

Spring 2018

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



Image by www.carolinefieldphotography.com

This edition of Impact focuses on the inspiring progress made by the partnership between our junior and adult Ambassadors in Cookham and surrounding areas and the people of Gende Tesfa in eastern Ethiopia. We are still at an early stage, there are further challenges ahead, but the positive change made through this partnership shows how, even in the poorest and most marginalised communities, people can come together and lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

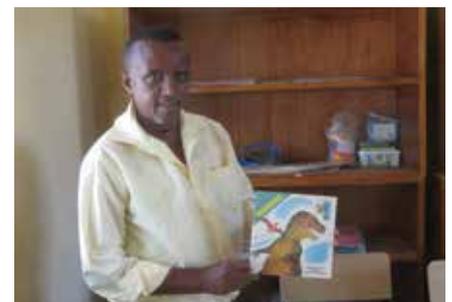
Dr John Binns, Chairperson of Partners for Change Ethiopia visited the community in Dire Dawa in January 2018 and these are his impressions.

The aim of the visit was to review the projects supported by Partners for Change Ambassadors and PFC supporters. Our junior Ambassadors in Holy Trinity School in Cookham had been especially involved with Gende Tesfa School. They provided funds for a playground, also for a breakfast club. Inspired by this, their parents, other people in the Cookham area and the Art for Change auction in Cambridge, raised funds, through our Woman2Woman

programme, to help 100 women caring for orphans and vulnerable children to set up new businesses.

In Genda Tesfa School I met the principal, Ato Wendu Fekade. He told me that the new playing field provides a valuable facility for the school and is also used by children after school, which gives them better leisure activities than hanging around in the streets. The local government was so impressed by the Ambassadors support they gave £2,900 to remove a high level power cable at the site which would have been dangerous.

The breakfast club began serving 25 children in 2016 increasing to 75 children in 2017. The club not



Ato Wendu Fekade

only provided them with breakfast, but also education and advice on personal hygiene, health and sanitation. Unfortunately this important club no longer meets due to lack of funding.

In Gende Tesfa there are 230 children out of a student population of 1077



Abbaynesh Tefera

who are assessed as vulnerable, usually because they have lost one or both parents.

I met Abbaynesh Tefera who looked after the club. She's an amazing lady. She ran the club unpaid, visited the families and was able to help HIV positive children manage their medication – she is HIV positive herself. The breakfast club is a top priority, it reduced absenteeism and enabled children to study better.

All the parents and carers of the 75 children in the 2017 Breakfast Club have been supported in setting up new businesses. I visited 13 of these to see how they were doing and how their lives had been changed as a result of Ambassador's support.

Asha Hassen has 4 children. Previously she used to beg outside St Gabriel Church. She managed to buy a handcart, which gave her an income of £1.30 a day. With support she bought another cart, this for transporting goods, and a horse. This has raised her income to £2.70. She uses this for household goods and feed for chickens. She proudly showed me that she even has a television as well, bought with the surplus. This matters, she says, because it keeps the children at home, and stops them wandering around the streets. Her monthly income has increased from £11 to £65.

Fayo Abdi has a mother who has mental health issues. We had met her before and had been deeply concerned about her awful situation. She cares for three children, one of which is her own, as well as her small half-sisters. Before she had lived in a derelict builder's hut, often sleeping outside with the children because they were frightened of the mother when her behaviour became erratic. The transformation has been truly amazing. The derelict hut is now a solid house, furnished and with TV. The area around is fenced. There is an electricity supply (£0.90 per month). She has a roadside stall which

she runs with her sister. She gave us coffee and local bread called melewa, delicious. Her next aim is to dig a latrine. Previously her situation seemed hopeless. I was amazed at the change.

Nigatua looks after 5 children including her grandson. She buys and sells various items, charcoal (bought in bulk and sold for 20% profit), berberre (hot pepper), shiro (chickpea, lentil and broad bean mixture) and araki (local alcohol, "not recommended by us" Abebe our manager in Dire Dawa commented). Nigatua had been ill, but recovered and managed to strengthen her business to secure a better income. Like many I met she says her children now eat three times a day, a huge achievement.

Askanech has three children, the oldest is away at a college. Her income comes from baking bread. Previously she used sorghum – a low grade flour – but has now scaled up and makes injera from teff (the superior, nutritious flour), which she sells to the university. She cooks outside, and has poor living conditions. Her neighbours told me that they all support her, especially when she is ill. Despite this her income has risen from £3.30 to £28 a month.

Zeyenba looks after her two children. She collects sweepings and left overs from a grain mill and sorts through it to sell what is good. She is using start-up funds to extend her house by



Asha Hassen



Fayo Abdi



Zeyenba



Eftu



Ikrame

building a new room, which she can rent out for £14 a month. Her income has risen from £13 to £20 a month.

Fozija and 8 children had been living in really terrible conditions, a tent made from plastic sheeting. Since it was not a properly constructed house the government could eject them from the land. Using some of her start-up funds Fozija has built a house by making her own bricks and buying nails and wood. She also keeps goats and sells firewood.

Aliya looks after six children. She had previously earned money by selling food, and had used her start-up funds to buy goats. Unfortunately two of the goats had been eaten by hyenas, then another died giving birth to kids – who also died. Now just three goats are left and there has been no change in her income. It was a reminder that not all outcomes are good. Our local manager talked to her and discovered that the oldest boy is now adult, and he advised him to talk to the development

committee and ask to be accepted on the training scheme for bajaj (local three wheel taxi) drivers. He could then take responsibility for caring for the family.

Eftu is eighteen years old, and has two children aged 3 and 4. She has bought two goats, and also works for the kebele in dry waste collection for

which she earns £22 a month. She has devised a creative and unusual business. She sorts green plastic bottles from the rubbish and uses them to make Christmas trees. They are very attractive and she sells them for £2.22.

Ikrame looks after five children, three of whom are her own. She has set up a road-side fruit stall. She was selling



Fozija

bananas, avocado, and mandarins. It's a good business and is expanding. Her income has increased from £17 to £26 a month.

Tizibet, aged 32 cares for 6 children and had been living with her father and his second wife (not her mother). When money for the household ran short her father wanted to withdraw the children from school: Tizibet and the children moved out. She found a house affected by flooding in very poor repair, however with determination and support she repaired the house and built a small attached shop; with start-up funds she was able to stock the shop and open for business. It is doing well and she said she would like to expand her business by combining the shop with her previous activity of selling vegetables. Tizibet said Partners for Change is a father to the poor. She talked about how it listens and enables the poorest women through advice, visits, information and start up support. Her income has increased from £6.90 to £28 a month.

The first steps out of poverty are the hardest. As we have seen here are many challenges and obstacles to overcome. Sometimes individuals are unable to succeed in their chosen business for reasons out of their control, sometimes they are just not suited to the demands and so new ways have to be found. Meeting other women on a weekly basis in a self-help group enables women to support each other and exchange ideas. Our local workers and community organisation also keep an eye on those who need assistance and guidance and help them to succeed.

We must continue this life changing work. Our Ambassador's first challenge is to raise funds to re-start the Breakfast Club and support the



Tizibet



Image by Gary Bartell

The Breakfast Club

most vulnerable 230 children in the school in the coming year. Breakfast costs approximately 70p a day – this amounts to about £124 per child per year. It should be noted that this is not a feeding programme but a project to support vulnerable children who come from often chaotic and unsettled backgrounds.

Like Fayó, Tizibet and Asha the parents and carers of the 75 children previously in the club have now been

supported to become financially independent through start-up funding to set up their own business. Their children no longer need the club – many of the women interviewed commented that they can now feed their children three times a day. However, there are many more women who need this support and our first target is to fund 100 women to set up their own businesses. It costs £100 to support a woman to do this. 

Please join us and support this vital work

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