**The boundaries and names and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations*

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Protection Monitoring and Solutions Report was produced in partnership with UNHCR's protection partner, **EOTC-DICAC** (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission), as part of the **EU IM3 Project** under the **protection monitoring and solutions** component. It provides a detailed analysis of protection needs in Afambo and Chifra Woredas, Zone One (Awsi Zone), identifying individuals and groups with specific vulnerabilities, and offering actionable recommendations for humanitarian assistance based on both qualitative and quantitative data.

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Afar Region is one of the regions most affected by both natural and man-made hazards, resulting in pervasive protection risks and heightened vulnerabilities among affected communities. Even prior to the outbreak of the conflict in North Ethiopia, the region was experiencing significant internal displacement driven by the protracted Afar-Issa conflict along the Afar-Somali border. The subsequent expansion of the northern conflict into Afar further intensified displacement, disproportionately affecting pastoralist populations.

While large-scale displacement associated with the northern conflict has largely subsided, evolving conflict and environmental dynamics continue to exacerbate protection concerns in Zone One (Awsi Zone). Ongoing Afar–Issa tensions and spillover insecurity from neighboring regions, including the Amhara conflict, have triggered renewed displacement in Chifra woreda. Meanwhile, displacement in Afambo woreda remains protracted, with affected communities unable to return for more than six years due to recurrent flooding and sustained livelihood destruction.

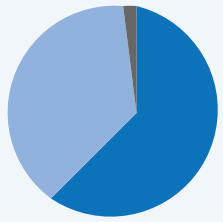
KEY FINDINGS & METHODOLOGY

TOTAL INTERVIEWS

238 Key Informants (KIs)

POPULATION STATUS

- 69% IDP Returnees
- 29% IDPs
- 2% Host



GENDER BREAKDOWN

59% Female | 41% Male

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Heads of Households (58%)

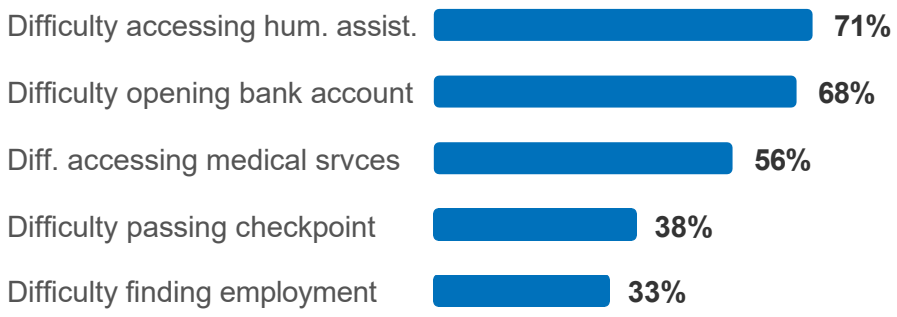
Community Reps (14%) | Volunteers (12%) | Religious Leaders (7%)

Students (5%) | Housewives (4%)

Picture: Key informant interview in Chifra, Awsi Zone

LACK OF DOCUMENTATION RISKS

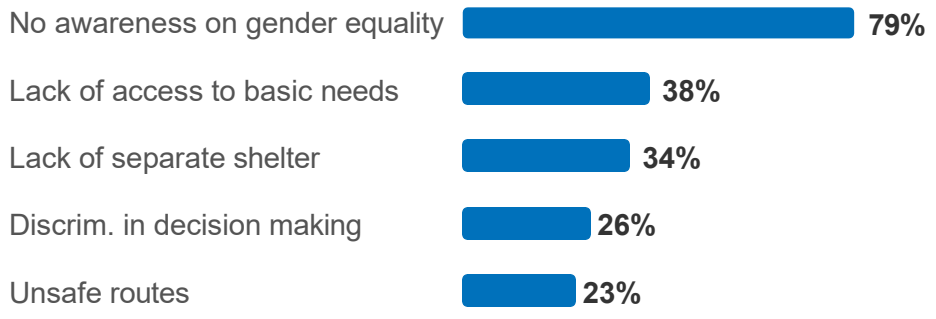
Top 5 protection risks community members encounter due to lack of documentation.



Lack of civil documentation mainly restricts access to humanitarian assistance, health, banking, movement and opportunity to get employment.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

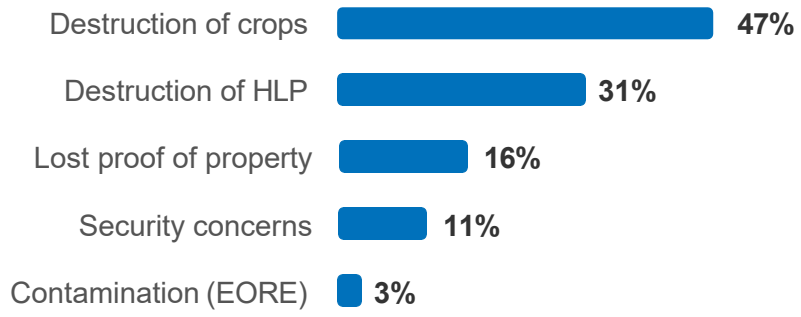
Top 5 factors increasing risk of GBV.



According to respondents, the risk of GBV and other forms of violence is primarily driven by a complex set of contributing factors including limited awareness of gender equality (79%), lack of access to basic needs (38%), inadequate shelter arrangements (34%), discrimination in decision-making (26%) and unsafe routes (23%). The findings show the need to strengthen awareness raising on gender equality and access to basic services.

HOUSING, LAND & PROPERTY (HLP)

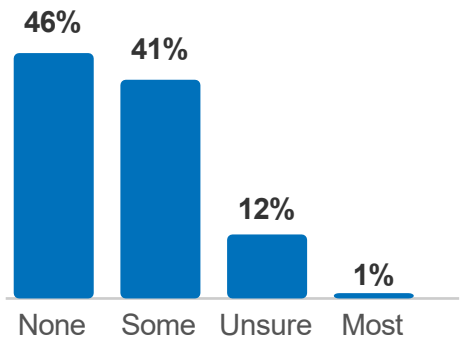
Top 5 issues faced by IDP returnees regarding HLP.



IDP returnees face HLP challenges, mainly driven by crop destruction (47%) and damage to housing and property (31%). Loss of documentation and security concerns further hinder safe return and recovery.

ACCESS TO FARMING LAND

Proportion of IDPs/returnees accessing land.



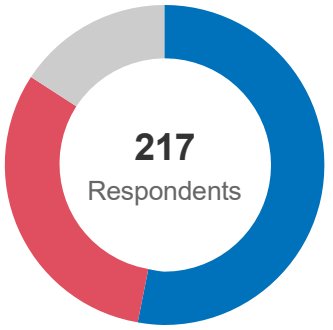
Access to land for farming among IDPs remains very limited, with 46% reporting no access and 41% indicating that only some IDPs can farm, while very few reported accesses for most (1%) or all IDPs.

ACCESS TO SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Do GBV survivors have access to specialized services?

Results:

- YES: 48% (105)
- NO: 42% (92)
- Don't Know: 9% (20)



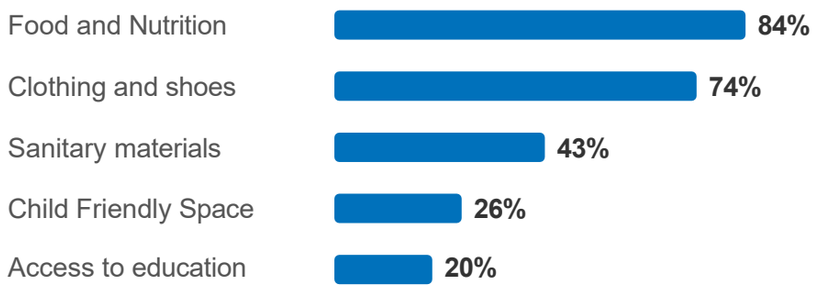
In Awsi Zone, less than half of respondents (48%) reported that GBV survivors have access to specialized services, while a substantial proportion indicated no access (42%) or were unaware of available services (9%), highlighting significant gaps in GBV response and referral pathways.

Methodology & Resources

The framework and the questionnaires of key informant interviews (KIIs) with IDPs and IDP returnees are based on the following global resources on internal displacement: the UN Secretary's General Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons and the Inter-agency Durable Solutions Indicator Library

CHILD PROTECTION

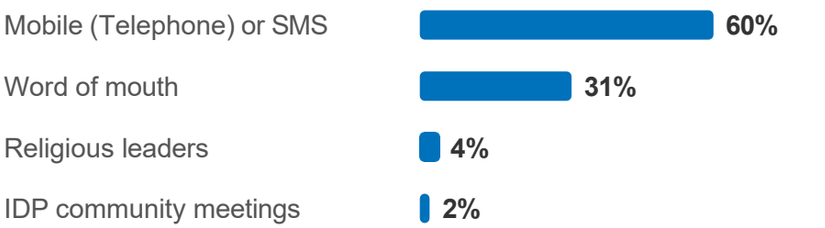
Top 5 protection issues children (boys and girls) encounter



Children face acute challenges related to food and nutrition (84%) and lack of clothing and shoes (74%), followed by limited access to sanitary materials (43%), child-friendly spaces (26%), and education services (20%), reflecting significant unmet basic and protection needs.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

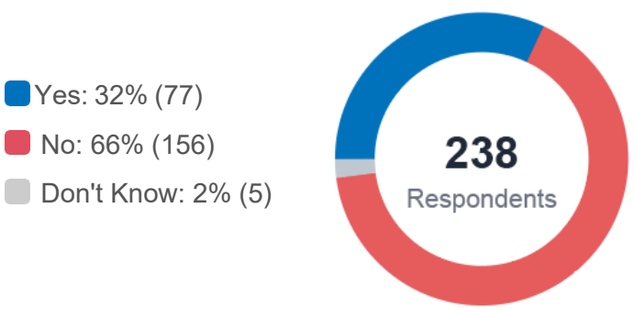
Major communication channels that people receive information



In Awsi Zone, information is primarily received through mobile phones or SMS (60%) and word of mouth within the community (31%), while formal channels such as religious leaders, IDP leadership structures, and humanitarian actors play a limited role.

EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE

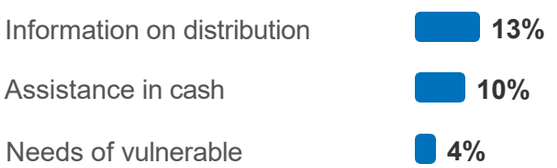
Are you aware of incidents related to unexploded ordnance UXO or other explosive remnants during the last 3 months?



In Awsi Zone, most respondents (66%) reported no known presence of landmines or unexploded ordnance in their area, while nearly one-third (32%) indicated awareness of explosive remnants of war, warranting continued monitoring and risk education.

SHELTER

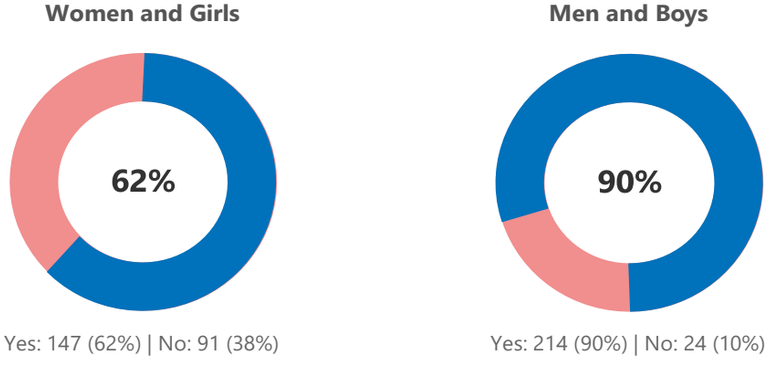
Things to improve during shelter and Non-Food Item assistance



Respondents highlighted the need for clearer information on distribution processes (13%) and greater use of cash-based ESNFI assistance (10%), along with improved consideration of vulnerable groups, adequate item quantities, and enhanced safety during distributions.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Are women and girls, men and boys always able to move freely in your community?

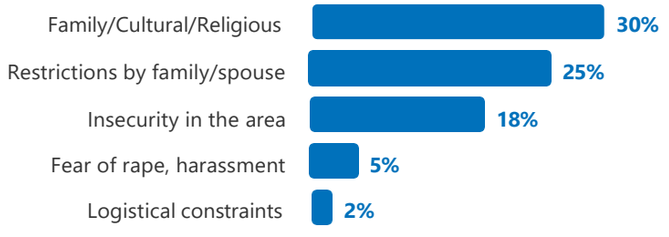


Yes: 147 (62%) | No: 91 (38%)

Yes: 214 (90%) | No: 24 (10%)

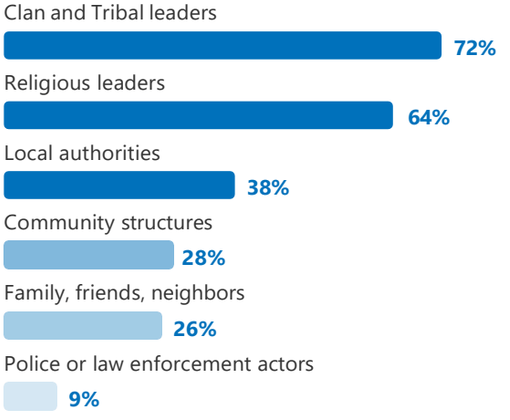
In Awsi Zone, freedom of movement is reported to be significantly more constrained for women and girls, with 62% indicating free movement compared to 90% for men and boys, highlighting persistent gender-based mobility restrictions.

Main reasons limiting freedom of movement for women and girls:



ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION ASSISTANCE

Most likely authority approached for concerns:

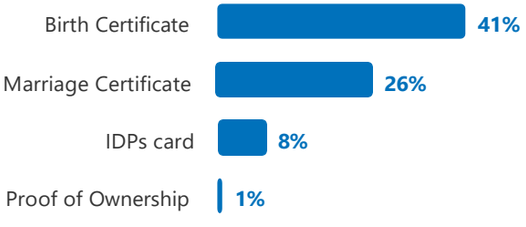


According to respondents, community members most commonly approach clan and tribal leaders (72%) and religious leaders (64%) to address protection concerns and disputes, while fewer rely on formal authorities such as local administrations (38%) or police and law enforcement actors (9%).

DOCUMENTATION

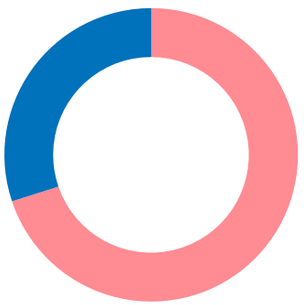
In Awsi Zone, birth certificate is the most accessibly documents (41%), followed by marriage certificate (26%), showing limited but essential access to civil documentation. The findings however underscore the need for strengthened civil documentation services. Fewer respondents cited access to IDP cards (8%) and proof of ownership (1%), indicating significant gaps in access to essential documentation.

Documents IDPs can obtain in the community:



Mental Health & Psychosocial Support

Observed signs of distress in population?



Most respondents (71%) reported no observed signs of distress among the population, while 29% indicated the presence of distress, pointing to localized protection and psychosocial concerns.

Older persons and Women amongst IDP and IDP returnees have been reported as the group showing more signs of distress

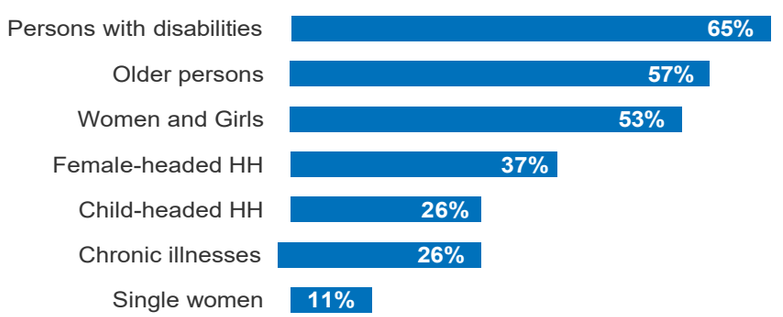
Obstacles to Access Basic Needs

Sector	Top 3 Obstacles (of 183 Key Informants)
FOOD	• Drought (67%) • Lack of food (65%) • Inflation (41%)
HEALTH	• Lack of medicine / supplies (78%) • Can't afford medical fees (58%) • Lack of healthcare staff (31%)
EDUCATION	• Not enough learning material (80%) • Can't afford materials (76%) • Lack of safety for children (37%)
WASH	• Water contaminated (44%) • Lack of available water (41%) • Lack of female hygiene kits (34%)

Education challenges are mainly driven by insufficient learning materials (80%), limited access to scholastic resources (76%), and safety concerns for children (37%) in Awsi Zone.

Access to Rights & Basic Needs

Most disadvantaged groups in accessing assistance:



Based on the survey, persons with disabilities (65%), older persons (57%), and women and girls (53%) were most frequently identified as disadvantaged in accessing assistance, followed by female-headed households and other vulnerable groups.

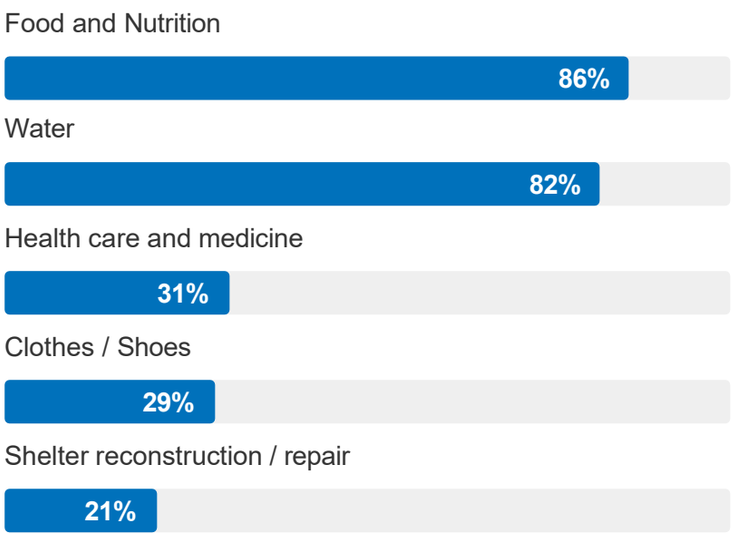
Coping Strategies

Mechanism	Always	Sometimes	Don't Know
Begging	-	25%	2%
Buying food on credit/borrowed	24%	72%	4%
Changing residence (reduce cost)	-	34%	3%
Child labor	-	27%	3%
Early Marriage for girls	1%	58%	3%
Illegal activities (theft)	-	47%	3%
Selling humanitarian assistance	-	66%	1%
Sold house and/or land	-	22%	5%
Transactional sex	-	5%	3%
Withdrew children from school	1%	45%	1%

In Awsi Zone, households reported reliance on negative coping strategies to meet basic needs, notably buying food on credit or borrowing (72% sometimes), selling humanitarian assistance (66%), engaging in early marriage for girls (58%), and withdrawing children from school (45%), underscoring heightened economic and protection vulnerabilities.

TOP 5 PROTECTION ISSUES

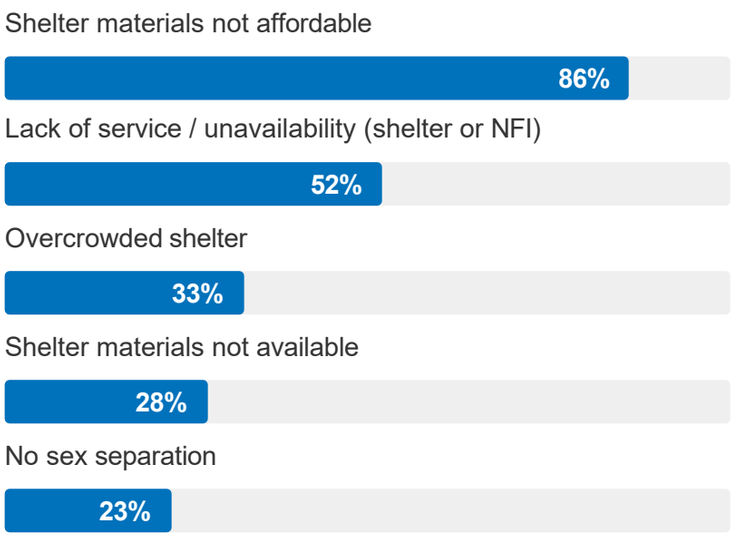
Issues IDP returnees are facing (Multiple Select)



Returnee children face acute challenges related to **food and nutrition (86%)** and lack of clothing (74%). Significant unmet basic needs persist in water and healthcare access.

HOUSING & SHELTER CHALLENGES

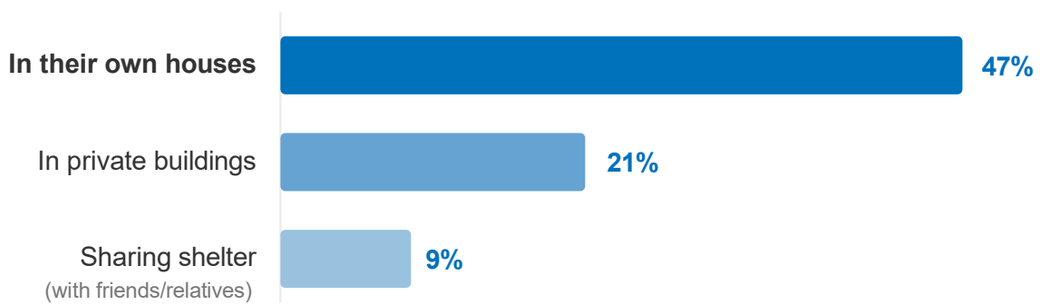
Issues IDP returnees are facing with housing



Severe economic constraint is the main driver of housing and shelter challenges for IDP returnees, with **86% reporting materials as unaffordable** followed by lack of service (52%). Lack of availability of shelter materials is also a significant challenge (28%). Overcrowding (33%) and lack of sex separation (23%) point to critical protection and dignity concerns requiring targeted shelter interventions.

CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Where IDP returnees are currently living



Almost half of IDP returnees (47%) are living in their own houses, suggesting a gradual return to places of origin (mostly Chifra). However, **30% remain in precarious housing arrangements** (private buildings or sharing shelter), highlighting persistent shelter challenges.

Critical Needs

Findings indicate persistent multidimensional protection and humanitarian challenges driven by protracted displacement, environmental shocks, and constrained access to basic services.

Basic Needs & Livelihoods

- Top concerns: food & nutrition (86%) and safe water (82%).
- Limited land access, crop loss, and livelihood disruption increase negative coping.

Shelter, Housing, Land & Property (HLP)

- Severe shelter/HLP constraints: materials unaffordable /unavailable (86%).
- Service gaps: shelter/NFI access (52%), overcrowding (33%), and lack of sex-segregated arrangements (23%).

Protection Risks & Civil Documentation

- Documentation barriers: birth certificates (41%) and marriage certificates (26%).
- Restrictions affect aid access, services, banking, movement, and livelihoods.

GBV and MHPSS

- Risk elevated by low gender equality awareness (79%), unmet needs, and unsafe routes.
- Gaps in specialized GBV services and survivor-centered referral pathways.

Child Protection

- Key concerns: food/nutrition (84%), clothing/shoes (74%), dignity kits (43%).
- Limited child-friendly spaces (26%) and school access barriers (20%).

Recommendations

1. Scale up integrated basic needs assistance, prioritizing food, water, and livelihood recovery through coordinated multi-sector responses, including cash-based interventions where feasible.
2. Strengthen shelter and NFI responses by improving availability and affordability of materials, ensuring safety and dignity (incl. sex- segregated arrangements), and supporting shelter repair for returnees.
3. Enhance HLP and civil documentation support through legal assistance and administrative facilitation to restore documentation and improve access to land and property rights.
4. Expand GBV prevention and response with increased community awareness, strengthened referral pathways, and improved access to specialized survivor-centered services.
5. Scale up child protection, focusing on nutrition support, clothing and dignity kits, child-friendly spaces, and improved access to safe education.
6. Strengthen MHPSS with targeted support for women, older persons, and other high-risk groups, including referral for specialized care.
7. Improve accountability and communication using preferred channels (mobile, community networks) and strengthen feedback mechanisms.
8. Promote conflict-sensitive and community-based protection approaches, engaging traditional and religious leaders while reinforcing linkages with formal justice and protection systems.

Partners

Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Development and Inter Church Aid Commission (EOTC-DICAC)

Donor Support

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