

M&E report

Name of project: Tsebiqiley Adigrat Gardening Project

Project implementer: Orthodox, Muslim & Catholic Unity Charitable Association (OMCUCA)

Lead organization: WHEAT Mentor Support Trust (WHEAT MST)

Donor: AFFORD, African Diaspora Small Grants Fund for Economic Development

Tsebiqiley Adigrat Gardening Project is a project operating in City of Adigrat, Tigray regional state. OMCUCA & WHEAT MST are implementing the project. It is funded by AFFORD. The objective of the project is to improve the quality of life of 97 orphaned children and other people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. The project targets orphaned children and their guardians, poor women making their living of paid-sex (prostitution) and poor heads of households living with HIV/AIDS. OMCUCA implemented the project for the last six months. During this time, the project reached 97 orphaned children and their guardians with economic empowerment activities. The target beneficiaries were provided gardening skills training and then established a small gardening association. Strong Technical support is being provided by partner staff (WHEAT MST).

We intend to use this evaluation to ensure sustainability in the current project site and to use the learning in order to replicate the gardening project in other nearby weredas (districts)

Drawing on consultations with WHEAT MST staff, OMCUCA faith leaders and project staff, key stakeholders, service users, and other relevant community members, this report sets out the findings of the evaluation conducted. It outlines:

- Intended outcomes of the gardening project;
- Strengths and constraints of the gardening project; and
- Recommendations for sustainability strategies and for replication and expansion of the gardening project into other weredas and regions.

Methodology of the evaluation

Data for the evaluation were collected in the following ways:

- semi-structured interviews with selected target beneficiaries, concerned government officials, WHEAT MST staff involved in the gardening project, OMCUCA faith leaders and project staff.
- A desk review of project documents
- Focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries, potential gardeners, volunteer mentors, partner staff and OMCUCA faith leaders.

A total of 43 people were interviewed in this evaluation, either through semi-structured interviews or by FGD. There were 24 female participants and 19 male participants. Of the total number of participants, 17 were target beneficiaries, 9 were key stakeholders, 1 was partner staff (WHEAT MST), and 11 were OMCUCA faith leaders and project staff and 5 relevant community members. The collection of this data necessitated visits to each of the interviewee's home or work place. The specific ages of interviewees were not gathered. However, there was a range of ages that participated in the evaluation, from orphaned children under 18, to men and women over 60 years of age.

Key issues mentioned by interviewees

OMCUCA ever since its inception has established a strong bond of cooperation with various government offices. Of these offices, the Adigrat City Administration office, Small and Micro Enterprises office and the Office of Labor and Social Affairs of Adigrat wereda are closely assisting the gardening project.

Here are some of the responses of our interviewees on the gardening project.



W/ro Masho Nugusse

Office of Labor and Social Affairs

"In our city Adigrat, there are quite significant number of poor men and women living with HIV/AIDS. There are hundreds of children who have lost both or one of their parents by AIDS. Our Office's practical observation witnesses that the impact of HIV/AIDS on the infected and affected people, particularly those living in abject poverty, is enormous and their number is large enough to merit project intervention from the side of concerned government and civil society organizations. But now, many thanks to **AFFORD, WHEAT MST & OMCUCA**, the gardening project is implemented to improve the livelihood option of the targeted beneficiaries in our city through the establishment of multipurpose urban agricultural farm. The project has started playing an encouraging role in **reducing unemployment in our city. Many housewives, street children and jobless heads of households living with HIV/AIDS are moving into work.** We also believe that, this project has its own part in **reducing crime in the city** because **some orphaned children** have been involved in **anti-social activities** as a **desperate measure of survival instead of schooling.**"



Ato T/Lidet Desta
Mayor, Adigrat City

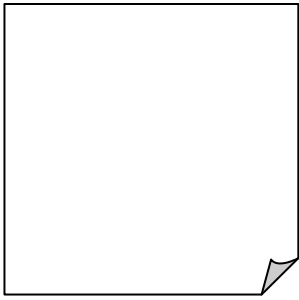
“Currently, in Ethiopia, due to rapid economic growth and high number of population, the issue of obtaining land is not as such an easy task. Some organizations, associations and investors have been requesting our municipality to provide them the plot of land as we gave to OMCUCA for the gardening project. It is weighting all these options that we lastly reached at an agreement to supply about 4000 sq meters to OMCUCA. Now we feel proud of our decision. We are watching certain improvements in the physical farm infrastructure development and a glimmer of hope in the targeted beneficiaries. We are working closely with the project and we are directing our agricultural experts to consult the gardening project in identifying the best possible feasible alternatives that maximize economic benefit for the targeted beneficiaries. Beyond its societal and economic values, the project has also undeniable role in **improving the climatic condition** of our city. A good beginning is half done!”



Ato Goyteom G/Selassie
Small-and Micro-Enterprises Office, Adigrat wereda

“Our office has recognized beneficiaries of the gardening project into legally organized association so that the government assists them in establishing **market linkage with potential customers** such as hotel owners, Adigrat University, Adigrat Hospital and other potential customers of the farm. The project is of paramount contribution in **enhancing employability in the city**. **Young people are moving into job and increment in their earnings** is certain. Our office will also provide them **technical support and loan**

service as it does to every other small business groups organized according to small-and micro-enterprises regulation promoted by the Government.”



Did not want to reveal her identity

Project Beneficiary

“We have started seeing the glimpse of hope now. I’m single mother of one child. OMCUCA is supporting my child 400 ETB monthly. But it is quite difficult to lead our life through this amount of money. So I was running small bar that sell alcohol as a pretext to cover prostitution as my main job of living. And I was always at the very edge of negotiation for the payment of sex; therefore, I was subject to sexual harassment, which carries a huge amount of risks including HIV/AIDS. But after I joined the gardening project I have started seeing the glimpse of hope. **Now my livelihood option and my life style are changing; and it is the legitimate time to increase my level of income.**”



Abba W/Selassie Tesfay
Executive Director, OMCUCA

“The project site is found in 06 kebelles (sub-districts) of Adigrat city, where most disadvantaged population of the city live. There is lack of public services and project intervention from benevolent organizations. There are many poor men and women living with HIV/AIDS, unable to earn the very basic necessities. There are a lot of children in the City who live in difficult situations due to lack of support services, and there are many young girls and women in the kebele whose livelihood is earned from prostitution. There are many local bars in the kebele, where people do indulge in alcoholism to suppress

the daily difficulties. Many lives have been lost due to fights among drunk people. It is in recognition to the plight of these people that the gardening project was set up in this particular kebele. So far, the project is yielding hopeful results. And the local community has developed a sense of ownership in the project. More than **12,900 ETB** has been **raised from the local community in a single day.**”



Dr. Hailu Hagos
Executive Director, WHEAT MST-UK

"Having been raised in poverty in this community, I know what it feels when someone is denied a decent living. I am therefore very happy to be part of this project. I really admire the active involvement of the beneficiaries and the sense of ownership that every stakeholder has created of this project. I should be very grateful for all the support we got from the City Administration, Office of Labor and Social Affairs and the like. I appreciate their presence in the site and would like to thank them for their co-operation. I urge other governmental and non governmental bodies to follow suit. With a continuous support from our Government and our People we will make poverty history. Our donors including the current funder of this particular project, AFFORD, expect us to show tangible results in changing the lives of disadvantaged groups. I am confident that OMCUCA's staff, volunteers and its membership will fully implement our action plans. We all need to work hard for the sustainability of our project"

Strengths

- ✓ OMCUCA has performed an encouraging local resource mobilization works to help the gardening project. And the local community has developed sense of ownership in the project. Hence, the matter of **phasing strategy** could have gotten an answer.
- ✓ Like in other projects, OMCUCA is following cost efficient and flexible approach in implementing the gardening project.
- ✓ The project is full of dedicated people to bring change.
- ✓ There is shared vision among the project community.
- ✓ OMCUCA using the religious leaders is providing moral support for the beneficiaries so that every member works in group not only as a means to earn a living for his/her respective families but to develop sense of sympathy and mutual support for each other as rooted in the respective religious values of every member.

Constraints

- The project lacks financial capacities to respond to the local demand. It seeks further financial support.
- OMCUCA has implemented the project in Adigrat wereda with limited resources, while the adjacent weredas they still request for similar service.

Overarching recommendations

- ❖ Pledge for additional land need to be persuaded. Because, the farm is accommodating three identified agricultural sectors in one: vegetable and fruits production, poultry and Sheep fattening.
- ❖ Perennial spring to irrigate vegetables at a portion of the given farm should be developed as soon as possible. Currently water is being fetched from nearby alternative of water resources.
- ❖ The scope of the gardening project should not only be limited in agricultural activities. Beyond that, following the greenery of the land, it should be an area for recreation; swimming pool, cafeteria and the like.

