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### **Ethiopia: Better Sanitation for Better Health**

Did you know Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world? Each year the annual incomes barely exceed one hundred dollars per person. This year, over 500,000 Ethiopian children will die before the age of five. Even though this may seem crazy, adolescents make up about twenty four percent of Ethiopia's total population. One out of every 10 children never has a first birthday. Water-related disease is the single biggest killer of infants and the principal cause of illness in adults in Ethiopia. Water-related diseases are a major threat to the population in Ethiopia and can cause the production of HIV/AIDS to keep on producing. Around twelve percent of the rural population of Ethiopia has access to safe drinking water and another seven percent to normal sanitation. The drought and politics in Ethiopia have made major damages not only to the population but to every aspect of living. During the months and sometimes even years of unsubstantial drought, the diseases run rampant through the country. As the droughts occur, the families in Ethiopia get water borne illnesses. These illnesses are most commonly known as cholera and diarrhea, which usually results in the increase of mortality. The politics in Ethiopia split the Nile River and its tributaries to the nations surrounding it which shortened the water supply greatly when there was not enough to divide. The families in Ethiopia are becoming more adapted to this structure of living but not completely. They always strive to succeed in the life they live and hope for better days to come.

The Getu family in Ethiopia is just one of the many families that are struggling to get by. The Getu's family is a household of seven. The father is Getu Mulleta at the age of thirty. The mother of the family is Zenebu Tulu at the age of twenty-five. Their five children are: Teshome Getu (ten), Like Getu (eight), Mamoosh Getu (seven), Mulu Getu (three), and Kebebe Getu (eight months). They are a very poor family that lives only two hours away by car from the capital in Ethiopia. They have no running water, no plumbing, no gas, and no electricity. The only hints of urbanization to their family farm are the high voltage lines that run behind their homestead in the valley for a project at the capitol. The women of this family do not have a down time. They are constantly working to fetch water, cook meals for the others, clean the corrals, and fashioning the dung into patties to use as fuel. The Getu family believes that education is very well important and finds it disappointing that the local school is inaccessible. This is so because of the fact that school is free but the supplies and school clothes are not. The costs of the two are around one-third of the family's annual income which makes it almost impossible for all of them to go to school. They do not have any access to health care so they are not able to keep up with their hygiene like we do. The Getu's have a small farm that consists of eight chickens, three horses, a lamb, two oxen, and five cows. The two oxen are the families most valued possessions because of the sufficient amount of work they can accomplish. This farm is very small to the aspect of what we see back in our home country. The Getu family grows the most indigenous crop in Ethiopia. They grow a cereal grain called Teff. They plant this indigenous crop twice a year and the only way that they have to water it is to carry pails from a small well. Once they harvest the Teff, they separate all the small seeds from the husks by marching the cattle over the grain. The family then works together to toss the seed in the baskets and let the breeze blow away the chaff. After all of the above process is accomplished, they can make injara.

The family also cleans out all of the dung out of the corral and mixes it with straw to make a paste for their house. They also use the dung collected to burn for fuel and these fires burn almost constantly in all of the homes in Ethiopia.

The Getu's are unable to produce the crops in great masses because of their water supply and also because of their declined technology for the land space they have. Those are just two of the major barriers that decrease their ability to grow a subsistence crop. As the land is not able to be left fallow which increasingly reduces the fertility of the soil. When the land degradation is like this it slows the production of the milk yields in their cattle. Also when they have to go to the capitol it is a long walk for either them or their animals. They are unable to just go there and come right back with their supplies because of a lack of money and transportation methods. As I examine this poor urban family in Ethiopia, I make the assumption that if they were able to get safe potable water supplies and increase their education on proper sanitation and hygiene it would help major. Also if they were able to increase their knowledge on food preparation techniques it would help reduce the transmission of food and water borne diseases. I believe that the practice of those simple factors would be a definite increase in the Getu family. This would make it more possible to keep the family population stable because of the decrease in the disease transmission. Their water would be better purified to make it easier to water crops and drink for themselves and their animals.

My family and I are able to produce more crops and increase our animal production just by the purification of water. It makes it easier to prevent diseases produced by stagnant water which is an issue in Ethiopia. As my family and I use the education on sanitation and hygiene, we are better able to live our lives longer and healthier. We have a sufficient amount of income to keep up with our house, family, mainly our subsistence farm by practicing those simple techniques. As we prepare our food, we keep it washed and use the purified water to do so. This helps us to keep the water borne diseases out of our system and makes it possible for us to intake a nutritious amount of food. As the Getu's continue to grow and use their past practices of farming, they are actually degrading the production of themselves and their animals. This is a severe situation in which they are not realizing. The women are not educated in the sanitation of their urban and rural lives of farming and cooking. This makes it very possible for the family to get the diseases they are open to. If the Getu's practiced the simple factors I have explained they would make an increasing difference for themselves and others. The factors would increase the amount of food and the quality of it because of the cleanliness. These factors would also enhance the income majorly to the Getu's and make the environment they live in more substantial. Also if they practiced these factors the women wouldn't have to work so difficultly. As the factors I described are not practiced, the families end up with food and water borne diseases. Also they end up with HIV or AIDS which is mainly because of the lack of health education. Mostly all of these diseases are transmitted to one another from the inexperience of cleanliness to their own bodies, or general hygiene.

As the factors I explained are introduced to the Getu family, I believe that they will help hold them ahead in all the times they are necessary. As the climate change, population growth, water scarcity, and the pollution continue, the factor I chose is going to be an advantage. It will be able to help keep the pollution down to a minimum. The population growth will not be a decrease because everyone will be using a hygiene method to help themselves and others. The water scarcity should decrease since it will be purified and less will have to be used. When the climate changes throughout the year it should make the family more educated on being safe in their struggles from time to time.

In the best way possible, I want to make my factor take a great advantage on Ethiopia. I want it to effectively address my chosen factor and help the World Health Organization and United Nations in making lives better for the families in Ethiopia. I hope that my chosen factor will correctly address the problems happening and that it will be cured before the year 2015. I believe that if we all work together and try hard enough that we can solve the disease production and purify the water usage in Ethiopia. If we can do so, I know we can extremely reduce the mortality rate in not only children but everyone.

As we work together in order to ensure the success and sustainability of the Ethiopia Water Initiative, Rotary Clubs in Rotary International Districts, and all of the other helpful organizations partnering together with Water Partners International, it is becoming a noticeable project. As we go on each day the Rotary International District 5030 and Rotary Clubs are raising the awareness of the critical need for safe, clean water in Ethiopia and are seeking to provide funding for this major water project. Water Partners International is a nonprofit organization founded in 1990 to address global water supply crisis. They continue on each day to facilitate high quality, comprehensive community water and sanitation projects. Altogether the impact of these few organizations above and many others, we will have a safe water system.

To curb the water scarcity in Ethiopia would be a significant help. In the consideration of this problem, the factor I chose to end this fits precisely. Even though not all the inputs of water may help but it can change the productivity in Ethiopia. If water security is increased through water efficiency it will make a result in hygiene and in crop productivity. Ethiopia needs this major change to put a closure on the diseases being produced. When all the agents work together to put a stop to on the famine and poverty of Ethiopia, it can and will be done. As the water is purified the families will be better able to experience the true factors of clean water. They will not have to worry about going to sleep without a clean shower or have to worry about their crops not growing because of the insufficient productivity. If we all work together to run underground lines for water it will cure the hurt of dry wells and springs and make it possible to succeed even more than they are now.

## Works Cited

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