



Training Leaders for Community Transformation using CHE in Ethiopia

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s global partner, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), is using [Community Health Evangelism \(CHE\)](#) to help transform communities in two of its 17 synods.

The West Gambella Bethel Synod (WGBS) and the East Gambella Bethel Synod (EGBS) serve primarily the Nuer and Anywaa people (respectively) living in the Gambella Region which borders South Sudan. The 2007 Census calculated just over 300,000 individuals living in the region; however, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics show close to 300,000 refugees and asylum seekers from South Sudan arriving in Gambella as of February 2016. These minority ethnic groups face many difficulties and challenges, including poor nutrition, low literacy rates, and multiple diseases, including malaria and HIV/AIDS, in the hot, arid lowlands.



Mission co-worker Rachel Weller with the four Mekane Yesus interns at the CHE internship in Kenya.

PC(USA) mission co-worker [Rachel Weller](#), who serves as the CHE facilitator in the Gambella Region, works hand in hand with both WGBS and EGBS to provide leadership and guidance as these synods implement CHE within their congregations. CHE is a holistic approach to ministry which seeks to transform communities both physically and spiritually by focusing on empowering communities to identify their needs and strengths and coming together to meet these needs. CHE uses a participatory approach to training, on-going mentorship of individuals and communities and a deep seated trust in the power of Christ to change hearts and minds. Rachel’s role is to train trainers, encourage and consult with these trainers to develop an appropriate program for each synod and community within the synods, and to assist the synod CHE directors Rev. Matthew Doleak and Ms. Ariet Phillip to develop or translate materials needed for community use.

Through the support of Presbyterian World Mission and First Presbyterian Church in Spokane, WA, Rachel and four members of the Gambella synods (Rev. Matthew Doleak and Rev. Stephen Tongyik of WGBS, and Ariet Phillip and John Okuch of EGBS) deepened their understanding of the CHE philosophy and implementation by attending the five-week CHE Internship held in Nairobi, Kenya in September 2014. On returning to Ethiopia, Rev. Doleak, director of mission and evangelism, stated: “CHE will help us fulfill our whole vision for the Mission and Evangelism Department.” Both EGBS and WGBS are eager to see the word of Christ take root in their congregations and create



Role playing at CHE Training of Trainers (TOT) 1.

transformational change.



Akwata discusses how CHE helped transform her village.

One such example of how CHE training can transform a community is through the actions of Akwata, a woman from the village of Abobo. After learning how to be a CHE trainer, Akwata gathered together several of her neighbors to begin making improvements to their neighborhood. A few years later, mission co-worker Rachel Weller visited the neighborhood and saw the results. Beside most of the houses, Rachel noticed a crude dish rack holding plates, glasses, and silverware that had been used for the last meal. Sitting in the sun, these dishes were getting "sterilized" and were away from sheep, dogs, and chickens. Each house had a place to store clean water to drink. Most houses had remnants of a rainy season garden; growing pumpkins, okra, and leaf cabbage. Last year Akwata's village of Abobo received the regional award for self-development.

To support [Rachel Weller's work](#), please make a donation to [E200421](#).

To support CHE work across Africa including the work of WGBS and EGBS, donate to [E052180](#).

For more information about CHE, please visit presbyterianmission.org/story/che/.