

Lalmba Letters

news from and about our work in Africa

February 2012

Out of Africa... News from our volunteers in Africa

A Way Out

by Andrew Hoskins, project director, Chiri Ethiopia

Chiri, Ethiopia was once the end of the road. Actually, the road didn't even reach Chiri when Lalmba first came here. Now, thirteen years later, Chiri is developing into a small town. Lalmba has had a hand in increasing the health of the population, encouraging the community to value its children (especially orphans who have no one else), and developing the economy through being the largest employer. This year Lalmba is encouraging economic development in a new and exciting way.

We've started a community micro loan program with a rock bottom interest rate. Our goal is to provide a way out of the trap of poverty for those who don't normally have access to credit. These loans are intended for people who are motivated entrepreneurs, but the banks deem "too risky" because they don't have collateral or simply because they are a single mother. Zewiditu is one such person. She has never been married and never had children of her own, although she has acted as a volunteer guardian helping students who live too far away from town to attend school.

When she first came to us, she was one of the patients that our Ethiopian social committee decided needed extra support. She had chronic pain in her leg which Lalmba treated for free. She slowly worked and saved enough money to buy a small piece of land to build on. This is a BIG deal. This month she took the first loan of her life. She has a business plan to buy and sell cardamom (a sweet smelling spice) as well as to sell bread and tea from her small home.

When asked if she had anything to add to her story before sharing it with all of you, she said that she is praying for Lalmba to succeed in its mission. She understands that if she can succeed, she can



Zewiditu in front of her home holding fresh cardamom

help others in the future just like her. THAT, after all, is Lalmba's mission - to empower someone who has no means to be able to have enough means to help others out of their poverty. Zewiditu and other women who have been helped by the loan program will one day be a part of helping others who face the same challenges they now face.

And that is real success.

Carrole's Corner

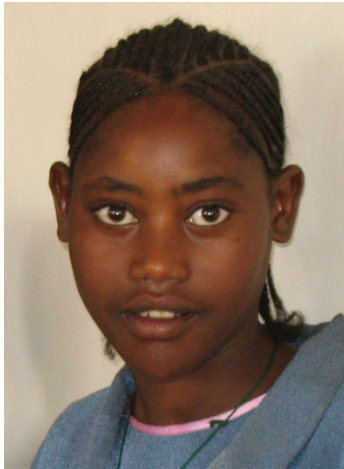
by Carrole Johnson, executive director

Extreme Makeover - Orphan Edition 2

We have so many exciting things happening in Africa that I had a terrible time choosing which one to write about! But let me tell you about a few orphans who are "graduating" from Lalmba's programs:

Abinet Ademe (Ethiopia)

Abinet's parents died when she was young. She lived with her uncle, who was very poor. Her teachers told Lalmba about her and she was placed in Lalmba's orphan program in grade 4. Abinet says "Before I came to Lalmba, I had many difficulties. My problems seemed too big for me to tackle. After Lalmba it was as if I had no problems. Lalmba helped me to focus on my studies. I no longer worried about food, housing, clothes, school supplies or medical treatment. The support I got was a powerful influence in my life." This year Abinet graduated from High School with honors and did so well on the national exam she was awarded a scholarship for nursing school. She plans to come back and work as a midwife for Lalmba's Chiri Health Center. Abinet started nursing college in November. You can watch Abinet tell her story on our website.



Abinet

Bob Modi (Kenya)

Bob was named after one of Lalmba's American volunteers in Kenya. His father died of AIDS when he was young, and he was placed in our RCAR program. Bob did very well in school, continuing on through secondary (high) school. Bob was such an exceptional student that Lalmba chose to help him go on to university. Bob is finishing a dual major in teaching and accounting. During one of his school breaks last year, he and an accountant friend conducted an audit of Lalmba's books, producing the report needed for our Children's Home license renewal.

Yibbie Desalegn (Ethiopia)

His name is actually Yibeltal, but we affectionately call him Yibbie. Yibbie was one of the first orphans to join our program in Chiri. He finished 8th grade in 2007, but did not pass the very difficult exam to continue into high school. Determined to get an education, Yibbie took the test two more times, passed on the 3rd try, and graduated. After working odd jobs to support himself as a young adult, Yibbie was selected to attend the Police Academy. He did so well that upon graduation he was chosen to be an Academy Teacher.



Yibbie in his new police uniform

I wish I could tell you that all orphans in our program are as successful as these. Ferocious unemployment contributes to the challenge. On average, each working person in Kenya is the breadwinner for 20 others. Twenty! This is why Lalmba doesn't just have an orphan program. Our medical, public health and food relief programs help members of the community become strong enough to work. Our micro loan programs provide opportunities to earn a living through a small business. It won't happen overnight, but these programs work as a whole to help the communities rise out of extreme poverty. As Andrew said so aptly on the front of this newsletter: "And that is real success."



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