



Open Way

helping people out of poverty

Registered charity 1122055

Annual Update - August 2024



Introduction

Ethiopia is struggling with several internal crises: fighting between ethnic groups, widespread food insecurity, medicine shortages in the hospitals, government workers not being paid, large cost of living increases and so on. For these reasons there is a lot of stress and anxiety in the country. This is heart-breaking to see and makes the work we are supporting all the more important.

Although the whole country is affected by these issues, the Sidamo region remains relatively peaceful, and we have been able to continue all our projects.

The last year has been Open Way's most impactful year to date. The team in Ethiopia were even given awards from local government departments who have appreciated the difference Open Way has made in the region – so very nice to get that recognition.

We'd like to pass a **huge thank you!** to all our supporters on behalf of all the very many people who have been helped. We hope you enjoy reading about what has been achieved in the following update.

Education project

It has been another successful year at the Open Way schools and nearly 2000 young learners have had a valuable year getting started in education.

This year, 36 teachers and eight librarians were employed at our ten schools. We were happy to be able to raise the salaries significantly this year, since the cost of living is increasing so fast, and this was greatly appreciated. The libraries double as community centres in the evenings, equipped with satellite dish and solar powered TV, so that people can catch-up on the news and have a place to meet each other.

The school roll for 2023-2024.

| School | Classes in 2023-2024 | Total Number | Schools library |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Shigesho | 8 | 418 | ✓ |
| T-K | 5 | 244 | ✓ |
| L. Wemerera | 4 | 169 | ✓ |
| Lela Honcho | 3 | 132 | ✓ |
| Hatabo | 3 | 150 | ✓ |
| Kokosa | 3 | 152 | ✓ |
| Mi-ke | 2 | 106 | ✓ |
| Bentibata | 2 | 120 | ✓ |
| Babe Colmocha | 3 | 154 | |
| Tula Hiricha | 3 | 146 | |
| | 36 | 1,910 * | 8 |

** 980 girls / 930 boys*

The schools have now broken up for the summer - time for repairs and repainting after a year of wet and windy highland weather.

The last academic year started with the opening of two new schools constructed last summer; three newly constructed libraries at schools which didn't yet have one; and three classrooms added at existing schools.



The new Babe school under construction (left) and the opening ceremony (right).



The new library at Mi-ke school.

A large proportion of students passing through Open Way schools go on to further education although it is difficult to get accurate numbers.

We were very happy to learn that 15 Open Way teachers have been given the chance to train on the government teacher training programme. This takes place at weekends over three or four years and is a great opportunity for them.

Tackling food insecurity

Grain

The cost of a basic staple flour in Ethiopia at about 60p per kilo is not far off its cost in the UK or other European countries and is completely beyond the purchasing power of almost all rural subsistence farmers in Ethiopia. In the Sidamo region where we are operating, families typically subsist by growing what they can in their own plots and supplementing this with a few other essentials when some family members can earn money in the coffee picking season.



Grain distribution outside the mill

Malnutrition is, unfortunately, very common in this situation of deep poverty that people face. Over the last 12 months, we have distributed over **78 tonnes** of grain. Beneficiaries are vulnerable families identified by our teachers and coordinators, local village councils, and health workers.

Seedlings

False banana seedlings have proved an efficient way to help people improve their food security situation. This is because they are a traditional staple, drought resistant, energy rich and nutritious, versatile and have a long storage life.

500 families received false banana seedlings during April and May 2024.

The distribution took place in two locations, TK and Tula. Distributing in Tula allowed us to reach more remote communities this time.



Tula distribution



TK distribution

We have now been distributing false banana seedlings for some years. It has been great to revisit some of the original recipients and see how they are doing. Many families have already benefited from harvests from their trees and have propagated new trees.



Great to behold these fully grown false banana trees given to a family five years ago!

Business Training

Last year, we started a new project aiming to improve food security in a more long-term way by providing a practical business training course.

The training, led by Mulu, took place over four days in September. 482 villagers benefited from the training and either attended in the mornings or the afternoon to make it feasible for them to attend and continue their daily responsibilities.

The training was so successful and popular that Mulu repeated it in December for 376 more people.

The training showed people how to use the resources at their disposal to improve their situation by running a small-scale business. Many people were very encouraged and inspired.

The Open Way farm manager Hailu taught people how to rear chickens successfully and attendees were given two chicks which they could keep or sell on to develop their own business.



Chick distribution after the business training

Providing Housing

This project provides a simple house for people who are vulnerable in unsafe accommodation. Many people just cannot afford to rebuild or repair their houses due to old age, ill health and crippling poverty. There is no help available for people in such situations and it is common to hear of people forced to sell their plot to take a relative to hospital for example. After several years of this project, there are now well over 100 Open Way houses dotted around the countryside in Sidamo, each providing safe shelter for several people.

Over the last twelve months, Open Way has built 21 new houses for vulnerable people.

The new houses are 4m x 5m and are metal-roofed. They all eventually receive mud-rendering inside and out, but this is seasonal work, and families very often move in before this is complete.

Here are a couple of examples from this year's cases.



Konjit and her children moved into their new house and no longer have to fear hyena attack at night.



Gatuso's family before and after receiving a bigger, safer and weatherproof house.

Medical Assistance

Assistance is organised for patients at several medical centres including TK Health Centre, Dilla Hospital, Yirgalem Hospital, Hawassa Hospital and occasionally Addis Ababa.

During the last 12-month period, 212 patients have been treated for various conditions. Of these patients, 111 were male, 101 were female, and 36 were children. Note some patients are treated for multiple issues.

| Condition | No. Cases |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Anaemia | 3 |
| Asthma | 4 |
| Benign moles on back | 1 |
| Body Swelling | 3 |
| Breast | 4 |
| Car accident | 1 |
| Cataracts | 22 |
| Cellulitis | 1 |
| Cervicitis | 2 |
| Diabetes | 2 |
| Ear, nose, throat | 1 |
| Epilepsy | 6 |
| Esophagus | 2 |
| Eye cancer | 1 |
| Eye issue | 2 |
| Fistula | 2 |
| Gastritis | 12 |
| Genital issue | 3 |
| Glaucoma | 10 |
| Goitre | 1 |
| Gynecomastia | 1 |
| HBP | 4 |
| Haemorrhoids | 1 |
| Heart issues | 23 |

| Condition | No. Cases |
|----------------------|------------|
| Kidney | 8 |
| Leg amputation | 1 |
| Leg injuries | 8 |
| Leukaemia | 1 |
| Liver issues | 2 |
| Lung issues | 2 |
| Malaria | 1 |
| Myoma | 2 |
| Pneumonia | 13 |
| Prostate | 3 |
| Psychiatric Disorder | 3 |
| Rheumatism | 1 |
| Scabies | 2 |
| Skin disease | 6 |
| Stomach issues | 2 |
| TB | 2 |
| Tumour | 2 |
| Typhoid | 45 |
| Typhus | 31 |
| UTI | 3 |
| Unknown | 2 |
| Womb | 7 |
| Worms | 13 |
| TOTAL | 272 |

Mebrat Tuke suffered from Goitre for years which is a deficiency disease. Just one example of the relief the medical project brings.



Mebrat before and after his operation

Assisting students into further education

This small project enables successful students to progress to further education when needing to cover costs such as rent, food, stationery, and clothing would have made it impossible for them to do so.

We have supported four university students and four high school students.

Helping the elderly

For many years, Open Way has been supporting 16 elderly people with clothes, food support and a small pension. This is a hugely important help for vulnerable people who have no help coming from family members or the state and allows them to live their last years peacefully and with dignity.



The Sidamo region where Open Way is working in Ethiopia.

