

## Ethiopia

### Introduction

The 2015 World Development Appeal highlights the serious effects of climate change which are already being felt in some of the world's poorest countries, demonstrates some of the adaptation initiatives which are helping people to cope, and calls on all of us to work for climate justice, that is, a shouldering of responsibility by those whose lifestyles have contributed most to climate change.

**Ethiopia** is Africa's second largest country, if size is judged on the basis of population. And its population is one of the fastest-growing in the world, with the vast majority of people living in rural areas.

Climate change is having a serious impact on traditional livelihoods, which have been largely pastoral or pastoral combined with some settled cultivation. And when food security is undermined, one vulnerability compounds another, producing a domino effect which touches on health, education, clean water, and the management and prevention of HIV.

### Project

The Chewaka District (Illubabor Province, Oromia Regional State) is known for its high levels of poverty and the marginalisation of women. The majority of households living below the poverty line are headed by women, and are engaged in subsistence agriculture, which does not provide the food security they need.

The **Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus – Development and Social Service Commission (EECMY – DSSC)** is initiating a project which will strengthen the agricultural base of the region, support and train producers, and increase the return small farmers receive for their work. The project is built on research from the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organisation, which has indicated that there is a large and unmet market for high quality peanuts (ground nuts) in Addis Ababa. The nuts are required for the production of peanut butter, a high protein food, and the fortified food supplement known as *Plumpy Nut*.

The project will also reintroduce vulnerable women to the value of micro-credit and other group savings schemes. During the brutal military dictatorship of the Derg, in the 1970s and 1980s, it was not uncommon for community funds to be misappropriated, resulting in a

continuing reluctance on the part of many people to invest in group schemes. However, EECMY is slowly building relationships of trust with the women, and good training and preparation will ensure that members of the group savings schemes can be confident that their books are being kept properly and that all funds are accounted for. In time, these women may become the most effective advocates for the growth and development of local micro-credit schemes.

**Forecast:** *hope!*

In the first phase of the project, community leaders, agricultural specialists, and representatives of local cooperatives will meet together to ensure that the project will receive full support from the authorities. The farmers will then organise themselves into Self Help Groups, enabling them to begin to save and to build up a base for small loans in the future.

Training will be given in all aspects of land preparation, sowing, irrigation, cultivation, and harvesting, as well as guidance in building the group's capacity to plan for the different stages of the agricultural cycle. Good quality seed will be provided, along with access to a decortication machine, which enables large-scale shelling of the peanuts, making them more attractive to potential purchasers. Finally, the small groups of farmers will be encouraged to join local cooperatives, for the additional long-term security and access to training they provide.

As their harvest of ground nuts begins to increase, the women will be guided through the various forms of market research they may wish to use, and will be guided in the signing of agreements with, for example, Hilina Enriched Foods, which produces *Plumpy Nut*. If all goes well, the women will soon be producing a sustainable harvest of high quality ground nuts for both local and national markets, and may even begin to think about producing their own peanut butter.

The women of Chewaka have a new forecast: *hope!* They are building new and durable livelihoods for themselves and their families, and are learning skills of resilience for an uncertain future. It is our privilege to support them in the 2015 World Development Appeal.