



A certificate of appreciation from the government of Ethiopia recognising the value of the Inclusive Education Project to development in Nekemte

Exeter – Ethiopia Link

The Exeter-Ethiopia Link was set up in 1987 to promote a Community Link between Exeter in Devon, England, and Hareto in Wollega, Ethiopia. In 1994 the Link was extended to include Nekemte, the principal town in Wollega.

The Link supports Health, Water, Education and Women's Projects in Hareto, Nekemte and surrounding areas. It also provides information to the people of Exeter on life in Ethiopia.

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Enabling communities to help themselves

Annual Report 2017



'A group of boys enjoying a capped spring'

Annual Report 2017

The Exeter-Ethiopia Link (EEL) has had another very active year and despite the continued political unrest in Ethiopia which has delayed the progress of some of our projects we continue to provide much needed support to communities in and around Nekemte. In particular, we are celebrating the success of the Inclusive Education Project which has had a considerable impact on disabled children in and around Nekemte allowing many to attend school for the first time.

Inclusive Education Project

At the end of 2017, the 3 year Inclusive Education Project (IEP) funded by UK Aid and the Waterloo Foundation came to an end. Thanks to the hard work of our Ethiopian project partner EECMY DASSC and their IEP team, we succeeded in working with 198 schools and increased the identified children with disabilities in the schools by 3630 children. In each school a disability club was set up which supported the children and delivered disability awareness activities. Including the work in partnership with Vision Aid Overseas, we have provided 1027 adults and 298 children with disabilities with assistive devices (spectacles, hearing aids, crutches, wheelchairs) or surgery (for



example, 11 children's club foot was treated enabling them to walk).

'Deriba Tamiru aged 12 was provided with a wheelchair by the Inclusive Education Project and now for the first-time attends grade one in school.'

Every day his peers from the school disability club (set up by the project) take him to and from school and he is in the top ten in the class'

Fourteen disability associations for parents and carers were set up with a Saving and Loan element. An example includes Garjo Fite Disability Association, which has 46 members, which was provided with an initial grant of £260. Two years later, the members have saved from their own money and increased their capital to £550. From this, 90 short term loans have been provided to members with 100% payback. The loans have resulted in improved economic circumstances and in turn all the parents that have a disabled child in school have kept them in school and a further 4 of them have started sending their disabled child to school for the first time.

Schools are still reporting that disabled children are joining because of the change in attitude and many of our disability associations have become or are close to becoming legal entities registered with the government.

With such a large project, we are not expecting everything to be sustainable, but we are fortunate to have a follow-on grant from the Waterloo Foundation to work with the 20 most effective schools, so we hope to be able to build on the outcomes achieved so far and deliver further support to enable even more disabled children to attend school.

School Libraries and Literacy Project

At the end of the second year, the School Libraries and Literacy Project has so far supported 42 primary schools to develop reading centres and open libraries. The reading centres are used by children in grade 1 to 4 to teach reading and the project data is showing that it is significantly improving literacy levels.

Some of the activity in the reading centres includes children reading mini-books. These mini-books are produced by deaf students in grade 10-12, and the money they earn from this supports them with their living costs; a total of 34 deaf students earned money through the book making.

The libraries are used by grade 5 to 8 to support their studies, and to ensure they are always open, a librarian is employed. Thirty five librarians are funded by the project and seven are funded by the government. The vast majority of the librarians are young and this is their first job after school. The project data shows that libraries are used by four to five hundred students a month. In 2018, the final year of the grant, the project will support an additional 10 schools to develop libraries and reading centres.

Health and Welfare Projects

Our continued partnership with Vision Aid Overseas (VAO) led to a team of volunteer optometrists travelling to Nekemte in November for 2 weeks with the aim of providing training and to do some eye testing. Exeter Ethiopia Link donated £1500 and this allowed VAO to take 1000 spectacle frames; 2000 lenses ready for cutting; and 750 ready-made glasses, and VAO also donated some equipment. The volunteer optometrists did 842 eye examinations and prescribed spectacles for 579 people at the clinic, and the outreach project team saw 516 patients. Some training was given to the workshop technicians and 5 eye care workers had extra training in prescribing spectacles. Fortunately it was relatively peaceful in Nekemte and the volunteers were very enthusiastic about Nekemte and its people who were very supportive and made their stay enjoyable. VAO are considering the needs assessment provided by the team, and we are hopeful that VAO will send a team in 2018. The eye clinic management has been handed over to a local NGO, GARUMA which is headed by Revd. Dr Alemu Nega who oversaw the establishment of the Nekemte Community Eye Care Clinic.



A Vision Aid Overseas volunteer, examining one of the pre-screened schoolchildren in Gute

Water & Environmental Projects

In 2017, 2 new springs were capped in rural communities in Wayu Tuka; one serving about 80 households, and the other about 65. Each spring capping includes a hard standing, an overflow pipe, concrete basins for clothes washing and enclosed with a wood and thorn branch fence to protect the spring from animals. The flow at each spring is sufficient to allow the drawing of some water for animals and small-scale irrigation, e.g. a small plantation of coffee seedlings. Each community has organised a spring maintenance committee and they have developed plans and a commitment to maintain the spring.



A capped spring in Wayu Tuka

School Linking

With the addition of two new schools this year 14 schools in Devon now have a link with a school in or near Nekemte. Some of the links formed several years ago have become well established. Unfortunately, difficulty in funding has meant that there have not been any visits from UK teachers to their partner school recently, however, with encouragement given by EECMY DASSC staff member, Gobena Atomsa to the Ethiopian schools the partnerships have continued to develop. Each school now has a Link Coordinator, joint projects have been embarked upon, and there has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of communications.

Collective sponsorship of students with hearing loss

During the last year we have continued to support 39 students with hearing loss in Grades 9-12 to attend school, through our collective sponsorship scheme. Under this scheme the group of students received additional tutorials, school books and the opportunity to earn money to support themselves through an income generation scheme established with funding from the collective sponsorship project.

In 2017, 8 of the students sat the equivalent of their A levels and all passed and are now at university ... a real success story!



'Deaf students receiving support from the collective sponsorship'

We believe that collective sponsorship is a fairer and more ethically sound approach than individual sponsorship, while still providing an opportunity for supporters to donate money to an identifiable group of people with clear aims and within a specified timeframe. As well as continuing to support this year's students we are considering establishing additional new collective sponsorship schemes for other groups or activities. Thank you very much to all who have contributed to the collective sponsorship scheme during the year, including anonymous donors who we have not been able to thank personally.

Finance

During 2017 the situation in an around Nekemte was still volatile but we managed to remit approximately £70,000 of grants for various projects and we were able to reduce our bank balance, as evidenced in our accounts. We hope to fund more, smaller projects this year related to the environment, health and women. The larger projects has meant that the workload of the finance function has increased, and therefore a treasury team of 3 members has been developed to include Dick Benn, George Dexter and Von Mathieson, who has inspected our accounts for many years & who will be doing our book-keeping this year.

Governance

The board of trustees continues to ensure the charity works effectively, and has supported a change in structure from subcommittees to project teams with the aim of improving the management of projects. The trustees have also instigated a review of safeguarding within the charity and its partners to ensure we abide with charity commission guidance.

Partnerships

Our primary Ethiopian partnership with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus Development and Social Services Commission (EECMY DASSC) continues, as does the Estepona Ethiopia Link, a Spanish charity formed by two members, Richard Hayes and Emilie Tieken. The partnership with Vision Aid Overseas has led to another successful visit by their volunteer optometrists, and links between Exeter University Peninsular Medical School and the Nekemte University Medical School, and between Plymouth University Institute of Education, and the Nekemte College of Teacher Education also continue.

Thanks to our partners, funders and supporters

We would like to thank all our members for their continued support, as well as our grant donors which include UKAid, Comic Relief, The Waterloo Foundation and the Souter Trust. EEL also depends on the dedication of our volunteer committee members and partners, who work to enable the Link to achieve its aims.

Exeter-Ethiopia Link Trustees:

Emma Sarton	Kirsten Pullen
Valerie Huggins	Rupa Chilvers
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