

Dir Biyabir 2013 Annual Report

www.dirbiyabir.org

January 30, 2014

OVERVIEW

The Dir Biyabir team is gratified to report that in 2013 we made some great progress on our biggest project, an integrated economic empowerment and environmental rehabilitation projects in the Northern Shewa region of Ethiopia. This project was funded by a grant \$86,300 from The Christensen Fund to Dir Biyabir, and is being implemented by our long-term partner in Ethiopia, Adheno. This is a 2 year project that was kicked off in January 2013, and the Adheno team has reported great progress in developing a nursery for seedlings, planting trees, local production of fuel efficient stoves, and many other exciting developments. We hope you read all about the details in this report. In addition, in 2013 Dir Biyabir formed some new partnerships to implement new projects in other areas of Ethiopia. We partnered with an Ethiopian NGO known as



Locally produced parts for fuel-efficient stoves

Wildlife for Sustainable Development (WSD) to implement a project with a group of Afar women in the vicinity of the Awash National Park. This project leveraged the Afar traditions and culture to generate income for local women. The project provided training on sustainably harvesting Doum Palm leaves to create beautiful handicrafts that can be sold to generate income for the women.

In another initiative, we partnered with a member of the Ethiopian Diaspora, Dr Adugnaw Worku to

provide books for a school in Southern Gonder that he had built. Dr Adugnaw grew up in this area as a farmer's son with very limited educational opportunities. He took the initiative to raise money to build this school and we are very proud to support his efforts. This book project probably also gets the record for the fastest execution. We are sure you will be just as gratified as we were to see the number of students that benefited from this project.

In 2013, Dir Biyabir completed development on a brand new website. Our home is still at www.dirbiyabir.org but we hope you like our new revamped look which was professionally designed. It is also easier to manage and maintain so we plan to keep it more current with project updates. We are also now on twitter so do follow us [@dirbiyabir](https://twitter.com/dirbiyabir)

Our operational expense in 2013 was much higher than usual due to the cost of the new website design. We are glad to report that our executive team continued to cover 100% of all our expenses via their donation.

Leadership Team

There were no changes to the Dir Biyabir Leadership Team in 2013: 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 members, your continued support is critical. We would also like to call on your help to reach out to your friends and family to encourage them to join Dir Biyabir - our strength is in our numbers!

On September 8, 2013 Dir Biyabir secured a booth at the Ethiopian New Year celebration in San Jose, CA at the Guadalupe River Park. The goal was to reach out to the local Ethiopian community and re-introduce ourselves and recruit new members. We signed up a few new members and hope for more signups in 2014, especially since one of our members has volunteered to help us recruit. We also met some exciting potential new partners including Dr. Adugnaw Worku with whom we have since implemented one phase of a new project for school books in Gonder. We look forward to many more impactful projects in collaboration with both our new and long-term partners.



Dir Biyabir Execs at booth

Total membership in 2013 was 65, down from 67 in 2012. Of the 65 members in 2013, 55 were renewing members from 2012, 1 was re-activating lapsed membership from 2011, and 9 were brand new

members. The 2013 Membership total of 65 members breaks down as follows:

- 84% Renewing members (flat)
- 2% Reactivating Members (down from 9%)
- 14% New Members (up from 7%)

The growth of new membership in 2013 is very encouraging and we hope this trend continues. As always we emphasize the critical need to keep our existing members and to improve their renewal rates

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> *As always we kindly request members to please pay their membership fees as early in the year as possible.* If members could target to pay their renewals by June of each year it would be very helpful. Early renewal 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 2014 and 2015 with one payment in 2014 by simply indicating on your check or PayPal notes that you are paying for both 2014 and 2015. We defer recognition of revenue for advance payment of membership until the effective year.

PROJECT STATUS

In 2013 significant progress was made on the largest Dir Biyabir project to date, the integrated economic empowerment and environmental rehabilitation project in Northern Shewa. In addition new projects were funded and executed including sponsorship of

school girls (a continuation of a program kicked off in 2012), an entrepreneurship project for Afar women and a school books project in Southern Gonder. We have a section on each of these projects below.

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. The project area has a population of 8,803 (48 % female) with an average family size of five. In November 2012, Dir Biyabir won a grant of \$86,300 from The Christensen Fund (TCF) to fund this project in full. The project is being implemented by our long-term partners in Ethiopia, Adheno, and implementation was kicked-off in January 2013.

Project accomplishments in 2013 include:

A) Training and Education

- Project kick-off/orientation workshop conducted with community representatives and relevant local government officers
- Adult education given to 113 farmers (30 women)
- Partially completed Farmer training center at Moyi now almost complete
- Construction of two class rooms at the Amoragedel satellite school almost complete.

B) Environmental

- 192 farmers trained on building soil and water conservation mechanisms such as stone and soil bunds and check dams. Tools provided (50 pick axe, 50 spades, 50 hammers and 50 digging bars)
- Farmers improved conservation of 220 hectares of land by building various soil and water conservation mechanisms including stone bund, soil bund, micro basins, trenches (percolation pits) and check dams.

- More than 56,700 tree seedlings were raised at the Kasset and Workegur tree nursery stations for planting in 2013. Extensive work is currently under way on two nursery sites to produce thousands of tree seedlings for planting in 2014.
- 22,431 trees planted in Moyi Kebele including indigenous, medicinal, and fruit trees. Remuneration is provided for indigenous trees.
- 65 types of medicinal and aromatic plants were collected by knowledgeable elders and priests and planted in two nursery stations (Workegur and Kasset). Additional medicinal plants were brought from Wondo Genet Research center and planted.

C) Economic Empowerment

- Initiated production of fuel saving stoves in Goshebado
- Completed work on converting a 3.2 km foot path to a paved horse track, thus providing local farmers better access to markets for their products
- Two women involved in pottery work were



Woman provided with donkey

provided with two donkeys for transporting raw materials and finished products.

- Four men trained in artisan metal work and provided material support including four anvils.

- Improved varieties or grafted Apple, Mango, Avocado, Papaya, Banana and Coffee seedlings were bought and distributed to farmers who have access to irrigation water.

The community had especially requested the horse track and worked hard to expedite its completion. Congratulations to the community and Adheno!

Education Initiatives

School Sponsorship- Northern Shewa

In 2012 Dir Biyabir had 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 wanted to attend school but were unable to afford



A sponsored elementary school girl

even basic school material as they are either orphaned or have parents who can not afford the expense. In 2012 we sponsored 89 elementary school age girls by providing them

the school material they need to attend local schools. An additional 16 high school girls were sponsored to attend the closest high school in the town of Debre Berhan and requires them to rent rooms in town. In 2012 Dir Biyabir provided these high school girls funds to buy uniforms and school material and Adheno was able to find other funds to allow them to rent rooms in town. In 2013 we continued and expanded this initiative. In October 2013, Dir Biyabir wired funds to sponsor the education of 139 elementary school girls and 16 secondary school girls. This includes all elementary school girls from the 2012 sponsorship program who still want to continue with school. Sponsorship of elementary school girls consists of paying for their school supplies which costs about \$10 per student per year, a sum most of us would consider insignificant, but an insurmountable obstacle for these kids.

The secondary school kids have an additional challenge as they need to travel to another town for

school and to rent a local room. The annual cost per student including rent, school supplies, uniform, and supplemental books is about \$100. The parents are responsible for providing them food. Dir Biyabir will continue to sponsor these kids every year.

School Books - Southern Gonder

“Worku Jenber School” is a school in Gela Matebia, Southern Gonder, which is located in Northwest Ethiopia. It was built 3 years ago by Dr Adugnaw Worku who was himself a farmer’s son from that area with very limited access to school. Worku Jenber currently has grade 9, 10, and 11 and enrolls a total of 367 students (47% of which are girls) from 27 villages in the general area. The school has a library and a full-time librarian and stocks essential books, which students could check out for a maximum of 1 night. Because the school suffered from a severe lack of books Dir Biyabir received a proposal requesting a long list of books and we agreed to fund a pilot project. Funds were wired in November 2013 to purchase a subset of these books.



Handing over purchased books: Worku Jenber

By December, Dir Biyabir had received pictures and documentation that a total of 392 books, mostly science, math, Amharic, and English books, had been purchased locally and provided to the library. A new policy had also been instituted in December allowing students to check out books for weekends and during vacations. The project coordinators in Ethiopia showed their commitment by even using the 10% of funds designated for overhead cost to purchase additional books. Dir Biyabir will fund additional phases of this book project in 2014.

By December, Dir Biyabir had received pictures and documentation that a total of 392 books, mostly science, math, Amharic, and English books, had

Entrepreneurship

Afar community-based women's enterprise

Dir Biyabir sponsored a project with Wildlife for Sustainable Development (WSD) for the first time this year. WSD is a small Ethiopian non-profit organization (www.wsd.org.et) whose goal is to conserve biodiversity by promoting sustainable use of wildlife and wildlife habitats. WSD had developed a project for the Afar region in the eastern part of Ethiopia, with the goal of developing a sustainable approach to exploiting local palm trees



Afar women on the last day of training

and providing women with skills to produce and sell marketable handicrafts from their leaves, thus generating supplementary income. An additional goal was to create awareness among the people on how the over use and destruction of their local resources would have long-term environmental consequences. Since the goals of the project were very much in line with the objectives of Dir Biyabir, we contributed \$ 2,351 (more than 70% of the total cost) towards the project.

The most common palm tree species in the area is the Doum palm (*Hyphaene thebaica*). Most of these trees are found within the boundaries of the Awash National Park where they provide shelter for wildlife such as leopards and waterbucks and protect riverbanks from erosion. Because of the prevailing poverty, the local Afar people are forced to encroach into the park territories and illegally utilize park resources, including vegetation and animals. This

has had a significant ecological impact on the park, and there is an urgent need to implement conservation measures.

The Afar people have a history and culture of using palm leaves to produce household goods, but this tradition has mostly been lost, with only some of the elder women retaining these skills. Currently, most of the income generated from palm trees is through the sale of the leaves (often the young parts) in the capital city, Addis Abeba, where the actual household products are made. The goal of the project was to have the Afar people recover their traditional skills to make these items themselves and improve their income, and at the same time ensure that palm trees are used in a regulated manner.

From June 29 to July 6, 2013, 10 women from the villages of Dudub and Deho, were selected by community elders and local experts and were trained in handicraft production. Among the items they learned to make were baskets, mats, brooms, lampshades, hats, and trays. The women received training on standardized production, administration, business, and financial management in an environmentally sensitive way. An important aspect of the training was also facilitating the exchange of knowledge in handicraft production among the women and identifying ways to access markets for their product. Each woman was also provided start up capital to setup up handicraft production. A brochure advertising the handicraft was developed (with input from Dir Biyabir) and printed to be handed out to tourists visiting the Awash National Park. Finally, the participants discussed ways of enforcing traditional sanctions against illegal harvest of palm leaves.

Dir Biyabir received a full report following the completion of the training. WSD will evaluate the project impact on the community, and depending on the outcome, WSD may scale up this project and train more women.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013

Revenue		
Membership Fees		\$6,125.00
Renewal	\$5,400.00	
New Member	\$725.00	
Donations from Individuals		\$2,085.18
Christensen Fund		\$0.00
T-shirt Donations		\$267.00
Donation from Dir Biyabir Executive team for Operations		\$2,200.00
Revenue Total		\$10,677.18
Expenses		
Grants Paid Out		\$37,501.00
Integrated Environmental Project - ADHENO	\$30,000	
Afar Women Enterprise - WSD	\$2,351	
School Books - Gonder	\$1,650	
School Sponsorship - ADHENO	\$3,500.00	
Operating Expenses		\$2,192.47
Taxes	\$0.00	
Bank Wire	\$180.00	
PO Box	\$224.00	
Website Design	\$1,450.00	
Web Hosting	\$42.60	
PayPal Fees	\$98.21	
Printing	\$47.66	
New Year Stand	\$150.00	
Total Expense		\$39,693.47
TOTAL REVENUE LESS TOTAL EXPENSES		-\$29,016.29
Balances		
Ending Balance from 2012		\$90,413.32
Total 2013 Revenue - Total 2013 Expense		-\$29,016.29
2013 Ending Balance		\$61,397.03

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2013

Stated 2013 Goals	Actual 2013 Accomplishment
Follow up on Integrated Economic Empowerment and Environmental Rehabilitation project in Northern Shewa and evaluate project impact.	Significant progress against project goals reported
Continue supporting school improvements and providing books for schools in Moy Meda, Goshebado and Workegur based on written requests and proposals.	No proposal received for books for schools in Moy Meda, Goshebado and Workegur. However books funded for new school project in Gonder
Continue to strengthen and expand poultry project for school girls based on results of survey assessing impact of project to date.	No additional phases funded for poultry project, pending impact assessment
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
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.	Dir Biyabir member met with Wzo Birke. Dir Biyabir was not satisfied with results and impact of computer training that was funded, no further projects planned with this group in short-term.
Review proposal to proposal to build safe and supportive dorm environment for rural girls attending high school in Debre Berhan.	Adheno re-assessed this project and decided to continue to fund students to rent rooms in town in short-term. Dir Biyabir sponsored 16 girls to attend high school in Debre Berhan.
	Sponsored 139 elementary school girls to attend school in Northern Shewa
	Successfully completed project to train Afar women to start micro-enterprises based on local handicraft tradition.
	Launched new website and established presence on twitter

GOALS FOR 2014

- Successful completion of the Integrated Economic Empowerment and Environmental Rehabilitation project in Northern Shewa and evaluation of project impact.
 - Continue supporting school sponsorship program for girls in Northern Shewa.
 - Support school improvements and providing books for schools in Northern Shewa (Moy Meda, Goshebado and Workegur) based on written requests and proposals.
 - Fund additional purchases of school books for the Worku Jenber school in Southern Gonder.
 - Evaluate needs for additional projects in Northern Shewa.
 - Fund purchase of school books in other areas of Ethiopia (pending new partnerships being finalized)
 - Recruit additional members.
 - Keep website more current with project information.
 - Establish more presence on twitter.
-

Thank You To Our Members !

As always, a very special thank you goes to all our members. We appreciate the support of all our renewing members, and are happy to welcome our new members to the Dir Biyabir family. You, our members make it possible for us to fund projects 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 helping us get the word out by encouraging friends and family to join Dir Biyabir. As always 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 2014!
