



April - June 2010
Quarterly Report

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1. Introduction

Abraham's Oasis is an Ethiopian Resident Charity (No. 0905), registered at the Charities and Societies Agency under the Ministry of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

1.1. Abraham's Oasis identified various vulnerable and marginalized people groups in Northwestern Zone of Tigray. These are divided into two main target groups:

1.1.1. Children

- Absolute orphans / totally abandoned children
- Child-led households
- Unaccompanied minor refugees

1.1.2. Women

- Women headed households
- Women affected by incontinence (obstetric and traumatic fistulae, uterine prolapsed etc)
- Gender based violence

Across all our activities we seek to highlight gender base issues

2. Overview

2.1. **Vision** - *“Sustainable opportunities for the marginalized and vulnerable”*

2.2. **Mission**

Creating an enabling environment whereby social and cultural integration of the marginalized and vulnerable will occur, strengthening them through agricultural development, childcare, health and education resulting in dignity and independence of the individual and the community.

2.3. **General Objective**

To bring about change in behavior that will raise standards of the selected marginalized and vulnerable in North Western Zone, Tigray bringing about dignity and independence of the individual and the communities.

2.4. **General Overview**

Abraham's Oasis started with childcare for orphans and abandoned children while the founder still lived in Shire-Endasselassie. The local government gave her land that was used to build Grace Village for the children.

This has developed into multi-faceted activities that include housing and a school for the resident children, as well as farm cooperative for the older residential boys; an office for the community orphan's sponsorship project has been established in Shire Town and we have the responsibility for Child Protection at the My Aini Refugee Camp under the umbrella of UNHCR.

The woman abandoned by spouse or partner has led to the women headed household activities in agricultural activities. In poverty there is illness and maternal health takes the lead, therefore our health activities are based on women's health issues.

2.5. Geographical Location and Demographics

Abraham's Oasis head office is five kilometres from Shire-town, in North-Western Zone, Tigray Region, Ethiopia. The current plan is to continue the work being done in Woreda Tahtay Koraro, which measures 777.27 square kilometres, contains a population of 83,019 of which 40,853 are female with 4,921 being female-headed households and to gradually extend throughout the Northwestern Zone.

3. Activity Reports

3.1. Childcare

Caring for children has been the first of all our services to the community, this remains are focus. We have developed a threefold approach, caring for children in a home environment, a place for them to call home, women they can refer to as mother and a male leader who can represent a father figure. These are totally dependent upon the organization for food, supplies shelter, education and preparation for the future.

The second group is the child led householder, these are usually teens caring for younger siblings, in some cases destitute mothers who are ill need a little extra but mostly the children are alone, the little money that goes into helping them makes the difference between attending school or not.

The third group is the unaccompanied minor in refugee camps; the need for child protection become glaringly apparent when the child is far from home with no familiar security posts. Providing shelters, a safe place to be, monitors to whom they can run to and ask for help; ensuring they are receiving their fair rations; rendering a secure environment for the female child in a male dominated camp is what child protection is all about.

3.1.1. Grace Village

Activity	No. Beneficiary			No. of target reached %		
	F	M	All	F	M	All
New children	2	2	4	100	100	100
Education						
• Nursery	3	6	9	100	100	100
• Pre-school	6	5	11	100	100	100
• Primary	13	15	28	100	100	100
• Secondary	0	3	3	100	100	100
Nurturing the children						
• Food	22	29	51	100	100	100
• Clothing	22	29	51	70	76	73
• Discipline / Counseling	6	2	8	100	100	100
• Recreational activities	9	12	21	100%	100%	100%

Successes

Five new children have been admitted to Grace Village. Lukas aged four days, Temesgen aged eight months, Tizita aged seven, Yordanos aged eight, Danayit aged six years and Hewan aged eight. The children have come because the mother could not care for him being disabled, his mother died, her mother died and for the last two the mother left the country and the last child was seriously injured by an uncle All have integrated well and we are pleased with them.

There has been smooth transition for two of our older lads who have moved into rented accommodation in town who will start eleventh grade this year. Teaching them independence as a means of preparing them for the future; will be evidence of their ability to integrate back into society.

Two family re-unifications have been implemented one with her father and one with her mother, both will be carefully followed by our community child care social worker who will make sure they are safe.

Constraints

This has been a tough quarter in that some of our children have been defiant both to their teachers and the authority within the village. We have been able to resolve these issues due to carefully planned family re-unification. One teenager was excluded due to inappropriate behavior. His sister over 18 year old has chosen to move back to Shire to care for him and we have given her a job in our organization as a daily worker, so despite the sadness of the situation we are reassured because the older sister has taken her responsibilities seriously.

The Women's Affairs Ministry has revitalized and upgraded their guidelines for childcare in Ethiopia. They strongly recommend home mothers of 6th grade or more. Our home mothers had not even completed the second grade. We were beginning to see evidence of this in the poor behavior of the older children. The younger children they managed just fine, but once the child knew mother than the home mother there were conflicts.

We have transferred the former housemothers to daily workers permitting them to attend evening school and improve themselves. The Big Sister are 6-7th graders and are watching the children and doing a good job, we have engaged girls from the community to help them; these are tenth graders and able girls. Thus far it appears to be working...

Human Interest Story

1. His mother was an HIV-AIDS animator in the town; a lovely bright and vivacious woman in her late teens. She had contracted AIDS due to an unwise life style. She decided to change, she was told NOT to get pregnant but she met a handsome man who made her empty promises. She became pregnant; her man was arrested for something or other. She delivered her baby; the baby's father went to jail. She has now died and the father is still in jail. The mother's sister had one baby and wanted a second one, this little baby was in the way... So the darling little eight month-old came to us. He was underweight but a smiling little boy; he is now gaining weight and doing very well.
2. Born to a very young mother who didn't know what to do with her. Finally she left her with her mother the child's grandmother and she left to seek her fortune. The little girl was left to a living horror. Her grandmother punished her with inhalations of burning hot pepper. Her mother's insane brother attacked her with a machete, chopping off her left arm above the elbow and slashing her head in various places... The little six year old ran away and lived on the streets, surviving with food thrown at her. She has come to us aged seven, never been to school and very affectionate! We will take her to the Cure Hospital to see if the orthopaedic surgeon can create a better stump for her arm for eventual prosthesis.

3.1.2. Grace School

This transitional period of the first year of school has had its ups and downs, the teachers are not used to teaching small classes, the students feel like they are at home so less able to separate school from home.

Classes	Total			Target attained	
	M	F	Total	M	F
Grade 1	3	1	4	100%	100%
Grade 2	0	5	5	100%	100%
Grade 3	2	2	4	100%	100%
Grade 4	1	0	1	100%	100%
Grade 5	2	1	3	100%	100%
Grade 6	3	1	4	100%	50%
Grade 7	1	2	3	100%	100%
Grade 8	3	1	4	100%	100%

Successes

That we have managed to get to the end of this first year is success on its own! Some of our slow learners have finally realized what learning is all about and have started to understand. Others who did poorly in the first term have improved and done better in the second term.

Constraints

We have had problems with water supplies that has led to illnesses related to low water supplies such as diarrhoea and vomiting. This has affected school attendance for some of the children. Another problem has been that of lack of maintaining discipline. It may have been due to the end of the year fatigue with the teachers, but some students were quite disobedient and unruly. Involvement of management however resolved the problems and the eventual exclusion of the misbehaving teenager has done much to settle everything down.

Individual Students

1. Selamawit had been with us for four years, her mother had died and her father did not want her. A few months ago he visited her and told her that when she finished school she could go home to him. She became totally unruly and unsettled after that. Finally school was finished and she has been transferred home to her father and our community care programme.
2. Under false pretenses her mother brought her to Grace Village saying she was an orphan. Sayid was not an orphan but needed open heart surgery that was done in Netherlands. Recently it was made known to us that this teenager had a mother, we made arrangements for her to return home. Both the girls will be followed under our community child care programme.
3. A brilliant student but totally psychotic, last year he tried to kill himself; we placed him in a safe haven. This year we thought we were doing so well with Samuel when we found out he had been seriously misbehaving in a way not reconcilable with our charity. He was able to complete fifth grade and will if possible continue in town at a government school.

3.1.2. Community Child Care

Activity (average)	No. Beneficiary			No. of target reached %		
	F	M	All	F	M	All
Community Child Care						
Identification of new children	3	3	6	100	100	100
Provision of funding, no. children sponsored	50	82	132	98	96	97
Supervision, children counseling, talked to	48	66	114	96	80	88
Medical support give, medicine bought	2	3	5	100	100	100
Home visits done this quarter	25	45	70	50	55	52.5
Use of study hall / library						
No. attending	34	67	101	68	82	75
No. helped by tutor	15	23	38	44	34	39

- **Successes**

It has been good to see the children able to pursue their studies and surviving so admirably despite severe handicaps and constraints. These are well behaved children no doubt because they have hope of a future. Seeing them strong and healthy is so encouraging too. They appear to be able to resolve their own problems and have developed into great reconciliation experts amongst their peers.

- **Constraints**

The Social Affairs Office is late in processing the needy children which causes delays in getting them enrolled in our community childcare programme. Some children do not come to collect their allowances in a timely manner which causes problems because the cashier comes only on certain days. Others come one by one instead of as a group creating gaps for payment.

The sick children are not quick to come for help and go late to seek medical advice, leading to more serious illness than necessary. There are children who are not happy with their caregivers and this needs careful handling as the loss of asylum for them can mean the street. But monitoring caregivers to ensure there is no actual abuse is also important.

We are still short of text books for studying; more are needed but mainly in Tigrinha for the lower grades.

- **Human Interest Story**

Regat Hadeгу is a young girl living with her mother who has HIV / AIDS. Regat helps her mother and cares for her and this young girl has expressed a wish to become a doctor so that she in turn can help people living with AIDS. This is what makes this programme so meaningful. Helping children attain their dreams!

3.1.3. Child Protection Refugee Care

3.1.3.a. Unaccompanied Minors (UAM)

SN	Activity	M	F	Total
1	<i>Shelter Activities</i>			
	New children	101	29	130
	Children in stone houses	619	93	712
	Children in tents	0	0	0
	Teens moved out	55	0	55
	No. received rations *	619	93	
	Quantity of rations:	27,765 Kg. wheat; 464.25 Kg sugar 278.55 salt 1857 lt.oil	4,185Kg. wheat; 69.75 Kg sugar 41.85 salt 279 lt.oil	
	No received water	445,680	66,960	
	No received clothing	0	0	0
	No. received blankets	46	14	60
	No received medical care in My Aini	50	15	65
	No received medical care in Suhul Hospital	2	2	4
2	<i>Unaccompanied Children Refugee Incentive Staff</i>			
	Current	18	11	29
	New	8	0	8
	Total			37
3	<i>Oasis for Kids Activities</i>			
	No children counselled	23	10	33
	Outcome	Fair	good	n/a
	No children using the centre generally	619	93	712
	No children using the reading room	100	79	179
	No. involved in sports	139	20	159
	No. involved in drama/art/music	76	10	89
	No. involved in crafts	46	77	123
	No involved in income generation	25	4	29
	HIV AIDS Awareness meeting	40	21	61
	No staff meetings held in the centre	23	6	29
4	<i>Intra-agency Activities</i>			
	Help with troubled teens	1	3	
	Assistance with housing		1	

- **Success**

The new UAM have arrived from the screening centre and have settled in well. We have been able to house them in stone houses which are more secure for these vulnerable children.

The OK Centre has been an enormous success and is used every day!

- **Constraints**

Poor communication from the screening centre of the numbers, sex and timing of transfer has made receiving these troubled children less idea than we like it. Previous notification would be helpful, we are trying to make this a smoother transition through closer working relationships with the screening centre.

The lack of stone shelters has led to overcrowding of the children in some houses. The addition of the reception centre will go some way to relieve this as a temporary measure. Having the children live in tents is not really safe especially during the rainy season. There are constraints for the teens wanting to build; the lack of free land space, building materials and water remains a serious handicap. The list of children given to Abraham's Oasis is not the same as what is given to government and refugee agencies causing problems for rationing leading to children being obliged to miss school. The OK centre is totally inadequate for the number of children, the items for their entertainment is not enough, due to their sheer numbers!

- **Teenagers graduated to independence status**

Fifteen UAM have moved out into shelters they have built themselves and now the second group is ready to move out and build their house. Other teens are in training for various income generation activities.

- **Rations**

The method for receiving and dispensing rations has been well organized and managed a storehouse is currently being built for better storage of these items.

- **Human Interest Story**

One lad of ten years of age talked about his military training in Eritrea. He had been caught while crossing the border to Ethiopia, and sent to a detention camp where he was trained in military combat. This young lad is short, very thin and attends church regularly at the My Aini Camp. He says "I have been given the ability to handle weapons and survive through different means; this has helped me cross the border again into Ethiopia. However, having this power at my age has only given me the burden of losing my childhood." Now we struggle to give this little lad his childhood back and to assure him that no matter what has happened in the past, it was not by his choice or his fault.

3.1.3.b. Community Child Protection Activities

1	<i>Community Child Protection</i>			
	No of new children admitted	258	169	427
	No living in stone houses	278	273	551
	No living under canvas	6	2	8
	No received clothing / blankets	88	92	180
	No received medical care in My Aini	30	12	42
	No received medical care in Suhul Hospital	3	2	5
2	<i>Community Refugee Incentive Staff</i>			
	Current	9	4	13
	New	7	0	7
	Total	16	4	20
3	<i>Oasis for Kids Activities / Community</i>			
	No children counselled	53	69	122
	No children using the centre generally	13	11	24
	No children using the reading room	4	7	11
	No. involved in sports	7	0	7
	No. involved in drama/art/music	13	11	24
	No. involved in crafts	0	0	0
	No involved in income generation	6	7	13
	No staff met with in the centre	25	6	31

- **Success**

The children feel safe in stone houses, this is much better for all the refugees. The receipt of clothing was welcome, they need much more, but in this distribution the most vulnerable received clothing. The outcome for counseling has been good, parents are keen to learn and to see how they can help their children in the camp life style.

- **Constraints**

During the official count of children living in the community, the families gave in accurate numbers due to children with disabilities who they tend to hide. There are eight children living with their parents in tents, these are not ideal, water comes in under the canvas and it is stifling during the day time; families tend to stay out under the trees during the day time. At night the tents are very cold. The OK centre is inadequate even for the UAM, so that the community children really do not have much possibility to being there. Much more supplies for sports, books and crafts are needed for all the children in the camp.

- **Human Interest Story**

She is fifteen years old, she came from Eritrea with her mother and they live together in a stone house. Now her mother has taken a male partner and abandoned her to go and live with this man who lives in a mud house. This young girl has been transferred to our UAM shelter for her protection until we can counsel the mother about the situation.

3.2. Health

Activity	Numbers			Target	Remarks
	F	M	Total	%	
Childcare / Grace Village					
Grace Village children treated	18	22	40	100	
HIV/AIDS monitoring	5	1	6	100	
Growth monitoring	23	25	48	98	
Housemothers checked	10	0	10	100	
Teachers education	0	6	6	100	
School health education	13	9	20	100	
Sanitation campaigns x 1	30	33	63	-	
Women's Health					
Fistula Awareness	243	111	354	-	
No. Sessions	6				
Locations	Tselemti, Medebaye Zana, Asgede Tsimbla				
Fistula pts. Identified	17	-	17	100	
No. referred to Mekelle	17	-	17	100	
Incontinence related problems	61	-	61	-	
No. referred to hosp.	7	-	7	-	
Maternal Health Awareness	282	104	386	100	
No. delivery kits given out/ used	182	-	182	91	
Sexual / gender based awareness	237	82	319	100	
No counseled / helped	2	0	2	100	
Kelakil Support					
No. visits	Two visits – assessed medical, economical and social problems				

3.2.1. Grace Village / School

Generally all is well in the village, minor health problems with no hospital referral this quarter. All the PLWA children attend the clinic and take their medication carefully and regularly. The children are growing, one older child refused to be measured but the remainder complied. The school health education classes are well attended, some teachers chose not to attend which is a pity. The whole of Abraham's Oasis helped with the sanitation campaign. One came late and made up by working longer.

3.2.2. Women's Health

Our main problem is the remoteness of the location, but then this is the reason mothers die or have problems during childbirth. We are seeing many women with obstetric fistula and word is now that we provide this service. The communications are good between government agencies and our charity. Women with other related incontinence are not receiving the service they require at the local hospital or they have financial constraints. Many women with uterine prolapse are being neglected. We are helping with psychological support for the time being. Our improved maternal health plan is working well but due to a shortage of delivery kits we have not been able to satisfy the demand. We hope to receive more kits soon. We have stimulated interest in Gender based violence and the next step will be to start focus group training to help those suffering from violence to help themselves and to work closely together against perpetrators.

3.2.3. Human Interest Story

- a. A lovely girl of eight years of age was living in Buya, 7 kms away from My Tsebri, between Amhara and Tigray Regions. She was living with her grandmother and her mother's brother. The mother was away, she had given birth to this child when she was little more than a child herself. The uncle is mentally deranged and in a frenzy chooped off the child's left arm with an ax, a knife and blade. He also cut her about the head. The child survived and lived with her grandmother who punished her by making her inhale hot pepper. The child was brought to Grace Village because of this tragic act of violence against her.
- b. We met a dwarf measuring 1.2 metres, she had been raped after giving her alcohol to drink. This little woman is not normal mentally and is often a target for mockery by her community in Dima, 80 kms from Tselemti. She started to show signs of eclampsia and while our health officer was teaching in the health centre, her case was presented to him and he brought her to the hospital where she was delivered by cesarean section one little boy. She has now returned to her village where she survives hand to mouth. Her little boy has been given a home at Grace Village because the mother is indigent and unable to care for the baby.

3.4. Farming

3.4.1. Women headed households

SN	Activity	Planned		Target		Success	Constraints
		M	F	M	F		
1	Adigidat	-	36	-	20	Well established now	-
2	Guale	-	34	-	22	Not doing well	advised how to improve or the project is stopped
3	Lemlem	-	37	-	30	Ongoing	-
4	Sesame	-	58	-	57	Successful	-
5	Kelakil	-	35	-	32	Ongoing	No land given yet, disappointing for the women

3.4.3 Grace Farm

The boys from Grace Village have established their own cooperative called EMNET Cooperative. They have established their rules and selected their members and are working hard.

SN	Activity	Planned total	Target reached	Success	Constraints
1	Types of vegetables 1.1. Tomato 1.2. Potato 1.3. Swiss Chard 1.4. Lettuce 1.5. Garlic 1.6. Green beans 1.7. Zuchinni	- - - - 4.8 qt -	8 kg - 4 pails 6 pails 4.5 kg - 3kgs	- - - - Poor yield	Poor outcomes due to lack of water, the dry season and poor work input
2	Types of crops Maize Teff Beans	0.5 ha 0.25 ha 0.25 ha	0.5 ha 0.25 ha 0.25 ha	Sown Ploughed ready	Hoeing and weeding done Ready to sow the fields
3	Water Resources 2.1. Lake 2.2. Wells	-- 1 1			Dry No water yet
4	Emnet Cooperative 3.1. No of members	10	7	Doing well	Not brilliant
5	Dairy Milk production for the quarter	1,900 litres	184 litres	Good outcome	-

The main constraint during this quarter has been the lack of water, labour and oxen. The supervising agricultural agent has not been well and has been of sick, this has not helped either.

4. Construction Projects

Water storage reservoir

The reservoir is 100% complete now, during the rainy season we will store up water herein and have sufficient for the dry season.

5. Summary

There have been changes in Grace Village during this quarter due to government guidelines, housemothers have been changed to comply with these guidelines. The first year of Grace School is now over and plans for the future are being considered. Several children have left as part of family re-unification and re-integration of older children.

The refugee work has expanded enormously and the estimated total of unaccompanied minors by the end of the year may be up to two thousand children, with this calculated guess we have put in place a strategic plan and a minimum package for every six hundred children. We have added two new child protection officers, one for the community and one for the next 600 children. They are being oriented at present.

The community children are growing and we have offered them apprenticeships within our charity to help them assist their families and prepare for the upcoming school year. Two of our Grace Village lads

now 18 year olds are to be attached to the community childcare programme as apprentices, learning how to support the orphan / vulnerable child in the community.

The health activities are developing in an exciting manner and we are pleased with the efforts being made by our health officer, we have added a nurse to the health team because when the health officer is away we need the presence of a nurse here to manage the children, appointments and to handle the fistula patients.

Our farm projects are getting off to a slow start, the rainy season should help the Boys Cooperative to develop and make money saved away for their future studies. The Women Head Householders are a mixed bag, with some doing exceedingly well and others rather poorly. We will gradually eliminate those who are performing poorly. Over the next year we may consider a phase out of this project and concentrate on Grace Farm, but we will monitor it carefully in the meantime.

In all our activities we are recognizant that we would not be able to do any of this work with out the support of our faithful donors! Thank you!

Catharina van den Bosch
Director

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