

Message from the Editor:

Greeting to all Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia!!!

After a brief absence, we are publishing our first newsletter for 2009. We have witnessed many significant historical events since our last Newsletter. The world economy has gone to shambles, affecting many of us. With the United States voters electing the first black president - Barack Obama, we have witnessed an extraordinary historical event, which gave the world a new hope. This is a clear evidence that with perseverance, we can achieve our goals.

In response to our 3rd newsletter, many of you wrote and told us how much you appreciated our efforts and the information in our newsletters. We are encouraged by your positivism and your financial support. Many of you were touched by Mintamir Desalegn's life story. We all can relate to and appreciate Mintamir's journey in life as it is the story of millions of young Ethiopians who are trapped in the downward spiral of poverty.

YESSERA has been forging ahead with its vision of supporting the Ethiopian youth to be self-sufficient. We are focused on our long term goal of establishing a Central Training Facility as we continue providing vocational training opportunities. The candidates from Debre Berhan have successfully completed a year-long training and field practice. Five trainees graduated with distinction, two were hired by international organizations. The candidates from Bekoji have been in training at OICE since October, 2008. They are dedicated to learning and are focused on their studies.

None of our plans would have been achieved without your support. You have provided us with valuable advise, coaching, and the needed funds. We ask that you continue to support our efforts. Any financial support you can provide us, no matter how small, will enable us to make more Ethiopian youth realize their dreams. Thank you from the YESSERA Team.
Negesse Gutema at ngutema@comcast.net

YESSERA AT A GLANCE

Mission: Empowering the Ethiopian youth to transcend limitations and realize their dreams by building their skills to benefit themselves and their communities.

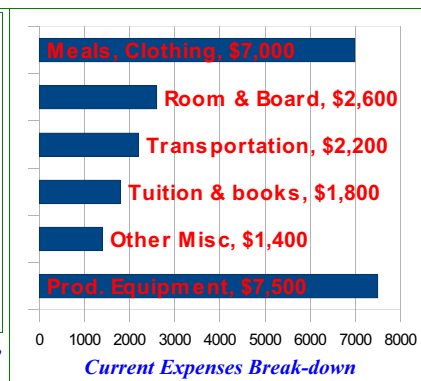
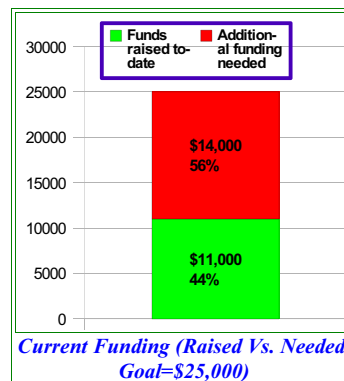
Short Term Goals: To provide vocational training to young Ethiopians who are marginalized due to economic and social conditions.

Long Term Goal: To establish a comprehensive central training facility to provide a broad range of vocational training and to become a hub of creative exchange among national, global and diaspora communities. Feasibility study is currently underway.

List of Projects To-date:

- 1) 12 out of 12 Graduated from Hawassa (2004 & 2005)
- 2) 10 out of 11 Graduated from Debre-Berhan (2008)
- 3) 10 Trainees from Bekoji (October, 2009)

Financial Status:



Board Members:

Aklilu Gebrewold, Elias Hassen, Fikru Kifle, Kassahun Maru, Kena Antensaye, Solomon Retta, Negesse Gutema.

Austin Support Team:

Christine Cwick, Jan Cronk, Barrett Sundberg, Laura Baker, Charles Rand.

YESSERA 2009 Vocational Trainees - Students from Bekoji:

Our 2008-2009 YESSERA trainees were selected from Bekoji, Arssi (Home of the world famous athletes). The candidates started their training at OICE in October 2008 and are well under way with their studies. They have adjusted to the life of a big city and are focused on their training. The YESSERA-BEKOJI team is also working with the Bekoji Community leaders and organizations in planning their business goals. The trainees will spend 2 months in field training in Bekoji upon completion 12 months training. The field training will give the graduates an opportunity to train within and support their community. Ato Solomon and Weizero Aselef, once again, have taken on the responsibility of mentoring the trainees. The Bekoji trainees, shown at right, are Abdulfeta Kelil, Gemechu Anbessa, Getu Urgecha, Genet Lemma, Halima Gemedu, Samrawit Daba, Sequare Deda, Tizita Gezahegn, Wenedmaqn Shewaye, Wendwesen Werku.



Bekoji Trainees on top of Fortino before leaving for Addis Ababa

YOUR DONATION WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN A BIG WAY!!!

Your financial support will enable YESSERA to provide opportunities to young Ethiopians. We need your support to ensure funding for Bekoji students to get started after graduation. Donation of any amount will get us closer to our goal. Please send personal check, cashiers checks, or money orders payable to YESSERA and mail to P. O. Box 4242, Austin, Texas 78765. Your donations are tax deductible.



YESSERA is a non-profit organization



"I believed providing the appropriate skill training will make the youth productive and self-supportive.." S. Retta

Taking Turns - The Formation of YESSERA and Its Role in Reducing Poverty (Part 1 of 2).

By Ato Solomon Retta: General Manager of DCS (Discovery Consultancy Services) and Board Member of YESSERA. Ato Solomon's article will appear in two parts. The first part describes how YESSERA was formed in the newsletter. Part 2 will address the role of YESSERA in reducing poverty among young Ethiopians and will appear in our next newsletter.

Part 1. Formation of YESSERA - Some Background

In 2000 Discovery Consultancy Services was commissioned by an NGO to conduct a baseline Survey on HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control in Addis Ababa. While I was supervising the data collection, the surveyors took me to one of randomly selected houses. I witnessed the condition of five young women who were struggling to make ends meet by working the streets as prostitutes. One of the women was bed ridden due to, what I suspected as, AIDS. The second one was entertaining a customer in the same room. The third young woman is waiting outside for a customer. The last two have gone out. Many young women, like the ones in this story, come from the country in search of a better life are forced into prostitution, which also exposes them to all types of sexually transmitted diseases.

Witnessing of such an abject living condition hit home with me because it is an all too common occurrence among many Ethiopian youth. I decided at that point to initiate a project that would create economic and educational opportunities for the young Ethiopians who have been exposed to health and economic hardships, especially those with the highest probability of exposure to HIV and AIDS. These young people have wasted their prime time struggling to survive with no opportunity to make to high school. I believed providing the appropriate skill training will make the youth productive and self-supportive. I focused on the Town of Hawassa for my first project since Hawassa was one of the towns where HIV and AIDS prevalence was high among the young people. As I was preparing proposal for the project, I met Ato Aklilu Gebrewold, who was visiting Ethiopia from United States. He was in Addis Ababa to plan for the upcoming "Peace Run Africa" event. I provided Ato Aklilu with needed information to plan his project. I also took the opportunity to ask Ato Aklilu if he would help with funding of a project in Hawassa. Ato Aklilu was very receptive and agreed to rally his friends to raise the necessary funds. Upon his return to United States, Ato Aklilu discussed with Ato Kassahun Maru, Ato Fikru Kifle, and others. The dedication of Ato Aklilu and his friends resulted in the creation of a non-profit organization known as YESSERA. Thanks to the commitment of YESSERA members and partners in Ethiopia, enough funding was raised to send 23 young impoverished high school dropouts (12 from Hawassa and 11 from Debre Berhan) to a vocational training school and to provide funding to start business. Eight graduates from Hawassa established "Hawassa YESSERA Construction Association", which manufactures cinder blocks and employs 39 people. The Association has won many awards and recognitions. Many graduates have secured employment in the private sector and in international organizations. YESSERA is providing funding for 10 trainees from Bekoji. The model created by YESSERA has become standard of measurement for other NGOs – enable, educate, empower, and sustain. *(Part two will appear in our next newsletter)*

Yes, We can make a difference!!!



HAWASSA



DEBRE BERHAN



BEKOJI

10203 Corkwood Rd. #103 Dallas TX 76238
2260 25th PL NE, Washington D.C. 20018
Toll Free 1866 616 7744
Cell 703 628 5716

Aster's Ethiopian Restaurant,
2804 N IH 35 Austin TX 78705
(512)369-5966
www.asterethiopian.com
email bekele11@msn.com

Discovery Consultancy Services.
P. O. Box 30357 Addis Ababa
Ethiopia. 011-251-11 122 1571,
Cell 011-251-91 161 8440
fassdiscovery@ethionet.et

lion.guard@sympatico.ca

Our sponsors and affiliates

የኢትዮጵያ ፈጣን የሙያ ማሰልጠኛ ድርጅት
OPPORTUNITIES INDUSTRIALIZATION CENTER - ETHIOPIA (O.I.C.E.)
☎ 2486 - 📠 75 01 51 / 75 01 52 - ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
OICE - e-mail oic_e@yahoo.com

To Donate Funds...

- Go to www.yessera.org and donate on line
- Send funds to the following address
YESSERA.
P. O. Box 4242 Austin, TX 78765
Tel / Fax. (512) 302-4222
- Consider adding YESSERA to your company's charitable contribution list and matching grant list
YESSERA is a nonprofit organization.
Your Donations are tax deductible

Please send comments and questions to info@yessera.org.