

You Made Us Teachers



The smell of coffee wafts from fresh beans roasting over a fire in Western Ethiopia, and a few women wander toward the scent. Have a cup, says the Mother’s Union representative, smiling warmly at the newcomers. Stay for a while. We have knowledge to share.

The coffee ceremony is an invitation to a lesson, facilitated by participants in the Mother’s Union monthly teaching sessions at the Gambella Anglican Center. Dr. Wendy LeMarquand and her colleagues train representatives from churches across the region on nutrition, hygiene, water purification, basic medical care and practical skills. The teaching topic is selected with input from the students, who then return home and teach their communities, sharing knowledge about healthy living as well as the Bible lessons learned through drama.

This month, coffee ceremonies will invite women to a lesson on the Moringa plant, a valuable source of nutrition in resource-poor communities. Moringa contains large quantities of Vitamins A, B, and C, as well as protein and other minerals, all of which are scarce in the local diet. Participants learned how to plant, grow, and harvest the plant, and all of them returned home with seedlings for their church compound.

This training was requested by the Mother’s Union representatives, who are taking increasing ownership over the program. The women identify needs in their communities, encourage one another through shyness and challenges, and exchange ideas and strategies for approaching others with new knowledge. In a culture of displacement and dependency, the Mother’s Union participants boldly say, “we know we can help our communities.”

“We are seeing a difference.”



Mother’s Union participants act out a story from Matthew 25.



Participants with a Moringa seedling.



Cham teaches others to crochet bags.