

Partners in the Horn of Africa
Annual Report of the Directors
2005

The Organization

Partners in the Horn of Africa is a registered Canadian charity operating in Ethiopia. 2005 was our fourth year of operation.

Partners follows two operating principles that distinguish it from other charities: First, *Partners* does not use donations for administrative expenses. Directors, who work voluntarily and who personally pay all operating expenses, run the organization. Second, with all of our projects we have an Ethiopian “partner” who contributes a minimum of 15 - 20% to the cost of the project. The contribution usually takes the form of supplying labour or local materials. This approach ensures that *Partners’* projects reflect local needs and empower the communities we work with.

Our directors are Canadians from Alberta and British Columbia, and Ethiopians: John Baigent, Mekonen Bayssie, Dave Cosco, James Hickling, Marguerite Jackson, John McAlpine, Vince Ready, Brooke Sundin and Yehalem Metiku. Directors meet regularly and visit our projects in Ethiopia at least twice each year.

Projects In 2005

2005 was a busy year for *Partners*. The number of our projects in Ethiopia rose from 13 in 2004 to 21 in 2005.

Over the past year *Partners* increased its involvement in AIDS prevention and the care and training of HIV Orphans (children who are typically HIV negative but who have lost both parents to the pandemic). *Partners* is involved in community AIDS education through information centres where brochures and videos allow young people to learn about the virus, its transmission and prevention. We also engage community peer educators who host neighbourhood meetings where they enter into informal but informative dialogue about the virus. On the care side, we now have 125 HIV Orphans living with subsidized extended family members or in small group homes. In the next few months we hope to increase the number of such children to 175.

AIDS is a problem of almost unimaginable dimensions in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 35 million people have lost their lives to the virus and yet, to date, the use of anti-retroviral drugs is minimal. In Ethiopia there are today more than 2 million children who have been orphaned by the pandemic. Because there is no government social safety net these kids either become a burden on already marginalized relatives or are left to their own devices. In the foreseeable future AIDS will continue to be a major focus of *Partners'* activities.

One of the more rewarding and enjoyable features of our work with AIDS victims took place this past Christmas season. At that time *Partners* put together a picnic for about 115 HIV Orphans in the lakeside city of Bahir Dar in the Gojam Region of Ethiopia. We brought the kids to the city for a weekend – some from 200 miles away. For almost all of them it was their first trip outside of their villages and, over a memorable weekend, we took the kids on a boat trip on Lake Tana and arranged for a circus to put on a special performance for them. For most of them this was the first time since the loss of their parents that they had received special attention. The picnic was a great success and we plan to make it an annual event.

Partners also increased its commitment to micro-financing projects where loans are given to unemployed or underemployed women to enable them to start their own businesses. *Partners* now supports three such projects and they are all doing well. The default rate is minimal and loans are doing their job. More and more women are breaking out of the poverty cycle.

One of *Partners'* most successful projects in 2005 involved the manufacture and distribution of 1800 fuel saving ovens to rural households in the North Wollo Region. The project provides employment for a half dozen women who build the ovens but, more significantly, it allows women to cook with far less wood. Less time is spent collecting firewood and fewer trees are consumed. This is significant in a country like Ethiopia where deforestation and soil erosion are tremendous issues. The project was so well received that *Partners* is going to ramp up its own production to 4000 ovens in the coming year. As a smaller charity with limited resources, one of our aims is to introduce new technologies that will be picked up by government or larger organizations. That is why *Partners* builds biogas latrines and why we introduced fuel-efficient ovens. We are now delighted to learn that the success of our oven project in North Wollo has encouraged local governments to produce and distribute these ovens.

Partners undertook a lot of construction last year in the North Wollo Region. – one of the poorest parts of the country. We successfully completed a Health Post that will serve some 35,000 people. The government, who also provides medical supplies, staffs it. In addition, we are building new classroom blocks and libraries in three different schools, water reservoirs and a large footbridge providing access to medical and educational facilities for several thousand families. In the Gojam Region *Partners* took on one of its largest projects to date. We completed a series of three bridges across three separate rivers – rivers which each rainy season isolated a community of 35,000 people from markets, schools and medical care.

Partners has started a Group Home for vulnerable orphaned girls who want to attend high school. The girls are selected from rural areas where there is no easy access to a high school and where the girls' lack of caregivers would likely mean either an early marriage or entry into the commercial sex trade. The home is located in the town of Debre Markos, in Gojam, where there is an excellent high school. 10 girls and a caregiver live together in the home.

Partners continues to manufacture crutches and braces for polio victims at a well-regarded clinic south of the capital. At that same location we arranged surgery for 50 children to free up long bound ligaments, enabling the victims to be fitted for crutches and braces and to learn how to walk...albeit with difficulty.... rather than crawling on the ground or dragging their bodies with the help of a large staff

Partners is increasing its efforts to provide clean drinking water. In Ethiopia only 24% of the population has access to safe drinking water. Over the past year *Partners* completed 6 wells in a drought prone part of the country. And, in the Bale Mountains of central Ethiopia we constructed 7 water distribution points...or public faucets ...in a town of 35,000 people.

In Canada

Partners now has an office in Edmonton, run by director, Dave Cosco. In Enderby *Partners* moved into a new/old office. We have rented a small bungalow in the "downtown core" and decorated it with Ethiopian posters and artifacts. Not many people pass through Enderby but if and when you do, please feel free to drop in for a coffee (Ethiopian, of course).

We have struggled successfully to maintain our policy of not using donations for administrative costs. In addition to direct contributions for administrative expenses from the directors, *Partners* continues to receive generous assistance with the supply of computers, phones, stamps, stationery, printing from the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 1518. Our Financial Statements are prepared without charge by the chartered accounting firm of Murray Rossworn & Co. Sophisticated databases enable us to do our fundraising and contract administration with minimal manpower.

In September *Partners* benefited from a tribute evening in honour of Director Vince Ready held to recognize his significant commitment to labour relations in Canada. The event was well attended by politicians and labour relations types from Western Canada and raised \$25,000 for *Partners*. All of the proceeds were directed to two small and impoverished schools in North Wollo that Vince and his wife, Noella, sponsor on a continuing basis.

Two women's groups (one in Kelowna, the other in West Vancouver) held events during the year to raise funds for *Partners*. *Mother and Me*, the West Vancouver group, held a successful Mother's Day dance and dinner in West Vancouver. In Kelowna a group of women organized by Alison Moscop, who visited our projects in Ethiopia last year, put on *The Great Big Run for Africa*, a 200 km. run from Enderby to Osoyoos. Combined, the two events raised about \$15,000.

In 2005 *Partners* also received a significant and novel contribution from the Alberta-based geotechnical firm, EBA. EBA commemorated its 40th anniversary by sponsoring a \$50,000 water project in Ethiopia designed to draw upon the firm's expertise. The idea was to use EBA's engineering expertise and personnel to oversee the protection of clean water springs that could provide uncontaminated water in drought-prone areas and, in the process, to educate EBA's Canadian staff about the needs of third world countries. The project got underway just before the end of the year with an EBA Engineer, Brian Adeney, visiting Ethiopia and working alongside an Ethiopian engineer hired by our Ethiopian "partner". The project looks to be a great success and is going to protect 5 springs and provide clean water to several thousand people.

Our Donors

Our donors were generous again in 2005. The chart below offers year-to-year comparisons of donations and supporters as well as the number of projects made possible by those donations.

Year-to-Year Comparisons

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of Projects	1	4	13	21
Number of Donors	18	154	181	374
Donations for the Year	\$21,450.00	\$103,261.00	\$191,000.00	\$421,815.00

We are continuing to grow the number of 'repeat' donors, which allows us to plan for the future with some confidence. *Partners* selects and commissions projects in advance, trusting that we will be able to raise money but never entirely sure of just how much. With a core of repeat donors we can select projects with more confidence. Our direct debit system is also working well with more and more donors choosing to donate this way. Direct debits involve low administration and offer us a measure of predictability.

Financial Statements

Our Financial Statements were audited by Murray Rossworn & Co., a Chartered Accounting firm in Enderby. Copies of those Financial Statements will be available upon request for members.

Vancouver, B.C.
March 30th, 2006