



Islamic Relief
Ethiopia

TWO DECADES OF COMPASSION, HOPE, & RESILIENCE

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023**

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Islamic Relief

Ethiopia





Executive Summary

Islamic Relief Ethiopia (IRE) marked its 20th anniversary in 2023 with remarkable achievements in humanitarian relief and sustainable development. Over the years, IRE has touched the lives of more than 8 million individuals through integrated programs in food security, education, health, and water access. Despite challenges such as inflation, climate change, and conflict, IRE maintained its commitment to serving Ethiopia's most vulnerable communities, impacting over 719,321 people in 2023 alone. This report highlights our milestones, financial resilience, and strategic direction for 2024.



ISLAMIC RELIEF

ETHIOPIA

**WHERE COMPASSIONATE HANDS COME
TOGETHER TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY.**



Message from the Country Director

Dear Colleagues, Friends and Supporters,

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of Islamic Relief in Ethiopia, we reflect on two decades of unwavering commitment to serving the most vulnerable communities across our nation. This milestone is not just a testament to our longevity but a tribute to the resilience and compassion that define our mission.

Since our inception, Islamic Relief Ethiopia has stood as a beacon of hope, providing lifesaving aid, sustainable development solutions, and empowerment initiatives to those in need. From emergency response during crises to long-term projects that foster self-reliance, our journey has been guided by the principle of serving humanity with dignity and compassion.

Over the last two decades, we have reached a total of 8.6 million people in need through both humanitarian and development assistance. Our efforts have spanned across key sectors, including food security and livelihoods, water and sanitation, health and nutrition, access to education, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, as well as seasonal programs.

In just the last six years alone, our budget, programs, and staffing portfolio have more than tripled. We now operate with an annual budget of GBP 17 million and a dedicated team of over 200 staff members working across three regional states and one administrative region: Somali, Oromia, Afar, and Addis Ababa.

None of our achievements would have been possible without the dedication of our staff, the generosity of our donors, the trust and support of the communities we serve, and the ever-growing collaboration with our partners in government and civil society organizations. Together, we have transformed countless lives, creating tangible and lasting change in humanitarian emergency relief and development assistance.

Looking ahead, as we navigate new challenges and opportunities, Islamic Relief Ethiopia remains steadfast in our core values of excellence, compassion, accountability, sincerity, social justice, and custodianship. With your continued support, we will forge ahead, striving to reach even more individuals and families in need, ensuring that no one is left behind.

On behalf of Islamic Relief Ethiopia, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our staff, donors, and partners for their invaluable commitment and support, which have allowed us to uphold our mission and make a lasting impact.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been part of our journey. Together, let us continue working toward a future where compassion drives action and hope is turned into reality.

Warm regards,
Ahmed Abajobir, Country Director, Islamic Relief Ethiopia



Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW): Four Decades of Trusted Humanitarian Impact

Islamic Relief is a faith-based independent relief and development agency working to save and transform the lives of some of the world’s most vulnerable people. Established in 1984, we now work in over 40 countries across the globe assisting individuals, families and communities through emergency response and development projects that typically help over 10 million people each year.

, we strive to make the world a better and fairer place for the billions of people still living in poverty.

For 40 years, Islamic Relief Worldwide has stood as a beacon of compassion and solidarity, tirelessly working to alleviate the suffering of those most in need. Founded in 1984 by Dr. Hany El Banna and a team of volunteers in Birmingham, UK, the organization emerged from humble beginnings, initially focused on delivering emergency relief to war-torn and disaster-stricken areas. What started as a small, heartfelt initiative has evolved into a global humanitarian force.

In the 1990s, Islamic Relief’s role in the Bosnian War marked a turning point by providing life-saving aid to refugees and displaced people, the organization’s work during this dark period laid the foundation for what would become an internationally recognized agency. From this critical moment, our mission expanded to address not only immediate crises but also long-term development—helping communities build back stronger through access to healthcare, education, clean water, and livelihoods.

Islamic Relief’s approach to aid is deeply rooted in Islamic principles of justice and mercy. Programs like zakat (charitable giving) and waqf (endowment) empower communities and offer tangible hope to the disadvantaged, redistributing wealth to foster a better life for all. The organization’s commitment to transparency and sustainability sets it apart in the global humanitarian landscape, ensuring resources are maximized for those in dire need.



Through disasters such as the Indian Ocean tsunami and the Syrian refugee crisis, Islamic Relief has been at the forefront, providing emergency food, shelter, and care to millions. But their mission extends beyond immediate relief; we work to rebuild shattered lives and strengthen resilience against future challenges.

A powerful advocate on the global stage, Islamic Relief collaborates with major international institutions, tirelessly campaigning for policies that combat poverty, defend refugees, and confront the global climate crisis. our efforts are unwavering in upholding human dignity and justice, transcending borders, religions, and ethnicities.

From emergency response to community empowerment, their work touches lives in profound ways, always guided by their commitment to serve humanity, regardless of faith or other background. We embody the true spirit of humanitarianism, nurturing hope where it's needed most.

- IRW is a member of the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) as well as the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International(HAP-I) in the UK
- It has also a consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council
- Is signatory to the code of conduct of the International Red-Cross and red Crescent Society
- Has an MOU with the African union

IRW is a policy leader in the arena of Islamic humanitarianism, developing distinctive and practical approaches to key issues affecting our world today including climate change, gender justice, forced migration, peacebuilding, child protection, and inclusion.

Our Islamic values and insights influence all aspects of our work, sitting alongside our decades of development experience in helping to shape humanitarian and social justice approaches in the broader sector.

Islamic Relief In Ethiopia:

Two Decades Journey Of Compassion, Hope and Resilience

In the vast, arid expanses of Ethiopia's Somali region, where pastoralists herded their camels and goats in search of sustenance, the year 2000 marked a devastating drought that cast a long, oppressive shadow over the land.

Nearly 10 million people were affected, according to official UN estimates, and the situation for livestock was even worse.

For many, daily meals became a desperate struggle as the relentless sun scorched the earth, drained rivers, and withered the once-lush greenery that had sustained both life and livelihoods.

Amid this crisis, Islamic Relief stepped in, determined to mitigate the devastating effects of the drought by providing emergency aid to the hardest-hit communities.

In its early days, the organization operated from a modest office that could best be described as "one staff, one room, and one chair." Yet, it was filled with warm-hearted volunteers unwavering in their dedication to making a difference.

In those early days of establishing the organization in Addis Ababa, the goal was clear: to reach the unreachable and serve the most vulnerable across the country.

Through determination and compassion, Islamic Relief Ethiopia (IRE) began restoring hope to a region consumed by despair.

Thus, Islamic Relief in Ethiopia began relief work at the devastating year, responding to the severe drought that plagued large parts of the Somali region.

Four years later, in 2004, IR officially opened its office in the country. Since then, Islamic Relief Ethiopia has been engaged in emergency relief responses and integrated sustainable development programs. Inspired by the Islamic faith and guided by our values, IRE believes that people with wealth have a duty to those less fortunate regardless of race, political affiliation, gender, or belief.

Islamic Relief is a faith-based humanitarian relief and development organization fully committed to humanitarian principles and standards. Islam underpins our organizational identity, values, and culture and informs everything we do.



Our Vision

Inspired by our Islamic faith and guided by our values, we envisage a world where communities are empowered, social obligations are fulfilled, and people respond as one to the suffering of others.



Our Mission

Exemplifying our Islamic values, we will mobilize resources, build partnerships and develop local capacity.



Our Values:

We are guided by the timeless values and teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, the prophetic example. Our organization is committed to 5 key values:

Sincerity

We are driven and motivated by sincerity to God and our duty to humanity.

Excellence

A commitment to excellence is a hallmark of our operations, programs, and conduct towards the vulnerable people we serve.

Compassion

Every life is precious, so we join other humanitarian actors in easing the suffering caused by disasters, poverty, and injustice.

Social Justice

We empower poor and vulnerable people to have their rights fulfilled and to achieve their God-given potential.

Custodianship

We value and protect the Earth and its resources, including its people, and we aim to honor the trust people place in us by being transparent and accountable.



Where We Work

Islamic Relief Ethiopia operates across various regions of the country, with its main office located in Addis Ababa. Our activities extend to the sub-cities of Addis Ketema, Lideta, and Kolfe Keranyo.

We also have a strong presence in the Somali Region, including Fafan Zone (Jigjiga, Haraw, and Grusum), Afder Zone (Hargelle, Elkere, Bare, and Chereti), and Liban Zone (Dekasuftu, Filtu, Gorobakasa, Goradamole, and Karsadula).

In the Afar Region, we are active in Zone 1 (Semera/Logiya), Zone 4 (Ewa, Teru, Gulina, Awra, and Yallo), and Zone 2 (Barahle and Abala).

In the Oromia Region, we work in the Borena Zone (Dire, Yabello, Elwaye, and Dubuluk) and the West Hararghe Zone (Meiso, Chiro, and Doba).



Strategic Focus Areas

i. Reducing the Humanitarian Impact of Poverty and Natural Disasters

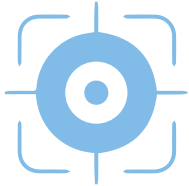
Under this strategic area, IR addresses drought and conflict-affected populations with emergency and recovery programs, including WASH, FSL, health and nutrition, livestock protection, and education in emergencies. Additionally, seasonal programs include Qurbani meat distribution during Eid al-Adha, Aqeeka, Adak and Ramadan food package distribution.

ii. Empowering Local Communities to Emerge from Poverty and Vulnerability

In this strategic area, we focus on improving livelihoods, building resilient communities, capacity building, and providing basic services like water development for pastoralists, children, urban youth, and widowed women.

iii. Mobilizing People and Funds to Support Our Work

We collaborate with international and local humanitarian organizations to raise funds and implement projects alongside relevant government offices and communities



Program focus areas and expertise

Integrated Child Welfare Program:

Focused on the well-being and development of children, ensuring access to education, healthcare, and protection from harm.

Food Security and Livelihood Program:

Aimed at improving food security and economic stability through agricultural support, income-generating activities, and access to markets.

Health and Nutrition Program:

Providing healthcare services, nutrition support, and promoting healthy behaviors to improve the overall health and well-being of communities.

Education Program:

Enhancing access to quality education by constructing schools, supplying educational materials, and training teachers, with a special focus on girls' education.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Program:

Construction of water facilities in schools and community setting in need of access to safe water. Conducting water trucking operations during emergencies and installing solar pumps.

The Impact and rightsholders reached Over the Last Two Decades

Thanks to the generous support of our funding partners, IRE has spent the past 20 years supporting poverty-alleviating development and humanitarian projects, directly impacting over 5 million people. This work has demonstrated a documented positive impact over two decades.

Our Program's Impact on Household Economics and Poverty Reduction

Orphan sponsorship programs (OSP) are vital in improving the lives of orphaned children and their care givers(guardians), offering them a path out of poverty and a chance to live healthy, productive lives. These programs not only support immediate needs but aim to equip children with the Education and tools they need for a better future. Sponsors play a crucial role in making this possible, and the impact they have can extend far beyond just one child.



Abubeker's dream came true with the support of the IR OSP

Many impacts were documented by the program. Abubeker, whose father passed away while he was still in the womb, was among those whose life was majorly impacted by the OSP program. Many impacts were documented by the program. And he/Abubeker become a member of the OSP's rightsholders at 12/13 years of age; also, the sponsorship support was crucial in helping Abubeker fulfill his dream of becoming a doctor. He is currently working to assist persons in need in a rural area close to the Silte zone.



Selamawit Inspiring Journey

At the age of eight, Selam lost her father and was raised by her aunt. Her aunt was given Selam's care because her mother was unable to support her because of her chronic sickness and financial limitations. The family's fundamental necessities, including Selam's education, were difficult for Selam's aunt, a daily worker and small-scale trader, to provide. At the age of 11, she joined the IR orphan sponsorship program in 2011.

The sponsorship help that Selam received from Islamic Relief changed everything. It made it possible for her to have regular school attendance as well as necessities like food, clothing, and healthcare. Selam thrived academically with this assistance, becoming a standout student during her elementary, high school, and university education. She is now a graduate and works for the government.

We have many more young men and women like Abubeker and Selam whose life have changed for the better through our sponsorship program in Addis Ababa and Jijiga cities. Currently IR supports over 2834 Orphans in both cities. As we speak we are expanding the OSP program to Semera city in Afar. Other expansion areas will be considered soon.



Medical Support and Shelter Renovation

Many guardians of Children in the IR orphan Sponsorship Program have been unable to renovate their homes as well as cover medical and school fees for the sponsored Orphans due to the high costs involved. Therefore, the Orphan Sponsorship complementary fund was established to support ongoing programs and cover additional expenses not included in core funding, such as more complex issues like shelter or home renovations and medical cost. Over the past five years, these funds have been allocated for shelter/home renovations, as well as medical and educational support for 39 OSP families. Households that benefited from the renovation program have reported that the improvements led to safer, more comfortable, and healthier homes. The renovations provided a sense of security and stability, reducing the risk of homes collapsing or becoming uninhabitable. This, in turn, alleviated both the emotional and physical strain of living in unsafe conditions. Furthermore, safe, clean, and comfortable homes contribute to better mental health and well-being, reducing stress and anxiety. They create an environment where families can thrive socially, strengthening family bonds and community connections. Renovations also empower families by restoring their dignity, helping them regain pride in their living space and improving their self-esteem and overall outlook on life.



Fostering Peaceful Coexistence in the Border Regions of Somali and Oromia

Ethiopia saw a dramatic rise in internal displacement in 2018 and 2019 due to regional border disputes, ethnic tensions, and inter-communal conflict. By January 1, 2019, ethnic violence accounted for 80% of internal displacement, while 20% was driven by climate-related factors. Despite some displaced persons returning to their areas, many remain internally displaced, temporarily living with relatives, friends, or in communal shelters due to the destruction of their homes by conflict. The then tensions between the Oromo and Somali communities in eastern and southeastern Ethiopia have had lasting effects on the peaceful coexistence between these two groups.

Strengthening mutual trust and communication between the two communities was key to reestablishing peace. With Islamic Relief's peace building and conflict resolution intervention, the root causes of conflict were addressed, and underlying tensions were openly discussed and resolved. The resumption of trade, sporting events, and other social interactions, along with the resilience of traditional institutions, the dedicated involvement of elders and religious leaders from both sides, and the activation of local indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, all serve as encouraging signs of progress toward rebuilding complete trust, cooperation, and peace—what can be called “Positive Peace”—between the two communities. The restoration of the marketing system helped address issues like cattle rustling and raiding, which were managed through traditional laws, clan structures, and the revived Aba Gada system for the Oromo and the Ugazes/Gurt system for the Somali. The decision to revive these traditional systems and create tailored local legislation was made during these discussions. As a result of the agreement to report livestock raiding and rustling, 241 animals were returned to their rightful owners. IRE's efforts played a constructive role in fostering peaceful coexistence and marked the hopeful beginning of transforming the relationship between the two communities from “Negative Peace” to “Positive Peace.”



Promoting sustainable access to water, hygiene, and sanitation

Afa'ade is a small village located in the Hargelle district of Afdher Zone in the Somali Regional State of southern Ethiopia. The local community relies primarily on pastoralism for their livelihood, living in a hot to warm arid lowland climate with temperatures ranging from 25°C to 36°C, and frequently experiencing prolonged droughts. To address the severe water scarcity in the area, IRE constructed a 14,550 m³ capacity Haffir dam for Afa'ade Kebele, which serves a population of 8,700 (PDP, 2014). Since the completion of the dam, the need for costly water trucking has been significantly reduced, resulting in annual savings of approximately GBP 60,000—about half of the construction cost of the Haffir dam.

The environment surrounding the Haffir dam has flourished, becoming a haven for various bird species and a recreational area of aesthetic value for the local community. The residents of Afa'ade now enjoy emotional and psychological stability, free from the fear of being displaced or dealing with issues related to water scarcity. The reliable water resource has also attracted people from neighboring areas, making Afa'ade a more desirable place to settle compared to nearby villages.

Over 15,000 cattle heads are protected from dying due to a lack of water; The residents of the community are shielded from a range of waterborne illnesses; Throughout the year, particularly during the greatest drought of the 2020–2023 drought, water availability is assured; The output of the pastoralist community has grown, and small-scale business ventures are encouraged and given motivation; It was discovered that people's well-being and social cohesiveness were superior to those in nearby communities; Children are enrolled in school, particularly girls, and school dropout rates have declined; Mothers can participate in economic activities such as pity trading. The Haffir dam has also become a source of income for women in the area, as the population has grown and new businesses, such as tea shops, restaurants, and warehouses for trading gum and incense, have been established. Household expenses, previously spent on transportation, water purchases, and medical care, have significantly decreased. As a result, both morbidity and malnutrition rates have also dropped.



Economic Empowerment, Social Cohesion, and Poverty Alleviation through Women's Self-Help Groups

Self-Help Groups (SHG) play a crucial role in transforming communities, particularly for caregivers. Their collective action, mutual support, and financial inclusion leads to tangible improvements in the lives of individuals, particularly women. Although challenges persist, the long-term benefits of SHGs in economic empowerment, social cohesion, and poverty alleviation make them a powerful tool for community development.

Financial Inclusion: Beyond providing access to financial services and economic empowerment, the 105 active Self-Help Groups (SHGs) supported by Islamic Relief in Addis Ababa and Jigjiga have accumulated ETB 9,722,283.00 in savings, with each group generating approximately \$779 or ETB 92,593.17.

Social Empowerment: Women's Empowerment through SHGs has been especially transformative, enhancing women's decision-making power both within their households and communities

Health and Education: SHGs frequently promote health education, empowering members to access better healthcare services. Additionally, all SHGs are now able to purchase health insurance.

Reduction of Poverty: By enabling members to access financial resources, develop income-generating activities, and build financial literacy, SHGs contribute to poverty reduction. They create sustainable livelihood opportunities for the marginalized.

Testimonies about Islamic Relief

Celebrating 20 Years of Dedication and Impact

Today, as we commemorate our 20th anniversary, we reflect on some of our organization's memories from the perspectives of our longest-serving staff.

Each of these individuals has served with IRE for over 15 years, and they embody the living history of the organization.

Long Served Staff Testimony

Twenty years on, Adinew Mengistu, a witness to this transformative journey, recalls the tremendous effort it took to open the office.

"When Islamic Relief started, there was just a finance manager, a program manager, and a director—without even a driver or a car. The director would often wait for a taxi," he says, reflecting nostalgically.

Adinew, who was initially hired as a driver, quickly volunteered to take on various roles, including that of a liaison officer, helping to address the many challenges faced by the newly established organization.

"Islamic Relief is where my life changed and my achievements began. I found my purpose here—it feels like home," he shares, his eyes gleaming with pride as he continues his journey with IRE.

Another early member of the IRE family, Mulu Haile, reflects on her 20 years with the organization, having joined when there were only five staff members. "Eighteen years have flown by in the blink of an eye," she says, filled with memories. "For me, Islamic Relief hasn't just given me a job; it has given me a family. It's the closeness that strikes me most."

Mulu expresses gratitude for having witnessed the organization's growth. "I saw Islamic Relief expand from its small beginnings to one of the top international NGOs, reaching the most vulnerable across the country."

Mebrat, another early supporter, shares her own reflections. "I have witnessed Islamic Relief become a beacon of hope for countless orphans and vulnerable children and mothers across the nation. My prayers are always for the organization to continue reaching even more people in need."

Together, these voices weave a rich tapestry of resilience, dedication, and hope, reflecting the profound impact Islamic Relief has had—not only on the region but also on the lives of its dedicated staff.

Over the years, the organization has expanded its efforts, focusing on both emergency relief and long-term development. IRE's interventions have benefited over 5 million people across the country through food security programs, clean water access, health services, and livestock protection initiatives.



"I saw Islamic Relief expand from its small beginnings to one of the top international NGOs, reaching the most vulnerable across the country."



"Eighteen years have flown by in the blink of an eye," she says, filled with memories. "For me, Islamic Relief hasn't just given me a job; it has given me a family. It's the closeness that strikes me most."

Testimonies from Rightsholders:



“The support from Islamic Relief Ethiopia has given me dignity and hope. Now I can provide for my children, and they no longer have to go to bed hungry.” Emebet, a 58-year-old blind woman and a mother of five



“There were times when we went to bed hungry, and it was very difficult for me to meet my children’s basic needs. After a year of receiving sponsorship support, I was finally able to send my children to school. Not only did I manage our consumption, but I also began to save 20% of the sponsorship money. Thanks to this consistent support, our lives have improved compared to the past.” Tenu mother of Helen Geremew Zewde



“The future appears promising for my family, who have faced hardships but now look forward to a hopeful future filled with opportunities” Jemila mother of Hanan

Testimonies from Government Partners:



“Islamic relief is doing a lot of emergency and development works in the region and when we evaluate its work from Water sector perspective, IRE is doing a brilliant work in climate resilient solar upgrading works. It implements its project activities based on the priority of the beneficiary community and regional context, in general”. Idris Utban Hamed, plan and Budget Director at Afar regional state



“In the heart of our community, your unwavering dedication and compassion have transformed lives and inspired hope. Thank you for your continues support to the needy people in Afder.”

Hargelle Woreda
Administration Head
Ahmed Abdirahman



“Unlike many NGOs, Islamic Relief Ethiopia has made a real impact. We appreciate your support and look forward to solar upgrades for our water sites. We hope to work together on future water projects. Thank you!” Gammachu Bateri Water & Energy Office lead Elwaye, Borena Zone



Building Resilience: A Lifeline for Ethiopia's Pastoralists

In the heart of Ethiopia's Somali region, where drought threatens lives and livelihoods, a groundbreaking initiative is making a lasting impact. The "Reduced Vulnerability and Strengthening the Capacity of Pastoralist Households to Withstand Drought Shock in Ethiopia" project is a £3.6 million resilience-building effort, implemented in partnership with UKAID/FCDO and Islamic Relief UK (Match Fund).

Designed to empower 3,000 pastoralist households (19,800 individuals) in Hargelle district, Afder zone, the project tackles drought vulnerability head-on. Through livestock protection, disease prevention, DRR technology, water infrastructure, and fodder production, it strengthens local coping capacities and ensures sustainable recovery.

With climate shocks intensifying, this initiative is more than just aid—it is a beacon of hope, securing livelihoods, safeguarding livestock, and empowering communities to build a more resilient future.



2023

**The Year of Impact and Growth
within Islamic Relief in Ethiopia**

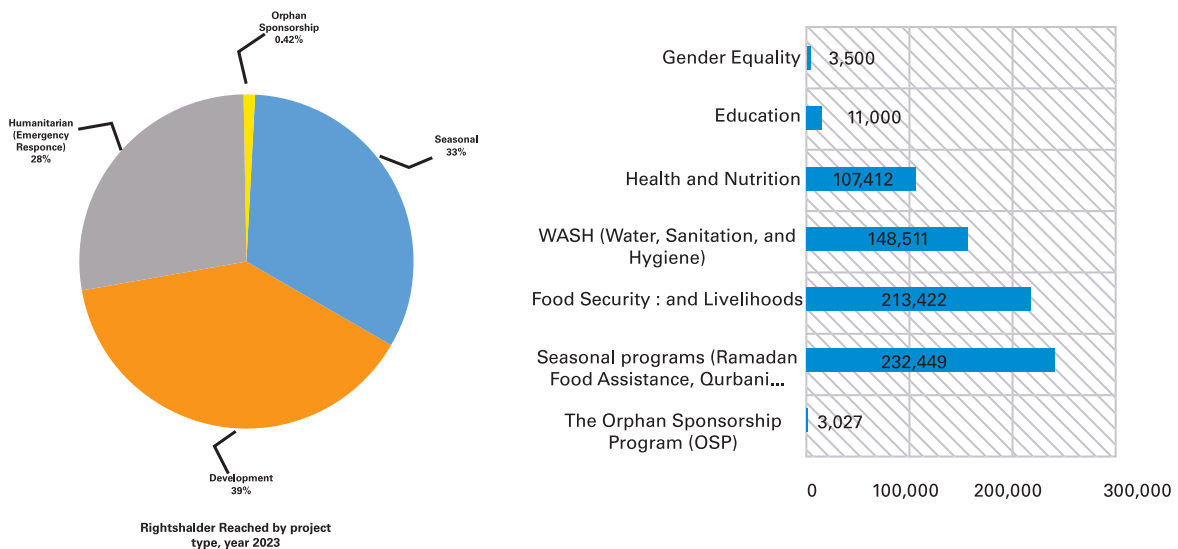
2023: The Year of Impact and Growth within Islamic Relief in Ethiopia

Islamic Relief Ethiopia (IRE) continues to stand as a beacon of hope and resilience, effectively navigating the complex humanitarian landscape of Ethiopia. In 2023, despite macroeconomic instability, escalating conflicts, and severe climatic challenges, IRE made significant strides in its mission to alleviate suffering and promote sustainable development.

The year 2023 was a landmark year for IRE in terms of fundraising. The organization secured approximately GBP 15 million in new funds, showcasing its robust engagement with major institutional donors such as UN(OCHA, WFP, UNICEF), SIDA and ECHO as well as from the IR family (USA, Canada, Belgium, Sweden, UK, Germany, Netherlands) With an impressive 80% success rate in funding proposals, IRE's strategic approach resulted in a diverse and sustainable funding base, ensuring the continuation and expansion of vital programs. Financially, IRE's health remains strong, with an income target achievement of 92% (GBP 12 million). The organization maintained a 100% Project Support Budget (PSB) recovery rate and reported a commendable 95% program spending rate at project closure. All financial audits, both donor-specific and statutory, were completed on time, reflecting IRE's commitment to compliance, transparency and accountability.

Throughout the year, IRE managed 50 projects, including significant humanitarian and development initiatives. Notably, the organization expanded its geographical reach to flood-affected regions like Dolo Ado in the Somali region and conflict-impacted zones in Afar. With a strategic focus on integrating climate adaptation, IRE implemented innovative solutions such as solar-powered water systems and haffir dam construction. In 2023, IRE's initiatives directly benefited over 719,321 rightsholders. These efforts included emergency relief, sustainable development projects, and community resilience-building activities, significantly improving the quality of life for vulnerable populations across Ethiopia.

Testament to its work, IR's was selected and its work in Borena, Oromia Zone, showcased through multiple national media outlets based on media tour organized by the Agency for Civil Society Organizations(ACSO to the various sites.



2023 IN NUMBERS, - 719,321 PEOPLE DIRECTLY ASSISTED

Highlights in 2023 from our main programme areas:

The 2023 Annual Report highlights successes from across the target area, structured according to the key areas that have been defined in the IRE Program Strategy. Accordingly, 719,321(48% female and 7% disabled rightsholders) rightsholders were reached and a total of 1,382,819 indirect rightsholders were reached.

Integrated Child Welfare

The Child Welfare Program made significant strides in 2023, focusing on improving the education status of orphans, promoting healthier lifestyles, ensuring the well-being of families, and enhancing child protection.

The Orphan Sponsorship Program (OSP)

The Orphan Sponsorship Program (OSP) successfully sponsored 3,027 orphans through partnerships with 13 Islamic Relief partners. IRUSA (Islamic Relief USA) contributed 29.6% of the sponsorships, followed by IR Germany, Canada, and the Netherlands. Impressively, 98.7% of these orphans are attending school, with many showing significant academic improvement. Quarterly payments were made to all sponsored orphans, and impact assessments were conducted by IRW (Islamic Relief Worldwide). The program awarded five high-achieving university students and registered 243 new orphans. Additionally, 83 orphans are attending higher education institutions, and 128 are enrolled in vocational and skill training institutes.

The Integrated Livelihoods Support program

The Integrated Livelihoods Support Program in Addis Ababa and Jigjiga had a significant impact on impoverished orphan families through its Graduation Model. This initiative equipped 1,800 mothers and 100 young people with essential business development skills. A total of 108 self-help groups were formed, engaging in various business activities. Financial support was provided to 1,853 widowed mothers and youth, with 12 individuals receiving sewing machines. These efforts aimed to enhance economic resilience and self-sufficiency among orphan families. Additionally, to improve access to healthcare services, 1,600 mothers were supported in purchasing community-based health insurance.





Seasonal Projects:

Seasonal projects are the flagship initiatives of Islamic Relief. These projects include Qurbani meat distribution during Eid al-Adha, Ramadan food package distribution, Aqiqa (sacrifice of an animal on the occasion of a child's birth), and Adak (voluntary sacrifice as an act of worship). These initiatives ensure that vulnerable communities have access to nutritious food and essential resources during important religious occasions, fostering a sense of community and solidarity.

The seasonal projects addressed food assistance needs through Ramadan Food Assistance, Qurbani Meat Packs, Aqiqah/Adak Meat Packs, and Eid Gift Packs. During Ramadan, 38,857 individuals received food packs. Qurbani meat was distributed to 69,058 people, and 14,011 people received Aqiqah/Adak meat packs. These interventions provided crucial food assistance during special occasions.



Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods

In 2023, the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) project had a significant impact on the well-being of vulnerable populations, particularly in areas affected by poverty, natural disasters, and conflict. A total of 204,329 rightsholders were reached through both development and humanitarian (emergency) projects. These interventions provided direct food assistance, cash transfers, and agricultural inputs to ensure that families could meet their nutritional needs, helping to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition.

The project also focused on livestock support and small business grants, which enabled households to diversify their income sources and improve economic stability. Additionally, the project provided seeds, tools, and training to smallholder farmers, boosting agricultural productivity and enhancing food self-sufficiency. This allowed families not only to feed themselves but also to sell surplus produce in local markets.

Furthermore, the project's interventions included involving women in decision-making processes related to food distribution, household spending, and livelihood activities, contributing to greater gender equality and women's empowerment.

The cash transfers played a crucial role in helping families meet their basic needs—approximately 88% of the funds were used to purchase food. As a result, the number of families forced to reduce their meals due to the food crisis decreased in average by 69% (PDM report). The cash transfers intervention reduces the need for families to rely on negative coping strategies, such as reducing meal sizes or sending children to work, thus improving both physical and mental health outcomes.

The overall living conditions and well-being of rightsholders improved due to the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA), with notable increases in women's decision-making power over household cash expenditures. Furthermore, the assistance enabled the majority of households to pay off existing debts.

Breaking Barriers: Ifrah's Path from Modest Seed Fund to Millennial Millionaire

A case study of Ifrah Ahmed,

In the bustling town of Jigjiga, nestled in the Somali regional state of Ethiopia, Ifrah Ahmed operates a flourishing clothes shop, defying the societal norms that often confine women to traditional roles.

Her every stitch reflects a defiance against the status quo, as she weaves her dreams into the fabric she sells. As a member of the "Style Clothes Shop" savings group, Ifrah's journey to success epitomizes resilience and determination, particularly in a society where women are typically relegated to the background, tasked solely with raising children and managing household affairs.

"This opportunity has brought immense joy into my life, and I am profoundly grateful for it," Shares Ifrah, her voice echoing with hope for a future where women like her are empowered to thrive with projects like that of the Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA).

Her sentiment resonates deeply, especially as the world celebrates International Women's Day on March 8th, a day dedicated to recognizing the achievements of women and advocating for gender equality.

Handpicked by the Islamic Relief Ethiopia (IRE) team and local government authorities for her entrepreneurial zeal, Ifrah received a modest seed fund of 15,000 ETB (approximately 265 USD) from the Youth & Women Empowerment Project (YWEP), funded by IRUSA, to kickstart her business.

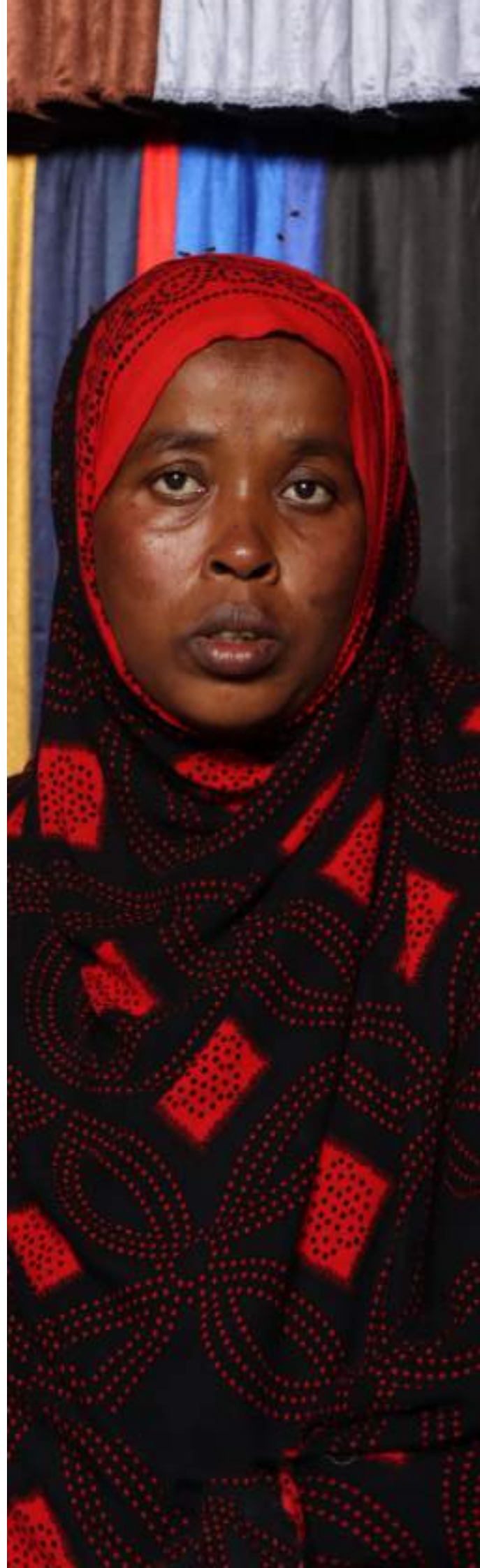
Since then, her daily earnings have soared from 100 to 500 ETB, a remarkable testament to her perseverance in the face of adversity. Her achievements culminated in a gross revenue of 1 million ETB (equivalent to 18,000 USD).

Since then, her daily earnings have soared from 100 to 500 ETB, a remarkable testament to her perseverance in the face of adversity as she achieved a gross revenue of 1M ETB (amounting up to 18000 USD)

"I take immense pride in being one of the women who manage their financial affairs independently," declares Ifrah, her eyes shining with determination. "With the blessings of Allah, I envision elevating this humble shop into the mainstay of our community's business centre."

Beyond the financial gains, Ifrah's success has rippled through her family, providing her children with enhanced educational opportunities and ensuring their basic needs are met.

Despite the economic challenges that persist, Ifrah remains resolute in her commitment to supporting her family and uplifting her community, embodying the spirit of empowerment that March 8th symbolizes.





WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene)

Water, Hygiene, and Sanitation (WASH) projects are crucial for improving the health, well-being, and quality of life in communities, especially in underserved and rural areas. These projects focus on providing access to clean drinking water, promoting safe hygiene practices, and improving sanitation infrastructure. The impacts of such projects are broad, affecting various aspects of health, education, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Improve access to water: In 2023, IRE provided critical emergency and development WASH support to drought- and displacement-affected communities in the Afar and Somali regions. The emergency WASH support included the delivery of over 10 million liters of potable water, benefiting a total of 148,511 people. Access to safe water was improved through the rehabilitation of existing water schemes, installed water storage tankers (with a capacity of 10m³) as a roof water harvesting at health facilities, primary schools, solarizing water schemes, the construction of haffir dam and the river intake practice that able to shorten the process to deliver water from a flowing river.

Alimo Khlid , Project Rightsholders “Constructing water points is delightful for women like myself, especially those who are breastfeeding. Before IR built the water point, it took at least four hours to go there both ways, and I hardly remember standing in line for an hour while holding my infant. Thanks to IR, obtaining water now only takes an hour in both directions, and there is hardly any waiting. Because of the shorter time and distance, we don’t need to bring our babies to the water points this time.”

Improved Hygiene Practices: with the distribution of WASH Non-Food Items (NFIs) and often include education on handwashing with soap, menstrual hygiene management, and safe food handling, which help in reducing the spread of infections and improving overall community health and hand washing at five critical times has improved by 87%.

WASH activity impact on education, particularly in improving school attendance and performance. In IRE project target areas without proper sanitation or water facilities, students—especially girls—may miss school due to waterborne illnesses or the need to collect water. The WASH infrastructure in schools, such as roto installation, construction of clean toilets and drinking water, encourages regular school attendance.

Small-scale irrigation: In areas dependent on rain-fed agriculture, improving irrigation systems and promoting drought-resistant crops can help communities better manage water resources in the face of changing rainfall patterns and river intake.



Health and Nutrition

In 2023, IRE’s health and nutrition programs in Ethiopia’s Oromia and Somali regions achieved substantial success. A total of 107,452 individuals received health and nutrition services. The program treated 45,289 children under five for Moderate Acute Malnutrition, 6,682 cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition were identified and treated. Nutritional assistance reached 29,110 malnourished pregnant and lactating women. Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergency addressed 52% of the target. Health worker training for outbreak management achieved with 553 health workers trained. 21,292 Primary healthcare consultations reached conducted. The health and nutrition intervention have contributed to reduced morbidity and mortality children under 5, pregnant and lactating women (PLW), and elderly due to malnutrition.



Education

With a focus on underprivileged rural and pastoral areas, Islamic Relief Ethiopia (IRE) achieved notable progress in expanding access to high-quality education in 2023. The target area's IDP Centers benefited from the retention of 10,000 boys and girls in basic schools. By upgrading school facilities, providing sanitary pads, reference books, and necessary educational materials, tables, and chairs the organization aimed to reduce educational disparities. It also created a safe learning environment by building more classrooms with ramps, installing water reservoirs and restrooms, and providing visual and auditory aids. Additionally, the parent-teacher-student association's training program supports school administration by serving as a mediator by bringing significant issues and causes from the school level to the woreda education office and students. This strategy is successful in improving both the availability and standard of primary education.

The distribution of sanitary pads has a notable favorable effect on female students' academic performance and competence development by lowering absenteeism and increasing enrollment. Participants, particularly women, will no longer miss school due to menstruation, according to community members interviewed for the review. With the help of labs, libraries (including reference books), and ICT resources for the targeted schools, the initiative substantially enhanced students' reading and learning performance. Building a reservoir and a latrine encourages new and dropout students to return to school, creates a safe learning environment, and provides clean water and a sex-segregated restroom. Constructing additional classrooms keeps both students and teachers comfortable while removing crowded classrooms and significantly lowering the prevalence of infectious diseases like the flu and tuberculosis.



Gender Equality

In 2023, IRE completed a project that addressed the detrimental practices of early child marriage and FGM/C in order to improve women's economic conditions and gender equality. To achieve this, IRE used a number of strategies to enhance gender equality, such as teaching teenage girls, mothers, guardians, and female-headed households through paralegal, conflict resolution, and life skills trainings for teenage girls that targeted religious leaders, restocking animals, community conversation and dialogue, and capacity building trainings for CBOs and CSOs were the main activities carried out to meet the project's objective.

The impact of a project were wide-ranging, influencing individuals, communities, organizations, and society at large. Below are some key areas where such a project can make a difference:

The project had a significant impact in transforming negative perceptions and practices, notably enhancing women's involvement in decision-making, reducing the prevalence of forced and early marriages, and fostering behavioral changes regarding Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) and the effects of early and forced marriages. These outcomes have had positive effects on women and girls, including increased participation in income-generating activities and establishing own assets.

From smuggler to shopkeeper:

In the West Hararghe region of Ethiopia, life is far from easy. Home to both Oromo and Somali communities, the area is frequently shaken by ethnic tensions and conflict.

In 2020, a new wave of violence forced many people to flee their homes, adding to the growing number of internally displaced people. Misra was among them.

Forced to leave everything behind, Misra fled to Meisso, a small town near the Ethiopian border with Somalia. Meisso is a relatively safe place, but is known for its harsh climate.

Life in Meisso was difficult for Misra, and finding a reliable source of income was nearly impossible. She turned to smuggling textiles from conflict zones back to local traders in Meisso – a dangerous trade that earned just about enough to feed her family.

“We earned very little, maybe 100 birr (less than £1) for each piece of fabric,” Misra explains. “But it was the only way we could survive.”

Smuggling can be very risky, particularly for women. By repeatedly travelling to dangerous areas, Misra was exposing herself to the risk of violence or being caught by security forces targeting smugglers.

Tough choices are an everyday reality

On a particularly traumatic occasion, Misra was caught by a security guard and her entire load of textiles was seized. If she returned emptyhanded, she risked punishment from the traders she was supplying in Meisso. But if she resisted the guard, she could end up in jail, a place notorious for gender-based violence.

“I had no choice,” she recalls. “I begged the guard and ended up paying him twice what I had earned just to avoid being beaten or imprisoned.”

For many women in Misra’s position, tough choices like this are an everyday reality. Conflict and displacement leave them vulnerable to exploitation and violence, with few opportunities to escape the cycle of poverty. The peace and stability they long for can feel like a remote prospect.

With the help of Islamic Relief, Misra and other displaced women in her community have been able to start new lives. Through our Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced People and Communities project Misra and her peers were given the support they needed to start small grocery businesses. She set up a shop, which now provides a sustainable income, allowing Misra to feed her family and build a better future.

Misra takes pride in her small grocery shop, a business that helped her escape the dangers of smuggling and rebuild her life after fleeing conflict

“For the first time, I don’t have to risk my life to make money,” Misra says. “Our business is small, but it’s enough to keep us going.”

Islamic Relief’s projects in the region focus on empowering vulnerable women like Misra, helping them earn a stable income and regain their independence. This kind of support is a real lifeline in communities where women are often left to shoulder the burdens of conflict and displacement alone.

Turning words into actions

Misra’s journey from internally displaced to business owner reflects the resilience demonstrated by so many women around the world, especially in conflict zones. Her story is a powerful reminder of the strength and determination of women who fight against the odds to create better lives for themselves and their families.







Crosscutting project Intervention Protection, Safeguarding and Inclusion

Islamic Relief (IR) is dedicated to the principle of ‘do no harm and leave no one behind,’ ensuring that all its programs align with Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and the Inclusion Charter. It is critical that we do not expose the communities or staff we work with to the risk of harm through our interventions. While thorough analyses and assessments aim to mitigate risks, some residual risks may persist. Nevertheless, IR strives to keep these risks as low as reasonably possible. Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) is CHS certified and committed to upholding all CHS commitments. Inclusion is central to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Islamic Relief is devoted to fulfilling the pledge to the ‘leave no one behind’ agenda in both humanitarian and development projects and programs.

All humanitarian actors are expected to mainstream protection in their humanitarian assistance activities, reflecting a broader commitment to quality and accountability in humanitarian response. Accordingly, Protection, Safeguarding, Inclusion (PSI), Gender, and Complaint Response Mechanism (CRM) are integral themes of Islamic Relief’s crosscutting issues. All staff members must understand and adhere to these commitments, ensuring that protection, safeguarding, inclusion, gender, and CRM are mainstreamed into every Islamic Relief Ethiopia (IRE) project and program.

Islamic Relief has robust policies and procedures to protect staff, volunteers, right holders, and program participants from various harms and to ensure safe programming. Policies include the safeguarding policy, CRM policy, child protection policy, PSEA (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) policy, gender justice policy, inclusion marker, and other associated policies that staff and program participants adhere to for mainstreaming crosscutting issues professionally. IRE actively engages and participates in networks like the PSEA network, National Protection Cluster (NPC), and other working groups.

Islamic Relief maintains a zero-tolerance policy for any safeguarding and sensitive complaints. We have ample experience in managing safeguarding and complaints while maintaining confidentiality. Dedicated staff, including safeguarding focal points and CRM focal points, are assigned to manage these issues. IR has a strong reporting line for safeguarding and complaints from the grassroots level up to the country office.



Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning

Designing an effective MEAL system and digital Transformation of Program and MEAL System
Global Programs & MEAL System (GPMS)

Program for Transformation. We began digitizing the MEAL system in 2023, with Ethiopia participating in a pilot program that involved eight countries. After a successful pilot, the system is scheduled to be implemented in 2025.

IHSAN Self-Assessment

Ihsan self-assessment was carried out in 2023, as a comprehensive set of standards and metrics created to help IR to evaluate its own performance and make necessary adjustments to ensure compliance with both internal and external regulations. Ihsan self-assessment was carried out in 2023, and IRE made achievement toward meeting quality criteria.

CHS-project assessment (After Action Review (AAR) exercise)

In 2023, as part of quality assurance, CHS-self assessment were conducted against CHS quality criteria for various projects. This assessment enable IRE to assess the ongoing/completed project's progress against the Nine Commitments of the CHS.

It allows the organizations to measure the extent to which they have successfully applied the CHS requirements, and allows them, to demonstrate that they have done so. The CHS assessment is vital for enhancing the quality, effectiveness, and accountability of humanitarian interventions, ultimately leading to better outcomes for affected communities.

Accountability

To ensure accountability to the people affected, IRE kept bolstering the CRM system and in 2023. IRE continue improving feedback and complaint mechanisms, and in 2023 the system become more user-friendly and culturally relevant for stakeholders and rightsholders and, more than 300 people file complain and feedback; were all of them were successfully handled, which resulted to a high level of rightsholders satisfaction.

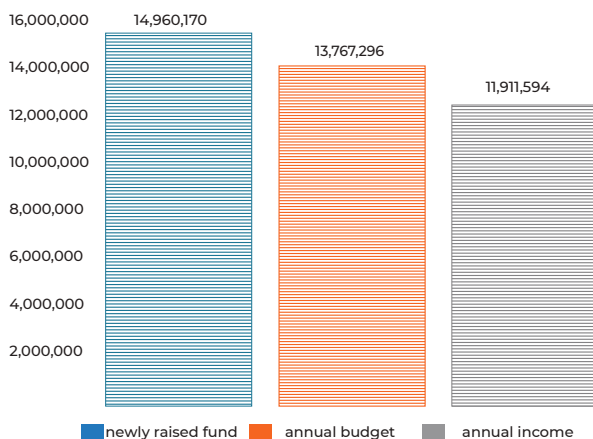
Monitoring and Evaluation

IRE carry out monitoring and evaluation activity which plays critical role in enhancing the effectiveness of IRE's development and humanitarian project/programs and enable to make day to-day management decisions about project implementation.

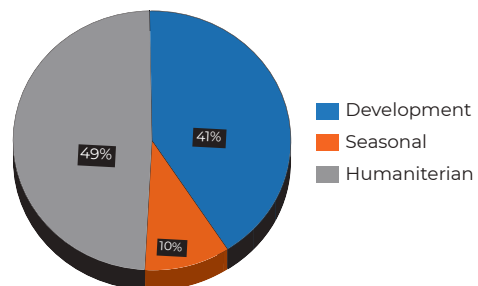
Regular project site monitoring, including result-based and on-site distribution monitoring, is carried out by IRE in accordance with the IR MEAL framework. A minimum MEAL deliverable in 2023 was the successful completion of five baseline studies, three endline, one midterm, and one real-time evaluations, along with twelve post-distribution surveys.

Fund Raising and Financial Performance 2023

IRE'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN 2023 (G B P)



How the fund were allocated



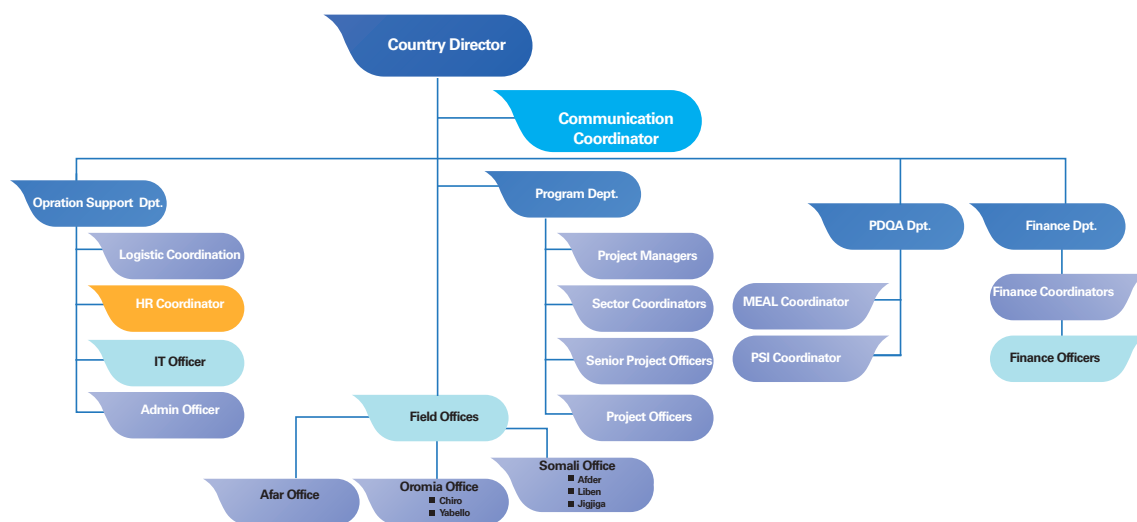
Organizational structure and Human Resource development

In 2023, Islamic Relief Ethiopia deployed around 204 national staff members, comprising 159 males and 45 females. These staff members bring a range of professional qualifications and experience in both emergency and development sectors, enabling the organization to effectively implement planned projects and address the needs of the target population. Despite concerted efforts to achieve gender balance, challenges such as limited educational opportunities for girls in pastoralist areas and the remote, challenging nature of operational locations have hindered progress. Staff members were stationed at the Country Office in Addis Ababa and six area offices in Afar, Afder, Jigjiga, Liban, Chiro, and Borana.

Islamic Relief is deeply committed to safeguarding and equal opportunities. Employment offers are contingent upon satisfactory references and appropriate screening checks, including criminal records and terrorism finance checks. IRE participates in the Inter Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, ensuring thorough background checks regarding any past misconduct. The organization believes in the right of every individual to be safe, respected, and valued, regardless of their circumstances, and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all candidates and qualified applicants without discrimination based on age, sex, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability status, or diversity.

IRE is dedicated to promoting gender equality and diversity in the workplace, creating an inclusive working environment where all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities for professional growth and development. The organization values the contributions and unique perspectives that women and persons with disabilities bring and is committed to providing a supportive working environment. Promoting gender equality enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of IRE's programs.

While 2023 presented numerous challenges, including high inflation, security risks, and disease outbreaks, IRE leveraged these as opportunities to innovate and improve. The organization's dedication to building strong community relationships and exploring new thematic areas like climate change and peacebuilding has positioned it for continued success.



Networking representation and partnership:

In 2023, IRE's leadership and collaboration efforts were exemplary. The organization played a pivotal role in various national and subnational forums, including HINGO, CANGO, and several UN clusters. Through these networks, IRE not only strengthened its partnerships with prominent NGOs like GOAL, Oxfam, and Action Aid but also engaged in joint fundraising initiatives, enhancing its capacity to deliver impactful programs.

Major Challenges during the year 2023

In the Health and Nutrition (H&N) sector, malnutrition remains a significant burden, with cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) increasing among children under five and Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLWs). This issue is particularly severe in zones like Afder and Liban, which have been heavily affected by drought and flooding. Additionally, shortages or interruptions in nutrition supplies have exacerbated the situation. Disease outbreaks, such as cholera and malaria, further compound these challenges.

The Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) sector faced several hurdles in 2023. The sector struggled with the timely implementation of irrigation farming and support for crop and fodder production as planned. Moreover, there was a shortage of improved agricultural inputs, such as seeds and seedlings, that are adapted to the local context.

The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector encountered significant obstacles throughout the year. Remote and inaccessible target areas posed substantial logistical challenges in transporting materials and equipment for WASH infrastructure projects. Sporadic conflicts and insecurity hindered the smooth implementation of projects, causing delays and sometimes necessitating temporary suspension of activities. Natural and manmade disasters, such as war, flooding, and drought, eroded household and community capacities, compounded by skyrocketing inflation. Additionally, the lack of technical data for water scheme rehabilitation and upgrades necessitated on-site data updates and design revisions.

limited access to certain project areas due to safety and security concerns impacted delivery of projects in time and within budgets.

Highlight of the 2024 Business Plans

IRE's 2024 business plan is ambitious yet grounded in strategic priorities. The organization aims to raise GBP 15 million and reach over 630,000 individuals through emergency response, long-term development, and advocacy initiatives. Key strategies include strengthening staff capacity, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and aligning programs with the Maqasid framework. IRE plans to expand its innovative solutions, such as solar-powered water systems, and further integrate climate adaptation strategies into its projects. The organization is also committed to improving its feedback and complaint mechanisms to ensure that beneficiary voices are heard and acted upon.

Islamic Relief Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to its mission, coupled with strategic fundraising, robust financial management, and innovative program development, has cemented its role as a leading humanitarian organization in Ethiopia. As it moves forward, IRE is well-positioned to continue making a profound impact on the lives of vulnerable communities across the nation.



Islamic Relief

Ethiopia





Our partners and donors

Islamic Relief Ethiopia collaborates with local communities, government organizations, community and faith-based organizations, as well as donors for joint project implementation, experience sharing, and resource mobilization. Our efforts focus on mitigating disasters, preparing for their occurrence, providing relief and recovery, and delivering long-term development assistance.

Key government partners include ACSO, EDRMC, the National Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and regional bureaus of health, economic development, education, water, pastoralist affairs, and women and children's affairs in Somali, Oromia, Afar, and Addis Ababa.

Our major donors include Islamic Relief family members from around the globe, including IR USA, IR Canada, IR Sweden, IR Netherlands, IR UK, IR Germany, IR Belgium, and others.

Lastly, the following are among the major international donors that provide financial support for our projects in the country:



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

unicef



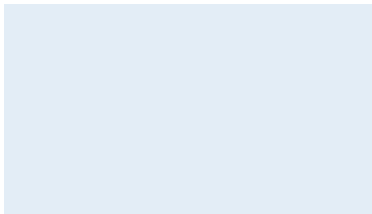
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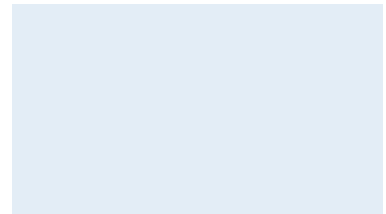
Global Affairs
Canada



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