East Action Organization
Action for Betterment

Project Outline

Project Title:
Strengthening EAO's Community-Based Digital and Inclusive Support Solution for Vulnerable Communities in Ethiopia

Applicant Organization:
East Action Organization (EAO)

Project Stage:
Prototype / Pilot – product exists and is being tested with users

Project Location:
The project will be implemented in Ethiopia, with strong focus on Somali Regional State, Dire Dawa City Administration, Harari Region, Addis Ababa City Administration, and other underserved areas where EAO has operational presence, community relationships, and focal persons. The pilot will prioritize areas affected by displacement, poverty, limited access to services, climate shocks, unemployment, and social exclusion.

Target Groups:
The project will target women, youth, persons with disabilities, vulnerable households, internally displaced persons, returnees, refugees, and local community structures. Special attention will be given to marginalized groups who face barriers in accessing information, services, digital tools, livelihood opportunities, protection support, and participation in community development.

Project Background and Rationale

East Action Organization has already started piloting a community-based support solution that helps identify the needs of vulnerable communities, connect them with available services, collect feedback, and improve community engagement. The pilot is not only an idea; EAO has already begun testing the approach with real users and local structures.

However, the current pilot remains limited because of shortage of budget, limited technical expertise, inadequate digital and operational tools, and insufficient capacity for monitoring, data

collection, documentation, and scale-up. These challenges reduce the effectiveness of the pilot and limit EAO's ability to reach more users.

This project will strengthen the existing pilot by improving its technical quality, expanding user testing, supporting staff and volunteer capacity, improving data and feedback systems, and preparing the solution for wider implementation.

Key Challenges Facing the Current Pilot

EAO has made important progress in starting the pilot, but several challenges continue to affect its effectiveness, quality, and potential for scale-up:

1. **Limited Financial Resources**
   EAO has started the pilot with limited internal resources. The shortage of funding affects implementation speed, staff support, field logistics, equipment, training, community outreach, and the ability to expand the pilot to more users and locations.
2. **Limited Technical Capacity**
   The pilot requires stronger technical support to improve its design, digital tools, data systems, user feedback mechanisms, and overall functionality. EAO needs access to specialized expertise in digital solution design, monitoring systems, data management, safeguarding, accessibility, and scale-up planning.
3. **Inadequate Digital and Operational Tools**
   EAO currently lacks sufficient digital devices, software tools, internet support, data collection systems, and operational equipment needed to run the pilot efficiently. This limits real-time learning, reporting, user tracking, and communication with beneficiaries and community focal persons.
4. **Limited Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning Capacity**
   The pilot needs stronger MEAL systems to measure results, collect evidence, document lessons, assess user satisfaction, and demonstrate impact to partners and donors. Without stronger MEAL support, it is difficult to prove effectiveness and prepare the solution for expansion.
5. **Limited Staff and Volunteer Capacity**
   EAO relies heavily on committed staff, volunteers, and community focal persons. However, they require further training, supervision, incentives, and technical guidance to deliver the pilot effectively and consistently across different locations.
6. **Accessibility and Inclusion Barriers**
   Women, youth, persons with disabilities, IDPs, returnees, refugees, and vulnerable households often face barriers related to mobility, language, disability access, digital literacy, gender norms, and lack of information. The pilot needs additional resources to ensure full inclusion and accessibility for these groups.
7. **High Community Demand but Limited Coverage**
   The need for the solution is high in EAO's operational areas. Many communities face poverty, displacement, climate shocks, unemployment, limited services, and social

exclusion. However, due to limited resources, EAO cannot yet reach all target communities or respond to the full level of demand.

8. **Sustainability and Scale-Up Constraints**
   EAO needs support to transform the pilot into a stronger, replicable, and sustainable model. This includes developing a scale-up strategy, strengthening partnerships, improving documentation, and securing long-term financial and technical support.

Project Goal

To strengthen and scale EAO's existing prototype/pilot solution so that it can more effectively support vulnerable communities through inclusive, community-based, user-tested, and evidence-informed services.

Specific Objectives

1. **To improve the existing pilot solution based on user feedback and community needs.**
   EAO will conduct structured consultations with users and community representatives to identify what is working, what needs improvement, and how the solution can better respond to local challenges.
2. **To strengthen EAO's technical, digital, and operational capacity.**
   The project will support the improvement of tools, systems, staff skills, volunteer engagement, and technical processes needed to make the pilot more reliable, practical, and effective.
3. **To expand access for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.**
   EAO will ensure that the pilot is inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of people who are often excluded from services and decision-making.
4. **To improve monitoring, learning, data collection, and evidence generation.**
   The project will strengthen how EAO collects user feedback, tracks results, documents learning, and uses evidence to improve implementation.
5. **To prepare the solution for wider scale-up and sustainability.**
   EAO will develop a practical scale-up plan, identify partnership opportunities, and document the model for future replication in additional locations.

Key Activities

- Conduct community consultations and user feedback sessions.
- Map user needs, service gaps, and local barriers.
- Improve the design and functionality of the current pilot solution.
- Develop or upgrade simple digital and operational tools.

- Train EAO staff, volunteers, and community focal persons.
- Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning tools.
- Test the improved pilot with selected users and communities.
- Collect feedback and integrate lessons learned.
- Document results, challenges, success stories, and recommendations.
- Develop a scale-up and sustainability plan.
- Engage local authorities, partners, and community structures for coordination and support.

Expected Results

- The existing pilot solution is improved and better aligned with real user needs.
- Women, youth, persons with disabilities, IDPs, returnees, refugees, and vulnerable households have better access to community-based support.
- EAO staff, volunteers, and focal persons have stronger technical and operational capacity.
- Improved data collection, user feedback, and monitoring systems are in place.
- Evidence from the pilot is documented for learning, reporting, and future fundraising.
- EAO has a stronger, more scalable, and more sustainable model for future expansion.

Estimated Budget Need

EAO estimates that the project will require approximately **USD 100,000** for a 12-month pilot strengthening and scale-up phase. This budget will support technical improvement, community testing, staff and volunteer capacity, monitoring and evaluation, field operations, inclusion measures, and preparation for wider scale-up.

Indicative Budget Breakdown:

1. **Technical Development and Digital Tools – USD 25,000**
   For improving the existing pilot solution, developing or upgrading digital tools, data collection systems, user feedback tools, basic technology infrastructure, and digital accessibility features.
2. **Staff, Volunteers, and Technical Expertise – USD 30,000**
   For project coordination, technical support, community mobilizers, data collectors, trainers, volunteers, and short-term consultants.
3. **Community Engagement and User Testing – USD 12,000**
   For consultations, user testing sessions, community meetings, focus group discussions, outreach, translation, accessibility support, and communication materials.
4. **Training and Capacity Building – USD 10,000**
   For training EAO staff, volunteers, community focal persons, and local structures on use of the pilot solution, inclusion, safeguarding, data collection, and feedback management.

5. **Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning – USD 10,000**
   For baseline information, monitoring tools, field verification, feedback collection, learning documentation, reporting, and final assessment.
6. **Operations, Logistics, and Administration – USD 13,000**
   For transport, office support, communication, coordination, field logistics, internet, printing, equipment maintenance, and administrative costs.

Total Estimated Budget: USD 100,000

Prototype / Pilot – Product Exists and Is Being Tested with Users

East Action Organization confirms that the proposed solution is beyond the idea stage. EAO has already started piloting the solution with targeted community users, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, vulnerable households, internally displaced persons, returnees, refugees, and local community structures in its areas of operation.

The pilot is currently at an early testing stage. EAO has begun implementing practical activities, engaging users, collecting community feedback, identifying user needs, and learning how the solution can better respond to real challenges faced by vulnerable communities. This demonstrates that the product or solution already exists and is being tested in a real community setting.

However, EAO has faced challenges in making the pilot fully effective due to shortage of budget, limited technical capacity, inadequate digital and operational tools, and insufficient specialized expertise. These limitations have affected the organization's ability to improve the solution, reach more users, strengthen monitoring and evaluation, generate evidence, and scale the model sustainably.

With additional financial and technical support, EAO will be able to improve the existing pilot, strengthen user testing, build staff and volunteer capacity, improve data collection and learning, strengthen inclusion and accessibility, and expand the solution to reach more communities in Somali Regional State, Dire Dawa, Harari Region, Addis Ababa, and other underserved areas of Ethiopia.

Therefore, EAO's solution should be considered a **Prototype / Pilot**, because it already exists, has started being tested with users, and now requires additional financial and technical support to become more effective, scalable, and sustainable.

Call for Donor and Partner Support

EAO respectfully calls upon donors, development partners, innovation funds, humanitarian actors, private sector partners, technical experts, and philanthropic institutions to support the strengthening and scale-up of this existing pilot solution.

This support is urgently needed to transform the current early-stage pilot into a stronger, more effective, inclusive, and scalable solution that can respond to the real needs of vulnerable communities in Ethiopia. Financial and technical support will help EAO improve the quality of the solution, reach more users, generate evidence, strengthen inclusion, and build a sustainable model for long-term impact.

EAO welcomes support in the form of funding, technical assistance, digital tools, equipment, software, training, mentorship, monitoring and evaluation support, partnership opportunities, and institutional capacity strengthening.

By supporting this project, donors and partners will help EAO move from a promising early pilot to a tested, evidence-based, community-owned solution that can improve access to services, strengthen resilience, promote inclusion, and create meaningful change for women, youth, persons with disabilities, displaced communities, returnees, refugees, and other vulnerable groups across Ethiopia.

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