

BOARD FIELD-TRIP; ETHIOPIA, OCTOBER 2017

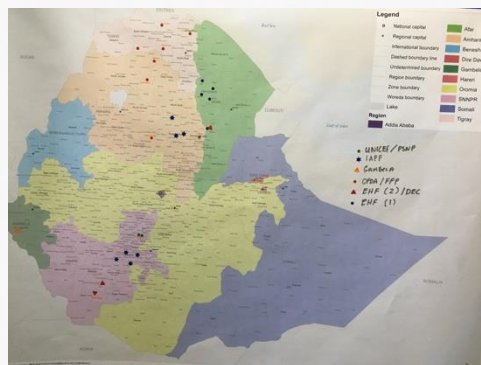
CONCERN WORLDWIDE

SEEING HOW DEVELOPMENT AID WORKS

Day 1 Visit to Concern Worldwides's offices in Addis Ababa

Allessandro Blini, the Country Head for Concern spoke to us about Concern's operations in Ethiopia. He also spoke about potential opportunities for further private sector involvement, as well as the need for IT investment in the area of grant management.

Notably Concern have over 400 staff in Ethiopia with only three ex patriots, including Allessandro, which speaks to the longstanding infrastructure which has been built up in the country.



Day 2 Visit to South Wollo in Northern Amhara

Having flown to Dessie, we met the Area Coordinator – Endalamaw – who briefed us extensively on the challenges facing communities in the Amhara and Afar regions (a North eastern area characterized by desert and nomadic animal herders).

Specifically, he emphasized the importance of integrated programs to address nutrition, water management, economic sustainability and gender based issues. Over



IN SUMMARY

Concern worldwide has been working in Ethiopia for over **30 years**

Despite economic progress, Ethiopia has a **rapidly growing population** of 100 million – mostly living as **subsistence farmers** on poor land.

We visited a variety of projects in the north of the country and around Addis Ababa which demonstrated clearly the **capability of the Concern team** and the opportunities for high impact integrated programs on **economic resilience**, as well as on **female empowerment**.

Considerable adaptability was evidenced in dealing with underlying/ongoing programmes while coping with emerging demands.

the following days we were to see clear evidence of not just the economic impact on beneficiaries but also the dramatic societal changes achieved through sustained efforts around female empowerment. The local farm land is of poor quality with regular flooding and drought across a highly mountainous landscape. Nevertheless the land is highly populated and barley is the traditional crop. Throughout our visit Endalamaw emphasized the gratitude of the communities supported by Concern during Irelands own economic crisis years.

We met with a watershed management group and a Women's Credit Union whom have over 560 members.



Day 3 Visit Upper Highland Communities (3000 metres above sea level)

The following day we visited the Concern sub-office in Gugufta – one of six outside the area office in Kombolcha before visiting three further community groups; a Womens Support Group, a potato seed Co-operative and an apple orchard.

Briefing from area Coordinator

Having returned to the Area Office in Kombolcha, Endalamaw presented to us on Concerns work in Amhara and Afar. 21 million people live in Amhara with 54% below the poverty line, and with 87% of the population living off agriculture. Climate change is a major challenge with rain and drought far more unpredictable, resulting in extensive food insecurity and malnutrition



Day 4 Addis Ababa

Having returned to Addis (2 hour flight), we were introduced to Kasaenesh, who has worked for a number of years with a local NGO that Concern has partnered on around urban poverty. With Concern's help, 1600 beneficiaries have been trained – in conjunction with local governmental training institutes – who had been persuaded to offer short courses in practical trades. Interestingly the cost of living in urban areas is much higher and so the reported poverty in urban areas is much higher. We then went to meet a selection of beneficiaries who told us their stories.

The first lady we met has been trained as a plumber. She had travelled with her husband to Sudan with a plan to travel to Italy. After 5 years in Sudan she had a child, and her husband tried to make his way alone to Italy, but was murdered by gangs in Libya. She returned to Addis with her child, and was recruited by Concern for 5 months training. Her child is two years old now and she is earning over Euro100 per month. We also met with a hairdresser and another plumber who previously had been involved in the drug trade.

As a young person I feel extraordinarily privileged to have had the opportunity to travel to Ethiopia with my dad, along with another board member of Concern and an employee of Concern's Office in Dublin. It was a

real eye-opening experience for me to visit a country that very few would get to experience at my age. In particular I appreciated the chance to meet with ordinary people living relatively ordinary lives and being able to visit and to experience the country through its people, be it in the countryside or in its capital city.

