UPDATE
BRINGING YOU OUR LATEST NEWS
Vita
Fighting Hunger and Climate Change in Africa
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April 2010

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Women Key to Development in Africa

African women are tired of food aid and can make their own way if we respect and support them properly

Vita believe that African women should lead an African "Green Revolution". Vita's Board of directors adopted a board resolution approving a radical work plan to support women in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The plan involves training and means for women to build thousands of fuel—efficient stoves and latrines, and plant edible "miracle" trees and drought-resistant seeds.

Vita's CEO John Weakliam said "Women abandoned when men go to war or migrate in search of a better life, can be inspired to do better on their own".

Vita believes that its "community-led" approach unlocks the talent of women and communities to lead their own way and get off aid dependency. "African women are sick of food aid and can make their own way if we respect and support them properly", John Weakliam.

Vita has enlisted the Irish Country Women's Association on their 100th anniversary in the campaign. ICA guilds up and down Ireland are raising funds for Eritrean women to build stoves and plant trees. Such activities not only fight hunger, but also reduce carbon emissions and climate change.

"The ICA were instrumental in bringing water, electricity and adult education to rural Irish homes. There are great lessons for Africa in this".

John Weakliam
CEO, Vita

Vita is an Irish Charity working in Africa with poor families affected by hunger and climate change.

Vita would also like to take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the ongoing partnerships with Irish Aid and the EU.

ICA Stoves Programme

As part of the their activities for their centenary year, the ICA has partnered with the Eritrea Women's Association.

Over the past 100 years, the ICA has helped their own communities and now as the organisation moves into its next centenary, it is helping women and their communities in Eritrea.

The Eritrea Women's Association has many similarities to the ICA. Its members work with women in localities by supporting and educating them on how to improve their lives. Just as the ICA helped to install electricity through out Ireland in the mid-20th Century, the Eritrea Women's Association is deeply involved in implementing a stoves programme, throughout the very poor regions of Eritrea. This saves the women and children having to search for essential firewood for up to 12 hours every day, carrying loads far heavier than themselves for miles.

The fuel-efficient stoves enable the women to have more time to devote to growing crops and for the children to attend school. Another main benefit of the stoves programme, it that is has a very positive effect on the amount of essential trees being cut down for firewood, thus saving the forestation and also the topsoil from erosion.

Above: **Etenshe Eteza from Chencha, Ethiopia delighted with her new fuel efficient stove supported by Vita**

Drought is a huge problem this year, in Eritrea. Crops are dying and animals are starving. Each stove is installed with 6 life-giving Moringa trees. These trees set very deep roots and their leaves can be fed to livestock as well as being eaten by the household. The sap is also very beneficial and can be used for food preservation.

So far this year, the ICA has raised almost €5,000 for this stove programme. This means that 125 families (750 people) have had their fortunes changed. In addition, over 750 Moringa Trees are being planted. Households (people) living in the Southern Region of Eritrea will be direct beneficiaries of the project. In total, there are approximately 670 households in this area of Eritrea where the ICA programme is taking place.

Left to Right: **Ruth Deasy**, European Commission, **Anne Maria Dennison**, President of the ICA and **Debesai Gebrehiwet**, Ministry of Energy, Eritrea and Inventor of the fuel efficient Stove

The EU fund an environment project in Eritrea focusing on Fuel Wood Efficiency, Forestry Nutrition and Enterprise Development managed by Vita.

Fuel Saving Stove Reduces Burden on Women

Walking more than 3km twice a week for firewood was a difficult reality faced by Etenshe Eteza and her female children. Vita's fuel efficient stoves brought positive change by lightening the burden for this 35 year old mother of seven from the Ethiopian village of Doreze Hayezo, Chencha. Now, she only needs to collect wood once a month.

Etenshe describes how the stove has greatly improved the living standard of her family; "by reducing fuel consumption by 75%, I now have time to engage in other income generating activities to support my family. I am a member of Vita's women's cooperative and my children now have got time to study and to go to school every day."

"My kids have now got time to study and to go to school every day"

Planting Seeds of Change

Ato Gezahagne Woreku is 38 years old and a father to 2 boys and 3 girls. To support his family, he was previously engaged in weaving and crop production. Despite his great efforts, he was still not generating sufficient income to afford even enough food for his family.

After becoming a member of one of Vita's target groups for vegetable production, Ato Gezahagne has received training on horticulture and compost making. Thanks to the additional support of seeds and tool provision, he now has the capacity to grow his own produce and is currently growing onion, beetroot, carrots and cabbages. He uses the vegetables to feed his family and the surplus generates a good income at market. In his words, "I found a real way to change my life."

"I earned more than 500 birr from my previous sale. I bought clothes for my family and covered the school needs of my kids. Through Vita, I now have access to income and food, thank you."

Pictured: **Ato (Mr.) Gezahagne Woreku**

Forestry Project Update: Eritrea

Vita's Forestry Project has creatively combined initiatives including fuel-efficient stoves, tree-planting, and income generation schemes.

The project's positive impacts extend from a local to global level. As well as supporting sustainable livelihoods in Eritrea, it has also contributed to the fight against climate change.

Vita is delighted to report that through their partnership with the Eritrean Ministry for Agriculture and the Eritrean Women's Association the following results were achieved by the end of 2009:

- 12,177 fuel efficient stoves have been completed
- Over 2.5 million seedlings raised and planted
- 85,000 beneficiaries in Anseba and Gash Barka Region

This work is now being expanded to other needy families through the support of Irish partners such as the ICA. In keeping with Vita's strategy, this project is sustainable and will continue to benefit these communities for years to come.

Diverse Benefits of the Forestry Project:

- Reduces time spent collecting firewood
- Improves health by reducing smoke emissions in households
- Edible Moringa trees provide an additional food source
- Combats climate change by reducing carbon emissions
- Raises funds through carbon credit offsetting scheme
- Improves food and income security
- Alleviates deforestation trends

Food Security for Female Headed Households in Eritrea

Women from Western Eritrea, supported by Vita, engage in weaving and embroidery for income generation

Fighting against food insecurity is one of Vita's primary aims. To tackle this challenge, Vita has launched projects targeting vulnerable communities in drought-affected areas of Eritrea. A particularly vulnerable group supported by Vita, is the female-headed household (FHH). In Eritrea, the thirty-year war of independence is still reflected in today's demographics. According to the African Development Bank, 47% of rural households are headed by women, many of whom are widows. Due to the lack of manpower and possession of fewer assets, it is reported that the levels of farm production and income of FHHs are up to 50% lower than non-FHHs (Food Security Strategy — Eritrean Government, 2004).

Like most of Sub-Saharan Africa, FHHs are impacted by global climate change. Erratic rainfall often arrives too late and ends too soon. When favourable conditions for crops fail to arise, many communities can only wait and hope that next year will bring better rains. Communities can however, be empowered to combat these harsh conditions. Improved farming practices, technologies and resources are capable of greatly increasing agricultural productivity. In this way, Vita's support offers people the building blocks to develop sustainable livelihoods.

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Vita's strategic work includes soil and water conservation initiatives. Recently, two irrigation projects have been completed with 105 FHHs specifically benefiting in the Durko (Debub Region). This included the rehabilitation of a micro-dam as well as the installation of a pump-house and modern drip-irrigation system. Vita has also introduced income-generation initiatives such as sisal and palm leaf weaving, embroidery and backyard animal keeping.

This year, EU funding of €1.7m has been secured for two new food-security programmes in Eritrea which includes the provision of farming inputs, training and irrigation schemes. The programmes are on track with a target of improving food security for over 50,000 people.

Meheret Tesfai from Debub region of Eritrea tends to her crop of Onions. In 2009 Vita has specifically supported 105 women headed households in Durko (Debub region) to secure their livelihoods through vegetable farming

I WOULD LIKE TO HELP FIGHT POVERTY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

Please fill in your details here:

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Mobile number:

Email:

How would you like us to keep in touch with you?

☐ Post ☐ Email

☐ Post & Email ☐ Do not contact again

A. I'm enclosing an immediate gift donation now

(Please make cheques, bank drafts and postal orders payable to Vita)

☐ €21 ☐ €40 ☐ €80

☐ €120 ☐ €200 ☐ €450

☐ €21 ☐ €40 ☐ €80

Other amount: €

B. I would prefer to donate by Credit Card/Laser Card

Please charge €

To my

☐ Visa ☐ Laser Card ☐ Mastercard

Card No:

Expiry Date: CCV No. (not applicable to Laser Cards)

Name on card:

Signature:

Date:

Continued over:

Women Key to Development

Vita's Board of Directors resolved to enlist €300,000 in donations to unlock €3 million of funding promised by the European Union. International donors have approved €15 billion in funding for the fight against hunger, and Vita is at the forefront of the campaign in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

John Weakliam, Chief Executive officer of Vita has said: "With a donation of €10, Vita can tap into €100 from the European Union". He said, "We have a unique opportunity to finally deliver the means of self-reliance to African farmers".

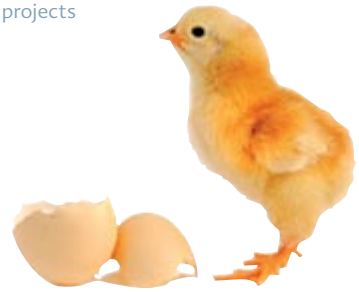
The European Union and international donors have approved Euro 15 Billion in funding for the fight against hunger. For every €10 donation, Vita can gain Euro 100 from the European Union. Donations of Euro 300,000 would unlock Euro 3 million of funding promised by the European Union and provide a unique opportunity to finally deliver self — reliance to African farmers.

Vita believes that its "community-led" approach to food security means Irish donations go even further as the communities that Vita works with are at the forefront of their own development.

Larry O'Loughlin area manager Teagasc and Dr. Seamus Crosse former director of administration at Teagasc are advisors to Vita projects in Africa.

Larry O'Loughlin
Teagasc and Vita programme advisory committee Chairman

Dr. Seamus Crosse
Adviser to Vita projects in Africa



The Easter Chicken Pack — An Eggstra Special Gift this Easter!

Support Poor Women and their families this Easter with a chicken pack so they improve their nutrition this Easter.

For only €25 this pack consists of 4 chickens and a sparkle of imagination. Chickens can provide a family with income through the sale of chicks, eggs, and meat; they are a vital source of nutrition; and their waste makes amazing organic fertiliser. A family will also receive enough chicken feed for three months and be provided with training on how to take care of the chickens. These chicken packs are destined for families in Chencha district of Ethiopia. An Easter gift like this would give a family an eggsellent chance of beating poverty.

You can buy an Easter Chicken Pack for a family by calling Vita on 1850 30 80 90, by sending a cheque to our address on the back or by logging onto www.vita.ie.

Ballyouskill village group raises €20,000 for Vita

Volunteers from Ballyouskill village, in Ballyraggett parish on the Kilkenny/Laois border are the biggest fundraisers in Ireland for the third world charity, Vita. Their efforts, through which they raised more than €20,000 will help hundreds of families in Chencha, Ethiopia in Eastern Africa to fight hunger and climate change and eventually become self sufficient.

Leaders of the Ballyouskill group, with a model of a fuel efficient stove which women in Africa are building aided by Vita funds.

From left to right are: **Bernadette McKenna,** Fundraising Liaison, Vita. **John Weakliam,** Chief Executive Officer, Vita. **Smret Kashai,** native of Eritrea. **Patricia Doheny,** Secretary of the Vita-Friends of Fr. Kevin Doheny group, Ballyouskill. **Frank Brennan,** Chairman, Vita-Friends of Fr. Kevin Doheny group. **Kathleen Mooney,** Public Relations Officer, Vita-Friends of Fr. Kevin Doheny group.

John Weakliam, chief executive of Vita presented a certificate of achievement to the leaders of the Ballyouskill Vita-Friends of Fr. Kevin Doheny fund at Vita head office, Blessington Street Dublin this week. The Ballyouskill group raised the funds in a series of events which included a sponsored walk, concerts, dances at the cross roads, a wellie race in Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny and a sale of stoves and decorations. In November, the Ballyouskill Friends of Fr. Kevin Doheny, represented by Patricia Doheny and Kathleen Mooney visited Chencha for 18 days to witness work there. They funded the visit from their own personal resources. Bernadette McKenna, fundraising liaison, Vita head office and Tom Carroll, programme officer, Vita head office accompanied them on the visit.

John Weakliam, chief executive of Vita said: "Vita is using an innovative community led approach to enable local families to take charge of their own development and get away from crippling dependency. Already hundreds of women have built latrines, improved cooking stoves, started weaving cooperatives and vegetable gardens that are transforming lives".

He said the philosophy of Fr Kevin Doheny, who founded Vita and who died 10 years ago is being continued through the work of Ballyouskill and their twinning with Chencha. Quoting Fr. Doheny, he said "Our task and our privilege is to build bridges to enable people to cross the gulfs that divide them". The late Fr. Kevin Doheny's brother the late Fr. Michael (Mike) Doheny was one of the founders of the third world charity Concern.

C. I'd like to become a friend of Vita and give a regular gift by Standing Order

There is no minimum amount — every Euro makes a real difference to a person's future. **By donating €21 or more a month Vita will benefit from tax relief from the Irish Government.** This makes the value of your donation to Vita considerably greater than your original contribution. **Please complete the form instructing your bank/ building society to make payments directly from your account.**

To the Manager

Bank Name:

Bank Address:

Please charge to my account the sum of:

☐ €7 ☐ €21 ☐ €50

☐ €100 ☐ €150

Other amount: €

Commencing on: ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐

☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Yearly

Name:

Address:

Account Number:

Sort Code:

Beneficiary Name: Vita **Beneficiary's Bank:** Bank of Ireland, Kill O'The Grange, Co Dublin **Account Number:** 12 98 67 35 **Sorting Code:** 90 11 83

Signature:

Date:

Please return your completed form to:
Vita, 73a Blessington Street, Dublin 7.

THANK YOU

VITA FUNDRAISING, NEWS & EVENTS

For further information on Vita please contact:
Vita, 73a Blessington Street, Dublin 7.
Phone **01 882 0108** Email **info@vita.ie**
www.vita.ie

Trees for Life — looking for that unique gift?

'Trees for Life' is a novel approach to honour life's many occasions whereby an oak tree is planted in Marlay Park, Dublin for you or a loved one.

The trees are planted as gifts for Christmas, birthdays, christenings, anniversaries, communions, confirmations as well as wedding presents. Trees may also be planted to celebrate the arrival of a newborn or in memory of a loved one.

For €100, an Oak Tree is planted in the recipient's name in Marlay Park in Dublin and a personalised gift card will be sent to you. For each oak tree planted in Marlay Park, the funds can be used to plant 90 Moringa trees in Eritrea or Ethiopia thereby having a meaningful and lasting impact on many families struggling to cope with poverty.

Call Vita at (01) 882 0108 for more information or visit www.vita.ie

Help Vita by claiming Tax Relief for 2009

If you are a PAYE only tax payer, and have given €250 or more to Vita in the course of a tax year, Vita can reclaim the tax paid on your donations.

If you are a standard rate tax payer of 20% and if you have given €250 over the course of a year, this will be worth an extra €63 to Vita.

If you are a higher rate taxpayer of 41% and if you have donated €250 over the course of a year, this is worth an extra €181 to Vita.

Your details are confidential to Vita and the Revenue Commissioners. The information will not be used for anything other than the tax claim. Once a year Vita automatically mails a tax relief form to all individual Vita donors whose donations qualify for a tax reclaim. We will be sending out the forms to claim for 2009 donations. Thank you.

Vita charity shops in Dundalk & Kilkenny

Vita Charity shops stock a wonderful array of the latest fashions for all the family. And what's more- the prices are right. Pick up a fabulous designer dress for a knock down bargain price. Vita Kilkenny is located at: 12A Parliament Street and Vita Dundalk is at 6A Church Street. Donations are always very welcome especially this Easter.

Vita & Legacy Promotion Ireland

By leaving a donation to a charity in your will, not only will you be supporting a cause that you care about; you will be leaving a lasting legacy that will create a better future for others.

For more information please log onto www.legacypromotion.ie

Green Team Update: €474 Raised for Vita

On Tuesday the 9th of February Vita was on site at E-Bay Ireland to collect their cheque for €474 raised by E-Bay staff. With these funds Moringa trees will be planted. This will raise the living standards of 30 families in Barentu, Eritrea, and will have a positive knock-on effect for their entire community. Every part of the Moringa tree can be used for food, fuel, medicine, animal feed etc.

A huge big thanks to Mathieu Fragniere for organising this event and coordinating with Vita.

Pictured: **Mathieu Fragniere, eBay and Smret Kashai, from Eritrea representing Vita.**

News Briefs

Gorta have awarded Vita a grant of €150,000 for construction of a micro-dam in Northern Eritrea. The micro-dam will provide life-giving drinking water and irrigation for farms for several thousand people in the area.

International Refugee Trust, the sister organisation to Vita in the UK set up by Father Kevin Doheny in 1989, is again working with Vita to support installation of improved stoves in Eritrea.

In December, the European Union has awarded Vita grants worth €3 million to build food self-sufficiency amongst over 100,000 people in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The projects will focus on irrigation, improved seeds. Vita also gratefully acknowledges the ongoing generous support of Irish Aid to Vita programmes in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Kenya.

Vita gratefully acknowledges the support of: Bank of Ireland, The Bishops's Appeal, Combined Services, the ESB, Dublin City Council, RTE, Dublin Airport Authority, the Irish Dairy Board and the John Jefferson Smurfit Foundation for their generous support.

Vita will host an African evening for supporters in Dublin in early April, details to follow. Those interested please call Teresa or Bernadette on **01 882 0108 or email info@vita.ie**

Vita is registered in Ireland, No. 152968. Registered office is 73a Blessington Street, Dublin.7.

Vita has been granted tax exemption from Irish Revenue Commissioners and has a charitable tax exemption No. CHY 9670