

# SERVING IN THE SLUMS

Salem's powerful witness of hope in the slums of Ethiopia's capital city is bringing more people to faith, but so much more can be achieved, says **Jo Clarke**, copywriter at Word in Need.

**C**hallenges of finding ways to live and cope in our pandemic-ridden world aren't unique to any nation; it's the inclusivity of the virus that draws humanity together in a way our generation has never before known. We face our common enemy, and we fight it together.

As we strive to cope with the personal challenges the virus brings, we're called in new ways to look outwards - to give hope and blessing, lift others, feed and clothe those in need, and care for those sick or alone. Hardship, uncertainty, distress and despair in our own villages, towns and cities is mirrored across the world. Although circumstances differ, the pattern repeats, and our struggles are shared.

For children living in slums, hardship was already a way of life and the coronavirus has further impacted desperate lives. Kent-based charity World in Need (WIN) provides practical mission in 12 countries throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East, running child support programmes and community projects.

We give hands-on help to families in the most desperate circumstances. Our Ethiopia project reaches out to orphans and children from poverty-stricken families in Addis Ababa, its capital, where around 80 per cent of the population are in slums. Families live in one room, often without clean water and a toilet.

We strive to give children access to education, nutritious food and medical care. In the last seven years the number of children we have been able to support there has risen to over 40, although many more are in urgent need.

Ethiopia's level of community transmission of COVID-19 is rising, particularly in Addis Ababa, so the push is greater than ever to help, in living circumstances where it's almost impossible to slow the spread.

Our programme reaches out further than the children, bringing benefits to the whole family. With food parcels delivered, medical care made available to the family and an empowerment programme for mothers, it means that vulnerable women can begin their own businesses and restore their dignity. One single mother with five children now runs a small laundry business, giving her the chance to provide for her family.

So, does the programme make a lasting difference to children living in slums? This is best answered by 20-year-old Salem.



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### Salem's story



*I live with my mother and two siblings. When I was seven years old my father got sick with diabetes. After two years he lost his life. My mother was responsible to provide for the family and take care of my sick father. There was no one to help. Rent, schooling, feeding, and helping us grow in our faith were all expected from her. There were times when it was hard for my mom even to feed us. These were dark days for my family.*

*At this critical time I was a first-grade student and remember my mom's prayers and tears to have help. The WIN programme came to the rescue. My mom got help to send me school and food items and detergents. In addition, twice a year I got a full medical check-up and treatment whenever needed.*

*This support changed the situation burdened on my mom. My school fees, school materials, and tutorial costs were covered. Also, we had a Bible study time that helped me grow in my faith in Jesus. This comprehensive support brought a light and joy to my family. Gradually we started to heal from our pain and deep poverty through prayer and active support.*

*I'm now a first-year medical laboratory student in a private college called Africa Medical College. To reach my academic goal I chose this field and need to move forward to my call, which is to help psychologically challenged and mentally ill people. It is my prayer and deep wish to study further clinical psychology to achieve this.*

*The pandemic brought more challenges. Lockdown means my mother stays home and loses her income, but provision at this time from the programme's support of food and necessities has stopped the return of the dark days of my childhood.*

This powerful witness of hope in the slums of Addis Ababa is bringing more people to faith. Bible study groups attract increasing numbers of members, and eight young people now meet together independently as they respond to the message of the gospel.

So much more can be achieved through involvement in practical support and prayer. Growth in funding will have an immediate and direct effect on the number of children who can be helped. The programme also needs prayer for the provision of more workers and for the hearts of those it reaches to be open to the message of hope they bring.

To find out more about WIN, its programmes in Ethiopia and other countries, and to get involved in our vital ministry, visit [worldinneed.org.uk](http://worldinneed.org.uk)

## Computers To Happy Homes!

The great guys from C4C collected our machines and are planning to use them in wonderful ways. Their Instagram post says it all:

"It's Friday, the sun is shining and we've received this generous donation from the wonderful team @fairdealwindows

Huge thank you for your support, this donation will mean many more will be helped.

Fairdeal Windows are acting with [environmental awareness](#) and [social responsibility](#), helping the [community](#) by donating their [it equipment](#) to be refurbished by Computers 4 Charity.

This kit will then be re-used by hospice patients to see their families, unemployed [veteran support](#) for job-search, the bereaved children of military personnel, [young carers](#) for their school work and in homeless shelters, enabling us to give laptops, tablets and PCs to those without any.





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