

Ethiopia Calling

The newsletter of **Partners in the Horn of Africa**

2008 will be a difficult year in Ethiopia. Rising fuel costs have led to dramatic increases in food prices in a country where 80% of the annual *per capita* income of \$125 is already used for food. This year there is even more reason for helping this splendid but impoverished country.

In 2008 **Partners in the Horn of Africa** will spend over a \$1,000,000 in Ethiopia and all of our projects will be true to our two basic principles:

- *100% of donations go directly into projects. Our directors work voluntarily and cover all operating costs.*
- *All **Partners'** projects have an Ethiopian "partner" who contributes 15-20% of the project cost, usually in the form of labour.*



With 40 lbs on your back, a slip is fatal

Across the River Ayu...Building Bridges



The Ayu River after a night of rain in the dry season

Most Ethiopians live in small villages and travel to the towns by foot. Since all essential services are located in towns, access is crucial for medical and dental care, schooling, shopping and other necessities. For most of the year travel is not an issue. However, during the rainy season from July to mid-September, small streams which must be crossed become raging rivers. Access to vital services is impossible.

Because the country is so densely populated the number of crossings is hard to grasp. At the River Ayu crossing, 11,000 people cross on a market day. The same



Villagers carrying sections of a footbridge

number are stranded for 3 months each rainy season.

At the Ayu River crossing 20-30 people drown each year and many lives are lost because there is no access to health services. Schooling must be abandoned. And, with no access to local markets there is no way of generating income or buying necessities.

The following is a personal account of one such tragedy at the Ayu crossing, recounted by our Country Representative in Ethiopia...

"...I asked him if he knew of any one from his village that died while trying to cross the river and he told me that he lost his wife, the mother of his 8 kids last August. He and his wife went to the Azena market to sell grain and buy, among others, new clothes for the kids for the Ethiopian New Year. Having accomplished their mission, they hastened back home to show the new clothes to the kids and make them happy. However, he was the only one who was lucky to cross after so much struggle while his wife and the clothes and other stuff they bought were taken away. It took him, his neighbours

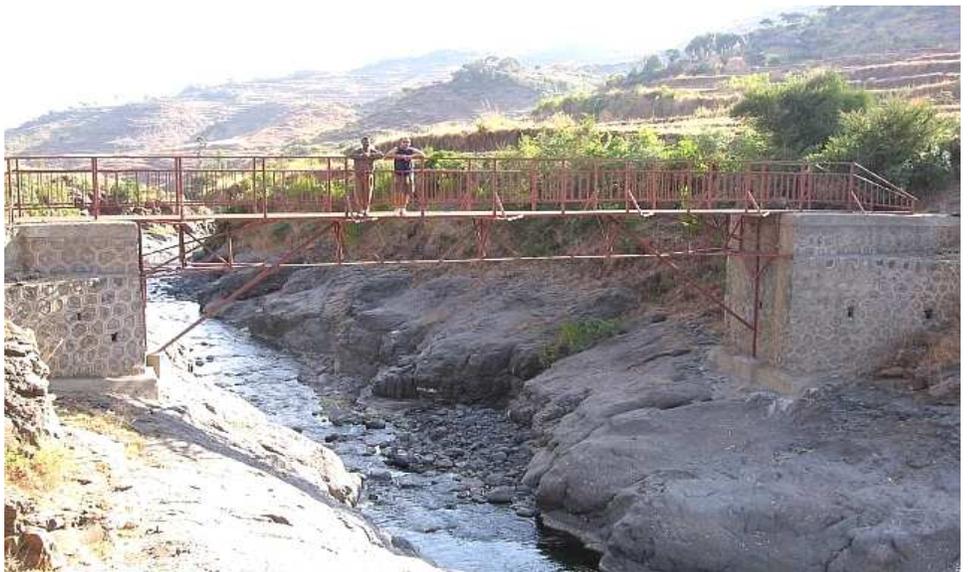
and relatives 4 days to retrieve the dead body."

Bridge construction is costly and labour intensive. Costly because prices of cement and steel in Ethiopia are rising dramatically. Labour intensive because building materials such as rocks, sand, eucalyptus and steel spans must be carried to the site by foot. That is a good

thing; it allows the community to play a major role and take ownership of its bridge.

Our latest bridge, a 22 metre span over the River Ayu – will benefit 62,000 people living in 9 rural areas on both sides of the river. Money is currently being raised by the community and rocks for the cement pillars have been hauled to the site. 5000 trees will be planted on the banks to prevent further erosion.

"...I asked this devastated farmer how much he could contribute if this bridge is to be built. He replied that "I have one sheep and I will give that."



A Partners' bridge that will save many lives

And on the Canadian Front,

Highlights Annual Report, 2007

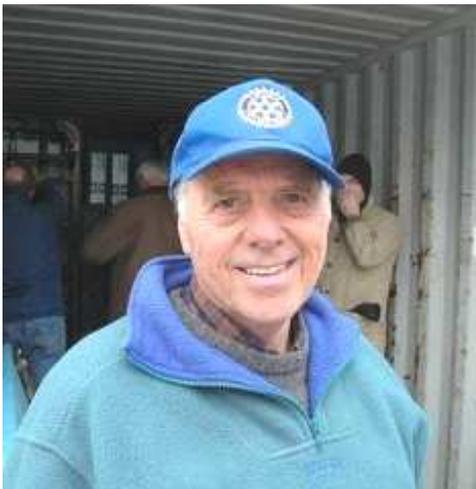
- Number of Project: 33
- Number of Donors: 999
- Total Donations: \$924,880

(copies of the Annual Report and Financial Statements available on request)

April 10, Annual General Meeting and Ethiopian Dinner (Roundhouse, Vancouver) 200 people attended. The guest speaker was Zenebe Mamo, Executive Director of AWWA, an Ethiopian charity that focuses on helping women and children and with whom we regularly 'partner' on projects.



Rotary crew loading hospital beds for Ethiopia



Colin Pritchard, key organizer in Kelowna

April 21, Partners and Rotary A second container of hospital beds, donated by an Okanagan hospital, was loaded by members of the Kelowna Okanagan Mission Club and sent to a rural Ethiopian hospital. Earlier, 8 Rotary Clubs in the Okanagan joint ventured with **Partners** to dig wells and install latrines in rural Ethiopia.

May 3, Mom and Me Dinner/Dance (West Vancouver) This year's 4th Mother's Day dinner/dance and silent auction was a huge success bringing 400 people together and raising \$24,500 for washable and reusable sanitary pads for rural school girls.

May 3-4 Strategy Session, Partners' Directors adopt a three year growth plan allocating *Partners'* resources as follows:

- Education & Training: 55% (school, library and latrine construction, desks, library books, washable, reusable sanitary pads)
- Infrastructure: 15% (wells, footbridges, latrines)
- HIV and Malaria Prevention: 8%
- Women' Empowerment, Micro-finance, New Technology, Capacity Building, Miscellaneous: 20%

May 28-June 5, Club Penguin, Toronto, Ottawa and Edmonton Club Penguin, the popular socially interactive children's website, agrees to fund a new school in Ethiopia as well as a kindergarten and home for street kids. Fundraisers were held and new supporters found in Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto and Ottawa.

Some of *Partners'* Projects in 2008

1. Renovating and furnishing 5 elementary schools
2. Opening a new home for street kids
3. Distributing 20,000 washable and reusable sanitary pads to rural school girls
4. Building two major footbridges
5. A new group home for orphan girls attending university or technical college
6. Increasing our involvement with HIV orphans and micro-financing



A micro-finance borrower selling spices at the market

Partners is having an impact in the Horn of Africa. The problems are immense but your donations do make a difference in the lives of many Ethiopians. **On their behalf we thank you.**

***Partners in the Horn of Africa* directors:**

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Partners in the Horn of Africa is a recognized Canadian charity and issues tax receipts for all donations.

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 ~

This newsletter is published courtesy of the United Food & Commercial Workers Union, Local 1518