

St Matthew's Children's Fund Ethiopia - **Twenty5** Ethiopia Appeal



Practical support to improve the lives of the poorest children

Why St Matthew's Children's Fund was founded

Twenty five years ago the world was shocked by television pictures of famine in Ethiopia. There was a great outpouring of aid, including Band Aid, with many people wanting to do something to help. Among these was a group of people at St Matthew's Church in Addis Ababa who, together with an Ethiopian Orthodox humanitarian organisation, established an organisation to care for orphaned and abandoned children. This organisation, which became JeCCDO (The Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organisation), cared for 1,000 children in four orphanages. At the same time St Matthews Children's Fund Ethiopia (SMCF) was set up to develop a fundraising network in the UK.

What's happened since then?

As the original orphan children grew up it became obvious that institutional care, whilst necessary in an emergency, is not the best way to bring up children. After consulting with orphans and people from the poorest urban slum communities, SMCF and JeCCDO agreed on a new approach. Children would be cared for in their own community – and their community would be improved to provide the best possible environment for them to live in.

SMCF and JeCCDO work in partnership with local communities. Together they agree what needs to be done. The community manages the project and JeCCDO supports them for five years; then the community takes full responsibility. The results have been extraordinary and communities have been totally transformed. Our key insight is that we believe that local people are responsible for changing their own lives – and we enable them to do this.

All communities agree that they need to achieve certain goals:

- **direct orphan support** – providing financial and practical help to orphans for a period of time and providing carers with training and grants to set up small businesses.
- **education** – providing additional tuition classes for children and support to schools
- **livelihood promotion** – bringing women carers together in self help groups to save money and set up small businesses.
- **urban agriculture** – teaching people how to grow fruit and vegetables in their backyards and how to manage small livestock.
- **health and sanitation** – building communal toilets, showers and kitchens as well as educating people about family planning and HIV/AIDS.

JeCCDO helps community associations to set up income generating schemes enabling them to fund these orphan support and development programmes in the future. These include grain banks, community dairy herds and bakeries. This has been achieved with seven associations in the poorest urban slum communities. They are now fully independent and no longer reliant on financial support from SMCF and JeCCDO.

What's needed now?

Although twenty five years after the famine things are much better in Ethiopia, climate change and environmental degradation are affecting food production and there are still many more

children living in urban slum communities that need our support. We have demonstrated our programme works and are asking church communities to help us to reach out to these orphan and vulnerable children to ensure they and the communities never fear famine again.

What your support will do

SMCF supports communities in slum area in five Ethiopian cities: Bahir Dar, Dire Dawa, Debre Zeit, Debre Berhan and Hawassa. Your donation could be used in any one of these places.

Support for orphans in poor communities: Many poor children miss out on school as their families cannot provide the necessary uniform and books. **£25** could give one poor child casual clothes, uniform, shoes and school materials for a year whilst an extra **£70** would give them pocket money and savings to help them when they leave school. **£130** will provide an income-generating course and start-up grant for their carer, which will enable the carer to provide enough income to care for their family in future years. Your gift will also help recruit and train a network of volunteers to support the carers.

Education: A gift of **£290** will provide a year's support to one of the volunteers who provide tutorial classes for children who have missed out on schooling, whilst just **£300** could provide all teaching materials for one class for a year.

Livelihood promotion: Your gift of **£350** will support the founding of a women's group where members come together to support each other, save money and invest in their own income generating project, either by themselves or together. Nominated group members will receive training, and then share their skills with other group members. The group transforms the life of the members who become able to play an active role in their community and encourage their families to do the same.

Urban Agriculture: Allotments and backyard gardening are all the rage in this country, and in parts of Ethiopia too. Your gift of **£150** will help to train a family in the latest fruit and vegetable growing techniques, and give them tools and plenty of seeds to get started. JeCCDO also advises on how to cook vegetables for maximum nutrition. **£70** could train a family in poultry management and equip them with chickens, feed and the materials to make a hen house. Family diet improves and any surplus produce is sold for income.

Health and Sanitation: Preventable illness and HIV/AIDS create many orphaned children in Ethiopia today. **£4500** will provide a clean water point for a community, helping prevent the spread of disease. Other initiatives you could fund include setting up a youth club to spread the message about HIV/AIDS prevention to young people or supporting a club for people living with HIV/AIDS to undertake income generating activities, such as a shop or café.

Environmental improvements: Climate change can spell disaster for poor communities if the rains don't come when they should, or are too heavy, causing flooding. Your gift will help a community to work together to reduce the disastrous effects of climate change by terracing and replanting hillsides, building dams and digging wells and water ponds. **£17** will provide 100 tree seedlings for a community nursery to grow native species to cover hillsides; **£500** will provide nearly a kilometre of draining ditch; whilst **£1700** will pay for a hand-dug well to collect water.

Thank you for considering supporting St Matthew's Children's Fund Ethiopia

For further information:

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