



April 2022

Afar

Regional Brief

General Overview

Afar region is located in north eastern Ethiopia with an estimated population of two million. The Afar people are mainly pastoralists. They depend on their cattle for food and income. The region is predominantly inhabited by Muslim pastoralists or agro-pastoralists. Afar region is one of the government's four Developing Regional States (DRS) having social indicators significantly below the national averages. Recurrent drought, disease outbreaks, locust infestation and conflicts affect the Afar communities. Chronic water shortage in the region also forces the population and their livestock to move from place-to-place affecting children's education, health, and wellbeing.



Population data based on a projection from the 2007 census



Total Population
2,093,612



Capital: Semera
There are 5 administrative zones, 37 woredas and 5 city administrations

Programme Overview

WASH

Afar's regular droughts put a huge strain on the water supply schemes which even at the best of times are insufficient to meet the demands of the population and their livestock. The percentage of households using improved drinking water sources is the second lowest in Ethiopia after Somali region.

In Afar, 57 per cent¹ of households use improved drinking water sources, but if the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator is used as the measure, the use of safely managed drinking water services is less than 11 per cent of the population.

In some areas, women and children walk for more than four hours in search of water.

Moreover, most institutions, including health facilities and schools, lack water.

Poor sanitation is another major challenge with only 4.1 per cent of people in Afar region having access to improved sanitation facilities, 1 per cent in rural and 11 per cent in urban areas². Afar region also suffers frequent outbreaks of cholera and other forms of acute watery diarrhoea, causing the deaths of many children.



11%
of the population use improved water sources.²



4.1%
have access to improved sanitation facilities

Health

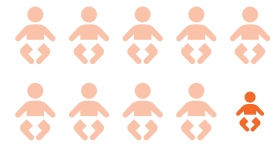
While Ethiopia experienced a significant decline in the fertility rate from 5.9 children per woman in 2000 to 4.3 children in 2016, in Afar, that number has increased from 4.9 to 5.5 during the same period. Similarly, while nationally early childhood mortality rates are decreasing, in Afar these rates

¹EDHS, 2016
²EDHS, 2016

are increasing, particularly the infant mortality rate which increased from 64 deaths per live 1,000 births in 2011 to 81 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016. Moreover, vaccination coverage at only 20 per cent is the second lowest coverage of children in the country as the community move from place to place. Large numbers of pregnant women who do not have any antenatal care and do not deliver in a health facility contribute to the many infants who die during the first 28 days of life.



The neonatal mortality rate is 38 per 1,000 live births.



The infant mortality rate is 81 per 1,000 live births.

Nutrition

Afar has some of the highest undernutrition rates in the country. There is little food production and what grows often is destroyed by cyclic drought, floods or locust invasions. Many children consume just a mono diet-camel or goat milk and bread. Women and girls are also malnourished, particularly during and after pregnancy. The number of children who are wasted (low weight for age) has been increasing since 2005 due to recurrent emergencies, poor feeding practices and diseases, particularly malaria and diarrhoea. Stunting prevalence is 41 per cent amongst children whose mothers have no education or just primary education compared to 14 per cent of children whose mothers have higher education.



14%
of children under 5 years of age are wasted



43%
of children under 5 years of age are stunted



32%
of children under 5 years of age are underweight



Education

The school enrolment rates in Afar are among the lowest in the country. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for pre-primary education in Afar was the second lowest in the country at 5.8 per cent; the NER for primary schools was 46 per cent, and the NER for Grades 9 and 10 at 6 per cent, and Grades 11 and 12 at 2 per cent in secondary school are the lowest in the country. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for Afar primary schools is 0.87 meaning more boys are enrolled. However, those children who attend school often fail to acquire basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy due to unskilled teachers, irrelevant curriculum, and inadequate learning materials.

5.8%

for pre-primary education (children aged 4-6)

46%

for primary school

2%

for secondary school Grades 11 and 12



Child Protection

Progress related to gender equality and women empowerment in Afar has been particularly slow. Over the 25 years, between 1991 and 2016, there was no significant change in the prevalence of child marriage in the Afar region (from 69 per cent to 67 per cent). Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) among girls and women aged 15 to 19 years also remains prevalent, the second highest in the country, and is often the most extreme form, infibulation. FGM/C has decreased only marginally in the past two decades, from 98.6 per cent in 2000 to 91.2 per cent in 2016.



1.6%

of children under five in Afar have their births registered



16.4%

The median age of marriage among women aged 20-49



91.2%

FGM/C prevalence among girls and women aged 15-19



Social Policy

Multidimensional child deprivation is high with 91 per cent of children deprived in three to six dimensions. Deprivation in housing (92 per cent) and sanitation (88 per cent) are the largest contributors to multidimensional poverty for children under 18 years of age in Afar region.

In addition, Afar has the highest deprivation rate in health (80 per cent) and nutrition (85 percent). 66 per cent of rural households in the region are enrolled in the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) compared with 11 per cent of rural households at national level.



In 2015/2016 Monetary poverty was

24%



91%

of children are deprived in three to six dimensions of poverty

Humanitarian Situation

The humanitarian situation in Afar continues to worsen with new conflict reported in Kilbati zone since mid-January 2022. The new conflict has affected 6 woredas, resulting in displacement of tens of thousands of people across the 6 woredas. According to Afar regional authorities, the internally displaced people in the region has now reach around 765,000. This number is nearly 40 per cent of the total population of the region.

The new caseload of displacement is increasing the needs and adding to the already overstretched humanitarian operations with the disrupted social services further complicating and deepening the suffering of the lives of the pastoralist community.

Key results achieved in 2021

UNICEF reached an estimated:



700,000 children with nutritional services



46,000 children with educational support



100,000 children with basic health services



280,000 children with basic WASH services



136,000 people with life-saving emergency assistance in response to conflict/drought/floods.

Key targets in 2022

UNICEF plans to reach an estimated:



800,000 children with nutritional services



116,000 children with educational support



106,000 children with basic health services



400,000 children with basic WASH services



26,000 children and women with child protection services



4,000 flood affected population with social protection services



370,000 people with life-saving emergency assistance in response to conflict/drought/floods