



Final Brochure

may 2026

Improvement of food security and
labour market access in Eritrea

AID 012848/01/0

■ A SHARED COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION AND DECENT WORK IN ERITREA

The project “**Improvement of food security and labour market access in Eritrea**” AID 012848/01/0 has come to a close, having fully translated its initial objectives into measurable and sustainable impacts on the local community. Funded by the **Italian Cooperation** and implemented by **Nexus ER ETS** in partnership with **ISCOS** and **Progetto Sud ETS**, and in close collaboration with the Eritrean trade union **NCEW**, the initiative has effectively addressed the structural and economic challenges faced by the most vulnerable segments of the population in rural areas and urban centers in Eritrea.

The goal of the initiative was to promote **an inclusive development model** capable of combining the strengthening of food security with the creation of decent, safe, and secure employment opportunities.

Through an integrated approach that combined **technical and vocational training** with the targeted provision of **inputs and productive assets**, the project promoted the socio-economic empowerment of **youths, women, and people with disabilities**, fostering their autonomy and integration into the labour market.

At the same time, a major **awareness-raising and advocacy campaign** has reached every corner of the country, fostering a renewed understanding of **labour rights, gender equality, and occupational health and safety**.

This initiative leaves behind not only **infrastructure and material assets**, but also a solid network of **qualified local technicians and trainers**: a valuable legacy of skills that will ensure the sustainability of the results and continue to generate value and social cohesion for Eritrea’s future.

■ Results and beneficiaries reached

The project has contributed to improve the conditions for **the socioeconomic inclusion** of the most **vulnerable segments of the population** in Eritrea, including youths, women, and people with disabilities.

Specifically:

- **30 women** received training in agriculture and were provided with agricultural supplies;
- **25 people, including 20 women**, received training in livestock farming and were provided with animals;
- **10.781 people** were reached by the awareness and advocacy campaign on occupational health and safety, decent and inclusive work, food security, and climate change;
- **163 people, including 80 with disabilities**, were trained in food processing, food service and hospitality, and the use of technology;

- **91 people** from unit bases and OSH committees were trained on occupational health and safety and provided with PPE kits to become trainers themselves;
- **12 members of the NCEW staff** were trained on the project cycle.

Actions implemented

A1.1 Empowerment of young small-scale farmers in rural areas through training and distribution of agricultural inputs

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the project, the initiative began with a **Training of Trainers (ToT)** session in Asmara, led by Italian agricultural expert Niccolò Renzi. This session trained **13 technicians from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)** and local partners on key topics such as agroecology, irrigation optimization, and biological pest control.



The trained technicians then shared these skills with the local community, providing **theoretical and practical training to 30 unemployed women from the rural communities** of Habero and Asmat. The beneficiaries received 60 days of **support in cultivating a total of 8.5 hectares of land** (5.5 ha in Asmat and 3 ha in Habero), dedicated to growing vegetables with high nutritional and commercial value (onions, potatoes, carrots, okra, and peppers). The perimeter of the fields was protected through the ecological planting of orange trees.



The project concluded with **the distribution of agricultural equipment** (hoes, shovels, fertiliser) and the establishment of **a regular mentoring program** to ensure the full productivity and self-sufficiency of the women's work groups.



■ A1.2 Distribution of animals for consumption and sale to female heads of household facing food insecurity

In line with the project's sustainability objectives, the livestock component underwent a significant strategic evolution thanks to the introduction of a **Training of Trainers (ToT) program** in Asmara. Led by Italian veterinary expert Giuseppe Puglisi, the course trained **17 technicians from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and local companies**, transforming them into local knowledge multipliers regarding animal health and disease prevention.



Subsequently, local trainers led a **theoretical and practical training program focused on livestock farming**, which involved a select group of 25 participants - including **20 female heads of household and 5 vulnerable youth** - in the villages of Elabered and Afabet.



The activity concluded with **the distribution of a total of 150 goats**: each beneficiary received 6 goats, a number calculated to enable them to start an independent small-scale livestock operation and generate supplementary income to support their family's food security.



■ A1.3 Awareness-raising and advocacy campaign

To amplify the project's impact and promote the values of decent work, inclusion, and sustainability, a comprehensive nationwide awareness-raising and advocacy campaign was launched in Eritrea. The initiative focused on key issues: **occupational health and safety, gender equality, and combating climate change**. The operational strategy integrated the use of media (radio and television), the distribution of multimedia materials, and the organization of local events.





The main phase of the campaign reached **its peak visibility in the spring 2025**, culminating in the celebrations for **International Workers' Day** under the official theme “Productivity by conscious participation.” Within this framework, the strategy was divided into two main initiatives: on the one hand, **a media campaign** involving the printing and distribution of **5,000 copies** of the NCEW magazine “**Voice of Workers**” (in Tigrinya, Arabic, and English); on the other, **thematic seminars, round tables, and cultural competitions** that brought together the communities of Asmara, Massawa, Ghindae, Assab, Mendefera, Keren, and Tokombia, with **over 5,500 workers** participating.





The engagement continued in the following months through **sessions focused on women's empowerment and youth leadership**, which actively involved an additional 281 people, thereby fostering a widespread collective awareness of labour rights and safety.

Another initiative was the drafting of **a Handbook on Social Dialogue**, prepared by NCEW experts Kidane Kibreab and Abraham Bereket in collaboration with Italian expert Professor Fabrizio Pirro. The Handbook was produced in English and Tigrinya.

■ **A 2.1 Implementation of training courses on food processing, food service, hospitality, and the use of technology for people with disabilities**

With the aim of breaking down barriers to accessing the labour market, the initiative promoted **a comprehensive program of tailored vocational training** for people with disabilities and vulnerable groups in the cities of Asmara, Massawa, and Keren. Implemented by NCEW in close collaboration with the relevant ministries and national rights advocacy organizations (including the Eritrean National Association of the Blind and the Eritrean National Association of the Deaf), the initiative was **a resounding success**, enrolling a total of **163 students** and exceeding initial projections for **the inclusion of people with disabilities**, increasing **the number of beneficiaries from 30 to 80**.

To ensure maximum training effectiveness, the modules were structured with specific supports, such as the use of assistive technologies for accessibility and the presence of sign language interpreters.

The program was divided into three specific areas:

- **Digital skills (ICT):** launched in the centers of Massawa, Keren, and Asmara, the program has provided **dozens of young people and women** with the essential computer skills needed for personal and professional independence. Of particular note was **the session dedicated to the visually impaired**, which allowed participants to become familiar with audio and Braille tools, opening up new and tangible employment opportunities.
- **Modern and traditional cooking:** held in Asmara, the course provided **20 unemployed deaf women** with specialized training in the restaurant and hospitality industry, equipping them with the practical skills needed to secure stable employment in the formal labour market.
- **Tourism and Hospitality:** organized in Keren in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, the initiative enabled **professionals already working in the sector** (including several people with disabilities) to hone their skills directly in the field through practical workshops conducted in partnership with local hotels.





The entire program concluded with **the official graduation ceremonies**, celebrating the students' achievement of greater independence and the acquisition of new skills to be applied in the labour market.





■ A2.2 Conduction of occupational health and safety training

In full alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda (SDG 8.8) for the protection of workers' rights and the promotion of safe working environments, the initiative has made occupational safety and health (OSH) a strategic pillar. In close collaboration with the Eritrean Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) and thanks to the partnership with the Italian trade unions CGIL and UIL, two major training programs were planned and delivered to strengthen the culture of prevention across the country.

The program was implemented through two complementary major initiatives: a specialized training in the construction and transportation sectors and the strengthening and reactivating occupational safety and health committees

- **Specialized training in the construction and transportation sectors**

An initial training program involved **40 local professionals (including 15 women)**. The course, led by Stefano Rizzi of FILLEA CGIL and Matteo Pellegrini of UILTRASPORTI, combined **an analysis of relevant legislation** (both national and international) with **a practical, hands-on approach**, dedicating over 60% of the course hours to practical activities, simulations, and instructional videos. To ensure a lasting impact and enable the transfer of skills to individual company units, **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits** tailored to the specific standards of the two sectors were distributed at the end of the course.



- **Strengthening and reactivating occupational safety and health committees**

In response to a specific request from NCEW, the second training cycle brought together **60 members of workplace health and safety committees** working in key sectors such as **construction, transportation, food service, hospitality, and services**. The sessions, led by Stefano Rizzi of CGIL Varese and Biniam Ahferom of the Eritrean Ministry of Labor (MoLSW), explored critical methodologies for **risk assessment** and the mapping of **rights and responsibilities in workplace settings**. Through discussions based on real-life cases, the training restored full functionality to these essential structures, equipping participants with **new PPEs** and strengthening their monitoring and prevention roles.





Recognized by the participants themselves in satisfaction surveys for their exceptional clarity and effectiveness, both programs marked the **first-ever sector-specific training initiative in Eritrea**, establishing a new network of future trainers capable of bringing about **lasting and widespread change in the workplace**.

The occupational health and safety training courses were held at the Social Media Center in Asmara, which was completed in 2023 thanks to previous collaborations between the Italian partners and NCEW and with the support of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

■ A 2.3 Training on the project cycle

As a cross-cutting activity within the project, Nexus ER commissioned Italian expert Anna Rocchi to develop an online training course on the project cycle. The course, designed for **12 members of NCEW's administrative staff**, equipped participants with advanced technical and operational skills in project design, enabling them **to independently apply the Logical Framework** and the **Theory of Change**, as well as to structure effective project monitoring and evaluation systems.



For further information
visit [the project page](#)
on the Nexus Emilia-Romagna website

Read also the Africa Rivista feature article
[“Eritrean Women at the Center of Change”](#)

PROJECT PARTNERS



NEXUS Solidarietà Internazionale Emilia Romagna ETS

NGO that carries out international cooperation activities to contribute to improving the quality of life and strengthening democratic institutions with full respect for cultural diversity and the principle of self-determination of peoples.



ISCOS - Istituto sindacale per la cooperazione allo sviluppo

NGO that promotes international cooperation actions and projects, according to the principles of solidarity, social justice, human dignity and peace, whose priorities are the defense of trade union freedoms and human rights, the fight against poverty and discrimination, and support for communities affected by natural disasters and wars.



PROGETTO SUD ETS

NGO engaged in international development cooperation activities in various countries around the world, promoting the principles of sustainable development, decent work, gender equality and women's empowerment, solidarity and cooperation between trade unions, the fight against inequalities and the protection of human rights.



NCEW - National Confederation of Eritrean Workers

To date it is the only trade union movement in the country. Its mission is to contribute to the creation of an organised, skilled and professionalised workforce as well as to ensure decent and socially protected jobs. NCEW is a member of ILO, ITUC, ITUC Africa, OATUU, HACTU the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Horn of Africa.

THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Improvement of food security and labour market access in Eritrea AID 012848/01/0

Starting date: 01/12/2024

Closing date: 31/05/2026

Project duration: 18 months

Project funded by



Implemented by



ATS partners

ISCOS – Istituto sindacale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo



Progetto Sud ETS



Local partner

NCEW - National Confederation of Eritrean Worker



In collaboration with

CGIL - Italian General Confederation of Labour

CISL - Italian Confederation of Trades Unions

UIL - Italian Labour Union



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