

Ethiopia Calling

The newsletter of Partners in the Horn of Africa

Special points of interest:

- Completed Projects
- Future Projects
- Application to CIDA

This is our first newsletter. With it we hope to familiarize you with our projects and let you see what your donations have brought about in the Horn of Africa.

In our first two years of operations *Partners* has completed five projects and three others are in progress. All are in Ethiopia. With all of these projects we have an African “partner” (usually a local volunteer group) who contributes 15–20% of project costs, either in cash or labour. All administrative work relating to our projects, whether in Canada or Africa, was done voluntarily and all operating expenses were paid by our directors or overseas associates. 100% of the donations *Partners* received went directly into these projects.

Completed Projects

Agarfa Group Home for HIV Orphans—Addis Ababa

Approximately 35,000,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa are HIV positive. Ethiopia, with a population approaching 65,000,000 has felt the full brunt of the epidemic. In urban areas of Ethiopia it is estimated that close to 20% of the population are infected.

In Addis Ababa, the capital, hundreds of kids are orphaned by AIDS each month. Last February *Partners* entered into a partnership with Hope for Children, an Ethiopian voluntary organization which finds homes and/or caregivers for HIV orphans. Together we leased a modest house and run it, with a full time caregiver, as a home for HIV orphans.

Shortly after the home opened, our Ethiopian partner wrote:

You cannot imagine how the children



felt happy about this. We spent three wonderful Saturdays with the children and their caregivers...and asked the community if they had something to contribute towards this effort. As a result of this we received many visitors coming to encourage the children in different ways such as bringing fruits on Saturdays etc...The doctor has already treated 25 children.

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Agarfa Group Home for HIV Orphans cont'd

And last month:

"We cannot believe we have our own place, we are rejoicing every day at our coffee break."

The group home kids are doing very well. You cannot imagine how much love they are sharing with each other. It has become a gorgeous family. Two of them have tested HIV positive. There is a volunteer doctor and a nurse who often visit the children. We have bought them new clothes, pjs, shoes and school bags...Partners has lighted our darkness. We can't believe that we have our own place we are rejoicing every day at our coffee break. Thus we cannot thank you enough.

Elementary Schools—Pit Latrines

Education is the basic building block for future development in Ethiopia and the only means by which individuals can hope to achieve decent employment. In the small towns of Merawi and Mota in central Ethiopia Partners found an effective and exciting solution to the very real challenge to education caused by a lack of toilet facilities in most rural schools.

A lack of latrines means that kids often have to relieve themselves in the bushes so that school grounds become unhealthy and unpleasant. Together with a regional voluntary organi-



zation Partners constructed pit latrines with a bio-gas function on two school grounds. Waste from the latrines drains into an underground concrete tank which functions as a bio-gas system creating

methane gas. The gas is transmitted to a second cement block structure—a lunch room where the methane fires burners so meals can be heated and tea warmed. Neutralized waste is extracted and applied to a vegetable garden and water lines from the town bring clean water to the site.

Waste no longer soils the ground, threatening the health of students, water is now available at the school and in the process methane gas is created. The result will be more kids staying healthy and staying in school.

Footbridges in Agarfa and Quarit



During the rainy season many rural Ethiopians are cut off from health and education facilities for 3 months when creeks turn into torrents and become impassable. This makes schooling almost impossible and results in unnecessary deaths when sick people cannot

access medical centres and hospitals. Economic activity is also curtailed and farmers cannot sell their produce because they cannot attend market in nearby towns. Footbridges over these swollen rivers can solve the problem and are ideal projects for Partners. The poorest villages can become our partner because their share of the costs can be contributed in labour and local materials. Partners has now developed an efficient and simplified design that allows us to prefabricate and erect these bridges simply and economically.

Our first bridge was in the mountains of

Bali; the second in a very poor area of central Ethiopia where malaria is prevalent and access to hospital care is often a life and death matter. Both have made a tremendous difference to the quality of life of people who formerly were on the "wrong side" of the river.



Library Renovation

Partners has just completed the reconstruction of a high school library in the Bali mountains of Ethiopia. The school which was recently designated as one of the few high schools to prepare students for university was without library facilities.

And since electricity is not available to rural homes, libraries are essential for studying and reading. With a local group of volunteers we renovated a large assembly hall putting mortar over the existing mud structure, installing electricity and providing shelving, chairs and

and tables. Books will soon be on their way.



"...since electricity is not available to rural homes, libraries are essential for studying and reading"

Future Projects

Partners has three projects scheduled to begin over the next several months.

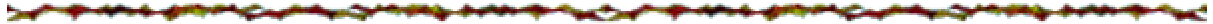
1 In September we will begin construction on a women's adolescent centre which we hope will become the prototype of many more in rural Ethiopia. The centre will be staffed by young female high school graduates (who would otherwise be unemployed) and will offer access to showers and model latrines and information on HIV and malaria. Both functions are extremely important. In rural areas the importance of personal hygiene is not appreciated and leads directly to the transmission of diseases. Similarly, there is a great need to educate families on HIV and malaria prevention. The latrines and showers will introduce young Ethiopian women to basic notions of hygiene. The latrines will also have a bio-gas function, creating methane for a tea room in the centre where rural women can read up on HIV and malaria. The sale of tea and a modest fee for use of the showers will cover the salaries of the women who are to staff the centre.

2 A second project involves the training of older HIV orphans (i.e. orphans of HIV parents) to make them employable. Our partner in Addis Ababa has arranged for a special 12 month training program in International (Western) cooking for 16 women. While they are at school *Partners* will subsidize their families for basic necessities. Experience with these types of programs indicates that upwards of 85% of graduates obtain good jobs in international hotels in urban areas after graduation. In our case that will mean that decent incomes will be provided to older orphans and their siblings who would otherwise be destitute.

3 Our third project involves the construction of another footbridge—this one for a rural community of 25,000 people who are presently cut off from schools, hospitals and markets three months of every year during the rainy season.

The Canadian International Development Association (CIDA)

This fall *Partners* will apply to the CIDA under a program which provides two dollars from the Canadian government for every dollar spent by a Canadian charity on an aid project. If *Partners* contributes \$50,000 towards a project acceptable to CIDA, it will receive another \$100,000 for that project from the government. From a donor perspective this means that, quite apart from tax credits, a \$100 donation results in a \$300 contribution directly to one of our projects. *Partners* will apply to CIDA only with viable projects that conform to our existing criteria: small, manageable projects supported by communities who are prepared to contribute—in cash or labour—15 to 20% of the costs. The CIDA program promises to dramatically increase our effectiveness.



Partners is having an impact in the Horn of Africa. Our projects have had a real positive effect on Ethiopian communities and we have avoided completely any administrative costs that would dilute your donations. Our donor base is broadening steadily and we are now well established in the aid community in Ethiopia. The problems in the Horn of Africa are immense but your donations have made a difference in lives of many Ethiopians. **For this we thank you!**

We expect to issue a second newsletter early in 2004.



Partners in the Horn of Africa

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Check out our new website at www.partnersinthehorn.com.
It's a "work in progress", but is helping us to get the word out.

***Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed it is the only thing that ever has. ~ Margaret Mead ~***