to SOS Sahel Ethiopia, as well as acting as an advocate for its work internationally.

Our evolution from international to national NGO has entailed a new identity, and one that affords us the opportunity to be part of a larger civil society movement within Ethiopia. We have a team of 50 qualified and experienced programme and about 100 administrative staff. The programme staff have diverse expertise in food security, agronomy, natural resource management, pastoral development, gender, farm enterprise development and humanitarian response among others.

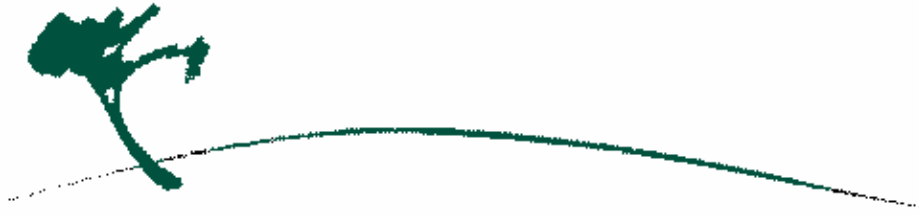
SOS Sahel Ethiopia's Major Donor Partners

Most of our earlier and on going projects are funded by: The Royal Netherlands Embassy, Embassy of Ireland , Oxfam GB, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), European Union(EU), Christian Aid, Comic Relief, Norwegian Embassy, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), DFID, Dryland Co-ordination Group (DCG), Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF), Trocaire/Cafod, CordAid, USAID, and CRDA.

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