ETHIOPIAID

TRANSFORMING LIVES IN ETHIOPIA

BEHEBRET TOGETHER

Winter Newsletter 2023

What your support means:

working together

A message from Valerie Browning, Co-Founder and Programme Director of our partner the Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA).

Valerie and her husband Ismael, co-founders of APDA

For Afar people, Ethiopiaid has become synonymous with APDA, walking with the Afar community through intimate issues such as female genital mutilation as well as the extremity of hardship brought about by natural and manmade disasters. Ethiopiaid is always there and the first responder, urgent to save the lives of mothers, children and to preserve what remains of the community assets (mainly goats). In every sense, Ethiopiaid is an utterly listening and directly responding organisation, the essence of what localisation is meant to be in terms of seeing the most devastated assisted in line with community direction.

For APDA as an organisation, this is a direct and open relationship that is practical and encouraging. It displays the beauty of relating humans to humans in contrast to the brutality of inhumanity as so recently encountered in Ethiopia's unnecessary northern conflict – a no fuss, first help organisation!

Read more about our partnership with APDA on pages 5 and 10.

Contents

Partner message	1	Emergency and recovery	9-10
Welcome	2	Health and wellbeing	11-13
Maternal health	3-4	Supporter news	14
Women and girls	5-6	How you can help	15
Education	7-8		

Welcome

As you will read in this newsletter a seemingly simple intervention, like providing a girl with a reusable period pack and enabling her to return to school (page 8), or equipping a women's health worker with the educational resources to combat child marriage (page 5), can transform lives.

I know it is a cliché that every small gift helps but it really does. Together in 2023 we have leveraged great change.

In her message opposite (page 1), Valerie describes us as a *"no fuss, first help organisation."* We listen to our local partners' needs and remain agile so we can respond quickly and effectively as was recently demonstrated by the cholera outbreak in the Afar region. You can find out about how being able to respond immediately helps save lives in our emergency update on page 10.

It is thanks to you, our wonderful supporters, that this is all possible. At a time when there is so much conflict and division in the world it is heartening to see what can be achieved through working compassionately and respectfully together.

On behalf of everyone at Ethiopiaid I would like to express my sincere gratitude and wish you a happy festive season.

Warm wishes,

Alexandra Chapman

Chair of Trustees

Strengthening maternal health

Important progress is being made to improve maternal healthcare, yet maternal mortality rates in Ethiopia are still high. Around 70% of all births in Ethiopia occur outside healthcare facilities, without the assistance of trained midwives. For many women in rural regions there is no choice but to give birth at home, alone, increasing the risk to the mother and baby. By improving access to maternal health services, our partners are saving the lives of mothers and babies, preventing the childbirth injuries that are so prevalent with prolonged unassisted labour and offering women choices in childbirth.

£325
enables a midwife to provide postnatal home visits for 1 month

theBigGive

We are delighted to share that our match fund appeal through The Big Give raised £22,632 for the life-saving Maternity Waiting Homes Project. Many women in rural Ethiopia have no choice but to give birth at home, without medical help. Providing maternity waiting homes within health centres means women have a safe place to stay at the end of their pregnancy, reducing dangerous home births, childbirth injuries and needless deaths. Our Big Give appeal has meant that not only has there been an increase in women giving birth in health facilities but also an increase in women using the antenatal services, reducing the risk of complications and emergencies. Tamenech experienced bleeding during pregnancy but was able to stay at the maternity waiting home where she was closely monitored while awaiting the arrival of her twins. *"The staff here counselled me and helped me understand what to expect. If it was not for this place and with the bleeding I had, if I was to go back home, I could lose my babies and maybe even die."*

Helping women access the care they need to give birth safely

"The sun is out for me and my daughter now"

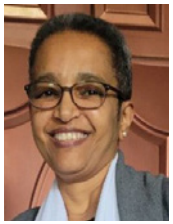
A recent story that's been on my mind and continues to inspire me came from one of our Safe Motherhood Ambassadors, Genet.

Genet found Aberash, who had been living with obstetric fistula for 25 years – a devastating childbirth injury which caused her to live with incontinence and severe depression. Aberash is 64 years old, she has four children and she has lost another four due to health problems and a stillbirth as a result of the fistula.

Aberash felt she'd been cursed. But then, as if that was not enough, her daughter who is 27 years old, ended up developing fistula too. She has had to live with fistula for five years. You can imagine the traumatic experience they have had to endure all this time. Believing that this was just the way their life had to be, another taboo they had to live with rather than a medical problem that could be fixed. They lived together, the daughter helping her mother even though she's also a fistula patient herself.

But, thanks to Genet, who found them and brought them both to the treatment centre in Hawassa, they both got treated and they are both fully cured. Aberash said: *"It's not easy to live with fistula for 25 years. I was not able to do the things that I love doing and I was not able to support my family and I felt so bad."*

She said thanks to God first and then to Genet, saying *"the sun is out for me and my daughter now".* To hear this is amazing. To be part of this change is even more encouraging and inspiring.



Meselech Seyoum
Country Director
at HHOJ.

Opportunities for women and girls

Women and girls in Ethiopia face so many barriers throughout their lives. Inequality starts from the moment girls are born, with many young girls undergoing harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM). Despite child marriage being illegal in Ethiopia, 40% of girls are married by the age of 18. We believe girls and women are the key to building long-term change. By protecting girls and promoting women's voices, our partners are building a safer, more equal world.

£13
equips a Women Extension Worker with the resources she needs to reach girls at risk of child marriage and FGM

Saving lives by raising awareness and providing free screening and treatment for cervical cancer

Doing whatever it takes to protect girls

Hasna almost resorted to poisoning herself to avoid being forced into marriage. After both her parents died, her brother believed it was his responsibility to see that she married, though it was against her will. She felt powerless and alone.

Your support helps fund Women Extension Workers, who are trusted role models for girls like Hasna who have no one to turn to.

Faatuma is one of these women. She heard of Hasna's desperation through her community outreach work, speaking to girls and listening to their daily challenges and difficulties. Part of her role also involves working alongside religious leaders who, as respected authorities, can lead by example to bring an end to harmful practices such as child marriage. By coming together, they helped Hasna's brother understand her rights, supporting her to continue in school.

Another inspirational woman who will do whatever it takes to stand up for girls is Madina. When Haalima came to her, a 15-year-old girl who had run away refusing to marry her much older cousin, she sheltered her in her own home. Many evenings, groups of young men from Haalima's community came to try and bring her home to be married but Madina, together with her neighbours, protected her. She called upon the community leaders who defended Haalima's right to decide her husband, enabling her to return to school.

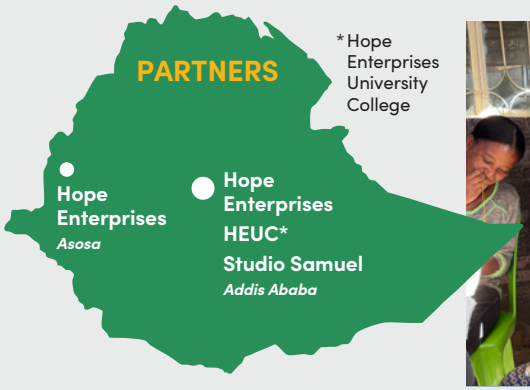
Your support saving lives

Since the wonderful response to our spring appeal for cervical cancer screening, our partner has screened 2,283 women, treated 259 women, and reached over 5,000 people through health education! Looking forward, they aim to continue expanding their services, particularly to reach women living with HIV and ultimately prevent cervical cancer.

Improving access to education

Huge improvements have been made in primary school enrolment in Ethiopia, but only 33% of children make it to secondary school. Children who have been displaced by conflict, live in rural areas, pastoralist communities and families with low incomes are among those who most struggle to attend school, especially girls. Education is a fundamental human right, and we are proud to support partners providing life-changing opportunities for education and employment for young people.

£148
pays for a student's catering and hospitality training for 1 month



Removing barriers to education so young people can continue learning

Making and distributing free reusable period packs means girls don't have to miss school

Dreaming big

At the age of just 10, Mariam moved to Addis Ababa from her home in the Oromia region to live with her uncle – her father had plans to eventually marry her to one of his friends. She did not speak Amharic, so in school she had to start from Grade 1. After several years, her uncle got divorced and she had to leave his house. Mariam took up work as a house maid, sending most of her earnings to help support her family back home. She couldn't afford period products for herself, instead using old cloths. She stopped going to school.

As Mariam struggled on, she could not see how her situation could possibly improve. But our partner is there for girls like Mariam. Not only did they give her a reusable period pack, taking away the worry each month of how to manage her period, but they also provided counselling support. Their caring team helped her return to school and encouraged her to 'think big for her future'. She now dreams of completing university and wants to be able to help orphaned children living in her community.

Access to opportunities

This year, you have helped 163 young people learn practical skills through Hope Enterprises' vocational training programme. Students who would otherwise have had to stop learning too soon, to find whatever work they could to try and support their families. This summer we celebrated 68 graduates going on to secure employment. The college adapts their curriculum each year based on job availability, equipping students with the skills that will give them access to wider employment opportunities.

Emergency and recovery work

Maternal Health: rebuilding after conflict

Work rebuilding health services in the aftermath of the conflict has begun in the Tigray region. Our partner is working on restoring Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services, distributing vital equipment, providing clinical mentorship and re-equipping clinics and maternity waiting homes. As they work to restore the health system, they are also working to increase health service uptake, making sure people know where they can go to receive medical aid.

£68
can vaccinate 100 children against measles

*Wings of Healing

Remembering Dr Onsy Louca

Dr Onsy Louca founded our partner Wings of Healing in 2012 after visiting Ethiopia and seeing how neglected women's health was. Initially he would visit with a medical team to perform gynaecological surgeries, whilst providing training for medics. When he retired, Dr Louca was able to dedicate more time to his passion, visiting Ethiopia up to 8 times per year.

As well as caring for tens of thousands of women and children in Ethiopia providing medical aid, his vision enabled the organisation's work to expand, including providing emergency support to people who have been displaced. Wings of Healing's dedicated team are working hard to honour the legacy left by Dr Louca.

> ***"We remain dedicated to continuing the work of our beloved father, friend, mentor, and so much more, Dr. Onsy."***
>
> **Dr Feven Tesfaye, Programme Director at WOH**

> ***"If the world is with us, we can make a change"***
>
> **Mahammad Nuha Hallo, Head of Primary Health, APDA**

Swift action saving lives

Thanks to the ongoing donations to our Emergency and Recovery Fund, we can act quickly when emergency strikes.

Our partner APDA recently shared urgent news of a cholera outbreak in Afar. Given its rapid transmission and the lack of safe water and sanitation in rural Ethiopia, the team needed to act quickly. Six people had already died within 24 hours.

Within ninety minutes of receiving their email, we were able to send funds for immediate aid, to help buy IVs, cannulas and other medical supplies, soap, medicines, and water-purifying chemicals.

Their dedicated team's day-to-day work in rural communities continues to save lives. With high rates of malnutrition, immunity in children is very low and disease outbreaks are common – including measles, which can be deadly, or leave children blind. They are working hard to combat this by distributing supplementary food and administering vaccinations.

Thank you for being there with the APDA team on the frontlines. Your support is saving lives.

Lisa Cousins
CEO

Supporting health and wellbeing

Limited access to social and health services and misconceptions about disabilities and neglected tropical diseases mean that many people in Ethiopia are extremely vulnerable. Through providing specialist healthcare and dispelling stigma, our partners are working hard to make sure everyone is included and can reach the support they need.

£55
pays for
1 month's specialist palliative care for a patient in their own home

Ahmed's story - nothing can hold him back

Ahmed is four. For the first months of his life, his parents had no idea that Ahmed had cerebral palsy. As he grew older and still could not sit up, they just kept hoping his condition would somehow improve. *"By the time we saw that children who were his age were able to walk, to go to school – we just woke up."*

The family live in rented accommodation in a town near Addis Ababa and work as daily labourers. Their lack of steady income means the transport costs are very expensive, but each week they make the long journey into the capital for Ahmed's treatment.

When he first came to the paediatric rehabilitation centre, Ahmed had difficulty standing and walking. Now he can walk freely using a stick, and even independently for a few minutes at a time.

Ahmed used to watch the other children going to school, wishing he could go too. Now, to his great excitement, he is enrolled for the new school year.

"A light during my dark time"

This year Hospice Ethiopia celebrated their 20th anniversary! Their compassionate care for the people they support and their commitment to developing palliative care in Ethiopia is truly inspirational.

For Ayelech, the support from the Hospice Ethiopia team has helped her survive. When she became very ill with HIV, her husband left her. Her health deteriorated so much that she could not get out of bed. With no other support, her constant worry was how she could provide for her daughter and her mother, who lives with them.

The nurse's weekly visits provided the support that she needed through their holistic care. They treated Ayelech's physical pain and symptoms with medicine. Their psychosocial support helped her cope with depression and anxiety. Food parcels gave her one less thing to worry about.

Ayelech still worries about the future, but she knows where to turn for support. She is up and about and finds work when she can, as a daily labourer. Seeing her daughter grow brings her huge joy. Reflecting on how much the care she received meant, Ayelech said: *"I was very grateful, and it was like a hope for me, to have that support."*

Supporting health and wellbeing

Interview with Betelihem Ayalew - Junior Physiotherapist, Cheshire Services

What drew you to this area of work?
I am disabled. I was one of the girls who grew up in a rural area and there are so many difficulties... I am interested in working with children and mothers who need my help as I know the pain and feelings.

What are some of the main challenges facing the people you work with?
Some of the children are unable to continue their rehabilitation due to unaffordable costs of transportation. Most of the parents have no permanent income or have to beg in order to feed their children.

What are your hopes for the future?
I hope that Cheshire Ethiopia will reach more children with disabilities, those who are denied access to rehabilitation, by expanding its services. I am eager to see us helping families of children with disabilities by engaging them in income generation activities.

Your legacy: transforming lives for years to come

We hope that you feel encouraged reading about the ways your support is transforming people's lives right now. As we look towards 2024 and beyond, we hope to continue transforming thousands of lives for many years to come. Legacy gifts mean our partners can plan ahead, safe in the knowledge that there is a network of people who share their compassion and are committed to being there for the individuals they support, far into the future.

Every legacy, big or small, can help build long-term change.

Scan the QR code to find out more about remembering Ethiopiaid in your Will and leaving a lasting legacy.

Supporter news

Our 35th anniversary

Next year marks 35 years of transforming lives in Ethiopia!

ETHIOPIAID
CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

We can't wait to celebrate this milestone with you, looking back at the incredible impact we have made together over the last three and a half decades.

2024 supporter trip to Ethiopia

We are looking forward to taking a group of 20 Ethiopiaid supporters to visit some of our partners' projects and take part in (or cheer on) the Hawassa Run.

Bill is joining the group and has already started her fundraising:

"I am hosting an evening at our home to talk about Ethiopiaid. We are making a meal using some Ethiopian recipes I have been researching! I also have a stall booked at my local village Christmas Fair - I will be making some Christmas hanging hearts to sell and I will add a little note about the charity. In working on this I have really appreciated learning more about the projects supported by Ethiopiaid. Just looking into what is being done, watching film clips and hearing the stories from actual people has been so good. I realise I want to share this information because it is so positive!"

We are very grateful for all the wonderful ways you support the work of our Ethiopian partners.

We also want to say a big thank you to Nat, who ran the Manchester Marathon for us this year, and Sophie, who ran the Edinburgh Half Marathon – you are both amazing.

If you would like to get involved by raising awareness and funds for our work, please do get in touch - we would be so delighted to hear from you.

ETHIOPIAID

TRANSFORMING LIVES IN ETHIOPIA

THANK YOU.

By supporting our work, you are an essential part of incredible, life-transforming change. When you've finished reading this, please pass it on!

Lake Hawassa, Great Rift Valley, Ethiopia

Ethiopiaid, PO BOX 5168
Bath BA1 0RR

01225 476 385

support@ethiopiaid.org.uk

www.ethiopiaid.org.uk

EthiopiaidCharity

@ethiopiaiduk

Scan to donate today

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Registered Charity No. 802353 (England and Wales)
Company Limited By Guarantee. 2435882 (England and Wales)

Please note names and images have been changed to protect the anonymity of the people who have shared their stories with us.