

Ethiopia Famine Relief Project Update (ET - 83300)

January 2010



Locally Produced

Many thanks to those of you who have responded to the Ethiopia Famine Relief Project in the last couple of months. This is a brief note providing first hand details by one of our team leader of the initial food distribution which took place in December. The second food distribution is due to be made in the next few days. Please continue to pray that:-

- the food from this next distribution will be used effectively
- for the right amounts of rain needed to make the seed grow
- that these people's physical and spiritual needs will be met.

Report on Distribution

We purchased food to provide for the needs for 3,048 adults and 1,400 children for a month. Four Isuzu trucks were loaded in Addis Ababa with the following:

- 13,100 kg of wheat flour
- 7,000 kg of Famix
- 2,225 litres of vegetable oil

We decided to purchase locally grown wheat at slightly higher prices, so that we would be contributing to the local economy in a healthy fashion. The wheat was ground locally into flour. We picked it up from the grinding company directly.

All of the flour, 2,000 kg of Famix and 725 litres of oil was delivered to an outdoor site along the banks of the Awash River opposite Hugub Kebele, Dulecha. 5,000 kg of Famix and 1,500 litres of oil was delivered to two school sites in Hurunto and Bolehamo Kebeles.

We met with the kebele chairman (local leader) and the 5 sub-kebele chairmen. At that meeting we confirmed the distribution list, according to the government surveys, with recipients listed. We then asked these leaders to help the people by stressing the need for children and lactating/pregnant women to receive the lion's share of the goods. We equated this to the way they ration meagre milk supplies to children before giving to adults. They seemed to agree that this was the right thing to do.

During that meeting men and women arrived from the kebele. We estimate that 300 had amassed by the time we addressed the people. I was introduced by my Afar name. This caused a stir and warmed the people to us all. We again highlighted the special needs of women and children. Then we spoke of the continued need to pray for our many friends and families, who are supplying for this food not from their wealth, but from their love for Afars.

Finally we led the people into a time of Afar-style '*doqa*' (prayers). This time was a special blessing of extended prayer of blessing on the food and asking for rain that went on for some 2 minutes or so.

Then the men went straight to work. The food was first divided into 5 piles for each of the 5 sub-kebeles. Then each sub-kebele divided their piles into extended family groupings. Finally the



Dividing in to extended Family Groups

women entered, dividing thing further into their own families' needs. The whole things took only 5 hours. It was truly a joy to witness the well known sharing mechanisms of these people in action. Smiles and pleasantries ruled the day. I saw not one argument.

We drove away as sacks were being carried off by donkeys and people. Over the next two days we had need to drive through Hugub several times. We saw evidence of the food throughout the kebele. More than that, we were warmly welcomed wherever we travelled. This kebele lies just south of our primary target area. Previously these people did not know us. Now we are known and accepted as part of them.

Thank you for helping to make this happen.



Dividing the oil

For more info contact - ethiopia.projects@sim.org