

Raising The Bar in Ethiopian Classrooms

Educational Consultant John R. Richardson of Seattle sends this report on the success of our Teacher Capacity Building Project...

Ethiopian children, who are fortunate enough to attend school, typically sit with their peers in dimly lit classrooms constructed of wooden poles packed with mud. Often the students sit on dirt floors or logs placed across the classroom with forty to sixty classmates. The children spend most of their class time listening to their teachers and staring at small chalkboards - memorizing as much as possible. The mud walls are dark and rarely used to post learning materials or student work. This is the untold reality for many rural schools in Ethiopia.



Engaged students learning in a classroom with stimulating materials on the walls

Tesfaye Kifle, now a teacher at the **International Community School of Addis Ababa**, attended such a school. “I remember my school, my teachers, like it was last week. It was a mud floor, four walls, a blackboard on one of the walls, and the teacher standing by the blackboard teaching sixty or seventy seated kids, not talking, no discussion. He was feeding us with all the information. And maybe the last five minutes he would say, ‘Do you have questions? Did you get it?’ We were shy and maybe one or two would ask questions.”

When Tesfaye became a teacher, he was determined to find out what his students knew before he began teaching and then, through inquiry, to guide them in new and relevant learning that would keep them engaged and interacting.

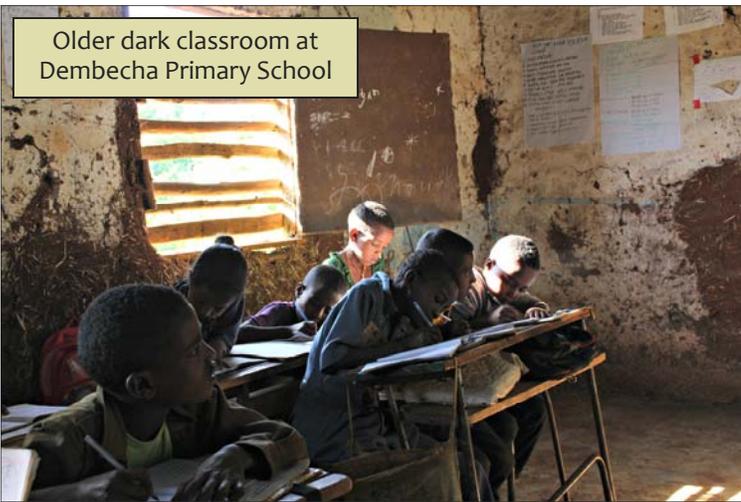
In 2010, **Partners** started the **Teacher Capacity Building (TCB) Project** to introduce **more student-centered teaching and improve the teaching techniques** found in a majority of schools in Ethiopia’s rural communities. More than 400 instructors from five teachers colleges and more than 1000 teachers from twenty-eight primary schools attended eight day workshops to learn teaching practices that would result in higher levels of student learning. These are many of **the best teaching practices used in schools in Canada, the United States, and other progressive countries.** (Continued on Page 2)

Partners in the Horn of Africa is a non-denominational Canadian charity operating in Ethiopia, with two basic principles:

- 1) **100% of any donation goes directly toward project costs in Ethiopia.** All administrative and fundraising costs are covered by Friends of the Horn of Africa, a separately funded sister charity.
- 2) Our unique development model is based on community participation. **The Ethiopian community or partner proposes the project to us and then is required to contribute at least 15% of the total cost in cash, labour and/or materials.**

We work with both rural and urban communities. Our projects focus on education, basic infrastructure, water and sanitation, food security and sustainable livelihoods.

Older dark classroom at Dembecha Primary School



Bright new classroom at Dejen Primary School



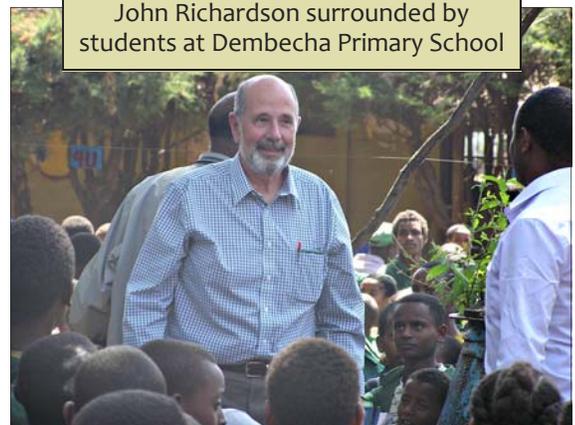
(Continued from Page 1) In November, I travelled to Ethiopia with two colleagues, **Dr. Duane Baker** and **Jeff Whitehill** to conduct an evaluation of the TCB project. We travelled over 2000 miles visiting three teachers colleges and four primary schools (grades 1-8). We observed teaching and learning in classrooms of both trained and untrained teachers. Using a data collection device developed by Dr. Baker, we scored each classroom we visited on criteria relating to best teaching practices. **In the classrooms of teachers who had received the TCB training, there was a marked difference from classrooms of untrained teachers.**

In addition to the teacher training, **Partners has been building quality classrooms and libraries for many schools in Ethiopia.** We were able to see these new classrooms with their concrete floors, solid concrete walls, and windows across an entire side of the room.

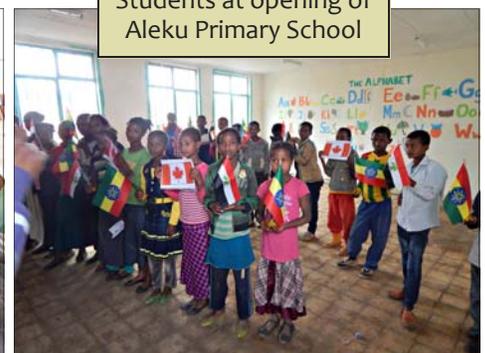
Teachers, administrators, and community members were very proud of their new classrooms and spoke reverently of Partners making such a difference for their children and communities. An elder from the community near Dembecha Primary school told us that **Partners** is different from other organizations in that we value education. He also said, "With education, they [the children] can do anything. The community loves you!"

Education has become a high priority for the Ethiopian government, and now accounts of nearly one quarter of its spending. More teachers have been hired and more students are attending school. **As more teachers learn the student-centered teaching strategies of the TCB Project, education will definitely improve, not only benefiting individual students but also the country as a whole.**

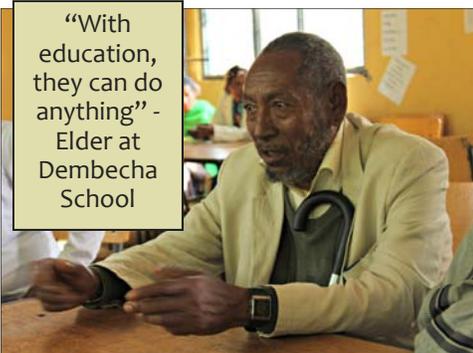
John Richardson surrounded by students at Dembecha Primary School



Students at opening of Aleku Primary School



"With education, they can do anything" - Elder at Dembecha School



Students interacting at Gondar Teachers College



Over the last 10 years, donations from **Tetra Tech EBA** and direct donations from their employees have let us complete 104 water projects, one school, renovations to 3 existing classrooms, school furniture and two latrines. We've also benefitted from countless hours of Tetra Tech EBA Engineering expertise for these projects. Staff have continued to support **Partners** through various fundraising campaigns - In December 2015, they successfully raised over \$37,000 to support the young girls at the Debra Markos Girls Group Home for the next two years.

Thank you for improving the lives of tens of thousands of Ethiopians!

Making a BIG difference together

Our Executive Director Silantoi Kisoso made her first Partners' trip to Ethiopia in January

Since I first encountered *Partners in the Horn of Africa* in 2011, I have become a keen supporter of its mission, vision and most importantly, its unique model and approach towards development. I travelled to Ethiopia in January to visit over 20 projects and spend time with our partners and our Ethiopian staff. I returned to Canada with a greater appreciation of the huge difference we are making in some of Ethiopia's most rural and forgotten communities.

I visited Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Adama, Debra Markos, Merawi, Gobe and Rira. Nothing prepared me for the level of abject poverty I saw. Simple everyday tasks were close to impossible for the millions of people living in rural Ethiopia – who account for 87% of Ethiopia's population of 95 million. I had the opportunity to visit a sample of our diverse projects: footbridges, our children's home, girl's group home, schools, libraries, water supply, water protection, microfinance and the reusable sanitary pad production center. Our projects vary in scope and size, but our focus is centered on community-led projects. These empower communities to be engaged in their vision for development, something Ethiopians appreciate very much. One government official assured me that the impact we are having is profound and lasting. **In Merawi Zone, Partners has been rated as having the third highest impact among many charities, many of these much larger in size.**

As we celebrate the completion of **104 Water Projects** supported by **Tetra Tech EBA** and more than **50 School Libraries** built with the support of **Disney's Club Penguin**, we are working to assure a sustainable future for a whole new generation with the ongoing use of these facilities. **Water Management Training** will ensure a continuing, cleaner water supply for communities. The **Teacher Capacity Building Project**, a partnership with the **Ministry of Education**, will help improve student success and build a strong reading culture among Ethiopians. Ethiopia is expected to experience the worst drought of the last three decades. This makes our **Food Security Project**, a large three year endeavour aimed at improving farming and food security in the Oromiyia Region, particularly important.

I am excited to work with our dedicated team in Canada and Ethiopia – not to mention our long-serving and committed Board of Directors. Thank you for being a supporter and for securing a brighter future for Ethiopia.



Girls who benefit from the reusable sanitary pad program. "I am no longer ashamed to be a girl", said one of them.

Ashar River Bridge: The children loved our empty water bottle



Bethel Children's Home: The children were joyful, as every child should be!



Visiting the modest clinic in Rira - serves 13,000 people



Water pump in Azena will serve 5,000



Girls at Dejen Primary School



Everywhere I went, everyone said THANK YOU in a big way.



SAVE THE DATE

Thursday May 26th - AGM and Ethiopian Dinner in Vancouver starts at 5:30 pm. Call us to reserve your tickets.

Saturday September 24th - The 12th annual **GREAT Big Run for Africa** in Kelowna and Enderby

Organize your own fundraiser run in your community! Or perhaps you would like to team up with your colleagues or neighbourhood to support a project. Contact us for more information. We'd be happy to support your event and/or efforts and share how big an impact you can have on a community of people in Ethiopia.



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Sally Thorpe joins our Board of Directors



In September **Sally Thorpe** was excited to join the **Partners** Board as part of her ongoing commitment to international development. Sally's career has focussed on **project delivery in social development contexts, indigenous relations, and strategic change leadership** at the local, national, and international levels. Sally has **led teams across British Columbia and associated relationships with 100+ First Nations** through her work at **BC Hydro**, where she continues as a **Senior Manager**. At the international level, Sally has experience in **complex humanitarian and human rights contexts**, through the **UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations**, the **UN Development Fund for Women**, **Australian refugee organizations**, and the **United States and Australian governments**. Sally lives in North

Vancouver with her husband, Greg, and three boys: Harry, Jack and Thomas. Sally learned about **Partners** on a work-related road trip with colleague and fellow Board member, **Ahmed Gelchu**, when they became engaged in conversation about Ethiopia and found they shared a passion for community development. A few hours on the road together led to a fantastic exchange of ideas and the rest is history! Sally especially values the **Partners** governance model, as a local initiative with a focussed international mandate and a valued delivery team based in Addis Ababa. Of course a Canadian partnership with Ethiopia is what makes it great. Sally hopes to contribute to the **Partners'** project delivery practice and relationship building, in whatever way her knowledge can build and sustain the great work already being done.

Welcome to Partners Kristina and Abdi

In Enderby, **Kristina Parkes** joined us in December as our Donor Relations & Administrative Assistant – she's the friendly voice of **Partners** when you call us.

In Ethiopia, **Abdulhafiz Yusuf (Abdi)** is back with us as our Partnership Manager. Abdi was a former Minister of Information in Ethiopia in the 80's and has been a supporter of **Partners** since its formative years.



Our mission is to improve the lives of Ethiopians. We listen to their needs and partner with them on projects that empower communities & individuals, and contribute to their well-being.

Donations of \$20 or more result in a tax receipt for Canadian and American donors. We are a registered charity in Canada and the United States.

Find us on:



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Thank you Calgary!

The generosity of our supporters in Calgary was a special thing to witness on February 29th. Even with the economic crisis in Alberta people gave to **Partners** ever so generously. We raised over \$13,000. Many thanks to our long time Calgary supporters **Patricia Blocksom, Robyn McGregor and Heather McKay**. A special thank you to the sought-after Italian cuisine guru **Allan Shewchuk** for preparing the sumptuous fare, and to **The Cookbook Company** in Calgary for hosting our fundraiser at no cost. Gratitude also to the wonderful **Tetra Tech EBA** volunteers: **Brian Carrera, Madalena, Darby, Beth Vanbeek, Kat Heaney, Breanne Leac, Nora Badreldin & Heidi Ericsmann**.