The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is a country located in the East Africa, and surrounded by Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti. The chief industry of the country is agriculture, therefore, crops such as coffee and grains are cultivated on a large scale. Although the country has achieved significant economic growth, the country still suffers from poverty and food scarcity, because its main industry, agriculture has been largely affected by harsh climate. Due to reasons including malnutrition, 64 children out of 1,000 under the age of 5 lose their lives.

TABLE FOR TWO has cooperated with New Life Community Organization since January, 2013 to deliver school lunch in the Akaky Kali area of Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia.

NLCO was founded in 1994 with a goal of building up environments in which children and women are able to participate in and contribute to the society. NLCO manages 7 kindergartens, 5 primary schools, 4 vocational schools and a community college in Addis Ababa and the southern part of Ethiopia.

The school lunch program by NLCO started when the educational system of Ethiopia changed in 2005. Previously, students were only obligated to attend school either in the morning or in the afternoon. Therefore, most students attended school in the morning, and went to work after school in order to earn some money.

However, the system was changed by the government, and children were obligated to attend both the morning and afternoon classes. This caused a decline in attendance, because attending school for a longer time meant less time to work, which meant less income for the family. Also, many families could not afford to send their children off to school with lunch.

In order to improve children’s health and increase student attendance, NLCO started the school lunch project.
School lunch is provided to about 1000 students attending the primary schools in the Akaky area. Not only did the health conditions of children improved, but the number of attendance increased and more students show concentration during classes.

Highly nutritious ingredients are used for lunch

The ingredients used for school lunch are highly nutritious. The staple food in Ethiopia called injera, made from a type of fine grain called teff, is often eaten with stew and other side dish. Besides that, wheat and beans are also used in school lunch.

After the school lunch has been prepared, it is delivered to classrooms and are distributed onto each student’s plate.

This is a plate for one student. It contains several kinds of vegetables, and it is a well-balanced meal.
Employment Opportunities for the Mothers

In the school kitchen are mothers of those children who attend the schools.

As part of the program, 50 mothers were trained at NLCO’s vocational schools. They learned cooking methods for a large-quantity meal, about nutrition, and ways to keep sanitation in the kitchen.

After the training, the mothers obtained jobs at the school kitchen. The work included preparation of lunch, dishwashing and cleaning. Before the program, the mothers did not have cash income, but now, there is a new source of income for the family.

Feedback of the People involved

“They used to look pale and skinny before the commencement of the project but now this is not seen on their face. But after the project started, we can see their happiness and hope on the face of our children.”

Miss Netsanet

I can attend my classes properly knowing that I can have my lunch served in my school. I thank NLCO and those who make this feeding program a reality!

Aklilu, a student at a NLCO school

Underweight children were common in our school but we have seen considerable improvement since the beginning of the feeding program.

Sister Venus, a school nurse