

# Orthodox, Muslim & Catholic Unity Charitable Association (OMCUCA)

Concern to the orphaned children



# OMCUCA's Concern to the Children

## Introduction

The Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic Charitable Association (OMCUCA) is non-profit union of three religions (Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic) legally registered with the Federal Charities and Societies Agency of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; its registration number is 2471.

The first time the three religious groups formed an association in 2006, then known by Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic (OMCA) Unity to save life. Currently the former OMCA is registered as OMCUCA, but it carries the overall purpose of its establishment aimed at supporting people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS in rural and urban settings of Eastern Tigray.

## Background and Justification

In Adigrat town and its peripheries, there is quite significant number of children who have lost both or one of their parents by AIDS and poverty. Since its establishment, OMCUCA has been working with communities, and as an association of three religions, the religious leaders have reliable information as to the number of children orphaned by AIDS because the affected people bestow their trust upon their respective spiritual fathers. Without making any reference to the published finding, OMCUCA testifies that the number of children orphaned by AIDS around our locality is in hundreds. OMCUCA regularly receives requests pledging for help from children unable to meet their daily bread for having lost their parents to the disease. These daily experiences ascertain that the impact of HIV/AIDS on these orphans, particularly those living in abject poverty, is enormous and their number is large enough to merit project intervention from the side of concerned government and civil society organizations.

Because of poor economic status, children orphaned by AIDS and poverty are leading life at the very minimum subsistent level. OMCUCA knows that majority of the poor orphans together with their guardians live in a rented house, paying 500.00 Birr monthly average rent for the owner. Guardians of these orphans have no reliable sources of income; the women depend for a living on menial daily work such as washing clothes, road side petty trade such as sale of small amount of charcoal, roasted maize; men do indulge in alcoholism to suppress the daily difficulty they face; **orphaned children are not able to properly access education; instead of schooling they take different petty trade on**

**road sides, like washing cars, begging, and some are involved in anti-social activities as a desperate measure of survival.** Young orphaned girls lead their early teenage years in prostitution, the time they would have to go to school, and they are at risk of getting HIV as the cases are common to the knowledge of religious leaders of OMCUCA. In connection with this, religious leaders of OMCUCA have scores of scores in delivering the most possible Financial and educational materials support for the orphaned children.

These days partly due to declining financial resources to HIV/AIDS at global scale and partly lured by claims that HIV/AIDS is less of a threat at societal level, the number of poor children orphaned by AIDS who are in difficult situations are many due to lack of orphanage and support services. In recognition to the plight of these orphans, OMCUCA has been doing relentless efforts in seeking financial donation from benevolent organizations and individuals so as to establish livelihood options for these orphaned children in Adigrat town and its adjacent localities.

So far, OMCUCA has played considerable role that when different religions cooperate, their services become more effective than the same amount of effort carried out separately, local support could relatively easily pooled if they work together. Hence, the association has been striving to improve the wellbeing of poor children orphaned by AIDS and absolute poverty.

### **Financial and educational materials support for the orphaned children**

At present **OMCUCA is supporting 97 children** who have become destitute in one way or another either because of the impact of HIV/AIDS or the consequences of war. A monthly allowance of **400 ETB** is given to each child. From that allowance **100 ETB is deposited** into an account so that the child will have some financial backing when it is time to launch out on a future career. This practical concern is just one example of OMCUCA's general policy when trying to solve current problems of the community (sickness and poverty) by mobilizing whatever local resources are available. Rather than cultivating some form of dependency, the policy promotes self-reliance from within the community.

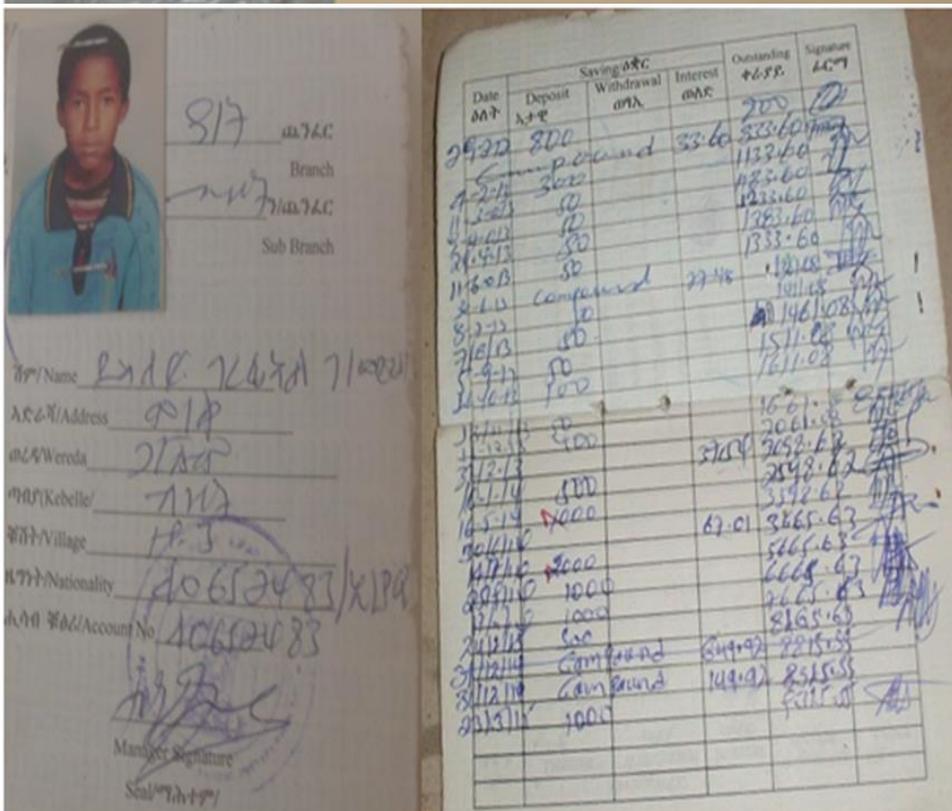
Beyond the financial support, OMCUCA has had consultation with Adigrat town municipality to find means to improve livelihoods of these orphaned children. From the consultations held, finally the two have reached at an agreement that the municipality supplies OMCUCA about half hectare of land suitable for urban agriculture; whereas OMCUCA raises fund as an initial capital to establish small-scale commercial capital operated and owned by the beneficiaries themselves for duration of five years.

The process of land provision from the side of the municipality is finalized; OMCUCA has received the land on behalf of the orphaned children. OMCUCA has consulted agricultural experts to identify the best possible feasible alternatives that maximize economic benefit for the orphans and their guardians.

### Photo gallery

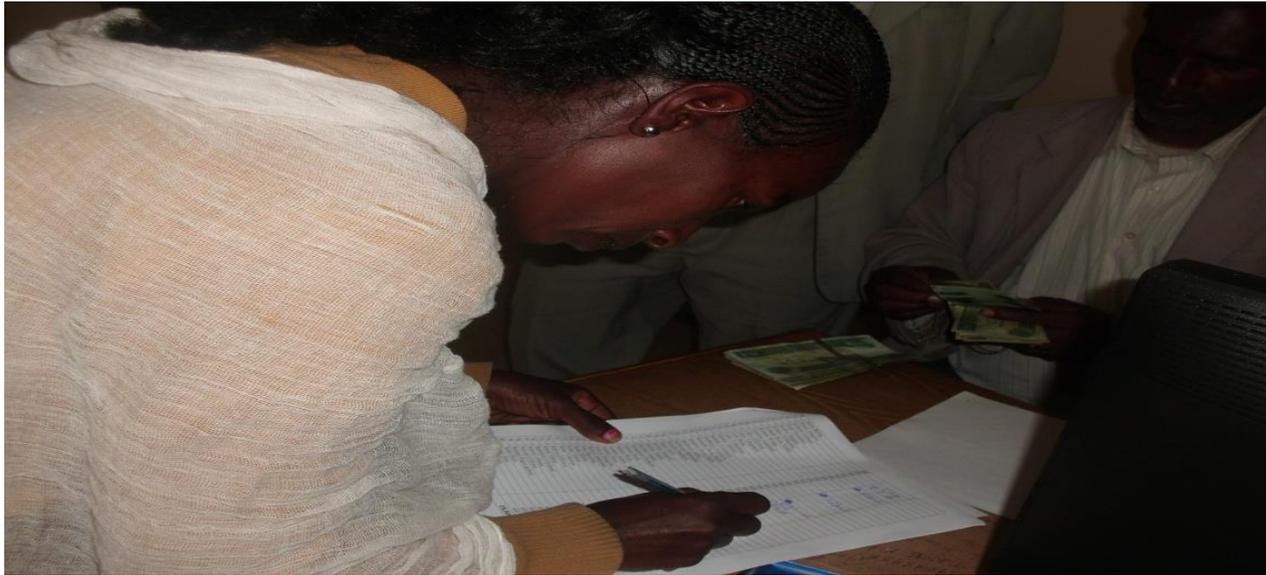


This photo shows the saving account of **Mikal Aron**. She is one among the orphaned children being supported by OMCUCA. She has deposited **8,092.80 birr**. She is 9 years of age & grade 4 student. This year her average score in class is 97.



---

*These 3 photos were taken while guardians of the orphaned children are taking the monthly 400 birr allowance.*



---

---

*These three photos shows while orphans & guardians are conducting a monthly review meeting with OMCUCA faith leaders. OMCUCA through its faith leaders offers such meetings with the orphans & their guardians monthly. Moral & spiritual counseling, Psycho-social support and follow-up of orphan's academic statues are part of the meetings.*

---



---

*This is a plot of land allocated to OMCUCA by Adigrat town municipality in order to find means to improve livelihoods of the orphaned children. The municipality has supplied for OMCUCA about half hectare of land suitable for urban agriculture. OMCUCA is raising fund as an initial capital to establish small-scale commercial capital to be operated and owned by the orphaned children and other HIV infected and affected people for duration of five years. OMCUCA has consulted agricultural experts to identify the best possible feasible alternatives that maximize economic benefit for the orphans and their guardians. Weighting all the options, the land will be used into the following uses:*

- I) Vegetable production*
  - II) Poultry rearing &*
  - III) Sheep fattening*
- 



---

Campaign to the  
plantation site



In the plantation site



Orphaned children being  
prepared to work in their  
plantation site



---

*The orphaned children and their guardians preparing the field for plantation*



---

*The orphaned children and their guardians preparing the field for plantation*

---



---

*Orphaned children working at the plantation site*



*Pepper seedlings planted in the plantation site*



*OMCUCA faith leaders inspiring the orphans to work hard*





*Mayor of Adigrat city administration, OMCUCA faith leaders and other volunteers encouraging the orphans to sustain what is being done in the field*

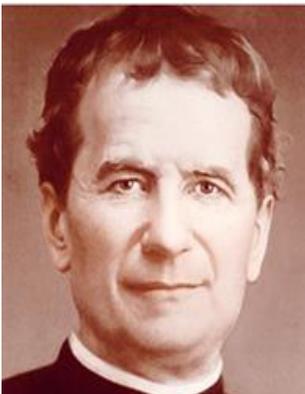
## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our funders and Collaborators below. We are particularly grateful to **Brother Cesare Bullo** from **Salesians of Don Bosco** and his office staff for their unwavering support in financing the orphaned children monthly. We count ourselves lucky to have worked with such a committed staff. You are and will always be true blessings in the lives of the orphaned children! You generously helped the orphans, without which, this work would not have been completed. May Lord continue to bless you abundantly!

OMCUCA on the behalf of the orphaned children wants also to deeply appreciate **WHEAT MST & AFFODR-UK**, for funding the “Tsebqley Adigrat Gardening Project”, a project aiming to improve livelihood Option of the orphaned children through establishment of multipurpose urban agricultural farm. The orphans will always relish your kindness.

We extend our profound gratitude to OMCUCA faith leaders for your moral & spiritual support and most importantly, for lifting the orphan’s needs to the Lord in prayer.

We are highly thankful to Adigrat town municipality for supplying us about half hectare of land suitable for urban agriculture in order to find means to improve livelihoods of the orphaned children. We are indeed grateful to Adigrat and G/Afeshum wereda offices of labour and social affairs for their habituated cooperation.



SALESIANS OF DONBOSCO  
ADISS ABABA



**Brother Cesare Bullo**  
Executive Director  
Mission Procure & Planning  
Development Office,  
SALESIANS OF DONBOSCO, A/Ababa



**Dr. Hailu Hagos**  
Executive Director  
WHEAT MST-UK



