The Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church has been pioneering a form of savings and loan groups in their churches which has become a movement that’s taking Ethiopia by storm. They're challenging poverty, establishing strong social bonds and giving people, especially women, the opportunity to flourish.
WHY WE’RE WORKING IN ETHIOPIA

Poverty in Ethiopia is widespread in both rural and urban areas, with Ethiopia one of the least developed countries in the world, ranking 173rd out of 187 on the 2013 United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index.

The World Bank estimates that 77.5% of Ethiopians survive on less than $2 (approx. £1.30) per day and roughly 29% of the population are living below the poverty line.

Into this challenge steps the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church. They are the largest evangelical denomination in the country with approximately eight million members in more than 8,000 widely dispersed congregations.

Following the ousting of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, EKHC became independent and self-governing. The Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army (known as the Dergue) ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1987 took power and it was a difficult time for the church - congregations had to cope with discrimination and persecution.

Since the fall of the Dergue in 1991, EKHC have been working with Tearfund to heal the wounds of conflict and discrimination in the church and to transform Ethiopian society.

For the past ten years, EKHC have been working alongside church leaders in Ethiopia encouraging them to look at the material needs of the community as well, rather than just the spiritual needs of their people and community.

Over 1500 local churches in Ethiopia are currently helping their communities address issues such as learning how to save money, caring for their environment, combating illiteracy, support for those with HIV and Aids and food insecurity.

It is estimated that over 1 million lives have been transformed by this process. But there are another 89 million people in Ethiopia to reach.
THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Through the Self Help Group approach EKHC is challenging poverty, establishing strong social bonds and giving people the opportunity to flourish.

Meseret is a member of a Self Help Group where 15-20 like-minded people come together each week to save small amounts of money. Under the guidance of Tearfund-trained staff, SHG members can access pooled funds to take out loans to start businesses.

In addition to savings and credit, the SHGs are sanctuaries for members to come and discuss their problems. Together people develop solutions to a whole range of issues and become confident and capable of realising change in their lives.

SHGs mean that for the first time, women like Meseret feel empowered to have their voice heard and to earn vital income so that they can improve their families’ futures.

I CAN’T EXPRESS IN WORDS WHAT MY GROUP MEANS TO ME. THEY ARE MY SISTERS - WE SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN EVERYTHING. AND WE HELP TO LOOK AFTER THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY. BY SAVING AND INVESTING IN SMALL BUSINESSES, I WAS ABLE TO COMPLETELY TRANSFORM MY LIFE AND GIVE MY DAUGHTERS A BETTER FUTURE.

MESERET, SELF HELP GROUP MEMBER
PROJECT IMPACT

Before joining an SHG, Meseret was in the clutches of poverty. Her husband Belay’s labourer salary provided scraps of food and they slept on the floor with no possessions.

Being in an SHG has seen Meseret go from strength to strength. Meseret used a loan to start selling charcoal and invested the profits to buy materials to make handicrafts. She's also set up a hairdressing venture and has plans to open a shop. As well as being able to feed her children three times a day, Meseret now has a new roof over her head. She's also become a Christian and active church member.

Tearfund has been supporting the Ethiopian Kale Heywet church to run SHGs since 2002 and today there are more than 12,000 across Ethiopia, having an impact on more than 1 million people.

They are making more than a dent in Ethiopia’s poverty where 39% of the population live below the poverty line surviving on US$1.25 a day.

To establish, facilitate and support a 20 member SHG costs just £54.20 per group per year, or just £2.71 per Self Help Group member! They're transforming not only their own lives, but also their families and households; impacting the lives of over 450,000 people in total.

I CAN’T EXPRESS IN WORDS WHAT MY GROUP MEANS TO ME ... I WAS ABLE TO COMPLETELY TRANSFORM MY LIFE AND GIVE MY DAUGHTERS A BETTER FUTURE.

MESERET, SELF HELP GROUP MEMBER
JOIN US

We are trying to raise £247,000 each year to support the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church as they help their churches start Self Help Groups all across the nation of Ethiopia.

There are almost 100,000 self help group members already but we need to reach many more of the 25 million people living below the poverty line in Ethiopia.

Will you help EKHC transform their lives?

FIRST I THANK GOD FOR HE HAS GIVEN US AN OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND SHARE LIFE IN CHRIST; AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND GIVING US ROOM IN YOUR HEART.

OUR PRAYER NEEDS ARE THIS - THAT OUR LEADERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE SALT AND LIGHT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

AMME, EKHC SOUTH WEST ETHIOPIA