

SD DATE

BRINGING YOU OUR LATEST NEWS

Vita 

Building Sustainable Livelihoods

Issue No. 8

December 2009



An Eritrean Women returning home from a co-operative with her bundle of vegetables.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

VITA NEWS FROM ETHIOPIA

VITA NEWS FROM ERITREA

GREEN GIVING

TAX RELIEF FOR VITA

FUNDRAISING & EVENTS

A Christmas message

Dear friends of Vita, 2009 has been a year of great trial for most of us, but out of the gloom, it's great to hear human values coming back into our vocabulary – love, community, sharing. It's also great to see volunteerism and solidarity returning.

In our "one world" global village, we are all in this together, and more than ever we are joined to people in far flung places through climate change, global trade & immigration. You, the supporters of Vita, and we in the Vita offices in Ireland, Eritrea and Ethiopia, stand for global solidarity, supporting women who are blighted by hunger and failed


harvests, drudgery in fetching water and fire wood and denied good health and education. During 2009, the impact of our work with **YOUR** support has been substantial. By now over eleven thousand women have built fuel-efficient stoves saving them hardship and all of us carbon emissions. Over seven thousand women have installed latrines in Ethiopia, improving hygiene and health and protecting their local environment. Thousands of people both in Eritrea and Ethiopia have planted edible Moringa trees improving their nutrition and food supply.

However only with **YOUR** generous donations are we able to secure these funds or even greater amounts from them.

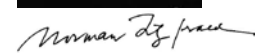
This Christmas please accept a warm hug and words of appreciation and thanks on behalf of all of us here in Vita and the thousands of wonderful families who, together with you our supporters, we help to help themselves. Life will definitely be better for them in 2010, and let's hope that this will also be true for all of us here!

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy Christmas. God Bless You.




John Weakliam, CEO




Fr Norman Fitzgerald, President

VITA NEWS FROM ETHIOPIA



Vita Ethiopia Team

2009 Global Hunger Index

According to the 2009 Global Hunger Index, twenty-nine countries around the world have alarming or extremely alarming levels of hunger. The Democratic Republic of Congo registered the highest levels of hunger followed by Burundi, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Chad, and Ethiopia. Vita works in Eritrea and Ethiopia two of the 6 countries worst affected by hunger in the world. Vita is working closely with local partners to tackle the long term causes of hunger through community led programmes in agriculture and environmental rehabilitation. Vita's particular emphasis is working to ensure food security at household level while leaning towards helping women and children.

Note: The Global Hunger Index was released in advance of World Food Day (October 16, 2009). The Index ranks countries on three leading indicators—prevalence of child malnutrition, rates of child mortality, and the proportion of people who are calorie deficient—and combines them into one score.

Income Generation Project – Shower Service Groups

Over the last three years in Arba Minch Town, Vita has focused a lot of attention on Income Generation Projects through small scale enterprises. These projects in conjunction with the local town Microfinance and Small Scale Enterprises work with the local women and youth of Arba Minch town

One of these projects is the Shower Service Group. This group was formed in the beginning of 2009 and has ten young members of which half are women. All of the members are orphans and until they became a member of the Shower Service Group had no other source of income to look after themselves.

The shower service is located in the town travel station where travellers and passengers gather when they are travelling to and from Arba Minch. The members of the group itself manage the showers on a daily basis – three taking a turn each day. Currently more than 50 people use the

shower service on a daily basis.

This project has helped the members of the group to receive a salary of 50 Birr (€3) per day – providing a stable income and

helping them lead their lives and plan for the future. Furthermore, as a knock on effect, the personal hygiene of the community in Arba Minch is improving.

This project has helped each member have a stable income, helping them to lead their lives and plan for the future.

One of the Shower Group members standing outside the showers in Arba Minch



Mr. Ato Asefa and his wife outside their own personal latrine

Community Led Total Sanitation, Tegecha Kebele, Chencha Woreda

Ato Asefa lives in Tegecha Kebele in Chencha Woreda. Last year Vita implemented a Community Led Total Sanitation programme in Ato's village. This Community Led Total Sanitation programme encouraged villagers to build latrines for both their own personal families use and communal ones the community and passers-by use, thus stopping the practice of open defecation and reducing the risk of people becoming sick from related diseases.

Within four months of the programme being introduced, the village successfully declared that it was 100% open defecation free. Community Led Total Sanitation is a new approach to helping villagers, initiated by Vita in the area, to organise themselves and work together to improve the quality of their own lives.

Below are Ato's own words on how it was before and after Community Led Total Sanitation was introduced to his village.

Helping villagers in the area, to organise themselves and work together to improve the quality of their own lives.

VITA NEWS FROM ERITREA



Vita Eritrea Team

The Fuel Efficient Stoves changing women's lives in Eritrea

Saliha Mahmud is a 38 year old woman from a village called Birar in the Gash Barka Region. Four years ago her husband died of Malaria. She now is a single mother to her 9 year old son called Ramada and her two daughters Fatuma and Sittlebenat aged 7 and 5 years old. Now as the sole bread winner for her poor family Saliha has to rely on weaving materials from palm leaves such as bowls and baskets and selling them at the local market in her village to get an income.

As part of the Vita "Stove & Trees" Programme that is being implemented in Eritrea, Saliha qualifies to become one of the many women beneficiaries of a fuel efficient stove in her home.

The design of these fuel efficient stoves is intended to reduce the fuel wood consumption and because they require so little wood, 60% fewer trees are cut down for fuel. This means there is less time spent away collecting firewood so she can flourish at her weaving. The toxic smoke that was emitted from the old stoves is a main source of eye disease that sometimes leads to blindness and other respiratory problems. Now Saliha and her family don't worry about any diseases related to smoke.

Once a woman is trained on how to build a fuel efficient stove, she will train another five women and the process continues. The stove is constructed using local resources and through these two processes, whole communities are strengthened and people's lives like Saliha and her family are transformed.

Mrs Saliha Mahmud cooking Injera bread on her fuel efficient stove



Striving to help people like Fatma Omer and her family

Fatma Omer lives in Gizgiza village with her 7 children. Her husband Adem (54) and her elder sons are mostly away from home with their livestock in search of water and pasture. Every other day Fatma has to travel 18 kilometres to fetch water for the family. Sometimes she borrows a donkey from the neighbours and brings two jerry cans of water (40 litres).

With her husband and eldest sons away it is very difficult for Fatma to tend all family chores. Along with fetching water she has to go to the local grinding mill once a week. Fatma has recently sold two goats to buy grain for the family. It is increasingly becoming difficult for Fatma to get water and fodder for the remaining five goats.

Last year's poor rains (attributable to climate change) have complicated the problem. Two thirds of men have left the village with their livestock; and a third of the women joined

them last year too. The local streams and hand dug wells have gone dry. The local clinic report increased oedema cases and severe malnutrition levels. Diseases such as cholera have increased as many families started drinking unclean water from contaminated sources.

In Fatma's own words "If only

the Gizgiza dam is finished we could get water firstly for the family and then our livestock. My husband wouldn't need to travel far away in search of pasture and water and my children would be able to attend school. We wouldn't go hungry as we would be able to grow some vegetables nearby the dam".



Fatma Omer and one of her daughters collecting water at a waterpoint 18kms away from her home

Vita and The Irish Country Women's Association

Vita is very pleased to announce that in October of this year the Irish Country Women's Association chose Vita and our fuel efficient stoves project in Eritrea as a partner for their Centenary year in 2010.

ICA country federations and guilds are proposing to adopt villages in Eritrea and support the women in those villages to build fuel efficient stoves.

The Eritrean Women's Association plays a key role in the stove programme that has great benefits in reducing poverty and tackling climate change. Every donation we receive, no matter how small, can help us change the lives of these women and their families in Eritrea. The partnership between the ICA and the Eritrean Women's Association through Vita could have a monumental impact on these women's struggle for a sustainable livelihood

As Eanna Ni Lamhna said at the ICA National conference in Wexford on October 10th "The ICA through its existence has changed the way many women live in Ireland. Now there is an opportunity for its members to do the same for the women of Eritrea".

Note: Vita would also like to acknowledge the funding contribution of EuropeAid to Vita's Eritrea Livelihoods Programme.

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

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 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 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.

Leaving a Legacy

Legacies, where people leave a gift to a charity in their will, are becoming a better way for people to make a difference well into the future.

In one Irish study, 45% of people indicated they had made a will and research by nfpSynergy revealed that 12% of adults aged 16 or over had included a charity as a beneficiary in their wills in Ireland. Other international research on charitable and legacy giving shows that 60% of people who support charities were happy to consider leaving a gift in their will.

To learn more about legacies, please contact Bernadette McKenna in Vita on 01 8820 108.

Your enquiry will be treated with the strictest confidence.



Green Giving Just World – The most novel Christmas present you'll ever give!

Choose from 8 life-improving gifts and help change someone's world this Christmas. From a Fuel Efficient Stove to a Chicken Maternity Unit, to Miracle Trees, you'll have no difficulty finding the perfect gift for every friend and relative. Not only that, you get three times the value and impact from them. Firstly you get to choose an inspirational and beautiful present in the name of your friend or relative. Secondly some of the poorest families on earth receive those life transforming gifts. Thirdly you're guaranteed that Vita will be working with that community to improve and protect their livelihoods and environment into the long term.

For more information and to request a catalogue please ring Vita on 01 8820108 or you can order online at www.vita.ie

Call for Volunteers for Vita's inaugural Flag Day in 2010

Vita is recruiting volunteers around the country to help with our inaugural Flag Day in 2010. We will be selling small flags/trinkets on a selected day in March and all monies raised from this day will go towards our projects in Africa helping to combat poverty. Alternatively you can always organise a fundraising event on your own. Vita is always delighted to hear from people who are planning to hold an event or take part in a sponsored activity for our benefit. We are more than happy to provide advice, support and fundraising materials for your chosen activity

If you would like to become a volunteer for this Flag Day or even hold your own fundraising event please contact Teresa Woods on (01) 882 0108 or email teresa.woods@vita.ie

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 Christmas.

Vita is delighted to acknowledge the vital contribution of Department of Foreign Affairs, through Irish Aid, to Vita's Sustainable Livelihoods Programme in the Horn of Africa. Irish Aid has been pro-active in supporting organisational development at Vita, in addition to providing a block grant for the period 2008-2010 from the Civil Society Fund. Vita also acknowledges the funding contribution of the European Union to Vita's Eritrea Livelihoods Programme through EuropeAid's Forestry and Environment Programme.



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