

The 2021 Green Action Week Campaign in Yem Special Woreda, SNNPR



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Green Action Week (GAW) is a global campaign to promote sustainable consumption. Its aim is to widen an understanding of Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) by policy makers, researchers and the public at large. Over 50 civil society groups in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America have taken part in the campaign since 2013. In Ethiopia, the Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) has been organizing the campaign once a year since 2013. Its main objective has been to raise awareness of the concept and purpose of sharing to revitalize the useful cultures of mutual support in communities and to sustain these cultures over a long period of time. It is also important for communities to perpetuate these practices and traditions and to pass them on to future generations.

Green Action Week Campaign 2021 was held from October 16-17 in the town of Fofa, Yem Special Woreda in Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR). Organized by ISD in collaboration with Fofa High School, its motto was "Sharing Community". Various programmes and activities were presented during the campaign. For instance, a public forum was held with participation of invited guests from government offices, as well as farmers and agricultural experts. Ato Bantyeru Alemayehu, Fofa High School Director gave a brief speech and then invited Ms. Meseret Weldesenbet, Head of Yem Special Woreda Education Bureau to present the welcoming speech. She stressed the importance of sharing what one had with others, and of caring for one another. She commended ISD for undertaking various activities to strengthen the culture of sharing.



Ato Samuel Michael, Administrator of Yem Special Zone, then took to the floor and emphasized the need and importance of integrating indigenous knowledge with education development. He said a system should be created

that could provide basic information on how to develop the indigenous knowledge of the education sector and pass it on to the next generation without compromising community cultural practices.

Following Ato Samuel's remarks, two presentations were made, followed by general discussion. The first presentation was on the traditional judicial system of the Yem people known as "Chano", and the second, on traditional herbal medicines which Yem Special Woreda is famous for. Participants had the opportunity to visit the herbal garden in a secluded areas of the school premises. Simultaneously, participants visited an exhibition of various types of herbal medicines and traditional foods produced by the Yem community. On the second day members of the school's environmental club performed a variety of educational music, dramatic shows and poems related to the COVID 19 pandemic. The community was urged to become further aware of and protect themselves from the scourge.

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One of the highlights of the campaign was the feeding programme for some of the town's orphans and low income children. 20

mothers prepared food for 20 children and gave an undertaking that they would continue doing this once a day even after the completion of the campaign.



A crucial feature of the campaign was the gathering up of plastic waste that was piling up all around the town and hence contributing to a serious pollution problem. Careless dumping of the plastic waste was recognized to have contributed to a depletion of the soil and lack of fertility. Campaign participants and the town's community thus worked together to collect plastic garbage and burn it. It was strongly emphasized by the Zonal Administrator that clean-up activities should be implemented on a weekly basis.

All in all, the campaign proved a success and proceeded according to plan. Participants were duly sensitized and provided with a sound understanding on why it was very important to sustain the culture of sharing and support each other in the community. Other awareness raising activities designed to strengthen the community's well known but neglected cultural practices were also deemed successful.



