



Girl's Education – an End to Poverty

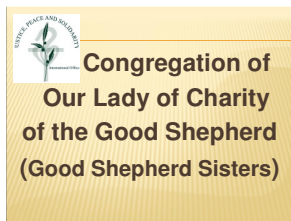
Winifred Doherty

Slide 1 Title -



Good morning! I am privileged to be in the company of such distinguished panelists who are dedicated to promoting the empowerment and visibility of girls. Our topic – ‘Girls Education – an End to Poverty’ Already I am answering ‘YES’.

Slide 2 Organization



I am a member of Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd known also as Good Shepherd Sisters and a member of the Working Group on Girls. Good Shepherd Sisters have been empowering girls and women for over 175 years around the world. We are present in 72 countries and on the 5 continents.

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We have a presence in eight African countries including Ethiopia. I lived and worked in Ethiopia for 16 years.



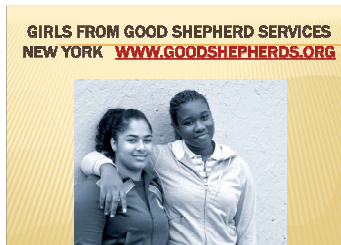
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The Working Group on Girls comprises more than 70 NGO's together with its International Network for Girls is committed to advancing girls rights. At the United Nations we advocate for the inclusion and visibility of girls in the work of the United Nations systems and structures and in international agreements. At National level we seek to ensure that governments implement legislation and policy, develop programs and allocate resource keeping the promises they have make to advance girls' rights.

Education is the primary vehicle by which girls who are economically, socially and culturally marginalized can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully in their communities and families.

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Before focusing on Ethiopia I wish to indicate that this is true too in New York where Good Shepherd Services view holistic education as the way to transformation. The website address is www.goodshepherd.org

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Young people growing up in high-poverty communities in New York confront tough odds in their journey to independence. Many of them have already given up on themselves, but what we see every day is this: **Success is right there in front of us!** Let me illustrate this with one success story of 2010 which can be found on the website.



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PARTICIPANTS SUCCESS STORY 2010

"Nekisha is a busy young woman-a full-time student in her junior year at New York City Technical College with a 3.5 GPA while holding down a job as a paralegal at a Brooklyn law firm. Today, she is actively pursuing her dream of becoming a lawyer, but just five years ago, she wasn't sure if she would even graduate from high school."

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Good Shepherd Sisters have had a presence in Ethiopia for 40 years. Ethiopia, a land ravished by cycles of drought and famine, with a population of 85.8 million, of whom 78% live on less than \$2 a day. Ethiopia was ranked 2nd lowest in the world on the Basic Capabilities Index (Social Watch 2009).

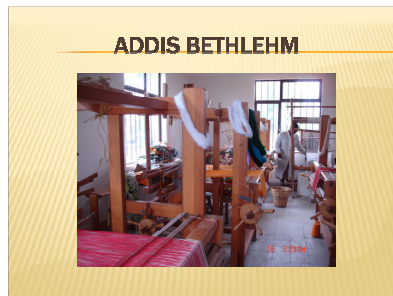
We have seen two generation of girls grow into adulthood. In the late '70 the exclusive focus was on girls (14 – 24 yrs) living in the slums of Addis Ababa, illiterate and further marginalized because of being in prostitution. Some of these girls had their own children to care for. Initial programs bought them together in groups to tackle the literacy problem, build self confidence and teach skills. Once basic literacy was achieved these girls enrolled for night classes working their way up through primary and secondary school education. In the day time they learned skills, formed a Carpet Cooperative,



Slide 9 established Wubet Fashions

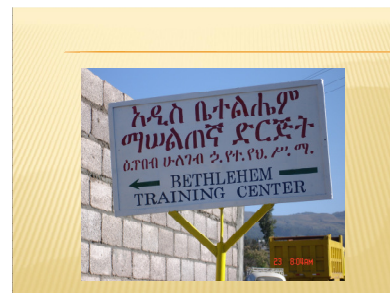
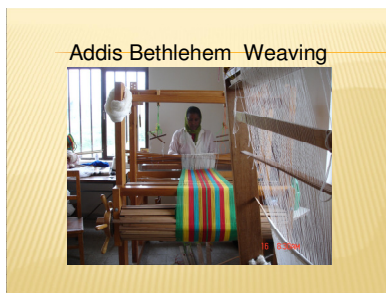


Slide 10 re-established Addis Bethlehem and its high quality production.



Slide 11 and were specialized trainers for other girls in Bethlehem Training Center

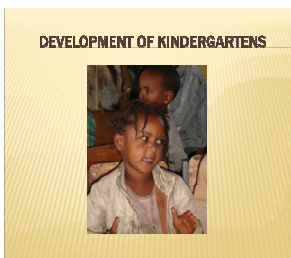
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These girls grew, developed and became women leaders in the local community and agents of change in their families. Child minding facilities were established, ensuring good nutrition and kindergarten education, providing a head start for a new generation of children. Yes, literacy programs, primary and secondary education, skills development all helping to break through the cycle of poverty into economic empowerment. There was also informal education tackling the roots of gender biases, patriarchy, traditional harmful practices, and kidnap of girls, early marriage, and female genital cutting.

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In the '90's (20 years later) the child minding services developed into local neighborhood community resources, providing literacy programs for older girls who were not attending school and

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kindergarten education for girls of new families who moved from the rural areas in search of a better future. Programs focused specifically on the provision of nutrition, medical care and education.

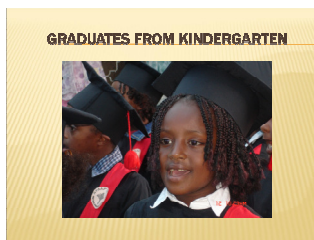


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Empowering girls from a very young age through role play was found to be very effective in bringing about change in cultural practices as children talked with their mothers about what they learned.

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A love for education was inculcated through the annual graduation from kindergarten to primary school.

While the emphasis was on girls' education, boys were found to be vulnerable to becoming street children due to economic poverty. In each intake group gender balance always favored the girl child.

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The lack of government schools within the Kebele (local government) meant that children of families living in poverty were unable to pay school fees

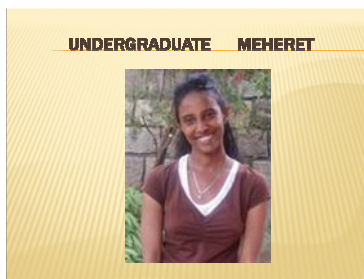


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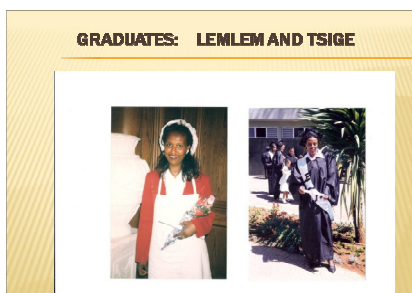
A response to this was the development of a school sponsorship program at primary and secondary level including the provision of uniforms, school materials, medical care, tuition, study programs and extracurricular activities.

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There have been many successes in education. Meheret is a first year English student at Addis Ababa University. Within local community there is acknowledgement of the fact that the education of girls benefits the whole community and brings about change. Today new generations of girls are reaching their target entering third level education.

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Rahel, a second year student is working towards a degree in Global Studies and International Relations. She is disappointed that there are only two women (herself included) in her department at New Generation University College. She is concerned that there is not enough affirmative action throughout Ethiopia to encourage girls to go on for higher education.



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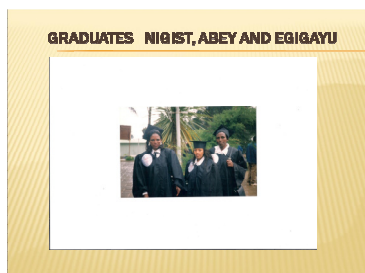
About 10 years ago Good Shepherd Sisters in a rural area, Mazoria helped educate over 100 students to third level. The sponsored youth pledged to return to the area to work and to repay some of the fees so that other students could benefit.

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This scheme has tremendously benefited the students themselves particularly the girls who now have broken through the cycle of poverty, are gainfully employed in the local area, role models offering

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hope to other girls and effectively implementing positive change in the local area.

Another best practice tackled the kidnapping of girls for marriage or rape. Good Shepherd Sisters provided a small residence for girls who had been kidnapped and raped, helping them to deal with the trauma and at the same time confronting the local community by having them re-enter school and continue their education. The Ethiopian Women Lawyers assisted



these girls implementing a rights based approach. The local police were also sensitized to the abuses. These actions led to awareness raising in the local community, discussion about negative cultural practices leading to change. When I was leaving in 2007 one of these girls was hoping to enter university!

Girls Education, a holistic education is bringing an end to poverty one girl at a time. This education focuses on healing and restoring dignity, raising self esteem and empowering girls through formal and informal education, including rights based education to take their rightful role in society.

Thank You!



THANK YOU!

April 1, 2010