A GLIMMER OF HOPE
ELIMINATE POVERTY. ILLUMINATE LIVES.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

Updated September 2023

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SINCE OUR FOUNDING IN 2000,

Ethiopia has experienced incredible progress and significant challenges. We are incredibly proud of the progress in Ethiopia over the past 20+ years—from strides in education to improved life expectancy to reductions in poverty. The challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and violent conflict in Tigray that continued into 2022 are setbacks, but do not erase the progress. Our commitment to Ethiopia and to this work is steadfast. We are continuing in our plans to grow our work and reach more people.

In 2018, Glimmer updated our strategy, drawing on the lessons learned from our work in Ethiopia since 2000. We refocused our efforts to place greater emphasis on agricultural livelihoods as the central driver of change. Glimmer's approach is based on the belief that families with steady and dependable income have greater capacity to send their children to school, make choices that support health and well-being, and withstand economic and climate crises.

Glimmer's 2020-2025 strategic plan highlights how we are testing our revised strategy with an eye toward expansion and growth. Over the next five years, we are focused on the following priorities:

- Implementing, testing and standardizing our updated theory of change to deepen impact and build scalability.
- Increasing the depth and reach of impact in rural Ethiopia, supported by increased and diversified funding.
- Developing a comprehensive system of learning and improvement, and continually applying findings.
- Connecting every staff member to the mission.
- Layering regenerative agriculture practices into our approach in support of building lasting resilience.
- Mitigating threats and seizing opportunities to strengthen the organization to continue work for the next 20 years.

As the Covid-19 pandemic required us to adjust our plans, we revised our strategic priorities to reflect the new and shifting situation on the ground. While Covid-19 is a shock at a global scale, it has the greatest impact on vulnerable communities, and we anticipate it will have ripple effects for years to come.

The war in Tigray was one of the deadliest conflicts in recent history, with the human toll surpassing half a million. A peace treaty was signed at the end of 2022, opening the region to relief and recovery efforts. The impacts from the crisis have compounded the challenges of Covid-19, and along with a severe drought and global food shortages, more than 20 million people are in food crisis across the country. Now, more than ever, our work in rural Ethiopia is essential.

As we look ahead to the next 20 years, Glimmer envisions Ethiopia with a thriving rural population that is both holding up and benefiting from the country's economic growth. Opportunity exists for all girls to attend school and all women to earn a fair income. Families and communities are resilient, supported by local systems and resources. Through the efforts of Glimmer, our partners, and the government and people of Ethiopia, the country's most vulnerable communities will progress and prosper—allowing Glimmer to create a roadmap to ending poverty at a global scale.

GLIMMER'S ORIGIN

FOUNDING STORY

When the images of the great Ethiopian famine emerged in the mid-1980s, Donna Berber was shaken to her core. Inspired by Live Aid, the global concert that brought attention to the devastating famine, the seed was planted that later inspired a vision that would change the lives of millions of rural Ethiopians.

COMMITMENT TO THE MOST VULNERABLE

A Glimmer of Hope was born in 2000 with the mission to improve lives in the most remote areas of Ethiopia. It was important to Donna and Philip, her husband and co-founder, to go where no one else was willing to go and help the people with the greatest need.

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION TO ENDING POVERTY

Donna and Philip's vision led to Glimmer's new model for community development. With an endowment from the Berbers to fund operating costs, they established Glimmer with the promise that all donations would go directly to projects. Glimmer employs a full staff of Ethiopian development experts and works with indigenous development partners to address the needs of the people through an integrated approach. Glimmer supports sustainability and full ownership by leveraging relationships with the government to staff and provide funding, with the community to contribute cash and labor, and with local partners to mobilize their own resources.

Since 2000, Glimmer has invested $110 million, reached 5 million people and completed 10,000 projects in rural Ethiopia. See the impact of our current approach at www.glimmer.org/results.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Glimmer's executive leadership team guides the organization's vision, operations and implementation in consultation with the board of directors.

ALICYN YARBROUGH

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Alicyn guides the development and expansion of Glimmer's strategies. She reviews outcomes, shapes the direction of Glimmer's approach and works in close partnership with the Ethiopian country director.

GEBREHIWOT RETA

COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Gebre informs the direction of the organization's strategies and implementation. He leads a team of 20 Ethiopian staff and serves as key contact and advocate with stakeholders, government leaders and local partners.

NASSER HASSEN

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF QUALITY CONTROL & SUSTAINABILITY

Nasser oversees the implementation of Glimmer's monitoring, evaluation, research and learning strategy, and drives continuous improvement.

MULUALEM ASHENAFI

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Mulualem heads the programs and operations team in Ethiopia, which is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and ongoing performance of project activity.

KAHSAY GIRMAY

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Kahsay serves as the fundraising and partnerships lead for the Ethiopia office, developing relationships, strategy and assessing Glimmer's theory of change, progress toward outcomes and metrics.

ABOUT ETHIOPIA

With a rocky history of political unrest, border wars, famines and refugee crises, Ethiopia has often been symbolic of hardship. In recent years, Ethiopia has made substantial progress in the fight against poverty and is one of the most rapidly developing countries in the world. Growth is mainly attributed to the development of the agriculture sector, construction of sound infrastructure, and the commitment of the people and government to achieve middle-income status.

Solving the underlying issues of poverty in Ethiopia can pave the way to global change. Ethiopia's large labor force, efforts to cultivate international business, economic growth and focus on driving a green, resilient economy combine to position the country as a leader on the continent. Creating sustainable change in Ethiopia can set the course for ending extreme poverty and reducing systemic inequality. We envision progress in Ethiopia at a scale that could inform a blueprint for ending poverty globally.

ETHIOPIA IS HOME TO OVER 115 MILLION PEOPLE

ETHIOPIA IS THE SECOND MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY IN AFRICA

THE PROBLEM WE ARE ADDRESSING

Life for a rural Ethiopian family is defined by hardship. When a drought hits, a family that relies on farming is sent into crisis without enough income or food for months. Opportunities to improve farming productivity and apply planet-positive practices that protect the land, access to markets and farming inputs, and solutions that can build up savings are simply out of reach in their remote community.

For a family in this position, limited income means the boys stay home from school during harvest season to help work the land. The girls search for water twice a day—taking them far from home along isolated, rough terrain to bring back contaminated water. The eldest daughter will soon drop out of school and be married before she turns 16.

Because every illness or climate shock has the potential to send the family into crisis, they never have a chance to get ahead. This is how the cycle of poverty continues in rural Ethiopia for nearly 21 million families.

More than 80% of Ethiopia's population lives in rural areas—where poverty is most entrenched.

Women farmers make up nearly half of the rural workforce. But with unequal access to resources, women produce 24% less than men.

Nearly 26% of the rural population lives on less than $0.60 a day.

Farming makes up 70% of jobs in rural Ethiopia, but climate change threatens food supply and income for families.

In rural areas, more than **30% of pregnant women do not receive prenatal care.**

Nearly 50% of girls drop out by secondary school.

GLIMMER'S GUIDEPOSTS

VISION

Eliminate poverty, illuminate lives.

MISSION

Glimmer brings together community-led, integrated solutions that transform the lives of rural Ethiopian families.

CORE VALUES

Put People First
We resolutely listen to the people in our communities, our supporters and partners, and each other.

Look Inward, Share Outward
Transparency is key to our success.

Follow Through
Commitment to our word matters.

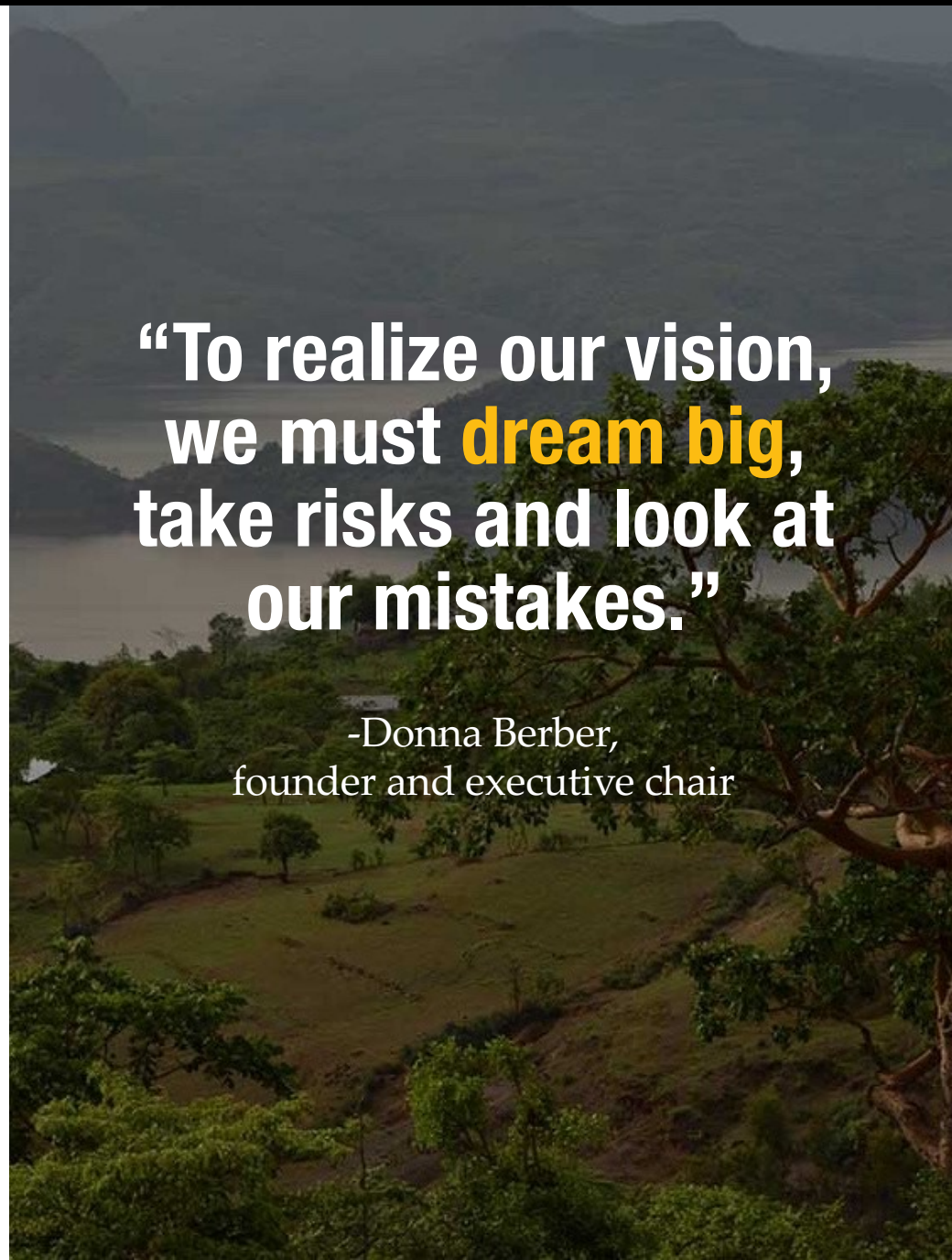
Embrace Change
We relentlessly pursue our vision by taking smart risks and always striving to be better.

OUR APPROACH

Glimmer's strategy positions sustainable livelihoods as the foundation of our holistic model, supported by essential health and education interventions. Glimmer places families at the center of our work, based on the belief that families that are healthy and have access to education are better able to take advantage of economic opportunities and secure steady income streams. Likewise, families with economic opportunities and stable incomes are better able to send their children to school, access necessary resources, and make choices that support health and well-being in the future. Underpinning family resilience is the critical need to proactively address climate risks for rural farmers. Our planet-positive approach protects environmental resources and ensures productive land use over the long-term so that the people of rural Ethiopia can thrive where they live for generations to come.

Our **guiding principles** keep us focused on pursuing the most effective ways to improve the lives of the rural poor and create change that is sustainable long-term. Our learnings since 2000 come together to support programmatic design to create systemic, lasting change.

Our **theory of change** provides a roadmap for planning, implementation and evaluation by explaining how a group of early and intermediate outcomes sets the stage for producing long-term results.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Glimmer is focused on pursuing the most effective ways to improve the lives of the rural poor and create change that is sustainable long-term. Our learnings since 2000 come together to support programmatic design to create systemic, lasting change.

Ending poverty requires resilience.
We equip families with the tools, training and resources to become more resilient to environmental, economic and social shocks—empowering them to respond and thrive long after we leave a community.

Alignment with government priorities and systems builds sustainability.
We take an ecosystem approach by designing plans around national priorities and strengthening local systems and structures in the rural areas.

Agriculture growth is the cornerstone of resilience.
Our focus is on providing capital and skill development to farmers while strengthening value chains and financial systems to drive growth in agriculture and family income and ensure long-term climate resilience and food security for rural Ethiopia.

Community engagement is key to sustainable change.
We honor local needs, priorities and culture by listening to the Ethiopian people first. We ensure long-term change by involving community members in every step of the process.

Systemic change takes time.
By committing to a community for five to seven years, Glimmer can monitor and support programs and empower the community to create sustainability.

Power lies in integration.
We strategically integrate initiatives in income growth, health and education to leverage synergistic impacts and drive deeper change.

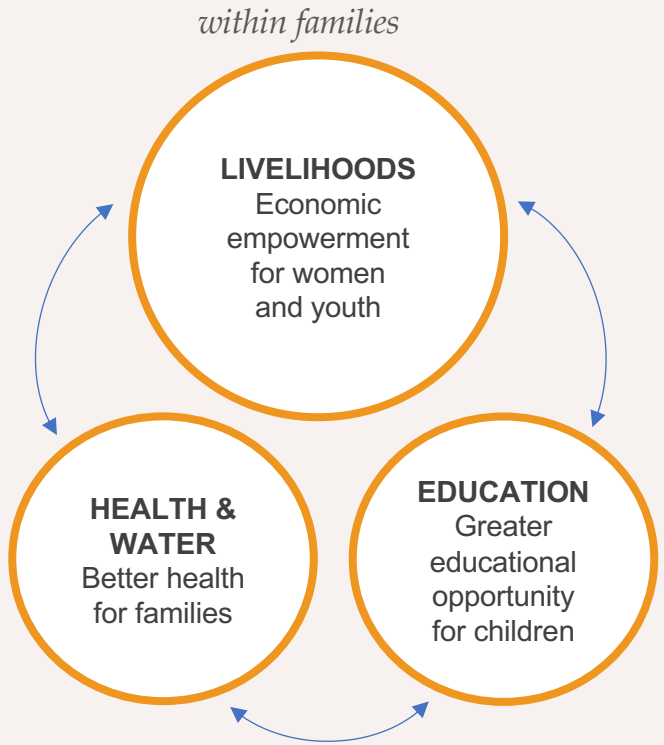
THEORY OF CHANGE

Glimmer Interventions

- Agricultural loans, skill building and value chain support
- Strengthening rural institutions and improving access to essential services
- Community trainings on nutrition, health, and hygiene & sanitation

Strategic Lens

- Integration of synergistic activities
- Planet-positive
- Gender empowerment
- Community-led development



Resilience Capacity
Increased individual, household and community resilience and improved response to crises

Improved well-being and reduced poverty

Key contextual variables
Political context
Climate risks
Socio-cultural context
Government responsiveness

Stressors and shocks
Climate change, natural disasters/environmental stressors, pest and disease outbreaks, political instability, economic shocks and stressors, health events, and chronic poverty

LIVELIHOODS STRATEGY

Goal: Increase family resilience through diversified income and increased production with a focus on women borrowers, improve food security and nutrition, and mitigate climate change.

TRAININGS & LOANS

Farmers receive training in commodity-specific business (e.g., market linkages, proper care and feeding, value-add production), planet-positive practices (e.g., soil fertility, recycled byproducts, intercropping, improved breeds) and financial literacy. Each borrower also receives one-on-one technical assistance from a community facilitator, a locally-hired staff who assesses progress and provides ongoing support.

MARKET & SOCIAL SUPPORTS

Borrowers participate in multi-stakeholder platforms to facilitate market linkages. Membership in local village economic and savings associations allows farmers to share best practices; increase knowledge of savings, climate conditions, and gender equality; and strengthen social networks.

COMMUNITY-BASED FINANCIAL SERVICES

To support financial access for the entire community, Glimmer strengthens local financial cooperatives to become self-sustained, locally-run savings and loan institutions.

IRRIGATION & ASSET PROTECTION

Farmers receive support through training in efficient water use and irrigation management, and provision of key infrastructure such as irrigation and veterinary services to support sustainable livelihoods.

HEALTH & WATER STRATEGY

Goal: Improve health outcomes for women and children by supporting community outreach and education and increasing access to quality health care and clean water.

TRAININGS

Glimmer provides training to health extension workers and members of the Women's Development Army on maternal and child health and nutrition. Strengthening these local systems and resources for women and families is intended to lead to better health outcomes over the long-term.

HEALTH POSTS & HEALTH CENTERS

Glimmer creates and improves access to quality health facilities in the most remote communities so that all community members are close to critical health care with skilled practitioners. Provision of solar power for health facilities provides continuous access to essential services.

CLEAN WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE

To support health outcomes, Glimmer constructs and renovates community water sources, ensuring families have access to clean water within 1 kilometer of their homes. Glimmer trains water committee members on sanitation, hygiene and maintenance of water sources.

EDUCATION STRATEGY

Goal: Change understanding of gender norms among boys and girls, support gender equity, build social networks, and increase access to quality educational environments.

GENDER EMPOWERMENT

To empower girls around gender issues and ensure more girls stay in school, Glimmer supports and strengthens girls' clubs. Girl leaders of the clubs educate their peers on early marriage, menstruation and the importance of staying in school. With income-generating opportunities to support the club, girls build confidence and create a permanent safe space to share challenges and talk about issues that they can't anywhere else. Boys also join the club and learn about gender roles and misperceptions.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

To ensure more children can attend school, Glimmer provides access to better learning environments and education materials. Glimmer also constructs gender-segregated latrines, which help more girls stay in school when they reach the age of menstruation. In addition to providing clean water at school campuses, Glimmer establishes and strengthens school water, sanitation and hygiene clubs to support health and attendance. Provision of solar power for education facilities provides continuous access to essential services.

RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

Glimmer defines resilience as the capacity of people, households and communities to mitigate, adapt to and recover from stressors and shocks in ways that support reduced poverty and improved well-being over time–while transforming systems and structures to address the root causes of vulnerability. The resilience capacity of families and communities builds with the goal of reaching the stage of lasting transformation.

Resilience is the lens through which Glimmer develops plans and measures impact. Without planning for resilience, we risk investing in change that can't be sustained over time. Resilience is especially critical for vulnerable communities that are disproportionately impacted by complex issues, including climate change, political conflict and Covid-19.

TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY

EXPANSIVE

Families can thrive in communities with good governance, infrastructure, basic service delivery and policies

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

FLEXIBLE

Families can respond in proactive ways to change

ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY

STABLE

Families can cope with the impacts of shocks on their livelihoods

MONITORING, EVALUATION, RESEARCH & LEARNING

Glimmer measures impact by looking at how integrated interventions in agricultural livelihoods, health and education result in improved resilience and decreased poverty for families.

The purpose of Glimmer's monitoring, evaluation, research and learning system is to:

- Clarify and articulate our goals and vision for success.
- Track progress and make ongoing improvements to our strategy to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.
- Better understand our contributions to poverty alleviation in Ethiopia.
- Build an evidence base for an integrated, holistic model of poverty alleviation.
- Share key learnings with stakeholders to secure additional funding to support our continued work in Ethiopia.

The core of the monitoring, evaluation, research and learning system includes:

- Performance Monitoring: Systematic data collection to assess quality and effectiveness of implementation.
- Evaluation and Learning: Ongoing and integrated processes for investigating and understanding progress toward the long-term goals in our theory of change.
- Research: Investigate the broader development space in order to remain strategically innovative and incorporate global best practices.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLS

Glimmer uses a mixed-methods approach to data collection, including household surveys, focus groups, cooperative assessment tools, digital surveys of individual loan recipients, government bureau data and cross-site evaluations.

OUTCOME INDICATORS

Glimmer gathers data to understand outcomes of our interventions during a five-year project at start, midpoint and closure.

	Outcome Indicators (Selected Sample)
1	% of loan recipients living below the National Poverty Line
2	% of loan recipients with the ability to recover from shocks
3	% of loan recipients who are food secure
4	% of girls' club members reporting knowledge on girls' club topics (menstruation, WASH, income-generating activities)
5	% of community members reporting involvement of women in household decision-making
6	% of community reporting use of regenerative and circular agricultural practices
7	% of community using clean water sources
8	% of community reporting use of improved quality of health services
9	% of community reporting use of improved quality of education services
10	Number of supported rural financial cooperatives demonstrating increased capacity

STRATEGIC FOCUS: 2020-2025

CURRENT STATE: SWOT ANALYSIS

- One-country focus since founding in 2000
- Community-driven approach
- Long-term commitment to communities
- Systemic approach to address roots of vulnerability
- All-Ethiopian implementation team
- Gender and climate lens
- Endowment contributes to organizational stability

- Progress and commitment of Ethiopian government to development
- Partnerships with reputable donors
- Growth of Ethiopian economy
- Organizational alignment with U.N. sustainable development goals
- Participation and commitment of the community members and leaders

- Complexity of solving poverty presents evolving challenges in implementation and measuring impact
- Challenges with using shared online systems across both offices
- Funding concentrated among a small group of donors

- Vulnerable communities are susceptible to deep impacts from global health concerns, such as Covid-19
- Violent conflict and resulting country-wide instability
- Climate change and shocks
- Inflation and foreign exchange rate devaluation
- Limited pool of donors that can commit to funding full, integrated model over five years

THEORY OF CHANGE:

Improve well-being and reduce poverty

Increase individual, household and community resilience and improve response to shocks

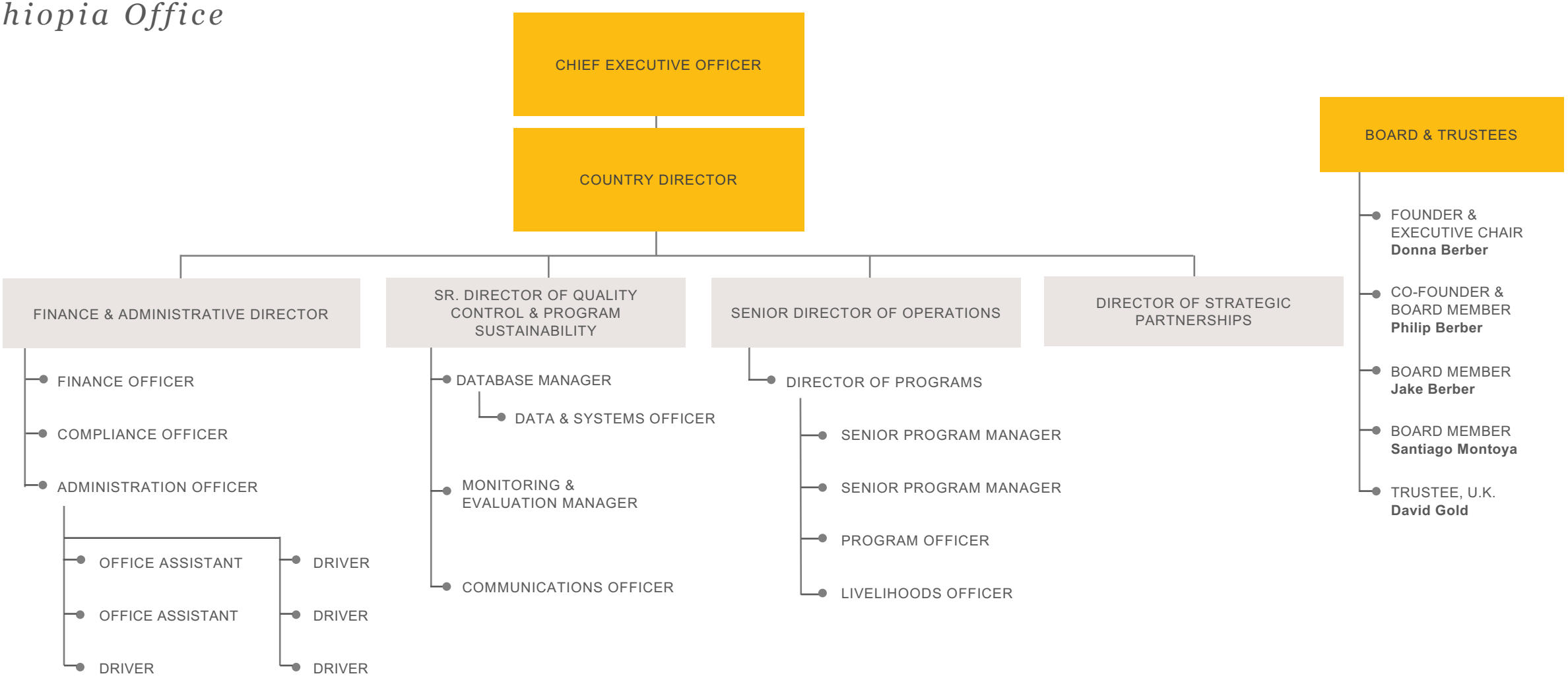
FOCUS	PRIORITY	FIVE-YEAR OBJECTIVES	TIMING
	1. IMPLEMENT & EXPAND: Roll out updated approach to improve well-being and reduce poverty.	1.1 Complete current five-year projects and gather learnings in line with outcomes in theory of change.	2020-2024
		1.1a: Gondar Zuria, Amhara region (population: 54,000).	2020
		1.1b: North Shoa, Oromia region (population: 50,000).	2021
		1.1c: Libo Kemkem, Amhara region (population: 64,000).	2022
		1.1d: Oda Bultum, Oromia region (population: 96,000).	2024
		1.1e: Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Project, Debub Sodo, SNNP region (population: 200 households).	2024
		1.1f: Debub Sodo, SNNP region (population: 66,000).	2026
		1.1g: Tigray projects (Medebay Zana, Kola Tembien & Maichew) on hold due to regional conflict	ON HOLD
		1.2 Increase current implementation by 20% by launching one new five-year project annually, targeting approximately 60,000-100,000 people per community.	2021-2025
		1.2a: Explore piloting a new five-year project as a geographic expansion of an existing project area.	
		1.2b: Identify new partner for expansion of work in Southern region.	
		1.2c: Select new five-year project, Oromia region	2022
		1.2d: Select new five-year project, SNNP region	2023
	2. TEST: Assess key assumptions in theory of change.	2.1 Test components of value chain approach that best support livelihoods outcomes, including village economic and social associations, multipurpose cooperatives, business-to-business meetings, experience sharing, etc.	2020-2024
		2.2 Test effectiveness of direct support through community facilitators as part of value chain strategy.	2020-2024
		2.3 Pilot modalities for loan delivery to borrowers (microfinance institutions, local financial cooperatives, unions of financial cooperatives) to determine effectiveness and sustainability.	2020-2025
		2.4 Secure partnership with research institution to complete five-year case study of new model.	2023
	3. ENHANCE IMPACT: Develop key partnerships and analyze our work to deepen our effectiveness.	3.1 Explore partnership with an organization that provides technology solutions that reach rural health workers.	2024
		3.2 Conduct a gender-analysis of Glimmer's programming and processes.	2020
		3.3 Complete an internal analysis of Glimmer's planet-positive agriculture practices.	2021
	4. STANDARDIZE: Build replicability and scalability through standardization within and across projects.	4.1 Finalize and document updated exit strategy.	2020
		4.2 Develop internal programs manual.	2022
		4.3 Standardize curriculum for girls' club trainings in schools.	2021
		4.4 Standardize program processes across implementing partners.	2021
		4.5 Roll out digital tracking of borrowers in every community.	2021

FOCUS	PRIORITY	FIVE-YEAR OBJECTIVES	TIMING
ORGANIZATIONAL: *Increase capacity and operational effectiveness*	**5. GROW:** Increase the depth and reach of impact on the ground in rural Ethiopia, supported by increased and diversified funding.	5.1 Increase funding by 20% to support programmatic growth and diversify funding (no funder constitutes >25%).	2025
		5.1a: Secure two new foundation donors (one in 2022 and one in 2023).	2021-2023
		5.1b: Maintain and increase current funding sources to support stability and growth of our work.	ongoing
		5.1c: Develop relationships to support government funding opportunities.	2025
	6. LEARN: Develop a comprehensive system of learning and improvement, and continually apply findings.	6.1 Implement and operationalize new monitoring, evaluation, research and learning framework.	2020-2024
		6.1a: Finalize Glimmer's updated monitoring, evaluation, research and learning framework to inform evidence-based decision-making in line with revisions to theory of change.	2020
		6.1b: Implement and institutionalize system across all new projects and organizationally in job descriptions, performance reviews, policies and procedures.	2020
		6.1c: Expand use of digital data collection system and tools across all new projects.	2020
		6.1d: Design and implement organization-wide data management and reporting strategy: identify software and technical tools, convert and streamline data, configure systems, and design dashboards.	2020-2021
		6.2 Create and maintain a culture of learning.	2020-2025
		6.2a: Create a professional development plan for internal monitoring and evaluation for staff in Ethiopia to expand knowledge around qualitative data collection and overall data analysis.	2021
		6.2b: Hold annual strategic planning summit across teams.	ongoing
		6.2c: Develop internal plan focused on Glimmer's strategic learning questions.	2020
		6.2d: Create an internal framework outlining research strategies to inform theory of change.	2020
	7. UNIFY: Operate using global systems and connect every staff member to our mission so that they clearly see how their role is critical to success.	7.1 Implement and manage effective global systems across offices.	2020-2025
		7.1a: Configure and implement NetSuite OneWorld financial and constituent management software across the organization.	2021
		7.1b: Structure and implement Dropbox file sharing across U.S. and Ethiopia offices.	2021
		7.1c: Create organization-wide job description manual that integrates core values and cross-team collaboration.	2021
	8. SUSTAIN: Mitigate current and future threats and seize opportunities to strengthen the organization to continue work for the next 20 years.	8.1 Integrate Covid-19 prevention strategies into our implementation plans and increase resilience to fragile operating environment in Ethiopia.	ongoing
		8.2 Assess inclusivity around hiring and internal operations and develop a plan based on findings.	2020
		8.3 Formalize and document Glimmer's updated IT policies and cybersecurity protocols.	2021
		8.4 Conduct enterprise risk management and insurance assessments and document and implement all policy and procedure changes.	2021
		8.5 Spending of the endowment caps at a rolling 6% plus inflation to cover operational costs without drawing on principal.	ongoing

APPENDIX

A GLIMMER OF HOPE

Ethiopia Office



A GLIMMER OF HOPE

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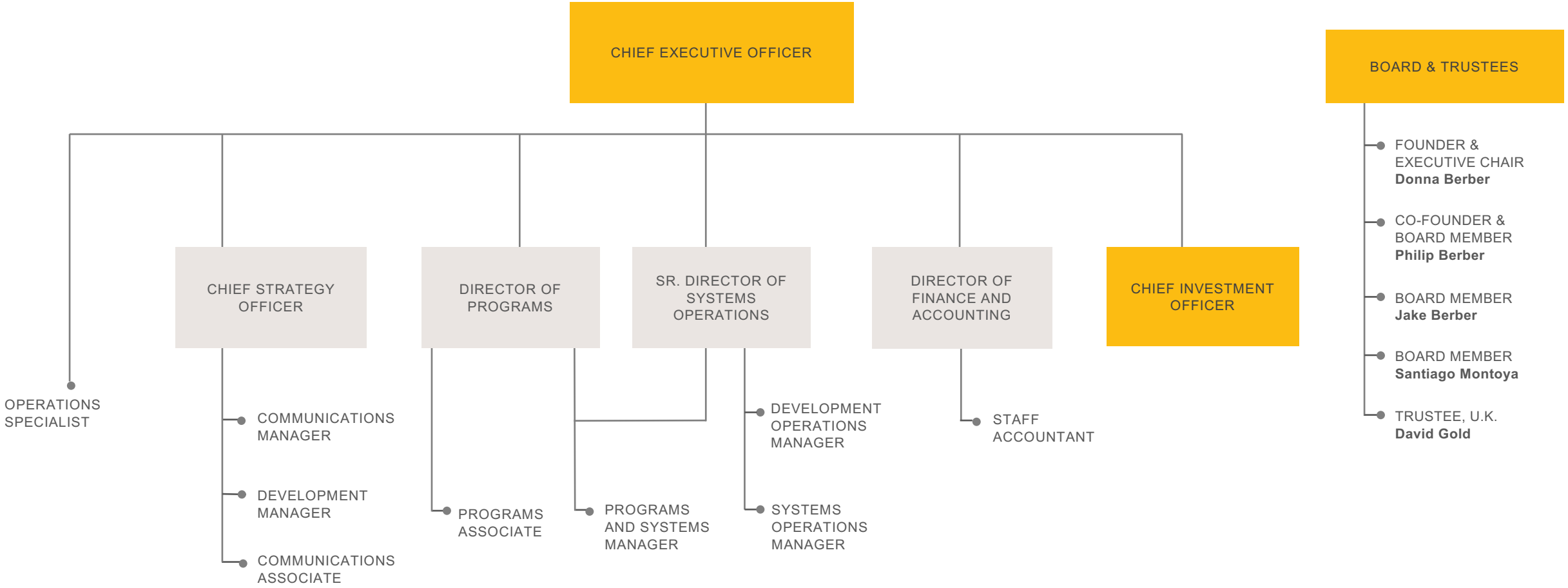

We can't eliminate poverty alone. We acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their generous support and shared learnings over the past 20 years.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & TRUSTEES

Donna Berber
Philip Berber
Jake Berber
Santiago Montoya
David Gold
Lee Portnoi

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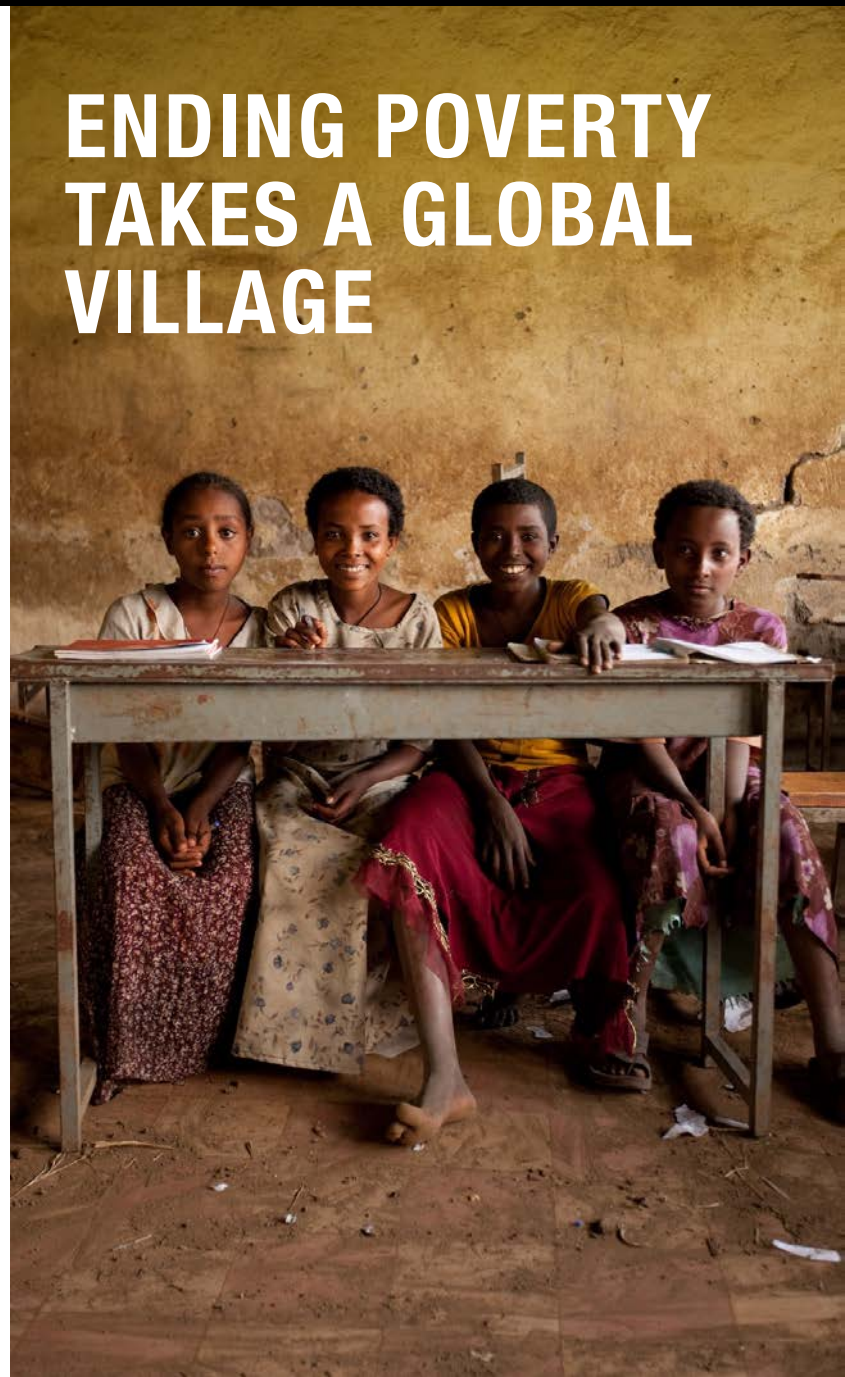
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