Addis Guzo

Moving forward together

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

Activity Report 2022

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1. 10 years Addis Guzo, Ethiopia

According to the United Nations Human Development Index, Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries in the world. On the current Index, Ethiopia ranks 175 out of 191 countries listed. It is therefore not surprising that people with disabilities experiencing poverty also live on the margins of society - with little prospect of medical or therapeutic treatment, education or work. Inclusion is thematized, but the actual reality of life is far from it. People with disabilities are among the most poverty-stricken and disadvantaged groups in Ethiopia. Prejudice, social exclusion and stigmatization are to be found in the everyday life of people with disabilities. For more than 10 years, we have been working tirelessly to ensure that people with disabilities can lead a more dignified and self-determined life, and that they are seen and heard and thus can become part of society in Ethiopia one day.

Addis Guzo is a non-profit association recognized in Switzerland with currently 47 members.
Since 2012, we are running a center for people with disabilities in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, and are also involved in mobility assistance in five cities in the surrounding Oromo region. In those years, Addis Guzo has developed from a small wheelchair workshop into a center of excellency for people with disabilities. In addition to the provision of assistive devices, people with disabilities have today access to therapy, sports, dance and skills training here - regardless of gender, age, social affiliation, political or religious beliefs.

The association in Switzerland is responsible for the strategic and technical management of the projects in Ethiopia as well as for raising the necessary funds. All members work on a voluntary basis. In the reporting year 2022, around 1300 hours of volunteer work were carried out in Addis Ababa and over 1200 hours in Switzerland. Addis Guzo is financed by donations, which we use very effectively and responsibly. For example, expenditure on administrative tasks in Switzerland is only around 3% of the total budget, which is exemplary by international standards.

Addis Guzo is registered and recognized in Ethiopia as a foreign non-profit organization according to the Proclamation for Civil Society Organizations. At the end of 2021, we again received recognition and approval in Addis Ababa (as we do every three years) for our new project phase, which will run from January 2022 to December 2024. In the current project period, we had and still have to deal with the consequences of the Covid 19 pandemic, a local and global economic crisis with enormous inflation rates (approximately 33% in 2022) and a terrible civil war, the outcome of which was uncertain for a long time.

Despite the difficult circumstances and partly uncertain times in the country, we can report many positive things from Addis Guzo. In times of crisis, Addis Guzo has continued to work consistently and decisively, and the cohesion among the staff has been incredible and strengthened our team spirit.
Building on the results of the comprehensive evaluation from 2021, we have made targeted investments in the further development of operational structures as well as in the training and development of our employees. We are pleased with the new momentum and promising developments in all three departments. In 2022, we once again were able to break new ground and have already achieved some of our ambitious goals that we had set for this project period.

2. Overview of project activities 2022

Project phase 2022 - 2024
Project iRi **Integration – Rehabilitation – Inclusion**

With the start of the new project period, we have divided our work areas into the following departments and consecutive activities:

Mobility Aid Department (Wheelchair Workshop)

Assessments
Delivery of wheelchairs and other aids
Repair service

Rehabilitation Department

Family-centered early intervention program
Physiotherapy for children, young people and adults
Inclusive playground - sensory play garden for children with and without impairments

Skills Development Department

Coaching for micro-enterprise groups for women
Promotion of life skills
Arts promotion and sports training - contemporary dance, wheelchair basketball

3. Department Reports

- **Mobility Aid Provision – A fresh breeze blows through the wheelchair workshop**

  A lot has happened and developed in our wheelchair workshop this year. After several failed attempts to find a suitable workshop head, we decided to hire Solomon Mesele Wordofa at the end of 2021, knowing full well that he does not have the classic CV that would have entitled him to the job. Finding well-qualified professionals in Ethiopia is in itself a difficult undertaking, and many of the professions we need in our environment are not yet being trained here and staff have to be qualified internally. We therefore decided to think outside the box and hire someone with the right skills for the job, rather than having lots of certificates and documents that do not match the work to be done, and we were not disappointed: Solomon worked his way into his complex tasks with great commitment, genuine interest, sufficient patience and a high sense of responsibility. As a team player, he puts himself in the middle of the work, takes the screwdriver in his own hand (which is not necessarily common with supervisors in this country) and ensures a good working atmosphere, motivation and commitment among our six employees in the workshop. Through further personnel changes and the new organizational structures, we were thus able to increase the quality and efficiency of the work in the workshop and ultimately also the contentment of our customers.

Assessments

A prerequisite for the best possible supply of mobility aids is the careful determination of the individual needs of our clients. In order to be able to guarantee optimal care, a comprehensive assessment is indispensable and is therefore always carried out at the beginning of every provision of aids. The findings are documented in personal dossiers, which can be accessed at any time when the beneficiary presents again. The assessment requires a high level of competence, which is maintained and developed through regular further training of our wheelchair technicians. In April, Rahel Huber (Bern/Switzerland), occupational therapist, wheelchair technician and assessment specialist, completed her second volunteer assignment in Addis Guzo. The focus of the three-week training was on the assessment, individual fitting and modification of wheelchairs. Many thanks for this! We are happy that Rahel will continue the training of the workshop team in spring 2023.

Delivery of wheelchairs and other aids

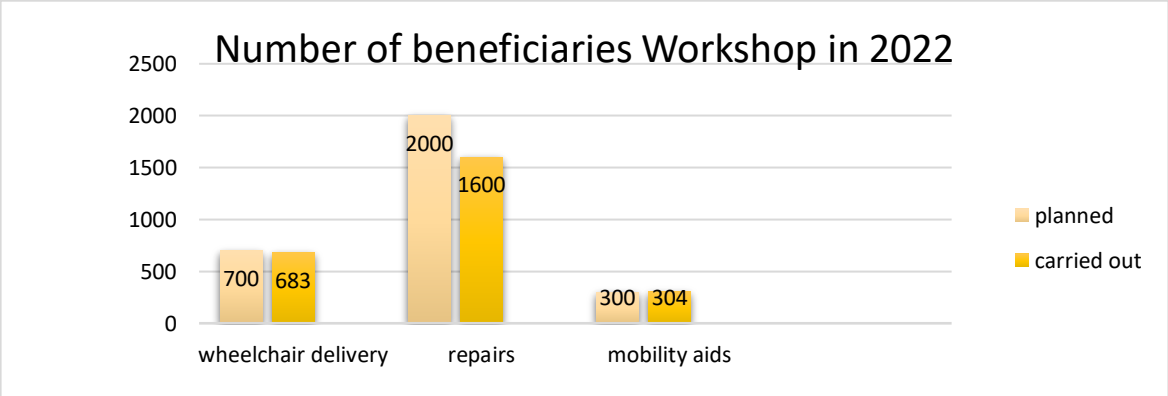
After a careful assessment, the wheelchair technicians select a suitable wheelchair from the wide range of products we can offer and prepare it according to the given specifications. Once the wheelchair is ready, the beneficiaries are informed and return to our center for final fitting.

In the surrounding Oromo region, where the supply situation with aid is even more precarious than in the capital, we have been working with five partner cities for many years. Due to the civil war and the volatile security situation in 2022, we were unfortunately unable to provide them with sufficient supplies and important contacts were lost. After the successful peace negotiations, we will return to all cities and resume our work in full.

What we were able to achieve in 2022, however, was to intensify our cooperation with the authorities in Addis Ababa and various institutions. What we could not deliver to the rural areas, we delivered to numerous hospitals (where many war victims are currently located), children's homes, homes for the elderly and other organizations.

Repair service

Providing a wheelchair is a tremendous help for the beneficiaries and it is an absolute must for us that they can use it for a long time. Addis Guzo works tirelessly to ensure the long-term and sustainable use of the aids provided. For this reason, we offer a repair service. Every day, clients come to our workshop in need of repair or maintenance of their assistive devices. Our repair service is unique in its kind in Ethiopia, as suitable spare parts and professional wheelchair repairs are hard to find in Addis Ababa (let alone in the rural areas). We are able to carry out about 2000 repairs per year. All necessary tools and spare parts are provided by our partner organization Rollaid (Switzerland/Interlaken). Rollaid (www.rollaid.org.) collects wheelchairs throughout Switzerland, which are then repaired in the Rollaid workshop and prepared for transport to Ethiopia. Wheelchairs that can no longer be used are dismantled and sent to the spare parts storage. In this way, we receive almost all spare parts for free.



- **Rehabilitation – Innovativeness and pioneering spirit in the new rehabilitation team**

  Over the last two years, the staffing in rehab has completely changed and also expanded. Today, a new, young, highly motivated team of four physiotherapists and a rehab assistant work together in early intervention, children's and adults' physiotherapy. The concept of rehab has also changed fundamentally and numerous success stories and touching feedback from families encourage us in our new approach. The most important element of the therapeutic work is our strength-based and holistic approach to therapy, which is currently still an exception in Ethiopia. Our therapists experience every day how effective our treatment method is, which increases their motivation to further qualify themselves professionally. We are happy about this development and the positive results it brings to our clients and smallest beneficiaries.

  Family centered early intervention program

  Physiotherapy, functional communication and adaptive play, occupational therapy and parent coaching: these are the focal points of the multidisciplinary and family-centered early intervention program that Kirsten Schwabel and Martina Oberli are currently developing in rehab. While early intervention services for children with disabilities are considered best practice worldwide, they are practically non-existent in Ethiopia. At the end of our last project period, we therefore decided to focus more and more on treating younger children. Our early intervention program is developed in real time and out of the Ethiopian context. In addition to training our staff, we are developing a module manual that can later serve as a basis for training other professionals.

  Due to the shortage of special educators in Ethiopia, we hired an additional physiotherapist in September 2022 to be trained and professionalized in the special education aspects of the program.

  In 2022, about 150 children were served in the five-month early intervention program in Addis Guzo. Regular follow-ups and the newly established "self-help group" help to ensure that families continue to receive support after the program has ended.

  Pediatric physiotherapy and physiotherapy for adults

  In the afternoon program last year, we treated more than 70 adults, adolescents and also those children who could not be included in the new early intervention program because of their age or impairment.

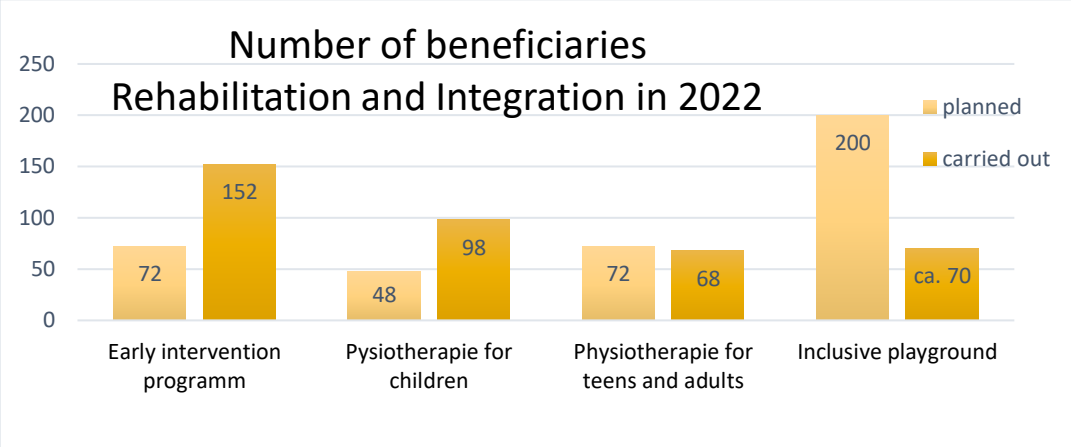
  On 22 April, Maja Hehl, a physiotherapist from Switzerland/Bern, led a three-week training course on the topic: Physiotherapeutic treatment of children with multiple impairments. The use of aids such as standing boards, walking aids etc. was also deepened theoretically and practically. Many thanks to Maja and: We are happy that she will do her voluntary service in Addis Guzo again in 2023.

  From October to the end of December, Morgan Ducrey, a physiotherapist from Lausanne, shared her knowledge and experience in treating adults with neurological impairments with the Physio team. Morgan also provided therapy to 12 of our staff members to prevent or treat work-related ailments. A unique and very welcome gesture from Morgan that our staff were extremely pleased to receive. We would like to thank her for her commitment.

  Inclusive playground - sensory and play garden for children with and without disabilities

  Far too many of our young clients never go out of the house and do not see enough daylight. They are hidden because of social stigma. As a result, many of them suffer from vitamin D deficiency. The play garden in Addis Guzo allows children and their families to spend time outdoors, enjoying the green surroundings and a variety of play opportunities. As soon as the weather permits, parents and therapists gather in the garden to have unique, basal outdoor experiences with the children. True to the rehab motto: therapy can happen anytime, anywhere! Therapists, parents and children slide, swing, play in the sand, ride bicycles, climb or practise walking on inclined planes and, above all, laugh!

Often the children's siblings also romp around the inviting grounds and everyone plays together. Towards the end of the year, work began on a concept for inclusive use of the playground. First contacts with schools and kindergartens in the neighbourhood were made and we hope that our offer to create meeting possibilities for children with and without disabilities will be used actively in the future.



- **Skills development and competence training – Addis Guzo creates perspectives**

  "Whenever we rescue a person from a life of poverty, we defend human rights. And whenever we fail, we betray human rights." Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General from 1997-2006

  Mobility is the basic prerequisite for social participation and a life in dignity that is as self-determined as possible. Education creates the basis for people to develop their potential, stand up for their rights and participate in social life on an equal footing. Only through education can people with impairments free themselves from the poverty trap in the long term. People with physical impairments in Ethiopia have hardly any access to education and often lead a life of dependency, loneliness and boredom. Many of them have experienced a lifetime of exclusion from society.
  We have made it our mission to expand and develop our educational offerings in this project phase. Vocational, personal, sports or artistic education - each educational offering in Addis Guzo has its value in itself. All areas of education have one goal in common: to support people with disabilities in their personal development. In doing so, we are aware of the great challenges we face in a country that is one of the least developed in the world. But: Every single person counts!

  It took us a little while to find the right staffing for this area. At the beginning of April, we hired Fikirte Belachew as coordinator for this department. She brings solid experience from the marketing sector and exceptional organizational talent and quickly understood what we particularly value in our staff: "open-mindedness, lateral thinking, hands on".

  Coaching of handicraft – microbusiness groups for women

  After the Corona-related collapse of sales opportunities and the threat of invasion by rebel groups, the situation in the capital eased and largely normalized during the year. The women's cooperative Bottlebrush, consisting of three groups with a total of 11 women, is back on track. They are now able to manage day-to-day operations largely on their own and need less and less support from our side. Each group generates its own income. The women are not employed by Addis Guzo, but continue to work in the small workshops that we provide for them on our premises. These provide the necessary infrastructure, barrier-free access, protection and support where needed. At the beginning of the year, we developed a cooperation agreement that takes into account the exceptional situation and regulates the rights and obligations of both parties. As part of the exit strategy required by the authorities, we

offered two training workshops to strengthen the women in their professional but also personal development. In autumn 22, two documentaries were shown on Ethiopian TV about the work and products of the cooperative.
Under our guidance, the Chuchura group has trained a total of six women in crocheting, who will in the future make products for the group in homework.

Life skills trainings
With the beginning of the fourth project phase, this area was newly integrated into the department for skills development. Due to a lack of capacity, the development of the concept is still in its infancy. Nevertheless, first actions took place: The "Self-Help Group" of former families from the rehab department met a few times and is supported by Addis Guzo in its development, organization and implementation of the desired content. Up to 30 families participate in the regular meetings.

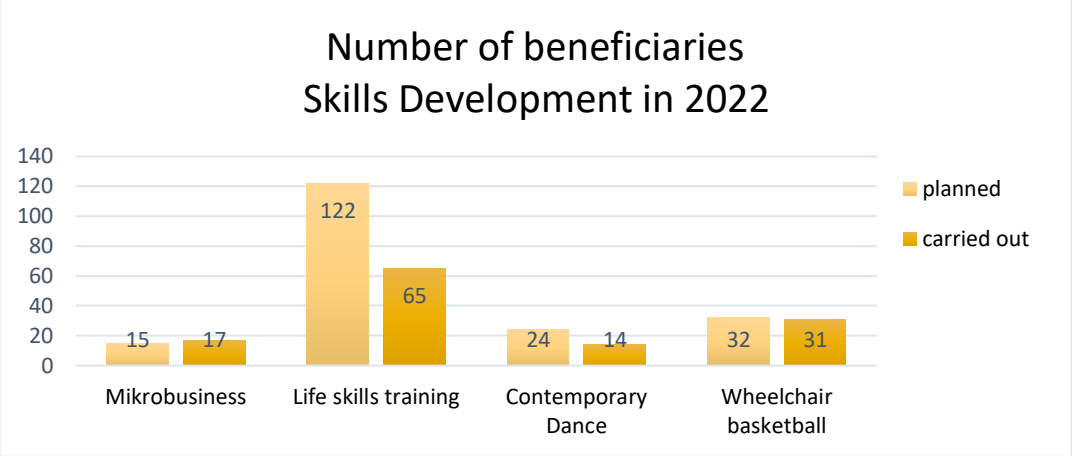
Arts and sports training
The importance of cultural and sports promotion is basically the same for people with disabilities as for everyone else. And yet, it is not only in Ethiopia that there are differences based on life circumstances and how their needs are perceived in society.
With our educational programs in sports and dance, we want to give participants the opportunity to break free from their often-troublesome daily lives, to experience self-efficacy and joy. We are convinced that the training triggers transfer effects that also have a positive influence in terms of health and basic professional skills.

Contemporary Dance
Two dance groups (beginners and advanced) with a total of 14 participants rehearse twice a week in the Addis Guzo dance studio. Unfortunately, we have not yet succeeded in establishing an inclusive dance group. We suspect that the fear of contact among the amateur dancers is still too great. Professional dancers work more easily with our dancers, which we can clearly observe at occasional workshops. However, in the beginners' group, one participant without a physical impairment has joined the ensemble, which gives us hope.
In May we had to say goodbye to our dance trainer Jessie Brett. Private reasons prompted her to return to her home country. For more than three years Jessie built up our dance group #Movement is life with great enthusiasm. We thank her for her years of commitment. Her work will now be continued by Bethelehem Leul, a professional Ethiopian contemporary dancer and trainer. Together with Junaid Jemal (a nationally renowned contemporary dancer), Betty has created a stunning choreography for our anniversary celebration. Link: https://youtu.be/BPBU81kRJ9M
She also enabled the advanced group to perform at this year's Diplomatic Bazaar. We are happy that their performance was also financially appreciated by the organisers and that the dancers received a proper fee for the first time.
Johannis Belete, our dance trainer apprentice, will complete his training in spring 23 at the latest and then get a job as a junior trainer at Addis Guzo. He will be the first professional trainer for contemporary dance with disabilities in Ethiopia.

Wheelchair Basketball
There is a wonderful consistency in the wheelchair basketball team. Our two coaches and also many of the 15 women and 16 men who regularly participate in basketball training have been with us for many years. Our teams successfully participate in various national competitions. The women's team represented the city of Addis Ababa in a national tournament and came first. Individual players were

happy to be included in the national wheelchair basketball team of Ethiopia. Other successes were achieved by the teams in the athletics competitions on Disability Day and in the wheelchair race at the Great Ethiopian Run.

Unfortunately, the planned renewal of the sports field surface could not be realized. The building material needed for this was not available for a long time. In the meantime, the costs have risen so much that we can hardly realize this project without additional financial support. But: We are staying on it!



4. Personnel

Since fall 2022, there has been a new management committee under the leadership of Tamirat Belay, Country Director, which is consists of representatives from the individual departments. The weekly exchange promotes awareness and cooperation between the individual departments, ensures smoother operations and releases synergies.

At the end of 2022, Addis Guzo had 37 employees.

Administration: country director, accountant, executive assistant, accounting assistant

Operations: driver, 2 cooks, outdoor cleaner, technical service, gardener

Workshop: workshop head, front desk officer and wheelchair mechanic, 4 workshop mechanics, 1 apprentice

Rehabilitation: rehabilitation head, 4 physiotherapists, 1 therapeutic assistant (50%)

Skills Development: Skills Development Project Coordinator, 2 sports and 2 dance trainers (each approx. 25%)

The security service and the cleaning of the interior rooms (10 employees) are outsourced to an external service provider who gives us influence on fair wages and working conditions.

5. Further education

Our focus on quality improvement is reflected in the many training courses that were held in 2022 in the various departments and areas of the project.

After the two-year "Corona intermission", we were again able to recruit, among others, several volunteers from Switzerland, some of whom worked for several weeks in the workshop and in the rehabilitation area.

With their commitment and experience, they helped our employees to keep pace with the further development of the organization:

- The competencies of the employees were developed and expanded.
- Previously undiscovered potential was promoted.
- Motivation and self-esteem were increased.

6. Cooperations

Our most important partner continues to be the Rollaid association in Swizerland, www.rollaid.org.
Last year Rollaid supplied 647 wheelchairs, 56 assistive drives, 21 walking aids, 78 therapy devices, 408 crutches and countless spare parts.
We also appreciate and maintain contacts with the local authorities, the Swiss Embassy, the American Embassy, the Luxembourg Embassy, the ICRC (International Red Cross), the Selam Association and many other stakeholders.
We would like to thank everyone and say a special thank you to the Luxembourg Embassy for their generous financial support and to the American Embassy for a fun day with a friendly wheelchair basketball game, which they unfortunately lost to our fabulous players.

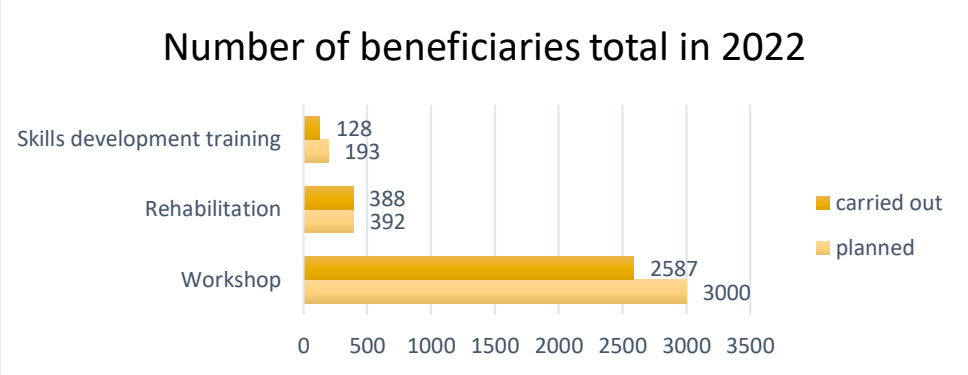
In the past year, a network for interdisciplinary cooperation was established within the framework of the early intervention program. We were able to refer several children to clinics and specialized facilities:
Care Epilepsy Ethiopia, Center for Children with Epilepsy
Allstar International Psychological Services, Autism Spectrum Disorders
Cheshire (Menangesha) and Berhan Letistanat, orthopedic splints
Nordic Medical Center, various emergency surgeries
Holt International, swallowing training and nutrition
Dr. Endayen Deginet, pediatric neurologist
Dr. Abebe, Addis Ababa University, Department of Special Education

7. Public Relations

As planned, we were able to revise our website. Since the end of October, the new website is online. It was designed in Ethiopia by two young IT experts. The work on it is not yet completed.
Two special highlights were the celebrations of our 10th anniversary:
In Switzerland we celebrated on 02.09.22 with more than 100 guests in Wabern a colorful, cheerful party in the "Heitere Fahne".
In October followed the big anniversary celebration in Addis Ababa with many guests of honor. Among others, we were pleased about the visit of Dr. Ergoge Tesfaye, Minister for Woman and Social Affairs.
The following documentations have been produced in this context and can be viewed under the links provided:
Video documentation Addis Guzo (english): https://youtu.be/I7G_OnAggv0
Dance video: https://youtu.be/BPBU81kRJ9M

8. Summary

2022 was a challenging year as usual, but extremely successful for Addis Guzo. We reached an estimated 10,000 people whose lives were fundamentally improved by our activities. This includes more than 3,000 people with disabilities who directly benefited from our services, as well as their family members who were indirectly relieved and supported. Not measurable but also not to be underestimated are the hope, dignity and social participation that we have been able to give to numerous people, as well as the impact of our work on society's perception of people with disabilities.



The positive developments in 2022 also result in the objectives for 2023:

- Ensure quality and efficiency of work
- Expand interdisciplinary cooperation between the departments
- Continue to offer further training for our employees
- Expand cooperation and network
- Sports field construction
- Further development of association structures in Switzerland

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all our employees in Ethiopia, volunteers, friends, foundations and donors for lending a hand and for the financial support. Well prepared, we are tackling the coming tasks with a lot of energy and confidence. True to our motto:

Moving forward together

Bern, 04.02.2023
Verein Addis Guzo

Christine Oberli

Bernhard Wissler

Photo Documentation Project iRi Association Addis Guzo

- **Family-centered early intervention program**

The therapy team receives ongoing training from specialized experts.

Parents are involved in the therapy and gain new competences in interacting with their children.

On the initiative of the parents, a self-help group was formed, which meets regularly.

- **Skills development and competence training**

The women of the handicraft cooperative “Bottlebrush”

The successful wheelchair basketball ladies

Very expressive: the dancers of the contemporary dance group

- **Wheelchair workshop**

Our ambition is to carry out a high-quality supply of assistive devices.

The customers of our wheelchair workshop enjoy the newly gained independence of movement.

The basis of adapted provision is the comprehensive assessment of needs.

Addis Guzo
Moving forward together

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