Bristol charity celebrates two working mums for Global Entrepreneurship Week

Tuesday 10 November, 2015

Life can be tough for working mums. To celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week on 16 November, Bristol-based charity TREE AID compare a day in the life of two working mums, who both run their own businesses.

Alice, 37, is a mother of two. She is freelance and works in TREE AID's head office in Bristol, UK.

Amina, 37, is a mother of seven. She lives in a village in Northern Ghana. With TREE AID's support she has set up an enterprise with other women from her village producing and selling shea butter.

TREE AID work with families living in extreme poverty in Africa to plant trees, lifting them out of poverty and providing valuable nutrition for their children.They also help people use tree products such as shea butter, mango and honey to start enterprises and make the money they desperately need, by providing business skills training, improving production and creating opportunities to work together.

Morning

Alice: "I wake up at about 6.30am. My husband has normally left for the day already, so I turn on the coffee machine and enjoy a few precious minutes before the kids wake up. Then, my peace is broken as the kids clamber downstairs for their breakfast. I empty the dishwasher, and feed the dog, whilst also getting the kids dressed for school and preparing their packed lunch and after school snacks."

Amina: "I wake up at 4am, along with four of my children who share my bedroom. I head outside to the communal washing place, and then say my morning prayer. After that I make breakfast for the family outside in one of the village fire pits. Like most of our meals, it is normally millet porridge. If there is enough to go round, I'll eat some too. Next I bath the kids. We are lucky to have a well in our village so collecting water only takes 20 minutes. Five of my children will set off for school. I can't afford to send the others yet, so they stay with me for the day."

Work

Alice: "I get to work at 9am. After my second maternity leave I came back to work a few days a week freelance. Work feels good, surrounded by adults, feeling valued for what I can do well. I check my emails, attend meetings and work with the fundraising team. I'll stop for a lunch break at about 1pm, enjoying my soup and sandwich, and catching up with social media. I finish at 5pm and rush to get to after-school club and pick up the kids before closing. I'll give them some after school snacks and jelly beans."

Amina: "I'll spend the morning doing chores like tending to the animals and heading to the orchard to pick up fallen wood for the fire. I also look after the baby of a neighbour who died, and look after another neighbour after their illness. Sometimes we will have a village meeting at 10am, then it's back to the orchard to start work. I meet with other women of the village and we make shea butter together when the shea nuts are in season. First I shake the nuts from the trees, then they are roasted, ground and tuned into butter. It's exhausting and very physical work, every woman in the village contributes. We sell the shea butter at a local market, it's used as a sunscreen, insecticide and ointment. The kids get home at 2pm, and if it's the right season I'll give them a mango from one of the trees to eat, they are always hungry. They will help with work during the afternoon."

Evening

Alice: "Bed time for the kids is 7.30pm. I read them two stories and treasure this time with them, it's the only time I don't need to make sure we are all on time, in the right place and equipped for emergencies! I'll head downstairs to do a few chores, then relax on the sofa with my husband, a pizza and a box set on Netflix, whilst also answering a few work emails. By 10.30pm, I'm tucked up in bed."

Amina: "I'll prepare the porridge for tea. If times are really tough and there's no porridge, I'll mix ground nuts with some shea butter and wrap the paste in leaves. The little parcels aren't that filling, but they do contain some nutrients and energy to keep the family going. Once the kids are in bed, I'll spend a few hours making tamarind juice, which I also sometimes sell to get a bit of extra income. I'll head to bed at

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midnight, being careful not to wake the children."

A child like Amina's dies of hunger every two minutes in the African drylands. Like every mother, Amina wants the best for her children. The chance to give them more opportunities than she had, like going to school, and to keep them fed during the difficult times. Which is why TREE AID have launched the Grow Hope appeal, an urgent campaign to help 32,000 more families get the skills they need to grow trees, start their own businesses and feed their families.

TREE AID is asking people to support their Grow Hope appeal by fundraising or making a donation. Your gift will provide trees, tools and training to help even more families like Amina's grow trees for food and income.

To learn more and donate to this vital appeal visit http://www.treeaid.org.uk/growhope/

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Notes to editors

About TREE AID

(www.treeaid.org.uk)

TREE AID is respected international development organisation based in St Pauls, Bristol. Since 1987 TREE AID, founded by Bristol foresters, has been working in remote and isolated communities in Africa, where people live in extreme poverty and have little food, money or opportunity to improve their lives.

We help communities to plant trees to grow their way out of poverty and hunger. The communities we work with learn to use the produce that trees provide for food and to earn extra income.

We work with communities to raise understanding of the importance of trees and how they protect the environment, not just for today but for future generations. The trees they grow help to create more stable local environments, reducing the risk of flooding and drought, and halting the cycle of poverty and hunger.

We work with partners at all levels from village to government to make sure the voice of the poorest is at the centre of forestry policy.

We work in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali and Niger and have helped more than 500,000 people across Africa grow more than 10,000,000.

Please contact the TREE AID Communications Team on press@treeaid.org.ukor ring 07956 268441

About Grow Hope

(www.treeaid.org.uk/GrowHope)

The Grow Hope Appeal started in October 2015 and aims to raise £250,000, which will enable us to lift 32,000 people out of poverty. The Grow Hope Appeal will help villagers grow trees, and grow hope of a better future.

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