Bringing content to students and patients by reconstructing schools and health centers in Tigray

22 February 2024 - The reconstruction of 14 health centers, 11 primary schools and 33 communal and institutional water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in Tigray was successfully completed. This was made possible through the Government of Ethiopia’s Response-Recovery-Resilience for Conflict Affected Communities in Ethiopia (3R4CACE) Project, which is financed by the World Bank and implemented by UNOPS.

Due to the conflict and lack of maintenance, the rapid response works carried out from March 2023 until January 2024 focused on refurbishment of the facilities to improve the access to health care, education and water and sanitation for 365,000 people in five woredas in Tigray. Many primary schools and health centers suffered from damaged roofs, walls, floors, windows and doors, inadequate external drainage and access paths, so the comprehensive reconstruction was covered by the project activities. Some of the facilities got for the first time new toilet blocks and running water, significantly improving sanitary conditions for their beneficiaries from the local communities. In several locations, new ramps were constructed to make it easier for people with disabilities to access the buildings.

“Our school was completely devastated due to the conflict, resulting in the loss of classrooms, desks, and blackboards. Before the rehabilitation, our school was nonfunctional, and teaching had come to a halt. We lacked proper desks and blackboards, and our students were forced to write on the walls,” Gebremikael Khishen, Director and teacher of Koraro Primary School in Hawzen Woreda, explains. “The collaboration between the Ethiopian Government and UNOPS has yielded remarkable results. UNOPS has supported us in maintaining our infrastructure, WASH facilities, and electricity, which are now providing essential services. In addition to the rehabilitation efforts, UNOPS has generously provided us with 200 desks and 16 blackboards. As a result of this support, our students are now happy to come to school and are motivated to learn.”

The rapid response activities were implemented in Hintalo, Abergele, Hawzen, Asgede and Endemahoni. The project has moved to its recovery phase, which will enable (re)construction of additional health, education and WASH facilities.

“During the peak of the conflict, approximately 80% of our health center was non-functional. Despite the extensive damage, we continued to provide services. All the health center rooms were totally destroyed including the delivery room were extensively damaged due to the bombing so we were forced to combine the delivery room to another ward,” Mis. Merhawit Gebrehiwot, the Director of Koraro Health Center remembers. “However, I am pleased that all of the health center rooms have now been completely restored. We used to combine wards due to a shortage of rooms, but now we allocate individual rooms for each ward, ensuring a dedicated space for medical consultations and treatments. After a successful
recovery, the community has resumed visiting our health center for their healthcare needs, as they feel content and assured of the center's excellent condition to provide services."

The Response-Recovery-Resilience for Conflict Affected Communities in Ethiopia (3R4CACE) Project of the Government of Ethiopia financed by the World Bank with USD 300 million, aims to (i) rebuild and improve access to basic services and climate-resilient community infrastructure and (ii) improve access to multi-sectoral response services for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors; in selected conflict-affected communities in Ethiopia.

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