



October-November trip 2022

➡ *report*



na School students with their brand new uniforms!

General situation

The trip took place from October 27 to November 5, 100% in the Simien.

Shortly before our arrival, the security situation changed abruptly, with TPLF troops retreating to Mekele (capital of the Tigray region) and the government troops and their regional allies (Amhara Special Forces & Fano) seemingly gaining ground on the battlefield. The military pressure on the North-Gondar and Simien area has thus decreased, resulting in a much more peaceful atmosphere during this visit compared to last March.

Our team and our partners also benefited from this calming down to find a full efficiency in their work.

Two weeks before our arrival, the school was able to resume normal activity and welcome back its children. This new school year saw a record number of children enrolling in grade 1 with 160 pupils! A great promise for the future!

October 27, 2022

Direct arrival from Geneva (departure on the 26th in the evening) to Debark, via Addis Ababa and Gondar. In the afternoon we meet the whole team (Mihret, Agere, Baye and Branu) to prepare the stay which promises to be dense in work. It also allows us to take the last news of Sona and Chirolaba to adjust at best our action plan.

October 28, 2022

Drive Debark -> Janamora (3h30)

Meeting of the School Committee of Chirolaba in Janamora with the head of the administration of Woreda (district), its director of education and the one of water. Presence of Ambatchew the director of the school of Chirolaba.

Items discussed and decisions :

- The organization of food and wood distribution to the students does not work.

Ambachew commented that there are no people available to sign off on managing the Foundation's financial support.

Mihret is obliged to buy the food himself.

An executive committee of 4 people (school, kebele, Woreda and Foundation) is to be set up at the school site in Chirolaba to improve the operations.

- The Jenamora administration is committed to funding one person at Chirolaba High School to manage storage, including food for students.

A power of attorney should be arranged for Ambachew to manage the financial aspect.

The soap will be added to the students' allowance.

The wood was never brought as promised by the parents of Sona students.

2 salaries of Nannies are increased from 1500 to 2000 birr /month.

4 guards will receive 500 birr/month each in addition to their salaries paid by the school and the kebele.

The allowance for 20 students has been increased to 40,000 birr/month.

Total cost as of October 46'000 birr/month for the Foundation.

Journey Janamora -> Chirolaba (1h)

Night in Chirolaba

October 29, 2022

Situation at the Chirolaba secondary school of the students sponsored by the Foundation.

Reminder: Each year, through its sponsoring program, the Foundation sponsors 10 deserving Sona School Grade 8 students to continue their education at Chirolaba High School (grades 9-12, up to the Bachelor's degree).

One student dropped out after the first year (Asmaretech). She got good grades, she said she had no problems with harassment or anything, only physical illnesses, headaches. She is going to stay home for a year and will decide next year if she wants to continue.

2 girls selected this year also dropped out for various reasons.

The Sona school committee reviewed the selection and 3 new students were called to join the secondary school in Chirolaba and accepted.

The current situation is therefore as follows

1st class: 11 students, i.e. 10 in 9th grade 1 in 10th grade

2nd class: 9 students, i.e. 4 in 10th grade 5 in 11th grade

Total 20 students (photo opposite): 10 in grade 9 or 5 in grade 10 5 in grade 11



Discussion with Ambachew (school director)

Two students were given a warning for disciplinary reasons. They were summoned and heard to explain themselves. They will be expelled if this happens again.

The rules will be re-established by Ambachew who has full authority.

Students will support the nannies with water and other daily tasks.

The dormitories are fully equipped for 20 people.

A shower was installed.

A solar light was paid for by FCC for the kitchen and installed.

2 local beds will be paid for by FCC and installed in the Nanis' room.

Charly has finished grade 12 and is waiting for his results.

Night in Chirolaba

October 30, 2022



Drive Chirolaba -> Sona (1h)

Arrival in Sona in the middle of the morning with its traditional welcoming committee.

Installation of the team in the library.

Andualem did not join us. Asnake is here to finish all the construction work for Kedir Hassan. Electrician Musami is joining us in Debark to finalize the electrical work.

Electricity is turned on at the school, making it as one of the most comfortable places in the whole North-Gondar region! It's a revolution with LED lights and electrical connections in all the buildings. The stay in Sona becomes more comfortable... It seems far from the rusticity of

the beginning...

Sona School Committee meeting

3 students were selected to replace those who drop out based on the usual criteria, namely:

- Student motivation
- Parents' motivation
- School results
- Economic situation of the family

A committee of high school parents has been formed and they are committed to bringing wood to Chirolaba every month.

The community should complete the leveling and clean up around the compound of damage and waste left by the Amhara Special Forces (ASF).

They will dig the trench for the water line to the water house on October 31.

Melish's first aid team, trained by SMMMS, will start next week.

Teachers will clean all buildings and assist with uniform distribution.

Night in Sona in the FCC room.

October 31, 2022

The following tasks were performed:

- Digging the trench, thanks to the help of about twenty members of the community recruited by the chief of the Kebele. They were thanked with a meal.
- Installation of the water pipe from the school corner to the water house. An installation made delicate by the strong heat of this period despite of the altitude.
- A bulldozer organized by Tedese of SMNP participated in the land leveling on October 28 and 31.

Test all lights, outlets and grounding with the electrician.

Distribution of uniforms to more that 500 students with the help of the teachers.

Organized a trip to Debark to purchase new mirrors, electrical equipment and cleaning supplies.

Night in Sona



November 1, 2022

The following tasks were performed:

Remove the trash left behind by the special forces with the students and burn it.



Trip from Branu to Chirolaba to transport material stored in Sona with the Land Cruiser.

Clean all buildings and furniture with students and teachers.

Cleaning toilets

Terracing the ground around the water house.

Store all furnitures in the buildings as it should be.

First aid room equipped with a desk, a consultation bed, a stretcher and first aid equipment. A room with a bed is available for the nurse.

Put the light in the kitchens that was broken by the special forces.

Night in Sona

November 2, 2022

The following tasks were performed:

Inventory of the furnitures of the whole school: 9 classrooms, infirmary, teachers' offices, library and housing for the 20 teachers.

Moving the electrical equipment dedicated to UV water treatment in the new room and reconnect it.

Cleaning of teachers' housing.

Teachers Meeting:

- Rules for keeping the building and toilets clean
- Respect of the material, management of the furniture
- Rules of electricity management, no water, no motors directly on the sockets, cut the main power in the electrical room, but leave the solar system and batteries on.
- FCC will provide a printer
- PCs will be provided in the future



Check water catchments and gabions

- Some leaks to be repaired as well as gabions to be rearranged after the harvest season

Relocate the UV water treatment electrical system to the water treatment room.

Grounding of solar panels and repair of others ground connexions.

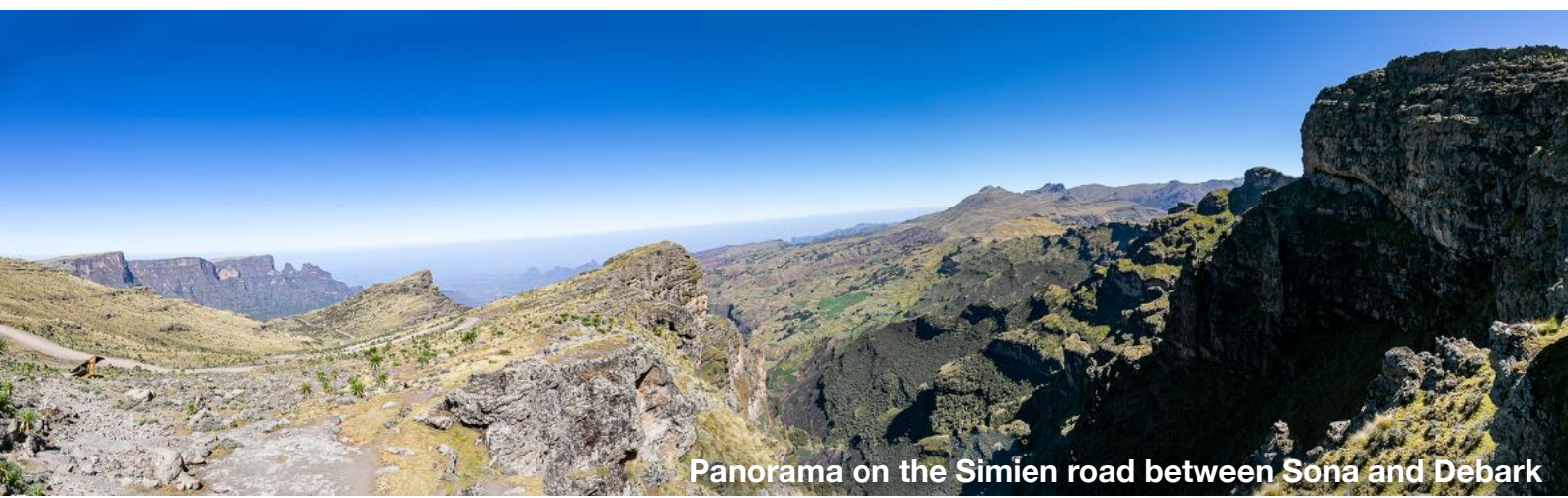
Move the exterior electrical panels of each building to a protected location (higher up under the roof - photo opposite).

Meeting with Mhabaw (director of Sona school):

- Rules and safety
- Planting
- Conservation Club
- Use and cleaning of toilets
- Wood for Chirrolaba as part of the committee
- FCC blanket management. Mhabaw has some (about 400 blankets) to help it mobilize the local community
- Management of missing uniforms (very few at first)
- Electricity : Alert and maintenance line : Mhabaw - Baye - Mihret - Branu - Eric
- Water catchment and gabion repair
- number of students per grade to be sent to Eric

Final review of the works, in view of the final reception of the project, with Asnake (Kedir Hassan company).

- Electricity all ok
 - Water pipe in front of the water house: make a cement protection.
 - Toilets: put the missing cement blocks
 - Finish the plastic paint on the walls
 - Finish painting all the walls of the building
 - Keep the temporary teachers' house as it is
 - Broken mirrors to replace
 - Finish installing the portal
 - Repair the fence with available posts and wire mesh. Mihret will provide sand and cement, as well as labor through the community.
 - Building drains to be cleaned by Mhabaw and teachers.
 - Drain to be completed under the hand washing station in cement with a slope for drainage.
- Night in Sona



Panorama on the Simien road between Sona and Debarq

November 3, 2022

Travel Sona -> Debark

SMNP (Simien Mountains National Park) meeting

Thanks for the support to Abebaw (director) and Tadese (expert) for Mihret transportation and the organization of the leveling by bulldozer which was working on a new 4x4 road few km away.

The FCC wishes to launch the agri-environmental aspect of its project, now that the "hardware" part of the construction of the school buildings is about to be completed. For this, the partnership with SMNP is more important than ever.

The SMNP announces that it has created nurseries for indigenous plants on its territory. One of them is being implemented in Kaït (2h walk from Sona) (FCC support requested and to be considered). In return for taking on "trainees" from the Sona school, for example.

Baye will manage the plantings on the school grounds based on a master plan to be developed.

Hervé will provide a drone photo of the master plan.

Vegetable garden behind the school, trees along the fence, etc.

FCC will draft a project framework for the conservation club and agronomy club to be implemented to engage teachers, students, and the local community.

As with the school buildings, the aim is to reach a high level of requirement and achievement for this part of our project.

Meeting of the SMMMS (Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service - Belgian-US NGO)

- 2 missing first aid kits due to the price increase due to the delay of purchase by Hawlt local director of SMMMS (1 year between the order and the purchase!)
- Hawlt will provide 1 kit and a refill as soon as possible.
- Sona's school will have a nurse from Kait coming every Friday to support Melish and provide health support to the school and the community. He wrote a letter of information to the authorities - Mihret has to follow this project in practice.
- Mhabaw (school director) will have to facilitate the nurse's arrival and stay.
- Other trainings could be managed in the future by the SMMMS after consultation with Eric by Brian Lovatt.
- Hawlt will provide pants for menstruating women (30 units for our Chirolaba residents).

FCC accounting with Mihret completed

Meeting with Brian McBrearity African Wild Life Foundation AWF

The promised textbooks could be available after the new year, to be continued - Mihret
AWF transportation can be used by Mihret and the FCC when appropriate - FCC
Brian will provide an example of a conservation project for a school.

Night in Debark

November 4, 2022

FCC team meeting (Mihret, Baye, Agere and Branu) - Action plan

- Follow-up of the Chirolaba - Mihret budget
- Evaluate the broken material in Sona to replace it - Mihret
- # Number of students per class in Sona - Mhabaw and Mihret
- Populate Sona's library
- Tracking wood delivery to Chirolaba - Mihret
- Inform Mhabaw about the SMMMS nurse - Mihret
- Get a free first aid kit and refill from Hawlt - Mihret
- Visit Sona and Chirolaba once a month and report back - FCC team
- Use SMNP or AWF transportation as arranged with Brian or public transportation - FCC team
- Send cement, provide labor to repair fence in emergency - Mihert
- Feedback from the final inspection of the Sona project with Asnake before his departure - Mihret
- Final grading and organization of grass and tree planting - Baye
- Repair of the water catchment - Baye
- Repair of gabions after harvest - Agere
- Rules and regulations written by Mhabaw - Mihret
- Get the 30 Women's Pants from SMMMS for Chirolaba - Mihret
- Conservation Club Framework Action Plan - Baye and Mihret for translation
- Conservation and agriculture framework to be prepared with input from Brian and Baye - Herve, Eric
- Create a Telegram group for FCC - Hervé

Conclusion

As this report shows, this trip was of a rare intensity. It is also one of the major successes of our action insofar as it puts behind us the difficult times with the reopening in the best conditions of the school. The end of the works is finally in sight in the very short term, the reception having to be acted before the end of November 2022. General cleaning and repair of minor damages, distribution of uniforms, commissioning of electricity, finalization of the water supply and final earthwork of the school grounds: the community of Sona and its partners have mobilized to put its educational equipment back on track!

We are very pleased with these excellent results, which are the result of the hard work of the entire FCC team. We would like to thank them warmly for their tough work! However, this is not the time for complacency. If the situation is stabilizing on the political level, we still have to implement the agri-environmental and eco-tourism aspects of our project for the community of Sona. If they are less hardware, they are no less important and the Foundation will remain mobilized and demanding on their implementation. It will require the deployment of important means in material and tools, human resources and supply of raw materials. These needs will be added to those of building maintenance, which means that we can anticipate financial needs comparable to those of previous years.

So when it comes to fundraising, there's no time for complacency either!