

March 2017

Reporting on the longest established, widest reaching, most effective community led development programme in Ethiopia



The Power of Partnership

Throughout our 32 year history Partners for Change has always looked to develop sustainable solutions to poverty.

One of the most successful ways we have found is through investing in women. Initially we gave money to the poorest women to set up small businesses but acting on their own women were often either afraid to use the money because they had never before been entrusted with such a responsibility, or they, understandably, spent the money on food or other such necessities. It took a few years for us to find the right balance and the success stories are now commonplace. The key to this success is bringing women together in groups of 15 to 20 to meet every week and support each other. Usually the women save whatever money they can and then use this to start up small businesses. In some cases, where the urgency is great, Pfc provides loans that women pay back when their businesses are making a profit. To ensure the women have the confidence, focus and skills to succeed Pfc trains local volunteers who attend the weekly

meetings and support women who need advice or encouragement through the process.

One such case is the community in Gende Tesfa. You may remember this is the community affected by leprosy we have featured in our All About the Child campaign and in previous newsletters. For the past year Sarah Parfitt, her son Joshua and her fellow Pfc Ambassadors at Holy Trinity School in Cookham have been raising funds to financially support the poorest children to have breakfast in the Gende Tesfa School. These children often had to go to school without having eaten anything in the morning and consequently could not concentrate on their lessons, were falling asleep or leaving school at lunchtime to go and beg in the city. Seventy five children have been identified as needing the breakfast club and Holy Trinity School has raised sufficient money to keep it going until June this year. A sustainable solution is to provide loans to the children's parents and carers to provide training and start-up funds to set up small businesses. We calculate £100 is required for each of the 75 parents or carers and once paid



back this money will then be used for other people identified by the Gende Tesfa community organisation.

Together we can create this opportunity – please join us by investing as much or as little as you can through a donation that will keep on giving.

Mothers for Change

Two young mothers in Gende Tesfa have achieved what three years ago was unimaginable. Thanks to funding from Partners for Change Ethiopia (PfC Ethiopia), support from community volunteers, plus their own determination and hard work Tizibet and Alfia have made remarkable improvements in their living conditions: they both now earn an adequate income from their own businesses to cover basic family needs, buy some home comforts, educate their children and save regularly.

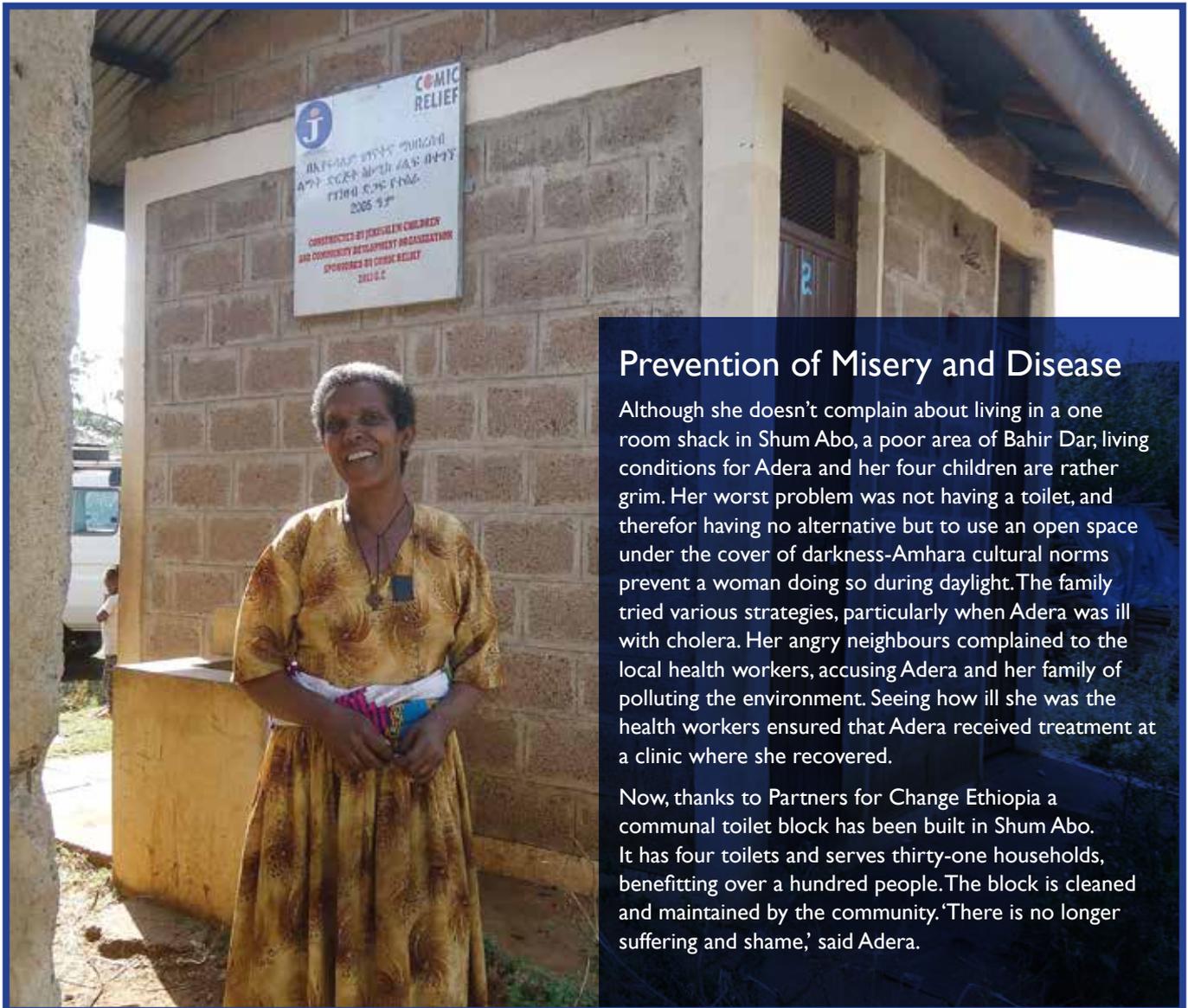
Tizibet

Tizibet's tiny income came from selling a few vegetables outside her house, her husband did not contribute to the household as he was away in Somalia with the army. Providing adequate food and decent school uniforms for her three children and the orphan she cares for was beyond her means.

Tizibet's family's progress towards a better standard of living and financial stability began when a community volunteer heard about their circumstances through the Dire Dawa Leprosy and Handicap Association. The real turning point came in 2015 when Partners for Change came to work in this marginalised community, where many have been left with a disability due to leprosy. PfC provided household items, renovated Tizibet's house, and equipped the children with the necessary school uniforms, educational materials and casual clothes.

Most importantly, Tizibet received training in business skills and PfC provided a £100 start-up loan which has enabled her to operate her own small shop so successfully, that after providing for all her family's needs, buying furniture and improving the fabric of her house she is able to save £36 a month. The benefits for all the family have not only been financial and material, their self-esteem and confidence have improved and now they can offer hospitality to their friends and relatives. Tizibet says, 'I am grateful to Partners for Change for the support, without it I would be isolated, leading a miserable life with all my kids'.





Prevention of Misery and Disease

Although she doesn't complain about living in a one room shack in Shum Abo, a poor area of Bahir Dar, living conditions for Adera and her four children are rather grim. Her worst problem was not having a toilet, and therefore having no alternative but to use an open space under the cover of darkness-Amhara cultural norms prevent a woman doing so during daylight. The family tried various strategies, particularly when Adera was ill with cholera. Her angry neighbours complained to the local health workers, accusing Adera and her family of polluting the environment. Seeing how ill she was the health workers ensured that Adera received treatment at a clinic where she recovered.

Now, thanks to Partners for Change Ethiopia a communal toilet block has been built in Shum Abo. It has four toilets and serves thirty-one households, benefitting over a hundred people. The block is cleaned and maintained by the community. 'There is no longer suffering and shame,' said Adera.

Alfia

Alfia was employed on a daily basis as a manual labourer on construction sites. Work, when available was hard: lifting bricks, mixing cement and digging holes. Her husband also worked as a daily labourer, but what he earned funded his 'khat' (a traditional herbal stimulant) addiction.

Living conditions for the couple and their three children were deplorable, a tent without toilet facilities. They had barely enough to eat, sometimes surviving on one meal a day.

Despite these handicaps, Alfia was attempting to build her own house. Against all odds and with steely determination she and one of the children made 360 bricks towards the construction; her determination impressed a community volunteer who recommended her as a beneficiary of the PFC Ethiopia project in Gende Tesfa. PFC provided Alfia with cooking utensils and several essentials the children needed for school. They also had the building work on the house completed and a proper latrine constructed.



Photo : Caroline Field

Business development training and a start-up loan helped Alfia establish her own profitable business baking injera on a fuel efficient, traditional stove. Alfia is able to feed, clothe and educate her children, she is optimistic about the future, motivated to work hard and especially grateful to PFC Ethiopia and its supporters 'for re-creating my family's life'.



Partners for Change Ambassadors

We are introducing a new way to be part of our work for the people of Ethiopia.

We're calling it Ambassadors.

Our approach is based on partnership not aid. We want to build relationships of understanding and mutual support. We believe that this enriches the lives of donors in the UK as well as those of beneficiaries in Ethiopia.

As an organisation we are big enough to reach out to hundreds of thousands of the poorest people in Ethiopia, but small enough to enable friendships and links between people and communities in the UK and in Ethiopia.

So instead of working to build up a large administration and staff, we prefer to encourage relationships and networks.

Ambassadors are people who believe in this approach and want to share in it.

They decide they want to be a part of PFC; they want to keep in touch with what we are doing; and they find ways to support us. So far two schools have become Ambassadors – and one has funded a new sports field and a breakfast club for children who wouldn't otherwise get anything to eat before school. They have also exchanged letters. Others have approached their church or mosque to gain support.

Then on our side - we keep them in touch with our activities; we arrange links between schools or women's groups or one of our projects; we arrange an annual visit to the people and places where we work in Ethiopia. We're launching a face book group page to share ideas and information.

Ambassadors will be a key part of our strategy. They are more than supporters, or volunteers – they are real Partners for Change.



If you would like to find out more about becoming a PFC Ambassador, just get in touch

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