



# Newsletter

September - November 2009

## Special STARS Edition

### It's official!

#### Mums for Mums in Mekele are stars.

The STARS Foundation Impact Awards are presented annually to three outstanding local charities in Africa and three in Asia which are acting with maximum effectiveness to improve the lives of children in their areas.

In 2009 there were 313 applications from African charities for the three awards available. Mums for Mums gained the award for protection of children. Each award provides \$100,000 unrestrictive funding as well as specific consultancy support. The fact that Mums for Mums is a STAR winner is evidence that it is now internationally recognized as an exemplary organization of its kind.

The competition for this prestigious award is intense. Many excellent charities submit applications. After a rigorous selection process consisting of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stage applications, Mums for Mums was selected for a three day visit by the STARS Foundation. During this visit no stones were left unturned. Later voluntary executive director Tebereh Wolde Gabriel and planning and program manager Ashenafi Asmelash received a telephone call with the exciting news they were one of the African winners.

In its letter confirming the award, the STARS foundation said the following:

'Mums for Mums overall focus on mothers as the route to improve the wellbeing of the whole family, and particularly children, was considered to be a very appropriate approach, and clearly well-linked to the difficult contexts in which you are working.'

The letter speaks of 'the impact you have had on the lives of your beneficiaries' and of 'a very strong sense of community engagement and support for your programmes'.

Other features of Mums for Mums' work that impressed the judging panel included the following: 'Mums for Mums distinguishes itself as being a very innovative organisation. It was particularly impressive to learn how successfully you have been able to introduce the concept of door-to-door counselling as a novel approach to reaching the communities you serve.' The Foundation also emphasised '(Mums for Mums)' adaptability and responsiveness to the changing needs of your community, as well as a commitment to supporting children in need.'

The award ceremony was held at the Wallace Collection in London on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The Wallace Collection is in a beautiful London Gregorian townhouse, a most magnificent setting for such an inspiring ceremony. All six recipients, three African and three Asian charities, were represented by their proud directors and are all worthy winners. Tebereh gave a passionate speech describing the everyday work of Mums for Mums. This was accompanied by a beautifully made video.



**Tebereh and Ashenafi at the STARS Foundation ceremony with the two other African winners from Ghana and Kenya**

On October 19<sup>th</sup> Tebereh and Ashenafi returned to Mekele with the inscribed star-shaped trophy. They were met at the airport by staff and supporters of Mums for Mums. They were greeted with full ceremony by an uniformed brass band and by small children in traditional clothes bearing flowers. A convoy of vehicles then took everyone to Romanat Square where the brass band played again. Media interest in the event was high and Tebereh gave several interviews. Among the journalists present were a team from VOA and ETV. Finally, guests and staff went to the Axum Hotel for a reception. The entire event was organized swiftly and efficiently, credit for which must go to Hagos and Zenebe.

## Volunteer corner

### Volunteer from the Netherlands

Back home, in the Netherlands, Ethiopian acquaintances used to speak about their country passionately and full of enthusiasm. Their stories about the culture got me and my husband intrigued to come and experience for ourselves. So from September 2009 I will be living and working in Mekele. My impressions so far of Ethiopia are those of a country rich in cultural and natural beauty with interesting, friendly inhabitants.

At Mums for Mums I had a warm welcome that certainly helped to feel at home in Mekele. Being a social worker, I love to use some of my knowledge in this organisation. From January 2010 I will start to offer coaching and counselling to the former street boys at Geza Margherita. The goal is to support them in empowering their life skills, so that they are able to build a life of their own in the future.

I am looking forward to the coming year, the experiences with the Geza Margherita boys and of course working with everyone at Mums for Mums.

Anita Pieters



*Some of the Geza Margherita boys*

### First view

My first view of Mums for Mums was one of delight and surprise. Here was a lovely courtyard garden retreat from the din of construction and dust in kebele 18. For the next three weeks I was welcomed into this thriving network of social programs serving the women and children of Tigray.

One of my assignments was to provide language support for the staff in order to take visitors on a tour of the agency. The workers at Mums for Mums were fully engaged in the activities of the lesson and ready with a quick slice of humour to keep things moving along.

I have been deeply impressed with the work done at Mums for Mums, deeply impressed by the commitment of the agency to provide for the women and children of Tigray.

Janet Massaro  
Canada  
Volunteer

### Visitor's comment

"This visit has inspired us to learn more ways to assist people to live with dignity. We thank you and hold you in our hearts."

Rosanne Ott from Australia

### Experience sharing

Several weeks ago a group of people from Italy came to Mums for Mums. The goal of this meeting was to share experiences. The Italians showed the Mums for Mums staff to cook, knit and more. In turn Mums for Mums helped them to make their first injera.

## Cactus Corner

### Preparing Beles

Preparing beles is a simple task. Just follow these eight steps.

1. Pick leaves not longer than 15-20 cm. Thin small leaves are tastier and if leaves are picked regularly the plant can produce young leaves for more months of the year.
2. Using a sharp stainless steel knife remove the spines and small shoots on both sides of the leaf.
3. Rinse leaves in cold water to remove any remaining loose spines and skin.
4. Cut cleaned beles into desired shape or size.
5. Place the cut beles into a cooking pot with salted water. Boil uncovered for 15-20 minutes.
6. As soon as the beles is done pour off the water.
7. Rinse the cooked beles with cold water to remove extra mucilage.
8. The cooked beles can now be used for salad, stew or as a vegetable.



**Leaves of beles and in the front the beles fruits**

## News roundup

## How you can help

You can help Mums for Mums in different ways:

- You can sponsor a young mother for skills training @ 500 Birr per month for 9 months.
- You can sponsor a young mother with children @ 7,200 Birr for a year.
- You can sponsor a counsellor @ 300 Birr a month.

The current rate of exchange means that:  
 £ 1.00 = approximately 20 Birr  
 € 1.00 = approximately 18 Birr  
 \$ 1.00 = approximately 12 Birr

You can send your donations directly to the Mums for Mums Bank Account:

Swift Code CBETETAA  
 Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Mekele Branch  
 Tigray, Ethiopia  
 Mums for Mums  
 Account Number 3388

Or contact TIYE International:  
[www.tiye-international.org](http://www.tiye-international.org)



For further information, please contact us:

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