



Children and youth empowerment has close relationship with our previous SEGNI program is designed to create proactive youth movement for conservation of nature and the culture of local communities. It is a way for transferring Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) from elders to the young generation. Being well equipped with the knowledge of the value of conserving the natural resources and related cultural values of their communities, the youth would always stand up to say “NO” to any threat to the culture and natural resources of their communities. SEGNI has been one of the best learning experiences for Education for Sustainable Development, selected and recognized as such by UNESCO in 2011.

However, the current children and youth empowerment program is brought to a program level incorporating quality education starting from upper primary schools (grade 5-8) and youth business and vocational skill training programs as a preparation for youth employment initiatives. The updated program also incorporates provision of support to vulnerable children, particularly young schoolgirls through the supply of scholastic materials and sanitation pads with the aim of making the school and school environment friendly to girls. Other school environment improvement interventions such as safe drinking water supply, library and school community attachment will be key program activities to improve quality education. On other hand, out of school young men and women will also be participating in different livelihoods trainings to upgrade their marketable skills and expand employ ability (self employment in particular).

## Eco-friendly Livelihoods Improvement

This program works to improve the life of disadvantaged local communities through provision of alternative livelihood options but in a way that does not harm both the culture and the environment. Livelihoods improvement schemes are meant to minimize the economic need driven pressure on the limited forest coverage and diversify income in the project areas. As such, alternative means of livelihood have been created for disadvantaged/unemployed segment of the communities, with a particular focus on women youth and minority groups, cutting across programs that can be used as tools for the achievement of the overall objectives of each of the major thematic areas.



Improvement of livelihoods will be realized through selecting and organizing the disadvantaged community members into cooperatives/ associations, practical farm management trainings, use of eco-friendly agricultural inputs and technologies, improved agricultural practices and engaging them in off-farm and non-farm alternative income generating activities such as animal fattening, beekeeping, collecting wild spices, home gardening and poultry.

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# MELCA-Ethiopia



## Vision

To see healthy and prosperous people that conserves their bio-cultural diversity.

## Mission

To work for healthy ecosystems, resilient communities and critical young generation through developing and institutionalizing innovative approaches and experiences.

## Goal

To increase the adaptive capacity to social and ecological shocks of communities and contribute to the creation of a healthy ecosystem and resilient community.

## About MELCA-Ethiopia

MELCA-Ethiopia was founded in 2004 as a non-profit making non-governmental organization. Its formation was initiated by a few concerned citizens who were closely observing the trend of the country's increasingly worrying environmental degradation and disregard for cultural values in ecological safeguards.

As a terminology, MELCA means ford (i.e. a shallow stream crossing structure) both in Amharic and Oromiffa- two most widely spoken languages of Ethiopia. Also, as an abbreviation, MELCA stands for Movement for Ecological Learning and Community Action. Therefore, the name is crafted to symbolically indicate the organization's commitment as a means of connection between environment and culture, youth and elders, conventional and scientific ecological knowledge, etc.

With this spirit, the original MELCA-Mahiber evolved into MELCA-Ethiopia and was registered in October 2013 with Registration No 0348 in the category of Ethiopian Resident Charity under the former Charities and Societies Proclamation No 621/2009. MELCA has been re-registered on the 14th of November 2019 by the Agency for Civil Society Organizations in accordance with the new Civil Society Organizations Proclamation No 1113/2019.

## Project Areas

MELCA-Ethiopia currently working in five project areas in four national regional states of Ethiopia. There are Bale and Adaba Project areas in Oromia National Regional State, Sheka project area in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), Majang project area in Majang zone of Gambella National Regional State and Woreilu project area in Amhara Regional State.

## Thematic Areas

### Environmental Governance

This is a program that works on registering and improving the governance of Man and Biosphere Reserves and Community Conserved Areas. It also works on supporting the revival of traditional ecological governance systems as well as Awareness and capacity building on environmental laws and policies.



MELCA-Ethiopia strongly believes that strengthening environmental governance is necessary to maintain the biodiversity and ecosystem functioning. We need to empower local communities, local governments and stakeholders to properly manage biosphere reserves and community conserved areas. We need to contribute to the coordination of efforts of stakeholders working on biospheres, we need to widespread the concepts and ideas of biosphere reserves in and out of school environment and bring in place sustainable strategies and systems on how the local communities can benefit from the biosphere reserves (i.e. non-timber forest products), and support communities to have bylaws that protect and properly utilize biosphere reserves and community conserved areas.

## Agroecology

This is a program that works towards thriving living soil, promoting agricultural biodiversity, strengthening farmer innovation, knowledge development and sharing and ensuring food sovereignty that feeds in to higher levels of nutrition security. These will be attained through appropriate biological and physical soil and water conservation methods, supply of eco-friendly agricultural inputs (such as organic fertilizers), technologies and energy sources as well as improved agricultural practices and local seed conservation methods.



It is also based on the knowledge of local communities and introduce techniques where what is taken from the soil is returned back. MELCA has successful experiences in this regard and wants to utilize its accumulated wealth of experience and expertise in this field.

## Children and Youth Empowerment

The program aims to create children and youth who are rooted in their sustainable cultural practices but contribute positively to their environment. They will be facilitated to connect with nature, culture and themselves and to get quality education.