



Newsletter July 2019

EDITORIAL

Dear readers

Sitting at my desk and looking at the three project reports in this newsletter, I reflect to find out what they have in common. I realize that the first two are about bridges. And the third contribution, trauma relief, is also about building bridges so that traumatized people can return to a normal life without fear. In various circumstances, bridges can be destroyed at any time (physically and mentally), while construction or reconstruction requires a lot of work, will and perseverance. At PartnerAid, we want to build bridges to people from different cultures, open new paths to bring them relief and hope.

Thank you for helping us to do this work.



Johnny Mumenthaler
Co-CEO

Bridge Emergency Aid Project

The story of Selam*: from a homeless half-orphan to a foster mother – from a homeless person to a business owner. This is the authentic story of an Ethiopian woman who, with the help of Bridge, passed from a life of poverty and hopelessness to independence and now is helping others. It is, at the same time, the birth of Bridge.

A toddler pushed around

Selam was born in 1989 in Dembi Dolo, a small town in western Ethiopia. Her single mother died at the age of 18 just a month after her birth. An elderly woman took care of the baby and brought her up until the age of eight. After the death of the old foster mother, Selam spent two difficult years with her godmother and aunt and lived in her father's family afterwards. There, she suffered a lot under her stepmother, who used to beat her and wouldn't allow her to study for school. This led to tensions between Selam's father and his wife.

Exploited

So the 12-year-old Selam left her father's house and travelled with friends to the capital city Addis Ababa to live with her aunt's sister. She promised Selam, that she could go to school. Selam was pleased because she wished nothing more than to study and

learn. But unfortunately, the woman did not keep her promise and Selam served only as a cheap domestic worker.

In the wrong hands

In the years that followed, Selam got to know a young irascible man to whom she was an easy prey with her 14 years. For fear of his outbursts of rage, Selam gave herself up to him and got pregnant. Then she lived with some friends and had no fixed home any more. At the age of 15 she gave birth to her son Yohannes, whose father didn't care for him. For a meagre living, she worked as a domestic servant to all kinds of people. However, almost four years later, her life was finally to change for good. →

The turning point

In April 2008 Selam was employed at a Swiss family, PAI collaborators, who had just moved to Addis Ababa. Now there was hope for her again! The family mother soon got to know Selam better. This woman realized, that Selam had a heart to help the needy.

A heart for the suffering ...

Even during her hardest time, Selam had tried to help others who suffered even more than she did. She told her employer about neighbours who were in emergency situations. With Selam's assistance and her realistic assessment, since she understood the language and culture of her people, the PAI collaborator assisted people in emergency situations in order to bridge the gap until they stood on their own two feet again. So the project BRIDGE was born. From the beginning onwards, Selam was a valuable associate, without whom the project wouldn't have worked.

... sufferers like Martha

When BRIDGE helped Martha, an orphan girl, to get off the street, a room was made available for her next to Selam's room. So Selam became Martha's foster mother. Today, Selam lives with her son Yohannes and Martha in a rented apartment. With the help of the Swiss family, Selam was able to buy an apartment that she can rent to others. Additionally, during her employment, BRIDGE offered her a training opportunity as a hairdresser. In 2018 Selam had the possibility of buying the facility of a hair-dressing salon, but didn't have the money to buy it. BRIDGE was able to advance her the necessary money. She will refund part of it, and the other part will be an investment of BRIDGE.

The Business Owner

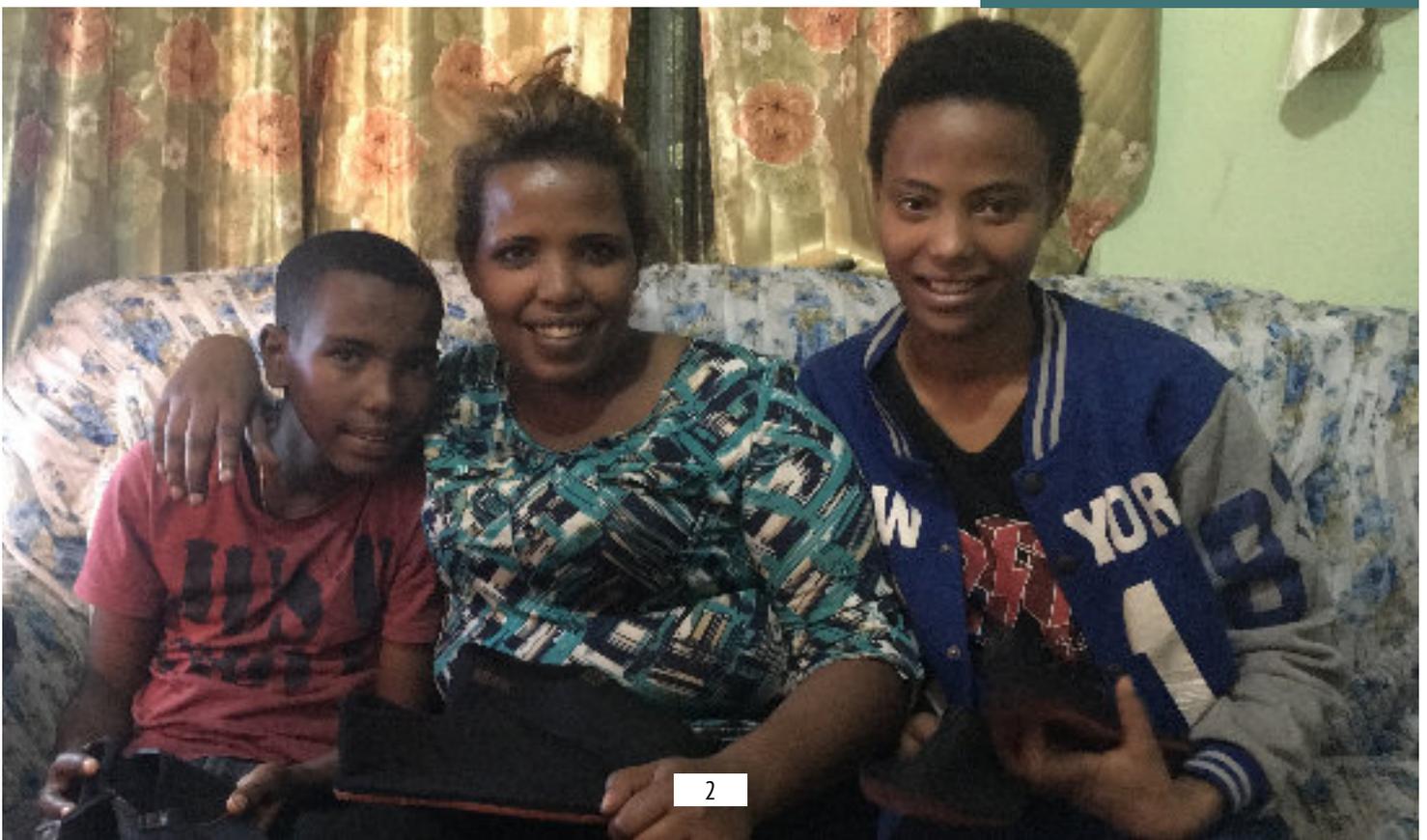
And thus the homeless half-orphan became a woman who offers two children a home and who, through her cooperation

with BRIDGE, supports people in need. A desperate, homeless woman became a proud business owner of a modest hair-dressing salon. This is an encouraging life story! Thanks a lot for your help!

* The names of the persons have been changed

Donation purpose: **Bridge Ethiopia**

Selam with her son Yohannes and her foster daughter Martha
x



Project «Bridge»

With your valuable help, PartnerAid carried out projects in the north of South Asia in the past. In recent years the focus has been on diverse projects in other regions. We are happy, that we have found a new partner here: it is a local consulting firm. Here is its report.

The dream of hope

It is to be heard in a hundred different shapes and facets. In discussions during the instruction, in a seminar during the questions and answers, in the daily exchange with the customers who pass through the doors of our consulting firm. It is the dream of hope. Sometimes it is, through the traumatic circumstances of life, only a shadow of itself, more of a big question mark than a dream. Desolate, like the desert not far from our town.

Like a spring rain

But if the right conditions occur together, it begins to blossom a little. Unexpectedly, in the same way as the spring rain produces suddenly flowers and lush greenery, we experience the interaction with our customers and students. A helping hand and words of encouragement have incredible power and let blossom out of the ground that has been written off as infertile, beauty and creativity.

New thinking through training

As a local consulting firm, we support business people with the aim to strengthen and to promote the domestic economy which is especially suffering from the lack of jobs and perspectives. Many young people put their hope still in fleeing to the West because they can't find any work or education of good quality. We are working against this trend and this way of thinking.

We are doing this by strengthening and supporting local initiatives and local leaders with advice and further education.

Courage to do business

Probably the most significant moments in our business year are always those when students, who participated in our courses, have the courage and find the resources to found and own a business or a long-term project. For example, a construction company which has found an international partner and created jobs, or a young woman who found the courage to open the first coffee shop for women and families, also with four employees. Of course, these moments are just the beginning of a long road to stability and productivity of quality. But they bear witness to this dream of hope that, despite years of war and destruction, there can grow good things from this local soil.

Seminars and trainings

In addition to support and advice local businesses, training courses belong to our daily offer. Our course rooms are located in a busy building in the centre of a provincial capital, where day in, day out a lot of students are bustling around.

We are offering various seminars and training for groups. Particularly in demand are courses on communication, project planning, leadership and management, as well as dealing

South Asia is separated in the north-west, north and north-east, through mountains, from the rest of Asia. In South Asia live 25 percent of the world's population. The following countries belong to South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



with crises, stress and building resilience.

Bestseller English courses

Our bestsellers are still language courses in English which belong to our daily core business. We are offering classes at three different levels and specialise in good pronunciation and fluent expression upon completion of our course. With three to four foreign teachers and high-quality teaching, we are filling a unique niche in the local market. Our customers include, especially, local businessmen and employees of non-governmental organizations, but also university professors, students or government officials which are all craving for adult education and professional training. People who want to dream of peace and hope.

Donation Purpose: **South Asia**

Trauma Relief in Somalia

"You won't find a family in the whole of Somalia without at least one person who has lost his mind because of all the tragic things he had to experience." This is a statement of a Somali, who himself lost his whole family in the civil war in one single instant.

Great suffering – deep darkness

There are a lot of deeply traumatized people, not only in Somalia, but all over the Horn of Africa, (Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Eritrea). Because of their experiences, they are hardly in a position to cope with their everyday lives, let alone to work.

The causes that lead to these traumas are manifold: female circumcision, traffic accidents, AIDS, high infant mortality, violence, prison, lost parents, political motivated riots, police violence ... to name but a few reasons. These people have in common that they can't find help anywhere for their griefs.

Network for traumatized people

Our partner organization has set itself the goal to change this. It does it in close cooperation with "Le Rucher Ministries" from France. The organization has been active now for almost two years.

Fruit of training

This spring, a course participant told us: "Yesterday, I called my sister in Asmara and we both had to cry when I told her how much healing I had experienced and how much hope there is for her too." Actually, she had been trained in a course to help other people with traumatic experiences. But all participants from Eritrea have been through terrible things themselves: war, torture and persecution because of their faith. These are difficult and cruel memories. For them, there isn't any doubt that what they are

learning in the course is of the utmost importance. They eagerly internalize the different steps of trauma processing – and by doing it, experience a lot of healing.

Be glad that you are still alive!

The refugees from Eritrea are only a group of meanwhile over a hundred people we've trained in trauma relief and pastoral care. The most important tools that are conveyed in the process are: listening, confidentiality and the confirmation that, in abnormal events, traumas, with all their effects, are normal. This is anything that is evident in Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea:

people in pain and grief are usually recommended to be grateful. "Be glad that you're still alive" they hear, or "You must finally trust in God".

Where to go with the pain?

Our program allows traumatized people to talk about their thoughts, feelings, impressions and questions. They learn to understand where they are in their grieving process and where they can deposit their pain and losses. When, after such lessons, people have been able to sleep through the night again, or a massively overweight person constantly repeats how light he's feeling now, then we know why we're doing this work.

Multiplication

We would like to go on working. One of our trainees has already

started a pastoral network with a telephone service with volunteers. Together with local collaborators, we would like to do more trauma debriefings, train more trainers as well as relief organizations and churches in their quest to support and heal a traumatized society. There is still a lot to do. At the same time, we celebrate every single person who has been able to experience improvement and healing. Thank you very much for your support!

Donation Purpose: **Trauma Relief**

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