

Dear friends and encouragers of Project Emmanuel!

How are you? What roads are you traveling? Summer has finally come, the grass is growing, hay is being mowed here and there, the first corn is being harvested... Summer heat, strong rainfall and wild thunderstorms have caused a great deal of turbulence these last weeks. Things have also been stirred up around Project Emmanuel, there is always a lot going on in different areas! I would like to let you know about the rays of sun and the thunderclouds in our work with the disabled and would like to thank you all once again for your faithful support! You are a great encouragement for the disabled men and women in Soddo, but also to us Swiss board members! THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

NEWS ABOUT PROJECT EMMANUEL ETHIOPIA

In the last weeks, there was lots of email communication between Switzerland and Ethiopia! There were intense exchanges between Melese, the project manager in Soddo, Duane Anderson (hospital surgeon and mentor of Project Emmanuel), Gary Vanderkooi (accountant SCH Hospital) and myself (Rahel Röthlisberger) on many different topics. The disabled Emmanuel members always transmit their greetings; the everyday routine is running smoothly in the individual work areas (mobility aid production/food workshop, individual microcredit-workplaces).

The idea for the BENEVOL FUND (see last newsletter), with which we would like to help penniless disabled persons to receive or procure the necessary mobility aids and/or surgery, was warmly received by Melese and the board in Soddo, the disabled themselves, and not least by Duane Anderson, the hospital's orthopedic surgeon, who will perform the operations! After making many visits to remote villages, Melese has set up a list and more than 100 of the poorest disabled persons without financial resources responded to the offer to adapt mobility aids and/or receive an operation (for example for crippled legs, clump feet, etc.). We are thankful for all of the small and large sums that have been donated by benefactors and foundations that have been given specifically for the BENEVOL FUND. We gladly accept further funding at an ongoing basis. We are happy to provide even more people a chance for new hope and a perspective for the future!

Unfortunately, problems with the bank transfer have blocked the start of the production of mobility aids as well as the surgery sponsorships (BENEVOL FUND) until now. Inquiries are being made and so we hope we can get started soon!

There is unfortunately no trace of the stolen motorcycle yet; in the meantime, we have been able to provide Melese with a substitute motorcycle in a roundabout way and thanks to an additional private donation. The new cycle will soon be flying around the neighborhood! This loss was very difficult for all concerned. A theft like this is not only a financial loss, it also has great consequences and challenges for the work for and of the disabled persons!

I asked Melese how he managed to cover the great distances within the city of Soddo, to and from the two workshops, to the board meetings, the administrative government meetings, and to his workplace in the hospital. He often had to go on his crutches; these "walks" often lasted up to two hours, over cobblestone streets, up and down hills, he had pain in his arms and legs and blisters on his hands...

This took lots of time. The disabled passengers who had often ridden on the back of the motorcycle with Melese had to find alternative transportation. Melese could not use the Minitaxi Tagrow Bajaj very often. He explained to me that this was difficult for him, because he cannot bend his lame legs very well and often almost fell out of the taxi! So everyone will be very happy to get the replacement motorcycle!

There is news regarding the cooperation between Project Emmanuel and the SCH (Soddo Christian Hospital). Until recently, Melese, leader of Project Emmanuel, had a 100% job as a physiotherapist at the Hospital. Parallel to this, he spent every free minute working for the increasing tasks with the disabled at Project Emmanuel. For more than a year, he has been supported by his team and the board in Soddo (also consisting of disabled men, Tesfaye, Birhanu, Jaffo and Belay). The hospital has transferred its own production of mobility aids to the Emmanuel workshop. There is also close cooperation in the inpatient unit (SCH Orthopedics); Melese always participates at the ward rounds and takes orders from the orthopedic doctors for custom-made disability aids that he transmits to the workshop.

In the summer of 2017 the hospital set up a little shop especially for Project Emmanuel! There we will be able to sell our mobility aids, such as crutches, wheelchairs and other equipment to the hospital patients and also external disabled persons, as well as make adjustments to their mobility aids. This way, Emmanuel has a permanent location within the hospital services!

However, Melese's work capacity has become overstretched with the increasing work with the disabled, because he is the Project Manager for Emmanuel as well as currently working 100% as a physiotherapist at the SCH. Intensive discussions are currently taking place via email between the Emmanuel Association Switzerland and the hospital officials (Duane Anderson, Gary Vanderkooi). The medium-term goal is to release Melese from part of the hospital work so he has more time to devote to working with the disabled within Project Emmanuel. We are still working on the what, when, where and how and will inform you when all of the facts have been clarified.

Mobility Aids

NEWS FROM VEREIN EMMANUEL SCHWEIZ

At long last! After weeks of night shifts, countless hours of computer training by our brilliant IT guy, we finally have our new website!

First of all, great thanks to our IT an for all of his encouragement, support and hands-on help. Other big thanks to Henriette Ludwig (Switzerland) for translating all of our texts into English, so that our friends in Ethiopia and the friends of Emmanuel at the SCH can learn about Project Emmanuel!

I am very happy to provide you with the new link. You will find lots of information, our newsletter, order forms for our charity cheese from the Alps and much more. But mainly I would like to invite you to look through our photo gallery where you will find many photographs depicting the everyday life of the disabled in Soddo, and where the beginnings and the growth of Project Emmanuel are documented.

Here is the link to the Website: www.Project-emmanuel.ch – Welcome, dear visitors! Please send the link to others and make Project Emmanuel known. Thank you!

We now have a specific, dedicated project Email address for inquiries: info@Projectemmanuel.ch.

Aside from the work on the website, the association Verein Emmanuel is keeping up the fundraising by presenting the newly created Project for the Disabled (Behindertenprojekt) and the Benevol Fund to different foundations. I am very thankful to the valuable exchange of information with several foundations and their generous support.

Furthermore, there is constant networking: coffee with the Swiss general manager of the LEPRAMMISSION (Leprosy Mission) and their plastic surgeon from Bangladesh was very enriching. The Lepramission is active in a similar way to Project Emmanuel for marginalized disabled persons. We had a lively exchange about challenges and successes, and I received many valuable inputs. One member of the Foundation Learning for Life explained everything about their microcredit projects in Ethiopia for two hours on the telephone, and I also received their entire teaching manual by email, which I studied thoroughly in the following weeks! A few weeks ago, I was able to contact Pastor Birhanu (Leader of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church in Switzerland). Friends of mine had arranged the meeting and the interesting evening was full of valuable insights and ideas. The experiences and views of Swiss-Ethiopians also added some new facets to the work surrounding Project Emmanuel. I am happy to attend a celebration at the Ethiopian parish at the Reformed Church of Spiegel near Bern, Switzerland on Sunday August at 5:30 p.m. and get to know more Ethiopians in Switzerland. Anyone want to come along?

Last Sunday I met with Christoph Zinsstag (Business Manager of the Selam Childrens' Home in Addis) when I was visiting the Ittigen Church. He brought along the long awaited art exhibit of an Ethiopian painter that can be seen at the der Casappella Worblaufen near Bern.

Visitors are warmly welcome to stay a while and enjoy these impressions of Ethiopian everyday life...

And last but not least: Summertime is my time in the mountains—cheese time! I often speed up to Oey Diemtigen with my Flyer bike, where I visit my aunt Madlen Tschabold or fetch more cheese in Erlenbach from Godi Knutti at Rinderalp. Fortunately, a neighbor helps me with the cheese sales and he sometimes takes along a crate full of mountain cheese for me when he visits the alp. Cheese lovers can also order cheese from me. The charity cheese is sold at a price of 50% more to benefit Project Emmanuel. There is Hobelkäse (thinly sliced cheese), sharp and mild alp cheese, and “Mutschli” (a soft cheese), at 250g and 500g, or other weights on request. The cheese will be delivered to you personally by bicycle. That is my little donation to the foundation.

So, now I am at the end of the many news items about the Project Emmanuel and the Emmanuel Association. I would like to thank you once again for your support, good night!