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Dir Biyabir 2011 Annual Report

www.dirbiyabir.org February 04, 2012

OVERVIEW

In 2011 Dir Biyabir focused on supporting and extending existing projects that have proven to be efficient and high-impact projects. One of our members, Makda Fisseha had visited several projects in Northern Shewa as part of a personal trip. Based on her observations and trip report, we followed up with Adheno on key projects such as the Poultry project for school girls, the Moyi school expansion and support for the Goshebado School. We received some excellent proposals requesting funding for these projects. In particular the proposal from the Principle of the Moyi school was very impressive in it's clarity, detail, and focus on execution. We are very encouraged and impressed by the quality of proposals coming out of these rural areas of Northern Shewa, and are gratified by the opportunity to support such highly effective grass-roots projects that are requested and developed by local communities. Another very encouraging development is that working with Adheno, farmers in Kasset have been planting vegetables such as carrots and cabbage and supplementing their diets. As a matter of fact, on this trip Makda was treated to a delicious meal of injera with locally grown vegetables!

Vegetable garden in Kasset

In addition to the projects in Northern Shewa, in 2011 we also had the opportunity to work with Wzo Birke and the very inspiring women of the textile enterprise for survivor's of leprosy. In 2011 another one of our members Megdelawit Getachew met with Wzo Birke on a personal trip to Ethiopia and discussed with her the needs of this enterprise and how Dir Biyabir could help. Based on this we continued conversations with Wzo Birke by phone and we were happy to receive some thorough documentation from this group for a very convincing initiative which we funded in 2011.

Adheno continues to be a critical partner in Ethiopia for all our projects in Northern Shewa. The success of these projects is primarily based on the effective partnership between Adheno and the local communities as well as the continued effectiveness of Adheno as an organization. We salute the committed staff of Adheno as well as all the very hard working members of the local communities that implement these projects . We also continue to deepen our relationship with the women's textile enterprise and look forward to helping this group of women thrive and grow.

Leadership Team

There were no changes to the Dir Biyabir Leadership Team in 2011: 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

As in 2010, in 2011, Dir Biyabir received 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!

Total membership in 2011 was 66, up from 61 in 2010. This reflects a growth of 8% in our membership, well below our target of 20% growth for 2011. *We need much better support from you our members in responding to our reminders and renewing membership.* Of the 66 members in 2011, 47 were renewing members from 2010, 6 were re-activated members (memberships from 2009 that lapsed in 2010 but were renewed in 2011), and 13 were brand new members. The 2011Membership total of 66 members breaks down as follows:

- 71% Renewing members
- 9% Reactivating Members
- 20% New Members

The renewal rate from 2010 was 77%, well below are target of 90%. It is encouraging to see non-renewals from 2009 re-activating their membership in 2011, however the renewals from 2010 need much improvement. Reminder to members: Membership is annual and can be renewed simply by paying membership fees anytime within the calendar year. We highly encourage members to pay their membership fees as early in the year as possible. A helpful habit would be to pay membership fees for the year as soon as you receive this annual report. In 2011 based on multiple member requests we started a new (optional) process to allow members to pay for 2 consecutive years with one payment. We thank those of you who took advantage of this new process to pay your 2012 dues in advance. Those who have not yet paid dues for 2012 can also renew for both 2012 and 2013 with one payment in 2012 by simply indicating on the check or PayPal notes that you are paying for both 2012 and 2013.

PROJECT STATUS

In 2011 Dir Biyabir focused on funding smaller projects. Very exciting projects were implemented at the Moy and Goshebado schools, and the poultry project for school girls was expanded. There was no new funding for our largest project, the reforestation and environmental protection project in the Kasset region of Northern Shewa. However Adheno continued to run the seedling station and provide seedlings to villagers to plant. This environmental projects continues to be a high priority for Dir Biyabir and we will explore ways to maintain and expand this project in 2012.

School Expansion in Moy

In 2010 we reported funding an initiative to add grades 7 and 8 to a village school in Moy Meda in Northern Shewa, 17 kilometers west of Debre Berhan. The school, "Moy Yemejemerya Dereja Timihirt Bet", enrolled 463 children in 2011 of which 46% are girls. There is one main school and 2 smaller satellite schools. Schools in this area are severely underfunded with an average annual budget of 12,000 ETB ($705 USD) excluding teacher salary. This comes to an alarming average of $1.52 per student per year! The principal of the school Ato Tesfaye Berta has consistently shown remarkable dedication in his effort to improve the learning environment for his students.

Ato Tesfaye submitted a detailed proposal via Adheno requesting funding to build cement floors for the new grade 7 and 8 classrooms, purchase desks and chairs for the students as well as much needed books and a few lab kits to do basic experimentation. After close review and revision of this proposal, Dir Biyabir funded this initiative in September. By December we had received a very thorough status report from Adheno. Constructing the cement floor proved to be one of the most challenging tasks as cement and sand had to be carried to Moy by the villagers. There is no road access to Moy and the terrain is steep and difficult. However even school kids pitched in to this effort and helped deliver sand. The community contributed their labor to excavate the ground, collect stones and mix cement. Construction was not yet completed as of January but significant progress has been made. Requested books were purchased by Adheno in Addis Abeba and Debre Berhan, and a total of 149 books were handed over to the school along with a bookshelf. Due to lack of availability some book substitutions had to be made. Adheno signed a memorandum of understanding with the school to ensure that the children were given full access to these books. After having seen first hand the complete lack of books in this school, we are gratified to see images of books in the hands of these very eager young students. Adheno secured standard designs for student and teacher desks and tables and received bids from 3 local metal/wood working enterprises to build this furniture. Unfortunately due to inflation, prices had increased 25% from the time when the proposal was submitted to when funding was received, and this caused delay in securing agreement with the suppliers. Contracts have been finalized for a lower quantity (63) of student desk/chair combo units based on new pricing and Adheno expects to receive this furniture within 40 days of the signing of the contract with the supplier in December. Dir Biyabir will continue to support this school with additional books and equipment as requested.

School girls transporting sand

Reading at the new Moy School

Goshebado School

The Goshebado school is a bigger and more modern school than the Moy school. However this school too suffered from a severe lack of books. Dir Biyabir received a proposal with a list of reference books needed by the students. Dir Biyabir thus funded the purchase of 274 reference books for the Goshebado School. All books were purchased by Adheno and handed over to the school principal Ato Desta in a ceremony. Ato Desta thanked both Dir Biyabir and Adheno and students are now encouraged to read in the school library or borrow the books for a maximum of 1 week. We are gratified to see the students so engrossed in reading these books and we thank our members for making this possible.

Book handing-over ceremony

Reading at the Goshebado Library

Another proposal was also received requesting support for the 11 school clubs at the school. The clubs have been providing a forum for the students to channel their minds and efforts in a constructive way and include: an environmental club, a health and Red Cross club, a library club etc. Based on a site visit in 2011, our member Makda Fisseha was impressed by the commitment demonstrated by a teacher, Wzo Nitsuh, who assists students in organizing the clubs, in particular the health club. Adheno confirmed the positive impact of these clubs and potential for more engagement with local youth via the environmental club and others. ADHENO also confirmed that the school has invested in improvements to club facilities (previously a converted bathroom and thus very unhygienic) and had built additional rooms to accommodate the clubs. Based on the submitted proposal, Dir Biyabir provided funding to purchase materials to support the activities of the school clubs. Adheno has purchased and handed over 5 bench chairs, 1 table, 1 shelf, and stationary to the students and teachers.

Youth Entrepreneurship

1. Poultry Rearing

Since the poultry project was initiated in Northern Shewa in 2009, a total of 98 school girls were enrolled in the project including 30 from the Workegur school and 68 from the Goshebado school. This project was conceived mainly as a way to help girls supplement their diet. However over the last 2 years it became clear that due to their extreme poverty, rather than eating the eggs, the girls were selling them to generate income to purchase school items and basic clothing. Though Dir Biyabir would have preferred to see the girls eating some eggs and improving their diet, the teachers who monitor this project have emphasized the project benefits for the girls, mainly by creating a sense of empowerment and responsibility. We hope that as the girls generate more income, they will feel secure enough to eat some of the eggs. On her project visit, Makda was able to speak with most of the girls participating in the project as well as their teacher and school principal who monitors the project. Makda confirmed the enthusiasm expressed by both the students and teachers and the benefits for the girls. She also noted an important challenge experienced with chicken dying. Most of the girls had one or more of their chicks die. Upon evaluation of the project, Adheno, who oversees the project, determined that the main cause of attrition was the purchase and distribution of chicks during the relatively cold season. Additionally, some of the girls were not giving the chicks the appropriate care and did not visit the vet when he came to the school. To remedy this, Adheno has planned to distribute chicks during the warm season, give girls additional training, provide more monitoring, and have schools give clear announcements when the vet visits, and have the teachers monitor attendance at this event. With these planned changes and follow-ups, Dir Biyabir agreed to extend the project to an additional 80 girls. After extensive discussion with Adheno, the decision was made to fund the addition of 80 girls to the project rather than replacing dead chicks for existing students. Girls who lost chicks will be encouraged to replace them with their earned income and continue to participate in the project, receiving all other support (training and monitoring). Dir Biyabir agrees that this is the best way to teach the girls responsibility and accountability. In December 2011, Dir Biyabir provided funds for extending the project to 50 girls from Workgur and 30 girls from Goshebado.

Workegur Girls in Poultry Project

2. Bee-Keeping

In 2010 we reported that when Makda visited the project area, she was able to purchase two jars of honey from the latest harvest of the youth bee-keeping enterprise funded by Dir Biyabir. In 2011 the Dir Biyabir Chairperson Haeran Fisseha received one of the jars of honey and provided samples to the Secretary and our key contacts at The Christensen Fund. We are happy to report that it is a delicious white honey with a unique smoky taste. We wish the youth of Goshebado continued success with their honey enterprise.

Honey from the youth of Goshebado

Women's Textile 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 Zenebwork, one of the poorest neighborhoods of Addis Abeba. Led by the very energetic and inspirational Woizero Birke, this group had completed a project to build a work area funded by Dir Biyabir in 2010. This work area included a washing station (to wash their products before sales), a storage area, and a bathroom. Supporting this enterprise continues to be a priority for Dir Biyabir and in 2011 one of our members Megdelawit Getachew met with Woizero Birke while on a personal trip to Ethiopia. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the needs of this women's enterprise and how Dir Biyabir could support them in achieving their goals. Woizero Birke indicated that lack of a computer and the skills to operate it was severely limiting their ability to communicate and reach new markets. She requested assistance from Dir Biyabir in this addressing this problem. After several follow up phone conversations between the Dir Biyabir Chairperson, Secretary, and Woizero Birke to understand the needs of the group, Woizero Birke was requested to send a documented proposal including a detailed budget. Fortunately Woizero Birke receives much needed assistance from Ann, an Australian physiotherapist who works at the Alert Leprosy Hospital. With great assistance from Ann, Woizero Birke submitted a detailed proposal that included multiple quotes from local businesses for a computer, printer, software, as well as computer and English classes. Based on this proposal Dir Biyabir wired funds in December 2011 to cover the cost of purchasing a computer, printer, Computer classes, and English classes. Woizero Birke has acknowledged receipt of funds and will provide status updates on this project. We will continue to engage with Woizero Birke in monitoring their progress. We extend our thanks to Ann for her invaluable assistance, and we wish Woizero Birke and her team much success in mastering English and gaining new computer skills. We are confident this will help them access new markets for their products and manage their enterprise more efficiently.

Woizero Birke

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Revenue	
Membership Fees	$6,081.23
Donations from Individuals	$4,820.00
Unallocated	$4,820.00
Allocated	$0.00
Christensen Fund (employee matching fund)	$500.00
T-shirt Donations	$615.00
Donation from Dir Biyabir leadership team for Operational Expenses	$500.00
Revenue Total	**$12,516.23**
Expenses	
Grants Paid Out	$11,738.00
ADHENO	$9,758.00
Moy Meda School Project	$6,310.512
Goshebado School Project	$1,373.49
Poultry Project for School Girls	$2,074.00
Women's Textile Enterprise for Leprosy Survivors	$1,980.00
Operating Expenses	$388.37
Bank Wire	$80.00
Bank Fee	$5.00
PO Box	$110.00
Web Hosting and Domain Registration (donated value of $52)	$0.00
PayPal Fees	$127.37
Taxes (Late File Penalty for CA tax)	$66.00
Expense Total	**$12,126.37**
Balance	
Balance from 2010	$20,208.31
Total 2011 Revenue - Total 2011 Expense	$389.86
2011 Balance	**$20,598.17**

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2011

Stated 2011 Goals	Actual 2011 Accomplishment
Fund new entrepreneurship projects by women	Funded new project for Women's Textile Enterprise for Leprosy Survivors
Review need for Phase 3 of environmental project. Submit proposal for funding if Phase 3 is required	Goal not met - no funding for phase 3
Complete feasibility study for eco-tourism in Northern Shewa. If feasibility study is positive, submit formal proposal for funding	Goal not met - no funding for feasibility study
Strengthen and expand poultry project for school girls	Expanded poultry project to 80 additional girls
Assess role of school boys in poultry project or assess alternative appropriate project based on needs and interest of the boys	Goal not met- no assessment of project for boys
Expand books projects for identified schools	Provided books for both Moy school and Goshebado school based on proposal
Expansion/fortification of Moy Meda School. Provide funds for local purchase of books, school equipment, and teaching material for the school	Provided funding for class improvement, desks, chairs, lab equipment for Moy school based on proposal
Increase membership by 20% while maintaining renewal rate of 90%	Goal not met - membership increased by 8%
Effective usage of Facebook to recruit members	Goal not met - no recruiting via Facebook, though Facebook page has been enhanced

GOALS FOR 2012

• Continue supporting school improvements at Moy Meda, Goshebado and Workegur schools based on written requests and proposals.

• Continue to strengthen and expand poultry project for school girls

- Assess role of school boys in poultry project or assess alternative appropriate entrepreneurial project based on needs and interest of the 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.
- Work with Adheno to evaluate new project proposals from Northern Shewa based on direct feedback from the community on need and willingness to own and execute project. Secure funding for project.

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 2011. Our members make it possible to fund all these wonderful grass-roots project that are transforming lives in Ethiopia. The best way you can support the work and progress summarized in this annual report is by continuing to renew your membership. We encourage all our members to renew membership as early in the year as possible. Early renewal frees up time and resources allocated to renewal reminder communications, and allows us to focus more effort on projects. We would very much appreciate your assistance on this front so we can maximize the impact of our very limited volunteer resources.

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. Our members and donors are united in raising funds for the same cause, and communities in Ethiopia are working together to execute high-impact projects with these funds. It is gratifying to see people working together on both ends.

We wish you and yours a very happy and successful 2012!