

Strategic Plan

Dorcas

Ethiopia



Building resilience, creating change **2026-2030**

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This public version of the Dorcas Ethiopia
Strategic Plan 2026-2030 is a concise version
of the internal document.

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Building resilience through partnership

Dorcas Ethiopia in 2030

By 2030, Dorcas Ethiopia will operate across seven geographic locations and be recognised as a professional organisation delivering integrated humanitarian and development programming. Our expertise will encompass Crisis Response, Livelihoods and Food Security, Climate Adaptation, and Community Development. Through evidence-based, community-led approaches and strategic

partnerships, we will empower marginalised communities to build lasting resilience. Local partners will be strengthened through systematic capacity development. Our team will possess enhanced technical skills in resource mobilisation and programme quality. We will champion gender equality and inclusion, demonstrating that sustainable transformation emerges when communities receive appropriate support, partnership and resources to shape their own futures.

Foreword

Ethiopia faces significant challenges, including an economic crisis, conflict-driven displacement, climate-induced drought, and rising urban poverty. These issues demand urgent and sustainable responses.

However, the evolving landscape also offers opportunities. The government's Climate Resilient and Green Economy strategy, its commitment to private sector development, and openness to partnerships allow organisations like Dorcas Ethiopia to make meaningful contributions to sustainable development.

This strategic plan outlines our direction for 2026-2030, leveraging our established presence in Sidama, South Ethiopia, Oromiya, Amhara, Somali and Addis Ababa. We will focus on four interconnected themes: Crisis Response, Livelihoods and Food Security, Climate Adaptation, and Community Development. This integrated approach recognises that lasting change requires addressing immediate needs while fostering long-term community resilience.

Our commitment to localisation will deepen during this period. We will

enhance the capacity of local partners through systematic assessments and support, while investing in staff expertise in resource mobilisation, monitoring and evaluation, and technical programming. Gender equality and inclusion will remain central to all our interventions.

By 2030, we aim to reach 30,000 direct participants annually through evidence-based programming across five geographic locations. We will expand our funding partnerships, grow our technical expertise, particularly in climate adaptation, and strengthen our position as a professional organisation within Ethiopia's humanitarian and development sector.

This strategy reflects our belief that communities have the knowledge and capacity to transform their circumstances when provided with appropriate support, partnerships, and resources.

Fikru Tarekegn (PhD)

*Country Director
Dorcas Ethiopia*



What unifies and guides us

Our identity

Dorcas is a growing, dynamic and responsive organisation. Much has changed over the years, but our calling to support, our shared values, and our inspiration from Jesus have remained constant. This strong identity defines who we are and guides how we work, shaping an organisational culture rooted in compassion, collaboration, and commitment. As we enter the new strategic period leading up to 2030, consistently living out this identity across all levels and facets of our work is essential to deepen our impact and foster coherence between our offices and shops, enabling us to work together effectively as a united movement.

Our vision

We believe that every person is equal before God and has been given unique potential by Him. Yet we live in a broken world where people suffer due to poverty, exclusion, climate change and other crises. Still, we see the extraordinary resilience of people. We envision a world in which people unlock their potential and restore their dignity so that people and communities can flourish!

Our mission

We are called to stand up for people in need. We take action in the face of poverty, exclusion and crisis. We come alongside marginalised people and communities and together create opportunities for them to flourish. This is how we follow Jesus' example.

Our values

We are determined, ...
We act with conviction and do not give up. Where there is need, we take action and get things done. We go the extra mile to make a lasting impact.

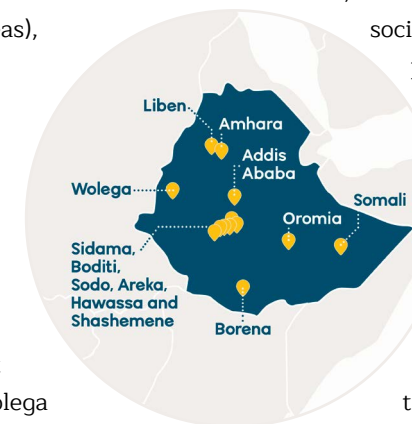
...we act together, ...
We are a movement that pursues sustainable change. We work alongside people in need and join hands with everyone who shares our mission. Only together can we make a real difference.

...out of love.
We are driven by compassion. We follow Jesus' example - out of love for our neighbour. We stand beside you - whoever you are.

Where we work

Dorcas Ethiopia operates in the South Corridor (Sidama, South Ethiopia, Somali, Amhara and Oromia regions) and the Addis Ababa city administration. In Borena and Liben (drought and conflict-prone pastoral areas), we implement humanitarian assistance, recovery, and livelihoods projects focusing on livestock management and climate-smart agriculture. In Wolega

(West Oromia) and Amhara, we run humanitarian and livelihoods programmes that address the impact of conflicts. In urban areas, including Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Shashemene, Sodo, Boditi and Areka, we deliver social empowerment and protection programmes that support children in vulnerable situations, youth, and older people, alongside youth employability initiatives that provide vocational training.





Challenges and opportunities

Economic challenges and poverty
Despite all the efforts and promising progress, Ethiopia's economy remains in a deep crisis. Government spending

prioritises military and debt servicing, which led to a default in 2023. The birr's 2024 devaluation caused a decline of over 120 per cent against

major currencies, triggering severe inflation. Unemployment levels are high, with firms ceasing production due to sanctions and raw material shortages.

Climate change

Drought is a major threat, particularly affecting pastoral communities in the Oromia, Somali, and Afar regions. Current per capita food production and high agricultural input prices make country-wide food security unlikely in the short term. Climate-induced disasters have become regular occurrences rather than occasional phenomena.

Social barriers and people in vulnerable situations

Gender inequality and low women's empowerment contribute significantly to food insecurity and poverty. Women face barriers in decision-making, which are exacerbated by low rural literacy rates and entrenched cultural norms. Urban poverty escalates as rural people migrate due to ethnic conflicts and displacement fears.

Donor and funding landscape

Competition for limited resources has intensified. Frequent shifts in development agendas and changes in donor policy create fundraising difficulties. Many institutional donors prioritise relief operations over development, focusing on social aid, food security, climate change and gender issues.

Technology

Technology is being used across Ethiopia to advance development by facilitating access to information, enhancing agricultural practices through precision farming, and improving communication in healthcare services. However, challenges such as limited internet access, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of digital literacy hamper these efforts.

Conflict and displacement

Continued ethnic violence results in killings, kidnappings and widespread displacement. Armed conflicts in the Amhara and Oromia regions have escalated, displacing significant populations and causing severe economic damage. Government corridor development initiatives have demolished impoverished neighbourhoods with detrimental effects for residents, businesses and civil society organisations.

Political and diplomatic tensions

The country's political crisis limits movement, disrupts supply chains and drives capital flight. Chinese companies relocate to neighbouring countries due to growing challenges. Diplomatic tensions with Eritrea and Egypt raise concerns about potential conflict, which could potentially deter foreign investment and drain limited resources.

03 | Our strategic ambitions and focus

Growing impact and reach

Strategic ambition

Dorcas Ethiopia's 2026-2030 strategy centres on three interconnected ambitions: achieving sustainable **growth** in our reach and resources, enhancing the **quality** of our programming

through evidence-based approaches, and strengthening our **position** as a recognised professional organisation within Ethiopia's humanitarian and development sector.



Grow

We aim to **increase our direct project participants** by approximately one-fifth by 2030. Our **portfolio will also expand significantly**. We will diversify our funding base by acquiring more donors, including institutional funders and strategic partnerships. Through consortium arrangements with like-minded organisations, we **will access larger funding opportunities**.

Our team will expand substantially to strengthen our implementation capacity across geographic locations.

Quality

We will systematically **improve programme quality through comprehensive impact studies**. Evidence-based programming will guide adaptations, with evaluation findings shared internally and externally. Our quality scan rating will improve to demonstrate **excellence in organisational systems and delivery approaches**.

Position

We will enhance visibility through **strategic communication and advocacy**, increased social media engagement and greater media coverage. **Active participation in networks** will position us as a key professional player.

We will establish an **advisory board providing local leadership and strategic guidance**, aligning governance with our localisation commitments.

Strategic focus

1

Evidence and impact to have a compelling, evidence-based story

We will gain a better understanding of our impact by continuing to develop evidence-based programmes and building strong track records. By 2030, we will complete impact studies for all four programme concepts and conduct evaluations that generate actionable recommendations and lessons learnt. These efforts will ensure that three-quarters of projects meet their objectives through systematic monitoring and adaptation.

2

Expertise and innovation to be relevant and strongly present

We will improve programme quality and impact by investing in the development of specialised technical expertise across the programmatic themes. Our thematic expertise will increase with experts across key areas. Climate change will become a leading approach, with

Dorcas Ethiopia can only achieve these ambitions if it excels in five interlinked key areas that form our strategic focus.

about one-third of ongoing projects mainstreaming climate adaptation. We will establish more strategic partnerships to leverage external expertise and resources.

3

Fund diversification to increase our donor base

We will increase the use of impact stories and evidence-based track records to become more attractive to funding agencies. By 2030, we will secure new funding sources with multi-year commitments and acquire more donors. Half of the projects will be funded through partnerships rather than solely through internal sources, with additional funding opportunities secured through joint proposals and consortium arrangements.

4

Positioning to be well-known and attractive to supporters and networks

We will strengthen our partnerships and diversify our funding by clearly positioning Dorcas Ethiopia as a leading partner in humanitarian and development cooperation. We will increase the number of social media followers annually to achieve improved interactions across all platforms. Brand recognition will grow substantially through enhanced media coverage, stakeholder engagement sessions and advocacy activities, positioning us as a key professional player.

5

Local power to increase local capacity

We will systematically strengthen local partner capacity through comprehensive assessments, achieving full coverage by 2030. Staff capacity in resource mobilisation and MEAL will be enhanced. An active advisory board will provide local leadership and strategic guidance. Our quality scan rating will improve to demonstrate organisational excellence while reducing dependency on international support for programme implementation and quality management.



04 | Our approach

Four programmatic themes

How we do things

As a faith-based organisation, Dorcas Ethiopia follows eight principles that enable us to help people and communities flourish:

- We focus on people who are most **marginalised** and believe in their potential.
- We facilitate the **flourishing and well-being** of individuals and communities.
- We implement community-based and **locally led** projects.
- We cooperate with local **community-based** organisations and strengthen their capacities.
- We realise sustained change through **long-term** commitments.
- We connect people and organisations around shared values for **partnerships** with impact.
- We seek to be **impartial** in who we hire, support, or partner with.
- We uphold a high level of **integrity** in all aspects of our work.

These principles guide all our programmes. Dorcas Ethiopia will focus on four key programmatic themes as we work toward 2030.

Our four themes

Dorcas Ethiopia will apply four programmatic themes to sharpen expertise, strengthen our track record, and define clear organisational positioning. By 2030, we aim to harmonise and standardise these programmes through a lens of inclusion and vulnerability, with community-based programming as our core approach.



Crisis Response



Climate Adaptation



Livelihoods and
Food Security



Community
Development





Crisis Response

We respond to acute and protracted crises through anticipatory action, lifesaving assistance and comprehensive recovery support.

Ethnic clashes forced Dase Olika to flee her home. With multi-purpose cash assistance from Dorcas Ethiopia, she could buy food, start a small business, and secure housing. Dase now raises chickens and sells coffee. Her business skills have transformed her family's situation.



Climate Adaptation

We enable farmers and citizens to adapt, protect themselves, build resilience and flourish in the face of climate change impacts.

Erratic weather threatened the crops of Yonas making it hard for him to maintain a stable income. With support from Dorcas Ethiopia, he acquired new skills and began producing vegetables. Now, he has a much higher income and can provide a better future for his family.



Livelihoods and Food Security

We support people in finding sustainable livelihoods, increasing resilience and contributing to community well-being, with particular attention to food security.

Drought threatened the businesses of dairy farmers like Bede Kebele. With training from Dorcas Ethiopia, these farmers diversified into the animal feed supply market and improved their business skills. They now plan to expand their market to neighbouring areas.



Community Development

We partner with communities in vulnerable situations through collaborative, asset-based and conflict-sensitive approaches that enhance their capacity, resilience and quality of life.

In Moyale, livestock play a vital role in sustaining livelihoods. However, milk production decreased when droughts resulted in a shortage of forage. Therefore, Dorcas Ethiopia introduced a game-changer: hydroponic fodder production. Livestock now have year-round access to green forage, and milk production levels have increased.





Looking after people and the environment

Our people

Dorcas Ethiopia is committed to fostering a supportive work environment for all staff. By 2030, we aim to expand our workforce to approximately 30 office support staff and 40 project staff, enhancing our operational capacity across diverse locations. We will prioritise employee well-being through competitive compensation,

comprehensive benefits, and mental health support. Our HR policies will promote career development, offering training and mentorship programmes to empower staff. We will actively work towards maintaining gender balance in our team, recognising that this requires consistent effort, ongoing recruitment strategies, and a focus on creating an equitable workplace culture.

Additionally, we will encourage open communication and feedback, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued within our organisation.

Our capacity

By 2030, Dorcas Ethiopia will significantly strengthen its capacity to operate with greater independence and sustainability. We will reduce dependency on international office support while building excellent staff quality to run country operations, including specialists in resource mobilisation, MEAL, human resources and child protection. Our thematic expertise will increase, with experts across key programme areas appointed by 2030.

We will conduct comprehensive capacity assessments for all local partners, providing targeted support to strengthen their organisational systems and programme delivery. We will also prioritise systematic capacity development for our staff.

Although we will continue to partially rely on international office support for quality management and financial controls, our enhanced local expertise will enable greater autonomous decision-making and programme implementation. Fund diversification will strengthen financial sustainability. We will acquire more donors and secure multi-annual funding commitments through strategic partnerships and consortium arrangements.

Our environment

By 2030, Dorcas Ethiopia will embed environmental stewardship as a guiding principle across all programmes. We will promote climate-smart agriculture technologies and strengthen community awareness on disaster risk reduction, enabling communities to design and implement their own climate adaptation plans. Our livelihoods programmes will emphasise sustainable farming practices, natural resource management, and reduced reliance on rain-fed agriculture. In pastoral areas, we will support improved livestock management and feed production that minimises environmental degradation. We will advance a green humanitarian response and ensure our work reduces environmental impact in line with global and donor priorities on climate and sustainability. Furthermore, we will engage local stakeholders in collaborative efforts to enhance biodiversity and protect ecosystems, reinforcing our commitment to a sustainable future for all.





Driving change

Dorcas Ethiopia will grow its portfolio to realise a substantial income growth over the strategic period.

We will transition our funding model progressively. In the short term, our dependency on international office funding will continue, but domestic resource mobilisation will gradually take the lead. By 2030, half of our projects will be funded through partnerships rather than solely through internal sources, demonstrating a significant shift towards diversified income streams.

Building strategic partnerships will be a key aspect of our income growth. Dorcas Ethiopia will work in consortium arrangements with like-minded organisations to enable access to larger funding opportunities that individual organisations cannot reach independently. We will secure more funding opportunities through joint proposals and consortium arrangements by leveraging combined expertise and track records to attract major institutional donors.

Our portfolio structure will maintain a strategic balance between humanitarian assistance and recovery, social empowerment and protection, and livelihoods and economic development. We will monitor this balance annually.

All staff will receive training in resource mobilisation and identified key skills, enabling them to identify opportunities, develop competitive proposals, and maintain donor relationships. Enhanced MEAL systems that generate evidence-based track records will make Dorcas Ethiopia more attractive to funding agencies.

Partnerships will drive change beyond income generation. Our strategic collaborations will leverage external expertise and resources, bringing technical knowledge, an expanded geographic reach, and enhanced credibility. These relationships will position Dorcas Ethiopia as a professional partner capable of delivering quality programming at scale, creating a virtuous cycle of improved capacity, stronger evidence, and increased funding opportunities.

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exclusion and crises. We come alongside
marginalised people and communities and
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