

# **Alge Shelter**

## **A small community-sponsored student shelter**

**~ Yonas Yigezu 11/03**

Alge is a small town, about 60 Kms North of Mattu. It is a poorly structured and initially only served as a market place for the people of the district. The district of Alge Sachi is one of the most populous districts in Illubabor Zone. It is a district that is well known by its natural potential, though most people are so much impoverished.

Illiteracy level in the area is as high as 60% at this time. School attendance ( age between 6 –18) is below 50 percent. Further, only some 10 percent of the students that attend school could make it to high school. It happens so for a variety of problems, but the main factors are poverty, lack of schools in nearby places, and low level of awareness in a few cases.

There are a few elementary schools in the district where most children could go up to completion of grade six. Then very small number of them go to junior and probably high school which is situated in Alge town. For some it takes 1 whole day to get to Alge, and some even do more than that.

Children that come from rural areas to Alge in search of education very often dropout from school mainly due to lack of accommodation. Some endure the difficulties by staying at the porch of some homes, and probably making at least a meal each day.

### **Some Attempts by the Alge Presbytery**

Alge Presbytery is a presbytery that extends through the three neighboring districts. As it is always the case, believers always are aware of their responsibility to address the needs of the poor (relatively). Congregations, in particular, understand the value of education, and therefore, try to coordinate their meager resources to support those children that are going to second level elementary and high school.

The support they can provide, however, cannot go beyond raw food stuff (mostly grain- like corn, beans, peas, etc) so that the children themselves could make food for themselves while attending school. This has been the situation for almost ten years now. The children have to come to their home villages every week to collect food materials that might carry them through the next week. Most of such children come from extremely poor families, or orphans in most cases. Their support therefore comes from the community of believers. In regard to living place, they mostly stay at somebody's yard or porch or are sometimes allowed to build a temporary shelter at the backyard of once home. However, at this time, the security situation and other related social conditions are making it difficult for most children to live without any home location.

In trying to address the accommodation problem, about a year ago, the presbytery members managed to raise some funds to construct a small shelter where the school children could stay.

Accordingly, a small amount of money was raised and that enabled them build a small shelter which could accommodate some 12 children. However, this could not make any significant change as only a fraction of the needy population could be accommodated. It has therefore become a big challenge now, even more seriously than before.

### **What can we do next?**

The presbytery is now looking for a **one-time** financial support to construct a new or extend the existing shelter, so as to accommodate some 40 children altogether. The project document that the presbytery office submitted when I was in office indicates commitment of congregations to continue supporting the children as long as accommodation is available. Now the 12 students that are at the center are fully supported by believers' contribution, and there is a commitment to do even more to help their little ones.

The plan is now to construct a house, at local standard, and with locally available construction materials. There will also be an outdoor kitchen along with some related utilities. The house will be built of wooden walls, mud-plastered, and externally cement-coated. There will be no ceiling, and no other sophisticated connections. The floor might be paved with cement. However, the building must be well founded and well constructed to guarantee durability. The community of believers will continue managing and maintaining the building so that the continuing generation may also benefit from it.

### **Size of the house:**

The main shelter 12 m X 7 m = 84 m<sup>2</sup>  
Outdoor Kitchen and food store 4m x 7m= 28m<sup>2</sup>

Once the construction of the building is finished, some furniture ( at local standard) are needed. The first of these are beds and bedding materials. Thus each child will be provided a bed with a blanket and probably bed sheet, to use only as long as he/she is at school in Alge.

### **Past Experience:**

As far as experience is concerned, there is one such shelter at another district where some 32 children are accommodated and supported by congregations. It is a successful one, and has been commanded as a model for other places also.

### **Management:**

As it has been so far, there will be a management committee ( volunteer) that is to be established by the involved congregations. The presbytery office will provide a day-to day supervision, but the students are allowed to manage their affairs as a community. This committee itself will be responsible to coordinate construction activities and related functions.

Now we are looking for a one time grant that enables construction of the house and provide it with the needed equipment. Below are some budget proposals.

**Cost:**

Locally available construction materials (wood, rocks, sand, straw, etc) = Et 20,000

Skilled and unskilled labor - 10,000

Other construction materials ( cement, iron sheets, nails) = Et 20,000

Unforeseen cost - Et 5,000.

Furniture and equipments:

18 Double deck beds - Et 13,000

36 pcs of Blankets - Et 7,200

**Total budget (proposed) – Et 70,000 ( US \$ 8,000 )**

This is just an information document. A more detailed project document might be worked out if this information is not sufficient.

Please contact me for any question and opinion that you may have. I pray and trust in the lord that this would be possible. This would be an important ministry that would change the lives of many children in the Alge area.

## **Alito Shelter**

### **Information about Alito Student Shelter**

~ Yonas

Alito is a district located at about 150 Km North of Mattu, the main town of Illubabor, and a centre of the Illubabor Bethel Synod.

Illubabor Bethel Synod has been operating in this area since 1995 and at this time there are some 20 congregations (Churches) and a number of outreach centers.

The total population of the district is estimated at about 50,000, of which over 98 percent are farmers who depend on subsistence farm.

Illiteracy is the main social problem in the area. In a rough estimation, literacy level of the district would be below 5 percent. School enrolment is also too low. Poverty and inaccessibility to schools are among the many factors that are causing this situation.

At the moment, there are a number of primary schools within the villages of Alito, but children have to go to another area after completion of primary school ( grade 6 ). The only junior and secondary school ( both together) available for the whole district is located at a town called Dabaso, main town of Alito.

For some it takes a day or two ( walking ) to get to the town. Therefore, most children quite school for reasons either that parents are unable to support them at school or the children are

orphan. Most of all, Lack of accommodation or inability to rent a house is one big problem. Yet, some well-to- do farmers are able to send their children to such places while children that belong to poor families or who are orphans have no choices other than quitting school.

In response to this situation, Congregations of Alito Parish ( 20 churches) have been making efforts to support those children that go to Junior or high school by providing them food items and some financial support for school materials. This is now becoming customary in the whole Synod that groups of congregations are formed to support poor children at school. What they do is simply to contribute grains and cereals ( farmers ) and children will be taught how to cook and feed themselves. However, for this to happen there must be a home where the children could stay during school times. Some presbyteries of the Synod have been able to build Low Cost homes ( we call it shelter ), either entirely by themselves or by partial support from partners.

Alito parish is now looking for such support to build a low cost home at Dabaso town. At this stage it is aimed to build a small house that can accommodate some 30 children ( in three small rooms two for boys and one for girls: (girls are fewer than boys). The total project might cost some 20,000 Ethiopian Birr ( a little over US \$ 2000). Congregations will contribute locally available construction materials and labor and that reduces the amount of cash that is required. That is, they need financial support to cover skilled labor cost and to purchase manufactured items such as roofing metals, nails and cement.

I believe and pray that you may be part of this ministry that aims at making differences in the life of our little ones. Thank you for considering to be of support and doing this in the name our savior lord.

Yonas Yigezu.