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# Dir Biyabir 2012 Annual Report

[www.dirbiyabir.org](http://www.dirbiyabir.org)

February 11, 2013

## OVERVIEW

The Dir Biyabir team is very pleased to report that in 2012 we won what is by far the biggest grant in the history of our organization. Our long-time supporters and partners, The Christensen Fund (TCF) awarded Dir Biyabir a grant of \$86,300 in November 2012 for a proposal we co-developed with Adheno for an integrated approach to economic empowerment and environmental rehabilitation in the Northern Shewa region of Ethiopia. This is an expansion of similar projects funded by TCF and implemented by Adheno in the region. The TCF Program Officer visited the project area in June 2012

and had extensive discussions with key community members and Adheno staff.

Dir Biyabir received very positive feedback from TCF on the impact of this



*Preparing soil packs for seedlings*

project on the local community, and based on this the proposal submitted by Dir Biyabir in July was approved and funded in full. We sincerely thank The Christensen Fund for the largest grant in our history and for their continued support of our work in Ethiopia.

The feedback from TCF following the project visit to Northern Shewa gave us renewed appreciation for the Adheno team and their uniquely respectful and effective style in engaging the local community. What impressed the TCF Program Manager the most was how comfortable the community leaders were

with the Adheno Director and staff, the ease of their interaction and their mutual respect for each other. The unfortunate and destructive condescension with which educated urbanites frequently treat rural villagers was no where in evidence. Instead, the villagers greeted the visiting Adheno Director, staff, and TCF Program Officer with an “agelgil” (traditional picnic basket) of the local cuisine and everyone sat under a shady tree to eat together and discuss the impact of past projects sponsored by Dir Biyabir, funded by TCF and implemented by Adheno. The villagers discussed the tangible impact of these projects on their lives, their continued need, and the priority of what they would like to see next as well as their role in implementing these projects.

The credibility and trust that Adheno has built with the local community is invaluable and is key to the success of our projects. The active engagement of the community in our projects, the focus on investing in the people, their goals and aspirations will continue to be our driving force.

## Leadership Team

There were no changes to the Dir Biyabir Leadership Team in 2012: Chairperson - Haeran Fisseha, Secretary - Aida Abate, Treasurer - Ksenia Siegel. As always, all Dir Biyabir positions are voluntary and uncompensated. The executive team continues to donate funds to cover 100% of Dir Biyabir operational expenses, thus guaranteeing that all membership fees, donations and grants are directly utilized to fund projects in Ethiopia.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Dir Biyabir team sincerely thanks all our members and especially our long-time continued supporters. Your membership validates our vision and gives us the moral support to forge ahead. As in past years, Dir Biyabir continues to receive some very generous donations from a few members. We draw much encouragement from the support and trust that motivates these donations. We extend a very special Thank You to these generous members for their continued trust and support!

Total membership in 2012 was 67, up from 66 in 2011, a growth of only 1.5% in our membership. Of the 67 members in 2012, 56 were renewing members from 2011, 6 were re-activated members (memberships from 2010 that lapsed in 2011 but were renewed in 2012), and 5 were brand new members. The 2012 Membership total of 67 members breaks down as follows:

- 84% Renewing members (up from 71%)
- 9% Reactivating Members (flat)
- 7% New Members (down from 20%)

The renewal rate in 2012 has shown significant improvement and this is very encouraging. We will continue to drive for improvements in the renewal rate to over 90%. The priority will continue to be on retaining our existing members through renewals,

however, we also see a need to recruit new members. In 2012 the Dir Biyabir team did not have bandwidth to focus on new member recruitment and this is demonstrated by the lower percentage of new members. In 2012, we will make an effort to recruit new members who will be long-term supporters.

Reminder to members: Membership is annual and can be renewed simply by paying membership fees anytime within the calendar year, all payment details are on <http://dirbiyabir.org/Membership.html> We highly encourage members to pay their membership fees as early in the year as possible. Early renewal is very helpful to us as it frees up our scarce volunteer time and effort to focus on projects rather than on reminders for membership renewal.

The new (optional) process we started in 2011 allows members to pay for up to 3 consecutive years with one payment. Several members took advantage of this new process to pay 2013 and 2014 dues in advance and we thank them for it. If you are interested in this option, you can renew for both 2013 and 2014 with one payment in 2013 by simply indicating on your check or PayPal notes that you are paying for both 2012 and 2013. We defer recognition of revenue for advance payment of membership until the effective year.

## PROJECT STATUS

In 2012 Dir Biyabir focused on co-developing a proposal with Adheno for the integrated economic empowerment and environmental rehabilitation project in Northern Shewa and getting this proposal funded.

We also followed up on 2011 projects including the poultry project for school girls as well as the

women's textile enterprise in Addis Abeba staffed and run by women survivors of leprosy. The goal of the follow up was to assess the effectiveness of the projects thus far and evaluate the case for continued funding and support of project expansion. In 2012 we also kicked off a new initiative to sponsor girls who are unable to attend school due to lack of funds.

## Integrated Economic Empowerment and Environmental Rehabilitation

Located in Moy kebele, Bassona Worana Woreda of Northern Shewa, the goal of this project is economic empowerment and enabling the community to improve its livelihood while nurturing and protecting the very unique biodiversity, environmental, and cultural heritage of this particular region of the Central Ethiopian Highlands.



*Adheno discusses projects with community*

This can be accomplished by investing in the people and supporting their desire to maintain their culture and way of life in the face of severe

environmental and economic challenges. The project takes a very integrated approach by providing economic empowerment opportunities for villagers to create income generating enterprises, while at the same time protecting the environment and regenerating the unique biodiversity and cultural heritage of the area. This integrated approach meets the immediate and urgent needs of the community, while simultaneously fostering and protecting the cultural and environmental heritage of the area. Addressing the stated and immediate needs of the community is a key factor in ensuring the sustainability of the project.

The project area has a population of 8,803 (48 % female) with average family size of five. The farmland has low productive capacity due to deforestation and soil erosion. Drinking water and fuel wood have become very scarce, causing women and girls to travel long distances to fetch water and to collect fuel wood. The project is being

implemented in partnership with Adheno, an Ethiopian grassroots NGO which developed a World Bank award winning environmental and biodiversity program called “Gudifecha of Trees” in which rural communities are encouraged and given financial incentive to “adopt” and care for trees.

A series of discussions were held by Adheno with community members of Moy to identify the key needs of the community and assess the types of projects they were willing to commit to and invest their time and effort in. Based on this discussion the following key project activities were identified:

- Plant and care for 150,000 indigenous trees, traditional medicinal plants, and animal/bee fodder plants. Provide training to youth and women on seedling production & planting
- Upgrade current footpath to horse path so farmers can better access local markets
- Develop clean source of water, provide training on soil and water conservation
- Distribute locally made fuel efficient stoves
- Build community center for training on key skills
- Adult education and literacy programs
- Support community to set up income-generating micro businesses: textile weaving, basket making, bee-keeping, horticulture
- De-worming of school children
- Experience-sharing visits for community leaders to visit and learn from other communities: Konso in Southern Ethiopia for terracing, Chencha for highland fruit tree management, and Atcheber for house construction and home making

Dir Biyabir won a grant of \$86,300 from TCF to fund this project in full, and we wired \$25,000 to Adheno in December to kick-off the project. We look forward to reporting progress on this project in Moy. We thank The Christensen Fund for making this possible, and wish the community and the Adheno team much success on this project.

## Youth Entrepreneurship

### Poultry Rearing

The poultry project was initiated in 2009 in several villages in Northern Shewa, funded by Dir Biyabir and implemented by our partner Adheno.

The project was initiated as a pilot project to help school girls raise chickens for eggs to supplement their diet. It involved the participation of not just the students, but their teachers and parents as well. Additionally, local animal husbandry



*Chicks distributed to additional school girls*

experts and veterinarians participated in training and providing services.

The first stage was launched in January 2010 when a batch of 90 chicks and sufficient chicken feed for the first couple of weeks was distributed to 30 girls. In the ensuing two stages of the project, an additional 148 girls participated, each girl receiving 3 chicks (two females and one male). As a pilot project several challenges were encountered and the project had to be adapted to address them. For example, chicken mortality was high, there were also cultural barriers that keep the kids from eating their eggs. Eggs are considered valuable commodity and are instead sold to generate income, which the children spend on school and personal material. Though generating income for the kids was not the primary intention of the project, the teachers who monitor this project have reported that it has given the girls significant non-tangible benefits such as empowerment and a sense of responsibility and independence. Nonetheless, helping students improve their nutrition remains an important goal,

and project monitors and teachers keep encouraging the girls to eat at least some of the eggs they produce and some girls actually report doing so. The goal is to gradually change behavior. A secondary goal of the project is to help kids develop entrepreneurial skills including book keeping and accounting, the impact on this will be evaluated.

Some changes in the project were implemented in 2012 based on challenges encountered. To address the problem of early mortality, slightly older chicks, better able to resist the long drive from the hatchery and the environmental change, were purchased. Chicks were also purchased and distributed during the warmer, drier season. Following the recommendations of the local experts, the breed of chicken purchased was also changed to bovan brown, which can cross with local variety and produce chicken with better resistance to local poultry diseases. Finally, girls received additional training on the care of chickens. These changes appear to have made significant improvements. During the first half of the year only about 12% of the chicks died compared with about 25% at the end of 2011.



*Hi, I'm Bovan Brown*

The last group of kids received chicken in February 2012. Before expanding this project further, Dir Biyabir

and Adheno have agreed it would be useful to evaluate accomplishments thus far to determine project impact. Adheno has initiated an extensive house-to-house survey, but because households are sparsely located it is a time and resource-consuming effort. The results of this survey will be available in 2013 and next steps will be evaluated accordingly.

## School Sponsorship

In 2012 Dir Biyabir initiated a new project proposed by Adheno to sponsor girls in seven kebeles in Bassona Worana Woreda in Northern Shewa region to attend local schools. This was a need identified by Adheno after discussion with the community. There are many girls in the area who would like to attend school but are unable to afford even basic school material as they are either orphaned or have parents who can not afford the expense. The proposal was to sponsor 89 elementary school age girls by providing them the school material they need to attend local schools. An additional 16 high school girls were to be sponsored to attend the closest high school which is in the town of Debre Berhan and requires them to rent rooms in town. Adheno was able to find funds to rent rooms for the 16 girls in town, but the girls needed funds to buy uniforms and school material.

After reviewing the details of the proposal, Dir Biyabir funded it in full and wired the requested funds 33,350 birr (\$1,841USD) in December 2012. We will monitor this project and based on the success we will renew our support annually.

## Women's Textile Enterprise

In 2009, Dir Biyabir had initiated a partnership with a small women's enterprise in Addis Abeba that creates high quality hand made cotton textile products. This enterprise is led by Wzo Birke, a leprosy survivor, and staffed by women who also are survivors of this disease. All its members have been treated and cured, however the physical damage from the disease is still apparent and the women are shunned by society and live in Zenebwork, one of the poorest neighborhoods of Addis Abeba.

In November 2011, a detailed proposal was submitted by Wzo Birke and team to equip their office with a computer, printer, and internet access as well as to get training in English language skills and

basic computer skills for Wzo Birke and Yenenesh, a key staff member. The objective of this proposal was to enable the group to communicate in English with potential customers abroad via internet in order to explore foreign market for their products.

The proposal was reviewed and approved in November 2011, and full funding of \$2,300 was provided in December 2011. In 2012 the group sent an interim report detailing project status along with pictures and receipts of the purchased office equipment. Both Wzo Birknesh and Yenenesh have been enrolled in English and computer classes. The



*Operations at Wzo Birke's Textile Enterprise*

latest email update from the group in September communicated their steady progress in learning English and gaining computer

skills. Subsequent multiple attempts to contact Wzo Birke in the last quarter of 2012 were not successful and the Dir Biyabir team decided the best course of action is to follow up with a visit.

Fortunately Dir Biyabir's board member Megdelawit will be going to Ethiopia in April and has volunteered to visit Wzo Birke and her enterprise to assess project status, discuss their needs and recommend next steps. Megdelawit had visited Wzo Birke during a prior trip and had established a good relationship with her, so she is well positioned to follow up. In the meantime, on your next visit to Ethiopia, we encourage you to purchase some of the fine cotton textile products these women produce. You can contact Woizero Birke on her mobile 251 (0) 911947757. She will be happy to bring some samples to any location within Addis Abeba.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

January 1, 2012 - December 31, 2012

<b>Revenue</b>	
Membership Fees	\$6,550.18
Donations from Individuals	\$3,671.36
Christensen Fund	\$86,300.00
T-shirt Donations	\$515.00
Donation from Dir Biyabir leadership team for Operational Expenses	\$350.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$97,386.54</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Grants Paid Out	\$27,250.98
ADHENO	\$26,841.00
Integrated Economic Empowerment/Environmental Rehabilitation	\$25,000.00
School Sponsorship	\$1,841.00
Women's Textile Enterprise for Leprosy Survivors(MS Office)	\$409.98
Operating Expenses	\$320.41
Bank Wire	\$60.00
Bank Fee	\$10.48
PO Box	\$238.00
Web Hosting and Domain Registration (donated value of \$52)	\$0.00
PayPal Fees	\$71.93
Taxes (CA Tax Refund)	-\$60.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>\$27,571.39</b>
<b>Balance</b>	
Balance from 2011	\$20,598.17
Total 2012 Revenue - Total 2012 Expense	\$69,815.15
<b>2012 Balance</b>	<b>\$90,413.32</b>

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2012

Stated 2012 Goals	Actual 2012 Accomplishment
Work with Adheno to evaluate new project proposals from Northern Shewa based on direct feedback from the community	Integrated Environmental/Economic Empowerment project developed based on extensive community discussion. Proposal submitted to TCF and grant of \$86,300 won.
Continue to strengthen and expand poultry project for school girls	Detailed survey in progress to evaluate impact. Assess next steps based on survey results
Continue supporting school improvements based on written requests and proposals.	Requested proposal from school but none received. Ato Tesfaye, Director of Moyi School and driving force behind Moy school improvement was transferred to another region
Assess role of school boys in poultry project or assess alternative appropriate entrepreneurial project based on needs and interest of the boys	Goal not met- no assessment of project for boys
Follow up on project progress with women's textile enterprise for survivors of leprosy. Support additional projects based on successful completion of current project and written feasible proposal for a new project.	<p>Progress report received from textile enterprise by women leprosy survivors, additional follow up planned for 2013.</p> <p>Entrepreneurial projects for women in Northern Shewa has been integrated into environmental rehabilitation project funded by TCF. Based on progress will fund additional women's micro-enterprises.</p>

# GOALS FOR 2013

- Follow up on Integrated Economic Empowerment and Environmental Rehabilitation project in Northern Shewa and evaluate project impact.
- Continue supporting school improvements and providing books for schools in Moy Meda, Goshebado and Workegur based on written requests and proposals.
- Continue to strengthen and expand poultry project for school girls based on results of survey assessing impact of project to date.
- Assess role of school boys in poultry project or assess alternative appropriate entrepreneurial project based on needs and interest of the boys.
- Visit women's textile enterprise for survivors of leprosy. Support additional projects based on successful completion of current project and written feasible proposal for a new project.
- Review proposal to proposal to build safe and supportive dorm environment for rural girls attending high school in Debre Berhan.

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## Thank You To Our Members !

As always, a very special thank you goes to all our members. We are grateful to all our renewing members for their continued support, and we are happy to welcome our new members who joined us in 2012. You, our



members make it possible for us to fund project that are transforming lives in Ethiopia. The best way to support the work summarized in this annual report is by continuing to renew your membership and encouraging friends and family to join Dir Biyabir. We commit to use 100% of your membership fees and donations for projects in Ethiopia. Your membership not only allows us to fund more projects, it also gives us the moral support to continue to volunteer our time and effort.

### Strength in Numbers

“Dir Biyabir Anbessa Yassir” - when spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion. Our name is inspired by an Ethiopian proverb that highlights the great strength inherent in people working together. Thank you for being a part of our web.

We wish you and yours a very happy and successful 2013!