Addis Guzo
Moving forward together

Swiss Non-Profit Organization working with and for people living with disabilities in Ethiopia

Activity report 2021

The Addis Guzo Association

Addis Guzo is a Swiss based non-profit association with currently 46 members. Since 2012, we are running a center for people with disabilities in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, and we are also involved in the provision of mobility aids in five cities in the surrounding Oromo region. People with disabilities have access to our services regardless of their gender, age, social affiliation, political views or religious background. The association is responsible for the strategic as well as professional management of the projects in Ethiopia and for the acquisition of the necessary financial means.

Addis Guzo is registered and recognized in Ethiopia as a *Foreign Organization* in accordance with the *Civil Society Organizations Proclamation*.
We are using the funds donated very effectively. All members of the association active in Switzerland work on a voluntary basis. In 2021, approximately 1000 hours of volunteer work were performed in Addis Ababa, and over 1100 hours in Switzerland. In the year under review, expenditures in Switzerland accounted for approximately 3% of the total budget.

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1. General remarks

Looking back at 2021, there seems to be only one topic at the first moment: Corona.
In Ethiopia, however, in addition to the economic consequences of the pandemic, the population also suffered under the consequences of the conflict in the north of the country. Despite all this, we were able to continue all operations in Addis Guzo with some restrictions, but without interruption throughout the year. We are very grateful for this!
In addition to the suffering of those directly affected in the conflict zones, the entire population was burdened by the threat and by the high inflation rate (approx. 25%). In several meetings all NGOs working in Ethiopia were asked by the *Ministry of Health* for any kind of emergency aid. We provided support in the form of food donations for those particularly affected by poverty in our neighborhood and provided storage space. On several occasions, we delivered numerous medical devices to hospitals caring for war victims.

In order to protect our employees and also our beneficiaries, the Corona protection concept was regularly updated and adapted to the latest scientific results.

In October 2021, the 3-year project phase came to an end; thus, a new concept description had to be developed for the application for further recognition by the responsible authorities in Addis Ababa. Time for reconsideration! The focus of this year's activity report is therefore on the evaluation and its results.
While in the previous year trips to Addis Ababa did not make sense for us because of the strict quarantine regulations, we were able to visit Addis Guzo Ethiopia several times in 2021 and carry out the evaluation in cooperation with the local management.
The board and the project leaders of Switzerland have been working hand in hand with the management and the staff in Ethiopia throughout the year to further develop Addis Guzo. The results of this work can be seen in almost all areas, including the new logo, and are described in the current documentation.
At the end of 2021, we achieved the certification in Addis Ababa for the new project phase January 2022- December 2024.

1. Overview of project activities 2021

Wheelchair workshop

- **Delivery of wheelchairs and other aids**
- **Repair service**

RES - rehabilitation, economic empowerment and sports

- **Rehabilitation**
  Day center for families with disabled children
  Physiotherapy for youth and adults

- **Economic empowerment**
  Care and support of women with disabilities in IGA groups
  (Income Generating Activities)

- **Sports / Arts / Recreation**
  Wheelchair basketball
  Contemporary dance for people with physical disabilities

- **Sensory and play garden**

2. Progress and results

Wheelchair workshop

The wheelchair workshop is Addis Guzo's main business. Even though new organizations are getting involved in the provision of assistive devices in Addis Ababa, Addis Guzo remains the main point of contact for people with impairments with its wide range of products and repair service. Six mechanics have been working in the workshop for several years, and they have acquired a strong expertise that enables them to offer individual wheelchair fittings at a high level. But not everything went smoothly. We had to realize that the flat hierarchies did not give enough orientation for some of our employees. As a result of the evaluation of the work in the workshop, several extraordinary discussions took place with three long-serving employees in the reporting year 2021. These discussions focused on the declining work attitude, the lack of team spirit and the lack of organization. Two employees seized their opportunity and again showed significantly more commitment in terms of quantity and quality. Zwedu Zeleke, our electrician, wants to start his own business and left Addis Guzo after 8 years in November. We thank him for his many years of service and wish him success for his plans.
In May we hired a workshop manager to coordinate the different fields of activity and to lead the workshop team of six people. Unfortunately, Ameha Abay surprisingly left us again after 5 months to find his fortune in Dubai. In January 2022, Solomon Mesele Wordofa will take over the management of the workshop. We know him for years and appreciate him as an open-minded personality with a great sense of responsibility. Meron Berhanu, who is expecting her third child, took over the newly created position of Front Desk Coordinator. Towards the end of the year a good atmosphere, calm and structure have returned to the workshop's daily routine.

- **Delivery of wheelchairs and other aids**

In the year under review, we were again able to offer our service in Addis Ababa without interruption. The overland trips to the 5 partner cities in the Oromo region were not always possible and could only be restarted safely at the end of the year. The material deliveries from Switzerland were carried out as planned. The team experiences special highlights whenever we supply institutions, such as the *Sisters of Charity,* with wheelchairs. The gratitude and appreciation were enormous and led to a constructive cooperation.
Due to the pandemic and the unrest in the country, we were only able to reach 90% of the numbers planned for the three-year project period.

- **Repair service**

Our repair service was more in demand than ever after the corona-related interruption. It ensures that the wheelchairs remain functional as long as possible. The spare parts needed for this were supplied by our partner association *rollaid* www.rollaid.org. *Rollaid* collects aids throughout Switzerland, which are repaired in the workshop in Interlaken as well as discarded spare parts. Wheelchairs that cannot be repaired are dismantled into their individual parts. Only exceptionally do we purchase new spare parts (for example puncture-free tires). We had to realize that in Addis Ababa no adequate batteries for the urgently needed pulling devices are available. Therefore, we launched a campaign to find sponsors for the purchase of new batteries in Switzerland. For the 78 pledges we thank you very much!

RES - Rehabilitation, Economic Empowerment, Sports

- **Rehabilitation**

The work in the rehabilitation area was still limited at the beginning of the year due to the pandemic. The number of children, adolescents and adults had been limited for reasons of space, and procedures had to be adapted. During the spring, it was possible to expand capacities again while keeping the protective restrictions in place. The rehab team consisted of two physiotherapists and one assistant, who was unfortunately absent for the first few months due to a serious illness and had to be temporarily replaced. In normal operation, six families took part in the morning program every day. In the afternoons, up to six children, adolescents and adults received physiotherapeutic care.

Day center for families with disabled children

The already planned focus on work with children was further developed. Since the beginning of the year, we have been working on a family-centered early intervention program that includes physiotherapy, occupational therapy, adaptive play and basic elements of functional communication. There was a change in staff during the year, as our long-time, ambitious physical therapist Misile Mulugeta left us in April after completing her master's degree to taking an employment at the *ICRC* (International Committee of the Red Cross). Our junior physiotherapist Abel Fekadu also moved on at the end of October. He wanted to concentrate on the treatment of adults. We thank both of them for their engagement and wish them much success. We were able to fill the open positions excellently with the two physiotherapists Yordanos Solomon and Addisalem Belay. With them we have found two experienced and committed employees who would like to specialize in working with children. Together with Kirsten Schwabel (curative teacher) and Martina Oberli (curative teacher and speech therapist) they are working on the basics of the early intervention program. We had to adjust our training plans at short notice. After her absence due to the pandemic, Kirsten's husband was unexpectedly transferred to Kenya, from where Kirsten now teaches the team in weekly video conferences. When the political and pandemic situation allows, she comes to Addis Ababa for additional training at intervals of about 2-3 months. In the fall, Rahel Huber (occupational therapist) completed a two-month assignment, which unfortunately had to end prematurely due to the unrest in the country. She actively supported the team in the implementation of the new program.

Since November, Martina Oberli has been officially employed by Addis Guzo and is thus the first employee without Ethiopian citizenship. The process up to the work permit kept the management quite busy. Martina is leading the rehabilitation department among many other tasks. In the upcoming year, we plan to hire an additional physiotherapist.

Physiotherapy for adolescents and adults

In the afternoons we continued to offer physiotherapeutic treatments for adolescents and adults and now also for children who could not be included in the new early intervention program due to their age or impairment. The number of patients could be increased again, so that we almost reached our set goals this year.

The delivery of therapeutic material from Switzerland, such as standing and walking aids or therapy equipment for active or passive movement could be continued without major difficulties. The rooms of the rehabilitation area were rebuilt and carefully equipped in view of the focus on early intervention.

- **Economic empowerment**

Care and support for women with disabilities in IGA groups (Income Generating Activities)

Already at the beginning of 2021, it became apparent that nothing would be the same as in previous years in the area of arts and crafts markets due to corona. With the first wave in 2020, many foreigners and their families and with them potential customers, had left the country and almost all bazaars were canceled. There was no such a thing as normal operations after that. Our women's cooperative *Bottlebrush Craft Center* was also directly affected by this. After the return of the international community, there was a ray of light on the horizon in October. New Christmas markets were planned and also the regular NGO Market was about to restart. And then came the state of emergency in November 2021. It seemed that the TPLF, a rebel organization classified as terrorist, would advance to Addis Ababa and many embassies asked their relatives to leave the country immediately. Thus, not only our groups again lost their main clients practically from one day to the next. The financial reserves were already exhausted at the beginning of the year. In this context, we decided to guarantee the purchase of the products in the amount of the salaries, in order to continue to guarantee the women their income in this difficult and unstable time. The sales in Switzerland and Germany gave them a perspective and they could focus more on their professional development.

We used the time for intensive training in all business-related areas. Since summer 2021, the women have been working largely independently under the Addis Guzo umbrella, but continue to rely on various services, including transportation, meals, networking, medical and therapeutic support, and legal counseling.

This year we were again confronted with the authorities' demand for an exit strategy for our groups. We faced the question of whether our high-end product line, which relies on foreign clientele, was a false choice. But analysis of the living and working conditions of people with disabilities in Ethiopia confirmed our approach. Our beneficiaries are not able to compete in the market of local micro-entrepreneurs such as producers of injera, potters or weavers, due to the additional impairment of their capabilities caused by their living conditions. Only by offering products that are different from the usual, we can achieve a turnover that, under normal circumstances, secures the income for the women.

Addis Guzo will continue to step in where the government can be expected to provide only little support. As long as the living conditions for people with disabilities do not fundamentally change, securing a livelihood through self-employment is hardly feasible. Initial advances in legislation and public awareness were recognizable. However, they were unfortunately slowed down for the time being by the effects of the pandemic and the civil war. A continuing important backup is the Bottle Brush Social Fund, established in 2020, to which all women contribute monthly. It was also topped up in 2021 by designated private donations and helped with financial emergencies that could not be covered by income.

There was also a staff change in this subsection of the program RES. The *Bottlebrush Craft Center* will be part of our newly defined Skills Development Department in the future. Hewan Gizwa Moreda, Psychosocial worker and RES Head, worked exclusively in the supervision of the three groups until the beginning of her maternity leave in July. Her professional background does not allow her to establish the new department. We sincerely thank her for her faithful service. We are still looking for a suitable employee for the new position.

- **Sports / Arts / Recreation**

Wheelchair basketball

The two wheelchair basketball teams (about 30 women and men) have been led by the same professional coaching duo for years. Again and again, new, younger players are integrated into the teams. The trainings could take place all year by following our protection concept. At the few competitions the Addis Guzo team showed best performances as usual. During our stay in April Addis Guzo could receive an award from the Addis Ababa City Administration Paralympic Committee for our engagement in wheelchair basketball.

Contemporary dance for people with physical disabilities

In the third year of its existence, the *Addis Guzo Dance Group* was allowed to participate in an online festival of the Swiss Organization *Beweggrund* in June 21. In a touching video, the participants show their impressive progress. Link: https://vimeo.com/568816654

Up to 12 dancers with impairments regularly participated in the weekly trainings. The main responsibility for the *Addis Guzo Dance Group* now lies with Jessie Brett alone. David Seto is focusing on his many other commitments. Thank you for your time with us!

In November, Yohannes Belete, who has trained with the Addis Guzo Dance Group from the beginning and is himself affected by an impairment, began his training as a professional dance coach under Jessie's direction. While Jessie was away in December, he was already able to demonstrate his talent as a coach. He supervised the dance team during the two performances at the National Theater and the *Hyatt Recency Hotel*, which took place in December in cooperation with the Goethe Institute.

Sensory and play garden

The inclusive playground is maintained by our gardener Woldesemayat since this year and has become a green oasis. Through Rahel's efforts in October and November, it is being used even more specifically as a therapeutic element in the rehab area. It offers the staff and visitors of Addis Guzo a space to relax. Unfortunately, the pandemic prevented the use for children from the neighborhood.

3. Cooperation

The interest in our work continues to grow. Repeatedly, representatives of the authorities, stakeholders and universities seek contact and request exchange and cooperation, which we are happy to provide.

Also, this year we received financial support from the *SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation).* And in October we were pleased to receive a visit from the new Swiss Ambassador Tamara Mona.

Through Kirsten we got in contact with Mr. Yidne. As a successful businessman and himself father of a son affected by impairments, he wants to get involved in Addis Guzo and will take over the financing of the third physiotherapist in the rehabilitation team in 2022. With him, the establishment of a *Revisory Board* was discussed, which could advise Addis Guzo and support our organization in networking and fundraising. We are open to this, but only carefully optimistic, because we have experienced several times in the past, that many such ideas come to nothing under the daily stresses of all involved.

4. Online payment options

In response to several requests, we explored the creation of modern online payment options for donations. After examining various implementation options, Addis Guzo decided to register with the *Twint* a Swiss online payment platform. On the homepage of the association, on newsletters, flyers and our new documentation you can find the QR code, with which donations can now be easily made online.

5. Logo

We are very happy, that we could finish the work on our new logo this year. After almost 10 years in the red and gray design, it was time for a face-lift. After all, we have constantly developed ourselves and our range of services. We also wanted to reflect this visually. It was developed in Ethiopia on a voluntary basis by Yasmina Thamri, who also noticed that there was still room for improvement in our corporate identity. To be honest, we put all our energy into our direct work. We have somehow neglected our public appearance in regard to the many urgent tasks. Now the website is also waiting for an update.

6. Evaluation of organizational structure and human resources

Nine years after the start of the project in Ethiopia, we carried out a comprehensive evaluation of Addis Guzo. The project had grown enormously during these years and has developed continuously.
In order to meet our quality standards in the future, we implemented adjustments and renewals in various areas. Among others these are:

- A new structure of the organization (organization chart and salary regulations)
- A completely revised human resource manual, adapted to the new laws and regulations
- The outsourcing of the security service
- Personnel changes
- Content adjustments in all areas of activity
- A child protection concept

With these modifications we want to increase the effectiveness of our project, improve the quality of the services and thus further increase the positive impact on our beneficiaries

The evaluation in the different areas clearly showed us the strengths and weaknesses in our staff management. A pleasant working atmosphere and fair working conditions were always a concern for us. We experienced only a low fluctuation. With more than 30 employees, who were affected by the current uncertainties in the country and personal strokes of fate, our management reached the limits of what was possible. Relief is urgently needed. Therefore, we are looking for a human resources and finance manager for the new project phase.
As expected, some of the restructuring processes caused additional uncertainty and caused some employees to leave us. For the outsourcing of the security sector, we concluded a contract with a company that enables us to continue paying fair wages to the guards.
The new organizational structure also led to restructuring the program RES. All successful and proven content will continue. Addis Guzo is now divided into three departments:
Wheelchair workshop, Rehabilitation & Integration and Competence Training.
At first glance, the past year 2021 was also a year of crisis, uncertainty and transformation for Addis Guzo. To face the changes openly, to design them actively and creatively, and to become a part of them, was a great challenge but also an opportunity at the same time for everyone involved.

7. Future plans and visions

10 years Addis Guzo Ethiopia - we want to celebrate this in 2022 both in Switzerland (on 02.09.22) and in Ethiopia. Preparations for both events are already in process.

Although the need is huge and we are not running out of ideas for further projects, there are no plans for expansion or extension, as our capacities are limited in the current status of the association. We want to ensure that our donors' money is used wisely and sustainably, and this would no longer be guaranteed with further expansion. The project has reached its final size. When we think of development, now more than ever it means deepening and increasing quality. Without neglecting the other areas, the focus is on the development and implementation of the *Family-Centered Early Intervention Program* and the new *Skills Development Department*.
The Board of Addis Guzo Association in Switzerland is exploring the possibility of broadening the project's base in the long term.

New project phase 2022 - 2024
Project iRi (Integration - Rehabilitation - Inclusion)

For the first year of the new project phase, in addition to the day-to-day business
- the following project activities are planned:

Wheelchair workshop

Wheelchair supply and adjustment
Repairs
Distribution of other aids
- Training in wheelchair adaptation

Rehabilitation and integration of children, adolescents and adults

Family-centered early intervention program
- Deepening of interdisciplinary cooperation within the project
- Advanced training in adaptive play and functional communication
- Employment of an additional physiotherapist

Physiotherapeutic treatment for children, adolescents and adults
- Advanced training in physiotherapeutic treatment of young children with multiple disabilities
- Training in the use of assistive devices such as standing aids, walkers, etc.

Inclusive playground - sensory and play garden for children with and without impairments
- Training in the use of the play possibilities
- Action days with children from schools in the neighborhood

Skills development training

Coaching of craft - microbusiness groups for women
- Business skills training manual
- Concept for cooperation with the groups
- Exit strategy
- Expand marketing and sales opportunities

Promotion of life skills
- Develop a program to train people with disabilities and their family members in basic skills

Arts - contemporary dance
- Establish an inclusive dance group
- Training a dancer with impairments to become a professional dance coach

Sports - wheelchair basketball
- Renewal of the sports field flooring
- Participation in national and international competitions within Ethiopia in cooperation with the Addis Ababa City Administration Paralympic Committee

We are convinced that with the new structures and priorities a good basis for further development has been laid.
We would like to thank all our staff, friends, foundations and donors for their dedicated and financial support.

Berne, February 18. 2022
Association Addis Guzo

Christine Oberli

Bernhard Wissler

Pictorial documentation

Handover of mobility aids to the Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa

We were able to give a large number of diapers for adults to a home for the elderly.

In Bishoftu, about 60 km from Addis Ababa, our technicians deliver wheelchairs to several customers.

The wheelchair repair service guarantees a long-term use of the aids

Kirsten Schwabel is the initiator of our early intervention program for families with disabled children.

Adaptive play is an integral part of this program.

Just like the sensory stimulation such as swinging on our playground

Or involving and guiding the parents

Rahel Huber shares her expertise in choosing and adjusting a seating aid.

Well-adapted assistive devices allow children to be as independent as possible.

Christine explains a new pattern to Yerus. The permanent training of the women's microbusiness groups is an important concern for us.

The women sell the colorful products at handicraft markets in Ethiopia. But they are also available in Switzerland.

The very intense training pays off.

Four of our players received a call-up for the Ethiopian national team.

The Addis Guzo Dance Group improvises and explores new elements for a choreography.

Yohannes Belete is trained as a professional dance coach by Jessie Brett.

The sensory play garden

The Addis Guzo Staff - Team