

In Addis Ababa alone there are over 100,000 homeless youth living on the streets, which amounts to 16% of all homeless children in Ethiopia^[1]. In these living conditions, the youth struggle to meet their immediate needs and face high rates of violence. Additionally, many of the children report that one of the barriers they face is the negative perceptions of their community, with one girl living on the street stating that “The community see me as useless”^[2]. Lack of access to basic human rights and the stigma against homelessness has implications not only for the present reality of these children but also for their futures. Escaping the cycle of poverty and finding meaningful employment is nearly impossible without access to proper support systems and basic education.



More than half the children globally not enrolled in school live in sub-Saharan Africa.^[3]



50% of the world's children experience violence every year.^[3]

Our response

The Fig Tree Foundation invests in projects which are sustainable, transparent, efficient, and collaborative. In 2015, the Fig Tree Foundation invested in a collaborative project between the Impact Society and the Strong Hearts Children's Foundation. Titled the Heroes Project, this initiative provided at-risk youth in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia the opportunity to participate in high quality youth leadership training. Through the Impact Society and Strong Hearts Children's Foundation partnership, at-risk youth living on the street gained the opportunity to learn basic strength-based leadership training and as a result, increase their confidence entering the workforce. To ensure this project was sustainable in the long term, students in their final year had the opportunity to become trainers and facilitators- ensuring the program's growth and implementation responded to community needs.

Funded Projects Dashboard

Location of project: Ethiopia



Project goals: Youth leadership training

Roundtable Members: Strong Hearts Children's Foundation & The Impact Society

Year organizations were founded: 2008 & 2007 (respectively)

In-country partner: Strong Hearts Development

Length of project: 1 year (2015-2016)

Proportion of project funded by FTF:

100%

Grant amount: \$6,800 CAD

This project contributes to SDG's...

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



The Impact

Since the pilot of the Heroes project, there has been a positive attitude and dedication in the youth enrolled. The courses were advertised informally through the Strong Heart center and community conversations- this led to a total of 15 enthusiastic youth completing the program. As the project progressed, it gained more visibility in the community with many young mothers interested in the program. The Heroes project not only provided youth with employable skills, but also empowered them to learn and appreciate their personal strengths and see the value they had to the community.



Since graduating, a handful of students from the pilot group have found jobs or become facilitators of Heroes programmes. 20 year old Birku was a participant in the Heroes pilot program. By discovering his strengths and how to best utilize them, he was able to secure a well-paying, reliable job. Yemesrach, another participant, says the Heroes program “[has] been helping me a lot to see and identify my strengths that I even didn't feel I had.” Yemesrach has gone on to become a facilitator for the Heroes programmes, with the desire to empower other at-risk youth to “see their strength as an opportunity of success.”



**4 youth have become facilitators
for the following cohort**



**In the first year, 15 youth
completed this program**



**64 training sessions were
provided in the pilot project**



Click to learn more about the great work [Strong Hearts Foundation](#) and [The Impact Society](#) are doing around the world

References

- [1] Walls, P.G. (2011). Socio-cultural challenges in conducting ethnographic research among Ethiopian street youth. *The Qualitative Report*, 16(3) 848-859.
- [2] Guy-Walls, P., Robert, G. (2015). Findings of a Study Exploring Homeless Street Females in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: A Need for Community Based Programs. *International Journal of Gender & Women's Studies*. 3. 10.15640/ijgws.v3n1a6.
- [3] UN Sustainable Development Goals- Good Health and Well-being (2015) United Nations, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>