



Exeter Ethiopia Link

Annual Report 2019 - 2020

www.exeterethioplialink.org



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2019 – WHAT HAPPENED?

Political Highlights

Abiy Ahmed delivered sweeping political and economic reforms after his election in 2018. He released political prisoners, made a peace deal with neighbouring Eritrea and won the Nobel Peace Prize. Ethiopians planted more than 350million trees in a day, setting a new world record, and contributing to an initiative focused on restoring the landscape that is being eroded by deforestation and climate change.

Over the year Ethiopia has also struggled with peace and stability which at times has led to the Internet being blocked. It is likely that peace and stability will be an issue for next year too.

EEL Highlights

EEL has continued to strengthen its policies and procedures as scrutiny has increased from the Charity Commission and the Department for International Development. We agreed to have monitoring and evaluation visits going out each April and October and that has seen more volunteers going to Nekemte to strengthen our links to our partners, DASSC. Internet issues in Ethiopia has made day to day communication with DASSC a lot more difficult.

Financial Highlights

The treasury team has spent a substantial amount of time reviewing and improving our financial processes. We have focused our priorities and are managing 3 main grants. We also managed a focused campaign to support libraries with the Year of the Librarian, and we started a new campaign to support the environment with the Year of the Tree. Over the year we drew our Collective Sponsorship of deaf students to a close.

Project Grants

- 1. Inclusive Education Project - UKAid / Waterloo Foundation*
- 2. Libraries and Literacy (Phase 1) - Comic Relief*
- 3. Libraries and Literacy (Phase 2) - UKAid / Souter Trust*

Looking Ahead

There is no doubt that the world changed substantially in March 2020 with the global pandemic of Covid19. Like the UK, Ethiopia also called a state of emergency in response to the Coronavirus. However, disaster has already hit some 1 million people who will require emergency food aid after swarms of desert locusts damaged 200,000 hectares of cropland in March.

We will be asking our Partners how best to support activities in Nekemte in the medium and long term to deal with the changing health, economic, social, environmental and political situation in the country.

In the short term, we are aware that funding for our Inclusive Education Project funding runs out in September 2020, Phase 2 of the Libraries and Literacy project has come to the end and so EEL will only be managing a single grant: Phase 2 Libraries and Literacy work.

We are thinking now about what risks that carries for the DASSC team in terms of future employment, and our potential loss of expertise on the ground. Our partnership with DASSC is very important to us, so we will be exploring how we continue to strengthen this relationship if volunteers cannot go out to Ethiopia very easily over the next 12 - 18 months.

We are considering how we re-ignite the Year of the Tree campaign in Exeter with the challenge of social distancing and how we link with other Partners such as Vision Aid Overseas (VAO) to assist with future funding bids.

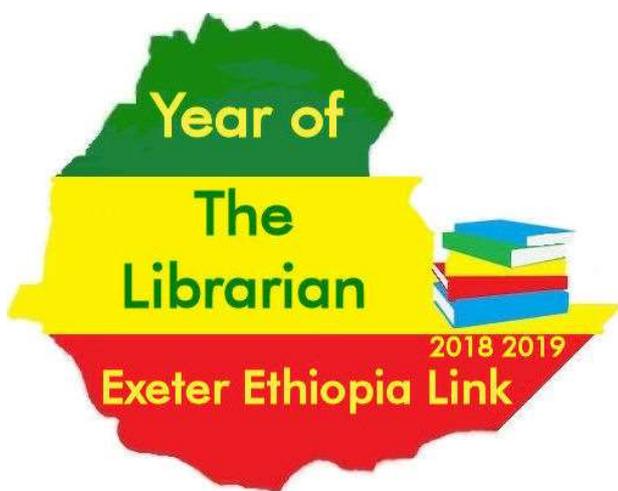
There is a lot to do, 2020 will provide challenge and opportunities and we hope to draw on the expertise and energy of the membership so that we increase our own capacity to help us contribute as much as we can to our Ethiopian friends.

The Trustees
May 2020

YEAR OF THE LIBRARIAN

The new initiative of 'Year of The Librarian' was launched in September 2018 with some clear intentions, to:

- Raise awareness of the wonderful work EEL does
- Support key projects
- Provide a focus around which to energise the active membership
- Attract new members
- Raise funds



Our small team of members organised a series of innovative fundraising events including the Acoustic Cafe.

Our stall at Exeter Respect festival was also a highlight which reaped really positive rewards in raising awareness as well as donations and making new contacts and members.

Our article in the Exeter Citizen helped to spread the word about EEL.

The Year of the Librarian wrapped up with a lovely afternoon tea in Belmont Park bringing together members, new and old, supporters from across the County, and two of our local Exeter City Councillors, Amal Ghusain and Trish Oliver.

The Councillors not only attended our get-together but were genuinely interested in what we do and offered us the unexpected opportunity to be featured in an article in their Exeter City Newsletter, helping to spread the word about EEL.

- *Almost £6000 raised!*
- *52 libraries sustained until the end of the 2020 academic year.*

YEAR OF THE TREE

'creating a greener earth from Exeter to Ethiopia'

Following the success of 'Year of the Librarian', EEL decided to make our next focus around our environmental work. We had been asked directly by our partners on the ground in Nekemte to help them plant more trees.



Under the leadership of recent Nobel Peace Prize winner, Prime Minister, Mr Abiy Ahmed, over 3 million young tree saplings were planted in summer 2019.

The 'Great Green Wall' Sahara and Sahel Initiative is an African-led movement with the ambition to grow an 8,000km natural wonder. By 2030, the Great Green Wall will be the largest living structure on the planet.

- *Almost 50 people attended the launch in Belmont Park to celebrate the planting of a native oak tree*
- *EEL received a legacy donation from long-standing member, the late John Rainger*

Various events were planned, included a special evening, 'A Taste of Ethiopia', attracting huge interest and sales of almost 100 tickets.

Whilst this has been put on hold due to the Covid19 pandemic, we hope to be able to progress with events in the autumn.

LIBRARIES AND LITERACY

Over the year we secured continuation funding for our Schools Library and Literacy project which runs from January 2020 until December 2021. The aim is to support 9000 pupils directly, and teachers in 20 schools indirectly, to improve the teaching and learning of reading in grades 1-4 and provide access to libraries for children in grades 5-8.



To support the teaching of reading, we are:

- Training teachers in improved teaching of reading
- Providing mini books to support learning to read.
- Developing improved assessment systems to help teachers to identify non-readers

To support the development of libraries, we are:

- Providing more furniture and books for school libraries
- Providing school librarian funding (if there isn't one)
- Providing training to the librarians

To ensure both are happening, we have

- 6-weekly monitoring and support visits in place



To ensure sustainability of the work, we are:

- Training government inspectors in improved monitoring around reading

- *The needs of initially 10 schools (year 1) have been identified to order furniture and books for the libraries.*
- *We have trained librarians for the 10 schools, 8 inspectors and 10 head teachers*

EEL AND PARTNERSHIPS

We have had regular visits to Nekemte over the last year. Both EEL and DASSC are happy with the work that the teams are doing and the progress that is being made.¹ We have introduced and encouraged DASSC to work with other organisations:



- DASSC and Vision Aid Overseas have now signed a memorandum of understanding
- Children in Crossfire have shown an interest in working with DASSC.
- We have shared results of the Phase 1 Libraries and Literacy project with DASSC Western Ethiopia Area Coordination Office (WE ACO) and DASSC Head Office.

Inflation has risen over the year, increasing the costs of construction materials and food items and having a negative impact upon our projects' budgets. We have also needed to consider the impact the exchange rate has had and the impact that on salaries funded by the projects.

At home we continue to be supported by several volunteers.

- A talk by Professor John Markakis on the political stability of Ethiopia.
- Anna Pawlyn writing mini books about Trees.
- Penny Pullen and her continued work with the school linking project.
- We have also made links with similar charities to ours, such as For Ethiopia, Link Ethiopia, Hope International and Bees for Development, through a new initiative 'Small but Significant'.
- Enable-Ed CIC support our projects with monitoring and evaluation.

Newtown Community Centre
Belmont Park
Belmont Road
Exeter EX1 2HQ

**A talk by
Professor
John
Markakis**

'The political stability of Ethiopia'

Professor John Markakis was a lecturer at Abbas Ababa University 1966-70, has written several important books on Ethiopia, the most recent being 'Ethiopia - the last two frontiers'.

11am - 12 noon Saturday 22nd February

RSPV to gentian468@gmail.com

¹ DASSC is the development arm of the Mekane Yesus Church

IN PARTNERSHIP: EEL AND DEVON SCHOOLS

Our Committee Member, Penny Pullen, continued over the year to work in partnership with some Devon schools to make links with schools in and around Nekemte.

As a result of EEL working with the schools, thirteen have continued to develop their connections throughout the year.

Key Successes for Devon Schools

- Letters have been exchanged regularly and they have collaborated in several interesting projects.
- Pupils in some of the Devon schools have made and sent lovely books to provide a wider range of reading materials in the reading centers.
- Other have made and sent beautiful teaching aids for literacy and mathematics to their partner school.
- Within the 'Year of the Librarian' some Devon schools have funded the employment of a librarian to ensure their Ethiopian partner school can keep their library open. The library is essential for Ethiopian students to extend and embed their learning.
- Three Devon schools applied as a cluster to British Council for a reciprocal visit grant and were successful. Sadly, on account of present circumstances in both UK and Ethiopia, their visit has had to be postponed.

Within measures imposed by the Ethiopian government to try and halt the spread of Covid 19 schools they are closed indefinitely so no linking activities can take place at present.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Improving education outcomes and enrolment for Children with Disabilities in Western Ethiopia across 40 primary and 8 secondary schools (IEP2)

In 2018, we received funding to further develop our inclusive education approach into secondary schools and further embed the work we have previously done in primary schools.



The aim of the work is to support disabled children to access, be included in and receive a quality education.

Supporting accessing the school

- Setting up parent support groups with savings and loan associations to enable them to save money and take loans out at crucial periods such as to buy seeds in planting season or buying their children a school uniform
- Funding the provision of assistive devices (crutches, calipers)

Supporting engaging and staying in school

- Teacher training to pastorally support the children with disabilities
- Disability clubs which the children attend with the non-disabled
- Running small businesses to generate income to buy the children stationery

Supporting quality of education

- Teacher training to be more student-centred and disability-friendly in their teaching
- Tutorials (with signing interpreters) for secondary school children with hearing impairments
- Livelihood support by providing them with opportunities to earn income making mini books as part of our libraries and literacy programme

Key successes for Inclusive Education 2019:

<i>Supporting accessing the school</i>	<i>Supporting engaging and staying in school</i>	<i>Supporting quality of education</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 more support groups were set up. • 6 groups were registered with the government which gives them legal status. • 100 assistive devices were provided. 	<p>From grants to schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47 hens, 20 goats, 4 oxen and 2 cows (both now pregnant) have been bought to support the disabled children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 of the disabled children were ranked in the top three of their class (with average class size 60 plus) and 11 were ranked in first place. • All 21 received prizes of additional reference books in ceremonies at the schools. • 8 deaf students successfully passed GCSE equivalent exams. • 5 deaf students successfully passed their A-level equivalent and are now going onto university.

This programme will complete in September 2020.

COLLECTIVE SPONSORSHIP

Since 2017 EEL has been operating a collective sponsorship programme that has supported secondary students with hearing loss in Nekemte.

The programme has used the money provided by sponsors to:

- fund tutors who offer additional educational support for the students,
- support an income generation scheme that allows students to earn money by working part-time, creating mini books that are used for another EEL education project,
- support the work of the recently established Nekemte Deaf Association, run by and for deaf people.



Interpreters helped deaf people who need interpreters at courts, public hospitals, schools, colleges, university, during advocacy, meeting and trainings.

As a result, over 20 students with hearing loss have won places to study at university. This is a huge credit to them, and we want to sincerely thank sponsors for their donations over this time. The programme has now closed.

Our money this year has provided:

- *10 days training for interpreters to improve their sign language skills*
- *Family planning training*
- *Gender activity planning; advising on body hygiene, and prevention of gender right violation*

WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

Last July 2019, DASSC produced a list of prioritised projects:

- *School Toilet Construction Project*
- *Spring Capping Project*
- *Tree Planting Project*

We contributed to the Anno school toilet construction in Autumn 2019.

During our November visit 2019, we visited a school in Birka Bekumsa and saw tree-planting in the grounds enabled by money donated from EEL:

- 115 planted as saplings and 90 still growing.
- 20 in a line marking edge of playing field, planted to improve the environment rather than simply for income generation.

Of absolute note was the passing of our friend John Rainger. We remain grateful to his contribution to EEL over many years. We especially note the contribution from John's funeral collection towards tree planting, spring capping and the library project.

Health

EEL is co-operating with Vision Aid Overseas (VAO) who will be running a 6-month pilot project with the DASSC inclusive education team that we fund and Nekemte Referral Hospital.

The government have funded an eye team at Nekemte Referral Hospital (Optometrist and Ophthalmic Nurses) and VAO provided specialist refraction equipment. The project will work with 20 schools training teachers and screening children with the intention of over the 6 months screening 19,000 children, providing an estimated 940 pairs of glasses and 450 children medicine or surgical support. A key challenge will be to ensure the children wear the glasses and overcoming any potential stigma associated with them.

SUCCESS STORIES

Librarians



Birhane completed Grade 12. She said she was from a poor family with neither parent in employment. She went to vocational college but had to drop out of her course due to lack of money and the need to work as a daily labourer doing basic hairdressing (earning ETB 5 (15p) per cut).

Having secured the job of librarian at Bikilta Leka school (earning ETB500 a month raising now to ETB700) in 2016, she used the money to start a 3-year accounting course.

The course finishes this year and she hopes to secure an accounting job with an expected salary of ETB2000 per month.

Children with disabilities

Two years ago, we reported that Deriba Tamiru was provided a wheelchair from the inclusive education project and started attending school for the first time at the age of ten.

His colleagues from grade one came every day to push him to school. Now, he has successfully finished grade two and was ranked first in his class.

In the picture, he is receiving his prize.



One of 21 disabled children who received prizes for being ranked in the top three in their class.

GOVERNANCE, PEOPLE AND ROLES

The trustees have continued to work with our funders to ensure that EEL has strong policies and procedures in place.

2019 saw some changes:

- Mark Howells stepped down after many invaluable years of service to EEL
- Abi Williams took on the role of Secretary
- Dick Benn remained as a Trustee but stepped down as Treasurer
- Kirsten Pullen returned as a Trustee and took on the role of Treasurer
- Rupa Chilvers took on the key trustee contact for Safeguarding as the Trustees continued to strengthen their control in that area.

Changes have also happened at Committee level:

- Penny Pullen retired from Chairing that group and from the Committee.
- Anthea Duquemin decided to no longer lead on the Collective Sponsorship programme
- Valerie Huggins resigned from her role as Project Coordinator for Inclusive Education Project.

To reflect the changing nature of the EEL, the Trustees agreed in June 2020 to change the Committee's delegation. It agreed with the proposal to establish a membership meeting, Linked-Up.

The trustees in role in 2019-20 were:

Abi Williams (Secretary), Dick Benn (Treasurer), Valerie Huggins, Rupa Chilvers, Emma Sarton and Kirsten Pullen (Treasurer)

FINANCE – TREASURER’S REPORT

The accounts for January to December 2019 have been examined by Von Mathieson in-line with account legislation.

Total funds

The Link finished 2019 with total funds of £35,804. While this would appear to be significantly less than the total funds at the end of 2018 (£61,950) this is reflective of the cycle of funding for our ongoing projects - monies received have been distributed to the projects. This is reflected by the greater amount of outgoings to our projects in 2019 (2019: £77,037 2018: 47,039).

Donations

We had a rise in the total number of donations (2019: £8,993 2018: £3,089) which is reflective of the excellent work by the Year of the Librarian team. Likewise, our subscriptions also increased (2019: 4,134 2018: £3,352) as our membership has grown. In fact, in 2019 our income from donations was greater than our income from subscriptions.

Restricted funds

Our restricted funds are healthy but have tended to be grouped under the fund received from. In the future we will be grouping these under the projects / work area for ease of monitoring. EEL accounts are healthy and enabling the charity to complete its charitable objectives. The project managers have worked hard to maintain the budget lines, and the ‘Year of ... ‘ initiative has demonstrated its effectiveness in increasing donations from our membership.

Thanks

I would like to thank Dick Benn for his years of service as the Treasurer of Exeter Ethiopia Link, and also to Von Mathieson for her sterling work as the accountant for the Link.

COVID-19 – LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

“We should never stop hoping for the sunshine, and never forget that things will get better”

In early April, Nekemte had not been affected by the virus. However, schools had closed, people were staying at home, access to open space markets and shops was prohibited.

EEL’s response will develop as we evaluate our options over time. Our immediate response has been as follows:

- £2000 to finance seed/fertiliser purchase and provide additional funds to disability associations. This this will help support the rural population that is already in our programme and mitigate against children dropping out of school in September.
- The School Library and Literacy Project will pause for a month or two. We will continue to pay salaries at the full amount during this time.
- Agreement in principle to fund the local hospital to a maximum of £2000.
- Scenario planning between EEL and DASSC.
- Ensuring the team have the right protection (PPE) to do their jobs.

Life is not always easy. Sometimes it is difficult to smile when the dark clouds move in to block the sun. However, we must have faith that things will get better. The night may seem long, but think of all the possibilities that the dawn might hold.

Just remember that no matter how dark the winter seems; spring will come with a burst of sunshine and new life. There is always God above watching over and guiding us, leading us along in this dark time and bringing us fragrant flowers in Spring.

Gobena Atsoma, DASSC (our Partner), 10th April 2020