

A DIFFERENT WAY OF DOING DEVELOPMENT

A visit to JeCCDO projects – September and October 2022

Partners for Change Ethiopia works together with JeCCDO to empower and enable poor communities in Ethiopia to build a better life and a stronger civil society. The two organisations were founded together and have worked together for over thirty years.

JeCCDO has unique community based approach and has a varied and innovative programme.

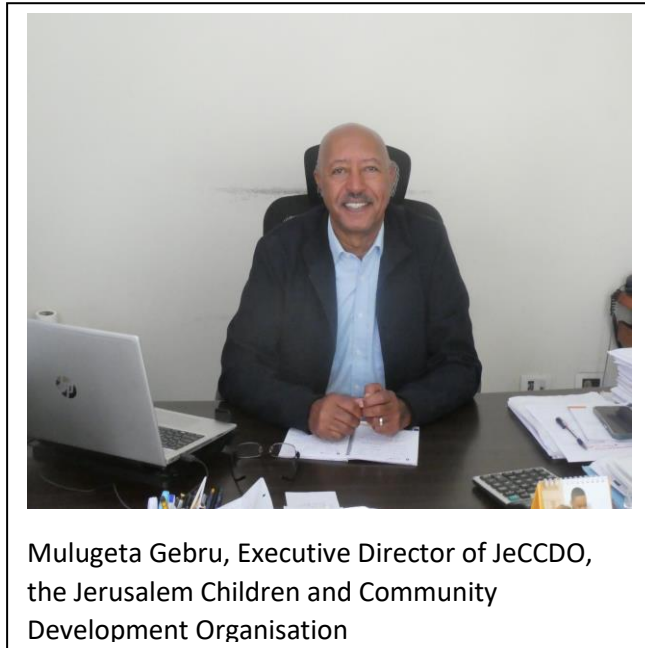
PfC Ethiopia was founded at the same time as JeCCDO so has long term partnership, which includes fundraising but goes further than that as we learn from each other, provide advice and consultancy, arrange visits, and share in education anther projects.

This year the Executive Director of JeCCDO has visited the UK and now the chair of PfC visits Ethiopia to discover how JeCCDO's work has grown and changed.



WHERE WE ARE NOW – AN OVERVIEW

JeCCDO has just completed a new Strategic Management Plan for the years 2022 to 2027. It's an ambitious plan to bring empowerment and change for millions of the poorest across Ethiopia. It envisages reaching over 5 million people in that period.



Our Executive Director Mulugeta explains that JeCCDO now works in four ways.

1. Social Development and Protection (SDP) - this deals with the big social problems of the most vulnerable people. We support schools, providing new buildings and training teachers, providing clean water and better sanitation. Big projects here are an education and support programme across a large area of the south supporting girls who are excluded from education by early marriage, menstrual hygiene and female genital mutilation; also a new training programme for girls who have become trapped in the commercial sex industry.
2. Livelihood Promotion and Environmental Development (LPED) – this is about enhancing economic status and the environment – with employment training for young people, empowering women to set up small businesses, improving food security and nutrition by caring better for the environment.
3. Humanitarian Response and Recovery (HRR) – this is a new programme set up to respond to emergencies including the covid 19 pandemic and the needs for people displaced from their homes by violence.
4. Community Engagement and Participation (CEP) – this provides education and awareness of child rights, develops social enterprise and sustainable incomes, also empowers communities to claim their social and economic rights. This builds a stronger civil society.



Meet the team

At Addis Ababa: The staff at Head Office

At Hawassa, Aleme the driver; Masresha the project manager and Yodit the communication officer



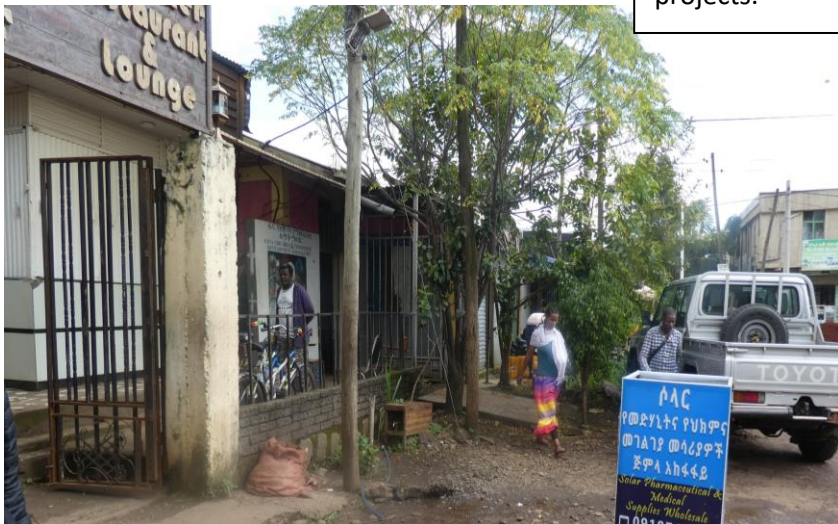
COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Working with community groups is at the heart of the JeCCDO approach. Training, resourcing, investing, supporting – this enables CBOs or Community Based Organisations to become agents of change.

There are many kinds of community groups within Ethiopian society. Often these are burial associations or *iddirs*. 'We used to support each other with arranging funerals but then we asked why we were only concerned with what happen after death – we should also be concerned with quality of life', said the chair of one of the CBOs. Among the activities of CBOs is setting up sustainable income generating projects to fund community development.

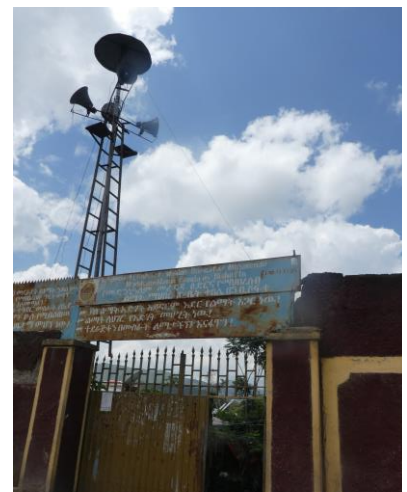


Many CBOs have set up grain banks to buy grain when it is cheap then when prices go up they sell to the local community at reasonable rates. At this grain bank at Ura on the Zege peninsula there are 96 bags of millet weighing 100 kgs each. They buy for 28 birr a kilo after harvest, then when prices go up to 32 birr they sell at 30 – benefitting local people and also building up funds for projects.



Many CBOs have built shops and food stores which they rent out, like this row of shops with restaurant behind in Bahir Dar.

This CBO installed a loudspeaker, which can be heard all over. It can be hired by anyone wanting to make a public announcement.



WOMEN – AGENTS OF CHANGE

Self Help Groups bring together women of a similar income level to support each other. They agree to save a fixed amount each week which builds up to form a large capital amount which can be used for loans to set up businesses or respond to emergencies. The groups meet weekly and share concerns and problems. Several groups come together to form a CLA (Cluster Level Association). These have become active and respected by government and others within the community. They are bringing about economic, social and political empowerment.



This is the Kokeb , or Star, SHG. They live in a town which was occupied and looted during recent fighting. The group has helped in reconstruction.

Here are some stories.



Asnakech is an OVC (Orphan and Vulnerable Child) guardian looking after a child identified as in need. 'I've started my business. I make injera (local bread) at home. I can sell these in the market for 10 birr for each injera. This earns me 300 birr a day. I can buy clothes for her children and provide medical care'.

Selam values the weekly meetings of her SHG. Her group has been active in upholding child rights. 'Before our meetings female genital mutilation was common – now its stopped. We're also concerned about child labour and we check door to door to make sure there is no abuse of children and if we do find cases of child labour we report it and follow these up'.



Aweke is a member of a Womens Self-Help Group. She says 'life is hard here and many children can't go to school because of poverty. JeCCDO has become 'the father of the poorest'. They helped us to set up a sub-committee which works on child protection. Volunteer staff make sure that the poorest are selected for support'.



Hiwot told us that she called in after a child living nearby attempted to commit suicide. 'I looked after the girl as she recovered and then I then adopted her. She's now at school and doing well.

Asalech had built up her shoe shop, but after her town was briefly occupied by hostile soldiers during fighting the shop was looted. She had invested 90,000 birr in setting it up, now she has taken a further loan of 20,000 and now it is restocked. Her SHG has enabled reconstruction after the conflict.



Coffee is part of social life. Here the SHG welcomes us with a coffee ceremony.

THE BAKERY AT THE SCHOOL

I've seen many examples of women's savings and empowerment groups, which set up income generating projects. But this was different. It is a group run by the girls themselves.

JeCCDO has supported Adea secondary school in Debre Zeit, providing buildings, teacher training and other support. They also set up a girls club to support the girls who were especially vulnerable. They wanted to help the group become sustainable and so suggested an income generating project to them. JeCCDO gave some money (92,000 birr, about £1,500) and the school gave a further 680,000 birr). With this the club bought a baker's oven and mixer, and set up a bakery in the school.



Space is limited and sacks of flour are kept in meeting room of the club.

One of the teachers, Marim, who teaches Civic Education runs the bakery. JeCCDO provided training and support for the girls and the girls run it themselves.

They pay some of the most disadvantaged pupils to work half days (since pupils attend either morning or afternoon, a shift system) who are paid 600 birr a month. The pupils also run the shop nearby. They sell bread a 5 birr (10p) a loaf, which enables children to buy some food at low cost. All the profits support the costs of education for the poorest children.

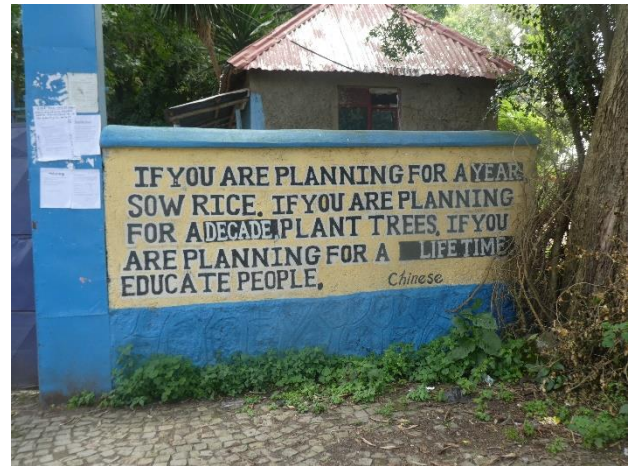


So as well as teaching business skills, it provides a small income for some of the needy children, provides food at low cost and also provides a fund to support the education of disadvantaged children.

It's an example of JeCCDO's approach of empowering and enabling communities to find their own ways out of poverty. It helps to make education accessible to the poorest.

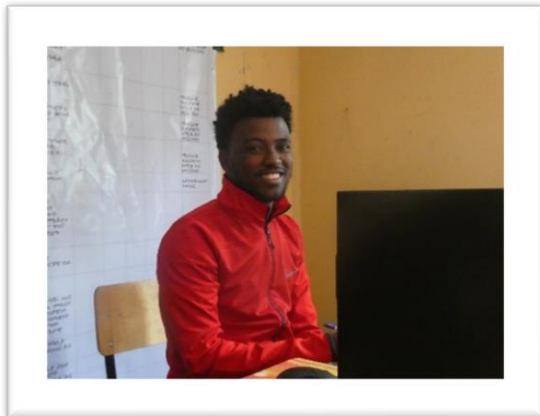


Some sign boards from the school



HAILE JESUS – A LIFE AFTER STREET LIFE

I first met Haile Jesus in 2018. He had been living on the streets, a life of begging and petty crime. One of the JeCCDO/PfC womens groups had offered him a new start and had helped with a loan, training and support to set up a hairdressing shop with three others. They were excited at this opportunity.



I met him again two years later. They'd moved to a new shop. He had seen so much suffering and hardship that he and five others had decided to start a new group to reach out to others on the street and offer the same support that they had received. They called the group Tensalet. I met him with the girl who was his co-chair – but I don't have this picture as my camera was pickpocketed later on that trip.

This visit we met in his office. Tensalet had received a license from the regional government and been allocated an office. So far 218 young people off the streets had been supported with counselling and training and 58 had been helped into new jobs. His hairdressing shop now employs six people. He has hopes of setting up a Rehabilitation Centre. I said I was looking forward to seeing how things had changed when I next come.



BREAKFAST CLUBS - THE BIRUH TESFA STORY

Biruh Tesfa is a primary school in the growing town of Debre Birhan. The name means Shining Hope. The school has 1287 pupils.



Abraham Tessema is the School Administrator. He says that the situation of the pupils at the school is severe. Some staff contribute a part of their monthly salary to a feeding programme at a local café, others bring food with them to contribute to it. When they counted up they found that 127 children out of 1287 were not able to bring food to eat.

Genet Dejzmach is a mum with children at Biruh Tesfa school. She was invited to join the Parents tree, saying that these are the children who don't have food. 'At that moment I felt sick' she says 'and imagined my own kids sitting there with no food to eat. I decided to send them to school with double amounts of food so they could share with children who had none'. Other parents started to do the same'.



They set up the Breakfast Club to respond to these needs and to support the poorest children. It ran from October 2021 to the end of the school year. The first plan was to support 40 children but this figure was quickly raised to 60 since the need was so great. The club provided a good meal at the start of the school day, paid for uniforms and also books, pens and other school materials. Staff also visited the children's families and helped the guardians to set up small businesses. The children's guardians were working as daily labourers and were not earning enough to provide food. The club helped them set up small businesses to give a sustainable income.

Meet three of the mothers and their children



With the small income she gets from her road cleaning job, Mulu Hailegebrel tried to sustain life with her four children. Her 12-year-old child Dagmawit Tatek is a grade seven student and was one of the beneficiaries of the breakfast club. With the seed money from the breakfast club, Mulu started her own vegetable gardening and poultry business. She now wants to expand her business and provide a better life.

Alemshet Abebe 35, has two children Yabsera Ayele 15 and Tsinat Ayele 12. She used to work as a daily laborer and house maid to support her family but, her monthly income was not enough and the children had to drop out of school. The breakfast club supported Alemshet and her kids for 10 months by providing a breakfast meal, educational material support including school uniform. Also, the program supported Alemshet to start her own business. "Currently I have started my own business of selling vegetables by the roadside, I am now able to support my family and I hope to have a shop and grow this small business into something more profitable."



Tringo is one of the guardians who have benefited from the school feeding program along with her 12-year-old son Abrham Negash. Prior to the breakfast club, Abrham used to go to school without food and was not able to attend his classes regularly. According to Tringo, in addition to the breakfast meal for her son Abrham, the breakfast club gave her the opportunity to participate on urban vegetable production and injera backing business. "Currently, our life has improved, and my child is active in his studies and ranked amongst the top ten students in his class."

AND NOW BASSO SCHOOL ARE SETTING UP A BREAKFAST CLUB



The principal told us that he intended the club to be for 60 children but he has increased this number to 87, and there are many more in the school who need the support of the new club.

This is the challenge – a new breakfast club.