



## First steps toward a new life

Ethiopia is a complex country, it has around 88 documented languages and a dizzying array of ethnic groups – democratic representation in such a context is a challenging process. A changing climate is contributing to frequent natural disasters, putting extreme pressure on poor people's already overstretched coping mechanisms. Whether natural or man-made these disasters require a swift and effective emergency response and this requires the participation by government, charity organisations and citizens.

There are many reasons to feel optimistic about Ethiopia. A new Prime Minister, Abi Ahmed, has been widely hailed in the country as a force for good, undertaking reforms and creating new opportunities for people to express themselves and advocate for their rights. But change is a complicated process, not everything is put right overnight.

Unfortunately, Ethiopia is still facing significant challenges, one of which is border disputes. Due to scarcity of natural resources such disputes have recently created major instability and displacement of people. The majority of these are from the Oromo ethnicity forced to migrate from the



Ethio-Somali region to adjacent Oromo zones and central parts of the country. More than 700,000 Oromo peoples have been made homeless resulting in hunger, disease, psycho-social problems, sexual harassment, lack of care for

pregnant mothers, unsafe births, child malnutrition and lack of support and care for the elderly and people with disabilities.

According to government officials and the displaced people themselves, the monthly ration of food aid covers 1.5 kilograms of rice or wheat and 0.45 litres of edible oil per person. Other basic food items have not been provided, cooking stoves and other essential utensils are scarce leading to a high prevalence of malnutrition, mainly among children and women. In addition to this there is a lack of access to curative and preventive health services, shortage of clothing including blankets, mattresses, casual clothes and shoes as well as inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene services. Parents do not have any income or the economic capacity to cover anything other than the most basic needs of their children.

The Regional Government of Oromiya announced an emergency plan to save the lives of these displaced people and given the scale of the problem JeCCDO, our partner organisation in Ethiopia, felt compelled to help.

Using £55,000 from profits generated from its social enterprise in Bishoftu and with further financial support from Kindernothilfe JeCCDO has assisted

1,918 displaced people including 705 children. Working in partnership JeCCDO has;

- provided food, clothing and other essential services
- enabled 455 children to receive formal and basic education in their new resettlement site.
- provided access to health care for all of the children.
- addressed the menstrual hygiene needs of 260 adolescent girls through provision of sanitary pads and pants
- improved the nutritional status of 200 undernourished children (below the age of 5 years) through the provision of supplementary food for the children and nutrition education for mothers
- improved access to clean water supply as well as sanitation and hygiene services through installation of water tankers and construction of low-cost communal toilets
- supported the psychosocial rehabilitation of displaced children who have experienced the trauma of conflict and dislocation from their homes.

It is not usual for JeCCDO to engage in emergency assistance. Its strategic

focus is to provide long term sustainable solutions to child poverty. In order to ensure the displaced people can make a new life for themselves JeCCDO has provided start-up funding and training for 100 women-headed households to make a new life for their families.

This is just the beginning - the displaced people are adamant they do not want to return to their former homes. Many of the women have been severely traumatised, sustained from having witnessed killings and sexual assault during the conflict. They are deeply worried about the emotional and psychological damage this has had on their children. The memories are too awful for them to return to their former lives, back to the scene of the horrors they have personally experienced and seen.

JeCCDO will use its experience and expertise to enable these people to build a new life for their families. The process is complicated and requires a range of support such as permanent housing, job creation, basic infrastructure such as water and sanitation and helping the community to come together and identify their priorities. We urgently need your support.



## Hope for Halima

My name is Halima Sharifo, I have four children. We had to leave our home because of a border conflict between the Oromo and Ethio-Somali. We were forced to move to an area where is no regular help, except for government assistance which gives just 1.5kg of rice or wheat per individual and 0.45 litres of cooking oil per month. The terrible uncertainty of our current situation is putting all our lives at risk.

Due to the beatings I experienced I am suffering from trauma, both psychological and physical. I currently have no job or income. We have no plates to eat our food from, so we have to use the bowl in which we wash our hands. We have a shortage of sanitation facilities. We don't have

enough water to drink. My children do not have enough school materials. Our temporary house is difficult to live in, especially for the children because it gets very hot in the day and extremely cold during the night.

As my children have lost the small comforts they enjoyed in their former lives and the friends they used to play with at home their behavior has changed and they are struggling at school. This worries me a lot because it is important they attend school: a good future lies in education.

Although we have many challenges I am still optimistic about our new life in Bishoftu. I have seen other women from our resettlement houses who have received training and start-up money from JeCCDO to start a small business of

their own. I hope I can do that someday, it is exciting to think about setting up a new business.





Halima and children sharing food with a neighbour in their home



Halima in a kitchen area shared amongst families

## AMBASSADORS

We invite our supporters to become Ambassadors. Ambassadors value their friendships with Ethiopia, want to support the projects and work with us in communicating that special Pfc approach to development. They are a never ending source of ideas and practical plans.

There have been many activities undertaken by Ambassadors over the past year – here are a few of them

**PENNIES FOR CHANGE.** The idea of Ava and Arthur, two pupils from Holy Trinity Primary School in Cookham. Children at their school were invited to collect pennies and other small change during Lent. They brought the money they had collected to school and poured it into a big wooden trunk. It was exciting to see the trunk slowly filling with money. It was then taken to Metrobank who put it all through their counting machine. Last year the school raised £400 and are repeating it this year. It's spreading to other schools in the area. It's a simple idea and great to see the big trunk filling up. Why not try it at your school, or church, or just do it yourself? Ava and Arthur's mum, Faye, can tell you more about how it worked, just contact us and we'll let you know.

Also out of Cookham came other ideas.

Zachary had a birthday party and both he and his sister, Sienna, asked their friends to give money to Pfc instead of buying presents. They raised over £100.



Bags2School involved bringing bags of old clothes in to school. These were sold by weight to an organisation which specialises in buying second hand clothes.

Then there was a concert at Cookham church by the African Childrens Choir. The church donated £300 from the profits to Pfc.

Meanwhile in East Anglia, Lesley invited her friends in for a special social evening which aimed to support street children in getting off the streets, away from their previous activities of petty crime and to start legal businesses. The result was a sum of over £2500 for the street children of Hawassa in the south of Ethiopia.

Our Ambassadors in Cookham and Chiswick in west London are in touch with schools in Debre Berhan. Their support is providing breakfast clubs.

Here vulnerable children – who would not get to eat before going to school – are given a good breakfast, and at the same time their families are helped to start small businesses or other income generating projects to provide a lasting escape from poverty.

A huge thank you to all our amazing Ambassadors. And there's always room for another Ambassador – which could be you.

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