

SDATE

BRINGING YOU OUR LATEST NEWS

Vita 

Building Sustainable Livelihoods

Issue No. 7

April 2009



Mrs. Ezigiamin Asfaha and her daughter with a fuel efficient stove.

VITA NEWS
FROM ETHIOPIA

VITA NEWS
FROM ERITREA

CLIMATE CHANGE
& AFRICA

AN EASTER GIFT

VOLUNTEERING

FUNDRAISING
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Climate change is a global crisis with global implications.

Already millions of the world's poorest people are suffering the effects, including unpredictable rainfall and worsening drought. Increased poverty and hunger are the end result.

In this issue you can learn how Vita is planning to help tackle poverty in Africa and climate change.

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.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND AFRICA

The average person in Ireland has a carbon footprint of 11 tonnes. In many African countries the average carbon footprint is 0.1 tonnes. Big difference!

Visit www.vita.ie to calculate your carbon footprint.



Most experts agree that Africa is the most vulnerable continent and the least able to adapt to the effects of climate change. Many scientists agree that Africa's best course of action is to reduce their energy consumption and take other steps to protect the environment.

People in Africa are amongst those who contribute least to climate change, yet it affects them most harshly. Is that fair? We don't think so. Vita's goal is to implement environmentally sustainable programmes that respect the dignity and human rights of all.

Our Stove & Trees Programme promotes lasting improvements in the livelihoods of 100,000 households in the Horn of Africa. The key is the prize-winning fuel-efficient stove. This innovative appliance improves the health and well being of thousands of women and their families, while at the same time helping to tackle climate change.

Because of their efficiency, these stoves deliver a dramatic reduction in CO2 emissions. And because they require so little

wood, 60% fewer trees are cut down for fuel. The great benefit of this is that trees capture and lock in carbon. So more trees, means less carbon in the atmosphere.

Vita's Moringa Tree planting initiative plays an important role in ending hunger. The Moringa or 'Miracle' Tree can be used as a source of food, for purifying water, for fuel, and for making rope. The Moringa leaves play a key role as they can be cooked and eaten on a daily basis.

For 2009, Vita plans to introduce 5,000 Stoves and plant and distribute 470,000 trees (Moringa Trees— 30,000, Fruit Trees — 10,000 and Soil Stabilization — 430,000) in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Vita has also entered into a research partnership with University College Dublin. Niall Roche, a PhD student in the School of Biology & Environmental Science has begun research work on the health, livelihood and environmental benefits of the improved stove in Eritrea.

For more information on this 3 Step Action Plan please log on to our website www.vita.ie

As part of our commitment to help tackle Climate Change in Africa, Vita has developed a new 3 Step Action Plan for people who care about this issue and want to do something meaningful about it right now.



Eritrea
Degraded land caused by climate change in Hagaz region.



Ethiopia
Children searching for grazing land.

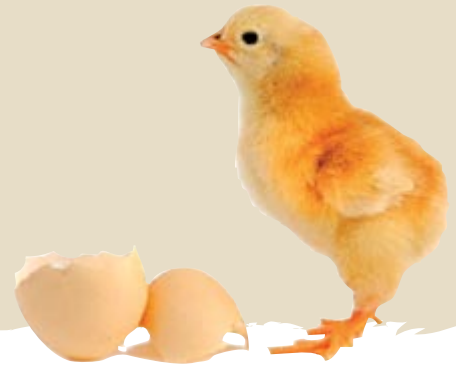


Trees
A local Eritrean woman receives Moringa Trees at a Vita seedling distribution meeting.

Chickens can provide a family with income through the sale of chicks, eggs and meat; they are a vital source of nutrition.



Ms Adanech Qilo and her husband with their Chicken Pack



The Easter Chicken Pack – An Eggstra Special Gift 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 the Shama and Woreda districts of Ethiopia.

An Easter gift like this would give a family an eggcellent 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 the address below or by logging onto www.vita.ie.

Vita needs you!

Volunteering is about giving your time and effort to partake in activities that benefit others. As a Vita Volunteer, you can make a real difference to the families and communities we work with in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

What you can do as a Vita Volunteer

Fundraise — organise a Church Gate collection, Coffee Morning, School Fundraiser, Easter Collection

Events — take part in one of our events e.g. Mini Marathon or organise an event of your own e.g. Concert, Pub Quiz

Campaigns — support one of our campaigns — Climate Change; Buy a Miracle Tree, Students for Vita, Twinning

Shops — if you have spare time — volunteer in one of our charity shops in Dundalk or Kilkenny

Promote Vita — spread the word about Vita and what we do, to your friends, family and colleagues

A few hours a week can be a journey into something different and rewarding. Join us and make a difference in 2009.

For more information about volunteering please call Jenny Douglas on 01 8820108 or email jenny.douglas@vita.ie



Dundalk

A local group is currently being formed in Dundalk and surrounding areas under the guidance of John Morgan; a dedicated Vita supporter and volunteer for many years.

This group will strive to inform people all around Dundalk about Vita and the work we do. To date flag days and church gate collections have been organised. Angels for Africa have been sold along with tickets for a fantastic Valentines Day Hamper.

Future events planned for 2009 include a Race Night, Walk the Monaghan Way, a cookery demonstration, flag days and church gate collections.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this group or for more information about their activities please contact Bernadette McKenna on 01 8820108 or email bernadette.mckenna@vita.ie

Kilkenny — The Friends of Fr. Kevin Doheny

The Friends of Fr Kevin Doheny group have been meeting regularly since October 2008. This group consists of members of the local community of Ballyousskill and surrounding areas of Ballinakill, Castlecomer and South Kilkenny who have come to together to continue the legacy of Fr. Kevin's work. Born in nearby Ballinalacken, Fr. Kevin is one of the founding members of Vita (formally Refugee Trust International). The group has twinned with Arba Minch, a town in Southern Ethiopia.

Past events and campaigns undertaken by the group included selling Vita's Fuel Efficient Stoves gift cards and the Angels for Africa which made fantastic gifts during the Christmas period.

Future events planned for 2009 include a golf classic, a walk and a hunt on Easter Sunday. The group also plans to have a Vita float the Durrow and Urlingford St Patrick's Day parades!

For more information please contact Bernadette McKenna on 01 8820108 or email bernadette.mckenna@vita.ie

VITA NEWS FROM ETHIOPIA



Vita Ethiopia Team



Weaving Cooperative Income Generation Scheme

Mr. Petros Reta, age 33, is living in Shama Kebele in Southern Ethiopia with his family. His wife, Degnesh Dereza, is 31 years old and together they have five children who all attend the local primary school.

Mr. Petros is a member of Vita's Weaving Cooperative in Shama. Before joining the weaving cooperative, Ato Petros used to work in a weaving factory in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa is located approximately 500km away from Shama. While in Addis Ababa, Mr. Petros found it very hard being separated from his family for such a long time especially as he was unable to fully financially support them on such a low wage. Therefore, a huge burden was put on his wife Degnesh to work day and night on their small plot of land producing vegetables.

Mr. Petros decided to return to his family in 2005 and joined Vita's Weaving Cooperative in Shama in 2006. When comparing his life now to that

when he was in Addis Ababa, he said: 'In Addis, my working capital was only two cloths per week and the financial benefit was only 20 Birr (€1.40) per week. But after joining Vita's cooperative my working capital rose to four cloths per week and my family net benefit became 48 Birr (€3.50) a week and 192 birr (€14) per month. This is because I can now produce cloths during the night time as we can use a generator light. This also helps me to buy food items during food shortage season.'

According to Mr. Petros, he also used to borrow money for the national Meskel holiday ceremony in Ethiopia. It usually took him two to three months to pay back the money. But now he can buy everything he needs from his own income!

Apple and Vegetable Income Generation Scheme

— Update from December 2008

Mr Tsona Dagne is 32 years old and is a local beneficiary of Vita's Apple and Vegetable Income Generation Scheme. Together with his wife Ayelech Toske they have four children under the age of 6.

Before joining the Vita Apple and Vegetable Income Generation Scheme their main source of income was traditional agriculture as they did not have any cows or sheep.

After Tsona joined the scheme he received training and was provided with 23 highland apple tree seedlings, vegetable seeds and various agricultural tools including a watering can, a hose, a rack and a grafting scissor.

As a direct result of being part of the scheme, last year Tsona earned 3000 Birr (€21.30) from selling apple tree seedlings and 1500 Birr (€10.65) from selling vegetables. With this income he was then able to buy two heifers and three sheep, clothes for his children and a piece of land where he built a new house!

Tsona said, 'Now I have started to help others by showing them how to graft fruit trees and how to grow them' as he said.'



Apple and vegetable seedling distribution in Shama.

VITA NEWS FROM ERITREA



Vita Eritrea Team

Beekeeping in Geza Medebai and Geza Hamle in Sub-Region Adi Quala in Eritrea

On request from local communities and in partnership with the Eritrean Ministry of Agriculture, Vita is planning to support 40 poor landless families in Geza Medebai and Geza Hamle through beekeeping training and the provision of beehives and bee colonies. Beekeeping is an excellent income generating and environmental conservation activity. Honey prices in Eritrea are up to \$10 USD per kilogramme on the local market which is a superb price and considerably higher than the world market price (\$1-2/kg).

The project sites are two drought affected administrative areas in Debub region in Southern Eritrea. This micro-project will be integrated within the overall community led and area based sustainable livelihoods project.

The project sites have long been affected by war and the average cereal harvest can barely feed people for 5-7 months of the year. The cyclic impact of this has been children dropping out of school, families migrating to other areas and other negative impacts. The introduction of beekeeping will help to diversify the livelihoods of these drought afflicted communities.



Drip Irrigation project – Update from December 2008

Most of the villages in Eritrea are affected by drought because of uneven rainfall. Drip Irrigation projects are a way of combating the harsh effects this can have on a village. Geza Keren in Southern Eritrea is a village where a Vita Drip Irrigation project was introduced in 2008. The system is still working perfectly with no complaints and the local beneficiaries are harvesting productions twice per year.

Mrs. Roma Tesfamicael is a 60 year old woman who represents one of the female headed households who have benefited from this project.

She is an elderly woman, she is one of the hardest working farmers on the project and she has therefore improved her quality of life with the income from the drip irrigation project. She has dedicated all her time and effort since 2008 and says “because of this project I am able to cover all my daily expenses like coffee and my daily meal - otherwise I may go hungry. May God bless those who helped us to reach into this stage.”



Beekeeping in action.

“...because of this project I am able to cover all my daily expenses like coffee and my daily meal – otherwise I may go hungry. May God bless those who helped us to reach into this stage.

VITA FUNDRAISING & 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

2009 Flora Women's Mini Marathon – Do it for Vita!

Walk, jog or run for Vita on the 1st June 2009.
Take part in this fantastic day out and help raise funds for Vita. You will be making a lasting positive change in the living conditions of poor and marginalised people in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

If you would like to take part, please contact; Jenny Douglas on (01) 882 0108 or email jenny.douglas@vita.ie to receive your Vita Mini- Marathon Volunteer Pack including sponsorship cards and a Vita T-shirt.

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 will be planted in the recipient's name in Marlay Park in Dublin and a personalised gift card will be sent with details of where the tree can be viewed. 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 2008

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 42% 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 recently sent out the forms to claim for 2008 donations. If you haven't returned your form yet, this is a gentle reminder of how your return can help Vita. 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 joins Legacy Promotion Ireland

Legacy Promotion Ireland is a consortium of Irish charities that have come together to inspire more people to leave a charitable bequest in their wills. 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

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