

Report of Members LinkUp Meeting on 25 November 2021

(Held via Zoom.)

Mark updated members on the current State of Emergency in Ethiopia and how it is affecting our projects in Nekemte. The situation is constantly changing but we are in regular contact with our staff and volunteer on the ground in Nekemte and some of the project work such as school visits have begun again with project workers remaining in the towns and not currently travelling out to the more remote locations.

As part of our fundraising efforts we clarified how to make donations through the Big Give from 30th November to 7th December using the donate button on the Big Give website. We discussed the best ways to communicate this to members. We are hoping to raise £3,400 through the Big Give, which will be match funded. It costs £200 to fund a school librarian in and around Nekemte for one year and the money raised will go towards funding as many librarians as possible. Members shared news of their own fundraising events for the Big Give such as a table top sale, a tea party and a sponsored marathon.

We had an update on membership numbers from Annie. As a way to increase membership numbers over the Christmas period as well as contributing to the Big Give, Dawn talked about the Christmas membership gift initiative. This makes it possible to gift someone a year's membership to EEL. As well as membership they receive a Christmas card with a personal message, Ethiopian recipes and information about Ethiopia and EEL's projects.

We began planning the launch of Year of the Girl and Gillian gave a thoughtful insight into her previous experiences of working on the very successful Year of the Librarian with the help of other members. This was followed by Year of the Tree which was somewhat curtailed by the start of the pandemic. Members agreed that in many respects we are in a different situation now and will need to think of new ways to organise and run Year of the Girl given our current capacity. We discussed any other groups of people or individuals who we could reach out to for support with this project. It was decided to hold a Year of the Girl brainstorming meeting as a starting point on 19th January 2021 where we hope as many members as possible will come and share their ideas for the project and how they can help.

A big thanks to everyone who attended the Link Up meeting.