Addis Guzo
Neue Reise – Neue Fahrt

Gemeinnütziger Verein zur Unterstützung benachteiligter Menschen

Activity Report 2020

General remarks

Like the rest of the world, our project was dominated by Corona last year as well. Because the virus took some time to spread in Africa our activities ran according to plan until the beginning of April 2020. In early summer we had to temporarily close our project site. The risk of infection caused great fear among our employees. We gradually resumed activities. Thanks to a comprehensive protection concept, we were able to offer all our services again from the end of September.

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1. Overview of the project activities

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  - **Delivery of wheelchairs and other aids for people with disabilities**
    Assessment of customer needs / selection and delivery of aids / adaptation of aids
  - **Repair service**
    Repair and revision of the wheelchairs and other aids / management of a spare parts stock

- **Rehabilitation**
  - **Rehabilitation day care center for families with disabled children**
    Physiotherapeutic treatment integrated into daily life activities / instruction and training of parents and relatives in interaction with their children / distribution of aids for use at home / psychosocial family counseling
  - **Physiotherapy for children, adolescents and adults**
    Ambulant physiotherapeutic treatment / psychosocial counseling

- **Mikrobusiness**
  - **Mentoring and support of women with disabilities in IGA groups (Income Generating Activities)**
    Instruction of work in the field of handicrafts / expansion of the product range / establishment and expansion of sales markets / business skills training / supervision of a social fund / psychosocial counseling

- **Sports / Arts / Recreation**
  - **Wheelchair basketball**
    Trainings for women and men wheelchair basketball teams on the sports field of our project site
  - **Contemporary dance for people with special needs**
    Training / creation of choreographies / performances / education
  - **Sensory and play garden**
    Operation and maintenance of a playground for small and big children with and without impairments

2. Progress and results

- **General**

Until the break caused by the Corona pandemic, we were doing well in all areas of our project. The new project site is functioning excellently for all our activities. The cooperation with the authorities, especially with the neighborhood representatives, is running smoothly and we are very satisfied with our employees on site (of course not without exception).

The recognition for our project work is great. We received for example a support contribution from the SDC and the Swiss Ambassador Daniel Hunn personally honored Addis Guzo before he left Ethiopia.

We are aware that our efforts in Ethiopia have a limited impact. According to the WHO, Ethiopia is populated by over 15 million people with disabilities (15% of a population of 110 million). A sustainable improvement of the living conditions of these people can only be achieved by a functioning social insurance system. However, with our center for people with disabilities we can serve as an important role model. Our activities are an example for new ideas, approaches, strategies and procedures, which are of great interest to other Organizations or the authorities.

- **Wheelchair workshop**

  The wheelchair workshop is the heart of Addis Guzo and unique of its kind in Ethiopia. No other organization dispenses as many wheelchairs, has such a wide range of different products, or a comparable repair service. Our team of six technicians has acquired a great level of competence over a number of years. Nevertheless, we see potential for improvement. In particular, the adaptation of aids to the disability-related needs of those who are affected can be made even more targeted, specific and individual.

  - **Provision of wheelchairs and other aids for people with disabilities**

    The number of wheelchairs that we distribute in Ethiopia is regulated by contracts with the authorities of the Addis Ababa and Oromia regions. During a three-year project period this amounts to 2100 wheelchairs. Due to the interruptions caused by the pandemic, we did not reach the annual quota in 2020. However, we will make every effort to reach the set goals by the end of the project period in October 2021.

  - **Repair service**

    We suspended the repair service for a longer period of time because of Corona to avoid customer contacts. We resumed accepting emergencies starting in autumn and normal operations should be up and running again by the beginning of the year. In order to keep the wheelchairs functional for as long as possible, repairs and revisions are key components. We are able to carry out around 3000 repairs per year. An important part of this is the supply of the needed spare parts. Our partner Association rollaid www.rollaid.org therefore collects not only different mobility aids that can be repaired, but also spare parts or used wheelchairs that have been dismantled into their single parts.

- **Rehabilitation**
  - **Rehabilitation day care center for families with disabled children**

    The need for the rehabilitation day care services is very high. There are only a few comparable centers in Addis Ababa. With a lot of commitment and more than 5 years of experience, the physiotherapist Misile Mulugeta was leading this area. The children attend the day center for a few months and are regularly followed up afterwards. An important aspect is the guidance of the parents and caregivers, so that what has been built up is also continued at home and thus has a more sustainable impact. Usually, eight families participate in the program four times a week (two times in two groups).

    Since the end of 2019, a curative educator from US has been visiting our day center on a regular basis as part of a volunteer assignment. The goal of the collaboration is to establish and introduce new forms of therapy. The focus will be on functional communication and adaptive play for children with multiple impairments. Together with the Association rollaid, we want to collect the correspondingly necessary aids.

    At the beginning of 2020, Alex Imhof has joined the team. As part of his studies in Switzerland for physical therapy, he completed a three-month internship at our Organization. The end of his engagement fell in the period in which we stopped our activities because of the pandemic. Our team took advantage of the interruption and visited the families and their children in their living environment.

- **Physiotherapy for children, adolescents and adults**
  In the afternoons, our therapists offered physiotherapeutic treatments for children, adolescents and adults. Thanks to the supply of therapeutic material from Switzerland, such as standing frames and walking aids or therapy equipment for active or passive movement, the therapeutic possibilities have become more diverse. Increasingly, our therapists also treat people from the surrounding area. This strengthens the acceptance of our project among the neighborhood population. Although there is an urgent need for more therapy services for adults, our thoughts are moving in the direction of focusing on the treatment of children and adolescents.

- **Mikrobusiness**
  - **Mentoring and support of women with disabilities in IGA groups (Income Generating Activities)**
    We had to stop supporting the IGA groups outside our project site. The tense political situation (disputes between the ethnic groups) and later the Corona pandemic prevented direct contact with the groups in the surrounding towns. Thus, we now concentrate on the handcraft groups located in our center. Due to limited financial and human resources, we also refrain from establishing new groups for the time being.

    Three of the existing groups are doing a great and successful job. Unfortunately, they have also been slowed down by the virus. The most important source of income, the local markets for handicrafts, has disappeared. It is not yet foreseeable when these will reopen. This forces us to look for new outlets. Marketing is one of the areas in which the groups will continue to depend on the support of our organization in the near future. Other areas are: Business management, personal responsibility, quality control, innovation, group dynamics, or accounting. We follow a process that gives the groups as much autonomy and independence as possible and in which we can gradually reduce our support.

    In summer we decided to stop our activities with the pottery group. The problems were complex: the physically demanding work was too much for some of the participants, the fragile group dynamics could not be strengthened despite interventions, the sale of the products was difficult and the local technicians could not get running the pottery oven. The women received financial help from Addis Guzo to bridge the financial gap or to build up a new source of income. We do not exclude a restart of the pottery. However, we have to create the necessary conditions for a successful completion.

    A nice achievement of the last months is the common social fund of the IGA groups. For emergency situations, all members of the three active groups regularly pay an amount into the social fund. In case of emergency situations (for example illness, social problems in the family, etc.) all women vote on a support contribution. This has already worked well for the first cases. Sponsors can also donate specifically to this social fund.

- **Sports / Arts / Recreation**
  - **Wheelchair basketball**
    The two wheelchair basketball teams (for women and men) are already part of the daily routine at Addis Guzo. They have been coached by the same coaching duo for a more than five years. Regularly new young talents are integrated into the teams. Nationally our teams have been among the best since the beginning. They were also slowed down by the virus, but since the end of September the ball is rolling all over again.

  - **Contemporary dance for people with special needs**
    In a short time, the contemporary dance group has become a jewel of Addis Guzo. Their performances touch and inspire the audience. With Jessie Brett and David Seto, the dancers are trained by two professional dance teachers and choreographers.

  - **Sensory and play garden**
    In November 2019, we built a barrier-free playground together with the Association Kukuk-Kultur. It is unique in its design and offers the children of the day center a richness of new sensory and movement experiences. In the future, it will also be accessible to children from the neighborhood and thus enable interactions between children with and without impairments.

3. Summary

With the construction of the playground, we completed the design of our project site at the end of 2019. After a dynamic start into the year 2020, the pandemic also slowed down our work in the spring. Thanks to the necessary protective actions against the virus, we were able to offer our activities almost in full again in September.

Our work is highly appreciated by the authorities and the Swiss representations and we are well connected with other Organizations. Our project is unique in Ethiopia and the Addis Guzo Center has become an important place for the support, rehabilitation and integration of people with disabilities. Currently, 30 staff members are employed at Addis Guzo. All permanent employees are Ethiopian citizens.

4. Future plans and visions

The three-year project period of our sub-project RES (Rehabilitation, Economic Empowerment and Sports) ran until the end of 2020. Of course, we are continuing the successful areas of this sub-project. Currently, we are evaluating the performance of the various departments. Based on this evaluation, we will define new objectives, project contents and implementation processes. In October 2021, we will have to renew the cooperation contracts with the authorities. We will complete the revision of the project description by late summer 2021.

There are already certain visions for the various subareas:

- **Rehabilitation day care center for families with disabled children**
  - The development of the area functional communication and adaptive play
- **Physiotherapy for children, adolescents and adults**
  - Focusing therapeutic interventions on children and adolescents
- **Betreuung und Unterstützung von Frauen mit Beeinträchtigungen in IGA-Gruppen**
  - Develop and implement a concept for microbusiness groups for people with special needs in high poverty countries (a new form between occupational program and full independence)
- **Rollstuhlbasketball**
  - Active participation in the national association for wheelchair basketball with the goal of building a national team and organizing an international game
- **Zeitgenössischer Tanz für Menschen mit Beeinträchtigungen**
  - Contacting the Association “Beweggrund” in Switzerland and organizing an exchange either in Ethiopia or in Switzerland

Berne, 23. February 2021

Bernhard Wissler
Association Addis Guzo

Image documentation

Playful activity and physiotherapeutic intervention in the outdoor area of the day care center

The therapy room of the day care center for families with disabled children

Home visit: Alex visits a family together with the team during the Corona break.

After corona interruption: Involving the mother during therapy

Together with the mother, the physiotherapist and the rehab technician look for solutions for a child with multiple disabilities sitting in a special seat.

Various therapy devices are ready in Interlaken, Switzerland for shipment to Ethiopia.

Abebech is one of the tailors who successfully sells beautiful products together with her colleagues.

IGA Group HAYA Dolls: Hulayesh makes a doll from pure natural products.

Intension, strength, skill: sport makes you forget everyday worries and strengthens self-competence.

Is a matter of course for us: gender equality

Dedication, concentration, grace: dance training in the studio of Addis Guzo

Contemporary dance: performance of the dance group at the inauguration ceremony of the new project site

Colorful, stimulating, unique: the sensory and movement garden on our compound

We have equipped the partner swing with a special seat, so that children with impairments can also enjoy.

Well prepared: We are countering the Corona pandemic with a comprehensive protection concept.

Well anchored: the neighborhood authorities hold a meeting on our compound.

Well managed: Tamirat Belay, our Country Director navigates our project stylishly through all storms.

Tackling together: This is how we want to take the next steps into the future.