



PROGRAM SUMMARY
December 2007

MISSION: To enhance the well-being of orphaned and vulnerable children through basic education and health development through community empowerment.

GOALS:

- To empower the community to become more self-reliant.
- To ensure everyone the right to basic primary education and health.
- To alleviate the plight of orphans, homeless and beggars living on the street.
- To encourage sustainable environmental practices.

APPROACH: *Positive Deviance:* In every community there are individuals who unique (“deviant”) behaviors or practices create better (“positive”) results than their neighbor with the exact same resources. Common Rivers’ Mission is to amplify these methods for full community success. We believe the solution lies within.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- To build a primary school for out-of-school children
- To upgrade the existing primary public school
- To provide shelter for students without a home
- To improve the health and nutrition of the community

MAJOR INTERVENTIONS

- EDUCATION:** Basic Primary Education for grades 1-4
- CHILDREN’S SHELTER:** Housing for students
- HEALTH:** Preventive care through Community Health Workers and primary health curative care through a clinic
- SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT:** eco-friendly building, assure safe water access, tap solar power, organic farming practices, reforestation through tree planting, sanitation.

LOCATION: Titira District, Aleta Wondo, Sidama, Ethiopia

POPULATION: Aleta Wondo: 14,000

BENEFICIARIES: 250 underprivileged children aged 6-9 years

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. EDUCATION

This component seeks to provide children with increased access to quality education through the establishment of a private community school. The school will be built upon a 5.5 hectare plot of land in Aleta Wondo. The school will provide 4 grades: 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th classes to children aged 6-9 years old. The curriculum will be alternative in that it will provide skills regarding coffee growing and marketing, given it is in the heartland of coffee producers, starting at the primary school age.

Upon completion of the school building construction, the program fully equips the school with furniture, teaching aids and materials. Moreover, continuous in-service training is given to para-professional teachers from the region. The community is highly involved in managing the schools through PTAs (Parent-Teacher Associations) to ensure community ownership of the school.

Although the school will provide access to children who are already out of school, the project will work to increase the quality of the government school, Aleta Wondo Primary School. There is a need for library books, notebooks, pencils, shoes and uniforms. The project seeks to provide these materials, as well as, a computer with internet connection to the government school.

A site study has been completed and architectural drawings are in progress from a stateside firm. The building will be eco-friendly and adhere to American standards and will conform with the local architectural style. These plans will be shared with a local architect in Wondo. Upon approval the building will be started, supervised by a contractor and managed by Tsegaye Bekele, a contractor himself.

The breaking of the ground will be in December 2007. Construction will start at that time. It is planned that the school building will be completed by September 2008. The faculty and administration will be trained and ready to start the inaugural academic year.

B) CHILDREN'S SHELTER

Fifty orphaned/vulnerable children will be selected by the community to live at the orphanage. The children will be orphans or beggars who either live with extended families who are already over-burdened or homeless. The project will build a Boarding Home next to the school, on the property. The home will provide shelter, food, clean water, bedding, basic health care and bathing facilities. There will be full-time staff babysitters and cook to oversee the home. The orphanage will be constructed simultaneously with the school. It is due to open in June 2009. Possibilities of expanding the building to accommodate more children will be built-in to the plans.

C) HEALTH

The community health and nutrition intervention aims at improving the health status and nutritional status of the entire community, with a focus on under-five children. It will provide regular behavior change health and nutrition education and training. A cadre of community health workers will be trained in preventive health using the behavioral change approach to health education. A health clinic will be constructed which will provide free primary health care and offer essential drugs and basic curative care.

School Health:

Immunization, Vitamin A distribution, de-worming and proper nutrition will be provided to all students. Each student will be provided with a medical check-up upon enrollment and those who require health care will be referred to the nearest health center.

A school hot lunch program will be provided at the Boarding Home for all students. The boarders will receive three meals a day. A school nurse will be hired to oversee the health care of all students and provide a monthly visit to the public school for consultations and health education for free to the community.

Under-fives Nutrition:

All children will be weighed and measured to determine nutritional status. Those who are malnourished will be rehabilitated using locally available, inexpensive foods through the Hearth methodology. Using the “positive deviance” approach, malnourished children will be invited to a cooking and feeding session. Cultivating a nutritious garden and raising animals will be part of the nutrition program and will feed the students, boarders, and guests, as well as educate them on organic farming and the environment.

D. SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

a. Buildings: All buildings will be eco-friendly. The program seeks to educate the community on the benefits of the state-of-the-start green technology. Tapping solar energy will be a top priority.

b. Water and Sanitation: Assuring safe water access is critical to all aspects of the program. There is a need to dig wells and installing pumps. The school site will be the first priority for water. Gray water will be collected through a catchment system. A recycling waste management program will be started and ventilated pit latrines built.

c. Organic Farming Practices: Although most coffee growers use organic techniques, Common River will promote organic farming practices and further support them because often once income raises, then the organic practices are often left behind. Reforestation through tree planting will be started especially for any trees that the building of the site chops down. There will be a community garden to produce organic vegetables for the students and boarders on the property. Developing animal husbandry (cows, goats and chicken) for protein consumption will be part of the school curriculum

OTHER:

a) Sports Facilities: As the school property is vast, Common River will tap other NGO's that specialize in sports in the developing world, to develop a track and soccer field for the community.

b) Community Center: Building a central meeting area for community-wide events will be started in January 2008. It can be simply a large roof with a floor for the community to conduct meetings.

c) Community Library: The school library will be accessible to the community at large. We will begin with a "mobile library" which is on a donkey cart, and goes around the community to particular spots, with a storyteller. Children can gather and borrow books.

Overall:

The possibilities of utilizing Titira land in Aleta Wondo (20 acres) are enormous. The land is flat and fertile and is located one mile outside of town, surrounded by coffee farms. The Malebo River runs through the property. This program seeks to create a "model" village. Once the model is established, it could be replicated in other villages in Ethiopia or in other countries.

With the hopes that this program could link the US community to Ethiopia, we seek to find a "sister school" in the US to sponsor the school and/or find a town in the US to adopt the town of Aleta Wondo as their sister city.

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| PHASE 1: |
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A. CONSTRUCT FENCE AND GUARD POST

- Plant trees along perimeter of fence

B. CONSTRUCT WAREHOUSE

- Using recycled materials from the demolition of part of the Bekele Hotel

C. CONSTRUCT SCHOOL

- Start a one-room school house

D. CONSTRUCT COMMUNITY CENTER

- Central meeting place for community meetings and training

E. CONSTRUCT BOARDING FACILITY

- Boarding Home construction for students

F. UPGRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL:

- Provide materials for teachers and students

PHASE 2:

A. OPEN SCHOOL:

- Hire staff, curriculum development, recruit students

B. CONSTRUCT HEALTH CENTER:

- Development of Health and Nutrition Center

PHASE 3:

A. SPORTS COMPLEX

- Sports Complex for after-school children all ages: soccer, volleyball and basketball

B. LIBRARY

- Expand upon the school library to become a community-wide library

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

Common River has a Country Representative in Ethiopia who is preparing the community to begin program activities. Tsegaye Bekele, Chief Executive Director will be going to Sidama Region in November 2007 -January 2008 to start implementation.

A firm in California has drawn architectural drawings. They will be presented to the officials for a permit to begin construction. A local architect will adjust the plans to adhere to the topography, wind and solar variables.

After the approval of the plans, the first priority will be securing clean water sources and power. The Municipal Water Company will be visited in order to bring water to the site. The electric power company will also be contacted to bring power to the site. Eventually, solar energy will be utilized once we secure panels and equipment.

The community center will be the first building to construct, followed by classrooms and the children's shelter. The community center will provide space for community meetings, as the community will participate through the formation of committees to assure ownership. The community will form a committee to begin selection of students to be the first enrolled. A principal and teachers will be hired to start the school, along with caretakers and guards. The Aleta Wondo Elementary School will receive supplies and materials during this period and regularly after that, to students and teachers.

After the completion of the community center, school and shelter, the health clinic will be built. A nurse will be hired to man the clinic along with an assistant/trainer. The training of the community health workers will be done simultaneously, to bring primary health care to the households through an extensive network of community outreach. The nutritional status of the under-five years of age children will be measured through a regular growth monitoring program.

After the Community Center, school, children's shelter, and Health Clinic are up and running, a Sports Complex will be started. This will be constructed on the land, which has the potential for full soccer fields and tracks. A library will be built alongside the community center, which will be accessible for all community members.

ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, STAFFING

Common River will have a Chief Executive Officer, Tsegaye Bekele, who is in charge of the overall program. Donna Sillan, the Chief Operation Officer, will be in charge of the program content and sectoral interventions. Diane Isaac is the Chief Financial Officer, in charge of finance and funding.

Negusse Bekele is the Program Manager and Negusse Mulugeta is the Program Coordinator. They are the point persons in Ethiopia and will coordinate all activities on the ground. Congressman Ato Shamana Oromo will be the School Administration and Faculty Advisor. He was the Principal of Aleta Wondo Elementary School for 11 years. Abeba Kuyera, who is the Head of Aleta Wondo Municipality, will be the Community Advisor on community matters.

The organizational structure will include the following hires:

Common River Staff in US

1. Chief Executive Officer (1)
2. Chief Operation Officer (1)
3. Chief Financial Officer (1)

Common River Staff in Ethiopia

1. Program Manager (1)
2. Program Coordinator (1)
3. Secretary (1)
4. Accountant (1)
5. Logistics Coordinator (1)
6. Ground Supervisor (2)
7. Driver (2)

School and Shelter:

1. Principal (1)
2. Teachers (6)
3. Cooks (3)
4. Cleaners (2)

5. Guards (3)
6. Caregivers (4)

Health Clinic:

1. Nurse/midwife (1)
2. Nurse assistant (1)
3. CHW trainer (1)
4. Sports facility
5. Sports Coordinator

Library:

1. Librarian
2. Librarian assistant

Sports facility:

1. Sports trainer
2. Facility maintenance

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Common River's approach is culturally appropriate and sustainable. Using the Positive Deviance approach, the community is involved from the start in the program conception and implementation and follow-up. Involving the community in articulating their felt needs and assisting in planning the program will instill community ownership. The program requires community participation in the following ways:

- a) Formation of community committees represented by all groups in the community
- b) Community contributions in the form of labor and building supplies and land
- c) Monitoring and Evaluation of the program with the community. Indicators will be tracked and posted on a community bulletin board for all to witness.
- d) Tapping the internal maternal technology in terms of health practices and behaviors through positive deviance assures that the behaviors are sustained. Behavioral change education through training seeks to internalize new practices in their homes.

Common River believes that by empowering communities to take care of themselves and become more self-reliant that the program will be sustained. It also encourages community ownership, which will enhance maintenance and continuation of program activities.

Common River plans to implement program activities in Aleta Wondo for a period of 3-5 years and then move to another community. Once a viable model has been created and works well, it can be replicated. Common River does not want to create community dependency and will make it very clear from the beginning that the community will be responsible for the program as the phase out strategy begins from the start.