

ACHIEVING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN ETHIOPIA



Findings from the CARE Learning Tour to Ethiopia

January 19-24, 2014

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Introduction:

From January 19-24, seven Congressional chiefs of staff and Kojo Nnamdi, longtime host of WAMU FM's *The Kojo Nnamdi Show* and *The Politics Hour* in Washington, D.C., traveled to Ethiopia with the global poverty-fighting organization CARE to see how U.S. investments in food and nutrition security are enhancing the resilience and self-sufficiency of smallholder farmers. The chiefs of staff represented a bipartisan and bicameral delegation from Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Maryland, Ohio and Oregon.



The delegation poses in front of the ticker at the Ethiopian Commodities Exchange in Addis. The visit showed how Ethiopia is modernizing its economy.

Around the world there are almost 842 million people who do not have enough to eat, and most of them are women and girls. In Ethiopia, the reality is that many communities are unable to access food and proper nutrition. During the four-day trip, the group learned how the U.S. government is working in partnership with the Ethiopian government, the private sector and local organizations to yield tangible improvements for families and farmers to produce and access nutritious food and link them to markets. They saw several programs run by CARE, which has worked in Ethiopia since the country faced a famine in the 1980s, to help people lift themselves and their communities out of poverty.

At the center of the conversation was U.S. food aid and the need to modernize the existing system. To dig deeper into the issue of food aid reform, the trip included visits to an emergency food distribution center in Dire Dawa and an innovative agriculture program in Awassa that is improving long-term food security for farmers and food aid recipients alike by sourcing food from smallholder farmers. The delegation also learned how Ethiopia is improving its access to markets through modern entities like Ethiopia's Commodities Exchange, which gives farmers an outlet to sell their products at fair and competitive prices. The site visits and meetings

with program beneficiaries showed the delegation the full arc of food and nutrition security from families that need U.S. food aid to meet their needs and those building their assets and poised to graduate off assistance to smallholder farmers producing enough to sell their harvests into food aid programs and those engaging in national and international value chains.

Ethiopia Overview

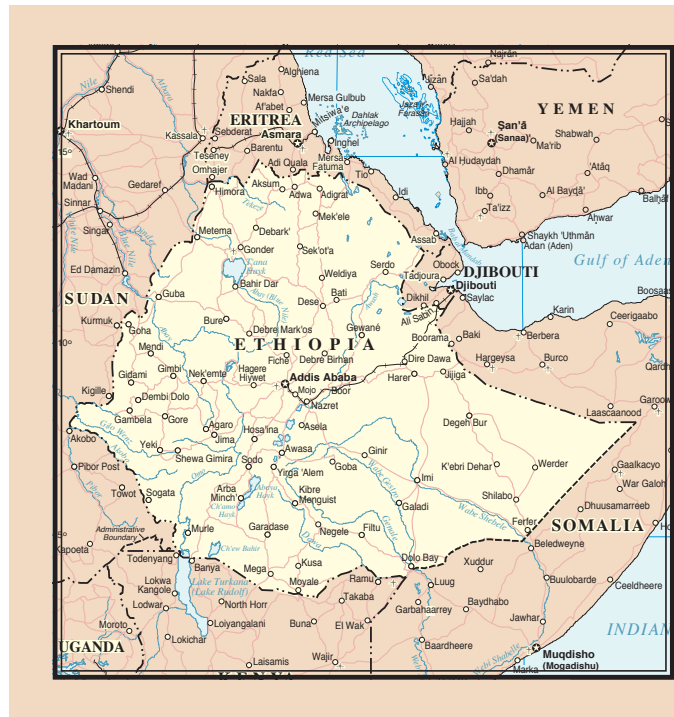
With more than 90 million people, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa and has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. The foundation of its economic growth is agriculture, which employs 80 percent of the population. Ethiopia could potentially reach middle-income status by 2025 with an emphasis on boosting domestic savings rates, private sector development and improving the trade logistics, according to the World Bank.

In recent years, Ethiopia has made development strides despite the regular cycle of droughts in parts of the country. The number of emergency beneficiaries has dropped from 15 million in 2003 to 5.6 million due to the support of international donors and the government of Ethiopia's national food safety net. Emergency preparedness and response have improved substantially with the assistance of USAID. The private sector has boomed, with the number of businesses increasing from almost none at the end of the Marxist Derg regime in 1991 to more than 45,000. Almost 95 percent of children now enter primary school, and health service has expanded enormously through the country's 38,000 health extension workers.

However, poverty is still a big obstacle to overcome in Ethiopia. Nearly one third of the population lives below the poverty line, and a vast majority depends on subsistence agriculture. Chronic and acute food insecurity are prevalent, especially among rural populations and smallholder farmers. About 10 percent of Ethiopia's citizens are chronically food insecure, and this figure rises to more than 15 percent during frequent drought years. Moreover, more than two out of every five children in

Ethiopia are stunted, a condition caused by a lack of nutrients that leads to permanent cognitive and physical impairments. The long-term effects of chronic malnutrition cost Ethiopia approximately 16.5 percent of its GDP each year, according to the World Food Program.

To address food insecurity, the government of Ethiopia is taking a strong leadership role with programs that meet the varying needs of vulnerable households. It is making significant investments and strides, particularly through its Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). PSNP is one of the largest safety net programs in the world and works with vulnerable households through cash or food for work programs. Its objective is to prevent families from having to deplete household assets in times of shortage. The program also stimulates markets, improves access to services, and builds community assets through the work households engage in. More than seven million people benefit from PSNP. Many of these households are also linked to Ethiopia's Household Asset Building Program (HABP), which focuses on families who are at less risk of *eroding* their assets in times of need and are positioned to *build* their assets in order to graduate out of poverty.



“As many challenges as there are, there’s a sense of optimism among the Ethiopian people that they can really accomplish anything,” said Brian Rell, chief of staff for Rep. Robert Aderholt (AL-4).

CARE started working in Ethiopia in 1984 at the invitation of the Ethiopian government following a severe drought and famine that devastated the population and claimed the lives of nearly one million people. Since then, CARE’s activities have expanded to address the root causes of poverty and vulnerability.

► Day 1: Why Ethiopia?

Today, Ethiopia is one of the largest and most complex recipients of USAID funding in Africa, given its significant economic potential, humanitarian volatility and role in the Horn of Africa. Maintaining the country’s stability is a strategic priority for the U.S. At the same time, the U.S. is home to the largest Ethiopian Diaspora community. Nearly 250,000 Ethiopians live in and around Washington, D.C. alone, which is more than in any urban area outside of Addis Ababa.

On the first day of the Learning Tour, the delegation met with the U.S. Mission in Ethiopia to learn more about the U.S. government’s food and nutrition security strategy. The delegation met with Dennis Weller, USAID Mission Director in Ethiopia, and his team. USAID supports the government of Ethiopia’s Agricultural Growth and Transformation Program, which catalyzes farming advancements and rural transformation to aid vulnerable households. In addition, USAID works with the government of Ethiopia to improve private sector investment in the agriculture sector.

Weller’s presentation began with a focus on democracy and governance. His team explained that Ethiopia’s location gives the country an important role in regional security, including hosting the peace negotiations to end the civil unrest and fighting in South Sudan that was occurring during the trip. Weller described Ethiopia as a “stabilizing force in East Africa.” However, the U.S.

Mission continues to face challenges with the Ethiopian government, as it works to promote civil society participation, freedom of the press and citizen mobilization. They also pointed out that more than 30 million people in Ethiopia still live below the poverty line, earning less than \$1.25 a day.

Next, the presentation focused on the country’s economic advancement, largely driven by agriculture and the private sector boom. Ethiopia’s economy is dependent on agriculture, which contributes 43 percent of the GDP and 90 percent of exports. However, just eight percent of the land is irrigated, and crop yields from small farms are below regional averages. Market linkages are weak, and the use of improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides remains limited. Despite these challenges, agriculture-led economic growth that is tied to improved livelihoods and nutrition can become a long-lasting solution to Ethiopia’s chronic poverty and food insecurity.

Another obstacle to agricultural production remains the country’s inability to produce sufficient output and ensure that it meets export quality standards.



Brian MacDonald, chief of staff for Rep. Greg Walden, participates in a briefing with USAID to learn about current food security initiatives in Ethiopia.

Weller's team explained how the programs USAID supports work in concert with the government of Ethiopia's PSNP as well as their Household Asset Building program. Through Feed the Future, USAID engages smallholder farmers to enhance their agricultural productivity and generate demand for local products. Agricultural investments improve the competitiveness of value chains such as maize, wheat, coffee, sesame, chick pea, honey, livestock and dairy. These activities bring jobs and income opportunities for rural households. Feed the Future also strengthens small- and medium-sized enterprises by providing access to credit and technical support.

A lively discussion followed Weller's presentation, with participants asking questions that delved deeper into the underlying causes of poverty, including Ethiopian policies and donor policies. The discussion topics ranged from the availability of technology to produce genetically modified, drought-resistant crops to how budget cuts have impacted USAID's work in Ethiopia.

As the conversation continued, the topic of nutrition emerged. The delegation asked how USAID integrates nutrition throughout their food security programming. The group also asked about U.S.-Ethiopia trade policies that are stimulating the private sector.

To gain a different perspective on how Ethiopia is tackling hunger, the delegation heard from local technical experts on nutrition, women's empowerment, agriculture and economic development work in Ethiopia. The discussion helped the group understand the political and historical context in which food and nutrition security work is being implemented in Ethiopia. Speakers included Garth Van't Hul, CARE Ethiopia Country Director; Matt Hobson, head of the PSNP Donor Coordination team for the World Bank; Mirafe Gebriel Marcos, chief of staff of the Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA); and Wigdan Madani, nutrition specialist at UNICEF.

The group learned more about the ATA, which has been supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The foundation has provided a total of USD \$25.1 million to

three partners – the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Food Policy Research Institute, and Synergos Institute – that are working to strengthen ATA's capacity to stimulate the Ethiopian economy by increasing production among smallholder farmers.

The panel provided an overview of the history of food security in Ethiopia, starting with the famine in the 1980s. The group explained that while many people still may associate Ethiopia with the stark images of famine, the country has made tremendous progress. There was a lack of donor coordination in response to droughts in the 1990s and 2000, but this disorganization led to the creation of the Ethiopian government's PSNP program to combat it. The PSNP harmonized the food security initiative into one annual plan with standardized processes, reporting systems and goals. When the Horn of Africa drought hit Ethiopia in 2011, the panel noted the country was able to respond effectively and quickly because of the PSNP and other safety nets.

Van't Hul from CARE also talked about the organization's priority areas. As part of CARE Ethiopia's development of a focused and long-term program approach to poverty, the country office has committed to develop programs around the following three groups: chronically food insecure rural women, pastoralist school-aged girls and resource-poor urban female youth.

The delegation asked questions about programs that help diversify the food that program participants received in order to prevent stunting. Again, the conversation shifted to the links between agriculture and nutrition.

► DAY 2: Emergency Food Distribution

In the last decade, countries around the world, including Ethiopia, have seen food prices rise, eroding the purchasing power of poor people, many of whom already spend most of their income on food. More than 2.7 million people in Ethiopia are in need of food assistance; that is roughly the size of the population of Chicago. Through Food for Peace, programs like the **Joint Emergency Operations Program (JEOP)**, run by Catholic

Relief Services and partners including CARE, provide people with food aid necessary to feed their families.

To learn about these food assistance programs, the group boarded a plane to Dire Dawa, in the eastern region of the state, to see the JEOP program in action. Dire Dawa is located in the region of Oromia, which is known for coffee and cattle production. JEOP started their program in Dire Dawa to address acute food security shocks in various parts of Ethiopia. The program fills the gaps in food availability by providing monthly survival food and nutrition rations to vulnerable households. Working with several other NGO partners, CARE collects its share of the commodities and arranges secondary transport for delivery to the communities. JEOP distributes food to 1.8 million people.



Alexis Covey-Brandt, chief of staff for Rep. Steny Hoyer, spends time learning about food distribution at the JEOP program.

When the group arrived at the JEOP warehouse, they saw stacks of U.S. grains piled high. After a tour of the warehouse, the delegates heard from Rich Markowski, chief of party for the JEOP program. He explained the successes of the program and the challenges of getting food to the communities. In Ethiopia, agricultural yields and resulting household food security is significantly impacted by increasingly unreliable rainfall patterns, as well as land degradation, other climate change impacts, population density, low levels of rural investment and



After a visit to a JEOP emergency food distribution center, Amy Porter, chief of staff for Chairman Ed Royce, helps distribute food to families in Dire Dawa.

the global market. For example, in 2011, the Horn of Africa drought left 4.5 million people in need of emergency food assistance in Ethiopia. Pastoralist areas in southern and southeastern Ethiopia were most severely affected by the drought. At the same time, cereal markets experienced a supply shock, and food prices rose substantially, resulting in a lack of access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food among people.

Implementation of the JEOP program addresses transitory or acute food insecurity among households that rely on an increasingly challenging agricultural livelihood. In particular, the JEOP provides food distribution during the “hunger season,” when households that cannot produce or buy enough food run low or run out of food supplies prior to the harvest. During this time, these households are highly dependent on food distribution to provide for their families.

“The highlight of the trip was going and seeing the distribution center and having the chance to talk to people about food aid,” said Amy Porter, chief of staff for Rep. Ed Royce (CA-39). “I was really proud of the work we’ve done.”

Next, the delegation traveled into the community to see how the food is distributed to families. The group drove through winding dirt roads and past stone houses before they arrived at the community center. The goal of the visit to the community center was to understand how the U.S. can effectively use U.S. food commodities to meet the needs of hungry people.

The group arrived at a central meeting point where the food is typically handed out to households. Women, men and their children stood in line to receive their food rations. After observing the distribution, the delegation broke up into three groups to talk to families.

The group met a young woman named Beya. Beya is 25 years old and has seven children, the oldest of which is 11. She joined the program after she was unable to harvest enough sorghum due to the weather in spite of trying improved farming methods. As a result, she did not have enough food to feed her family. She was thankful that the program enabled her to keep her children fed. Today, she is selling firewood to earn money and better provide for her family, including sending her children to school.



A CARE beneficiary in the JEOP program shares her personal story about receiving food aid, which in turn, helps to feed her children.



Joshua Rogin, chief of staff for Rep. Ted Deutch, meets the children in Dire Dawa.

Abdela Alishu, a widow with four children, also reflected on how crucial the food is for her family. She comes to collect her food once a month after a day-long walk. “If the support isn’t there, then I can’t care for my family,” she said.

Several other families shared how they were thankful for the food and used it to cook a filling porridge to feed their children. They also thanked the farmers in the U.S. for providing the food.

“The thing that stuck with me the most was the optimism of the woman who had to go eight hours to commute for food and two hours for water,” said Steve Voeller, chief of staff for Sen. Jeff Flake (AZ). “She still has optimism and wants her kids to improve, and that struck me. She’s still smiling.”

► Day 3: Long-Term Food Security

The third day of the trip took the group to Awassa and was dedicated to learning more about how U.S. food aid and long-term investments address agriculture and economic development. Awassa is a quiet town located on the shores of Lake Awassa in the Great Rift Valley. The group started their day with a breakfast discussion

with John Meyer, who serves as chief of party for **CARE's Graduate with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development (GRAD)** program. Overall, the program aims to reach roughly 375,000 Ethiopians who are currently receiving support from the government's Productive Safety Net Program. While programs like JEOP focus on filling the gap in a family's supply of food, PSNP aims both to ensure households' continued access to adequate, nutritious food and to build the assets of their communities through projects that address infrastructure or natural resource restoration needs.

Working in concert with PSNP, then, GRAD is a \$23 million, five-year program funded by USAID. The program helps poor families build their household assets in order to graduate from poverty and reliance on food aid. The program links them to microfinance services and functioning markets, encourages women's participation, strengthens their skills and teaches new farming and natural resources techniques. There is also a focus on improving nutrition and enhancing modern agricultural services. Improvements in agriculture systems can enable smallholders and workers to provide better lives for their families, bolster resilience to climate change and other shocks and stresses and reduce negative impacts on ecosystems.



The group visits CARE's GRAD program in Awassa. This 5-year program helps poor households graduate out of poverty and dependence on food aid through access to micro-finance services and functioning markets.

To see the GRAD program in action, the group traveled to a community center, where they sat in a circle with Ethiopian farmers participating in the program. The goal of this visit was to meet farmers who have been trained and empowered to increase and diversify food production in rural agricultural settings. The group listened to farmers talk about the social and environmental constraints faced by poor rural households to accessing services, finance and markets. The guests also gained a deeper understanding into CARE's approach to engaging marginalized households, especially women.

The GRAD participants explained how the program taught them how to pool their savings and invest in different small businesses through community decision-making. The micro-savings component of the GRAD program is modeled after CARE's signature Village Savings and Loans program, or VSLA. During the presentation, the participants pointed to a metal lockbox where their savings are held.

One of the challenges small-scale farmers face is their reliance on natural resources, many of which – like soil and water – are increasingly depleted or becoming scarcer. Poor populations are also extremely vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate, like shifting rainfall patterns and more severe natural disasters. These shifts, as some of the farmers pointed out, can decrease agricultural productivity and disrupt the stability of food supplies in the long term.

Many of the smallholder farmers are women, and the delegation was able to hear from a few female farmers. In the developing world and countries like Ethiopia, women make up a significant portion of agricultural labor and are often responsible for the families' food and nutrition needs. But they often do not have the same access as men to land, inputs, credit and information – resources necessary for productive, sustainable livelihoods.



Rob Lehman, chief of staff for Sen. Rob Portman, visits the home of a farmer who has benefited from the GRAD program.

To gain deeper insight into the day-to-day challenges these farmers face, the delegation split into three groups to participate in home visits and take a tour of the household farms.

One group met Wariko Wansara and Tejitu Eshetu, who are both farmers with a large family of seven children, four boys and three girls. As participants in CARE's GRAD program, Wariko serves as the chairperson of the Village Economic and Social Association (VESA). Through the program, the couple is learning about savings and engaging in new economic activities to increase their income. Three days a week, Tejitu travels a half hour on foot to sell hygiene products to about 200 families. With her job, she earns an income and is able to give some to her children to buy supplies for school.

Wariko cultivates two beehives that generate about 20 kilos of honey each year. Together, Wariko and Tejitu grow maize, sweet potato and whole grain teff, and Wariko also raises sheep and goats that he later sells in the market. For Wariko and Tejitu, the GRAD program means they can access training and credit to grow their livelihoods. Through GRAD, Wariko and Tejitu have hope

that their children will be well fed and be able to find work one day.

Another group met Asefa Haqamo and Almaze Hobasa, who are also GRAD participants. As smallholder farmers, Asefa and Almaze grow maize, sugar cane, and coffee. Asefa and Almaze also cultivate a vegetable garden, growing cabbage, carrots, onions and sweet potatoes. Several times a week, Almaze goes to the market to sell produce. Because of the gender equality training Asefa received as part of the GRAD program, he knows the importance of helping his wife, and he picks her up in the market when she goes there to sell vegetables in order to be equal partners in their business. They are considered gender role models in their community.

“It’s great to get to go to places we’ve never been able to go before. The most remarkable thing was meeting with the families in Awassa and speaking to the woman who started her own business. The husband told us he learned from CARE about gender equality, and that was stunning,” said Joshua Rogin, chief of staff for Rep. Ted Deutch (FL-21).

The third family the delegation was able to meet was Zacharius Tibo and Asanakach Gedana. Asanakach and her husband Zacharius have learned to work together as partners. As a result, they said they realized a deeper love for each other. Through the program, they have been able to expand their sources of income, raising goats and sheep for sale and selling bananas in the market. By working together, they have become true partners in providing for their three children. They are hopeful that their children, who are in school, will complete their studies and be able to find work. “The land is everything to me,” Asanakach says.

After touring the family farms, the delegation was able to spend time with the children in the community. The group played a quick game of soccer before heading to a pilot local/regional purchase program — called **Purchase**



Kojo Nnamdi, radio host of WAMU's The Kojo Nnamdi Show, plays soccer with some of the children in Awassa.

for Progress (P4P) — run by the World Food Programme. In contrast to the JEOP distribution center visit in Dire Dawa, where the food was shipped from the U.S. and distributed to food insecure households, this program purchases food from smallholder farmers in Ethiopia to be used in food aid programs. Research has shown that current U.S. international food aid programs that rely on shipping American commodities to developing countries not only take a longer time to reach families in need but can also be costlier, using precious food aid dollars for transport and administrative costs when food may be available closer to where it's needed. Relying solely on shipping food from the U.S. is also a missed opportunity to support long-term food security goals. By buying food locally, these programs empower and support local and regional farmers, the fruits of whose labor now go to feed over 43,000 children in almost 40 schools as part of WFP's homegrown school-feeding project.

P4P represents an alternative that can support and leverage smallholder farmers and local economies. While participants in the GRAD program still need to rely on food assistance and are building their household assets to graduate out of poverty, the farmers in the P4P program are increasingly productive and able themselves to contribute to food security solutions. P4P is a five-year,

\$159 million pilot program in 20 countries that strives to enhance agricultural production, sustain market engagement and increase the incomes and livelihoods of smallholder farmers, particularly women. In 2012, 33,000 smallholder farmers represented by 17 cooperative unions participated in P4P. By the end of 2013, 34,000 additional farmers joined the program.

The group learned how Ethiopian farmers transport the crops to cooperatives and heard about the value chain of suppliers and buyers. They were able to learn how the program has helped increase and sustain food production and improve livelihoods in the region. The program builds the capacities of participating cooperatives to allow them to take part in the national commodity exchange. By participating in the exchange, the cooperatives gain access to quality-oriented markets, and because they are participating as cooperatives rather than individual farmers, members increase their market power and enjoy more certainty in pricing and higher profits. To support this endeavor, P4P purchases commodities across the exchange and also buys from traders' associations that demonstrate the potential to take part in the exchange.



A farmer from the WFP's Purchase 4 Progress program talks about how buying local has helped his farm and the economy in his community.

The group's last visit of the day was a coffee distribution center that is part of the **Ethiopia Commodity Exchange (ECX)**. The delegation was able to see the truckloads of coffee that pulled up to the center. The Ethiopia Commodity Exchange is a quasi-government and private



The group visits a coffee distribution center that is part of Ethiopia Commodity Exchange. The group participated in a quality control process called “cupping” where they sampled different varieties of coffee.

commodities company established in 2008. The company was established by Eleni Medhin, a former economist for the World Bank, in partnership with market actors, members of the exchange and the Ethiopian government. As of July 2011, ECX consists of 55 warehouses in 17 regional locations. It has grown from trading 138,000 tons in its first year to more than 508,000 tons a year, with nearly equal shares of coffee, oilseeds and legumes. Through the Commodity Exchange and its regional locations, as smallholder farmers invest in their farms and increase their productivity, not only can they link to national and international value chains, they can also access better market and pricing information. This enhanced information enables them to make better, more informed decisions about when to sell their harvest.

► Day 4: Linking to Markets

The fourth and final day of the trip was spent seeing how Ethiopia is modernizing its economy that is largely based on agriculture. The first stop was a meeting with **Ato Tefera Deribew**, who serves as Ethiopia’s Minister of Agriculture. The meeting helped the delegation understand how the U.S. has partnered with Ethiopia in the past and what current initiatives are under Deribew’s portfolio. The main topic of the discussion was Ethiopia’s economy and the country’s future as an industrialized nation. Deribew explained that Ethiopia’s goal is to become a middle-income country in the next decade.

The group asked questions about the challenges smallholder farmers face. Deribew emphasized that it’s becoming increasingly difficult to manage smallholder farmers because of the growing population dividing up smaller plots of land. Coffee also played a major role in the discussion. The group asked how Ethiopia plans on improving the quality and quantity of its coffee production.

The last visit was to see the modern economy in action at the **Ethiopia Commodity Exchange Trading Floor** in Addis. Just as on a trading floor one might have seen in years prior in Chicago, traders gather together to buy and sell commodities such as coffee, sesame, navy beans, maize and wheat. The Commodity Exchange is a clear demonstration of the progress that Ethiopia and its smallholder farmers have made and to the potential of the country and its farmers to continue to grow their productivity and engage in national and international trade.

During the visit, Rob Lehman, chief of staff for Sen. Portman, rang the bell, which began the next set of trades. Trades are made in the pits by bidding or offering a price and quantity of contracts, depending on the intention to buy or sell. The group watched the flurry of hand signals and listened to the loud chatter as the traders went to work. As of November 2010, the trading floor in Addis Ababa handled 200 contracts in commodities, totaling a billion dollars in trade annually.



Rob Lehman, chief of staff for Sen. Rob Portman, gets a chance to ring the bell at the trading floor of the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange. As of November 2010, the trading floor in Addis Ababa, handled 200 contracts in commodities.

Conclusion

Ethiopia is a country of “many truths.” While the country has experienced economic growth, it faces limits due to its lack of infrastructure and private sector investments. However, one third of the population lives in poverty.

The Learning Tour showcased the dynamic relationship between the United States and Ethiopia and their strategies to tackle poverty through improving access to food and nutrition security. The group saw firsthand how the government of Ethiopia is taking the lead in empowering local farmers and protecting them against natural and emergency disasters such as drought. Through program visits to CARE’s emergency food distribution program and the GRAD program, the group witnessed how effective partnerships can have a positive effect on the livelihood of Ethiopian families by providing a continuum of services.

“We all saw the things we needed to see to chart the path of the programs themselves and [learn] what it takes for them to be successful,” said Alexis Covey-Brandt, chief of staff for Rep. Steny Hoyer (MD-5). “This is the best trip I’ve ever been on.”



Bags of wheat and soy like this are distributed to families who are food insecure.



The delegation flew over Ethiopia’s Great Rift Valley.

Another topic explored on the trip was the need to modernize how food aid is distributed. The U.S. food aid system began in 1954 with the generosity of the American people; today, the U.S. provides in-kind donations of commodities such as corn, wheat and soybean oil as international food aid through programs administered by USAID and USDA. The Food for Peace Act Title II is the chief legislative vehicle governing over 80 percent of food aid. In fiscal year 2012, the U.S. spent approximately \$1.45 billion under this program, feeding hungry people around the world in both emergency and non-emergency situations.

Over the last decade, CARE and other organizations have pointed out the inefficiencies in the current system. Changes in implementation could feed more hungry people without spending more U.S. dollars and support local farmers, so that they are part of the solution. Traditionally, the U.S. has responded to emergencies by shipping U.S. commodities to places in need — a process that can be slower (up to two months) and costlier (using up to 30 percent of resources for shipping) than sourcing emergency food aid locally or regionally, including from smallholder farmers. The U.S. has also relied on monetization — the donation, shipping and resale of U.S. commodities in local markets — to support non-emergency programs, a practice that not only can undercut local smallholder farmers, but also sees up to 30 percent of resources used for shipping rather than program activities.

As a result, CARE and other organizations have urged the U.S. government to reform its approach to food aid through vehicles such as the Farm Bill and annual appropriations. Most recently, CARE fought for provisions in the 2014 Farm Bill, passed in February, and FY14 appropriations that include significant, common-sense, lifesaving reforms to the U.S. international food assistance program. These changes will enable the U.S. government to source food from smallholder farmers closer to the crisis and to rely more on cash rather than the sale of U.S. commodities in local markets to fund non-emergency programs. By allowing the U.S. to be more flexible in responding to food insecurity in a smarter, more efficient manner, it's estimated that these provisions will enable the U.S. government to reach almost 600,000 more hungry people. Ultimately, these reforms give the U.S. government and implementing partners the flexibility to select the most efficient and effective tool in the toolbox to respond to emergencies and where possible contribute to long-term solutions to food insecurity.

Many delegates agreed that the major highlight of the trip was spending time with program participants, at their homes and their farms. The delegation met with mothers and fathers who are learning how to improve their families' lives through innovative food and nutrition programs. Through interactions with the local communities, the group saw how empowered smallholder farmers are instrumental in advancing investments in health and education for their families and Ethiopia's economy.

“We’ve seen CARE’s theory of change – a hypothesis we’ve seen tested in the last few days. It gave us all the opportunity to meet some truly amazing people,” said Kojo Nnamdi, host of The Kojo Nnamdi Show, WAMU 88. “We can change the world, and thank you for showing us how.”



Rob Lehman visits the town of Dire Dawa to learn more about U.S. emergency food programs.

Policy Recommendations

Support Smart Foreign Assistance

U.S. foreign assistance is critical to building a stable and secure world. U.S.-funded programs produce real change in the lives of children and families living in extreme poverty, while at the same time strengthening U.S. economic security, defending against global health threats and creating the basis for respect and good will toward the U.S. in countries around the world. By emphasizing self-reliance and sustainability, U.S. foreign assistance helps people help themselves.

One of the most important things the U.S. can do to fight global poverty is devote sufficient resources to these programs. The International Affairs budget is just one percent of the total federal budget (and poverty fighting programs are only half of that), and yet it helps to feed millions, promote development and enables the U.S. to respond to humanitarian crises like the recent typhoon that leveled entire communities in the Philippines. While we recognize the significance of this difficult budget climate, CARE advocates for the U.S. to maintain and strengthen its support for the International Affairs budget.

Support Food Aid Reform

Since 1954, U.S. food aid programs and Americans' generosity have addressed the emergency food needs of millions of people. Yet recent studies have revealed ways to modernize U.S. food aid to increase its effectiveness, reach millions more people without spending any extra money and support the long-term food and nutrition security of smallholder farmers.



The delegation gets ready to leave Dire Dawa for Awassa

The 2014 Farm Bill included significant reforms to U.S. food aid, including a program at USDA to enable the U.S. to source emergency food aid locally or regionally. The Farm Bill also provides greater flexibility to use cash resources rather than shipping U.S. commodities to support non-emergency programs. This increased flexibility for emergency and non-emergency programs coupled with increased cash resources in the FY14 omnibus appropriations bill means that the U.S. will be able to reach as many as 800,000 more people.

While the Farm Bill authorized the changes, CARE urges strong support through the appropriations process for robust investments in U.S. food aid programs, particularly when the ongoing crisis in Syria, emerging food crises in the Sahel and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines have stretched U.S. emergency response resources.

Support Long-Term Food Security

CARE advocates for U.S. food and nutrition security programs to adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses all aspects of hunger and malnutrition. Food-insecure households often struggle to grow or buy enough nutritious food because of poor soil quality, small plots of land, water scarcity or low incomes. Often, they have no access to a diversity of nutritious food. Smallscale farmers also face challenges because traditional weather patterns are more and more unpredictable, increasing the uncertainty they face with already tenuous livelihoods. Women are particularly constrained, given their unequal access to financial, information and economic resources. Many households are just one disaster away from a full food crisis.

It is vital then that programs to address food and nutrition security adopt a comprehensive approach that enables vulnerable families to increase the agricultural productivity, diversify their sources of income with new economic activities and protect the natural resources on which agriculture depends. Effective programs also must integrate nutrition, to ensure the best possible development outcomes for children under two. Comprehensive food and nutrition security programs also build families' ability to recover more quickly from natural disasters or other shocks and stresses to their livelihoods.

In addition to advocating for strong U.S. investments in food and nutrition security programs, CARE advocates for support of bipartisan legislation, such as the Global Food Security Act (H.R. 2822), that would call for a comprehensive food and nutrition security strategy, increase program effectiveness and sustainability and ensure continuity of these programs.

Support Investments to Empower Women and Girls

CARE advocates for the U.S. government to integrate gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment throughout its foreign assistance programs, including strong policies and robust resources to promote girls'



Steve Voeller, chief of staff for Sen. Jeff Flake, visits a food distribution site in Dire Dawa.

education and leadership, prevent child marriage, combat gender-based violence and ensure women and girls are food-secure.

Women face particular disadvantages in accessing enough nutritious food. When food is scarce in a household, they are often the last to eat, yet their nutrition is critical to the nutritional outcomes of their children.

The first 1,000 days from conception to age two is the most critical time for a child's development. Malnutrition in this "window of opportunity" can leave permanent negative effects on physical and cognitive development. At the same time, women are traditionally responsible for providing meals for their family and play a fundamental role in agriculture. According to the FAO, if women had the same access to resources as men, between 100 and 150 million fewer people would be hungry.

It is vital that food and nutrition security programs – from emergency food response to long-term agricultural development – integrate gender and prioritize the interventions necessary to ensure that women have equal access to tools, resources, information and services. Programs must also integrate nutrition to ensure that the unique needs of pregnant women and lactating

mothers are addressed to enhance the nutritional outcomes of their children.

CARE advocates for bipartisan food and nutrition security legislation, like the Global Food Security Act (H.R. 2822) that recognizes the importance of the integration of gender to address persistent inequalities and to prioritize measures that ensure women's equal access to resources and ultimately food and nutrition security.

The CARE Learning Tours program introduces policymakers and other influential individuals to the importance of U.S. investments, particularly as it relates to family health outcomes for women and girls. The goal is to utilize these individuals in ongoing advocacy efforts and help inform recommendations for a long-term U.S. strategic approach to these issues.

We are deeply grateful to the many individuals who generously gave of their time to make this visit to Ethiopia a success. CARE specifically thanks the Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation for its generous financial support to the Learning Tours.

If you are interested in CARE's Learning Tours program, please contact:

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