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Dir Biyabir 2016 Annual Report

February 09, 2017

OVERVIEW

As we launch into the new year we reflect back into 2016 and find that in many ways it was both a challenging and fruitful year for Dir Biyabir. The worst drought in Ethiopia in 50 years led us to do a special online fundraiser effort in January -February. Thanks to the generous support of a small group of members and other donors, the funds raised far exceeded our goals. Though Dir Biyabir normally does not participate in emergency relief, the extent of the problem required our action. We note with gratitude that our direct project area in Northern Shewa i.e the wereda (district) of Bassona Worana was minimally impacted by the drought and we believe this is a sign of the effectiveness of the Environmental Rehabilitation and Economic Empowerment projects that we have been funding in this area via our partner ADHENO. 100% of funds



Trees planted in "Debir Gott" - Weyniye

raised for the drought were allocated to Kewet wereda where funds were used to purchase seeds and cattle feed to help farmers get back on their feet as soon as possible. It should be noted that despite appeal to other organizations, Dir Biyabir was the only non-profit that donated to ADHENO for drought relief in this area so we would like to extend a very special thank you to all the individuals who responded generously to our appeal.

2016 was a record year in terms of individual donations driven mostly by the fundraiser for the

drought but also due to a very unexpected individual donation of \$10,000, the highest in our history! We are making plans to allocate this donation to a project that aims to re-introduce traditional herbs, medicinal plants and other indigenous vegetation that have disappeared from Northern Shewa. Stay tuned for progress on this project which is expected to be implemented in the first half of 2017.

The Dir Biyabir Chairperson who had decided to take an extended self-funded trip to Ethiopia spent all of 2016 in the country, and so had the unique opportunity to personally visit several projects and assess their impact including drought relief efforts in Kewet, as well as education initiatives in Addis Abeba and Northern Shewa.

In 2016 we saw more members utilizing automatic renewal via PayPal. We strongly encourage more of our members to make use of this very convenient **PayPal Auto-Renew feature** on our website: <http://dirbiyabir.org/page/become-a-member>

Leadership Team

There were no changes to the Dir Biyabir Executive Team in 2016: Chairperson - Haeran Fisseha, Secretary - Aida Abate, Treasurer - Ksenia Siegel. The Board consists of: Dr. Tadesse Wolde, Sam Smith, and Dr. Asrat Tesfayesus. All Dir Biyabir positions are voluntary and uncompensated. The Executive team continues to cover 100% of Dir Biyabir operational expenses, to ensure that all membership fees, donations and grants are directly utilized to fund projects in Ethiopia.

MEMBERSHIP

Starting January 1 2015, the Dir Biyabir membership levels were adjusted as follows

- Diamond: \$1,000 per year
- Platinum: \$500 per year
- Gold: \$200 per year
- Silver: \$100 per year

Since this adjustment, revenue from membership fees has increased by over 140% so we'd like to extend our sincere thanks to our new and renewing members. Most of our projects are funded by membership fees so this increase membership revenues allows us to fund more projects. As always 100% of membership fees and donations are allocated to fund one of our grassroots projects in Ethiopia.

Total membership in 2016 was 68, down by 5.6% from our 2015 membership level of 72. Of the 68 members in 2016, 50 were renewing members from 2015, 11 were re-activating lapsed membership from 2014 or earlier, and 7 were brand new members. The 2016 Membership total of 72 members breaks down as follows:

- 89.7% Renewing or reactivating members
- 10.3% New Members

Membership fees are our only reliable and consistent source of revenue to fund projects in Ethiopia so we

very much appreciate all of our members.

Membership is a mechanism to fund our projects in Ethiopia via membership fees. There are no additional responsibilities or obligations for being a member.

For those of you who prefer the convenience of auto-renewal we remind you that we have a **PayPal Auto-Renew feature** on our website: <http://dirbiyabir.org/page/become-a-member> so do make use of it so you don't have to worry about remembering to renew your membership every year.

Reminder to Members: Membership is annual and can be renewed simply by paying membership fees within the calendar year. Members are strongly encouraged to renew their membership as early in the year as possible.

New or Renewing Membership can be paid by:

1) Sending a check (please include your email address for receipts) payable to Dir Biyabir to:

Dir Biyabir, P.O. Box 391532, Mountain View, CA 94039

2) Via Pay Pal on our website: <http://dirbiyabir.org/page/become-a-member>



"Gedenbo Gott" in Weyniye

PROJECT STATUS

2016 was a record year in terms of the total amount of funds released to various projects in Ethiopia. Project grants given out by Dir Biyabir totaled \$89,739. The largest projects funded were the drought relief efforts in Kewet and the continuation of the Environmental project in Northern Shewa. The Environmental Rehabilitation and Economic Empowerment project was funded entirely by The Christensen Fund except for 2 components: the rural road from the village to markets in town, and the Women's Self Help Groups. Both of these components were funded by membership fees and individual donations.

Dir Biyabir's commitment to education continued in 2016 with the rural school books projects in the Gurage zone and Northern Shewa, the School Girl Sponsorship program, and the education program at Grace for All Center for street children in Addis Abeba

Integrated Economic Empowerment and Environmental Rehabilitation

In June of 2015, Dir Biyabir and our implementation partner ADHENO launched phase 4 of our largest project, "Integrated Environmental Rehabilitation and Economic Empowerment". This 2 year project in the kebele (sub-district) of Weyniye (pop. 2,528) in Northern Shewa, was funded with an \$80,000 grant from TCF. As in prior phases, the goal of phase 4 of this project is economic empowerment and



Debre Birhan Seedling Station

enabling the community to improve its livelihood while nurturing and protecting the unique environmental and cultural heritage and biodiversity of this

region of the Central Ethiopian Highlands. Key accomplishments of this project to date include:

- 1) Renovated an abandoned nursery station in Debre Birhan and raised 80,000 tree seedlings.
- 2) Planted 75,420 indigenous trees including Wanza, Kosso, Koshim (bush useful to prevent soil erosion).

- 3) Constructed terracing on about 126 acres of land
- 4) Constructed a clean water spring that serves 53 households (about 265 people)
- 5) Distributed seeds of local varieties of teff, lentils and chickpeas to encourage propagation of indigenous varieties.
- 6) Provided farmers with seedlings of local varieties of fruits and vegetables including cabbage, carrots, tomato, onion, lemon and coffee.
- 7) Supported revenue generating activities including one group engaged in pottery and another in basket-weaving household items from bamboo.

In addition to the above activities funded by our TCF grant, Dir Biyabir also funded the below activities in Weyniye using membership fees:

- 1) Built a 3.5km foot-path out of Weyniye valley to facilitate access to local markets to sell goods.
- 2) Funded 3 Women Self Help Groups: Addis Berehan, Fanos and Helm Ayehu. Each member of the SHG starts her own business which so far include preparing traditional food/spices, sheep fattening, raising poultry, and trading in grains. The new grant from Dir Biyabir is being used to give new loans to the women to start new businesses based on written business plans.

Educational Initiatives

A- School Sponsorship- Northern Shewa

Dir Biyabir continued support for a school sponsorship program that was kicked-off in 2012. The program was proposed by our local partner ADHENO to sponsor the education of girls in seven kebeles in Bassona Worana Wereda in Northern Shewa. ADHENO identified that there are many girls in the area who wanted to attend school but were unable to afford even basic school material. In 2014 Dir Biyabir had sponsored 139 elementary school girls and 28 secondary school girls.

In 2016 Dir Biyabir continued support for 139 elementary school girls and 27 high school girls. One of our high-school girls unfortunately dropped out before the start of this academic year. Having passed the National Exam, we were disappointed by her decision, but she had some pressure to earn income to support her family. On the bright side, 10 out of the 28 students passed the national exam given at grade 10 with high enough grades to enter the college track (including the girl who dropped out). 12 have entered vocational training as their grade was not high enough for the college track. All 10 passing students received a cash award at a lunch hosted by ADHENO and the Dir Biyabir



Ayahlush & Friends at Award Lunch

Chairperson on December 17. One of our students, Ayahlush Dereje, earned the highest grade in the history of ADHENO's sponsorship program, scoring 3.85 out of 4.0 on the national exam,

and received a special award. The Dir Biyabir Chairperson met with Ayahlush to encourage her in her dreams of studying engineering in college. She comes from a poor rural family who can not afford to send all 3 girls to school at the same time so the kids were taking turns to go to school. As the eldest,

Ayahlush helps her sisters when they are forced to miss school. Ayahlush tells us that what her family can not provide in money they compensate with their love and support. We will be keeping close track of this very bright and hard-working young lady!

B- School Books - Northern Shewa

In 2016 Dir Biyabir provided funding for the purchase of much-needed books at 3 schools in Northern Shewa: Goshebado and Debre Eba High Schools, and



Books Delivered to Debre Eba High

Weyniye Elementary School. In addition we funded a new initiative to purchase story books, puzzles,

color pencils and paper for 3 rural pre-schools in Workegur, Weyniye, and Moy. Funding was provided based on a written proposal from each school including a list of books needed. Our implementation partner ADHENO purchased the books in Addis Abeba and on December 8 the Dir Biyabir Chairperson accompanied the ADHENO team in delivering the books directly to the schools. 208 books were delivered to Debre Eba High. 142 books were handed over to the director of Weyniye Elementary as well as pre-school material for the Weyniye pre-school. Next the team headed over to the new Goshebado High School which did not yet have a single book in its library. 627 books were handed over to this school. It was then on to Workegur to handover story books, jigsaw puzzles (depicting Ethiopian historical spots or cultural traditions), color pencils, alphabet and picture charts etc for Workegur Pre-school. Similar pre-school material for Moy pre-school was delivered to the ADHENO office in Debre Birhan for later pickup by the Moy School director.

C- School Books - Gurage Zone

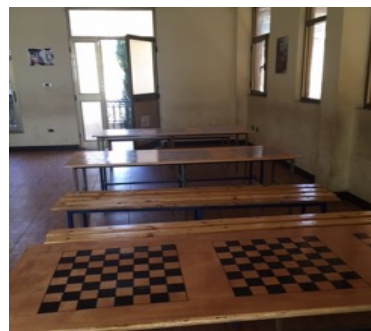
Dir Biyabir has been funding the purchase of school books in the Gurage Zone since 2014. Based on a written proposal from schools specifically listing the books they need, Dir Biyabir has been working with our implementation partner Journey to Light (JTL) to fund the purchase of books for 6 schools in this area. In 2014 - 2015 we funded books for Yedege, Anano, Bojebbar, and Negoder Elementary schools, all in the Wereda (district) of Edja. In 2015 the Dir Biyabir Chairperson visited these schools as well as additional schools in the area while on a self-funded trip to Ethiopia. Based on her visit and discussions with teachers and students she was convinced of the effectiveness of this initiative (which according to teachers has resulted in a 90% improvement in the number of students passing the 8th grade National exam). In 2016 Dir Biyabir funded the purchase of school books for two additional schools in Cheha Wereda per the list of books they submitted to Dir Biyabir. In April 2016, Borana Tuba Primary School received 188 books and Bakanwote Elementary School received 358 books. We are confident these students will make good use of these books and wish them much success in their studies.



Students at Borana Tuba with their new books

D- Education at Grace for All

In 2016 Dir Biyabir funded educational initiatives for a Center for street children in the capital Addis Abeba, Grace for All (GFA) is a Center that supports 200 street kids in Addis Abeba (30% girls and 70% boys). In the last quarter of 2014 GFA had implemented a Dir Biyabir funded library project including the purchase of 304 books which were mostly text books: English, Amharic, Math, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Dictionaries, and some children's books. These books are currently in the GFA library on shelves and this was confirmed by the Dir Biyabir Chairperson on her visit to the facility in July 2016. In addition materials to build benches and tables were purchased, with Dir Biyabir and GFA splitting the cost for materials 50/50. The benches and tables were built and installed with help from students and staff and are still in use today. However there was a need for additional benches and tables to accommodate all the children so in 2016 Dir Biyabir provided funds to purchase material to build 35 benches and 17 tables. In addition Dir Biyabir funded the purchase of 2 hand-



Tables and benches built at Grace for All

washing basins and a kitchen sink to improve hygiene for all the children. Currently all the benches and tables have been built with help from the students and staff of Grace for All and have been put

to good use. Not only was it cheaper to build the tables and benches, the staff was also able to paint checkerboards on the tables so they could also be used by the kids to play games

Drought Relief

In 2015 to 2016 the worst drought in 50 years impacted various areas of Ethiopia including the Northern Shewa region. The specific area where Dir Biyabir and ADHENO have been implementing Integrated Environmental Rehabilitation and Economic Empowerment projects in the Bassona



Ox at Kure Beret

Worana district of Northern Shewa were minimally impacted and we believe this is a testament to the effectiveness of these projects, which have

focused on rehabilitating the deforested landscape and improving agricultural yields through various water conservation and management techniques. Thus Dir Biyabir was requested to assist the wereda (district) of Kewet which was much more severely impacted. with 49% of the population of 94,788 requiring aid.

While food aid is critical to meet the short-term need of the people, Dir Biyabir prefers to focus on measures that assist farmers to quickly get back on their feet and end dependence on external aid. This meant focus was needed on providing cattle feed and seeds. Oxen are needed to plough the fields, and due to the shortage of cattle feed, these critical animals were dying at an alarming rate. In addition, the farmers had not been able to save any seed for the next planting season so seeds for cereal grains such as wheat, teff, and barley were critically needed.

Dir Biyabir drove a special online fundraiser for this cause in the 1st Quarter of 2016 and was able to raise \$21,205 from a very small group of generous members and other supporters. Dir Biyabir then added on \$10,000 from its own coffers and the total \$31,205 was wired to ADHENO in March for this cause. On April 5 2016, the Dir Biyabir Chairperson Haeran Fisseha accompanied the ADHENO team on a trip to Kewet to observe the distribution of cattle

feed purchased with funds provided by Dir Biyabir. The distribution focused on 2 specific kebeles (sub-districts), namely Kure Beret and Sefi Beret. The kebeles are located 30kms and 36kms respectively from the nearest town of Shewa Robit which is 100kms from the town of Debre Birhan which itself is 130 kms from the capital city, Addis Abeba. Both kebeles are located in the lowland “Qola” region adjacent to the Afar area. A total of 1,500 farmers (including 450 women) were identified based on the greatest level of need and the following feed were distributed in April 2016. All 1,500 farmers received ቁጭ but only 191 of them also received factory feed



Dir Biyabir Chairperson at Feed Distribution at Kure Beret

Distribution included:

Sefi Beret:

- 1,400 bundles of “Chid” ቁጭ (i.e the stalk of Teff which is mixed with factory produced cattle feed),
- 20,000kg of factory produced cattle feed

Kure Beret:

- 1,000 bundles of “Chid” ቁጭ (i.e the stalk of Teff which is mixed with factory produced cattle feed),
- 25,000kg of factory produced cattle feed

At the end of June 2016, right before the planting season 3,500 kgs of Teff seed was distributed to 280 farmers.

Though the community’s need far outweighs Dir Biyabir’s capacity, our contribution helped these 1,500 farmers get back on their feet sooner.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016

Revenue		
Membership Fees		15,920.16
Renewal	14,920.16	
New Member	1,000.00	
Donations from Individuals		12,100.00
Drought Fundraiser		21,205.00
Virtual Run Fundraiser		45.37
Corporate Match		943.75
The Christensen Fund		30,000.00
Amazon Smile Donation		75.19
Donation from Dir Biyabir management team for operations		1,000.00
Revenue Total		81,289.47
Expenses		
Grants Paid Out		89,739.31
TCF Environmental Project - Northern Shewa	40,000	
JTL School Books Project in Gurage Zone- Phase 3	1,867	
School books – Northern Shewa	5,000	
Drought Funding - Northern Shewa	31,205	
Grace For All Center - Addis Abeba	1,437	
Self- Help Group - Northern Shewa	2,464	
Pre-School Project - Northern Shewa	1,495	
School Sponsorship Project - Northern Shewa	6,271	
Operating Expenses		927.56
PO Box	86.00	
Bank/Wire Fees	285.00	
Paypal Fees	556.56	
Total Expense		90,666.87
Balances		
Ending Balance From 2015		56,646.88
Total 2016 Revenue – Total 2016 Expense		-9,377.40
2016 Ending Balance		47,269.48

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2016

Stated 2016 Goals	Actual 2016 Accomplishment
<p>Food Security (given latest drought)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term: hold fundraising and support drought relief efforts in Northern Shewa Long-term: develop proposals and win new grants to fund additional Environmental Rehabilitation and Economic Empowerment projects that improve food security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> short-term: raised \$21,205 and added on \$10,000 from Dir Biyabir coffers for total \$31,205 for drought relief Long-term: developed 4 proposals , 2 are pending (UNDP and KR Foundation), and 2 were not accepted (SIDA and Global Innovation Fund)
Visit Dir Biyabir sponsored projects and identify new effective projects with existing partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed poultry project proposal with Sebeta Gethsemane Nunnery Funded new education projects
Expand School Girl Sponsorship Program, add annual updates	Decision made to expand support for existing students and get more updates on their progress than to add new students
Identify new project partners in Ethiopia with proven backgrounds in grass-roots projects	Developed new partnership to support Awramba Community. Additionally decision made to focus on existing partners.
Develop training for ADHENO staff on grant writing, communication, etc	Worked with ADHENO staff to develop 2 new grant proposals
Recruit additional members.	6 new members recruited in 2016
Identify new funding partners for Dir Biyabir	Largest individual donation received but no new foundation partners
Hold Dir Biyabir Fundraiser in US	Virtual Run Fundraiser was not successful and raised only \$45
Improve social media presence including Facebook and Twitter	Developed new Facebook page, and participated in Facebook based fundraiser

GOALS FOR 2017

- Identify new funding partners for Dir Biyabir or ADHENO
- Fundraise from individual donors and supporters of Dir Biyabir
- Fund all projects in pipeline
- Maintain or grow 2016 level of membership
- Successful transition of a new Chairperson by 2nd Quarter of 2017
- Implement new partnership for supporting Awramba Community
- Maintain current level of reporting including Annual Reports, Quarterly Reports, and Website Updates
- Improve social media presence including Facebook and Twitter

Thank You To Our Members !

Most of Dir Biyabir’s projects are funded by the membership fees and donations of our members, so as always a very special Thank You goes to our new members as well as our renewing members. By renewing their membership year after year, our long-time members has been especially critical in giving us a continued stream of revenue to fund our projects, so we are always gratified and encouraged by their support. If you like what we do, the best way to support us is by continuing to renew your membership and by encouraging friends and family to join Dir Biyabir. For our part, we will continue to commit that 100% of your membership fees and donations will be allocated to projects in Ethiopia.



Goshebado Students Welcome Dir Biyabir

“Dir Biyabir Anbessa Yassir” - “When Spider Webs Unite, They Can Tie Up a Lion”. Our name is inspired by a popular Ethiopian proverb that highlights the great strength inherent in people working together. “Dir Biyabir” means “when spider webs unite”, and the more webs we have the stronger we are. Thank you for being a part of our web!

Wishing you and yours a very happy and successful 2017!