



American Friends of Soroka Medical
Center of the Negev

American Jewish Committee

American Jewish Joint
Distribution Committee (JDC)

American Jewish World Service (AJWS)

American ORT

Anti-Defamation League (ADL)

B'nai B'rith International

Canadian Jewish Congress

Central Conference of American Rabbis

Conference of Presidents of Major
American Jewish Organizations

HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society)

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Jewish Labor Committee

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

Lilith Magazine

Meretz USA

New Israel Fund

NYANA (New York Association for
New Americans)

Rabbinical Assembly

Religious Action Center of
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UJA-Federation of New York

Union of American Hebrew
Congregations

United Jewish Communities (UJC)

United Synagogue of Conservative
Judaism

Ve'ahavta: Canadian Jewish
Humanitarian And Relief Committee

Women of Reform Judaism

Women's American ORT

Final Activities Report

December 21, 2001

I. SITUATION UPDATE

Three consecutive years of persistent drought and poor rainfall, coupled with the effects of armed conflict with Eritrea have devastated Ethiopia's crops and livestock. By June 2000, the food shortage was at its highest level since the famine of 1984-85, and deaths from starvation were increasingly being reported. The situation has been particularly grave for the pastoralist (cattle-based) populations in southern and southeastern Ethiopia, who have faced losses of as much as 60-80% of their herds, and who have been forced to migrate to other areas in search of pasture and water sources. Fortunately, immediate emergency relief, such as large-scale food distribution and health programs conducted by the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, and international NGOs, have helped to avert the effects of the famine, keeping it from reaching catastrophic proportions.

In 2001, adequate rainfall in arable lands of the northern, western and central parts of the country, combined with successful repatriation of many internally displaced persons (IDPs), have improved conditions for many Ethiopians. Estimates of the number of Ethiopians requiring drought assistance fell from 10.2 million in June 2000 to 6.2 million in May 2001, and were further reduced to 4.5 million by August 2001. With a close-to-average crop production this year, the overall number of needy people in 2002 could be the lowest in many years.

Particular focus remains on the pastoralist communities in the southern and southeastern areas of the country, especially the Somali region where insecurity, displacement and continued poor rainfall have hampered recovery. The persistent water shortages have forced some 80,000 Ethiopians of this region to move from their rural homes to urban centers, and a large number of people from Somalia have moved into Ethiopia. Animal and human health, nutrition, food security and access to water remain critical issues. International agencies and NGOs continue to work to address the problems of approximately 1.2 million people countrywide who are still in need of assistance.

II. STATUS OF MAILBOX FUNDS

In the spring of 2000, JDC convened the Jewish Coalition for Aid to Ethiopia that, to date, has raised \$24,078. These funds were programmed in October 2000 for the “Ground Water Development Project,” the implementation of which cost, as estimated, \$20,000. The \$4,078 balance will be held in reserve for maintenance and supplies as needed.

III. PROJECT UPDATE

The Jewish Coalition ground water program was implemented in the Dabat Woreda district in North Gondar, which is 70 km (approximately 45 miles) from Gondar. The location was chosen based on the availability of expertise and the extent of need. JDC has over 17 years of experience conducting other water management projects in North Gondar, and when programming decisions were being made, 4,000 people in the region were affected by the drought and had not yet received any type of assistance.

As noted in previous reports, Ethiopia’s Zonal Department of Water, Mining and Energy, as well as the Zonal Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission were partners in the project, and were involved in every aspect of its implementation. The original agreement included the construction of three hand-dug wells in drought-affected *kebeles* (villages). A JDC contribution and an increase in Coalition income made it possible to construct three additional wells, for a total of six Coalition-sponsored hand-dug wells.

After a preliminary survey was conducted, it became apparent that there was greater need in three draught-affected villages that had not originally been selected. Based on these findings, the three villages most in need were selected as project sites. Also, in three of the locations, it was decided that fortified springs would similarly address the problem, but be easier to maintain than the hand-dug wells. In these sites, concrete underground chambers and pipes were constructed to protect the natural springs.

Project activities included site surveys, construction of camp facilities, site-clearing, excavation work for spring protection, the digging of the wells, the laying of concrete for the foundations, and the building of pipe trenches and drainage canals in addition to the training of local residents in the repair and/or maintenance of the wells and springs. Items purchased included carts, concrete, dry stone masonry, grout, plaster and piping materials.

Three hand-dug wells and three springs are now providing clean water in the following villages:

- Talak Mesk – construction was completed on this fortified spring in June 2001. It is located 3 kms from Woken and 500 meters from the main road, and the water collection chamber has a 4,000-liter capacity. In addition to providing potable water to the village, the site has several washing basins and is also used for irrigation purposes. A 7-member Water Committee controls the site and collects 25 cents/month/family from approximately 300 families. A guard has been hired to protect the site, which is fenced, has a door with a lock, and is kept very clean.
- Chambelegay (originally planned for Kerha) – this well, which was completed in August 2001, is located 4 km from the town of Gedebge and is 1.5 km from the main road. Approximately 15 families use the well, which is sometimes shared by people from Gedebge when their hand-pump is not working. This well is fenced, but the door has no lock and the site is not guarded. JDC will follow up on this.

- Woken Zuria – this well is situated 300 meters from Woken school and was completed in May 2001. The site, which has 2 washbasins, is well-maintained and protected by a hired guard. The Water Committee collects 50 cents/family/month from the 80 families that use the well, and has hired a guard to protect it.
- Fenote Selam (originally planned for Charbita) – this village well was completed in May 2001. The hand-pump is surrounded by a locked fence, and is also guarded. The Water Committee collects 50 cents/family/month from 500 families.
- Dequa Tirko (originally planned for Benker) – this spring was completed in May 2001 and has a collection chamber with a 4,000-liter capacity. Although there is no lock, the spring has a fence and a guard has been hired. The Water Committee collects 25 cents/family/month from 120 families.
- Dabat Zuria – this village spring was completed in May 2001. The distance from the spring source to the collection chamber is 500 meters and the chamber has a capacity of 4,000 liters. The Water Committee collects 25 cents/family/month from 350 households and has hired a guard. It is fenced with a door, has washing basins and a cattle truss, and is very well maintained.

IV. CONCLUSION

According to JDC’s Country Director for Ethiopia, there has been a very enthusiastic response on the part of the beneficiaries to both the hand-dug wells and the springs. The villagers are keenly aware of the Coalition’s contribution, and are very appreciative for the steady supply of clean water. In addition to the obvious health benefits, there are economic benefits, as the water has helped the villagers to maintain their livestock and expand their crops. These new water sources will also prove invaluable when future droughts occur, as they are able to withstand more severe climactic conditions without drying up.

Moreover, under the supervision and direction of the local authorities with whom the Coalition partnered, the majority of the manpower for building the wells and springs came from the villagers themselves. A portion of the villagers’ labor was considered the “community contribution” to the project, while village members received payment for the remaining part of their labor, which contributed to the local economy.

JDC’s staff has also reported that villagers are eager and proud to assume responsibility for the maintenance of these new water sources. Each community has a Water Community Committee, which is made up of members from each village. These committees are accountable for the appropriate use of the water, as well as its up-keep – several of the committee members received special training to perform basic maintenance on the springs and wells. The component of local participation throughout the process has added an additional benefit to the project, as villagers feel a sense of investment and ownership in the water systems that they have helped to create and are now working to sustain. In this way, the Jewish Coalition has done more than simply address an immediate need in Ethiopia: it has contributed to the strengthening of local communities and their capacity to help themselves.