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Dear reader,

At the end of July Erick and Marijke visited Ethiopia and of course they also visited the OVC in Koka. A good moment to send another newsletter from the Desta Foundation with the latest updates from Ethiopia and the Foundation.

An update from Koka, Ethiopia

It was wonderful to see how the children have grown and how they are developing. They are doing well. The project staff is largely the same and they are still very committed to the children of Koka.

The plants in front of the OVC have grown as well. The banana trees produce plenty of fruits that are distributed to the children.

A start has been made with the creation of a vegetable garden; between the wooden fence in the picture below.



The situation in Ethiopia is not easy at the moment. There is social, ethnic and political unrest, it can be unsafe. Every now and then we see some of this on the Dutch news, but by no means everything. Inflation is also very high, about 40%. Everything is getting more expensive and people are finding it more and more difficult to make ends meet.

Activities in the past months

In June, soap, hair oil and detergent were distributed to the families. This is part of the permanent support for the children and foster families. These products are highly appreciated because they have become

much more expensive in recent months. We are happy that the Desta Foundation has two major sponsors who make it possible to offer this 'hygiene support'.



The regular support also continues: meals are provided, children go to school and attend tutorial classes. They play in the garden and help to grow vegetables.

At Easter, flour and oil were distributed to the foster families.

Plans for the coming months

A few years ago, the library was filled with school books bought with donations from our sponsors. The books are used intensively. The project staff informed us that they would like to further expand the library with school- and reading books. Desta Foundation is happy to contribute to this and we can use additional donations to finance this.

The computers in the computer room must be checked, which will be done by the IT employee of one of the sponsoring companies in Koka.

Some playground material is broken and needs to be repaired. In Ethiopia, the project staff is looking for

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someone who can do this in a proper way so that the playground equipment can be used intensively afterwards. The children have a lot of fun playing on the swings, slide and merry-go-round.



New CSR Manager: Mieso Beriso

Since early 2022, Mieso Beriso Kumbi has been appointed as Corporate Social Responsibility Manager for the Koka OVC project. In addition, he has other CSR tasks and responsibilities for the three cutting farms in Koka. He has a master's degree in "Community development" from the university in Hawassa, Ethiopia and 12 years of work experience.



For the Koka OVC project, he is responsible for the daily activities in the OVC Center, identifying what is needed for the children to support them safely and

properly, supervising the project staff, maintaining relationships with the community, ensuring a positive PR for the companies and making periodic reports on the activities, finances and challenges.

He says; *"I am excited to work for the Koka OVC project because it is a good and humanitarian project. It contributes to a good development of the children and that is very important for their future. It gives me satisfaction to see that we can provide basic support and meaningful and uplifting activities to those who need it most."*

Injera project

For several years now, a group of 10-15 women have been baking injera and selling the injera to one of the sponsoring companies in Koka. The money that the women earn after deducting the costs is jointly saved. After about one and a half to two years, the women have saved a considerable amount with which they can set up their own business or buy a piece of land to build a house. The third group of women has now started. It is a great way to help women gain (financial) perspective and to ensure their own income and self-esteem.

Shalo Biratu

Take, for example, the story of Shalo Biratu. Shalo has three children; a daughter and two sons. They are 13, 6 and almost two years old. Shalo has no husband. Her eldest two children are supported by the Koka OVC project.

Shalo participated for two years in the first women's group to bake injeras. During these two years she earned an income. In addition, she saved with the group. With her income she could pay the rent of her house and food for herself and the children.

After two years, the group of women had saved enough capital to give each woman her share. Shalo bought a piece of land with her money and built a house. She no longer has to pay rent. At the moment she works as a day laborer and she occasionally makes shiro and berbere for the OVC center. These are sauces and spices that are eaten with the injera. Shalo has enough money to start her own business.

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Shalo Birutu at an injera oven. Here she is drying herbs.

She is very happy with the opportunity to join the group of women who bake injera. It has helped her building her future and she can try to make a start to be more financially independent. The fact that she no longer has to pay rent for her house makes a big difference, there is now more money left for the evening meal for the children and other expenses.

She is also happy with the support of the Koka OVC project for her two oldest children. They receive food, education, medical care and health insurance.

She thanks all sponsors who contribute to the Koka OVC project, it helps the children forward and that is what a parent likes to see!



Shalo's children:

Yosphe Asmera, Bereket Arareso, Dibora Arareso

Bread bakery

The injera bakery has already helped a number of women like Shalo. The project staff of the Koka OVC has now initiated the plan to also start a bread bakery. Desta Foundation wholeheartedly supports this initiative. Plans and budgets are currently being made, to start with a building where the women can make dough and bake the bread. Ovens must be purchased and the electrical connection needs to be adjusted so that the ovens can run. A new group of women must be organized to get started. There is a lot to do and a lot of money is needed to realize this plan.

Fancy Fair Florensis

Saturday 7 May was the great day! After 2 years of absence due to COVID19, another Fancy Fair was organized at Florensis in Hendrik Ido Ambacht.

For weeks, trays with annual and perennial (young) plants were collected that were left over from production. 4000 Hanging baskets have been filled. In addition, suppliers and customers also provided the necessary flowering plants.

The aim of this Fancy Fair is to raise money for the Roparun and charity projects in Kenya and Ethiopia. Although the sale started at 8 am, the first rows of people were already at the door at 7 am.

Helped by many volunteers, hundreds of people have been provided with beautiful plants. In addition, there was the Wheel of Adventure and people could

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enjoy a snack and a drink, during which the flyers of Desta Foundation were also brought to the attention and taken by the visitors.

In the course of the afternoon most of the hanging baskets and many plants were sold. It was a huge success, breaking the record turnover of three years ago.

Desta Foundation submitted a proposal for the set-up of the bread bakery.

18,000 Euro from the proceeds has been allocated to this proposal. A fantastic amount to be able to realize this project.



Update from Desta Foundation

The Desta Foundation now sponsors 38 children, two more than last year. This is possible thanks to many individual sponsors.

The financial annual report for 2021 is available on the website, as is the policy plan for the coming years.

If you also want to contribute to sponsoring children, or want to make a donation for the bread bakery, library or refurbishing the playground equipment: our account number is at the bottom of this letter. We welcome any contribution.

If you have any questions or ideas, we'd love to hear from you.

Kind regards,
on behalf of the board of the Desta Foundation

Marijke Westerman



**On behalf of all the children in Koka:
Thanks for reading the newsletter!**