



Open Way

helping people out of poverty

Registered charity 1122055

Annual Update - August 2025



Introduction

In 2025, Ethiopia is facing a complex humanitarian crisis. The after-effects of the civil war combined with climate events have taken their toll. The World Food Programme estimates that over 10 million people in Ethiopia are living in severe food insecurity, three million of whom are internally displaced, and that over half of under-fives are malnourished to some degree. On top of these internal issues, Ethiopia is hosting many refugees from war-torn Sudan and other countries.

The Sidamo zone has suffered like everywhere else because of the general countrywide political unrest and ever-increasing prices, but it is relatively stable when compared to other parts of the country. Many people face extreme poverty, and both drought and flooding in recent years has made life very difficult for many farmers. Thankfully, at least the weather in late 2024 and early 2025 has been better, allowing farmers to rebuild to some degree.

The Ethiopian currency was unexpectedly liberalised in 2024 and became much weaker against the pound. While it is unclear what this means for the country, it does mean that the funding assigned for the year's activities went a lot further than planned.

We are really impressed with what the team in Ethiopia have achieved this year, and the strong impact that Open Way is having in the region. Thousands of people are getting reliable support in education, food security, shelter and medical help.

None of this work would be possible without our generous supporters and we would like to **THANK YOU** very much for helping to make it all happen. We hope you enjoy reading about what has been achieved.

Education project

Open Way's ten schools registered nearly **1800 students**. Children get a crucial start in numeracy and literacy at OW schools. It is now 15 years since the first two OW schools opened at Bentibata and T-K with two classes at each school.

Two new libraries were constructed early last summer for the schools at Babe and Tula meaning all Open Way schools now have libraries. The libraries are also used as community centres in the evenings where local people can gather.

School	Classes 2024-2025	Number registered	library
Shigesho	8	401	✓
T-K	5	216	✓
L. Wemerera	4	200	✓
Lela Honcho	3	150	✓
Hatabo	3	162	✓
Kokosa	3	131	✓
Mi-ke	2	96	✓
Bentibata	2	110	✓
Babe Colmocha	3	149	✓
Tula Hiricha	3	150	✓
	36	1,765	10



The library at Babe Colmocha

The school roll for 2024-2025

At the heart of the educational work are the teachers and librarians from the community. As well as teaching, they support the wider effort. For example, their deep community knowledge makes them key to recognizing those families who need extra help.



The Open Way
teachers and
librarians of 2025

All the schools had end of school year events to celebrate students' achievements. The students received their report cards and rewards.



**The end of year
celebration at Lela
Honcho school**





**The awards being presented at
Shigesho school**



**Students receiving their
end-of-year report cards at
Shigesho school**

Tackling food insecurity

Grain

Grain is a crucial lifeline for many vulnerable families. The families are referred to Open Way via teachers at the schools and by medical staff at local clinics and hospitals where patients are taken for medical help. Beneficiaries collect the grain directly from the mill. This year about 300 families per month have received 15 kg rations of grain/flour.

Seedling distribution

The team in Ethiopia were very keen to focus on seedling provision this year, and specifically false banana as a key, drought resistant indigenous crop in Sidamo.

Thanks to the currency devaluation, OW was able to provide seedlings to 1,600 families.

This distribution took place over several days in the false banana season in April and May. The seedlings were transported to four different distribution points in the countryside to minimise to some degree the distance people would have to carry the heavy bundles home.



**Seedling bundles
ready for distribution
at Banko Markos**



**One of the OW
coordinators**

Business training

Last year the team in Ethiopia saw the potential for starting business training for people in the rural areas to incentivise self-reliability and change local attitudes to poverty.

The project was a huge success last year and so greatly appreciated by the participants that it was expanded this year.

The training comprises sessions on running a small-scale business, money management and attitudes to poverty. The business training spans five half-days in total as this makes it easier for people to attend to their daily responsibilities as well as attend the training.

In total 2,250 people received training: all the false banana seedling beneficiaries as well as 650 people who received two 45-day-old chicks to rear from the OW farm. One of the sessions in the training included a session either on the practicalities of chick rearing, or the cultivation and management of false banana seedlings.



Trainees from Shoecho, Bentibata and Setamo assembled at one of the false banana training sessions in T-K

There were many inspiring stories from the previous year's training where people had managed to grow a small business. Some of them were invited back to receive congratulations and to share their achievements in this year's training.

Training and meeting hall

The business training sessions require large venues and typically the village churches are used. Sometimes these are not available and as the training program has grown, the need for a purpose-built venue became clear.

Construction of a training hall began in T-K in July. This will be capable of holding up to 400 people for training or other large gatherings.



The new training hall under construction

Providing housing

Vulnerable people often live in houses which are unfit for habitation. For example, they may be in a state of collapse, let in the rain, or not protect from wild animals such as hyenas. New houses are provided which are simple timber constructions with metal roofs and mud rendering inside and out.

This project also provides employment for several teams of local builders.

Beneficiaries are typically single parents, elderly, sick or disabled people who have no other means to rebuild or repair their homes.

This year 25 houses have been constructed in villages around T-K town.



Alemu and his family's house had collapsed, and his wife is blind making life very tough.

Here they are outside their new OW home.

Medical assistance

The cost of travel, registration fees and medicine makes medical help impossible for many rural people. OW organises medical assistance at several medical centres including T-K Health Centre and hospitals in Dilla, Yirgalem, Hawassa, and even occasionally Addis Ababa. This project brings huge relief for patients and their families.

During the last 12-month period, 234 patients have been treated for various conditions. Of these patients, 96 were male, 138 were female, and 24 of these were children. Note some patients are treated for multiple issues.

Condition	No. Cases
Abdominal / ascites	5
Anaemia	7
Appendicitis	1
Armpit lump / gynecomastia	3
Asthma / lung	8
H. pylori infection	2
Breast cancer	1
Cataracts	17
Clubfoot	2
Deep vein thrombosis	1
Diabetes	3
Endometrial cancer	1
Endometrial hyperplasia	1
Epilepsy	5
Eye conditions (various)	7
Fistula	4
Food poisoning	1
Gastritis / gastroenteritis	7
GERD	1
Giardiasis / parasitosis	10
Glaucoma	9
Goitre / neck	5
Heart conditions	17
Hepatitis	2

Condition	No. Cases
High blood pressure	4
Wounding (hyena attack)	1
Impetigo	2
Injuries (leg; head)	3
Lipomas on cheek	1
Malaria	5
Meningitis	1
Pelvic organ prolapse	6
Peptic ulcer	10
Pneumonia	15
Psychiatric Disorder	3
Pyelonephritis / kidney disease	19
Scabies	1
Skin issues / dermatitis	4
STD	3
TB	8
Tumour / myomas	10
Typhoid	33
Typhus	13
Unknown	2
Urinary tract infection	4
Uterine tumours	4
Vaginitis	1
TOTAL	273

Mossy foot

Mossy foot is a disease endemic in the Ethiopian highlands where the combination of the specific soil type and bare-foot farming combine to create the problem. The volcanic red clay soil contains silica particles that get through the skin and ultimately block the lymphatic system causing swelling of the feet and legs, discomfort, and secondary infections. The illness also carries a lot of stigma. OW has helped many people with mossy foot in the past. One of those helped was OW's own coordinator Adanech who has been trained to help people with mossy foot.

Recently, the Haranjicho kebele offered us use of a room at their medical centre to help people with mossy foot, so with some of the additional funds available from the currency devaluation, we have started a mossy foot clinic there.

Ten patients are registered each week, five of whom come each morning and five each afternoon. They are trained in self-treatment which involves massage and the application of medical creams. They are also given shoes and socks and the required medicines. The patients return after one week on a Saturday for a progress check and then from time-to-time for more medicines.

This programme is up and running and the word is getting around that the treatment is available. People are coming from far and wide, so we aim to continue over the coming 12 months at least.



Adanech training one of the mossy foot patients

Assisting students into further education

This project enables successful students to progress to further education by assisting them to cover costs for rent, food, stationery, and clothing. Without this help, it would have been impossible for them to take up their places.

Open Way currently supports 10 students in total: 5 high school students and 5 university students.

Helping other vulnerable people

OW continues to help 16 elderly people and a small number of vulnerable families who have no support coming from anywhere else with food, clothing and support money.

Update on Jane Mason's memorial fund

Jane is a much-missed previous trustee of Open Way. After several years waiting for the right project, part of Jane's memorial fund has now been put to use.

The fund was invested in Ethiopia and has gathered interest. Very recently, Mulu was approached by the town of T-K and asked if it would be possible to provide a water pump. The town lacks a pump for its main well, meaning that some residents must travel to find clean water. This doesn't make life easy.

We were really happy to agree that this would be a great use for Jane's fund. We know she would be very happy thinking that many people would be getting access to fresh, clean water as a result of the fund.

The pump is not yet installed but we are hoping this will occur soon.



The T-K water authority receiving the pump



The Sidamo region where Open Way is working in Ethiopia.



Open Way is a UK-registered grant-giving organisation.

We support a group of Ethiopian nationals who carry out poverty alleviation work within their own communities.

We are not an international implementing agency; rather, we provide funding and encouragement to locally led initiatives.