Impact in Ethiopia
A Force for Change

In 2015, we marked 15 years since Glimmer’s founding, which began with the simple notion to relieve some of the pain and suffering on the planet.

As I reflect on where we began all those years ago and all that we didn’t know then, it is wonderful to see how Glimmer and our approach has continuously evolved to help shape Ethiopia and her most rural and forgotten communities.

We have truly grown into a force for change—impacting the lives of 5 million people and completing 10,000 projects since 2000. Our investment of $85 million in rural Ethiopia is part of a groundswell of growth and progress across the country that is exemplary among African nations. The change we are creating together is remarkable and undeniable.

It is a great joy for me and the entire Glimmer team to continue along this path. Now more than ever, our work is critically important to the people of Ethiopia. We are committed to creating even greater change in the years ahead.

Donna Berber
Founder & CEO
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IN 2015 GLIMMER INVESTED $5 MILLION IN RURAL ETHIOPIA

OUR 2015 VILLAGES
1. VILLAGES OF MAICH EW
2. VILLAGES OF SENALE
3. VILLAGES OF GONDAR
4. BANJA VILLAGE
5. VILLAGES OF SHOA
6. TERCHA VILLAGE

THIS YEAR’S PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
We launched our first phase of work in three new areas, with deep commitment from the communities. As part of our planning agreement, Shoa, Gondar and Maichew villagers contributed 10% toward the first year of projects.

IKEA FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP
Recognized for our holistic, integrated approach, the IKEA Foundation honored Glimmer’s work with a five year, $7 million grant to fund work in Tigray.

GLIMMER GROWTH
To support our expanded reach, we added staff in the areas of finance, communications, programs compliance and office management.

PROJECT VISITS
Our CEO, Donna Berber, visited the communities of Robit, Giragie, Senale, Mendida and Shoa during a trip to Ethiopia in November.

JOURNEY TO ETHIOPIA
TRIP ATTENDEES
REPRESENTING 5 COUNTRIES

IN THAT TIME WE’VE SEEN ANNUAL CHILD DEATHS CUT IN HALF, PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DOUBLED, AND LIFE EXPECTANCY INCREASED BY 13 YEARS ACROSS ETHIOPIA.

WE CELEBRATED 15 YEARS SINCE OUR FOUNDING
GLIMMER’S FIVE-STEP APPROACH IN ACTION

Groundbreaking Community Commitment in Villages of Gondar

Glimmer’s rigorous planning process guides our work from the selection of a new program area to the final hand-off and impact evaluation at the completion of our projects.

Launching workshops are a critical part of our five-step approach. As the kick-off of our implementation of a program (Step 3 in our process), launching workshops bring together the key stakeholders to share joint plans and commitments at a public meeting.

IN FEBRUARY 2015, Glimmer convened a launching workshop in the Villages of Gondar. Our local construction partners, the local and regional government representatives and community members participated in the meeting. Villagers traveled for hours on foot to solidify and share their commitment to Glimmer’s upcoming projects. Each village sent representatives, including teachers, health workers, elders and young men and women, to be a part of this momentous event.

The upfront planning and the commitment of stakeholders at every level is unprecedented in this area and is a sign of an engaged community.

During the workshop, representatives split into small groups and finalized plans for their contributions, which ranged from cash to labor to supplies like gravel, wood, sand and eucalyptus. One village had already constructed a two-and-half-mile paved road to prepare for construction vehicles to bring in supplies.

The excitement during the workshop was palpable—with the room erupting in loud applause and celebration as each village leader presented their plan. The full support and commitment for Glimmer’s work at all levels of the community created a solid foundation for ongoing work in Gondar.

WORKSHOP FACTS

WHO ATTENDED?

- Village Members and Leaders
- Local Partner Representatives
- Local Government Representatives
- Glimmer Project Team

WHAT WAS DECIDED?

- Each Village’s Contributions
- Most Critical Needs For Year One
Enriching Schools, Empowering Students

Cultural and environmental considerations are an important part of Glimmer’s planning. We have found the addition of a library to a school to reap huge academic rewards. A library allows students much-needed study space at school. Access to books, computers and the internet helps students prepare for national exams that determine secondary school placement.

When Glimmer first arrived in the Villages of Gondar, one of the most striking areas of need was in education. This year, Glimmer completed the Minzero Primary School library. It provides a study space and research resources for more than 900 students.

Student Deribew Menigistu, age 16, tells Glimmer staff: “It is beyond all measurements! It has boosted my appetite for reading and we are lucky to have it.” Principal Nega described the library’s positive impact on the school’s overall quality of education:

“Students now spend time reading even when they are not in school and they are more interested in academic success.”

The library is enriching education and allowing students to see a future full of possibilities.
A Strong Partnership In Villages Of Shoa

Our local implementation partners make Glimmer's work possible. A long-standing relationship with the Oromia Development Association has resulted in more than 900 projects across the Oromia region.

ODA is led by Adanech Abiebie, the only female executive director across all of our Ethiopian partner organizations. Through her leadership and our shared vision of empowering women and girls, ODA encourages equal-opportunity, collaborative projects and engages community members at every level.

Over the past 22 years, ODA has constructed health, water, education, livelihoods and sanitation projects in the region. They are one of the largest indigenous NGOs operating in Oromia.

ODA’s on-the-ground experience and relationship with community members enhances Glimmer’s strategic approach of investing in sustainable, integrated programs in Oromia.

Currently, we are partnering with ODA to continue our second phase of work in the Villages of Shoa. In our first year of projects, our partnership efforts provided new access to high schools and clean water sources. We constructed new laboratories, libraries, a computer lab and administration buildings at two high schools, and completed 25 new water projects.
What led you to Glimmer?
My passion for water science and previous work in underserved communities led me to Glimmer. I was instantly hooked by the opportunity to use my scientific background to foster lasting change in rural Ethiopia.

What was your most interesting project this year?
During my visit to Ethiopia in the spring, I helped lead a comprehensive program assessment that would inform our five-year plan for the Villages of Gondar. Using a detailed site assessment template, our team visited every existing project and future project sites to understand the need and the existing resources we could leverage during our time in Gondar. We also audited other NGOs working in the area, reviewed local government bureau data and interviewed community members to ensure we had a complete picture of the area before developing our plan.

How has Glimmer’s approach to wells evolved?
In some areas of Ethiopia, like eastern Tigray, groundwater is becoming more difficult to access due to water table decline. A variety of factors can contribute to this – an increased number of wells in an area, drought or stress from climate change. Glimmer is planning ahead by exploring the development and sustainability of deep borehole wells that allow us to go deeper and increase water output with twice the lifespan of a shallow borehole well.

Once a well is complete, how does Glimmer collaborate with the village to maintain wells?
We set up and train a local water, sanitation and hygiene committee to operate and maintain wells, as well as educate the community on sanitation and hygiene practices. In the case of larger technical issues, more intensive support systems are used. For example: in the Tigray region a team of mobile mechanics on motorcycles visit wells on rotation to ensure that wells are functioning smoothly.

Leslie Llado
PROGRAM MANAGER

Years at Glimmer: 3
Trips to Ethiopia: 6
Area of Study: HYDROGEOLOGY
Favorite Ethiopian Food: MUTTON
Based in: AUSTIN, TEXAS
Visit Our Villages

Be a part of Glimmer’s work to fight poverty and uplift lives. Read more about our work and visit our villages at GLIMMER.ORG.