



Dear friends and precious supporters!

In the midst of these stormy times (Corona pandemic, planning for the future of our practice, etc.), I would like to send you heartfelt greetings from all the members of Project Emmanuel in Ethiopia. Thanks to your support, disabled persons from the street are provided with mobility aids. They are thus able to move around, they have the possibility of getting jobs, they get a new perspective on life and often, for the first time in their life, can experience appreciation and dignity within the community of Project Emmanuel. Particularly in these last months, I would simply like to do whatever falls into my hands each day, that is to serve the people I encounter and be an encouragement wherever I am, because no-one knows what tomorrow will bring. I wish you all a protected time—and pleasant reading!

#### **News from Project Emmanuel, Soddo**

At Project Emmanuel, women are working as usual at the food production workshop and the men are producing mobility aids (crutches and wheelchairs). Because our good old minitaxi Tagrow Bagaj was at the edge of its capacity to handle the transport of goods for food production, deliveries of the finished foods to city customers as well as transporting workers, the Emmanuel Association Switzerland (Verein Emmanuel Schweiz) funded a second minitaxi with a covered loading surface. The taxi is already working at full capacity and is appreciated by all.



Minitaxi with open loading surface (sales point) – The new minitaxi at work (Emmanuel food production workshop)



The open loading surface was covered (for bad weather and the rainy season) and advertising panels were added.

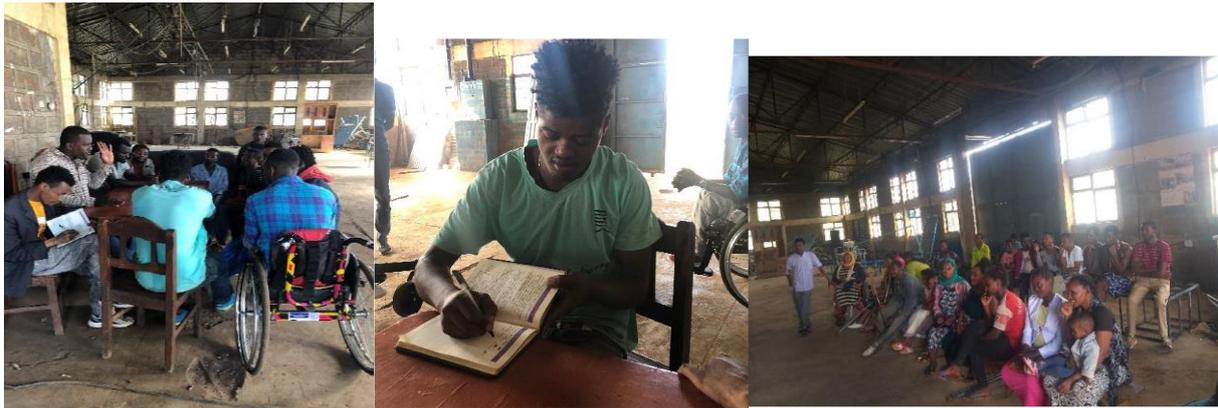
In addition, thanks to an offer from the SCH Hospital, we were able to acquire a larger generator for the women's workshop at a reasonable price. The capacity of the smaller generator wasn't enough to run all of the industrial ovens and dough kneading machines at the same time. In addition, several power failures every day, which lasted for several hours, led to the frequent loss of materials and finished goods. Primarily the ongoing deliveries to large customers became impossible. Now, the workers hope to be able to accept further large orders and complete them reliably.



Happy workers in the women's workshop – Freshly baked *umbasha* – Thanks to the generator!

The many daily power cuts also affect all of the machines in the **men's workshop**. In those cases, however, the machines simply stand still without affecting the materials or causing losses of material. Handcrafting can still continue, and work on the machines goes on as soon as the electric current is restored. Large wooden boards for upper arm crutches can only be cut out by machine, whereas other work can be done by hand: sanding wooden parts for crutches, cutting metal tubes for lower arm crutches, etc. As soon as the new generator is working dependably in the women's workshop, the previous small generator in the women's workshop can be moved to the men's workplace.

Currently, however, a **greater challenge** in the men's workshop is the discipline and work effort of the workers. Melese and Bereket had to hold several team meetings to improve the situation. Not everyone shares the great commitment of the director and the supporters from the SCH Hospital. Nevertheless, free mobility aids continue to be donated to needy disabled persons and to the Mother Theresa sisters in Addis for the hospital for the poor. There are several stories in the attachment about needy people who have received these mobility aids. Their thankfulness speaks volumes 😊.



Team meetings in the men's workshop – The secretary taking minutes – Hoping for turnover!

### **Vision & Planning of a New Orthopedic Workshop for Leg Prostheses and Braces**

Verein Emmanuel Schweiz is currently examining the setting up of a new orthopedic workshop to produce leg prostheses and braces. They are looking into this together with the local Emmanuel directors (Melese, Bereket) and the managers of the SCH Hospital (Duane Anderson, Gary Vanderkooi). There is a great demand for such orthopedic mobility aids. Many disabled persons have lost limbs due to accidents and bone ulcerations (osteomyelitis). Thanks to **prostheses** they can learn how to walk again, on crutches, but at least “on their own feet”. **Foot and leg braces** help to position lame feet and legs in such a way that they can be used as support when walking and so that the disabled persons do not constantly trip over their own paralyzed limbs. There is no orthopedic workshop like this anywhere in the area. The nearest are in Awassa and Arbaminch in the south, or in Addis in the north (the first two at around 300km from Soddo, the latter 600km away). There is a great demand for such items from the regional hospitals, countless disabled persons as well as the orthopedics team of the SCH hospital. The machines to manufacture them are available in Ethiopia itself, a professional orthopedics technician has been asked and he is ready to head production. The local Emmanuel leadership team is highly motivated to set up the workshop as quickly as possible and to start the expanded production of mobility aids. Verein Emmanuel Schweiz was asked about funding the required machinery and infrastructure. Verein Emmanuel Schweiz feels that in order to secure a long-term existence for this workshop (which should supply a huge region in Ethiopia!), it urgently first needs to have **professional, competent and organizational management expertise on location**. The workers of Project Emmanuel are probably not up to such a task, as most have no formal education, professional education, management or organizational knowhow. That is why Verein Emmanuel Schweiz is intensively negotiating with the orthopedic team of the SCH Hospital, which was asked to take over the general management, supervision and quality control. Further information will follow.

There is always lots going on at the **men's house**, as can be seen in the different photos. A number of minor improvements and repairs could be done at the **women's house**. Mesfin, the new disabled staff member at the mobility aid workshop, sends his regards to all of you. He and his family are doing well, they are exceedingly grateful that he has a job with Emmanuel and that he can live in Harage's house with his wife and two daughters. I am always happy to see photographs of the community housing. Despite all of the challenges, I am very thankful that life and the everyday are shared there and that formerly outcast and hidden disabled beggars from the street can experience family and belonging somewhere 😊!



Melese and members of the SCH orthopedic teams visiting the large prosthetic workshop in Addis – Living as a community – Happy times!

In recent days, I have received news that the **corona virus is increasingly infecting** more and more people in Ethiopia. How will this affect the poorest of the poor in such a country with the greatest poverty, and the community of the disabled? Melese and Bereket have heard about the situation in Switzerland from the media and are praying for all of those affected, for those who bear the burden of responsibility to deal with the situation, as well as for those who are caring for the sick and the dying. EMMANUEL–GOD with us, in every challenging situation.

### **News from Verein Emmanuel, Switzerland**

Verein Emmanuel Schweiz is communicating intensively with the local project management and the cadres of the SCH Hospital: the current challenges in the men's workshop and planning the new orthopedic workshop are the "irons in the fire". Thousands of pages of emails are flying back and forth between Switzerland and Ethiopia 😊 thanks to the Internet, insofar as it is functioning and is not shut down by the Ethiopian government!

We are always communicating and are in friendly relations to other Ethiopian NGOs, who are models and inspirations to us (for some months now, Werner and Cornelia Hässig have been active in Mekele in the north, Cornelia as a doctor, instructing women, and Werner as a newly retired engineer in the area of solar energy (courses and installing solar panels) ... exciting!

There are many more friendships, for example with Bright Future, Selam, Mission am Nil, Mercy Project, etc.–what a gift!

So much for now. Dear friends and supporters of Emmanuel! I would like to thank you all very much for carrying us through, for your donations and for your prayers—they enable us as the Swiss Emmanuel Association to bring hope and a positive outlook to the disabled and help people "get back on their feet".

Blessings – or "shoulder to shoulder 16 times", as my Ethiopian friends say!  
Rahel Röthlisberger, President Verein Emmanuel Schweiz

**REMINDER & Information about events 2020: Changes possible depending on the corona virus situation!**

**SAVE THE DATE: Sa. May 23, 2020 BENEFIT-PARTY 😊 with exhibition and sale of paintings to benefit Project Emmanuel at the Foyer Casappella in Bern, with lots of snacks, songs, chats, games... 😊!**

Project Emmanuel is celebrating its 5th anniversary in 2020 😊 😊 (and I myself will be celebrating a multiple of 5 years). Friends of Project Emmanuel and interested persons are cordially invited! Saturday, May 23, 2020 as from 17h / Casappella, Längackerweg 14, 3084 Worblaufen  
Please sign up by May 9, 2020 with Rahel Röthlisberger: Email: rahel\_medizin@gmx.ch  
Phone: 078 900 62 15

**SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday June 9, 2020 Annual General Meeting Verein Emmanuel Schweiz:**

Tuesday June 9, 2020 at 19h at the home of Esther Schaller, Rebhaldeweg 4, 3472 Wynigen.  
Association members and other interested persons are cordially invited to attend. An invitation will be sent out.

**Exhibition and sale of paintings to benefit Project Emmanuel at the Foyer Casappella in Bern March to June 2020, Foyer Casappella, Längackerweg 14, 3084 Worblaufen—many, many thanks to artist Mauro Anesi! Orders and information: Email to rahel\_medizin@gmx.ch or ms.anesi@hotmail.ch**

**Sale of Charity mountain cheese to benefit Emmanuel:** Please send your orders to Rahel Röthlisberger.

Emmanuel Website—with a new look! Many thanks to our IT guy JR 😊 😊 😊!  
Link: [www.Project-emmanuel.ch](http://www.Project-emmanuel.ch)

**Donations for Emmanuel:** Payment slip in the attachment. Thanks for all of your support!

Verein Emmanuel 3472 Wynigen; Postfinance account 89-710260-0 /  
CH 49 0900 0000 8971 0260 0

Verein Emmanuel Schweiz tax-exempt in the Canton of Bern since August 15, 2015

