



# *Annual Report* *2010*

*Abraham's Oasis*  
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## **Table of Content**

- 1. What the Director has to say**
- 2. Why we are here**
- 3. Who we are**
- 4. Where we are**
- 5. What we do**
- 6. How we work**
- 7. Who we work with**
- 8. Why we need our donors**
- 9. How we handle monitoring and evaluation**
- 10. What we plan to do**
- 11. What you can do**

## **Summary**

***Annex One - Staff***

***Annex Two – Organizational Chart***

***Annex Three – Financial Statement***

## 1. What the Director has to say

It is our delight to present to you our annual report. You will read herewith the many activities we have carried out over the past year. I realize that we would not have been able to do any of these services without the support of our donors and the highly motivated staff who have and indeed continue to make every effort to use all funding coming into Abraham's Oasis wisely, while implementing projects that are sustainable for the vulnerable and marginalized.

## 2. Why we are here

When Catharina van den Bosch came to Shire, Tigray, there were no non-governmental agencies working in the area. She started to work in the local hospital, but soon realised that there was a greater need to provide asylum for abandoned and orphaned children. The local government approved this initiative and gave her fifteen hectares of land to be developed into a childcare village.

Five years ago Grace Village was established and over three years ago Oasis Foundation was registered as a branch of the Netherlands Oasis Foundation. When the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia decided that all agencies working in development work should re-register with the newly formed Charities and Societies Agency, under the Federal Ministry of Justice, it was decided that for the sake of sustainability that a local charity would be best for the future.

In late 2009, the organisation became an Ethiopian Resident Charity registered (licensed) under the number 0905, it has an Ethiopian Board and General Assembly and was renamed Abraham's Oasis.

In line with our vision statement:

*"Sustainable opportunities for the vulnerable and marginalised"*

And our mission statement:

*"Generating a sustainable environment whereby social, economic and cultural integration of the said marginalized and vulnerable will occur; strengthening them through farming, childcare, basic maternal health and gender awareness that will result in dignity and independence of the individual and eventually the whole community."*

To attain our vision and mission we have set the following goal:

*To reach and assist target groups in and around North-Western Zone of Tigray, Ethiopia in order to re-establish individual dignity and independence.*

Setting as our objectives as follows:

- *To safeguard the basic needs of the orphaned, abandoned, vulnerable, ostracized and /or troubled child through schooling and basic supplies.*
- *To ensure a future for the residential child at Grace Village*
  - *By supplying basic physical, emotional, spiritual and psychosocial needs for the wellbeing of each child at Grace Village*
  - *By providing good education at Grace School for residents of the school and for the deaf and blind children from our community.*
  - *By income generation activities created from Grace Farm for future sustainable outcomes and autonomy of the residential village programme.*
- *To strengthen school attendance for poor, orphaned and neglected children in Tahtay Koraro and Shire Town with monthly stipends and student support.*
- *To provide child protection to children in the refugee camps as long as it does not compromise our primary work or core values.*
- *To build up local primary schools with financial initiatives for improved outputs and quality of service to local primary school children.*
- *To support current projects for women headed householders towards independence in rural projects outlined and developed by their individual cooperatives.*
- *To strengthen maternal health through health education and clean delivery kit support*
- *To raise awareness and facilitate for women with obstetric fistulae*
- *To create focal groups together with local women’s organization for women affected by gender based violence*

### **3. Who we are**

Catharina van den Bosch as founder was appointed by the Abraham’s Oasis Board as Managing Director of Abraham’s Oasis. She is ably assisted by team leaders in Finance, in Child Protection, in Health and we are currently seeking to employ a team leader for our Childcare activities. The development work is supervised by a very able agricultural expert. Various support staff are employed. (See annex three).

Abraham’s Oasis does not discriminate between employees on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, marital status, or any other status or condition protected by applied Ethiopian law in determining the suitability for employment, compensation, promotion, transfers, training, education, social and recreational programs or termination.

### **4. Where we are**

The Abraham’s Oasis main office is five kilometers from Shire town, in the North-Western Zone of Tigray Region in northern Ethiopia with a rural population of 912,348 with 230,640 being women of reproductive age and 363,096 under the age of 14 years, representing over half the population of the area. We serve the immediate area for child sponsorship, but have taken orphaned and / or abandoned children from the whole of Northwestern Zone. Our Health Awareness campaign includes several Woredas in the Zone. The Child Protection is located in the selected refugee camp as determined by the recognized authorities.

## 5. What we do

### 5.1. Childcare

#### 5.1.1. Residential – Grace Village

- Introduction

The child comes to us either from the hospital or home where s/he was born, small vulnerable and needing milk formula administered under sterile conditions, loving care, warmth and security, or the older child hurting and confused not understanding why they were abandoned or why parents have died and left then so alone. They need basic care, protection, food, counselling and an enormous dose of love and affection from our caregivers.

- Home environment

Five homelike units with caregivers or Nannies who provide the day to day management, meals are prepared in each group home, the children sleep in two bedrooms one for boys and one for girls. The children share double beds to create a sense of companionship in an attempt to avert lonely and fear.

- Education

There is a school on the premises for KG through 8th Grade that meets the special needs of the children that is targetted to their specific requirements. We also teach handicapped and blind children from the neighbourhood. High school children attend public school in Shire. Two of our older lads attend preparatory school in Shire; they are working as apprentices with the community orphan project and they live in rented accommodation in Shire.

- Recreation

Games, football, simple skipping games, and imaginary games figure largely in the younger childrens repertoire; there is a playground where they can use swings, seesaws and climbing frames. The favourite game for older children (boys) is football. The girls like nothing better that to sit around and chat and perhaps braid each others hair.

#### Grace Village

Activity	M	F	All	Remarks
Nurturing the children at Grace Village				
No. new children	7	7	14	
No. residents	31	23	54	
Food and clothing	31	23	54	
Discipline and counselling	5	2	7	
Developmental and Recreational Activities	21	27	48	
Water supply and sanitation	31	23	54	
High School student re-integrating	2	0	2	
Staff	1	18	19	

### **Success**

The continuation of childcare in the five houses has moved along well; using former housemothers as cooks enabled us to support the government recommendation that childcare givers be at least sixth graders and engage the older girls as Nannies to monitor the children has been good; the measure of empathy of these big sisters who understand what it means to be motherless and / or fatherless has created sweet bonding between the children.

Moving the 9-12 year old boys into a house with a big brother has led them to being boys amongst men creating male role models. They have become less defiant than when being monitored by female role models. The soft touch remains in that they all live together in the village; but a big brother will not tolerate bullying and this has led to greater self-discipline of these lads. They are happy to rough and tumble together without squealing girls and help the older boys with farm jobs, spending their extra energy on healthy pursuits. The same aged group girls are able to spend time helping the big sisters with childcare. This has worked very well.

The move of former fistula patients from housemothers to the role of cooks has released them to attend evening school, thus improving themselves with a view of one day being again housemothers as per government regulations.

### **Constraints**

Some of the big sisters have behaved as who they are, teenagers and needed counseling and better supervision. In order to deal with this we have employed an older lady who works through the evening and stays overnight to provide supervision and support for the Nannies. This has worked very well!

Several children became discontent when they heard that they had parents and could not understand why they should live in Grace Village. We have, therefore made every effort to find their families and re-unify them, thus providing them with a place in the community and under the community child care programme where they receive a stipend for schooling. This has been very positive.

One fifteen year old boy was excluded because of confirmed reports of sexual harassment. His older sister also a resident here, she had turned nineteen, so decided to leave at the same time to provide him with a home in town. She has been given a job here at Grace Village. This incident was reported to Social Affairs in the correct manner so that they too are aware of the problem. They support us in this decision.

### **Human Interest Stories**

In October we received a little family of three children, the oldest child and her brother had lost their father and their mother remarried; the two older siblings were living with an uncle. The mother became pregnant again and was found to be carrying twins, in labour the first baby was born safely but the second twin and the mother both died. Now this little family of three is orphaned and the uncle processed them through Social Affairs to come and live with

us. The smallest baby was very small and fragile; all three have made great progress.

We have had several small babies come to us this year, Temesgen's mother died while his father is in jail. He was small and scrawny and being cared for by an aunt who had another baby herself; the grandparents were worried and decided that the little boy would be better with us. He has adjusted very well, a happy little boy. Two newborns came to us, both birthed by itinerant women, one from a remote country area of north western Tigray who was also handicapped and the most recent from a woman who lives on the streets and has a history of abandoning her children (two previous dead babies reported) and Social Affairs believed that in the best interest of the baby he should be placed somewhere safe.

### Grace School

Activity	M	F	All	Remarks
Grace Village School				
No. Nursery workers	0	1	1	1 nursery worker on maternity leave
• Nursery	5	2	7	Simply stimulation, food, love
No. KG Teachers	0	1	1	Certified KG teacher
• Pre-school	2	3	5	Basic numeracy and fidels
• KG Two	5	6	11	Basic reading and numbers
• Slow learners	0	2	2	Helping where they are weak
No. of Elementary Teachers	3	0	3	Certificate/ Diploma level
• Grade One	4	3	7	Progressive - Reading, numeracy
• Grade Two	4	1	5	Additional basic science, English
• Blind Children	1	2	3	Braille writing, reading
• Grade Three	0	5	5	Maths, Science, Languages, Aesthetics
• Grade Four	2		2	As above
Elementary				Distance Learning (Mandela)
• Grade Five and Six	2		2	According to grade
• Grade Seven	3	1	4	
• Grade Eight	1	2	3	
Secondary				Shire High School
• Grade Nine	3		3	
• Grade Ten	1		1	
• Grade Eleven	2		2	Shire Preparatory School
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>62</b>	

### Successes

Grace School has been an asset in that we have been able to add blind children to grade one. Teacher Menguesha was trained to teach Braille this year, in Addis Ababa.

The change from formal teacher driven classes for grades five through eight to distance learning with a class supervisor has helped to place our students on a national level and create for them the basis of student-centered learning as recommended by the government. Initially the children balked at this but with adjustment on our side and a change in supervisor they appear to have accepted this methods of learning and are working in small groups and singly to gain knowledge.

### **Constraints**

The change from formal to distance learning education for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade has created some degree of anxiety; due mainly to interference from an unrelated (to school) staff member who no longer works here. This has been resolved and the children are doing much better and appear happy.

Eating lunches at school started off rather messy but careful seating arrangements and monitoring has made for smooth and easy lunchtimes at school.

### **Human Interest Story**

Three children come specifically to learn Braille - two girls and one boy. A neighbor asked if her son a victim of polio might attend school here as local schools are too far for her to push his wheel chair. So he too attends, recently we started physiotherapy under the auspices of the local physiotherapist. We hope to expand our education for the vulnerable to include the deaf during 2011.

#### **5.1.2. Community**

- Introduction

In line with the Women's Affairs Ministry the preferred method of childcare is keeping the child within the environment in which s/he has been born or brought up. Where an older sibling has been managing the home, albeit with difficulty, we seek to assist the younger siblings with food and schooling, often a helping hand is all that is required. A small quiet place to study is a luxury, and schools where they have a good black boards and toilet facilities are rare. This is where we can help.

- Stipend Child Supports and Medical Assistance

The Community Child Care Project assist children to survive and to find a measure of contentment despite their heartaches, through the work of supervision, counselling, and advising them in relation to their education and how to improve their grades; their social lives and how to live safe and healthy lives. We seek to motivate the brighter students to continue to improve and the slower students we help in our study hall. We ensure that the children are not exploited in any manner either at school, their communities and / or at home.

One hundred twenty five birr per month is paid to each child selected from the list supplies by the local government offices and reviewed by our social workers. The social workers go to the schools, the homes when required and see the children each month in the office. Their situation is reviewed regularly. Medical problems are treated at the local government health facility, and treatment and medication is covered by the Abraham's Oasis.

- Study / social counsel

A small study hall is available for these vulnerable children where they can study; an older student or an adult with diploma level education is available to assist them with school work. Should they have problems of social nature, our social workers are present to advise them of ways to overcome these problems.

- Elementary School Support

Many rural schools in Ethiopia suffer from the lack of basic teaching tools. The aim of Abraham's Oasis is to strengthen these schools through initially supplementing their needs

and then helping them through selected income generation schemes proposed by the said school for sustainable outcomes, to eventually support themselves.

One of the highlight for us this year was a regional award presented to Abraham’s Oasis for the building of four classrooms in Kelakil for children affected by the unidentified liver disease currently decimating many within certain affected communities of our area here in north western Tigray.

### Community Child Care

SN	Activities	M	F	All
	Community Child Care			
	• Identification of vulnerable children in the area	1105	940	2045
	• Provision of funding	51	84	135
	• Supervision of sponsored children	38	50	88
	• Medical Support	7	10	17
	• Home visits done in 2010	74	122	196
	New children added this year	6	16	22
	Children attending the library	30%	25%	27.5%
	Children who failed to pass exams	7	17	24

### Success

The majority of the students under the project continue their studies at school; they appear to be happy to have this facility. They try hard, with more and more using the study hall as a quiet place to study. We are making a concerted effort to encourage children, especially the female teenagers, to continue their education.

### Constraints

Some children unfortunately do not come in a timely manner to collect their stipend; this makes for awkward book keeping, and creates problems within the households where they reside. Other children have neglected their studies despite help from the social workers and others have failed to pass from one grade to another. Other children are working half days as daily labourers in order to earn a little bit of money, and sadly the bars lure many pretty teenage girls into a quick profit money making rackets at the cost to their lives.

### Human Interest Stories

1. Tarke Guesh is one of the young girls on the Community Child Care Project; she lives with her mother who is very poor, seriously ill with both epilepsy and AIDS. Tarke faces enormous sorrow, a heavy work load and she prays daily for her mother survival.
2. Lewan is fourteen, both parents are dead and she feels very alone as she believes she has absolutely no family. Recently she heard that she has one uncle, her mother’s brother – now she dreams that one day she will meet him, this one living relative has given her hope!
3. Regat is a young girl living with her mother who is an HIV/AIDS victim. Regat is the primary caregiver for her mother, now she dreams of becoming a doctor so that she can help others just like her mother. This makes what we do so meaningful, helping children achieve their dreams!

### Elementary School Support Project

SN	Activity	M	F	All	Outcomes
1	Kelakil School	470	610	1080	
	Phase One				Completed
	Phase Two				Started the shop
	Phase Three				Not yet started
2	Degana School	562	607	1169	Money received
	Proposal				Received
	Phase One				Not yet started
	Phase Two				-
	Phase Three				-

#### **Success**

The Kelakil School is using the materials correctly and the students are beneficiaries of the second phase that is a small school based shop from whence local people may buy items for the home and the pupils can buy school note books and pens.

#### **Constraints**

The shop is only open a few hours per day, thus creating a lack of continuity of marketing appeal. This should be reviewed and be available for most of the day and weekends.

#### **Future Hopes**

The Degana School would like to use the first installment to build a classroom as they face some severe classrooms shortages. This would help enormously.

#### **5.1.3. Child Protection for Refugee Children**

- Introduction

Unaccompanied minors crossing the borders from Eritrea arrive with no support system apart from the multilateral aid agencies. In 2008 Abraham's Oasis was requested by the local office of one of the multilateral agencies to handle the Child Protection service for these vulnerable children on one of the local refugee camps. This started small and has increased to over one thousand children as we write this report. In addition to the unaccompanied minors we also supervise the welfare for children living with refugee immediate families, extended families and foster family living within the refugee community.

- Shelter supervision

In normal refugee camp setting the fostering of unaccompanied minors is the norm; sadly in refugee camps where males (young males) are over 75% of the camp residents, this does not create good and secure environments for these vulnerable children. We have, therefore created shelters for the children where they live together in group homes with the younger unaccompanied minors living under the close supervision of incentive worker housemothers, who are able to ensure - Security, nurturing, good nourishment, healthy life styles and oversight or guidance for the children under eighteen.

For children who reach seventeen, there is a transitional period wherein these youngsters will move out from under our care and will be established as part of the larger community.

- School compliance

The multilateral agencies ensure that there are agencies to provide education, it is our responsibility to supervise school attendance, this is not always easy. However the incentive workers are engaged to supervise the children, the teachers and other community workers who are able to keep our Child Protection Officers informed of truants or trouble children. Working closely as part of a larger partnerships strengthens the over all child protection for these exceedingly vulnerable children.

- Safety

As the name implies, child protection is making certain that each and every child is safe, from perpetrators, from fears, from hunger, from lack of education, from inside and outside threats, from bad influence such as bars, prostitution and any other form of exploitation.

- Recreation

Simply providing sufficient books for 1000 children is huge, endeavouring to provide games, balls, sports equipment for that number of children is mammoth and alone we are unable to do this. Some support is forthcoming but not enough to provide for one thousand children.

### Refugee Children

SN	Activity	M	F	All	Remarks
1	No. of unaccompanied children	877	143	1020	In all shelters, stone & tin hall
	No. of community children	694	584	1278	
	No. of shelters received	14	1	15	But still insufficient
	Total number of shelters	63	12	75	+ 6 rooms in the reception hall
	No. of new OVCs registered			702	
	Food supplied to	877	143	1020	
	Blankets supplied to	120	13	143	
	Clothes given to	877	143	1020	
	Floor mats supplied to	145	34	179	
2	No. Reception Centre (rooms)	6	-	6	
	No. of youths	153	-	153	
	• In Reception Centre	140	-	140	
	• Re-housed	9	-	9	
3	Oasis for Kids services				
	No. children assessed (BIA)	53	5	58	Training in Jan 2011
	No children helped emotionally	34	7	41	
	No. protected from perpetrator	877	143	1020	
	No given psych. counselling	65	37	102	
4	No children attending school	514	298	812	
	• Primary School	486	281	763	
	• Secondary School	28	17	45	
6	Youths moved to independence	39	-	39	
	Building shelters	17	-	17	
	Completed shelters	12	-	12	
7	Medical assistants to children				
	• No. Locally assisted	500	423	923	
	• No. Transferred to Shire	22	8	30	

	• No. Transfer elsewhere	6	1	7	
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SN	Activity	M	F	All	Remarks
8	Incidents of violence				
	• Sexual based	-	1	1	Case currently in court
	• Other types	-	-	-	
9	Escapes from Camp				
	• Attempts	26	8	34	
	• Non returned	5	1	6	
10	Special needs children				
	• UAM	8	1	9	
	• community	24	18	42	
11	Intra-agency activities				
	• No. meetings			8	
	• No. workshops			3	
12	Community refugee children				
	• With parents	534	543	1077	
	• With extended families	18	15	33	
	• With foster families	14	3	17	

### **Success**

Providing for increasing numbers of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and unaccompanied minors (UAM) has become quite a challenge; but with creativity Abraham's Oasis has been able to ensure shelters, rations distribution, safety and activities to keep them occupied. The library, debates, sports and simply collecting wood has kept them busy.

During the year Abraham's Oasis added Child Protection Officers (CPO) breaking down the child-groups into manageable sizes to be monitored by each CPO. One of the CPO's is a qualified psychologist and she has been instrumental in providing counseling to these traumatized children selecting the more severely disturbed children to begin with and gradually helping more and more.

A Child Protection Coordinator has been employed to provide more hands on oversight of the activities of the CPOs and the incentive refugee workers as well as the children and to create good partnerships with other agencies also working at the camp.

### **Constraints**

The need of fuel has been a challenge for the better part of this past year, the local population not happy to have their supply depleted by these incomers, the incentive refugee workers believing this is not part of their mandate and the children fearful of attack while gathering wood. This has been largely resolved with meetings held and job description redefined for incentive workers and making use of electricity for the making of baked goods (Injera and bread); however some partners are loathed to use refugee children to collect firewood, this will create an impasse unless more flexibility is acceptable to partner.

Some older children have tried to run away, they are counseled and encouraged not to repeat this. Other children are attracted to the bars, and night clubs found around the camp.

Stricter supervision with more informal activities are being introduced to keep the children engaged and out of mischief.

### ***Human Interest Story***

1. She is fifteen; she and her mother came from Eritrea and lived together in a stone house. Now the mother has abandoned her to go and live with a partner, who lives in a mud house. The girl has been transferred into our shelter, and the mother is intent on staying with this man.
2. A mother sent her seven year old daughter with an older man to be attended to at the clinic however, the man raped the child on the way. This is being followed in the local court.
3. A fourteen year old who fled from Eritrea and then returned of his own free will, was while back in Eritrea attacked and forced into the military; however due to the injuries sustained during the attack he was given five months rest. During that time he fled back to Ethiopia and the camp, where he has become a spokesperson against fleeing back into Eritrea.
4. At least two UAM have been sent money to try and flee to Israel, however reports (BBC) are forthcoming that the Bedouins in Sinai have become expert human traffickers, using refugees as expendable commodities in exchange for hard currency. Every effort must be exerted to stop refugees from making this harrowing trip as it may cost them their lives or lifelong psychological trauma leaving them permanently scarred in body and mind.
5. One lad of ten talked of his time in the military, he had been caught while try fleeing from Eritrea into Ethiopia. He was sent to a detention camp where he was trained in military combat. This young lad is small for his age, very thin and spends most of the time in the church at the camp. He states, "I have been given ability to handle weapons and to survive through different means, this helped me cross the border again into Ethiopia. However, this power at my age has only given me a burden of losing my childhood". Now we struggle to restore to this little lad his stolen childhood and to assure him that no matter what has happened in the past it was not his fault.
6. A sixteen year old crossed the border with her sister; she stayed at the My Aini camp for two weeks. She went missing so we reported her absence to the police, after four days the police informed us that she had returned. She was injured and she told her us that the smugglers took 2,000 EB from them and put thirty refugees on the back of a truck, when they reached the border when asked to stop the driver sped up to cross over the border, the guards started to shoot not knowing there were people under the plastic awing. Three people we killed including the girls sister, she herself sustained a bullet injury through her wrist. They were found in the forest where they hid and after first aid at a nearby health facility they were sent back to the refugee camp at My Aini. An uncle had sent money to help these two girls to try and escape.
7. Another lad aged 14 years tried escaping with financial help from uncles abroad and became caught up in the Sinai with the Bedouin traffickers, who took all his money. When he reached to where he eventually wanted to go he was placed in prison and an international agency helped him back to Ethiopia. His uncles have now said he should try and find ways to go to Addis Ababa to live and study in a legal way.

## 5.2. Health

### 5.2.1. Women's health related support

Northwestern Zone of Tigray is one of the most remotes areas of Ethiopia, twenty years of civil war, followed by conflict with neighbouring Eritrea has depleted us of most of the basic services in health in general and maternal health in particular. In rural areas there is a population of 912,348 with 230,640 being women of reproductive age and 363,096 under the age of 14 years, representing over half the population of the area.

Faced with early marriage still practised in some areas that leads to early child bearing and all the related complications resulting in disabilities and death. There are also destitute, poor, disabled, mal nourished who stand little chance of survival simple living without the added buredn of a pregnancy. This leads to dimished outputs and the effects on the economy are not insignificant. As prevention and well placed practical information will make inroads into improving their lot, Abraham's Oasis has placed it emphasis on Women's health generally and maternal health in particular.

### 5.2.2. Gender based violence focal groups

Being a woman carries with it high risks; women and children remain the most vulnerable of all groups; women are victims of rape, battery, destitution after divorce, separation from children, means of livelihood taken from them after widowhood or because of disagreement. When we started these groups they were an interesting mix of:

- Women with unterine prolapse
- Divorced and widowed women
- Women with obstetric fistulae
- Barren women, unable to bear children
- Commercial sex workers

They were quite willing to sit down and plan together withoutstanding in judgement against each other simply realising that they are women and alone they can produce little but together or focal group their voice can be heard.

This is in its early stages but as we plan the future we hope that these focal groups can develop soem means of income generation to give them a hope and a future.

### 5.2.3. Grace Village health supervision

There are five children who take anti retroviral treatment and have careful follow up in the local hospital for their HIV/AIDS status. These children live, play and attend school together with their village siblings. It is lovely to see them all together. They have been taught to call an adult when anyone falls and bleeds, thus treating everyone equally and all blood is cleaned with precaution.

Growth monitoring especially of the babies and toddlers is done monthly, the older children are done more sporadically unless they show signs of weight loss. Sick children are followed by the village nurse, if seriously ill they may be hospitalised. This year one boy had his appendix removed and is back to health and vigour. Another lad was admitted with septicemia, his recovery was slower and we follow him carefully because he also has

hydrocephally with a Spitz Holter valve. We want to see the children learning good healthy customs so health education and big sisters teaching helps them learn how to be clean, to wash their hands frequently and the efficient use of mosquito nets to prevent malaria.

#### Health

	Activity	M	F	All	Remarks
<b>1</b>	<b>Rural health awareness activities</b>				
	• Fistula / Maternal Health Ed and Awareness	237	405	642	In four Woredas
	• Simple Delivery Kits distribution	-	-	836	Delay of supplies
	• Clean delivery assembly plans	-	-	-	Approved to start in 2011
	• Identify pts and referrals to Mekelle Fistula Centre	-	36	36	Women with VVF / or stress incontinence
	• Fistula staff members referred	-	2	2	1 re-operated – better
<b>2</b>	<b>Gender Based Awareness</b>				
	• No. of sessions	-	-	152	In seven3 Woredas
	• No. Victims assisted	-	59	59	Morale /finance
<b>3</b>	<b>Grace Village</b>				
	• No. Referrals to Addis Ababa	3	3	6	
	• No. who had surgery (outcomes)	0	2	2	Good results
	• No. Growth monitoring	25	23	48	Older boys do not come
	• No. Health supervision	0	0	22	Coughs and cold mainly
	• No. Staff with Fistula monitored	-	5	5	(No. 1 for referrals)
	• No. HIV residents / children	2	3	5	All on ART
	• No. given Health Education	-	-	12	Sessions
	• No sessions of Environmental Sanitation	-	-	3	General cleaning sessions

#### Successes

We have been able to identify more fistula patients than heretofore, referring on average 3 per month to Mekelle; this is a good beginning for us. The feedback from health institutions has been very positive, even in the health centres the midwives have asked for delivery kits *“we can guarantee a clean delivery to every mother, and they like this and now demand this minimum from us.”*

The Gender Based Violence Focal groups has been a great success, where women have felt forgotten and now can come to a meeting and talk opening about their heartaches is no small thing in rural Ethiopia. If we can now get funding for some forms of income generation for these women they can then walk with their heads held high!

We have good working relationships with the health offices and open doors for many more opportunities with other Woredas wanting to know when we can come to work with them! No doubt having a good Health Coordinator has done much to create this excellent environment.

#### Constraints

The women with uterine prolapse still come when we are looking for obstetric fistula, this is also a childbirth injury, but because these are not young pretty women they receive less publicity, they too need our help. We encourage the women to go to the local hospital for

surgery, but they can ill afford this especially if abandoned by their husbands. We would like to do more to help them.

Another constraint is fear, women are fearful of going so far away as Mekelle, they come from small remote villages and have never left their villages to go to the nearest market town much less the eight hour trip to Mekelle where the nearest centre is located. It will take time to assure them and as their friends return and tell their stories about the repair of their fistula and the outcome, more will be willing to go. We can only encourage them, pay the costs of travel for them and a family member to accompany them but we cannot force them. This will take all our powers of persuasion to bring about change of behavior and attitude amongst these very remote communities.

### ***Human Interest***

1. Yemisrach is 48 years old, a mother of seven children. Ten years ago she went into labour and labored for 48 hours resulting in a stillborn baby. We identified her during our outreach campaign into some of the most remote areas of northern Ethiopia. We brought her by car to the nearest community health centre when she panicked and said she needed to go home. No amount of persuasion would make her change her mind – she returned home.
2. Ambaynesh is thirteen years old, she has a congenital leakage of urine and she has been referred to Mekelle Hamlin Centre for assessment, her father has gone with her. The child has a congenital problem and was referred to the urologist who after providing her with medication has sent her home. We will try and follow up on this case and see if we can help in other ways.
3. Tsehaynesh was using a urethral plug that due to stretching of the urethra was no longer effective at controlling her urine. She went to Mekelle Hamlin Centre where the surgeon was able to tighten the urethra and now the plug is again effective at keeping her dry. She works at Grace Village. This new procedure is good as many of our staff may require this in future and we are happy that Dr. Melaku can do this for them in Mekelle.
4. Hewan aged eight living on the streets where she felt safer than living with her grandmother who used burning pepper as an inhalant as punishment. In that same house Hewan's mother's brother chopped off her arm and cut her head out of anger. This is where our role against gender based violence has highlighted the need of safe-houses for both children and women. Hewan is now happily living at Grace Village, attending school and learning to live with others in safety.
5. Mebrat is a woman who is also a dwarf. She had been surviving on the streets of her small village. On one occasion she was made drunk and several men raped her, resulting in a pregnancy. She was reported as a victim of gender based violence who when our representative saw her realized she was near term for her pregnancy. He brought her to the hospital in Shire where she was delivered of a baby boy. She told us given her plight she could not care for him and asked us to take him. He now lives with us.

## 5.3. Rural Development

### 5.3.1. Grace Village Farm

The Emnet cooperative of older boys did well to start with, however since starting highschool and having classes at irregular hours this has been somewhat difficult, however, since they have incorporated some of the younger lads to help them with watering vegetables, this has improved. It is good to see the enthusiasm and pleasure these lads have in working together.

The dairy part of the farm has progressed and we see a real future in this with more milk cows, a higher milk yield, more butter production and starting cheese manufacture, while also supplying the village children with milk at least once a day and the babies with more frequent quantities. There is huge scope for development in this area leading to eventual income generation that would create a sustainable environment for childcare at Grace Village.

### 5.3.2. Women Headed Householders

In 2010 the change from supporting women who start from zero, helping them actually get started and then supervising them to starting with women who have already shown initiative in starting their own cooperatives with their own meagres means has been a very good move. The women in the second group have progressed rapidly, they are enthusiastic at receiving the extra assistance.

The previously selected groups resulted in a 33% success rate. Out of three for example, only one has been able to graduate to independence. The two others (Guale and Myliham) have been dropped because of poor outcomes. Projects following the new criteria set have been wonderfully successful; Semama women's cooperative is very creative growing fruit trees, bee-keeping, coffee trees and a storehouse for surrounding market gardeners to collect their produce prior to distribution to the sales market. The other group in Lemlem have been growing teff and are now changing to dairy and this is going well. Our conclusion is continue to work with women with initiative for good outcomes.

### 5.3.3. Special vulnerable groups

Having said the above regarding women headed householders; we still want to assist vulnerable groups who have been devastated due to disease (Kelakil); women affected by gender based violence in services that will assist them to hold their heads high despite the misery they have sustained.

SN	Activity	M	F	All	Outcomes
<b>1</b>	<b>Women's Farms</b>				
	Review proposals from community	-	90	90	Being reviewed
	Support the active women's coops.		-	4	2 grad. 2 active
	Supervised- No. women		144	144	
	Handover to coop – No. women		81	81	Two cooperatives
	Number co-ops dropped			2	Poor results

SN	Activity	M	F	All	Outcomes
2	Grace farm				
	Role of Emnet, No. Active members	7	0	7	Good
	<b>No. cattle</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Production</b>
	• No cows producing milk		5	5	
	• No. bulls / bullocks	2	-	2	
	• No. female calves		1	1	
	• No. cows in calf/ still producing milk		(1)	(1)	
	• Amount of milk produced				30-35 lit. per day
	• Amount sold to public				4-8 lit per day
	• Amount consumed at Grace Village				16 lit.
	• Amount of butter produced per day				0.25-0.5kgs
	• Amount of butter sold				0.125 – 0.150 Kgs.

### **Successes**

Women's farms have been successful because we have improved our selection criteria only taking women's cooperatives where some measure of initiative has already been denoted by the women's affairs office. Starting with women who have not worked as a cooperative before and do not understand the implications has led to failure. (See constraints)

### **Constraints**

Poor output due to non-compliance and willingness to work by the members has led to a change in strategy (See success); these projects sites - Guale and Myliham have been dropped as not viable.

### **Human Interest Story**

In the Semama Project one woman called Mebrat, used to work very hard in subsistence farming and now even though she is around fifty years of age, she worked dynamically in the women's cooperative and made a good profit, from this she decided she would like to develop bee-keeping and was able to buy two bee-hives and again she has made profit; now this hard working woman has started to build for the first time in her life – a house!

### **Kelakil Rehabilitation**

SN	Activity	F	Number made	Profit made EB
1	<b>Women's rehabilitation</b>			
	• Tea shop	20		1,200
	• Basket making	5	20	112
	• Shop	7	-	201
	• Shiro making	5	25 Kgs	208
	• Chair making	0	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>		<b>1,721</b>
2	<b>Food support from Ab. Os.</b>		<b>Quantity distributed</b>	<b>Received</b>
	Maize		8,764 Kgs	8,764 Kgs
	Chick peas		8,764 Kgs	8,764 Kgs

### **Successes**

The women appear to be satisfied with the marginal profit they are making, however, we need to review the viability of the project in 2011.

### **Constraints**

Most of the members of this cooperative are illiterate and they have indicated a desire to learn; we have discussed this with the local government administration who will look into the matter. A number of the women are not healthy as they are ill with the unidentified liver disease affecting the area.

### **Carpet making**

One woman was trained in carpet making, a feasibility study was done and we decided that this would be good for the people of Kelakil. The delay has been from the government agency in Addis Ababa where the spinning and weaving looms are being made, to date these are not yet finished. Hopefully in 2011 these items will be ready and we can begin.

## **6. How we work**

The service provided is carried out through funding coming from donors with 5% deducted across the board for Administration costs.

At Grace Village each child is sponsored individually, this fund covers the lodging of the child and the employees required for the care of the said child. Some of this will also cover part of their schooling. The deficit for Grace School is made up from other donors who provide specifically for the school. Special equipment and training for blind and other handicapped children is made up by individual donors who help towards this cost and gifts in kind are given by agencies in country who support the blind and handicapped.

In the Community sponsorship programme we have donors either organized in to donor groups or who send individually from around the world for specific children; these children are followed and each year a report is sent to the donor with a thank you note from the child sponsored.

An organisation interested in strengthening local primary schools provides funding for local schools upon presentation of a three phase proposal and then funds given in three installements will be given on the pre-condition that the previous phase has been attained in an adequate manner.

Child Protection of unaccompanied minor refugee children was started after Abraham's Oasis was requested by United Nations High Commission for Refugees to manage this undertaking. Abraham's Oasis is supported 100% through the multilateral agency requesting us to manage this component of our work.

The Health of the children are covered by their sponsors, the Women's Health is funded through donors from overseas.

In our Rural Development, we would like to see Grace Farm become autonomous and eventually even be run with a profit that could be invested in Grace Village against the day whereby there may be no outside funding. For the Women Headed Householders this is done in a phased approach whereby the women will eventually graduate to independence and create their own income. The special vulnerable groups are either sick, handicapped and are assessed on a case by case basis to support them upon presentation of feasible proposals and the availability of funds.

## **7. Who we work with** (*alphabetical order*)

Administration for Refugee and Returnees Affairs, Shire, Ethiopia

Baptist Mid Missions, USA

Bridge to Light, Netherlands

Capel Fron, Wales

Charities and Societies Agency, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Christian Blind Mission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Davis University, USA

Education Bureau, Mekelle, Ethiopia

Education Office of Tahtay Koraro, Tigray, Ethiopia

Dr. E. Catherine Hamlin, Ethiopia

Health Bureau, Mekelle, Ethiopia

Hope Ethiopia, USA

Julia Taft Fund, Embassy of the United States of America

Mariet, Netherlands

Mesrach Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Michael Onlus, Italy

Northwestern Zone Administration, Shire, Ethiopia

Rivers of Hope International, USA

SBAAG, Scotland

Shire Administration, Tigray, Ethiopia

Social Affairs Bureau, Mekelle, Ethiopia

Sue Small, UK

Tahtay Koraro Administration, Tigray, Ethiopia

United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Ethiopia

Mr. van de Zwaan, Netherlands

Women's Affairs Bureau, Mekelle, Ethiopia

Women's Hope International, Switzerland

Yared Tours, Ethiopia

Individual donors from :

- Australia
- Canada
- Ethiopia
- Italy
- The Netherlands
- United Kingdom

- United States of America

Donors have given by way of regular contributions for projects (Grace Village, Grace School, Grace Farm, Community Orphans, Refugee Unaccompanied Minors, Women's Health, Gender Based Violence, Women Headed Household support, Elementary School Supports, Special support Projects for vulnerable and marginalised people groups and Rural School Libraries.) Others send parcels with items valued by our children, sweaters, clothing, school items, special gifts for their birthday (Grace Village Birthday is held in October every year, when we celebrate the birthday of each child); still others write notes and send cards to encourage the children; others send photos; still others come and visit and help us build, repair, paint the village; there are donors who donate their time to teach English, to spend time with the children to help with babies, even small babies who need feeds in the nights! We welcome willing hands and loving hearts here at the village!

## **8. Why we need your support**

How good it would be to feed children fresh air and to clothe them with clothes (if we had any); but sadly we need funds to care for the children, to sponsor them, to pay for books and teachers, to pay salaries of caregivers, cooks, logistics expenses, finance, administrative and other personnel to meet the minimum standards laid down by the Charities and Societies Agency of the Ministry of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the line departments with whom we work - Bureau of Youth, Social and Labour Affairs, Bureau of Health, Bureau of Education and Bureau of Women's Affairs.

When you visit us and help with different projects, caring for babies in the nursery, repair our ceilings or plumbing, teach English or other subjects; advise on engineering, building, plumbing etc. We become a safer and better place, providing the best possible environment for our children and our staff.

Bus loads of tourists mainly from The Netherlands and Belgium, stop on their tourist route to Axum in order to visit our village, they bring useful items and leave donations. Every little bit helps. One young girl in US is raising money to pay the salary of a teacher. This is precious in our eyes! Without assistance from friends inside and outside Ethiopia we would fail. Thank you for what you have done for us for short or long term, recurrent or once off, you are important to us!

## **9. How we manage our activities**

Abraham's Oasis is registered as an Ethiopian Resident Charitable Society with the Charities and Societies Agency. Regular meetings are held by Management and quarterly Board meetings are held. There is an annual General Assembly wherein the audit report and annual reports are presented and approved; minutes are kept for all meetings, signed and kept on file.

Monitoring - Abraham's Oasis works closely with the Zonal and Regional line departments. Communications are maintained between the offices regarding cross-cutting issues. International donor-partners are closely involved in all pertinent issues.

Reporting Roles - Abraham's Oasis provides the annual narrative and audited financial reports to Charities and Societies Agency as well as the Regional Bureaus as per the agreement. This includes an annual review and audit of accounts and administrative matters. The donor sets the format and frequency of their reporting; all donors receive the annual narrative and audit reports each year and we are pleased to comply with whatever other request made.

## **10. What we plan to do in 2011**

Abraham's Oasis is a dynamic charity seeking to improve, innovate and enlarge upon current activities.

### **10.1. Childcare**

We hope to employ a Childcare Team Leader who cares passionately about children, has leadership skills and is able to lead our teams in the community child care activities, Grace Village and Grace School. This will ease some of the current administrative constraints for the concerned departments.

#### ***Residential***

To continue the care being done and house up to a maximum of sixty children in the village itself. The former housemothers who were asked to work as cooks because of the Women's Affairs Guidelines will continue to work as cooks while attending school up until 6th Grade when they can apply to be a housemothers again. In the meantime they will move back into the village and live along side the children they have mothered. This is being done with the approval of the Ministry for Women's Affairs who stated that as long as the child's best interest is considered we may be flexible in our strategy. We are pleased with this latitude.

We will continue to seek family re-unification whenever this become apparent and when as noted above the child's best interest is for such an eventuality. The re-integration into not village life will be carried out in a similar fashion to our current strategy, the over eighteen year old may work as an apprentice in one of our projects while attending school and live in Abraham's Oasis house in town, where we can continue to monitor their well being.

#### ***Community***

We are blessed with some good sponsors for this project; if we have available funding we could easily enlarge this project to include more children. Further development of the librabry / study hall would be beneficial for the children. A more systematic methods of visiting homes and couselling troubled children would also be of value. To improve reporting and provision of good reports for donors would be excellent.

## **10.2. Health**

### ***Grace Village Health***

To maintain the health status of our children, ensure ongoing good care of HIV + children with regular follow up at the HIV/AIDS Clinic in Shire. To ensure good nutrition, well prepared meals, safe environment, good nurturing skills by caregivers and adequate clothing. Creating a dynamic home and school environment where children can develop within carefully thought out boundaries.

### ***Women's Health***

To strengthen women, make changes in the family and thus the society is stabilized and the country develops rapidly. Therefore, ensuring good physical and mental for women, mothers, young girls will make some inroads towards creating a better environment for women in this remote north western area of Tigray.

### ***Gender Based Violence***

Unless that environment is safe and secure for women to develop, to learn and to earn their own income all we do will be made null and void because of fear. Giving women the ability of grouping with others creating a sense of unity will enable them to move forward and know they are not alone. This too will help the home, the community, the region and the country both socially and economically.

## **10.3. Agro –Development**

### ***Grace Farm***

There is enormous potential to develop the dairy at Grace Village. To produce milk and milk by products for the town and the residents of Grace Village. We would like to realise a good size dairy herd, build a barn with biogas facilities, fence of part of the fifteen hectares we have for this projects and then use this as a training ground for our children.

A dairy where we can produce pasturized butter, cheese and other milk by products could be marketed all the way to Axum and even Gondar given good refrigeration services including a vehicle for such purposes. The current dream is to see such an enterprise creating enough income to help towards running Grace Village and eventually cover all the costs, thus creating a truly sustainable village for vulnerable and orphaned children.

### ***Women's Cooperatives***

Helping women help themselves through cooperatives will remain part of what we do following our current careful selection criteria.

## **11. What you can do**

As one of our current partners your role is of enormous value to us, simply sustaining what we are doing at the present time remains a challenge. The inflation rate, the additional costs for growing children, the expansion of our services requires ongoing and additional funding. Your input and your expertise is of value to us, to develop income generation projects for Grace Village and Farm resulting eventually in an autonomous organisation is only a dream at present but one that we believe will create in this remote part of Ethiopia a model for other children's villages towards a self sustainable enterprise for child care, schooling and farm development.

New partners are welcome, your ideas for this vulnerable and rather forgotten area of Tigray would be of enormous worth not only for Abraham's Oasis but for the local government who is urging us to do more, to go further and to make changes where possible to give the local population hope for a more sustainable future in rural Ethiopia, thus encouraging more to stay in the countryside instead of migrating to the streets of the cities across Ethiopia.

On behalf of the people of North-Western Zone of Tigray, Ethiopia, thank you to donors, guests, government, bi-lateral and multilateral agencies in country and from around the world who support us in our efforts to serve the vulnerable and marginalized within the scope of Abraham's Oasis.

## **12. Summary**

Overall this has been a good year; the adjustments in Childcare Activities has been well received with good outcomes. Grace Village has settled down to a peaceful year end with happy and basically healthy children. Grace School has a stable environment with the local Education Inspector stating this 'is a very good school'. The Community children despite school dropouts is reaching more children than ever before helping them attend school.

The Child Protection Activities though challenging with implementation of a Strategic Plan, has as a whole met the children basic needs in compliance with international unaccompanied minors requirement.

The Women's Health Activities has taken off beautifully under the auspices of the health coordinator. Highlighting Gender Based Violence has made us realise that this is very much part of women's well being and health.

Our Agro-development activities are doing better than heretofore; working with innovative women has made a positive change in the women headed household projects. Grace Farm needs a good leader to bring it to a profitable outcome.

As a whole despite challenges we have had a good year, thank you for the supportive role you have played.

Catharina van den Bosch  
Director  
January 2011

## Annex One - Staff

### Administration

- Manager (Volunteer) – 1 – nurse manager 1
- Advisor “ – nurse – midwife 1
- Finance Officer BSc - Accounting 1
- Accountant BSc - Economics 1
- Cashier Diploma in Accounting 1
- Storekeeper - Diploma 1
- Purchase and Supply Diploma 1
- Cleaner - Primary Education – 1

### Childcare –

Coordinator – BSc level to be employed in 2011 1

#### Grace Village

- Supervisor for childcare 10<sup>th</sup> grade - 1
- Storekeeper / Supervisor for Domestic service 8<sup>th</sup> grade 1
- Nannies - 7<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grade 6
- Domestic employees – unskilled 11
- Driver - driver’s license ½

#### Grace School

- KG teacher – certificate- 1
- Grade 1& 2 - certificate plus special education in Braille 1
- Grades 3 & 4<sup>th</sup> - Diploma 1
- Grades 5-8<sup>th</sup> – Diploma 1

#### Community Childcare

- Community Child Officer – diploma 1
- Childcare worker – diploma 1
- Apprentices – 11<sup>th</sup> grade 2
- Driver - license ½

#### Child Protection

- Child Protection Coordinator – BSc - (completing MSc) 1
- Child Protection Officer – BSc 3
- Child Protection Officer – Diploma 1
- Driver – license 2

### Rural Development

#### Grace Farm

- Agricultural Agent – diploma - ½
- Dairyman – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade 1
- Apprentice dairyman – 10<sup>th</sup> grade 1

#### Women headed householders

- Agricultural Agent – diploma – ½
- Driver- ¼

#### Special Project Kelakil

- Supervisor trained in AA in carding and spinning - 1

### Health –

- Health Coordinator – BSc 1
- Nurse – Diploma 1
- Driver - license 1



## Organizational Chart for Abraham's Oasis

