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Dir Biyabir 2010 Annual Report

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OVERVIEW

In April 2010, Dir Biyabir won a second grant of $25,000 from The Christensen Fund (TCF) to fund our Reforestation and Environmental Protection project in Northern Shewa. TCF has not only been the funder of our biggest project, their vote of confidence has armed us with the enthusiasm, energy and credibility needed to forge ahead with even more projects. We are very thankful to The Christensen Fund for their continued support. The Dir Biyabir Leadership team was fortunate enough to visit all sponsored projects in Ethiopia and/or meet with the project beneficiaries. The Dir Biyabir Secretary, Aida Abate, visited the projects in October 2010 and spent significant time meeting with villagers, youth, school children, and teachers to hear their perspective on the value of the projects and their thoughts on the best path forward. Based on these conversations, and the great warmth with which Aida was received on her visit, the leadership team is realizing that the impact of these projects, as small as they are, far exceeds our expectations. The environmental project has empowered the villagers to finally act upon their long-standing concern about the rapid degradation of their environment and it's impact on their children. It has also given them access to clean water and improved their daily lives. The poultry project for girls has instilled a sense of confidence and independence in rural school girls, and access to books has excited both school kids and their teachers. Perhaps the most gratifying aspect is seeing the change in the villagers attitude. As they see their labor bearing fruit through these projects, they are realizing their ability to tangibly transform and improve their lives. With this realization comes more confidence to take on bigger and better projects. The Dir Biyabir community by working with the ADHENO team, is enabling neglected communities to unleash their full potential, and it is truly exciting to see what people can do with very little help and in very difficult situations. We thank our members for making this possible. We also thank ADHENO our key partner in Ethiopia, and the implementer of most of our sponsored projects. ADHENO's credibility with the villagers and their dedicated support and management of these projects has been, and continues to be, the most critical success factor. We continue to seek small grass-roots development organizations with similar levels of competence and integrity that we could partner with in other areas of Ethiopia.

Leadership Team

Ksenia Siegel has very graciously agreed to take on the role of Treasurer. Ksenia has been doing some excellent work in upgrading our financial tracking and metrics-based reporting, we are happy to welcome Ksenia to the executive team. The rest of the Dir Biyabir team and Board remains unchanged. 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.

MEMBERSHIP

In 2010, in addition to membership fees, Dir Biyabir received some very generous donations from a few members. We are very encouraged and inspired by their vote of confidence in our organization.

Dir Biyabir Membership actually shrunk from 66 at the end of 2009 to 61 at the end of 2010. 2010 was the first year that Dir Biyabir saw an overall reduction in membership and though disappointing, there are some lessons to be learned. In September 2009 we recruited 12 new members via our outreach booth at the Ethiopian New Year celebration in San Jose, CA. The renewal rate of these new members was under 35% which is far below the 90% renewal rate of all other members. Other members were directly recruited via personal networks of friends and family, and have maintained very high rates of renewal. This would seem to imply that public events may be better suited for raising one time donations than for recruiting long-term members. We are relying on our members to help expand the Dir Biyabir community by reaching out to their personal network to recruit new members by discussing the impact of Dir Biyabir projects. A Dir Biyabir member had suggested and developed a "Me Plus One" campaign to get all members to renew their membership and recruit one additional person. The message and flyer for this campaign that was emailed to all members can serve as a valuable recruiting tool. Please simply forward the email with a small note encouraging your friends/family to join and follow up with them. We will re-send the email, and we thank you for all your efforts in expanding our membership ranks.

PROJECT STATUS

Dir Biyabir projects showed good progress in 2010 and a few new projects were also initiated. The environmental project funded by The Christensen Fund (TCF) continues to be our biggest project and has been very well received by the local community in Kasset. The project had been initiated at the explicit request of a community elder who had been alarmed at the rate of deforestation and environmental degradation in the area. The local community continues to be very actively involved in this project

Reforestation and Environmental Protection

Phase 1 of this project in the Kasset region of Northern Shewa was initiated in January 2009. Phase 2 was kicked off in April 2010 funded by a second grant from TCF. The project is being implemented by ADHENO and the credibility of ADHENO in the community has been critical in ensuring the success of this project. So far over 84,000 trees have been raised, distributed and planted. An environmentally degraded area of the surrounding mountains has been enclosed and protected from animal and human activity to allow it to recover. Stone bends as seen in the picture, have also been successfully constructed to mitigate erosion of the land by running rain water. The spring water that was tapped has not only been used for the seedlings, it has provided much needed clean water for the community. The villagers have communicated to Dir Biyabir their profound appreciation for this access to clean water. They are also visibly energized and motivated by the

opportunity to improve the environmental condition of their area and to restore trees and natural flora to their land. A village elder communicated to Dir Biyabir his disappointment at the the way trees had been chopped down in his community, and the land left eroded and barren. He shared with us his vision and his sense of responsibility to ensure that his generation restores the land to some of it's natural vegetation before they hand it over to the next generation. We are privileged to be able to assist this very wise old man and his community achieve such a visionary goal.

Youth Entrepreneurship

Dir Biyabir funded three entrepreneurship projects for rural youth in the Northern Shewa region. All projects are managed and monitored by ADHENO.

1. Poultry Rearing

The poultry project was kicked of in August 2009 with 30 school girls from the Workegur Primary School with the dual goals of teaching the kids entrepreneurial skills while also providing access to nutritious food. Each girl had been given three 3-month old chicks (including one male) and some chicken feed to get started. By August 2010 close to 90% of the chicks were alive and each girl had at least one chick that was laying eggs. Based on the success and popularity of this project, Dir Biyabir funded an extension of this pilot project to an additional 68 school girls at both the Workegur Primary School as well as another school in Goshebado. It seems there was a higher rate of chicken deaths in the second phase of the project, possibly due to weather conditions. The school girls met with the Dir Biyabir Secretary during her project visit in October 2010 and communicated to her their excitement about the project. They told her that they have been able to buy school books, shoes, clothes, and kerosene (so they can study at night) by selling the eggs. The girls were encouraged to inform the local vet and their teachers when their chicken got sick. Dir Biyabir is working with ADHENO to improve the monitoring of the chicken. We are also evaluating the possibility of replacing chicks that died. Boys in the schools have asked that they too be included in this project. This is a fair request and Dir Biyabir will evaluate and implement a project for boys. Dir Biyabir and ADHENO chose to prioritize girls as they are typically given lower priority in the society despite the huge responsibilities they are given.

2. Irrigation Based Horticulture

In October 2008, Dir Biyabir had funded a youth group that had been organized as a fruit and vegetable growing cooperative. Funding was requested by the Magwasha youth co-op to develop an irrigation system for horticulture. In 2009, we reported that this group of 35 youth had planted and harvested 4,000kg of onions. In 2010, this group planted and harvested 2,200kg of teff (the most important local grain). They have also planted several fruit trees. When this group met with the Dir Biyabir Secretary they expressed their appreciation for the initial grant that was given to them and informed us that they require no further assistance. So far this group has been the most successful youth entrepreneurship group funded by Dir Biyabir and we are extremely proud of their drive and tenacity. We wish them even more success in the future.

3. Bee-Keeping

The bee-keeping project was the first youth-entrepreneurship project funded by Dir Biyabir. In 2008 the youth group "Goshebado Tsigereda Wetatoch Mehaber" had requested funding to start a bee-keeping enterprise. 30 modern beehives had been purchased and installed, but in 2009 we reported that for various reasons, this group of youth had found it challenging to manage this project centrally as a team. The beehives were distributed with each member getting 2 or 3 beehives. The youth have installed the beehives by their homes and have been managing them individually. When they met with the Dir Biyabir Secretary in October 2010, they reported that they had already generated revenue from one season of harvest and that they expected another harvest by the end of 2010. By December 2010 when one of our members went to visit the projects, she was able to buy two jars of honey from the latest harvest. She also met a youth who had earned $1,600 ETB(about $95 USD) by selling honey. ADHNEO has been supporting a recently formed local honey co-op "Tegulet Mar Mehaber". The youth have joined this co-op which will collect honey from all bee keepers in the area, then refine, bottle and sell it.

School Books

One of the key Dir Biyabir goals is to provide access to books for rural school school children. We reported in 2009 our disappointment at the failure of our first attempt to do so. In June 2008, Dir Biyabir had provided funding for the purchase of text books for the Workegur Primary School. These text books can not be purchased in Addis Abeba so the text books had to be purchased through local school officials. Thought the books were reportedly purchased by the officials, they were not distributed to the school kids and repeated efforts by ADHENO to ask the local officials to distribute the books had failed. We reported that the loss of this $500 had taught us the valuable lesson that funds should never be placed at the disposal of non Dir Biyabir-approved organizations. Since then Dir Biyabir has seen much better success at distributing books and school equipment through two initiatives.

1. Shashemene Books

In 2010 Dir Biyabir initiated a new project to provide books for the library of the "School for Humanity" in Shashemene. Dir Biyabir was introduced to this school by the group "Ethio Village" based in San Jose, California. This is a well established and well run school initially funded by two non-profits: "School for Humanity" (US) and "Hope and a Future" (Ireland). It is currently funded entirely by the Irish group. The school has 287 children and targets children from the lowest income families. The school submitted a proposal for books for their library and Dir Biyabir provided $1,000 USD. The staff purchased books in Addis Abeba and showed their commitment by using the funds allocated for their logistics expense to purchase a book shelf. The Dir Biyabir Secretary was warmly welcomed when she visited in October and was proudly shown the new books in the library. Our secretary also visited a very small school nearby which gets no funding. She provided exercise books, pens, pencils, erasers, sharpener, and ruler for each child in the school. The children were very pleased. Dir Biyabir is evaluating the feasibility of a long-term relationship with one or both schools

2. Workegur Books

In the second attempt to provide books for the students of the Workegur primary school in Northern Shewa, Dir Biyabir leveraged lessons learned from the first attempt by providing books directly to the school. ADHENO used funds provided by Dir Biyabir to purchase a selection of Amharic, English, and Mathematics books in Addis Abeba. Exercise books were also purchased for each of the 205 students. These books were directly handed to the Workegur school by ADHENO and the Dir Biyabir Secretary during her October visit. The school has no library, so the staff committed to convert a storage room to a library, and to place the books on a shelf previously donated by Dir Biyabir. The

teachers have recommended that books not be lent out to the children due to lack of a check-out process, and that the children should read in the library. Dir Biyabir has asked local ADHENO program managers to monitor to ensure children are given sufficient access to the books. Based on the success of this pilot, Dir Biyabir plans to expand this little library.

School Expansion in Moy

The village of Moy Meda in Northern Shewa has a small local school for grades 1 to 6. This school is about a 1 hour walk from the Kasset environmental protection project site. Upon hearing of the visit of the Dir Biyabir Secretary to the Kasset project site in October, the headmaster of the school Ato Tesfaye went to Kasset with the specific goal of meeting the secretary and discussing the situation of his school. Ato Tesfaye explained the critical need to expand the school by adding grades 7 and 8. Currently students who complete grade 6 at this school have to walk long distances to attend another school in Goshebado for grade 7 and 8. The situation is especially difficult for girls who face additional hazards such as harassment on their long walk to this school. The

villagers had pooled their resources to start building these classrooms and put up a wooden frame but ran out of money. The local education office stated they have no budget to help. The Dir Biyabir secretary visited the school and was very impressed by the dedication of Ato Tesfaye and the other teachers, especially their efforts to create teaching material from the very basic material (as seen in picture below). At Dir Biyabir's request, Ato Tesfaye very promptly submitted a detailed proposal outlining the short-term need to complete the classrooms as well as his long-term vision for expanding the school. Based on this proposal, Dir Biyabir provided the requested $1,000 USD to ADHENO to manage the completion of the construction of the classes. By December ADHENO had purchased and provided 100

corrugated iron sheets, 10kg nails, and ordered three doors and seven windows via the local metal work shop. Iron wire and the remaining nails were provided by the local education office. Remaining funds will be used to purchase blackboards. By January 2011 the doors and windows were delivered and installed. Local villagers are contributing their labor and are now in the process of mixing the mud for the walls. Based on the final results of this pilot project, Dir Biyabir will evaluate further engagement in developing the infrastructure of this school.

Women's Textile Crafts Enterprise

In 2009, Dir Biyabir had initiated a project with a small women's enterprise in Addis Abeba that creates high quality hand made cotton textile products. This enterprise is staffed and run by women survivors of leprosy, and all it's members have been treated and cured of the disease. However the physical damage from the disease is still apparent and the women are shunned by society and live in one of the poorest sections of Addis Abeba. The group had requested funding to build a work area and Dir Biyabir had sent $1,000 USD. As reported in 2009 the group faced an urgent need to purchase raw material (cotton) in order to avoid laying off some of their workers and they used funding provided by Dir Biyabir to purchase cotton. However they agreed that the work area would be built as planned in 2010. They were true to their word and in 2010, the group built the work area including a washing station (to wash their products before sales), a storage area, and a bathroom. When our secretary met with the enterprise in October 2010, she was given a tour of the facilities including the new work area. The group indicated that its biggest challenge was to increase sales. Despite the high quality of their products, the women have very little access to markets as they live and work in a very poor and remote area of the city and have no retail store of their own. Dir Biyabir is evaluating next steps to assist this highly talented group of women overcome this challenge. In the meantime, on your next visit to Ethiopia, we encourage you to see and purchase some of the crafts that these women produce. You can contact the leader of this enterprise Woizero Birke on her mobile 251 (0) 911947757. She and her staff will be happy to bring some samples to any location within Addis Abeba that is convenient for you so you can purchase what you like. Pictures of some of their work are included below. Please support these highly skilled women in their efforts to support themselves and their families by producing and selling beautiful and creative traditional handcrafts.

Frame-able Embroidery

Placemat

Bedspread

Pot-holder

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Revenue	
Membership Fees	$5,820.00
Donations from Individuals	$5,114.12
Unallocated	$5,074.12
Youth Entrepreneurship	$40.00
Christensen Fund	$25,000.00
T-shirt Donations	$315.00
Donation from Dir Biyabir leadership team for Operations	$502.00
Revenue Total	**$36,751.12**
Expenses	
Grants Paid Out	$28,773.00
ADHENO	$27,773.00
School for Humanity	$1,000.00
Operating Expenses	$431.19
Bank Wire	$90.00
PO Box	$110.00
Web Hosting and Domain Registration	$52.00
PayPal Fees	$179.19
Expense Total	**$29,204.19**
Balance	
Balance from 2009	$12,661.38
Total 2010 Revenue - Total 2010 Expense	$7,546.93
2010 Balance	**$20,208.31**

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2010

Stated 2010 Goals	Actual 2010 Accomplishment
Win TCF Grant for Phase 2 of Environmental project and implement project with ADHENO	Won phase 2 grant, 100% of funds wired to ADHENO, project implemented
Fund entrepreneurship project for women/girls	Poultry project for school girls expanded
Monitor funded youth projects	Status of Irrigation, poultry and bee projects monitored by ADHENO and status provided to Dir Biyabir. Projects and project beneficiaries personally visited by Dir Biyabir Secretary
Develop relationship with Leprosy survivor group	Group visited by DB Secretary, original project completed, evaluating new initiative with group
Implement books project that gets books into the hands of kids	Books purchased and directly provided to Workegur School. Funds provided to School for Humanity in Shashemene for books. Books were purchased and stocked in school library
Continue to have Dir Biyabir executive team cover all Dir Biyabir operational expense so that 100% of donations and membership fees are allocated to projects in Ethiopia	Dir Biyabir executive team continues to cover 100% of Dir Biyabir operational expenses. All revenue from grants, donations, membership fees are allocated to projects in Ethiopia.
Find new grass-roots group to work with in Ethiopia	Pilot project (books) implemented with School for Humanity, assessing potential for long- term relationship
Complete site visit	Dir Biyabir Secretary visited 100% of funded projects in October 2010
Increase membership by 50%	Goal not met - total membership went down from 66 to 61.
Identify new foundation for funding	Goal not met - no search for new foundation
Leverage Facebook to expand membership	Facebook page created, needs further development to serve as an effective recruitment tool

GOALS FOR 2011

- Fund new entrepreneurship projects by women
- Review need for Phase 3 of environmental project. Submit proposal for funding if Phase 3 is required
- Complete feasibility study for eco-tourism in Northern Shewa. If feasibility study is positive, submit formal proposal for funding
- Strengthen and expand poultry project for school girls
- Assess role of school boys in poultry project or assess alternative appropriate project based on needs and interest of the boys
- Expand books projects for identified schools
- Expansion/fortification of Moy Meda School. Provide funds for local purchase of books, school equipment, and teaching material for the school
- Increase membership by 20% while maintaining renewal rate of 90%
- Effective usage of Facebook to recruit members

Thank You To Our Members !

A very special thank you goes to all our members. We are grateful to all our renewing members for their continued support. We are also happy to welcome our new members who joined us in 2010, and hope we can continue to count on their support in the coming years. If you buy into our vision of eliminating extreme poverty by investing in people and building their capacity to help themselves, we encourage you to tell your friends and family to join Dir Biyabir. The more of us pitch in the more we can do together.

You Are Making A Big Difference

As you can see from the project updates, a little bit of money can go a long way towards making a difference. The key is to invest in well managed and well thought-out projects that are requested and staffed by local communities, and that build their capacity to help themselves long-term. We are very proud of the dedication and accomplishments of our project partners in Ethiopia, and of all the hard-working project participants. We look forward to even more success in 2011.

We wish a very happy and successful 2011 to you and yours !