

# Together We Learn

England & Wales · Charity number 1165953

## Details

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Other names	LINK ETHIOPIA
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2016-03-09
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a>

## Contact

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Address	Together We Learn 225-229 Seven Sisters Road London N4 2DA
Phone	02086173393
Email	<a href="mailto:hello@twlethiopia.org">hello@twlethiopia.org</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.twlethiopia.org">www.twlethiopia.org</a>

## Activities

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**Objects:** The advancement of education and the relief of poverty in Ethiopia and the promotion of equality between people in the United Kingdom and Ethiopia in particular but not exclusively by: A. supporting children, families, individuals, schools, communities, organisations and charities in Ethiopia; B. raising public awareness in the U.K. of Ethiopia's history and culture, educational and poverty issues, including through lessons and a range of visits.

**Activities:** We are a charity working with children, schools and communities in Ethiopia for the advancement of education and the relief of poverty. We do this by improving access to education through child sponsorship and school construction, improving the quality of education through teacher training, and improving wellbeing through extra-curricular activities.

## Classification

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- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Services
- **What:** Education/training, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies

## Geography

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- Ethiopia
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

## Finances

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Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-08-31	£359,992	£327,618	-	-
2024-08-31	£343,410	£309,142	-	-
2023-08-31	£400,655	£367,425	-	-
2022-03-31	£506,170	£208,062	£308,161	2
2021-03-31	£10,472	£0	-	-
2020-03-31	£0	£0	-	-

## Trustees

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Name	Role	Appointed
ASHLEY ENGLAND		2016-03-09
Holly McKenzie		2018-10-03
Jack Leonard Sharville		2016-03-09
Matthew Stockdale		2018-10-03

**Together We Learn**

England & Wales - Charity number 1165953

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# Accounts

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# Annual Report

2024 - 2025



# Charity Information

## Registered Address

225-229 Seven Sisters Road  
London, N4 2DA

## Trustees

Nadine Carle-Edgar  
Ashley England  
Elsabeth Gezahegn King (*until Sep 2025*)  
Holly McKenzie  
Jack Sharville  
Matthew Stockdale

## Chief Executive

Caroline Walker

## President

Helen Pankhurst CBE

## Banker

The Co-operative Bank p.l.c.  
P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street  
Manchester, M60 4EP

## Registration

Registered charity number: 1165953

Charitable Incorporated Organisation  
Constitution last amended 8 May 2020

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# The Year in Numbers

**117**

girls received reusable  
period packs

**69,800**

students reached with improved english teaching

**367**

students sponsored  
through education

**172**

food parcels provided for families affected by conflict and high inflation

**1,218**

teachers trained

**800**

students learning in new classrooms

# Welcome

Thank you for opening Together We Learn's annual report for 2024-25. Despite continued conflict, economic pressure and policy changes, this report is alive with stories of success. Throughout you will find case studies that show how your commitment, generosity and support have enabled children, teachers and communities in Ethiopia to withstand difficult circumstances and come out stronger.

This year, we made notable progress in all areas of our work. More children were able to access education through our longstanding student sponsorship and school construction programmes, and we continue to promote equal access for both girls and boys. We worked to raise the quality of education children receive through training teachers, influencing policy and collaborating with local government. By linking schools in Ethiopia, the UK and US, we ensured that learning goes both ways. We also considered children's wellbeing through clubs, playgroup and sport.

At the same time, our projects have dealt with significant challenges. Conflict, internal displacement, disrupted schooling, transport and construction, rising inflation and poor policy implementation have all affected children's access to opportunities. The impact we've made in this report is a testament to the dedication of our local teams, partners and communities.

One of our proudest achievements of the year has been seeing our teacher training literacy project receive growing national recognition. We use a phonics-based approach to reach tens of thousands of students through trained teachers and the results are heartening. Not only do the children report improvements across all measured skills, they relish the chance to learn English through songs, games and stories. Importantly, we have engaged education bureaus, ministries and local networks at every stage, which has strengthened their recognition and endorsement of the project, and allowed us to contribute to conversations on foundational literacy at the regional, national and international levels! This recognition sets the project up for long-term, widespread and significant impact and reflects years of dedicated delivery and relationship-building on the ground.

Finally, we spent this year considering what comes next for Together We Learn. We developed our Strategic Vision for 2025-2027 and advanced separate but interlinking strategic plans for our organisation and our Ethiopian partner. Both strategies are aimed at our shared ambition to empower a locally-led approach to achieve our mission for quality education in Ethiopia. This Strategic Vision is the first step in a process that we expect will involve years of thoughtfully redesigning processes, strengthening systems and building capacity to eventually shift the power from the UK to Ethiopia.

We are deeply grateful to our supporter, donors, schools, volunteers, staff and friends in the UK and Ethiopia who continue to believe in our work. Your support enables children not only to stay in school, but to learn, thrive and imagine an exciting future.

Amasegenalu - thank you.

**Caroline Walker, Chief Executive** ♦ **Holly McKenzie, Chair of Trustees**

# About Us

Our vision is for all children in Ethiopia to be able to strive for a brighter future through access to quality education.



## Our Mission

Our mission is to break the cycle of poverty by enabling access to quality education for disadvantaged children. We do this by improving the quality of teaching and the quality of facilities within schools and by working with communities to overcome obstacles, enabling children to stay in school.



## Our Approach

Our approach to providing access to quality education is holistic, as our experience shows us that there are many areas of need that must be addressed to enable children to make the most of education.

Our work with schools builds safe, local school facilities and supports teachers with training and resources to inspire children to flourish in the classroom.

We also work closely with the children, their families and communities to understand and address the issues they face at home and how these impact their ability to attend and concentrate in school.



### Access

We ensure access to education through the construction of school facilities and projects that address barriers to education.



### Quality

We improve the quality of education through teacher training and provision of quality educational resources.



### Wellbeing

We enable children to flourish through after-school activities and programmes supporting their families at home.

# Our Values

## Equal

### Creating opportunities

Our work is driven by the knowledge that all children have equal potential regardless of the circumstances they are born into.

## Collaborative

### Together we can transform

We support children and families to transform their lives. Engaging with communities at all stages ensures that our projects are meeting actual needs and making a difference.

## Caring

### Taking time to look closer

We care about the individual lives of the children and families we serve, even if it makes things more complicated. We recognise that effective solutions aren't 'one size fits all' and that each family is made up of individuals with varied circumstances and concerns of their own.

## Respectful

### More than a single story

Ethiopia is a diverse and complex country with a rich history and culture. We promote a positive and rounded image of Ethiopia while supporting its development.

## Honest

### Accountable to communities

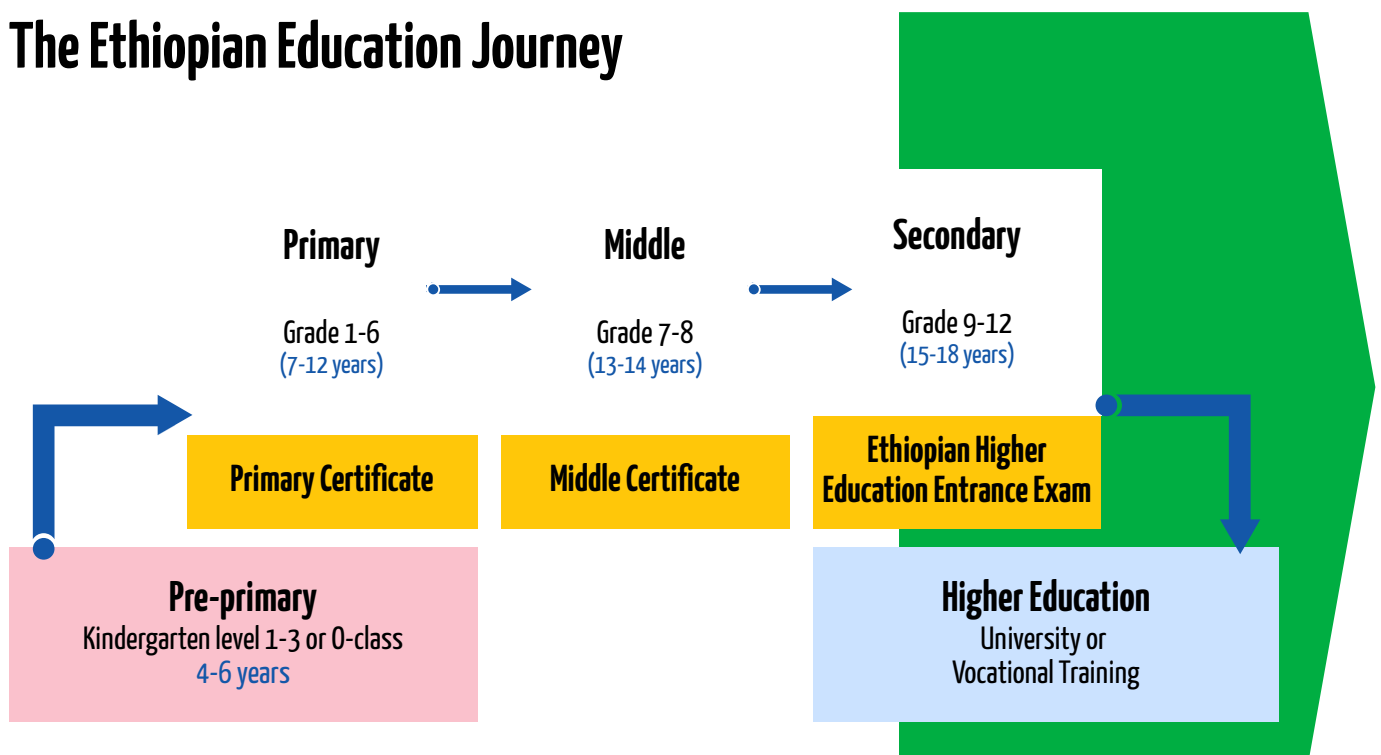
We are transparent and open in our work. By working closely together, communities are able to hold us to account. This means supporters and funders can be confident that we continue to invest donations where they have most impact.

## Impact driven

### Never too big to learn

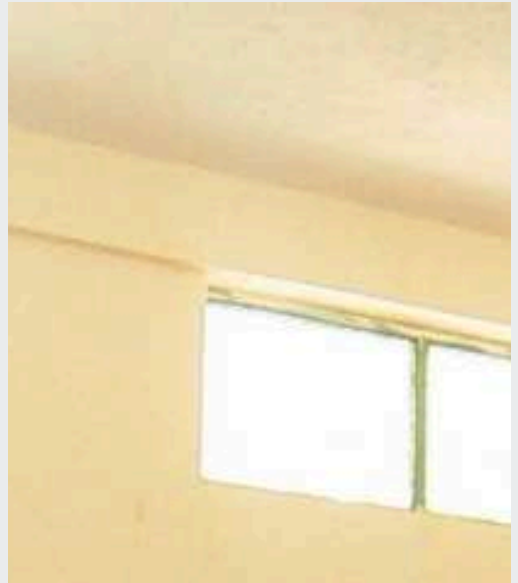
We have over 25 years' experience but we have never stopped learning. Each project or activity is an opportunity for us to become more effective. We are not afraid to innovate, but don't feel the need to reinvent the wheel if an approach is effective. We aim to have a significant and lasting impact.

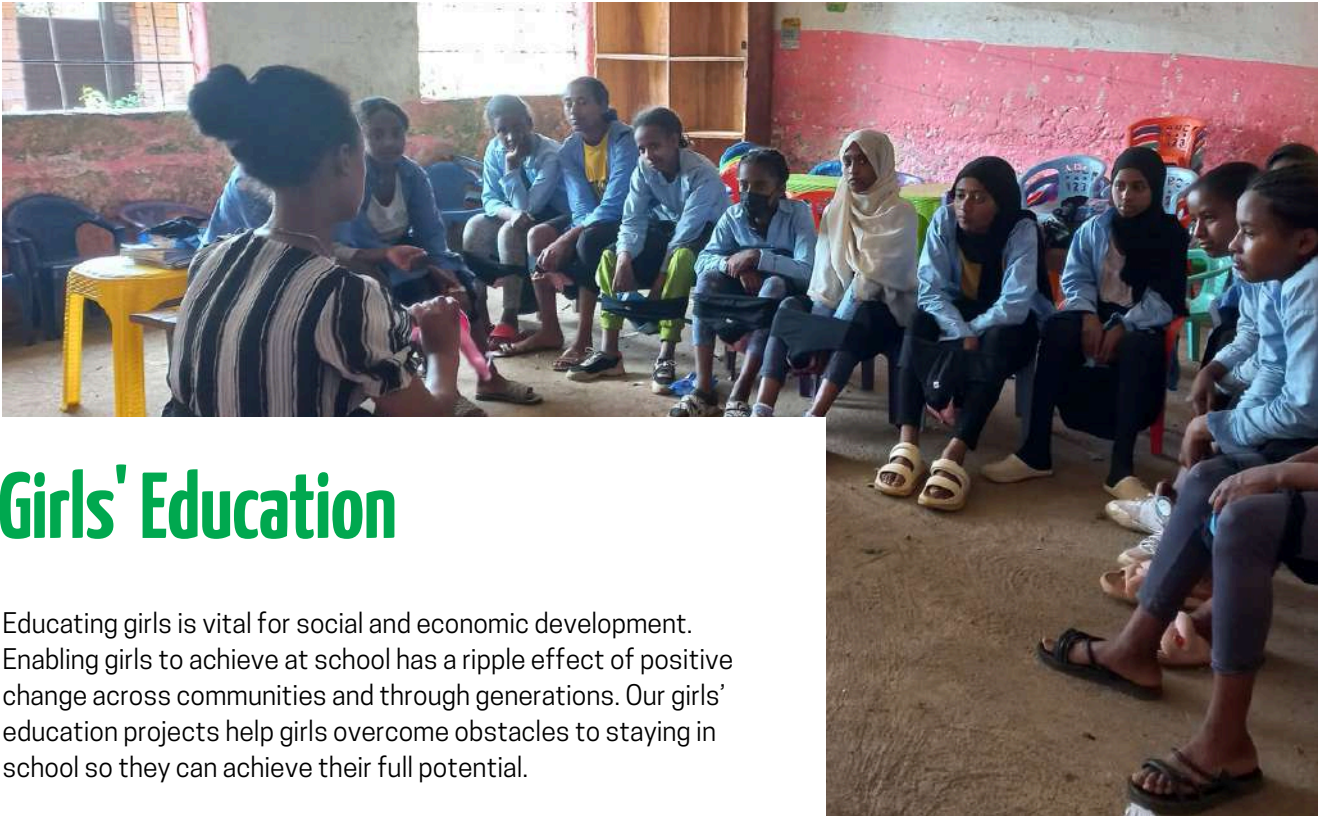
## The Ethiopian Education Journey



# Access to Education

Together We Learn ensures access to education through the construction of school facilities and projects that address barriers to education.





## Girls' Education

Educating girls is vital for social and economic development. Enabling girls to achieve at school has a ripple effect of positive change across communities and through generations. Our girls' education projects help girls overcome obstacles to staying in school so they can achieve their full potential.

## Future Girls Building Confidence, Leadership, and Safer Schools

This year marked the end of the second phase of our two-year Future Girls programme, delivered across six primary schools in the Amhara and Oromia regions. Building on the foundations laid in earlier phases, the programme continued to equip adolescent girls and boys with the knowledge, confidence, and leadership skills to challenge harmful gender norms and create safer, more supportive school environments. Girls Clubs met at least fortnightly, providing a trusted space for open discussion on topics such as gender equality, reproductive health, menstruation, and peer pressure.

Across the year, 98 girls and 66 boys took part as club members, with many stepping into leadership roles. Students led monthly school assemblies, presented poems and essays, and organised Menstrual Hygiene Day events attended by the whole school community. Local media covered several of these events, helping to amplify positive messages and reduce stigma around menstruation. Alongside this, 117 girls received reusable period packs, and small grants enabled schools to make practical improvements such as secure toilet doors, water points, menstrual hygiene supplies, and dedicated resting spaces for girls. In total, 6,700 students benefited from improved facilities.

Teachers, school directors, and government officials also played an active role. Over the year, 12 teachers, six directors and three officials received training on early marriage, reproductive health, and safeguarding, while 18 staff from previous phases joined peer learning activities to share best practice. Parents were increasingly engaged too, with 21 parents participating in awareness sessions.

**117**  
girls received reusable  
period packs

**6,700**  
students benefitted from  
improved facilities

**98 girls and 66 boys**  
were involved as club members

## The Impact

Monitoring data and an external evaluation by EnableEd show that the programme has had a strong and measurable impact on Girls Club members over the two year phase.

### Improved confidence and leadership

By the end of the project, 76% of girls felt proud discussing gender and puberty at school, compared with 22% at baseline, and 64% believed others saw them as leaders. Teachers reported that girls spoke up more in class and led peer discussions with confidence.

### Shifts in attitudes among boys

Boys who participated in the clubs increasingly rejected stigma around menstruation, describing it as natural and worthy of support. In one school in Amhara, teachers noted that boys who had previously teased girls began actively supporting them during their periods.

### Stronger social and emotional learning

The evaluation highlighted significant gains in confidence, empathy, teamwork, and problem solving among members. These skills are essential for girls who often face pressure to stay silent or leave school early.

### A safer environment for girls

Club leaders played a vital role in identifying and supporting girls facing abuse at home. 11 safeguarding cases were identified and supported. In two of these cases, it was the club members themselves who helped the affected girls access protection and support, leading to decisive action by school leaders and local authorities.

### Sustainability and peer learning

A key finding of the external evaluation was the sustainability of the model. Clubs in schools supported during earlier phases of the project remain active two years on, with local contributions used to purchase menstrual supplies and students continuing to use the clubs as safe spaces. Peer conferences and best practice visits this year strengthened these networks further, bringing together club leaders, teachers, directors, and officials from both current and former project schools.

**“You strengthened us to do more with the club, and we have a plan to sustain it with Grade 8 next year and with new members too.”**

— Girls Club Leader



# A Mother's Business, a Daughter's Future

Providing a business grant to the mother of a female student is an effective way to benefit a household in multiple ways at once. By generating her own income, the mother can achieve greater economic independence and increased confidence, and this income in turn reduces the risk of early drop out for their daughter. This year, we were pleased to support **11 mothers and students** through the establishment of a savings and loan association and business grants.

The mothers received business training at the outset and ongoing support from our team to form their association. Within this group, each woman pays a regular amount into savings, which is then topped up by a grant. The fund is circulated among members, with different women receiving and repaying loans in turn, enabling them to establish and grow their own businesses.

The first grants were distributed in April 2025 and by August 10 women had established new businesses. Most of those reporting profits within the first 10 months had earned profits equal to 98% of their original loan which many invested in smartphones for their children to access online learning.



**“The outcome has been very beneficial. Previously, I used to buy things on credit, but now I prepare and sell my own items, which is helpful. I can provide my child with the supplies needed for education. It is very useful”**

— Ehitalem ♦ Savings and Loans Association member



## Reported ‘most valuable aspect’ of the project



# Student Sponsorship

Our sponsorship programme enables children from low income families to go to school. Our sponsorship model is designed to directly meet the needs of families in a way that most effectively enables children to stay in education.



Our sponsorship model includes direct financial assistance for essential living costs such as rent and food, provision of educational materials, and medical cover. We also implement targeted initiatives to strengthen students' academic performance and promote family engagement, health, and overall wellbeing.

In 2024–25, we supported 367 students, from kindergarten through to university, in Amhara and Oromia. Most of our sponsored families live in Amhara, where prolonged conflict continued to disrupt daily life, while rising inflation placed further pressure on households. Despite these challenges, our sponsorship team provided consistent support to students and their families.

## Supporting Families with Positive Parenting

Programme activities began in September 2024 with our annual Family Forums. These gatherings strengthen relationships with families, provide opportunities to gather feedback, and allow us to share information.

In Amhara, parents and guardians attended a session led by a doctor from Gondar Hospital, who shared guidance on common health issues affecting sponsored families. A psychologist also delivered training on effective parenting skills, helping families better support their children's development and wellbeing. Students from our Kindu Klub enriched the event with a poem and musical performance, showcasing their confidence and creativity.

At the forum in Oromia, parents and guardians were introduced to a representative from the One Stop Centre, a free service that supports children and adults who have experienced violence, abuse, or exploitation. The centre provides medical care, psychological support, and legal assistance. At the forum, they also provided guidance on positive parenting and how to support children's learning.

Celebrating academic success remains a central feature of the forums. Students who achieved high academic results in both regions received monetary awards. In Amhara, parents of high-performing students were also recognised, highlighting the vital role families play in their children’s education.

Following the forums, families received annual distributions of school materials, including exercise books, pens, uniforms, and shoes. For families living in areas with unsafe travel conditions, funds were transferred so they could purchase required items locally.

## Meeting Changing Needs

Over the year, we observed an increase in higher education students at risk of dropping out due to financial pressures. Rising transport costs driven by conflict, alongside the growing use of online learning materials, created new challenges for students unable to afford smartphones, laptops, or printing costs.

In addition to covering tuition fees at state colleges and helping new university entrants with set-up costs, we provided extra financial support to higher education students at risk of dropping out. This assistance helped cover essential expenses enabling them to continue their education.

## Holistic Support for Families

Beyond sponsorship, many families received wider support throughout 2024–25. A total of **257 donations** funded home improvements, small business start-ups, additional educational assistance, the installation of water taps and electricity meters, and celebration and birthday parcels, among many other forms of help. These contributions played an important role in supporting household stability and improving the living conditions of sponsored families.



**367**

students received  
sponsorship  
support

**92**

students were  
in university or  
higher education

**130**

medical cases  
supported

**5**

students achieved  
their certificate of  
secondary education

**13**

students moved from primary to  
secondary education

**20**

students graduated from university or training courses

**172**

food parcels  
were distributed

**83**

students attended summer tutorials

# Expanding and Improving Summer Tutorials



In the summer of 2024, we introduced a tutorial programme in response to regional conflict and its impact on students' learning. Ongoing insecurity and changes within the primary education system meant that the need for additional academic assistance remained high. Following the success of the first tutorials, we were pleased to offer this support again in the summer of 2025.

In the most recent national exams taken at the end of secondary school, only 8.4% of students achieved the minimum score required for university entry. The introduction of a new exam at Grade 6 has also added pressure for younger learners. A revised curriculum, combined with a chronic shortage of textbooks, further hindered students' progress. For many of our sponsored students, who frequently lack access to digital alternatives, the absence of learning materials is particularly challenging.

The summer tutorials supported students entering exam years and helped them prepare for the academic year ahead. **83 students** attended lessons over eight weeks. We expanded the number of subjects covered from three to eight, adding Citizenship, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and History, to Maths, English, and General Science. Drinks and snacks were provided daily, along with exercise books and pens, and transport costs were covered for students from certain areas, to enable safe and consistent attendance.

Students' performance showed a strong upward trend, with significant progress between the tests at the start of the summer and the assessments at the end. These results reflect both the value of the expanded curriculum and the dedication of the teachers and staff involved.

As part of our efforts to motivate and inspire students, we invited Temesgen, a former sponsored student who graduated from Gondar University and now works at the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, to speak with the group. Drawing on his own educational journey, he offered thoughtful and heartfelt advice, encouraging students to stay focused and resilient despite the challenges they face. His talk concluded with a lively Q&A session, during which students asked insightful questions and engaged deeply with his experiences.

Questions asked at the motivational talk show the challenges that many of our students are facing, and how motivated they are to positively manage those challenges:

- ◇ "What was your reading style?"
- ◇ "How do you choose the right friends?"
- ◇ "At what age did you lose your mother, and how did you manage life afterward?"

# Investing in Futures: Anteneh's Story

Anteneh joined our sponsorship programme as a child. Through dedicated support and his own remarkable efforts, he is now employed in the career of his choice and keen to pass on the benefit he received to other children in the country. He tells his sponsorship story below.

When I joined the sponsorship programme, my family faced significant financial problems. It was a constant struggle to make ends meet, and my education was a major source of worry for my parents. Now, I am 25 years old and working as a Process Chemist in the chemical industry.

The sponsorship supported me by covering all my education-related expenses. This was a huge burden lifted from my family. It meant I had everything I needed to focus on my studies, from textbooks and uniforms to school fees. This comprehensive support allowed me to learn without stress. If I hadn't been sponsored, the financial pressure on my family would have been too great. I likely would have had to leave school early. I would not have become a Process Chemist. Instead of building a career I am passionate about, I would probably be in a low-paying, unskilled job, struggling just as my family did before.

The most meaningful part of sponsorship for me was when my sponsor, Nadine, came to Ethiopia and I got to meet her family in person. I was so excited and happy. Putting faces to the names, shaking their hands, and being able to thank them directly was an unforgettable moment. It transformed the support from something abstract into a real, human connection. **It reinforced that someone across the world truly cared about my future.**

I would say that the biggest challenge facing children from low income households in Ethiopia today is the overwhelming financial barrier. Even with the will to learn, a child cannot go to school without the basics: a uniform, books, and supplies. This pressure often forces children to drop out and work to help their families. Beyond that, many children in rural areas lack access to quality schools and motivated teachers, creating a gap that is very hard to close without external support.

**If I had a magic wand, I would erase the link between a family's wealth and a child's access to quality education.** I would ensure that every child, no matter where they are born, has the same opportunity I was given – the opportunity to learn, to dream, and to build a life based on their potential, not their parents' income.

Sponsorship is more than a donation; it's an investment in a future. Look at me: I was a child with dreams but no means. Today, I am a chemist and I dream of helping other children in my country. Sponsorship creates a ripple effect. You are not just changing one life; you are empowering someone who will go on to uplift their community and their country.



**“We were lucky to be able to meet Anteneh during one of our trips to Ethiopia. We visited his school and met his family. This was a very special day for all of us.**

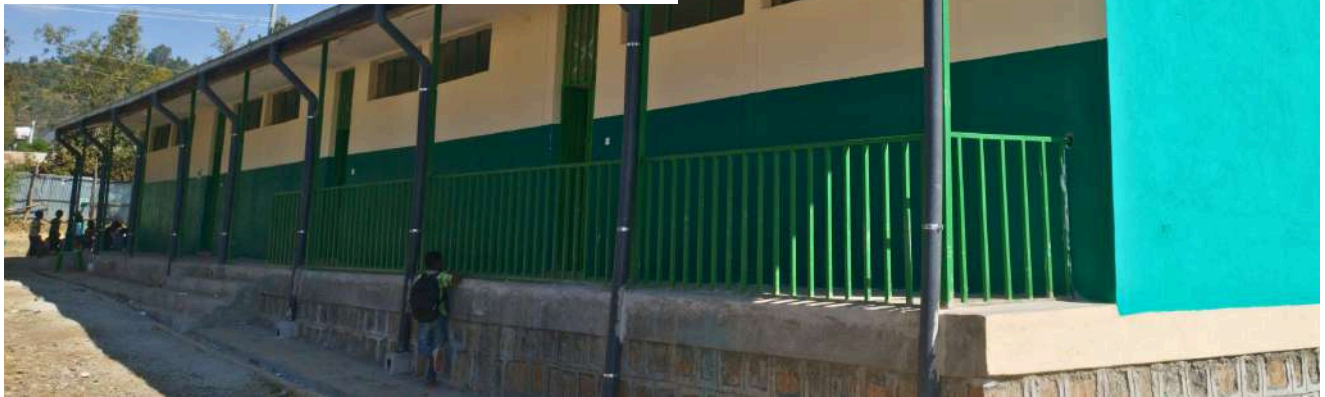
**We are so pleased to have helped him to stay at school and go to university. We now sponsor two other students. Not all students go to university but each extra year at school is beneficial for them and improves their life chances.”**

— Nadine ♦ Anteneh's sponsor



# School Construction

Together We Learn ensures access to education through the construction of school facilities that mean more children can stay in school. This year we continued strengthening school infrastructure, focussing on projects that expand access to safe, permanent classrooms and improve learning conditions for growing student populations.



## A Bright Start: Transforming Early Learning at Kebele 20

New Kindergarten classrooms at Kebele 20 have transformed early learning for young children in Azezo. Baseline consultations showed deep concern about the old mud and wood classrooms, which were described as ‘unsafe’, ‘dark’ and ‘uncomfortably hot’. Many children reported feeling anxious in the space and the poor environment was discouraging attendance. Our project replaced the old classrooms with a bright, concrete four classroom block, fully furnished and designed around children’s needs. Enrolment for the new school year has doubled to 240 children, reflecting renewed confidence in the early education available at Kebele 20.

The new classrooms are spacious, well ventilated and equipped for play-based learning. Children, parents and teachers helped shape the design, choosing hexagonal desks for group work, open shelving for play resources and a fresh colour palette to make the rooms welcoming. A new outdoor playground was also installed after children and teachers highlighted the need for safe, high quality play equipment to support physical and social development.

Alongside the construction, training was provided for the four Kindergarten teachers, none of whom had previously specialised in early childhood education. Training focused on child development, active learning and the use of local materials for play based teaching. Training was supported by a field visit to a high performing government Kindergarten to see the methods in practice.

The project faced challenges, including delays caused by conflict related transport disruptions and the need to source additional furniture due to rising enrolment. Careful planning and strong local partnerships helped us manage these pressures while keeping the project on budget.

Enrolment  
increased by  
**100%**

**240**  
children accessing  
quality early education



## The Power of Partnership

*“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”* So goes a well-known African proverb.

Collaboration is one of Together We Learn’s core values; it ensures that we work with communities and existing structures so that our work is genuinely effective. This year, through strategic partnership with the Amhara Development Association (ADA), we have been able to build more facilities and benefit more children than we could achieve alone.

ADA is a local NGO that strengthens community capacity, mobilises resources, and ensures broad public participation in development efforts. Together We Learn worked with the ADA this year on construction projects at Kebele 20 and Gendit schools. Their financial contributions, volunteer mobilisation model, and localised offices enabled us to upgrade the classrooms at Kebele 20 to durable concrete structures, and to continue construction at at Gendit, our model rural primary school project in a conflict-affected area we could not otherwise have reached.

The impact of the partnership has been significant, advancing both our organisations’ aims, delivering greater benefits for schools and communities, and ensuring your donations go further.



## Hope despite conflict at Gendit School

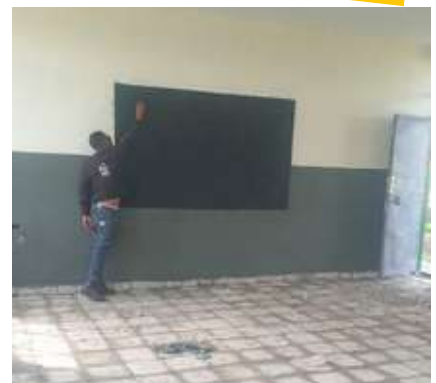
Gendit Primary School in Maksegnit continues to take shape as a model rural primary school despite exceptionally difficult circumstances. Since conflict broke out in August 2023, almost all of the schools in the zone have closed. Gendit is one of only ten that has remained open, providing a vital service to children in the area. A new school director has brought strong leadership and renewed positive collaboration with the education office.

The original plan to build a single block was no longer feasible after four years of conflict related delays, rising construction costs and new government standards. The project was redesigned into two phases: a four classroom block built this year, with a separate library and office block planned for 2026. This responds to increased enrolment - now 376 students - and ensures the school can continue teaching up to Grade 8. The new classroom block is now complete and fully furnished providing four bright classrooms, while refurbished older buildings are being used as temporary office and staff space. Additional support for quality of education at the school this year included new curriculum reference books, a fenced kindergarten play area and teacher training delivered in Gondar, where staff could travel safely.

Teacher development has been an important part of the project. 80% of teachers reported they had mostly implemented the training, and all felt it had improved their teaching. A Teacher Competency Framework has helped teachers adopt clearer lesson planning, including writing lesson objectives on the blackboard, and teachers reported improvements in questioning techniques and student engagement.

Because conflict has made direct access unsafe, we have relied on strong partnerships to maintain oversight. Amhara Development Association (ADA) staff based in the area conducted weekly site visits, supported by regular communication with the director, local supervisors and government engineers. This collaboration has ensured construction quality and continuity despite the security situation.

**800**  
students benefitting from  
new classrooms at 3 schools



# Breaking ground again in Oromia

We have been unable to run construction projects in the Oromia region since 2020 due to the impact of conflict and COVID 19, so we were delighted to start work in May 2025 on a new concrete block that will provide four permanent classrooms for Kurkura Elementary School. The school sits on the outskirts of Bishoftu, where rapid population growth - driven by conflict related internal displacement and expanding industrial parks - has placed huge pressure on already limited education facilities.

Kurkura Elementary School was prioritised because it was teaching in corrugated iron or mud and wood classrooms that are loud in the rain, unbearably hot in the sun and unsuitable for afternoon lessons. There was huge demand from the local population but the school could only provide education up to Grade 4. At baseline, all teachers described the classrooms as totally inadequate, and every child surveyed said learning in them made them feel sad.

The project will replace these temporary structures with bright, spacious and durable classrooms, enabling the school to expand teaching up to Grade 6, the end of primary school and a critical exam year. From September, 320 children will benefit directly, with many more in the years ahead.

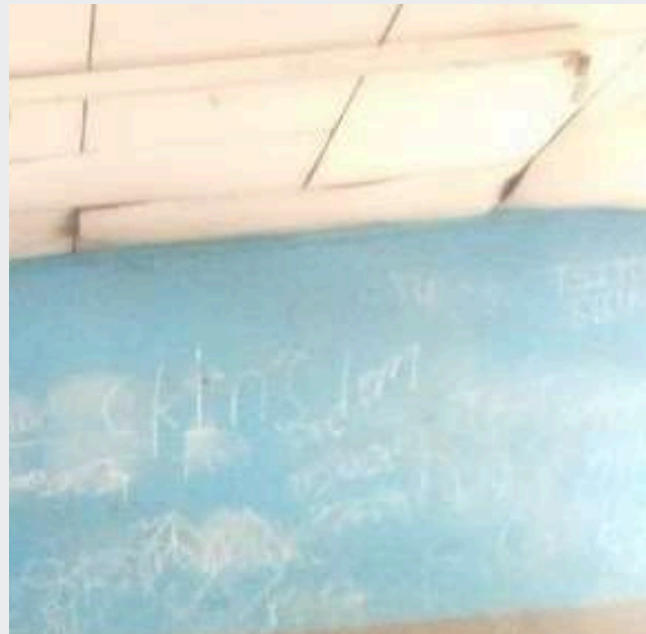
The first months of the project focussed on establishing strong foundations. A competitive bidding process selected a local contractor, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the school, and construction began immediately to complete the sub structure before the heavy rains. By August, excavation, masonry, beams, the floor slab, columns and hollow block walls were all complete, marking a strong start and keeping the project on schedule.

*Photos: children attend lessons in the crowded, iron sheet classrooms (top); construction begins on the new classroom site (middle); the concrete framework of the new classrooms takes shape (bottom).*



# Quality of Education

Together We Learn improves the quality of education through teacher training and provision of quality educational resources.





## Teacher Training

We support teachers in Ethiopia to deliver more engaging, inclusive, and effective lessons. In traditional, overcrowded classrooms, many children, and especially those with limited support or special needs, struggle. Our training builds teachers' capacity for impactful learning.

## Helping Children Read, Write, and Thrive

Together We Learn's teacher training efforts focus on improving English teaching. Our early-grade English literacy intervention has been refined over time for maximum impact, centred on Grade 1 teachers and training in engaging phonics-based methodology.

English proficiency is essential for Ethiopian students to progress in education, as all subjects from secondary school onwards are taught in English. Without strong English literacy skills, students struggle to succeed beyond Grade 8, regardless of ability. The challenge is even greater for students from low-income households, families with illiterate parents, or those with reading difficulties. Evidence shows that structured pedagogy programmes can generate learning gains equivalent to three additional years of schooling for every \$100 spent per child (Angrist et al., 2025).

**14**

local Ethiopian phonics  
trainers newly certified  
or upskilled

**1,200**

teachers trained from 1,015 schools,  
improving phonics skills by

**80%**

after the first training

**69,500**

students reached, improving literacy outcomes by

**78%**

on average

Phonics teaches English through letter sounds rather than the alphabet. It is now the standard approach in many English-speaking countries and is proven to be especially effective for students learning English as a second language. (2025 GEEAP - Effective Reading Instruction)

Through our partnership with Jolly Phonics, we train teachers in phonics and child-friendly teaching techniques, such as songs, actions, and stories, that make lessons more enjoyable and effective. These methods are still uncommon in Ethiopia. They mean that students are more engaged in lessons and make faster progress.

This year, **we trained 1,200 teachers, reaching 69,500 students and improving literacy outcomes by an average of 78 percentage points.** The project was delivered in collaboration with the Amhara and Oromia Education Bureaus, who endorsed the training and covered teacher attendance costs and provided training venues.

Training took place over five days: three days in the first semester and two refresher days in the second. Schools received teacher books, pupil books, and posters, with ongoing support from local education officers and online chat groups.

Delivery in Amhara was especially poignant this year. Conflict in the region placed travelling teachers at risk, yet attendance remained high. 93% of invited teachers chose to attend despite this risk.

**“I have been teaching English for 13 years. In November, I had a good opportunity to get this training. It really made my English teaching method outstanding. I have full confidence now to teach English to my students in a fun and enjoyable manner.**

**The refresher training time is difficult because the road transportation is so risky. But all these challenges didn't stop me. I left my phone at home, wore older clothes not to be identified as a teacher, and came. I hope I will go back home safely with the help of God and will support my students happily and effectively.”**

— Ateref ♦ Grade one teacher, Amhara

The conflict also strained the Education Bureau's budget due to urgent security-related priorities. Nonetheless, they maintained their commitment and funded teacher attendance for the second semester so training could continue.

By the end of the year, students taught by teachers who attended our training outperformed control-group students by 78 percentage points in literacy tests, significantly improving their abilities in sounding letters, reading words, and writing words.

To strengthen sustainability, we also **trained 911 school directors and 126 government personnel.** Director sensitisation supports teachers with implementation, while training officials and lecturers enables continued monitoring and assistance at local levels. We also trained **eight new Ethiopian trainers** and upgraded six existing trainers, ensuring the local capacity needed to meet increasing demand for training.

## Emebet's Story

Emebet had been teaching grade one students for over 40 years before attending our teacher training. "For years, I was teaching my students the names of the letters (A, B, C), but neither they nor I understood what we were doing. I would tell them to read, but they simply couldn't, and I didn't know how to teach them to decode words correctly. I just kept repeating the same method, thinking I was helping them. But in reality, I was wasting their time and mine. The children didn't enjoy English lessons, and they made little progress. Even I struggled with spelling correctly."

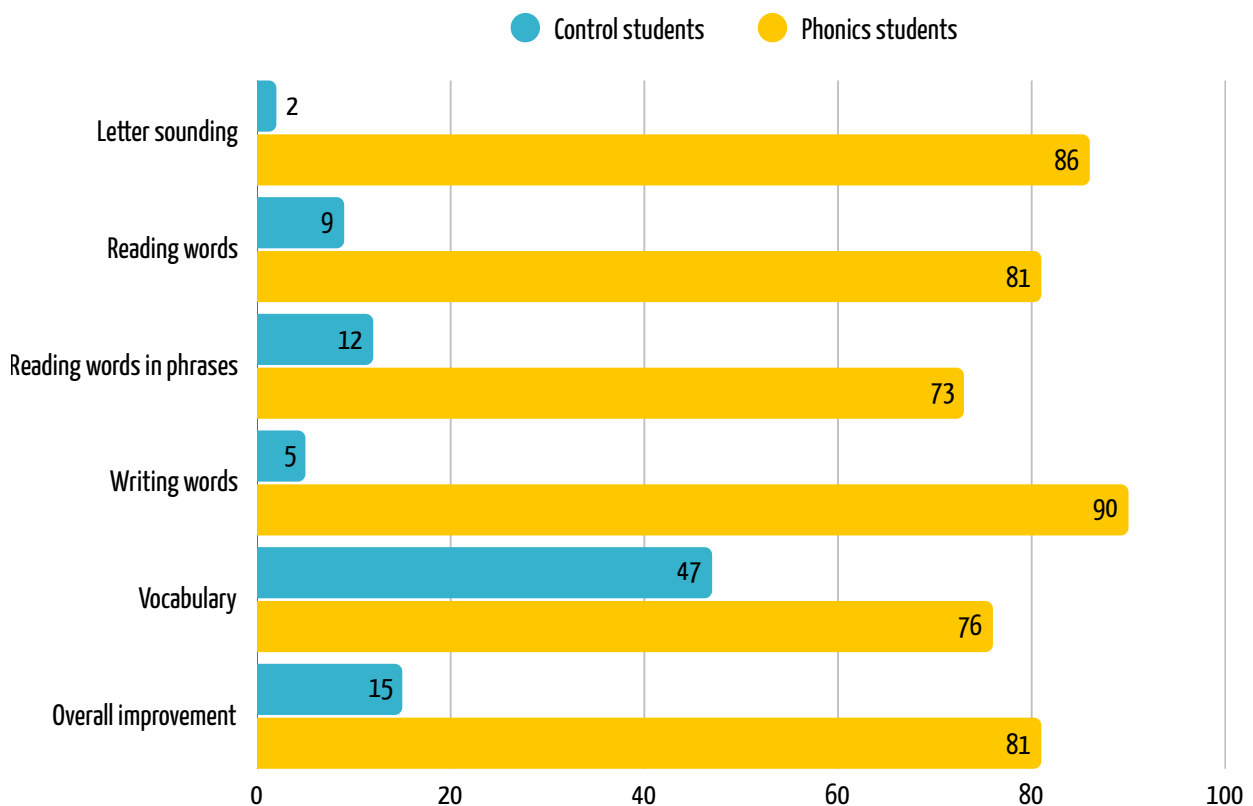
She described the Jolly Phonics training as a revelation. "Everything changed after that training. English became one of the most enjoyable and engaging subjects for my students. They began learning to read and write through playful activities, using sounds, actions, songs, and stories. The children were genuinely inspired to read and write new words, something I had never seen before."

Not only did Emebet completely transform her approach to teaching grade one, but she started running tutorials for students in higher grades who had missed out on this method. She even took it upon herself to train other teachers voluntarily during her time off, determined to pass on the learning before she retired.



## Improvement in Literacy Outcomes

Percentage point improvement in literacy skills tests from the beginning to the end of the year among students taught by teachers trained as part of our phonics project (phonics students) and students taught by teachers using the standard curriculum methodology (control students).



## Advocating for Curriculum Change

The most effective way to improve literacy outcomes for students in Ethiopia is to ensure that all children have access to better teaching methods through curriculum change. Alongside delivering training, Together We Learn is working to embed phonics methodology within state systems.

At the start of the year, our Country Director attended the first Pan-African Synthetic Phonics Summit in Cape Town. We hosted the Heads of the Amhara and Oromia Regional Education Bureaus at the conference. Giving them the opportunity to hear how phonics is being used to teach English in other African countries and to share the impact the methodology is already having on Ethiopian students through our project.

Later in the year, we were pleased to host the CEO of Teacher Development from the Ministry of Education at the international Jolly Phonics conference in the UK. The event opened constructive conversations with representatives from countries that have already integrated phonics into their curricula and reinforced a shared ambition to bring phonics into Ethiopia's English curriculum.

Our Country Director also took part in the African Union's workshop on Scalable Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Practices to End Learning Poverty in Addis Ababa. This led to an invitation from the Ministry of Education to attend the National Reading Network, which was established to promote early grade reading and improve literacy outcomes in primary schools. Together We Learn is now an active member of this network.

Invitation to participate in national literacy initiatives and growing interest in our project from both ministry and regional levels has been a significant success of the programme this year. Our engagement with these bodies continues to deepen, and recognition of our intervention is increasing. With sustained commitment to the programme, we are hopeful that this momentum will contribute to national adoption of the methodology and expand its impact to hundreds of thousands of children across Ethiopia.



# Kindu Klub

## Strengthening Learning Through Tutoring, Books and Digital Access

The Kindu Klub after-school service continued to be a vital source of stability, learning and nourishment for children from disadvantaged households in Gondar this year. Many of the children we support face overcrowded classrooms, short school days and limited support at home due to low parental literacy. The club provides a safe, structured environment where they can learn, play and grow with confidence.

Across the year, the Kindu Klub offered a wide range of support each week, including hot nutritious meals for 75 children, tutorials and homework help for 50 pupils and library access for 84 students. These activities help children build academic skills, creativity and emotional wellbeing, while giving families reassurance that their children are safe and supported.

Library and IT access remained central to the programme. We purchased 203 new study books in response to an evaluation, ensuring students have up to date materials aligned with the new curriculum, which is particularly important for those preparing for Grade 6, 8 and 12 exams. Our computer facilities were nearing the end of their life, so they have been replaced with new desktop PCs to ensure children can continue developing essential digital skills.

Children attending the club received both group and individual academic guidance, with extra homework and assignment support available throughout the week. Football sessions continued every Friday and were open to both girls and boys, helping children build teamwork, confidence and physical fitness. We were also pleased to run a creative summer programme in music, drawing and drama for children who presented at our annual family forum. Hot meals are provided twice daily for all students attending morning or afternoon sessions.

The year was not without challenges. The Klub has been affected by the daily realities of conflict in the region, rising inflation and intermittent water shortages. Despite this, staff worked tirelessly to keep services running, ensuring children continued to receive meals, learning support and a safe place to play.



**50**  
students receiving homework support  
each week

**203**  
new study books  
bought

**84**  
students using the library  
each week

# School Linking

This was a **year of reading** across our School Linking programme, with partner schools in Ethiopia, the UK and the US celebrating stories and promoting reading for pleasure through shared activities, letters and creative exchanges. Children explored one another's cultures through the books they read, the tales they told and the artwork they created, strengthening confidence, curiosity and global connection.

Our Shared Learning Activity focused on **traditional tales**, a theme chosen by Ethiopian teachers who wanted their students to engage with stories from their own oral heritage and share them with their link schools. Children read and retold the Amhara folktale *Sinziro and His Brothers*, created drawings inspired by the story, and received tales from their partner schools in return. These exchanges brought real excitement into classrooms; teachers told us how eagerly pupils waited for their packages and how proud they were to see their work valued by friends overseas.

Reading for pleasure was also promoted through our termly newsletters, which encouraged UK and US schools to explore Ethiopian stories, celebrate Genna (Ethiopian Christmas), and bring non Western narratives into English lessons. These resources supported teachers to diversify and decolonise their curriculum, helping pupils appreciate the richness of Ethiopian history, food, festivals and storytelling traditions.



Little Red Riding Hood



He went to the market and he bought an ostrich in the market and he went home for the next day an ostrich rich said to him the farmer was too surprised he said that it was very very good the golden he went to the market center said for him much money

**24**  
schools engaged in our linking programme



We also saw powerful ripple effects from the programme. At Bottesford Infant School, Ofsted highlighted the link in their Outstanding report for “ensur[ing] pupils make rich links between their lives and contrasting cultures.” During Elsa Kebede’s visit to the UK, we met the student led link group at Bedford Academy (photos left), which has been partnered with Edget Feleg Secondary and Preparatory School in Gondar for five years. What began as a virtual fundraising walk during the pandemic has grown into a thoughtful, reading rich partnership shaped by student initiative, shared artwork and collaborative projects. Hearing sixth formers reflect on how the link has broadened their worldview was a highlight of the year.

Another link school to receive a visit was Moseley Primary School in Coventry (photos below), where Hannah Dillon, our link coordinator, led an assembly on Ethiopian culture and supported pupils as they completed their Shared Learning Activity on traditional tales. The visit brought the programme to life for the children, helping them understand the stories they were reading and the friendships they were building across continents.

Despite the challenges of conflict, inflation and occasional communication delays, the programme remained active and resilient. Teachers on all sides worked hard to keep exchanges flowing, ensuring that children continued to experience the excitement of receiving stories from abroad and the pride of sharing their own.

**“[The Ethiopia school link] ensures pupils make rich links between their lives and contrasting cultures.”**

— Ofsted ♦ Report on ‘Outstanding’ Bottesford Infant School



# Children's Wellbeing

Together We Learn enables children to flourish through after-school activities and programmes supporting their families at home.





## Playgroup

### Stability, Learning and Joy in the Early Years

Our Playgroup in Gondar continued to offer a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment for pre-school children and their families. Many of the youngest children we support live in overcrowded homes with limited space for play, and parents often have little time or resources to provide early learning opportunities. Playgroup gives them a calm, well resourced space where they can explore, learn and grow through play.

Each week, children up to 6 years old received nutritious meals, structured early learning activities, and plenty of opportunities for social interaction. Staff focused on early language development, fine motor skills and confidence building through songs, stories, puzzles and imaginative play.

Parents are also welcome and benefit from the Playgroup activities. Staff shared practical advice on nutrition, hygiene and early childhood development, helping families support their children's learning at home, especially those with limited literacy.

For many families, the programme provides vital reassurance, knowing their children are cared for in a safe and loving environment.

A major challenge this year was the severe water shortage affecting Gondar, which meant that the Playgroup was unable to offer its usual bathing service for much of the year. Bathing has always been an important part of the programme, supporting children's hygiene, dignity and wellbeing, so its absence was felt by both staff and families. Despite this, the team worked hard to maintain routines, ensure children stayed clean and comfortable, and provide parents with guidance on hygiene during periods of limited water access.

**25**  
children attended  
each week

# Football Teams



The Girls' Football Team in Gondar continued to offer a safe, empowering space for adolescent girls to build confidence, challenge gender norms and develop leadership through sport. The team trained twice a week throughout the year, with an exceptional 96% attendance rate, and now supports **17 players**, many of whom have been involved for several years.

This year we strengthened the project with a new football coach, selected with the local Sports Office, who has helped the girls progress in technical skills and teamwork. A new Team Leader, a former sponsored student who recently graduated, also joined to support coordination and safeguarding, and has quickly become a trusted role model.

**“Football makes me feel confident and helps me forget my worries after school. I want to keep improving so I can play professionally one day.”**

— Member of the Gondar girls' football team

At the weekly training sessions, the girls received nutritious meals with added protein, water and biweekly milk to support recovery and growth. New members received full kits, and all players were provided with reusable period packs and information sessions on menstrual health, ensuring they can participate confidently and comfortably.

Friendly matches with local teams were held during the summer break, giving the girls valuable experience and a chance to showcase their progress. A scout from a local youth team attended the final match of the season, opening up potential opportunities for talented players.

At the end of the year, a project evaluation showed clear enthusiasm and progress. Most players associated participation in the team with feelings of progress, stability and helping others.

Meanwhile, the boys' teams continue to train in Oromia, where **56 boys and young men** in the under-17s and under-21s teams train together and support positive peer development. A key ambition this year was to help develop players into professionals by strengthening engagement with player agents and creating more opportunities for players to gain visibility.

Significant steps were taken towards this goal when the team won the Bishoftu Summer Cup, becoming champions among the 16 participating teams. The team also took home awards for Best Player and Best Goalkeeper, and positive feedback from the players about the new coach was reinforced when he received the tournament's Best Coach award.

**73**  
children involved in  
our football teams



# Special Thanks



## Organisations

- ◇ Baillie Gifford Foundation
- ◇ Barzilai Foundation
- ◇ Building Futures Ethiopia
- ◇ Children's Voices in Action
- ◇ Coles-Medlock Foundation
- ◇ Corvallis Sister Cities Association
- ◇ Days for Girls UK
- ◇ Educational Opportunity Foundation
- ◇ Elsie Kerr Trust
- ◇ Enable-Ed
- ◇ Ethiopiaid
- ◇ Eva Reckitt Foundation
- ◇ Guernsey Overseas Aid
- ◇ Hosking Charitable Trust
- ◇ Jolly Learning
- ◇ Meeting Industry, Meeting Needs
- ◇ Pears Foundation
- ◇ Small International Development

### Charity Network

- ◇ Studiosus Foundation
- ◇ The Chamber of Us
- ◇ The Sycamore Trust
- ◇ Trans World Educational

### Experiences (Twedex)

- ◇ The Tula Trust
- ◇ Tutu's Fund for the Future
- ◇ The TUUT Charitable Trust
- ◇ Wild Frontiers Foundation

## Gifts In Kind

- ◇ Rosica Solunova: voluntary services to examine accounts
- ◇ Crankstart - paid internship scheme
- ◇ Days for Girls - reusable period packs
- ◇ Dropbox - storage solutions
- ◇ Finsbury Park Trust - discounted office space
- ◇ Queen Mary University - paid internship scheme
- ◇ Mailerlite - discounted mailing service
- ◇ Salesforce - database

## Link Schools

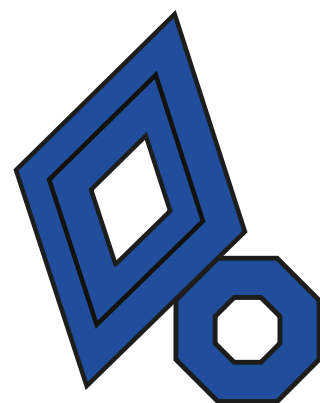
- ◇ Adams Elementary School, Corvallis, USA
- ◇ Backwell School, Bristol
- ◇ Bedford Academy, Bedford
- ◇ Bottesford Infant School, Scunthorpe
- ◇ Franklin Elementary School, Corvallis, USA
- ◇ Holland House Infant School and Nursery, Sutton Coldfield
- ◇ Impington Village College, Cambridge
- ◇ Moseley Primary School, Coventry
- ◇ South Avenue Elementary, New York, USA
- ◇ St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea
- ◇ Stratton Primary School, Stratton
- ◇ Unicorn School, Richmond

## Volunteers

- ◇ Ethiopia Abebe
- ◇ Eniye Bemir
- ◇ Mirana Claye
- ◇ Stefania Capraru
- ◇ Nadine Carle-Edgar
- ◇ Chloe Edapal
- ◇ Ashley England
- ◇ Elisabeth Gezahegn King
- ◇ Debebe Hailegabriel
- ◇ Eytayo Makinde
- ◇ Raquel Martinez Ballester
- ◇ Holly McKenzie
- ◇ Mieraf Mergia
- ◇ Carola Pozzi Carmelini
- ◇ Eleanor Seaver
- ◇ Jack Sharville
- ◇ Matthew Stockdale

## Fundraisers

- Edinburgh Marathon
- ◇ Aicha Meknassi
- Pottery Sales
- ◇ John Wright
- Royal Parks Half Marathon
- ◇ Andrew Hunter
- ◇ Arron Zitver
- ◇ Charlie Moody
- ◇ Daniel Cashman
- ◇ Fraser Campbell
- ◇ Emily Pogue
- ◇ Fabio Pizzoccheri
- ◇ Gemma White
- ◇ Joey Pogue
- ◇ Lorenzo Foot
- ◇ Madelaine Clifford
- ◇ Sasha Hunter
- ◇ Tim Otty
- ◇ Tom Moody
- ◇ Tom Richards



# Our Team



# Ethiopia Team



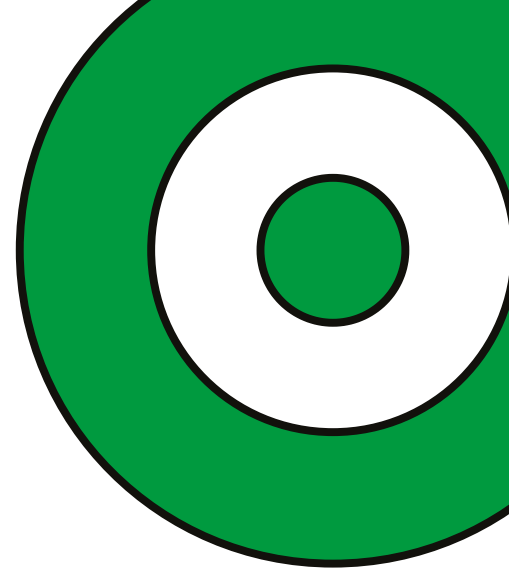
**Elsa Kebede**  
Country Director



**Tatek Ezezew**  
Amhara General  
Manager



**Binalfew Alemu**  
Amhara Accountant  
and Administrator



## Project Teams



**Dawit Megerssa**  
Oromia  
Projects  
Manager



**Zemene Mersha**  
Amhara  
Projects  
Manager



**Fikiraddis Tareegn**  
Projects &  
Sponsorship  
Assistant



**Wubetu Addisu**  
Kindu Klub  
Youth Worker



**Chekula Gebre-Egzabhier**  
Playgroup  
Youth Worker

## Sponsorship Teams



**Marta Bekele**  
Sponsorship  
Manager



**Aster Molla**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator



**Lensa Abera**  
Oromia  
Accountant &  
Coordinator



**Asfaw Admas**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator

## Supporting Staff



**Selamawit Abebe**  
Cashier and  
Purchaser



**Askalech Astatkie**  
Cook



**Melat Getu**  
Cook



**Abebech Mequanent**  
Cleaner



**Enanye Tadele**  
Cleaner and  
Messenger



**Abate Teye**  
Guard



**Tigabu Bera**  
Guard



**Wagney Shumeye**  
Guard (*retired  
Sep 2025*)



**Abebe Dinku**  
Gardener

# UK Team



**Caroline Walker**  
Chief Executive



**Gaby Sanwikarja**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator

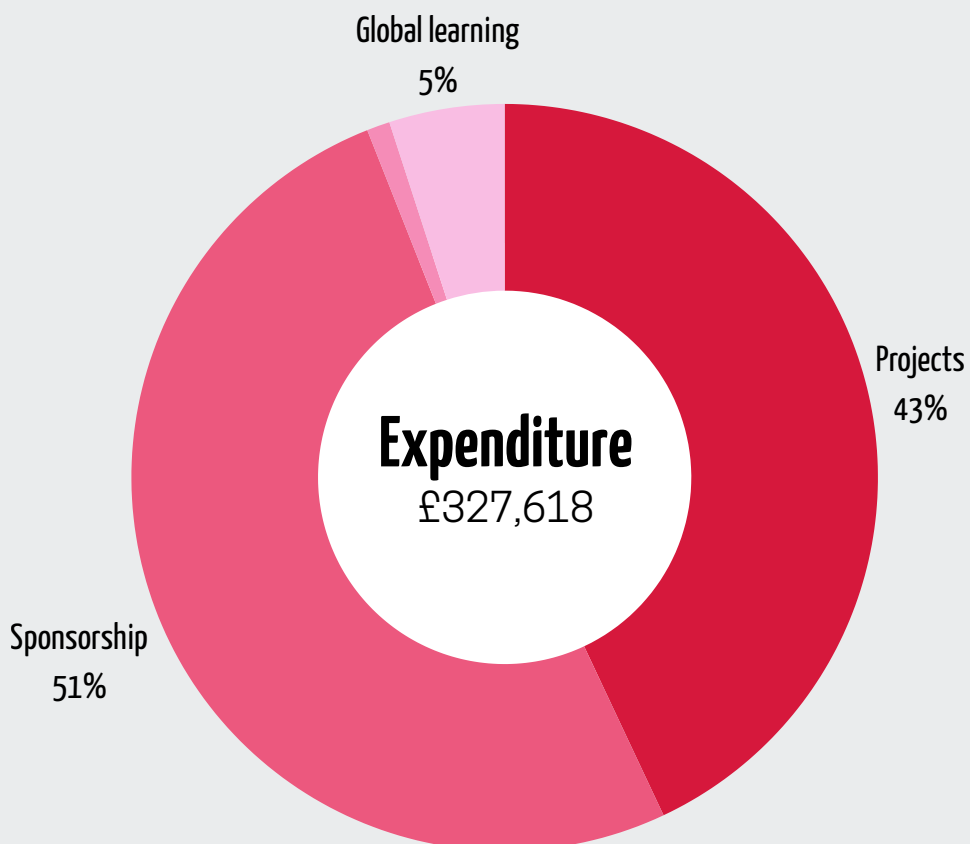
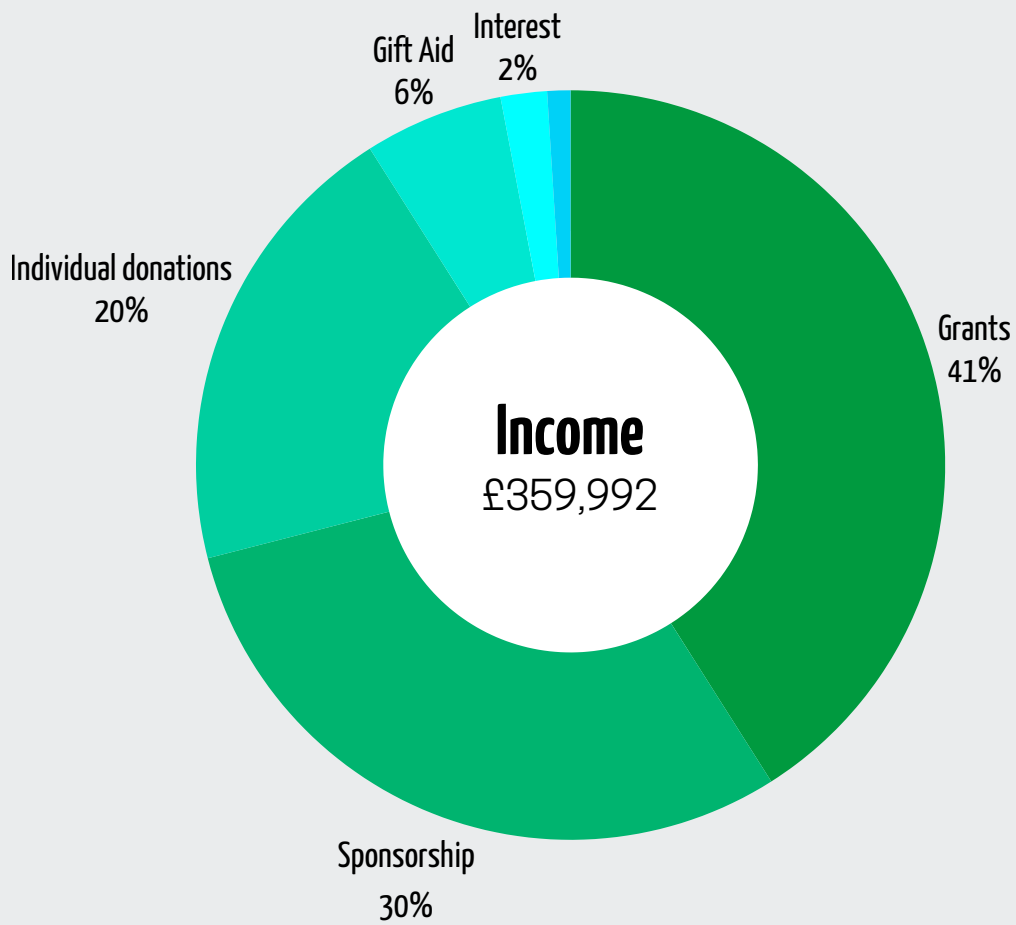


**Hannah Dillon**  
Programme  
Manager

# Our Finances



# Income and Expenditure



# Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted income funds (£)	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Incoming resources</b>				
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	77,733	171,304	249,037	218,385
Charitable activities	2,935	108,020	110,955	125,025
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,668</b>	<b>279,324</b>	<b>359,992</b>	<b>343,410</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>				
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	18,237	-	18,237	18,035
Charitable activities	5,289	304,092	309,381	291,107
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,526</b>	<b>304,092</b>	<b>327,618</b>	<b>309,142</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>	<b>57,142</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,767</b>	<b>34,268</b>
<b>Transfer between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>33,844</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Foreign exchange (losses) / gains</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>23,511</b>	<b>9,076</b>	<b>32,587</b>	<b>33,984</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward	259,710	115,576	375,286	341,302
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>283,221</b>	<b>124,652</b>	<b>407,873</b>	<b>375,286</b>

# Balance Sheet

	Total this year (€)	Total last year (€)
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	-	-
<b>Total fixed assets</b>	-	-
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	-	5,870
Cash at bank and in hand	487,457	370,111
<b>Total current assets</b>	487,457	375,981
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	- 79,584	- 695
<b>Net current assets / (liabilities)</b>	407,873	375,286
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	407,873	375,286
<b>Funds of the charity</b>		
Restricted income funds	124,652	115,576
Unrestricted funds	283,221	259,710
<b>Total funds</b>	407,873	375,286

# Notes to the Accounts

## Note 1 - Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charitable trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', and Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of investments. There were no related party transactions for the period.

## Cash Flow

A cash flow statement has not been prepared as the Trustees have taken advantage of the exemptions afforded by Financial Reporting Standard Number 1 (revised) as the charity is of similar size to a small company.

## Note 3 - Analysis of income

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

## Corporation Tax

The charity is exempt from taxation in respect of Income and Capital Gains under Section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 and Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

## Note 2 - Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Together We Learn is formed of the merger of two charities Link Ethiopia & The Kindu Trust. Any legacy donations received by the previous charities are transferred to Together We Learn in accordance with the relevant Deeds of Transfer.

	Unrestricted funds (€)	Restricted income funds (€)	Total funds (€)	Prior year funds (€)
<b>Donations and legacies</b>				
Donations and gifts	47,472	-	47,472	39,576
Projects	-	171,304	171,304	156,878
General grants provided	-	-	-	-
Git Aid	22,928	-	22,928	11,682
Interest	7,333	-	7,333	10,249
<b>Total</b>	<b>77,733</b>	<b>171,304</b>	<b>249,037</b>	<b>218,385</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Sponsorship	-	108,020	108,020	122,089
Global Learning	2,935	-	2,935	2,936
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,935</b>	<b>108,020</b>	<b>110,955</b>	<b>125,025</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>80,688</b>	<b>279,324</b>	<b>359,992</b>	<b>343,410</b>

### Note 4 - Resources Expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes VAT which is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates. Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Costs are split between categories based on staff time.

### Note 5 - Raising funds

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Raising Funds</b>		
Events	1,004	2,903
Merchandise & other	312	390
Shared operations	3,775	4,892
Staffing	13,145	9,850
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,237</b>	<b>18,035</b>

### Note 6 - Employees

Average number of full-time equivalent employees in the London office: 2 (2 in 2023-24). Number with annual remuneration of £60,000 or more: 0.

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Employees</b>		
Wages & salaries	59,892	52,101
Social security costs	4,217	3,649
Pension Contributions	1,037	946
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,146</b>	<b>56,696</b>

### Note 7 - Trustee Remuneration

Trustees received no remuneration nor expenses.

## Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

### Signatures

**Full name**  
Holly McKenzie  
**Position**  
Chair  
**Date**  
28/04/2026



### Note 8 - Tangible Fixed Assets

Purchases of under £1,000 in value are written off in the year of purchase.

### Note 9 - Debtors & prepayments

Amounts falling due within one year:

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Debtors</b>		
Trade debtors	-	5,870
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,870</b>

### Note 10 - Creditors

Amounts falling due within one year:

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Creditors</b>		
Accruals	-	-
Social security	872	695
Deferred income	78,712	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,584</b>	<b>695</b>

### Note 11 - Movement in Funds

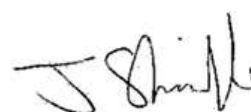
Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

The charity maintains detailed restricted funds. There were 29 unexpended restricted funds at the year end.

### Note 12 - Foreign Exchange Calculation

Transactions in Euros are translated at rates prevailing when funds are received or expended. Balances denominated in Euros are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year end.

**Full name**  
Jack Sharville  
**Position**  
Treasurer  
**Date**  
28/04/2026



# Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Together We Learn for the year ended 31st August 2025, which are set out on pages 38 to 42.

## Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

## Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Rosica Solunova FCCA**

29 April 2026



## Website

[www.twlethiopia.org](http://www.twlethiopia.org)

## Registered Address

225-229 Seven Sisters Road,  
London, N4 2DA

## Trustees

Nadine Carle-Edgar  
Ashley England  
Elsabeth Gezahegn King  
Holly McKenzie  
Jack Sharville  
Matthew Stockdale

## Chief Executive

Caroline Walker

## President

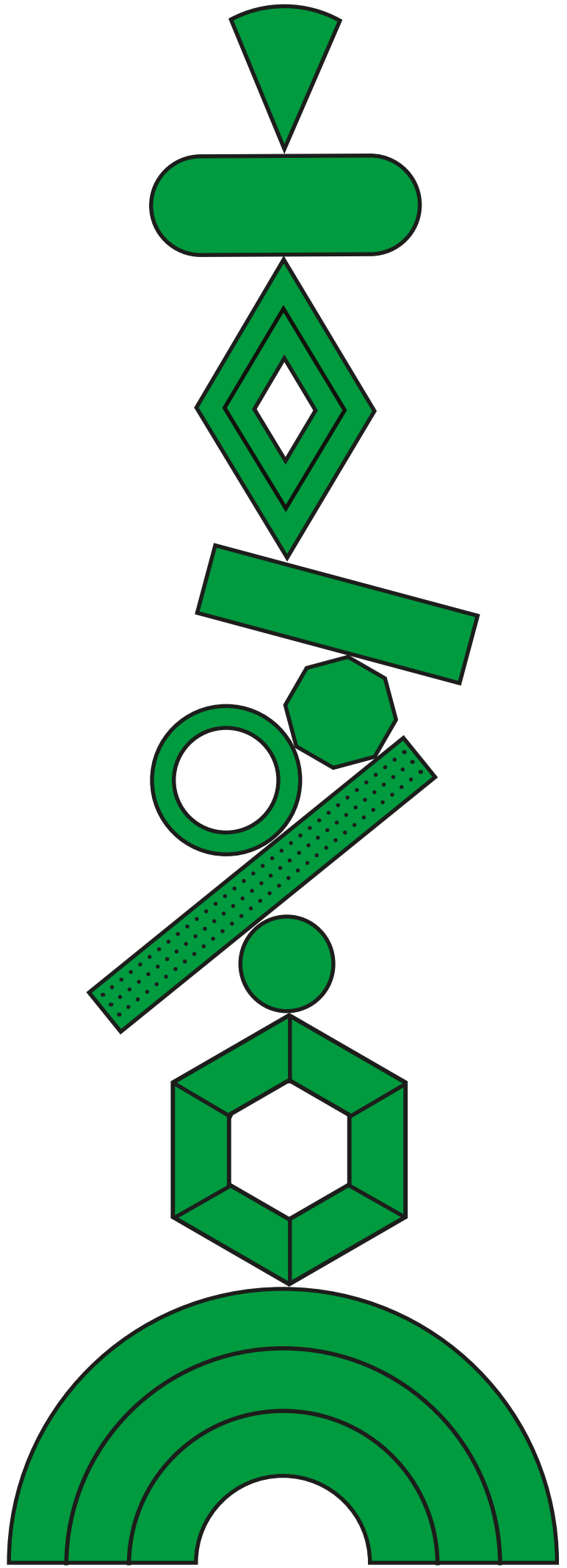
Helen Pankhurst CBE

## Banker

The Co-operative Bank p.l.c.  
P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street  
Manchester, M60 4EP

## Registration

Registered charity number: 1165953  
Charitable Incorporated Organisation,  
Constitution last amended 8 May 2020



**Together We Learn**

England & Wales - Charity number 1165953

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# Accounts

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# Annual Report

2023 - 2024



# Charity Information

## Website

[www.twlethiopia.org](http://www.twlethiopia.org)

## Registered Address

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# Welcome

We thank all of our supporters for their continued contributions to Together We Learn's work this year. We also recognise the remarkable resilience and dedication of our staff, who have continued to prioritise the futures of young people like Addisie (page 15) and Tadila (page 21) despite conflict, scarcity and inflation. All the achievements outlined in these pages are a testament to your support and their commitment.

This year tested us all. Armed conflict disrupted daily life in Ethiopia, cutting internet, halting transport, and closing banks. The Amhara region, where most of our projects take place, spent much of the year under a state of emergency. Despite the danger and disruption, our team in Ethiopia continued to provide practical and financial support to the communities we serve.

Although the state of emergency has been lifted, there is still no peace agreement in place, and the situation remains tense. Food and transport prices have spiked and there's a greater risk of theft and kidnapping. In the face of extremely difficult circumstances, our Ethiopian colleagues have kept every project running, reaching as many beneficiaries as possible.

Students across Ethiopia also faced severe challenges. After a new curriculum was introduced without sufficient textbooks, most classes spent the year learning from outdated materials. Structural issues in the education sector and changes to National Grade 12 exams resulted in an extremely low pass rate of just 3%.

We responded by running summer tutorials for students, supplying curriculum reference books, and hosting guest speakers to give young people something invaluable: hope—and a plan—for the future.

There were also powerful moments of progress.

We completed our first major construction project in Amhara in more than four years, after delays from conflict and the pandemic. The city government recognised our efforts with an award for integrity, cost-effective construction, and perseverance.

Our early literacy teacher training programme scaled up dramatically. In partnership with the Oromia Regional Education Bureau, we trained 700 teachers—up from just 12 the year before. Collaborations with both Oromia and Amhara Regional Education Bureaus are laying the groundwork for even greater impact.

And perhaps most significantly, we reopened our Ethiopia country office in Addis Ababa. With our Country Director now based in the capital and backed by the Oromia team, this is a major step forward in our long-term vision to build the capacity of Together We Learn-Ethiopia and brings us closer to opportunities, networks, and national reach.

We thank everyone who contributes to our mission of helping Ethiopian children break the cycle of poverty through quality education. Your generosity, encouragement, and belief in our vision have made everything in this report possible.

Thank you!

Caroline Walker, Chief Executive ♦ Holly McKenzie, Chair of Trustees

# The Year in Numbers

**1,800**  
students benefitted  
from new school facilities

**372**  
girls received menstrual hygiene materials

**391**  
students sponsored  
through education

**1,300**  
teachers received training to improve literacy outcomes

**34**  
schools engaged in  
international links

**130**  
students supported to access  
higher education

# About Us

Our vision is for all children in Ethiopia to be able to strive for a brighter future through access to quality education.



# Our Mission

Our mission is to break the cycle of poverty by enabling access to quality education for disadvantaged children. We do this by improving the quality of teaching and the quality of facilities within schools and by working with communities to overcome obstacles, enabling children to stay in school.



## Our Approach

Our approach to providing access to quality education is holistic, as our experience shows us that there are many areas of need that must be addressed to enable children to make the most of education.

Our work with schools includes school infrastructure - providing safe, local schools - and supporting teachers with training and resources to inspire children to flourish in the classroom.

We also work closely with the children, their families and communities to understand and address the issues they face at home and how these impact their ability to attend and concentrate in school.



### Access

We ensure access to education through the construction of school facilities and projects that address barriers to education.



### Quality

We improve the quality of education through teacher training and provision of quality educational resources.



### Wellbeing

We enable children to flourish through after-school activities and programmes supporting their families at home.

# Our Values

## Equal

### Creating opportunities

Our work is driven by the knowledge that all children have equal potential regardless of the circumstances they are born into.

## Collaborative

### Together we can transform

We support children and families to transform their lives. Engaging with communities at all stages ensures that our projects are meeting actual needs and making a difference.

## Caring

### Taking time to look closer

We care about the individual lives of the children and families we serve, even if it makes things more complicated. We recognise that effective solutions aren't 'one size fits all' and that each family is made up of individuals with varied circumstances and concerns of their own.

## Respectful

### More than a single story

Ethiopia is a diverse and complex country with a rich history and culture. We promote a positive and rounded image of Ethiopia while supporting its development.

## Honest

### Accountable to Communities

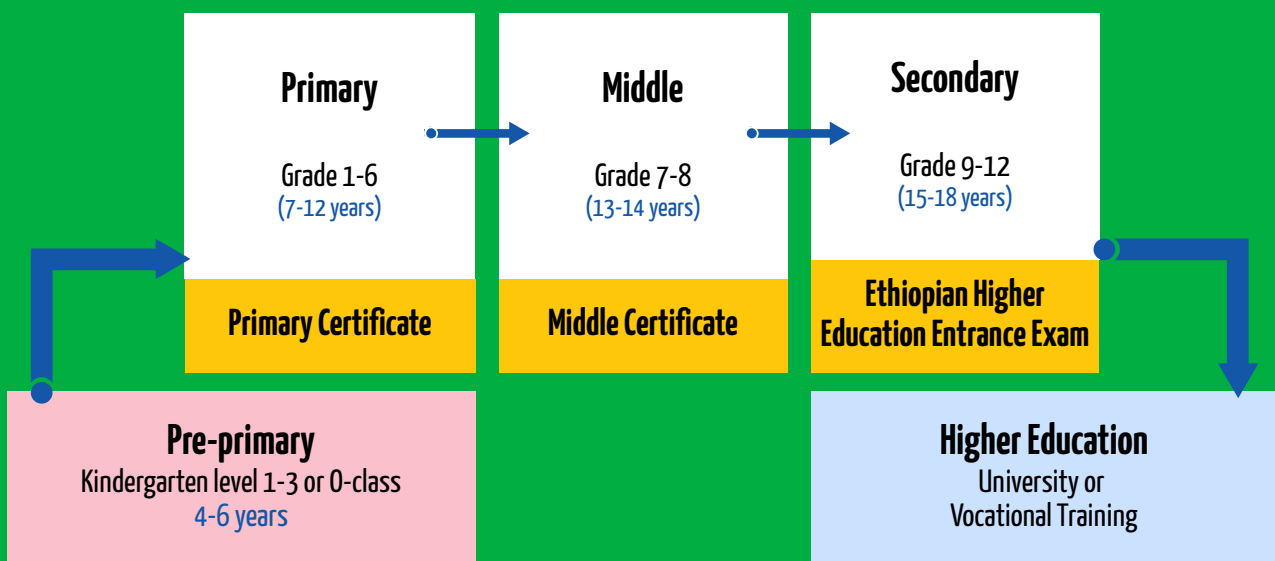
We are transparent and open in our work. By working closely together, communities are able to hold us to account. This means supporters and funders can be confident that we continue to invest donations where they have most impact.

## Impact driven

### Never too big to learn

We have over 25 years' experience but we have never stopped learning. Each project or activity is an opportunity for us to become more effective. We are not afraid to innovate, but don't feel the need to reinvent the wheel if an approach is effective. We aim to have a significant and lasting impact.

## Ethiopian Education System



# Access to Education

Together We Learn ensures access to education through the construction of school facilities and projects that address barriers to education.



# Girls' Education

Educating girls is vital for social and economic development. Enabling girls to achieve at school has a ripple effect of positive change across communities and through generations. Our girls' education projects help girls overcome obstacles to staying in school so they can achieve their full potential.



## Future Girls Students Lead the Way

Future Girls is Together We Learn's flagship programme for supporting girls' education. It revitalises existing, often inactive, Girls' Clubs in primary schools, creating inclusive spaces where girls, boys, and teachers can learn, discuss, and challenge gender inequalities. The project tackles key barriers to education—such as period poverty, gender-based violence, and harmful social norms—so girls can attend school with dignity and confidence.

Delivered across six schools in the Amhara and Oromia regions, the project supports each school for two years. 2023-24 was the first year of engagement for six new schools. During the year, sessions guided by trained facilitators created safe spaces for students to explore issues like gender roles, puberty, consent, and their rights. Boys were actively involved, promoting understanding and collective action. Teachers and school directors received dedicated training, while student-led assemblies and Menstrual Hygiene Day events reached the wider school community with inclusive, stigma-reducing messages.

This year also introduced exciting new elements. Student leaders were selected at each school—directly supporting the Girls' Club leader, speaking at assemblies and leading sessions. Peer conferences were held for the first time in both regions. The six schools involved in the last phase of the Future Girls project attended, alongside student leaders and club facilitators from this year and representatives from the local Women and Social Affairs Office. The conferences are spaces for continuous development and peer

**“Girls now approach me openly, without any sense of embarrassment to request sanitary kits.”**

— Derara Primary School Director (male)

**4,470**  
students reached through assemblies

**150**  
male and female students were active members of Girls Clubs

learning, providing an opportunity to share advice and ensure schools are supported to continue club activities beyond our direct involvement.

The project's impact is profound. Sessions involved **150 male and female students** in discussions about key topics. **156 girls** received reusable period kits and 150 packs of disposable pads were made available at schools. Assemblies reached over 4,470 students and helped foster open discussion. Crucially, the Girls' Clubs became a trusted space for students to disclose safeguarding concerns—some of which led to school-supported interventions and legal action.

As one school director shared, *"Girls now approach me openly, without any sense of embarrassment to request sanitary kits."* These changes reflect a shift in attitudes and confidence—both among students and across the school environment.

Despite regional conflict, the project adapted creatively and maintained momentum. Future Girls will continue to work with the six schools in the next academic year to build knowledge and skills and embed the Girls Club activities as part of school life. This rolling model is building a sustainable, student-driven movement for gender equality in education.

## Reaching Rural Communities

Our girls' education activities this year extended to provision of locally produced reusable period pads to girls in rural Oromia, aiming to reduce absenteeism and promote dignity among girls in underserved communities.

**50 girls** aged 13–16 received pads accompanied by a comprehensive training session addressing menstrual myths and hygiene practices. **92% of participants** said they felt better equipped to manage their periods after the distribution and training.

Reusable period pads were also distributed to sponsored students to support their attendance and retention.



**150**  
packs of  
disposable pads  
given to schools

**222**  
reusable period packs  
distributed

# Student Sponsorship

Our sponsorship programme enables children from low income families to go to school. Our sponsorship model is designed to directly meet the needs of families in a way that most effectively enables children to stay in education.



Sponsorship covers direct family support for essential living costs like rent and food, along with school supplies, uniforms, shoes, and access to healthcare. Programme activities address not only educational needs but also emotional wellbeing and family engagement, helping students overcome adversity and realise their full potential.

Throughout 2023–24, Together We Learn’s Student Sponsorship programme provided targeted support to **391 students** enabling them to stay engaged in education during a turbulent year.

Activities began with family forums held in August in both Amhara and Oromia. Parents attended sessions covering a range of topics to support their parenting skills and good health. The forums also celebrated students’ achievements and gathered valuable family feedback to strengthen the programme’s impact.

In Amhara, parents attended sessions on family planning and common health problems, led by a health professional from Gondar Hospital. Children performed drama and poetry, and outstanding students were recognised and awarded for their academic performance. In Oromia, we worked in partnership with BONITA Youth Training Centre to provide information on good parenting, life skills, nutrition, education support, and psychological wellbeing. Parents welcomed the training, asked questions on additional health topics, gave feedback on educational materials and suggested areas for future programme improvement.

In September, sponsored students received a full distribution of educational materials including exercise books, pens, uniforms, and shoes. University students received additional materials such as suitcases and bedding, to support their relocation. These provisions help ensure all students are ready for the new academic year, easing the financial burden on families.

In September, students were invited to a psychosocial skills training session covering resilience, self-confidence, managing peer pressure, and mental wellbeing. Conflict in Amhara meant delivery of the training was only possible in Oromia this year.

**391**

students received  
sponsorship  
support

**130**

students were  
in university or  
higher education  
training

**209**

food parcels  
were provided

**53**

students took part in  
summer tutorials

**10**

students moved from primary to  
secondary education

**18**

students graduated from university or training courses

**204**

healthcare cases were  
supported

**347**

additional monetary gifts were sent to  
support student needs

# Summer Tutorials

## Supporting Students through Conflict

In 2023, Ethiopia's education system faced significant challenges. The Grade 12 national examination results were particularly concerning, with only 3.2% of students achieving a passing score of 50% or higher, highlighting systemic issues within the education sector. Additionally, changes to the secondary curriculum were implemented without the provision of updated textbooks, further hindering students' learning.

Compounding this, the Amhara region experienced ongoing conflict, leading to the closure of over 3,000 schools and severely disrupting students' education. In Gondar specifically, the conflict has caused frequent school closures, made commuting to school dangerous, and led to increases in theft and incidents of kidnapping. These threats have understandably had a profound impact on students' psychological wellbeing and their sense of safety.

In response to these challenges, we provided extra support to sponsored students in pre-exam years in Gondar by running a tutorial programme over the summer. Prior to the tutorials, we held meetings with parents to inform them about the objectives of the programme and to establish safe attendance arrangements. The tutorials ran for eight weeks, four days a week, covering English, Maths, and Science subjects, and were attended by over 50 students.

To further motivate and guide the students, we invited speakers who were previously sponsored students and had successfully completed their education. These sessions allowed current students to relate to the speakers' journeys and engage in discussions about the specific challenges they face.



**“I want to share my gratitude for getting this chance. I thank my mother and Together We Learn as both support me to continue my education. When I start my study I always think of my mother's struggle. I promise I will join university and be a business woman, and I will be the next model person for Together We Learn students.”**

— Yordanos ♦ Girl, starting Grade 10 this year



# Student Spotlight

Addisie's\* family joined the sponsorship programme in 2003, when her mother came to Together We Learn (then The Kindu Trust) along with her older brother and sister, in need of support. Addisie started coming to the Playgroup, developing early literacy and numeracy, as well as accessing toys and nutritious meals, before joining primary school aged 7.

With an eagerness to learn, Addisie walked with a friend for an hour every day to get to school.

While one in five students in Ethiopia drop out after Grade 1, Addisie pursued her education right through primary and onto secondary school, after which she joined Gondar Technical College to study Hotel Management.

Again, she would walk for an hour and a half to get to college, until she found a part-time job at a hotel. Working as a cleaner and an assistant chef meant she could cover the cost of the bus to college while also getting valuable work experience.

Sadly, due to conflict in the region, and with declining tourism, Addisie lost her job, but she persevered with her studies. In 2023, twenty years after her first visit to the Playgroup, Addisie achieved her diploma in Food Preparation. With support from her sponsor, and investment from the local community, she opened her own café. Alongside her older sister, they serve customers fried lamb tibs, egg and vegetable sandwiches, potato chips, and injera firfir, as well as coffee and tea.

Although life has been particularly challenging in recent years, Addisie stayed motivated and used her education and the skills she gained to transform her life, supporting herself, and her family.

\*Not her real name.



**1 in 5**  
students in Ethiopia drop out  
after only one year of  
schooling

**63%**  
of students don't make it to  
secondary school



## School Construction

Together We Learn ensures access to education through the construction of school facilities that mean more children can stay in school.

### Meseret School A New Library for Students

After a four-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict in the Amhara region, we were pleased to resume our major construction initiatives in 2024 with the completion of a vibrant new library at Meseret Elementary School. This bright, welcoming facility offers a much-needed place for study and access to books for over 1,800 students.

The project was initiated by Dr. Ribka Amsalu, a former student of the school, who raised funds in memory of her father, Amsalu. She was inspired to work with Together We Learn to support her school after seeing our previous library project at Hibret Elementary, also funded by another former Gondar student. We are honoured to be part of their inspiring philanthropy.

As in all Ethiopian state schools, students at Meseret attend in shifts – either in the morning or afternoon – due to large class sizes. That makes a library an important facility, providing students with access to books and resources outside their classroom hours, fostering a culture of reading and self-directed learning.

The school’s former library was demolished years ago to make way for a new road. Since then, part of the

assembly hall served as a temporary library. But it was a dark space that lacked adequate seating and was often closed for school events. This construction has created a bright and welcoming library facility, designed around the needs of the students, offering different age appropriate reading spaces and a diverse collection of books.

As well as the facility itself, our project involved a number of wraparound elements to ensure full benefit for the students. The library was stocked with an **updated and expanded book collection** including up-to-date textbooks and fiction selected based on student feedback. This includes **culturally relevant storybooks** written in English and local Ethiopian languages, helping young readers connect with stories in their mother tongue. A **library committee** involving students and teachers was formed, to maintain and support the library beyond our intervention. **Training for the librarian** was provided to enable them to implement best practice in organizing and maintaining the library, and to help students find the right books for their needs. Finally, a **book lending program** was established so that students can borrow books to read at home – extending learning beyond the classroom.



# Gondar City Golden Cup Award

The Meseret school library construction led to Together We Learn receiving the prestigious Golden Cup from the Gondar City Education Office, recognising our high-quality school construction projects. Referring also to our previous library construction at Hibret School and construction of toilets at Walaj School, this accolade highlighted our efforts in delivering essential educational infrastructure amidst the challenges faced in the Amhara region.

The education office specifically praised our delivery of impactful projects in difficult circumstances, management of programmes with integrity, and the cost effective, but high quality, nature of our construction projects.

Being one of only three organisations honoured—and the smallest NGO recognised—the award underscores the significant impact that dedicated community collaboration and integrity-driven work can achieve.



**580**  
new books stocked

**5x**  
more books being borrowed

**1,800**  
students benefitting from the library

# Quality of Education

Together We Learn improves the quality of education through teacher training and provision of quality educational resources.



# Teacher Training

We support teachers in Ethiopia to deliver more engaging, inclusive, and effective lessons. In traditional, overcrowded classrooms, many children—especially those with limited support or special needs—struggle. Our training builds teachers' capacity for impactful learning.



## Improving Literacy with the Phonics Method

In 2024, Together We Learn significantly expanded its early-grade English literacy programme across Ethiopia. The project addresses the challenges posed by traditional teaching methods that often leave students ill-prepared for secondary education when all subjects are taught in English. By training teachers in the Jolly Phonics method—a child-centred approach focusing on letter sounds—the project builds strong literacy foundations for students.

This year, the programme trained 1,130 Grade One teachers from over 500 schools in the Amhara and Oromia regions, more than doubling the previous year's reach. A notable expansion occurred in Oromia, where support from the Oromia Education Bureau enabled us to increase training numbers from 12 teachers to 700. The training is structured in two phases: an initial three-day session before the first semester and a two-day refresher at the start of the second semester, allowing teachers to implement the method and refine their skills.

Additionally, for the first time, a one-day sensitisation session was provided for school directors to ensure institutional support for the methodology. The programme also included training for 462 education professionals, such as local supervisors and curriculum experts, to support and monitor teachers' implementation of the phonics approach as the project expands.

The impact was substantial. Approximately 135,600 young children benefited from improved teaching. At the end of the year, **students taught by trained teachers scored 41 percentage points higher in literacy tests** than students taught using standard approaches.

*Photo courtesy of Susan Roderick/Open Hearts Big Dreams*



## Building Local Capacity to Strengthen Sustainability

A cornerstone of the project's success lies in its emphasis on building local capacity and ensuring a sustainable approach. In 2024, Together We Learn collaborated closely with the Amhara and Oromia Regional Education Bureaus, who played pivotal roles both by covering transport and subsistence costs for trainees and by endorsing the training method. This partnership enabled a significant scale-up of the training programme.

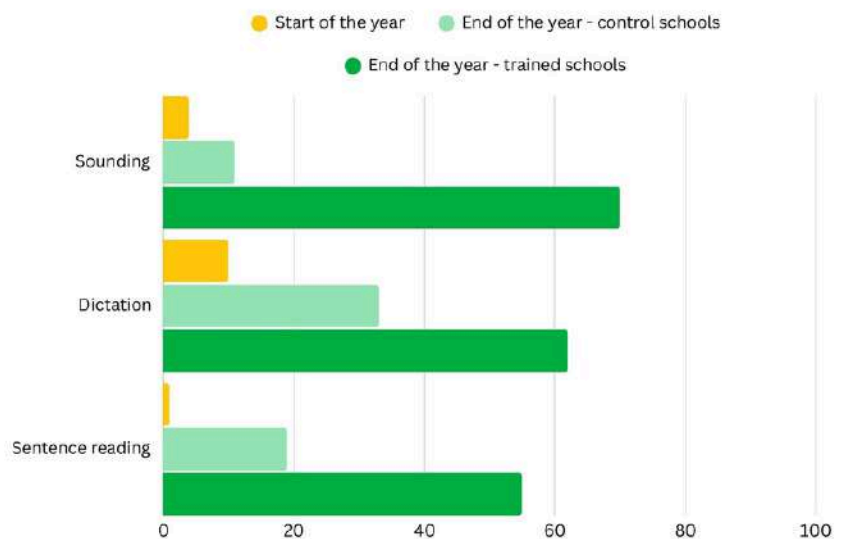
To ensure long-term sustainability, the project also trained 462 education professionals, including local education supervisors, English curriculum experts, and lecturers from teacher training colleges. These stakeholders are now equipped to support and monitor the implementation of the phonics methodology across the many areas with trained teachers, fostering a supportive environment for teachers and integrating the approach into the broader educational framework.

We also hosted the first ever Training of Trainers session, preparing five new certified Ethiopian Jolly Phonics trainers. This initiative not only expands the pool of qualified trainers but also strengthens the capacity of Together We Learn's staff to train, positioning the organisation to meet the growing demand for phonics training across the country.

**135,000**  
Grade 1 students  
reached

**1,130**  
teachers trained in the  
phonics method

## Literacy Test Results



# Kindu Klub

State schools in Ethiopia operate on a shift system, meaning students attend either in the morning or the afternoon. This approach enables as many children as possible to access education, given the limited number of schools and teachers. However, class sizes remain large, averaging 40–50 students in the areas we serve.

Due to the shift system, students receive only 20 hours of schooling per week. For those from low-income households, studying outside school hours is often difficult because of a lack of resources, inadequate study spaces, and the need to work or carry out chores to support their families.

The Kindu Klub, based at our office in Gondar, provides a supportive environment for sponsored students to study, access educational resources, receive guidance, and build confidence and self-esteem through peer networks and activities.

**50 students** attend the club weekly, either before or after their school shift. Our Youth Worker leads sessions on core subjects, followed by student-led homework support. Afterwards, students have free time to use the library and computers before receiving a nutritious lunch. For younger students, each session also includes poetry, drama, and storytelling to develop public speaking skills and build confidence. Additionally, more than **270 book loans** were made to help students study in their own time.

Fridays are dedicated to sports and creative activities. All students are welcome to join football in the morning, and drawing, art, or music sessions in the afternoon. In this way, the club offers holistic support—enhancing academic learning, building life skills, and creating a space for connection and play.

## Borrowed Books and Big Dreams

Tadila\*, aged 17, is currently in Grade 11 at a secondary school in Gondar. Thanks to a sponsorship, she has access to the Kindu Klub and its library. She attends the club every week and makes full use of the resources available.

A disciplined and intelligent student, Tadila previously struggled to keep up with her studies due to a lack of access to books. She lives with her mother and sister in a low-income household, where even meeting basic living costs is a challenge—let alone affording educational materials. Before her sponsorship, she relied on borrowing books from friends, which wasn't always possible, especially during exam periods when her friends needed them too.

Since Grade 7, Tadila has had consistent access to the club's library through her sponsorship, and she credits this support with her academic success. *"Studying at the library is an agent, and learning is a weapon to become a better person,"* she says. She enjoys reading subject books and discussing them with friends at the club.

In a country where only 25% of secondary school-aged girls are enrolled in secondary education (UNICEF, 2018), Tadila is doing exceptionally well. She will sit her university entrance exams next year and hopes to become a psychiatrist. Her main ambition is to support her mother and sister.

"The library is the main source of my knowledge.

If it wasn't available, I wouldn't get these results and I might have failed."

— Tadila ♦ Grade 11 student



\*Name has been changed

# School Linking

Our School Linking Programme connects schools in the UK and US with schools in Ethiopia, promoting global understanding, cultural exchange, and collaborative learning.

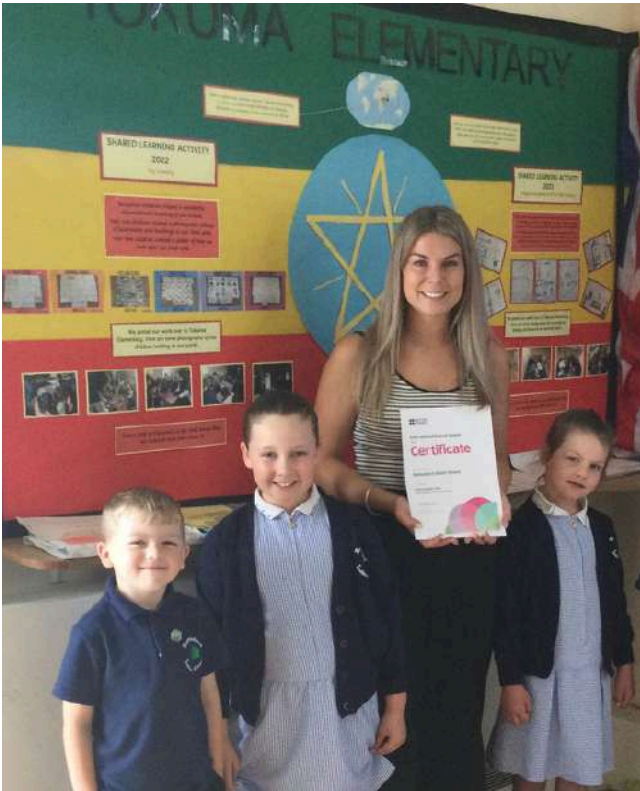
Since its inception over two decades ago, the programme has fostered sustainable partnerships between UK/US schools and their Ethiopian counterparts. These links enable students and teachers to participate in shared learning activities and gain insights into each other's cultures and experiences. Each term, participating schools receive newsletters featuring examples of good practice, teaching resources, and case studies—enriching the curriculum and broadening students' perspectives. Annual shared learning activities offer pupils opportunities to collaborate and learn about one another's cultures.

In this year's Shared Learning Activity, students from both the UK/US and Ethiopia explored which objects are important to them. Pupils exchanged drawings and descriptions of their most treasured objects, offering valuable insights into cultural similarities and differences. This activity not only deepened students' cross-cultural understanding but also encouraged creativity and teamwork.

The programme provides a unique opportunity for students to communicate with peers from different cultural backgrounds, boosting their confidence, self-esteem, and practical skills. It also supports mental health and wellbeing by encouraging reflection on personal identity and relationships with others. By fostering an appreciation of diversity both locally and globally, students develop a more inclusive worldview, contributing to efforts to decolonise the curriculum.

Ethiopian schools also benefit significantly from the programme. This year, teachers serving as link coordinators, along with school directors, attended a school linking conference where they shared good practices and engaged in discussions on English teaching. Upon returning, they were well equipped to facilitate shared learning activities and were provided with materials such as coloured pencils to enhance students' experiences.





## International School Award Achievement

One of our UK link schools, Bottesford Infant School, has achieved the intermediate level of the British Council's International School Award.

In partnership with Tokuma Elementary School in Bishoftu, Ethiopia, they have engaged in a variety of shared learning activities that have enriched their students' educational experiences. Their commitment to international collaboration exemplifies the positive outcomes of school linking.



## Fundraising for Digital Resources

Meanwhile, Impington Village College, also in the UK, has shown exceptional dedication to supporting education in Ethiopia.

Through student-led fundraising, they have provided computers for their link school, Ada Model Secondary School in Bishoftu, enhancing digital learning opportunities. Their efforts demonstrate the powerful impact of community involvement in global education.

**32**  
schools took part in  
international school  
linking

**960**  
students participated in  
shared learning activities

# Children's Wellbeing

Together We Learn enables children to flourish through after-school activities and programmes supporting their families at home.



# Playgroup

As part of its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Ethiopian government has set an ambitious target: universal access to early childhood development and pre-primary education by 2030. With formal primary education beginning at age seven, the focus is on expanding kindergarten services for children aged 3 to 6.

Since pre-primary education became a national priority in 2019, progress has been encouraging. Most provision now takes the form of a dedicated classroom within primary schools offering at least one year of pre-primary education. However, by 2024, only 58% of children were enrolled in some form of early education (ESAA, 2024), highlighting a continued need for accessible, community-based services.

Together We Learn's Playgroup in Gondar has been meeting this need since 2011. Open to families in our student sponsorship programme, the Playgroup supports 20 children and their caregivers each week, offering vital early childhood development support. It provides a safe, nurturing environment where children develop cognitive, emotional, and social skills through storytelling, songs, play-based learning, and activities that build motor skills, as well as early literacy and numeracy.

Each session also includes nutritious meals and bathing facilities, promoting health and hygiene—especially important in a region where access to soap and water has been severely impacted by conflict.

The Playgroup is also a welcoming space for parents and carers, who attend with children from birth to age six. A traditional coffee ceremony offers opportunities for connection, peer support, and sharing parenting knowledge—ensuring that early development continues at home as well.

**20**  
children received hot  
meals at Playgroup  
each week



# Football Teams

Together We Learn runs football projects for girls and boys. The teams offer children the opportunity to build confidence, improve their fitness and develop new skills outside of the classroom.



**134**  
young people were involved  
in our football activities



## Football and Citizenship Skills

Our football project in Bishoftu supports two boys' teams, under-21s and under-17s. Both teams train three times a week and participate in local tournaments.

This year saw the introduction of a new coach, Beyene. As well as supporting the boys to develop their skills and fitness, his leadership has focused on developing good citizenship among players. The coach works closely with the team members, facilitating the sharing of educational resources to widen access, promoting ethnic cohesion and camaraderie, and encouraging positive behaviour such as good family relations while advising against negative influences.



## Andinet: Unity in Girls' Football

Our Girls' Football Team in Gondar provides a safe and empowering space for girls aged 13–19 to play sport, build confidence, and form strong friendships. The team, who selected the name Andinet, meaning 'unity', trains twice a week. Every session includes access to a hot meal and refreshments—helping ensure that physical health and wellbeing are supported alongside personal growth.

Despite regional conflict, the programme adjusted and continued this year, offering normality, joy, and a consistent safe space for the girls.

## 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



# Contributing to Sustainable Development Goals

Ethiopia is making significant efforts to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Our programmes contribute to national efforts towards the outcomes of goal 4 - to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



### Target 4.1 Free Primary and Secondary Education

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Our sponsorship programme ensures those living in poverty are supported to remain in education, construction projects increase access to education, especially in rural areas, and teacher training improves the quality of education and achievement of learning outcomes.



### Target 4.2 Equal Access to Quality Pre-Primary Education

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

Our sponsorship programme outreach supports parents with skills and knowledge, the playgroup provides a space for positive early childhood development and early years classes are prioritised for our classroom constructions.



### Target 4.3 Equal Access to Affordable Technical, Vocational and Higher Education

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Our sponsorship programme supports students right through higher education, with a special fund to cover vocational course fees and costs of attending university.



### Target 4.5 Eliminate All Discrimination in Education

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

Our girls' education programmes address the issues that negatively affect girls' participation in education and our school construction projects are built with accessibility in mind.



### Target 4.6 Universal Literacy and Numeracy

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

Our teacher training programme improves teaching skills, with significant positive results increasing English literacy levels.



### Target 4.7 Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

Our school linking programme fosters global citizenship of students in Ethiopia, the UK and the USA. Termly resources and annual conferences build awareness and knowledge about cultural diversity and sustainable development.

# Our Team



# Ethiopia Team



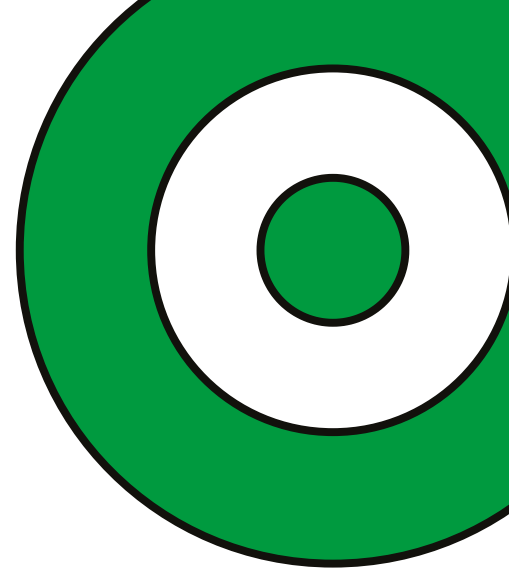
**Elsa Kebede**  
Country Director



**Tatek Ezezew**  
Amhara General  
Manager



**Binalfew Alemu**  
Amhara Accountant  
and Administrator



## Project Teams



**Dawit Megerssa**  
Oromia  
Projects  
Manager



**Zemene Mersha**  
Amhara  
Projects  
Manager



**Fikiraddis Tareegn**  
Projects &  
Sponsorship  
Assistant



**Wubetu Addisu**  
Kindu Klub  
Youth Worker



**Chekula Gebre-Egzabhier**  
Playgroup  
Youth Worker

## Sponsorship Teams



**Marta Bekele**  
Sponsorship  
Manager



**Aster Molla**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator



**Lensa Abera**  
Oromia  
Accountant &  
Coordinator



**Asfaw Admas**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator

## Supporting Staff



**Selamawit Abebe**  
Cashier and  
Purchaser



**Askalech Astatkie**  
Cook



**Melat Getu**  
Cook



**Abebech Mequanent**  
Cleaner



**Enanye Tadele**  
Cleaner and  
Messenger



**Abate Taye**  
Guard



**Tigabu Bera**  
Guard



**Wagnew Shumeye**  
Guard



**Abebe Dinku**  
Gardener

# UK Team



**Caroline Walker**  
Chief Executive



**Elle Harris**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator



**Gaby Sanwikarja**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator



**Hannah Dillon**  
School Links  
Coordinator



**Eleanor Seaver**  
Projects  
Coordinator

# Special Thanks



## Organisations

- ◇ Baillie Gifford Foundation
- ◇ Building Futures Ethiopia
- ◇ Children's Voices in Action
- ◇ Coles-Medlock Foundation
- ◇ Corvallis Sister Cities Association
- ◇ Days for Girls UK
- ◇ Educational Opportunity Foundation
- ◇ Elsie Kerr Trust
- ◇ Enable-Ed
- ◇ Ethiopiaid
- ◇ Hosking Charitable Trust
- ◇ Jolly Learning
- ◇ Meeting Industry, Meeting Needs
- ◇ North South Travel Development Trust
- ◇ Open Heart Big Dreams Fund
- ◇ Q3 Strategy
- ◇ Small International Development Charity Network
- ◇ Studiosus Foundation
- ◇ The Sycamore Trust
- ◇ Trans World Educational Experiences (Twedex)
- ◇ The Tula Trust
- ◇ Tutu's Fund for the Future
- ◇ The TUUT Charitable Trust
- ◇ Wild Frontiers Foundation
- ◇ Wonfel Aid

## Link Schools

- ◇ Adams Elementary School, Corvallis, USA
- ◇ Backwell School, Bristol
- ◇ Bedford Academy, Bedford
- ◇ Bottesford Infant School, Scunthorpe
- ◇ Franklin Elementary School, Corvallis, USA
- ◇ Holland House Infant School and Nursery, Sutton Coldfield
- ◇ Impington Village College, Cambridge
- ◇ Killinghall Church of England Primary School, Harrogate
- ◇ Longney Church of England Primary Academy, Longney
- ◇ Naseby Church of England Primary School Academy, Naseby
- ◇ South Avenue Elementary, New York, USA
- ◇ St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea
- ◇ Stanion Church of England Aided Primary School, Stanion
- ◇ Stratton Primary School, Stratton
- ◇ Tannery Drift First School, Royston
- ◇ Unicorn School, Richmond

## Fundraisers

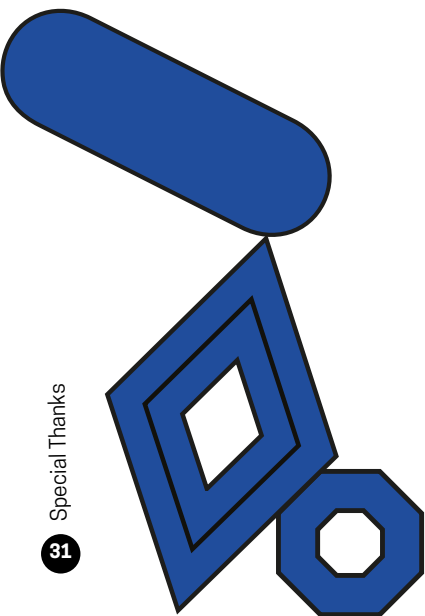
- ◇ Alice Anderson-Shah - Royal Parks Half Marathon
- ◇ Ribka Amsalu - Meseret Library
- ◇ James Edgar - Ride London
- ◇ Alexander McKenzie - in memoriam
- ◇ Akhil Shah - virtual Royal Parks Half Marathon
- ◇ John Wright - pottery sales

## Volunteers

- ◇ Nadine Carle-Edgar
- ◇ Tom Edminston
- ◇ Ashley England
- ◇ Joe Gambin
- ◇ Elisabeth Gezahegn King
- ◇ Phil Hawkins
- ◇ Yitong Liu
- ◇ Holly McKenzie
- ◇ Ebed Melech Gebreselassie
- ◇ Eleanor Seaver
- ◇ Jack Sharville
- ◇ Melat Solomon
- ◇ Matthew Stockdale
- ◇ Maab Sunabara
- ◇ Lydia Zakrajsek

## Gifts In Kind

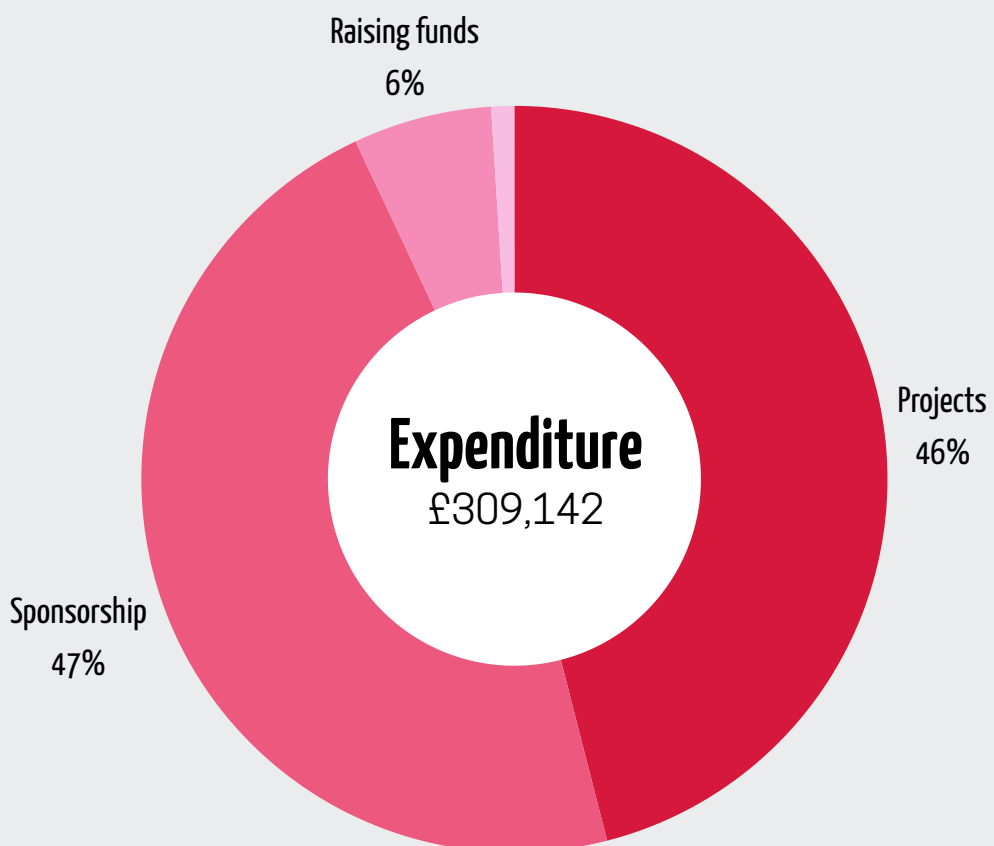
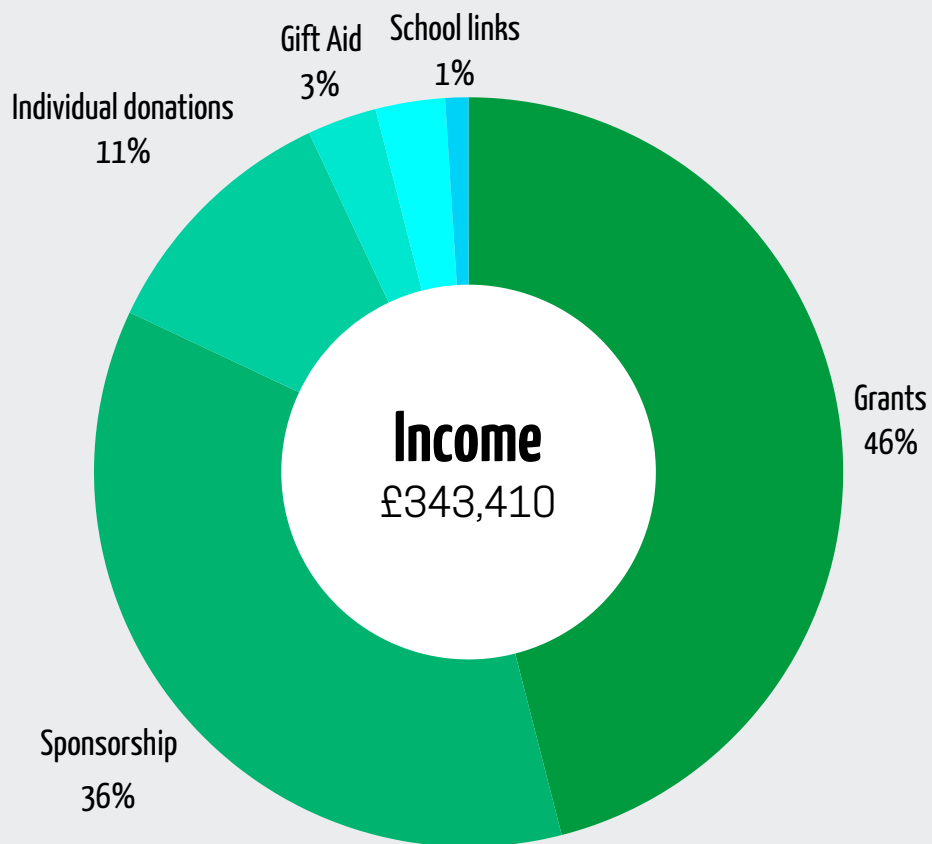
- ◇ Rosica Solunova: voluntary services to examine accounts
- ◇ Aklile Solomon: fidel foam letters
- ◇ Crankstart - paid internship scheme
- ◇ Days for Girls - reusable period packs
- ◇ Dropbox - storage solutions
- ◇ Finsbury Park Trust - discounted office space
- ◇ Queen Mary University - consultancy service
- ◇ Queen Mary University - paid internship scheme
- ◇ Mailerlite - discounted mailing service
- ◇ Salesforce - database



# Our Finances



# Income and Expenditure



# Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted income funds (£)	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Incoming resources</b>				
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	61,507	156,878	218,385	212,697
Charitable activities	2,936	122,089	125,025	172,520
Link Ethiopia & Kindu Trust Transfers	-	-	-	15,438
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,443</b>	<b>278,967</b>	<b>343,410</b>	<b>400,655</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>				
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	18,035	-	18,035	25,744
Charitable activities	3,734	287,373	291,107	341,680
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,769</b>	<b>287,373</b>	<b>309,142</b>	<b>367,425</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>	<b>42,674</b>	<b>- 8,406</b>	<b>34,268</b>	<b>33,231</b>
<b>Transfer between funds</b>	<b>- 33,746</b>	<b>33,746</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Foreign exchange (losses) / gains</b>	<b>- 284</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 284</b>	<b>- 90</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>8,644</b>	<b>25,340</b>	<b>33,984</b>	<b>33,141</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward	251,066	90,236	341,302	308,161
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>259,710</b>	<b>115,576</b>	<b>375,286</b>	<b>341,302</b>

# Balance Sheet

	Total this year (€)	Total last year (€)
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	-	-
<b>Total fixed assets</b>	-	-
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	5,870	22,685
Cash at bank and in hand	370,111	320,724
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>375,981</b>	<b>343,589</b>
Creditors: amounts failing due within one year	- 695	- 2,287
<b>Net current assets / (liabilities)</b>	<b>375,286</b>	<b>341,302</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>375,286</b>	<b>341,302</b>
<b>Funds of the charity</b>		
Restricted income funds	115,576	90,236
Unrestricted funds	259,710	251,066
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>375,286</b>	<b>341,302</b>

# Notes to the Accounts

## Note 1 - Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charitable trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', and Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of investments. There were no related party transactions for the period.

## Cash Flow

A cash flow statement has not been prepared as the Trustees have taken advantage of the exemptions afforded by Financial Reporting Standard Number 1 (revised) as the charity is of similar size to a small company.

## Note 3 - Analysis of income

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

## Corporation Tax

The charity is exempt from taxation in respect of Income and Capital Gains under Section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 and Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

## Note 2 - Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Together We Learn is formed of the merger of two charities Link Ethiopia & The Kindu Trust. Any legacy donations received by the previous charities are transferred to Together We Learn in accordance with the relevant Deeds of Transfer.

	Unrestricted funds (€)	Restricted income funds (€)	Total funds (€)	Prior year funds (€)
<b>Donations and legacies</b>				
Donations and gifts	39,576	-	39,576	81,334
Projects	-	156,878	156,878	105,250
General grants provided	-	-	-	800
Git Aid	11,682	-	11,682	24,431
Interest	10,249	-	10,249	882
<b>Total</b>	<b>61,507</b>	<b>156,878</b>	<b>218,385</b>	<b>212,697</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Sponsorship	-	122,089	122,089	164,751
Global Learning	2,936	-	2,936	7,769
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,936</b>	<b>122,089</b>	<b>125,025</b>	<b>172,520</b>
<b>Transfers from Link Ethiopia and The Kindu Trust</b>				
Transfers from Link Ethiopia	-	-	-	7,127
Transfers from The Kindu Trust	-	-	-	8,311
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,438</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>64,443</b>	<b>278,967</b>	<b>343,410</b>	<b>400,656</b>

### Note 4 - Resources Expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes VAT which is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates. Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Costs are split between categories based on staff time.

### Note 5 - Raising funds

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Raising Funds</b>		
Events	2,903	2,650
Merchandise & other	390	465
Shared operations	4,892	390
Staffing	9,850	22,239
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,035</b>	<b>25,744</b>

### Note 6 - Employees

Average number of full-time equivalent employees in the London office: 2 (2 in 2022-23). Number with annual remuneration of £60,000 or more: 0.

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Employees</b>		
Wages & salaries	52,101	59,433
Social security costs	3,649	4,377
Pension Contributions	946	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,696</b>	<b>64,810</b>

### Note 7 - Trustee Remuneration

Trustees received no remuneration nor expenses.

## Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

### Signatures

**Full name**  
Holly McKenzie  
**Position**  
Chair  
**Date**  
03/04/2025



### Note 8 - Tangible Fixed Assets

Purchases of under £1,000 in value are written off in the year of purchase.

### Note 9 - Debtors & prepayments

Amounts falling due within one year:

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Debtors</b>		
Trade debtors	5,870	22,865
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,870</b>	<b>22,865</b>

### Note 10 - Creditors

Amounts falling due within one year:

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Creditors</b>		
Accruals	-	-
Social security	695	-
Deferred income	-	2,287
<b>Total</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>2,287</b>

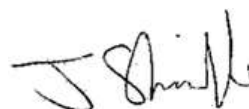
### Note 11 - Movement in Funds

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

The charity maintains detailed restricted funds. There were 20 unexpended restricted funds at the year end.

### Note 12 - Foreign Exchange Calculation

Transactions in Euros are translated at rates prevailing when funds are received or expended. Balances denominated in Euros are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year end.



**Full name**  
Jack Sharville  
**Position**  
Treasurer  
**Date**  
07/04/2025

# Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Together We Learn for the year ended 31st August 2024, which are set out on pages 34 to 37.

## Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

## Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Rosica Solunova FCCA**

03 June 2025





## Website

[www.twlethiopia.org](http://www.twlethiopia.org)

## Registered Address

225-229 Seven Sisters Road,  
London, N4 2DA

## Trustees

Nadine Carle-Edgar  
Ashley England  
Elsabeth Gezahegn King  
Holly McKenzie  
Jack Sharville  
Matthew Stockdale

## Chief Executive

Caroline Walker

## President

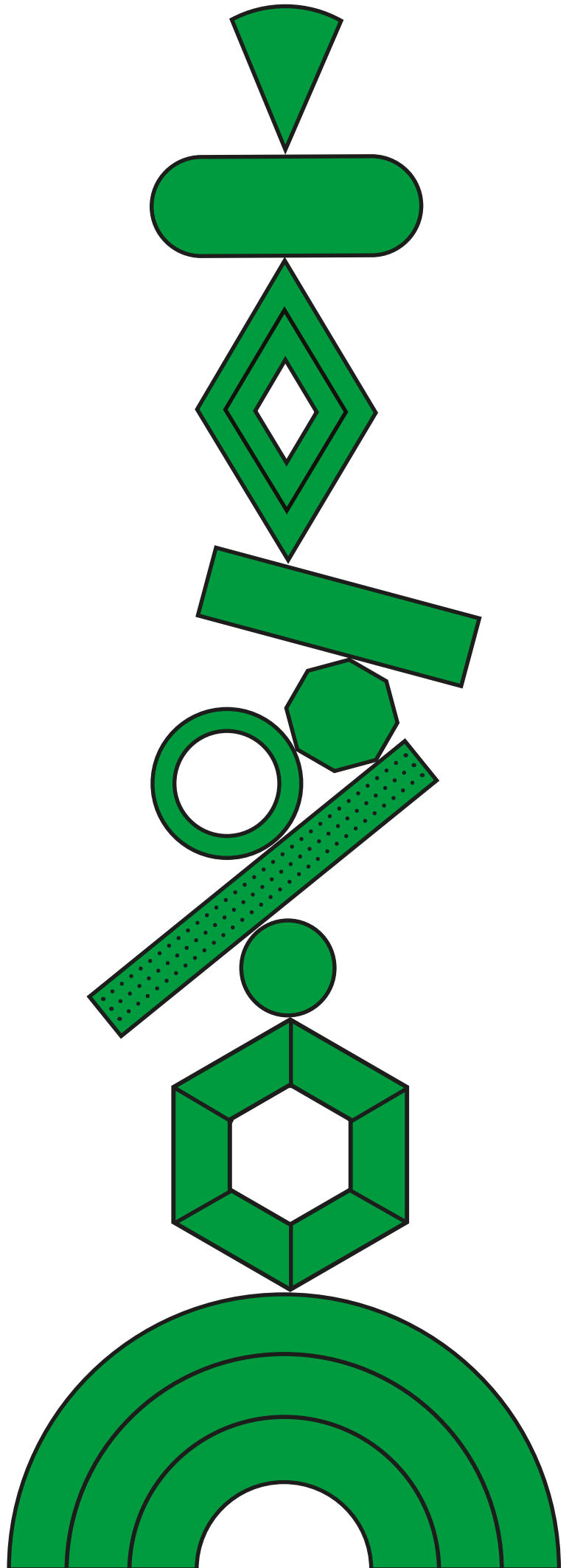
Helen Pankhurst CBE

## Banker

The Co-operative Bank p.l.c.  
P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street  
Manchester, M60 4EP

## Registration

Registered charity number: 1165953  
Charitable Incorporated Organisation,  
Constitution last amended 8 May 2020



**Together We Learn**

England & Wales - Charity number 1165953

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# Accounts

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# Annual Review

2022 - 2023



# Charity Information

## Registered Address

225-229 Seven Sisters Road  
London, N4 2DA

## Trustees

Nadine Carle-Edgar  
Ashley England  
Elsabeth Gezahegn King  
Holly McKenzie  
Gabriella Otty (*until October 2023*)  
Jack Sharville  
Matthew Stockdale

## Chief Executive

Caroline Walker

## President

Helen Pankhurst CBE

## Banker

The Co-operative Bank p.l.c.  
P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street  
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# Welcome

Writing this Annual Report to you, our supporter, gives us the chance to reflect the work we've done in partnership with Ethiopian communities and the impact we have had together. While the last 17 months has brought a lot of positive progress, external events have presented new challenges to our delivery, and we have worked hard to adapt to changing circumstances in Ethiopia.

Conflict in Ethiopia has directly affected our Ethiopian office and programme activities. It has endangered communities, disrupted lessons, and made it much more difficult to communicate with our team. We also had to suspend our tours, which are a small but important source of income. A state of emergency was declared in Amhara, the centre of our operations, in August 2023 and is still in place.

Despite these distressing circumstances, our Ethiopian partner organisation and the communities they work with have proved remarkably brave and resilient. Together, we continue to adapt to the situation, to learn and improve our practices, and to deliver our programmes as best we can. We are resolutely focused on building the capacity of our Ethiopian partner in order to be more locally-led in our approach.

For example, in July 2023 Elsa Kebede, the Country Director of Together We Learn-Ethiopia, visited the UK for the first time. Elsa visited four of our link schools where she gained experience of UK school environments, while also helping British students learn about Ethiopian culture. We invited Elsa to participate in a trustee meeting so we could better incorporate the views of our Ethiopian partners into our strategic planning. And we were delighted to hold a supporter event with over 80 guests in London, who had the chance to hear from Elsa directly about the impact of our work in Ethiopia.

You will also see a renewed focus on the voices of children and students that our projects serve in this report. We are keen to ensure that their perspectives inform our approach. We are carrying out more and improved evaluations on our projects to better understand the needs of children in education, and the impact our projects have for them.

We look forward to the future and are committed to delivering our goal to break the cycle of poverty by giving disadvantaged children access to quality education. But, at this time of conflict, our mission and the impact of our work are more important than ever before. Thank you for all you do to support Together We Learn.

**Caroline Walker, Chief Executive** ♦ **Holly McKenzie, Chair of Trustees**

**Note on the period** This Annual Review covers an exceptional period of 17 months as we adjust our reporting period to better fit with our programming. As most of our projects run in line with the academic year, we will now report on activities from September to August. This review bridges the gap, including financial and activity information for the period of April 2022 to August 2023.

# The Year in Numbers \*

**560**

pupils benefitted  
from new school facilities

**324**

girls accessed menstrual hygiene products

**445**

students sponsored  
through education

**489**

teachers received training to improve quality of teaching

**66**

students accessed  
higher education

**5**

new classrooms in use

\*All numbers in this report relate to the most recent 12 months of activities.

# About Us

Our vision is for all children in Ethiopia to be able to strive for a brighter future through access to quality education.





## Our Mission

Our mission is to break the cycle of poverty by giving disadvantaged children access to quality education. We do this by improving the quality of teaching and the quality of facilities within schools and by working with communities to overcome obstacles, enabling children to stay in school.

## Our Approach

Our approach to providing access to quality education is holistic, as our experience shows us that there are many areas of need that must be addressed to enable children to make the most of education.

Our work with schools includes school infrastructure - providing safe, local schools - and supporting teachers with training and resources to inspire children to flourish in the classroom.

We also work closely with the children, their families and communities to understand and address the issues they face at home and how these impact their ability to attend and concentrate in school.



### Access

We ensure access to education through the construction of school facilities and projects to address barriers to education.



### Quality

We improve the quality of education through teacher training and provision of quality educational resources.



### Wellbeing

We enable children to flourish through after-school activities and programmes supporting their families at home.

# Our Values

## Equal

### Creating opportunities

Our work is driven by the knowledge that all children have equal potential regardless of the circumstances they are born into.

## Respectful

### More than a single story

Ethiopia is a diverse and complex country with a rich history and culture. We promote a positive and rounded image of Ethiopia while supporting its development.

## Collaborative

### Together we can transform

We support children and families to transform their lives. Engaging with communities at all stages ensures that our projects are meeting actual needs and making a difference.

## Honest

### Accountable to communities

We are transparent and open in our work. By working closely together, communities are able to hold us to account. This means supporters and funders can be confident that we continue to invest donations where they have most impact.

## Caring

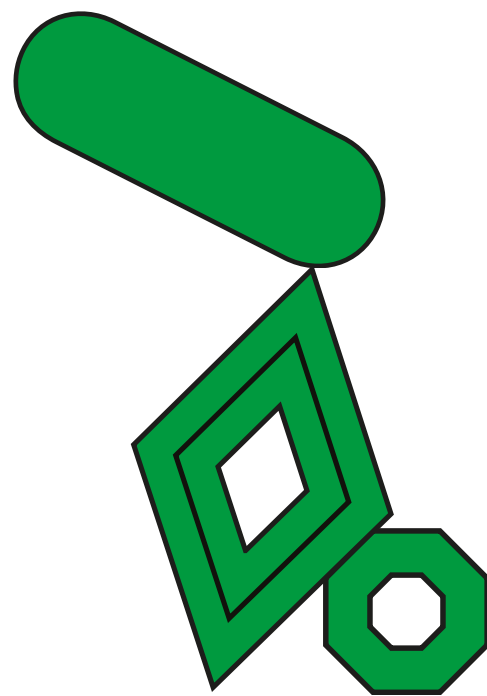
### Taking time to look closer

We care about the individual lives of the children and families we serve, even if it makes things more complicated. We recognise that effective solutions aren't 'one size fits all' and that each family is made up of individuals with varied circumstances and concerns of their own.

## Impact driven

### Never too big to learn

We have over 25 years' experience but we have never stopped learning. Each project or activity is an opportunity for us to become more effective. We are not afraid to innovate, but don't feel the need to reinvent the wheel if an approach is effective. We aim to have a significant and lasting impact.



# Access to Education

Together We Learn ensures access to education through the construction of school facilities and projects to address barriers to education.



# Girls' Education

Educating girls is vital for social and economic development. Enabling girls to achieve at school has a ripple effect of positive change across communities and through generations. Our girls' education projects help girls overcome obstacles to staying in school so they can achieve their full potential.

## Future Girls

### Raising awareness to improve girls' education

August 2023 marked the end of the pilot phase of our Future Girls project, which aims to engage all school stakeholders to improve awareness of issues girls face in education, and thereby create a female-friendly school environment.

The pilot ran for 18 months over two academic years and we worked with six schools across the Amhara and Oromia regions. Girls Clubs exist at most state schools as part of the national objective to improve girls' access to education. Unfortunately, with little resource or motivation to support them, these clubs are generally inactive. We worked with Girls Club leaders, teachers and directors to increase awareness of issues such as gender roles, social norms, puberty, menstruation and bullying, and how these can affect girls in their education. We ran training so that Girls Club facilitators could run engaging, participatory sessions on these topics with both male and female students. 201 students were directly engaged at the six schools in over 90 discussion sessions. Students would share what they learnt in their discussions with other students at school assemblies and flag ceremonies.



**“The Future Girls sessions brought lots of change in the attitudes of school girls and boys. Previously, girls were very shy to share or discuss some sensitive topics but now they are relaxed and free to talk not only to their friends and teachers but also to speak out to the whole school community at the flag ceremony. And girls are supported by boys when they have their period.”**

— Zenanesh ♦ Girls Club Leader

**201**  
boys and girls attended sessions

**15**  
school staff trained on  
girls' education concerns



The project also included a small grant to make practical improvements at schools, advised by the students. These were used to repair toilet locks and doors, provide menstrual pads, and improve spaces for girls to access when unwell.

90 female students received reusable period packs to manage their menstrual health and hygiene. A whole-school celebration day was held at each school on Menstrual Hygiene Day to alleviate the taboo of speaking about periods. Students spoke about their learning and raised awareness among other students of what periods are, how they can affect girls at school and why it's important to stop bullying related to periods.

The teachers and staff involved described seeing 'different girls' at the end of the project. Girls that spoke openly and with confidence both generally, and on topics that would have been taboo before.

A greater awareness among male students was noted, related to their behaviour in the home, with students taking a more active role in supporting with household chores that had previously fallen to mothers or sisters only.



**“Before I participated in the girls club sessions, I didn’t support my mother and my younger sister. I usually leave my food plate for my younger sister to wash. But after participating in the sessions, I started supporting them more. Now my sister is able to get enough time to play and study. Previously, she was spending most of her after school time on house chores.”**

— Muluken ♦ Boy, Grade 8

# Student Sponsorship

Our sponsorship programme enables children from low income families to go to school. Our sponsorship model is designed to directly meet the needs of families in a way that most effectively enables children to stay in education.



The sponsorship team conduct home visits with sponsored students and their families throughout the year. These in-person visits allow the team to observe first-hand the impact of the programme, monitor the academic progress and wellbeing of sponsored students, and respond to any concerns.

In September 2022 we supported students ahead of the new academic year by collecting school report cards, confirming enrolment, and distributing educational materials. Ahead of distribution, we also asked students for feedback on what materials would be the most useful for them. Based on this feedback, we carefully reviewed the package of materials, which included school bags, uniforms, exercise books, pens, coloured pencils, sharpeners and other stationery, and adjusted according to students needs. We also allocated a fund for students joining higher education to cover their transport costs to reach university or college and to purchase suitcases and bedding.

In October we held Family Forums in the Amhara and Oromia regions which brought sponsored families together, gave our staff a platform to share updates about the programme, and provided an opportunity for sponsored families to share their feedback. Students from the Together We Learn Kindu Klub programme also performed a play for all attendees at the Gondar forum, and we held award ceremonies to celebrate sponsored students who had done exceptionally well at school.

**445**

students received  
sponsorship  
support

**153**

families received  
medical  
support

**35**

students sat their national  
secondary exam

**66**

students were  
in university or  
higher education

**11**

students moved from primary to  
secondary education

**186**

students participated in life skills sessions

**127**

food parcels  
were distributed

**21**

students graduated from university  
or training courses



In December, we held our first-ever life skills training sessions for sponsored students. This training is a result of feedback from students at our last forum, and is an opportunity to support students beyond the strictly academic side of education and promote their overall wellbeing. The two day-long sessions were led by specialist social workers and explored subjects such as self-confidence, good study habits, avoiding early marriage, and unplanned pregnancies. The trainings were interactive, and students of all ages were involved and encouraged to share their ideas.

Throughout the year, sponsored families received support to access healthcare, to improve their homes, and further support education. Gifts from sponsors ranged from new beds, to schoolbooks, to water taps. Families in need of medical support received coupons to cover the cost of treatment and medication. Over the year, families received further support 260 times, in various ways including 18 gifts to purchase education resources or access further training, five gifts to set up a new business, and 220 food parcel gifts to help families celebrate Christmas, Easter and Ethiopian New Year. These have been particularly appreciated at a time when inflation has caused the price of food to soar by 35 percent.



# Student Spotlight

One of our 21 graduates in 2023 is Samrawit\* who graduated from university as a Civil Engineer in July 2023. Samrawit has received sponsorship support for 15 years to enable her to achieve her full academic potential. She is one of four children and her mother is a single parent who earns an income from selling boiled potatoes and baking and selling church bread on Sundays.

Sponsorship meant that the family received direct financial support every month on the condition that Samrawit was in education. This support helped Samrawit's mother pay for rent, food and other essentials for their household.

At the start of each school year, sponsorship meant Samrawit knew she would have the textbooks, pens and other important materials to make the most of her lessons.

When she gained a university place after her Grade 12 exams, sponsorship became especially important. As often happens, Samrawit was allocated a university place in another region. She had to travel over 15 hours by bus to attend her university course.

Sponsorship meant that the family continued to receive financial support and additional transport costs were covered so she could travel to and from university each year, and buy essentials such as a suitcase and bedding for living at university.

Samrawit studied for five years to secure her degree in Civil Engineering. At the end of her studies, her costs to rent a gown were covered so she could attend her graduation and celebrate this significant educational milestone along with her peers.

We are very proud of Samrawit and all she has achieved through her own hard work and determination. Her story shows the transformative impact of sponsorship and the ways in which it supports students to strive for a brighter future through education.

\*Not her real name.



**"My family does not have much capacity. Without this support my family could not support me to go to university."**

**"Many of my friends had to drop out from school and I am so happy I got this chance to get an education and to get my degree."**

— Samrawit

# School Construction

Together We Learn ensures access to education through the construction of school facilities that mean more children can stay in school.



Our team works with schools, parents and education offices to identify schools where new facilities will have the biggest impact. This ensures our projects increase the number of children who can go to a local school, reduce their risk of illness, and create safe and comfortable spaces for them to learn, serving generations of children.

## Walaj Kindergarten Sanitation for the most vulnerable

Walaj Elementary School reported increased levels of absence in children aged 4 to 6 years old, due to the lack of an appropriate or nearby toilet facility. The only toilets available were on the adjacent elementary school compound. Being far away and designed for older children knocked the children's confidence to go to the toilet at school which led to higher rates of illness.

We were pleased to be able to respond, with the support of Corvallis Sister Cities Association, to build a concrete block providing six toilets designed for the children, who are now able to attend school in a healthy and hygienic environment.

**60**  
kindergarten children with  
access to toilets



## Chenna Primary School Rebuilding Classrooms after Conflict

Chenna Primary School used to serve 725 pupils from Grades 1-8 but the area was occupied by rebel forces during the conflict in northern Ethiopia in 2021. When forces withdrew, five of the eleven classrooms had been destroyed and furniture had been burnt. Children and staff went back to school when they could, but students had to study outside and the little remaining furniture was shared between classrooms. The experience of conflict left students feeling angry, worried, and confused. 270 students didn't return to school when it re-opened, showing how high levels of trauma and demotivation were.

We ran a fundraising campaign in December 2023 and were able to secure funds to support the reconstruction and refurbishment of five classrooms to restore capacity at the school. In doing so, we have supported students to return to school and begin to recover from the trauma of occupation. Seven out of eight students reported feeling positive about the future and their reported feelings progressed from worry, confusion and anger before the project, to excitement, safety and calm after restoration.

Each of the classrooms provides a safe, inviting, and well equipped learning space for an average of 100 pupils. With five classrooms built, that means 500 pupils benefitted from the restored classrooms in the first year.

**“You came while we were at risk. We were disappointed not only in our learning but just to live. Now, we are happy, as our children’s minds have changed from disappointment to ambitious to learn for their future.”**

— Mekdes ♦ Parent Teacher Association member at Chenna School

**66%**  
reduction in student dropouts

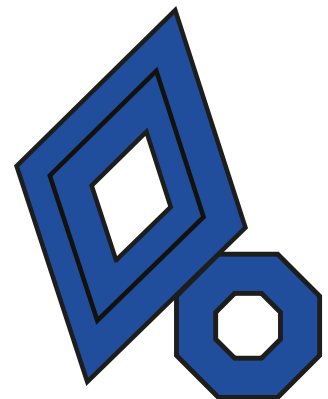
**7**  
out of 8  
students felt  
positive about the  
future

**500**  
students in conflict zones  
have access to new  
school classrooms



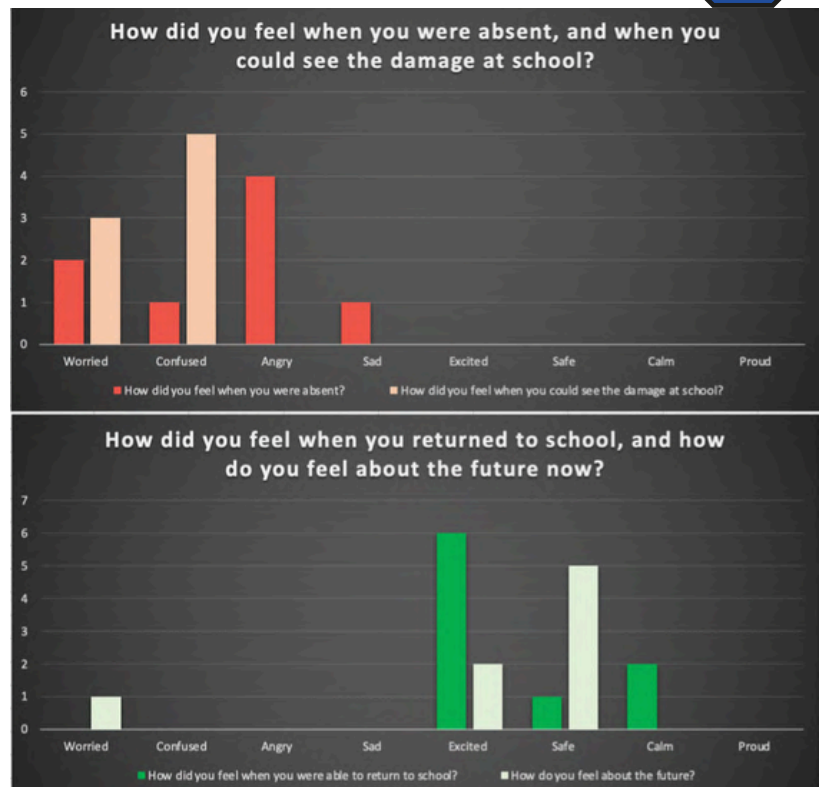
After construction, children reported now feeling excited, safe and calm at school. Teachers also observed that by repairing the damage and painting the walls in different colours, the environment feels safe and ‘comforting’ for children again with teachers themselves also now feeling excited and proud to return to school.

Of the 275 pupils that didn’t initially return to the school, 182 had returned once the construction was complete - a 66% reduction in dropout.



**“Together We Learn didn’t only work on classroom refurbishment, but on making children safe, since they were exposed to the sun when learning outside; on helping students who had dropped out to access education; on quality of education; and your project even created work opportunities for the community during construction.”**

— Ato Mekonnen ♦ Deputy Head of the local Education Office



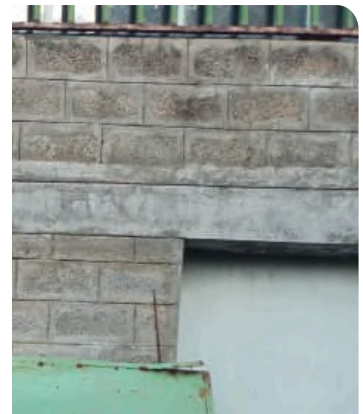
# Quality of Education

Together We Learn improves the quality of education through teacher training and provision of quality educational resources.



# Teacher Training

We work with teachers to help them deliver more effective lessons. In most Ethiopian classrooms, lessons are very traditional with a teacher lecturing to a crowded classroom from the blackboard. In this environment, it is easy for children, especially those with little support at home or with special educational needs, to fall behind. Our teacher training projects help to build the capacity of teachers to make their lessons engaging, impactful and inclusive.



## Phonics Training for Early Years English

Our Teacher Training this year has once again focussed on working with Early Years teachers to improve their classroom skills, pupil engagement and English teaching through the Jolly Phonics method.

English language is particularly important during the early years, as by secondary school age all children are expected to learn entirely in English. This is something the majority of students struggle with and it negatively impacts their educational outcomes.

After ten years of using the Jolly Phonics method we are able to evidence the dramatic impact it has on pupils' reading and writing outcomes. This success led to support from the Regional Educational Bureau in Amhara and a huge scale up of our teacher training. This year we worked with over 400 teachers from 200 schools training them over three days to deliver interactive, multi-sensory, phonics based lessons. Directors from each school also attended introductory training, to ensure that the programme had support from school leadership.

**400**  
teachers trained

**40,000**  
students reached

**45%**  
improvement in literacy skills

Teachers then applied the methodology in their lessons and received books and materials for their classrooms, benefitting 40,000 students. 42 local Education Office staff were also trained to monitor lessons and support the teachers throughout the year.

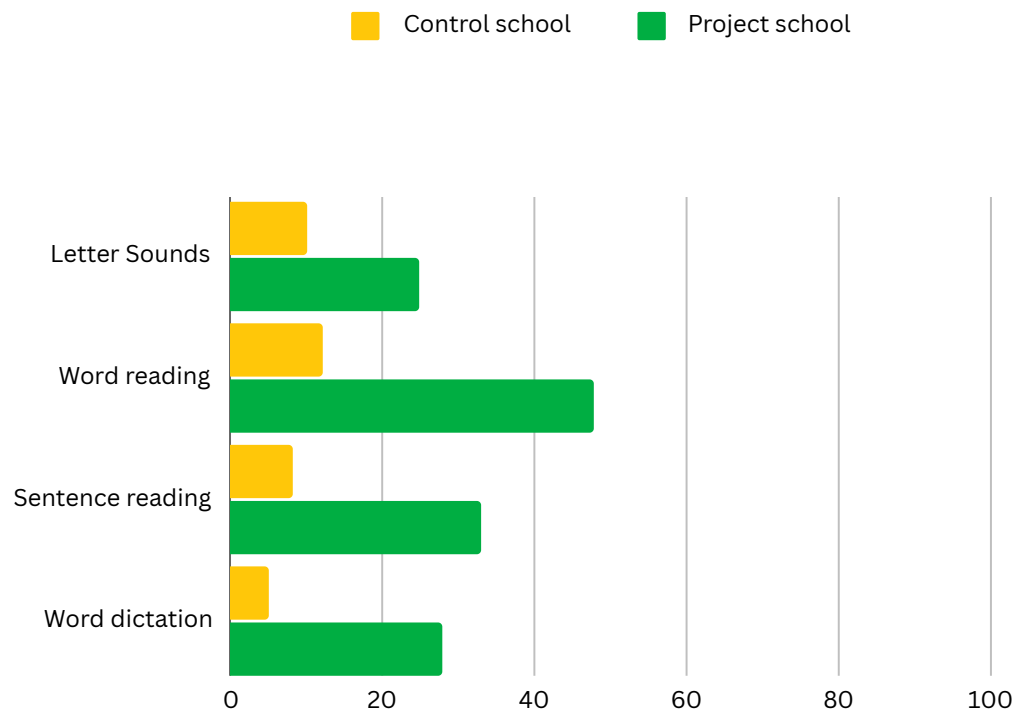
In semester two the teachers attended a further two days of refresher training. This ensured consistent quality and engagement with the programme which was reflected in the outcomes.

Teachers reported finding the training enjoyable and inspirational, having a positive impact on their teaching overall. Jolly Phonics taught students showed significant improvements in their English language abilities, such as sentence reading and word dictation, averaging a 45% improvement in scores across the year. This was in comparison with those who did not receive Jolly Phonics teaching, who showed just 9% improvement over the whole year.

Due to the success of Jolly Phonics in improving children’s education this year, we have new support from the Regional Education Bureau to replicate this in Oromia, as well as roll out further training in the Amhara region over the next year.



## % of improvement in all English language measures (control schools compared to schools receiving training)



# Kindu Klub

The Kindu Klub is an educational club based in Gondar that provides homework support, access to learning spaces and organised play. It provides a valuable study space for children who attend state schools for only half a day, where they can be in a class of over 50 pupils, and whose parents are often illiterate and unable to help with school work.

This year we supported an average of 46 pupils per week at the club where the dedicated youth worker arranged lessons to support their learning, provided homework support and led games, including weekly football sessions on Fridays. The club also provides access to computers so that children can learn IT skills, and a library where they can borrow fiction and study books.

This year we wanted to put the children and young people of Kindu Klub at the heart of the service. We worked alongside Children's Voices in Action to design tools that would enable every child to have their say on what they need and want from Together We Learn, to help build a brighter future for them.

To do so, we collaborated with local organisation Meketa, building on our community network of similar services. Staff from both organisations were trained on a child's right to be heard, the art of listening, and how to engage young people with multi-sensory activities. Based in movement, play and intuitive communication skills, children (and parents of younger children) were empowered to speak about their needs, experiences of the club, and their hopes for the future.

As children worked through the landscape of activities they shared their views using participatory tools such as the trees of life, the ladder climb, the thunderstorm and throw-away river. Each gave us a unique insight in to how to build on the service in coming years, with children's experiences at the heart of it.



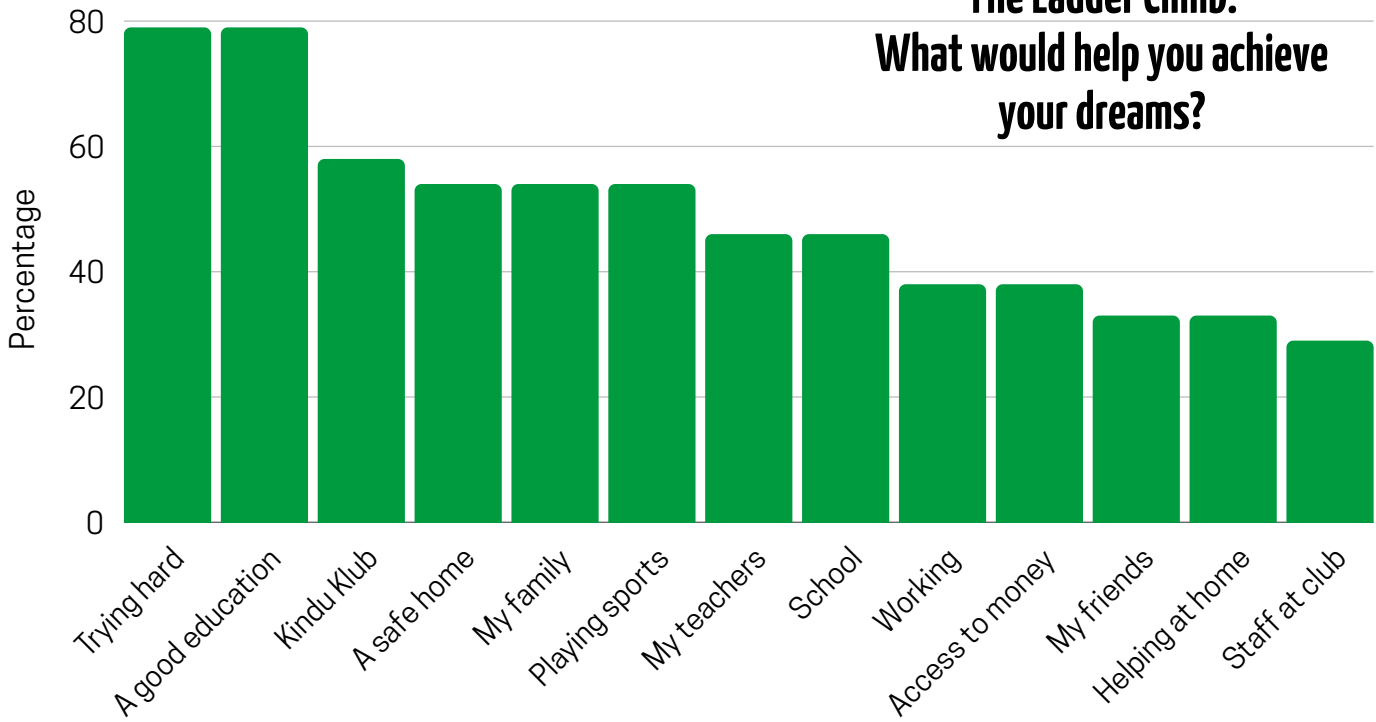
Each week:

**24**  
children joined Friday  
football sessions

**12**  
children used  
the library

**46**  
children received  
educational support

## The Ladder Climb: What would help you achieve your dreams?



In February 2023 we welcomed back our first international volunteers since the pandemic. We had two volunteers, who had both previously visited our projects in Gondar and were keen to support further.

As well as assisting with our children's voices project, they supported training for the girls' football team and ran specialist art workshops at Kindu Klub. The workshops were designed to be fun and develop the children's creativity. Through drawing and collages, children were encouraged to express themselves around different themes. The materials were kindly funded by Corvallis Sister Cities Association and the drawings will be used as illustrations in upcoming Amharic books printed in Ethiopia by Open Hearts Big Dreams.

**"One morning at football training I had 27 enthusiastic children, ages six to 17, two balls and a sandy bumpy field! I am greeted with the most beautiful smiles all day long. From the children at the Kindu Klub, but also from people on the street."**

— Hanny ♦ International volunteer



# School Linking

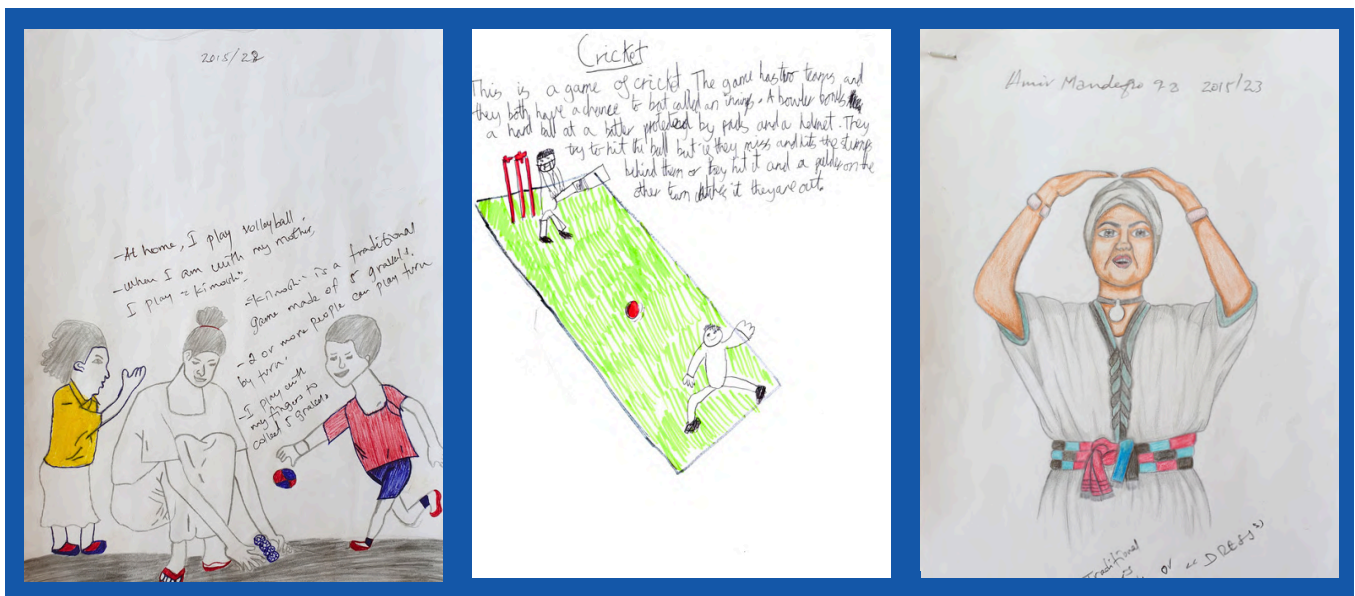
This year we facilitated links between 48 schools. The project encourages children to discover more about each other's cultures and learn together through an annual shared learning activity. The topic for learning activities this year was *My Playground Games* and the children created artwork to share with their link school friends. Our team have worked hard to re-engage schools after the Covid pandemic, reinvigorate existing links and put pupils back in touch with each other. We saw a huge increase in the number of shared learning activities completed and shared this year and our teachers reported a buzz around school on the day they received their post.

Connecting schools online is a growing part of what we offer. Students from the English club at Edget Feleg Secondary School in Gondar and the Student Voice at Bedford Academy in Bedford took part in a video call. Deputy Head Teacher, Laura Fordham, said afterwards that:

**“the student voice had a highly educational and engaging hour speaking about school life to our partner school students on Zoom! The students from both schools were eager to exchange cultural experiences.”**



Examples from the My Playground Games exchange



Some of our UK schools also received a visit from Elsa Kebede, our Country Director in Ethiopia, during her visit to the UK in July.

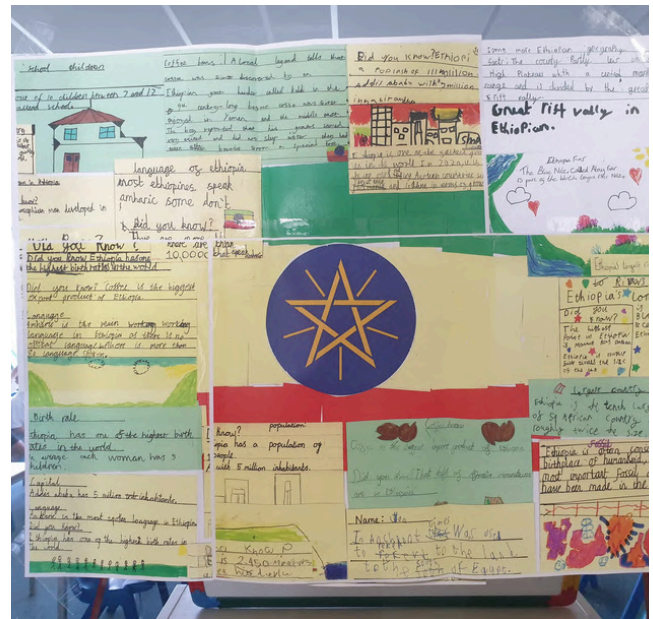
She gave assemblies, talks and held Q & A sessions with pupils. The Year 4 pupils at St Nicholas and St Mary C of E Primary School in Shoreham-by-Sea in Sussex heard first-hand about life in Ethiopia from Elsa as part of a special in-depth project.

Meanwhile, some older students from Backwell School in Bristol were fascinated by the Ethiopian tradition of the coffee ceremony that Elsa was able to show them.

Schools signed up to our programme receive a termly newsletter and set of classroom resources addressing relevant topics such as urbanisation, women's football, Ethiopian music and Ethiopian history.

These resources go a small way to helping to redress the gap in the national curriculum that has been recently evidenced, showing perspectives of people of African descent are not reflected, and where African countries are studied, it is often in an outdated and stereotypical way. (APPG Africa Education Inquiry Report, 2022)

Our resources encourage children to draw similarities and differences between their country and Ethiopia and challenge teachers to expand their subject knowledge and reflect on culture and values.



**48**  
schools took part in  
international school  
linking

**1,080**  
students participated in shared  
learning activities

# Developing Reading Centres to Improve Literacy



Access to reading materials is very important to the lives of the young people we work with. Across Ethiopia, many children do not have books at home. Those that have access to books learn to read earlier, have a better chance of staying in school and therefore access to greater opportunities as adults.

We supported literacy through librarian training and book distribution for 50 educators benefitting 17 schools in Amhara and Oromia. Training was delivered for teachers, directors and librarians, including our own donkey librarians, focussing on how to maintain attractive library and reading spaces and how to encourage pupils to read and engage with books. This was followed by an open discussion among the trainees on how to resolve challenges school libraries face, and how schools with smaller reading spaces can encourage children's literacy.

More than 2,400 books were distributed, 53% of which were local language, bilingual, colourful children's books printed locally in Addis Ababa. The other books were Ethiopian subject reference books to support children's curriculum learning. Our thanks go to Corvallis Sister Cities Association, Open Hearts Big Dreams and the Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad, for providing books and supporting the training.

Our Donkey Library project further supported literacy for pupils in rural areas throughout the year running reading sessions and lending books at schools that don't have a library.

**“The training was so interactive, participatory and fruitful. New techniques and experiences were shared to improve the gaps related to libraries and reading at schools. All the participants agreed to stop using their libraries as book storage, and instead to use them as reading centres.”**

— Elsa Kebede ♦ Together We Learn-Ethiopia Country Director

**50**  
educators trained  
on reading  
engagement

**2,400**  
books distributed  
to libraries

# Children's Wellbeing

Together We Learn enables children to flourish through after-school activities and programmes supporting their families at home.



# Building Homes

## Creating Security



This year we have continued to facilitate home improvement projects amongst sponsored families from home construction, to electricity installation, to water taps.

We were pleased to complete a larger scale construction project, building a block of new homes for eight single-parent families in a community compound in Tikil-Dingay.

For many low-income families, illiteracy, few employment opportunities, and little to no housing security makes it extremely challenging to break the cycle of poverty. Through the construction of homes, each family now owns their own home with no need to pay rent or fear that they will be moved on.

The compound construction includes four toilets, two water taps and electric meters. The toilet and water facilities not only improve sanitation, but also mean that girls do not have to travel far to fetch water which can be a risk to their safety. The electric meters both ensure children can study at home after dark and enable the mothers to run businesses.

More than half of the families now have much more space per person within their household than before, and two families who had school-age children working no longer do.

The new homes have also had a large emotional impact on families, with almost all saying they had a positive feeling of ownership, a place to call home, reduced stress, and increased happiness.

**"It means everything.**

**My children go to school now and I use the money I paid for rent to buy food."**

— Hanna ♦ mother of two



"We were living in the rented house before and it was difficult for me to read after dark as the owner didn't want to use power at night, but now I can read without any trouble. In addition the new house is near to my school and it is inside the town.

I am very glad to get this chance, so I will try my best to get a good result in my education"

— Fasika ♦ girl, Grade 10



**10**  
new homes built

**12**  
families received beds  
or bedding

**12**  
families had taps  
or electricity  
installed

**5**  
received funds to set up a business



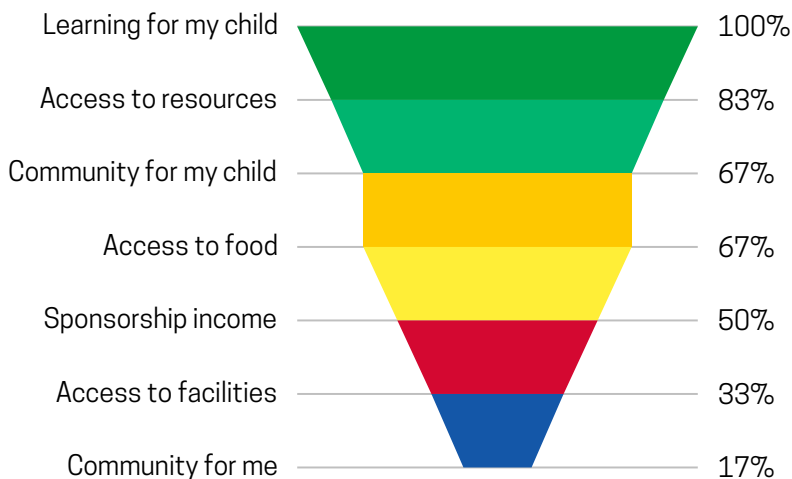
# Playgroup

Our daily playgroup is attached to Kindu Klub and provides a space for pre-school aged children and their carers to meet, receive support and engage in development opportunities. Playgroup supports the families' self-identified areas of greatest need by meeting children's basic health needs. It does this with access to sanitation facilities for washing, and a nutritious and balanced hot meal available daily.

This year we wanted to put the children of Playgroup at the heart of the service. We worked alongside Children's Voices in Action to design tools that would enable every child to have their say on what they need and want from Together We Learn, to help build a brighter future for them. Staff were trained on a child's right to be heard, the art of listening, and how to engage young people with multi-sensory activities. Based in movement, play and intuitive communication skills, children and their parents were empowered to speak about their needs, experiences of the playgroup, and their hopes for the future.

Children and parents both value the opportunity for play and development, by accessing toys, books and a safe space to be active. They find great comfort in the social support playgroup offers, headed up by our caring, and community orientated leader running coffee ceremonies and the chance to talk for parents and carers.

## Reasons parents come to Playgroup:



**25**  
children received hot meals at Playgroup each week



# Football Teams



Together We Learn runs football projects in both Gondar and Bishoftu. The teams offer children the opportunity to build confidence, improve their fitness and develop new skills outside of the classroom. Access to football training is especially important for girls, who are often excluded from such sports activities due to a higher burden of household chores and fears for their safety.

This year 20 girls and 40 boys aged 15-21 years old benefitted from the service. As well as training, the girls' team have access to showers, soap and towels as well as a nutritious snack each week. They received full sports kit whilst members of both teams received training resources and weekly coaching sessions.

In Bishoftu the boys team were able to compete in a local tournament building confidence and social capital for the young people involved. A tournament was sadly not possible for our girls team in Amhara due to conflict.

In addition to the teams, an average of 24 children a week participated in Friday football sessions organised at the Kindu Klub.

Children consistently report that the opportunity to participate in sport has a positive impact on their wellbeing. During our child-centred evaluations in 2023, 78% of students told us sport was an important part of their future.

**24**  
children participated  
in Friday sport  
sessions

**20**  
girls were members of dedicated  
football teams

**60**  
children were part  
of 3 football teams  
in 2023

# Our Team

Together We Learn has been working in Ethiopia to achieve our shared mission for over 25 years. We work with our partner, Together We Learn-Ethiopia, a locally registered Ethiopian NGO.



# Ethiopia Team



**Elsa Kebede**  
Country Director



**Tatek Ezezew**  
Amhara General  
Manager



**Binalfew Alemu**  
Amhara Accountant  
and Administrator

## Project Teams



**Dawit Megerssa**  
Oromia  
Projects  
Manager



**Zemene Mersha**  
Amhara  
Projects  
Manager



**Fikiraddis Tareegn**  
Projects &  
Sponsorship  
Assistant  
*(from Oct '22)*



**Wubetu Addisu**  
Kindu Klub  
Youth Worker  
*(from Oct '22)*



**Chekula Gebre-Egzabhier**  
Playgroup  
Youth Worker

## Sponsorship Teams



**Marta Bekele**  
Sponsorship  
Manager



**Aster Molla**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator



**Lensa Abera**  
Oromia  
Accountant &  
Coordinator



**Sitotaw Ambachew**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator  
*(until Jun '22)*



**Asfaw Admas**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator  
*(from Jun '22)*

## Supporting Staff



**Selamawit Abebe**  
Cashier and  
Purchaser



**Askalech Astatkie**  
Cook



**Melat Getu**  
Cook



**Abebech Mequanent**  
Cleaner



**Enanye Tadele**  
Cleaner and  
Messenger



**Abate Taye**  
Guard



**Tigabu Bera**  
Guard

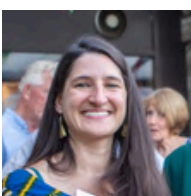


**Wagnev Shumeye**  
Guard



**Abebe Dinku**  
Gardener

# UK Team



**Caroline Walker**  
Chief Executive



**Elle Harris**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator



**Hannah Dillon**  
School Links  
Coordinator



**Eleanor Seaver**  
Projects  
Coordinator

*from Sep 2022*

*from Apr 2023*

# Special Thanks



## Organisations

Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust  
Amhara Regional Education Bureau  
The Archer Trust  
Baillie Gifford Foundation  
Building Futures Ethiopia  
Children's Voices in Action  
Corvallis Sister Cities Association  
Days for Girls UK  
Enable-Ed  
Ethiopiaid UK  
Eva Reckitt Trust  
Guernsey Overseas Aid  
Hosking Charitable Trust  
Jolly Learning  
Jolly Futures  
Meketa  
Ministry of Education Ethiopia  
Open Heart Big Dreams Fund  
Oromia Regional Education Bureau  
Pears Foundation  
Q3 Strategy  
Small International Development Charity Network  
Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad (SPANNA)  
Souter Charitable Trust  
Studiosus Foundation  
The Sycamore Trust  
The Tula Trust  
Tutu's Fund for the Future  
The TUUT Charitable Trust  
UK Literacy Association  
The Waterloo Foundation  
Wild Frontiers Foundation  
Wonfel Aid

## Link Schools

All Saints Church of England Primary School, Newark  
Backwell School, Bristol  
Bedford Academy, Bedford  
Bottesford Infant School, Scunthorpe  
Brocks Hill Primary, Oadby  
Bryn Offa Church of England Primary School, Owestry  
Franklin Elementary School, Corvallis, USA  
Furze Platt Junior School, Maidenhead  
Holland House Infant School and Nursery, Sutton Coldfield  
Impington Village College, Cambridge  
Kenmore Park Infants and Nursery School, Harrow  
Killinghall Church of England Primary School, Harrogate  
Letitia Carson Elementary School, Corvallis, USA  
Longney Church of England Primary Academy, Longney  
Naseby Church of England Primary School Academy, Naseby  
Nun Monkton Primary School, Nun Monkton  
Rhyddings Business and Enterprise School, Oswaldtwistle  
South Avenue Elementary, New York, USA  
St John's Church of England Primary School, Walsall  
St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea  
Stanion Church of England Aided Primary School, Stanion  
Stratton Primary School, Stratton  
Tannery Drift First School, Royston  
Unicorn School, Richmond

## Fundraisers

Jane Aires - Birthday fundraiser  
Aida Habte - Birthday fundraiser  
Eleanor Seaver - Royal Parks Half Marathon  
Herve Smets - Edinburgh Half Marathon  
Alice Anderson-Shah - Royal Parks Half Marathon  
Akhil Shah - Royal Parks Half Marathon  
Willber Willberforce - Birthday fundraiser

## Volunteers

Gracia Akubuike  
Pete Belfield  
Nadine Carle-Edgar  
Tom Edminston  
Ashley England  
Elsabeth Gezahegn King  
Megan Kong  
Meron Haile  
Holly McKenzie  
Gabriella Otty  
Yana Polikarenko  
Maab Sunabara  
Jack Sharville  
Matthew Stockdale

## Gifts In Kind

Rosica Solunova - voluntary services to examine accounts  
Days for Girls - reusable period packs  
Dropbox - storage solutions  
Finsbury Park Trust - discounted office space  
Mailerlite - mailing service  
Salesforce - database

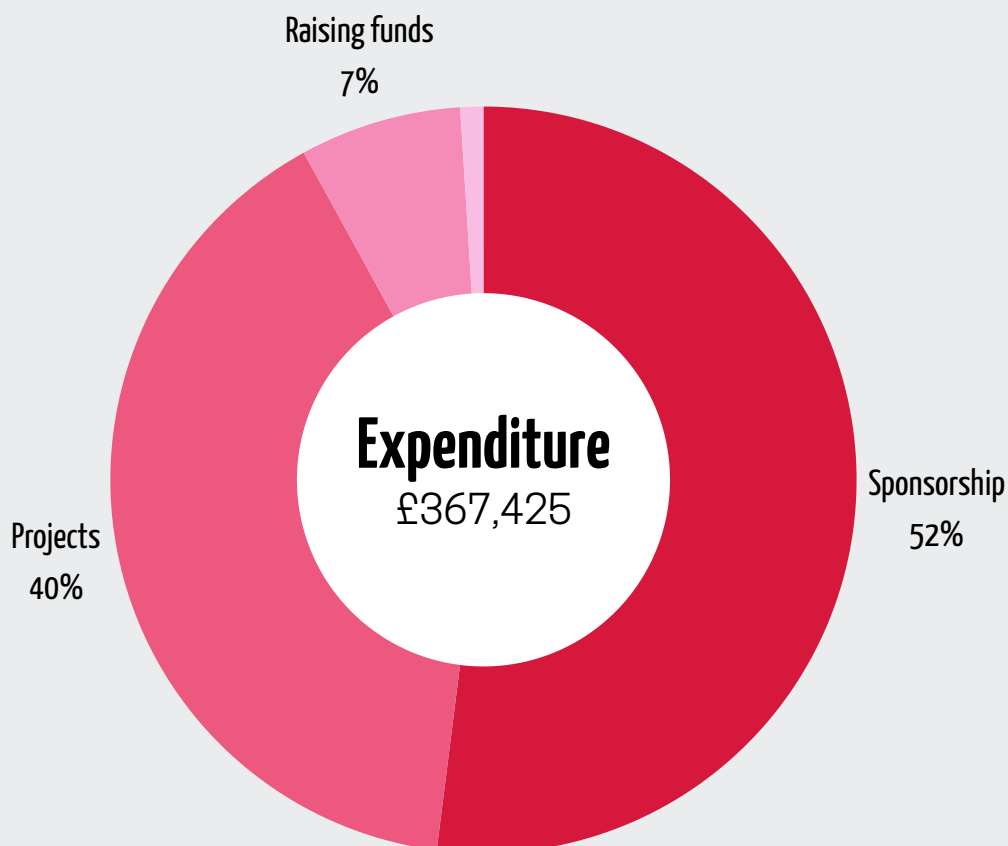
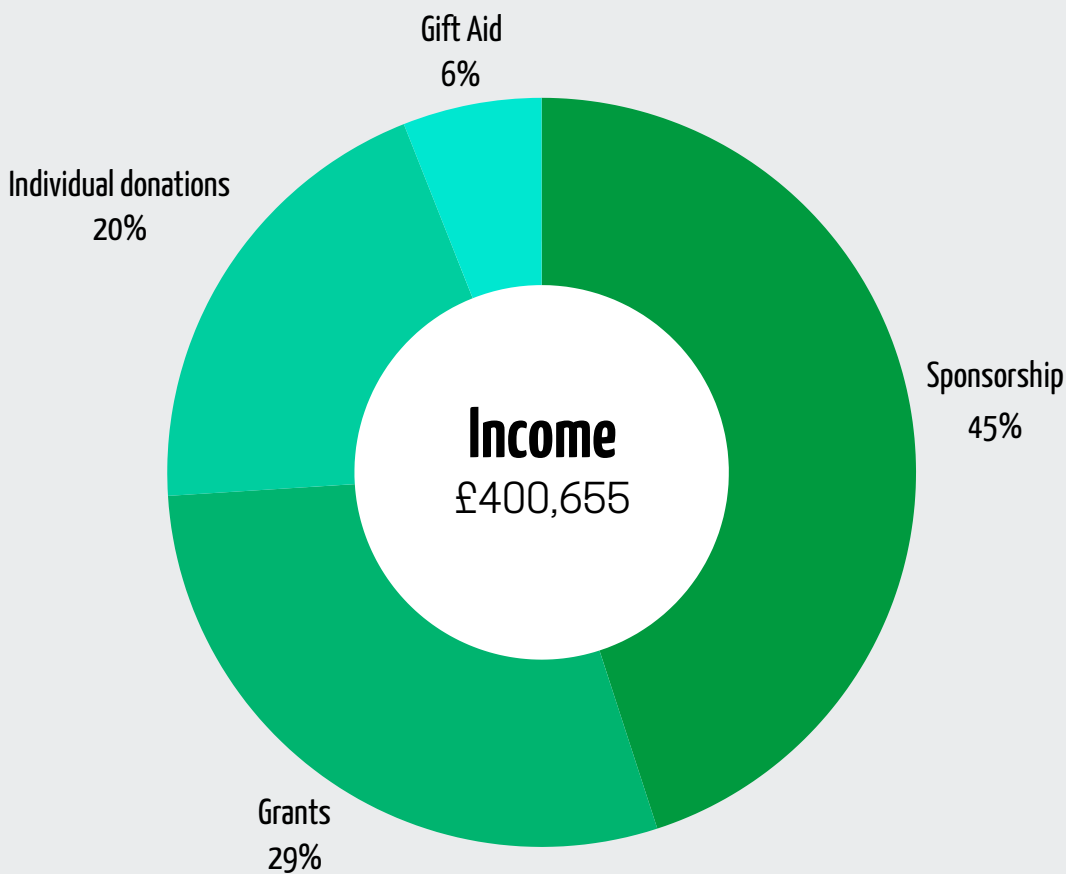


# Our Finances



# Income and Expenditure

For the period of April 2022 to August 2023 (17 months)



# Statement of Financial Activities

Together We Learn has adjusted our financial period in line with the academic year as most of our projects run on this schedule. The finances below represent an exceptional reporting period of 17 months (April 2022 to August 2023). Prior year funds represent the 12 month period prior.

	Note	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted income funds (£)	Total funds (£) (17 months)	Prior year funds (£) (12 months)
<b>Incoming resources</b>	2&3				
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
Donations and legacies		82,468	130,229	212,697	81,158
Charitable activities		7,769	164,751	172,520	51,419
Link Ethiopia & Kindu Trust Transfers	2	15,257	181	15,438	373,593
<b>Total</b>		<b>105,494</b>	<b>295,161</b>	<b>400,655</b>	<b>506,170</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>	4				
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds	5	25,744	-	25,744	14,200
Charitable activities		4,111	337,569	341,680	193,862
<b>Total</b>		<b>29,855</b>	<b>337,569</b>	<b>367,425</b>	<b>208,062</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		<b>75,639</b>	<b>- 42,408</b>	<b>33,231</b>	<b>298,108</b>
<b>Transfer between funds</b>	11	- 39,357	39,357	-	-
<b>Foreign exchange (losses) / gains</b>	12	- 90	-	- 90	- 419
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>36,192</b>	<b>- 3,051</b>	<b>33,141</b>	<b>297,689</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		214,874	93,287	308,161	10,472
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>251,066</b>	<b>90,236</b>	<b>341,302</b>	<b>308,161</b>

# Balance Sheet

	Note	Total this year (€)	Total last year (€)
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	8	-	-
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		-	-
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	9	22,685	9,696
Cash at bank and in hand		320,724	324,914
<b>Total current assets</b>		343,589	334,610
Creditors: amounts failing due within one year	10	- 2,287	- 26,450
Net current assets / (liabilities)		341,302	308,161
Total assets less current liabilities		341,302	308,161
<b>Funds of the charity</b>			
Restricted income funds	11	90,236	93,287
Unrestricted funds		251,066	241,874
<b>Total funds</b>		341,302	308,161

# Notes to the Accounts

## Note 1 - Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charitable trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', and Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of investments. There were no related party transactions for the period.

## Cash Flow

A cash flow statement has not been prepared as the Trustees have taken advantage of the exemptions afforded by Financial Reporting Standard Number 1 (revised) as the charity is of similar size to a small company.

## Note 3 - Analysis of income

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

## Corporation Tax

The charity is exempt from taxation in respect of Income and Capital Gains under Section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 and Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

## Note 2 - Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Together We Learn is formed of the merger of two charities Link Ethiopia & The Kindu Trust. Any legacy donations received by the previous charities are transferred to Together We Learn in accordance with the relevant Deeds of Transfer.

	Unrestricted funds (€)	Restricted income funds (€)	Total funds (€)	Prior year funds (€)
<b>Donations and legacies</b>				
Donations and gifts	56,355	24,979	81,334	39,321
Projects	-	105,250	105,250	16,250
General grants provided	800	-	800	14,597
Git Aid	24,431	-	24,431	10,990
Interest	882	-	882	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,468</b>	<b>130,229</b>	<b>212,697</b>	<b>81,158</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Sponsorship	-	164,751	164,751	45,519
Global Learning	7,769	-	7,769	5,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,769</b>	<b>164,751</b>	<b>172,520</b>	<b>51,419</b>
<b>Transfers from Link Ethiopia and The Kindu Trust</b>				
Transfers from Link Ethiopia	6,946	181	7,127	184,384
Transfers from The Kindu Trust	8,311	-	8,311	189,209
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,257</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>15,438</b>	<b>373,593</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>105,495</b>	<b>295,161</b>	<b>400,656</b>	<b>506,170</b>

## Note 4 - Resources Expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes VAT which is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates. Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Costs are split between categories based on staff time.

## Note 5 - Raising funds

	Total funds (€)	Prior year funds (€)
<b>Raising Funds</b>		
Events	2,650	2,855
Merchandise & other	465	1,560
Shared operations	390	3,279
Staffing	22,239	6,506
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,744</b>	<b>14,200</b>

## Note 6 - Employees

Average number of full-time equivalent employees in the London office: 2 (2 in 2021-22). Number with annual remuneration of £60,000 or more: 0.

	Total funds (€)	Prior year funds (€)
<b>Employees</b>		
Wages & salaries	59,433	35,967
Social security costs	4,377	2,309
Pension Contributions	1,000	619
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,810</b>	<b>38,895</b>

## Note 7 - Trustee Remuneration

Trustees received no remuneration nor expenses.

# Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

## Signatures

**Full name**  
Holly McKenzie  
**Position**  
Chair  
**Date**  
31/05/2024



## Note 8 - Tangible Fixed Assets

Purchases of under £1,000 in value are written off in the year of purchase.

## Note 9 - Debtors & prepayments

Amounts falling due within one year:

	Total funds (€)	Prior year funds (€)
<b>Debtors</b>		
Trade debtors	22,865	9,696
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,865</b>	<b>9,696</b>

## Note 10 - Creditors

Amounts falling due within one year:

	Total funds (€)	Prior year funds (€)
<b>Creditors</b>		
Accruals	-	10,000
Social security	-	631
Deferred income	2,287	15,819
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,287</b>	<b>26,450</b>

## Note 11 - Movement in Funds

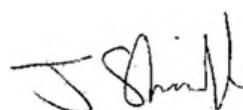
Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

The charity maintains detailed restricted funds. There were 15 unexpended restricted funds at the year end.

## Note 12 - Foreign Exchange Calculation

Transactions in Euros are translated at rates prevailing when funds are received or expended. Balances denominated in Euros are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year end.

**Full name**  
Jack Sharville  
**Position**  
Treasurer  
**Date**  
31/05/2024



# Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Together We Learn for the year ended 31st August 2023, which are set out on pages 38 to 41.

## Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

## Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Rosica Solunova FCCA**

31 May 2024





### Registered Address

225-229 Seven Sisters Road,  
London, N4 2DA

### Trustees

Nadine Carle-Edgar  
Ashley England  
Elsabeth Gezahegn King  
Holly McKenzie  
Gabiella Otty (*until October 2023*)  
Jack Sharville  
Matthew Stockdale

### Chief Executive

Caroline Walker

### President

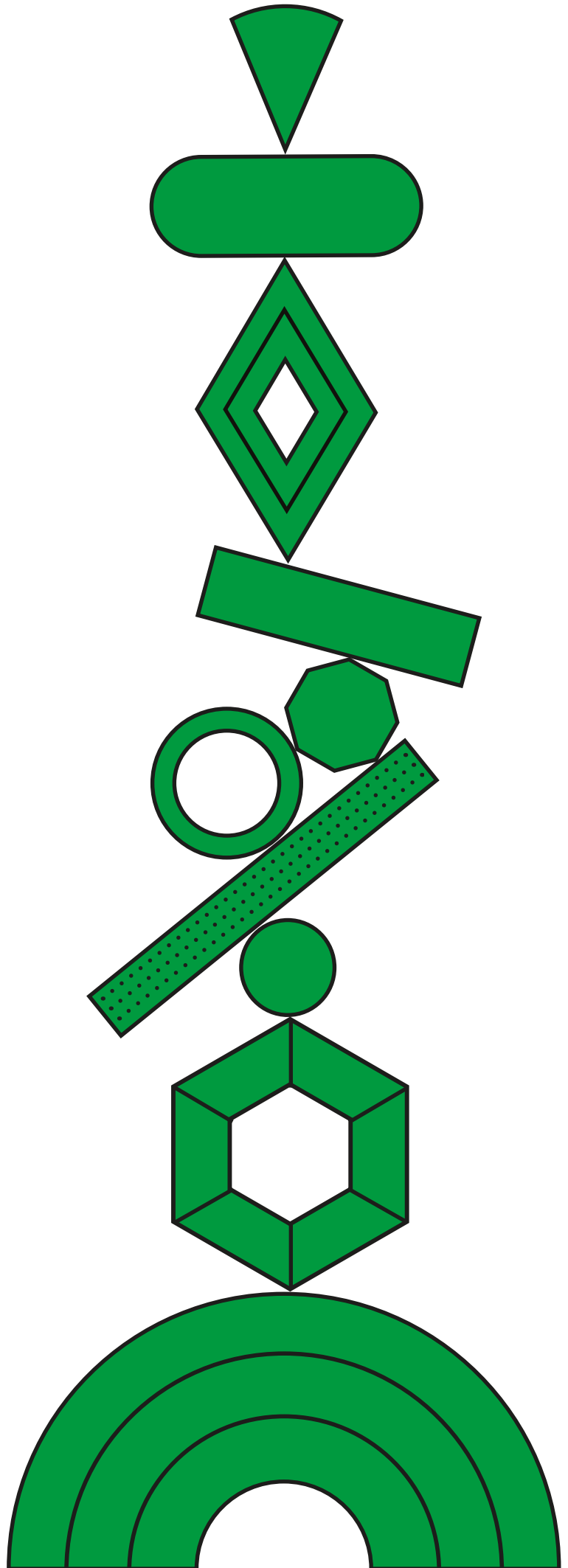
Helen Pankhurst CBE

### Banker

The Co-operative Bank p.l.c.  
P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street  
Manchester, M60 4EP

### Registration

Registered charity number: 1165953  
Charitable Incorporated Organisation,  
Constitution last amended 8 May 2020



**Together We Learn**

England & Wales - Charity number 1165953

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# Accounts

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# Annual Review

2021 - 2022



# Charity Information

## Registered Address

225-229 Seven Sisters Road  
London, N4 2DA

## Trustees

Nadine Carle-Edgar  
Ashley England  
Elsabeth Gezahegn King  
Holly McKenzie  
Gabriella Otty  
Jack Sharville  
Matthew Stockdale

## Chief Executive

Caroline Walker

## President

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# Welcome

Thank you to everyone who has continued to support our work this year. The year has been a challenging one following the outbreak of conflict in northern Ethiopia in November 2020. The conflict started just as restrictions due to the global Covid-19 pandemic were being lifted. It has severely impacted some of our anticipated projects, as well as posing difficulties for our staff and the people of Ethiopia.

In April 2021, at the start of this reporting period, the conflict had significantly impacted the Tigray region and by July it had spread to areas of the Amhara region, where our team is based and much of our work takes place. The incursions brought insecurity, internal displacement, and pressure to our team and the communities we serve.

Our team responded with resilience and we continued almost all of our programmes and support in the region. Nevertheless, we were forced to put all construction projects on hold as resources were claimed by the federal armies and materials became scarce and unreliable. Some of the families we support were displaced by the conflict, or had displacement camps set up in their communities. All families and projects were affected by spiralling inflation.

We have responded directly to the impact of the conflict by increasing aid for families, purchasing food parcels, providing resources for internal displacement camps, and providing extra support for our sponsored students in Lalibela, an area occupied during the conflict, as you will read in this report.

We have also continued our usual work as far as possible, maintaining our student sponsorship support, teacher training and girls' education programmes. We were even able to introduce improvements to some of the projects, holding our first sponsored family forums as a merged organisation and beginning a new girls' project to develop more female-friendly school environments.

Our Ethiopian team have remained focussed and committed to delivering our projects as best they could for the children in their communities throughout unimaginable circumstances and we would like to recognise them especially this year.

April 2021 also marked the official establishment of Together We Learn Ethiopia as a local charity in Ethiopia with its own board members. Together We Learn Ethiopia remains our implementing partner and their new registration status enables us to localise more project work and access more international funding. There are currently five members on the board, each bringing valuable knowledge and experience. The Ethiopian board will support us to achieve our mission and provide direct support to the team in Ethiopia.

At the time of publishing this report, a peace deal has been reached regarding the conflict and a number of positive steps have been made towards reconciliation. We look forward with hope for lasting peace and reopening of the country. We thank everyone who supports our work to ensure Ethiopian children can continue to strive for a brighter future through education.

**Caroline Walker, Chief Executive** ♦ **Holly McKenzie, Chair of Trustees**

# The Year in Numbers

**92**

girls received reusable  
period packs

**64**

students accessed higher education

**482**

students sponsored  
through education

**107**

food parcels provided for families affected by conflict and inflation

**45**

teachers received  
training

**60**

schools linked

# About Us

Our vision is for all children in Ethiopia to be able to strive for a brighter future through access to quality education.



# Our Mission

Our mission is to break the cycle of poverty by giving vulnerable children access to quality education. We do this by improving the quality of teaching and facilities within schools, and by working with communities to overcome obstacles, enabling children to stay in school.



# Our Approach

Our approach to providing access to quality education is holistic, as our experience shows us that there are many areas of need that must be addressed to enable children to make the most of education. We work closely with schools through our construction projects, teacher training and school links, to understand the problems they are facing and how we can most effectively help them.

We also work closely with the children, their families and communities, through sponsorship, after-school clubs and income generating activities, to understand the issues they face at home and how these impact their ability to attend and concentrate in school.



## Access

We ensure access to education through the construction of school facilities that mean more children can stay in school.



## Quality

We improve the quality of education through teacher training and provision of quality learning environments.



## Wellbeing

We enable children to flourish through after-school activities and programmes supporting their families at home.

# Our Values

## Equal

### Creating opportunities

Our work is driven by the knowledge that all children have equal potential regardless of the circumstances they are born into.

## Respectful

### More than a single story

Ethiopia is a diverse and complex country with a rich history and culture. We promote a positive and rounded image of Ethiopia while supporting its development.

## Collaborative

### Together we can transform

We support children and families to transform their lives. Engaging with communities at all stages ensures that our projects are meeting actual needs and making a difference.

## Honest

### Accountable to communities

We are transparent and open in our work. By working closely together, communities are able to hold us to account. This means supporters and funders can be confident that we continue to invest donations where they have most impact.

## Caring

### Taking time to look closer

We care about the individual lives of the children and families we serve, even if it makes things more complicated. We recognise that effective solutions aren't 'one size fits all' and that each family is made up of individuals with varied circumstances and concerns of their own.

## Impact driven

### Never too big to learn

We have over 20 years' experience but we have never stopped learning. Each project or activity is an opportunity for us to become more effective. We are not afraid to innovate, but don't feel the need to reinvent the wheel if an approach is effective. We aim to have a significant and lasting impact.





# Access to Education

Together We Learn ensures access to education through sponsorship and girls' projects that help overcome barriers, and constructing school facilities.



# Girls' Education

Enabling girls to achieve at school has a ripple effect of positive change across communities and down generations. Educating girls is vital for social and economic development. Our girls' education projects help girls overcome obstacles to staying in school so they can achieve their full potential.



## Future Girls Creating Female-Friendly School Environments

This year marked the beginning of our new initiative to support girls in education. Special sessions were run weekly in six schools, involving male and female students, to discuss topics that affect girls' ability to participate fully at school.

In these sessions students had the opportunity to discuss together, to develop their thinking, and to present to groups on issues such as periods, bullying, and differences in expectations for boys and girls.

Directors and teachers were included from the outset of the project, receiving training on the topics before helping to facilitate the sessions with the students.

Each month students would present the topics at

school-wide assemblies, to share the learning with other students and improve their confidence and skills. Special assemblies were also held on Menstrual Hygiene Day in May to tackle the stigma and bullying around periods in schools. Female students also received reusable period packs to the help them manage their periods comfortably.

**75%**  
of girls said that bullying  
during periods was  
common at their school

**92**  
students received  
reusable period  
packs

# Student Sponsorship

Our sponsorship programme enables children from low income families to go to school. Every child should be able to go to school with food in their belly, school books in hand, and knowing that they have a safe home to come back to. Our sponsorship model is designed to directly meet the needs of families in a way that most effectively enables children to stay in education.



**482**

students received  
sponsorship  
support

**23**

students achieved  
their certificate of  
secondary education

**97**

families received  
medical  
support

**69**

students were  
in university or  
higher education

**23**

students moved from primary to  
secondary education

**10**

students graduated from university or training courses

**107**

food parcels  
were distributed

**38**

small businesses and home  
improvements were funded

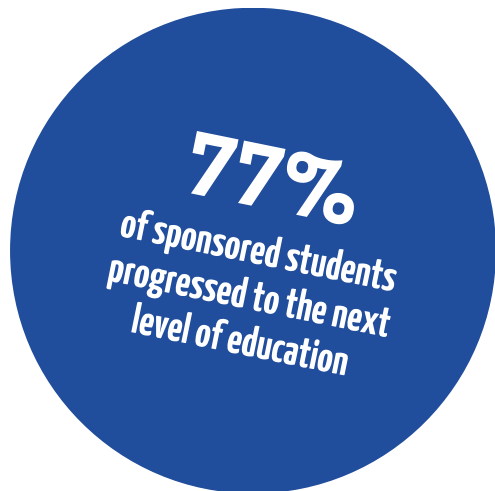
# Updating the Programme to Meet Needs

The Covid-19 pandemic followed by the conflict in the north led to high rates of inflation across Ethiopia. This meant the cost of most basic household goods increased drastically. The families we support through sponsorship already struggle to make ends meet, so it became impossible for them to meet these higher costs.

From April 2021 we increased the amount of direct financial aid that parents and guardians receive every month. These payments are used by parents and guardians to support the household in whatever way they think is best. Families usually use the money to buy food, water and pay rent.

Sponsors also responded to the increased need by buying food parcels to help families with higher costs. In total, 107 food parcels were bought.

Family forums were held in both regions bringing together all our sponsored families. A review of the programme was also run which led us to add regular psychosocial training for the students to our package of sponsorship support, and to improve reporting systems.



# Meet Amanuel



Amanuel grew up in a rural area of Western Gondar where he lived with his family and spent his days helping to take care of their sheep. Amanuel had an aunt who lived in Gondar town and believed that education was important for children. She tried to convince Amanuel's parents to enrol him in school, but the nearest school was far from their village and they needed Amanuel's support with the farming.

Eventually Amanuel's aunt managed to convince his parents to let him live with her in Gondar and start his education. Aged 8, Amanuel enrolled in school for the first time. He worked really hard and had a natural aptitude, he finished Grade one with the highest results in his class and often helped his classmates with their work.

His teachers recognised his enthusiasm and his potential, as well as his difficult living situation. His aunt lived in poverty and did not have many resources to support him with. Together We Learn (then Link Ethiopia) was working with the school to support the education of students in need and we started Amanuel's sponsorship in 2008, providing school materials, extra-curricular support and funds to help his aunt care for him.

Amanuel continued to excel in his education and, at the age of 14, he was selected from students across 54 schools to win a Young Innovator award. He continued to live with his aunt and supported her with household chores like fetching water, cooking and washing

**“My dream comes true now and it made me so happy to go to school.”**

— Amanuel

clothes on top of his studies. He also took an interest in electronics and practised fixing things in his spare time.

After completing college, Amanuel was allocated a place at university to study his top choice of subject, computer electronics. His sponsorship continued while he studied for four years, graduating in July 2021. After graduating he developed his skills by completing a short course on electronics maintenance, he took a small loan from the bank and set up a workshop where he now earns a living repairing electronics. He pays off his loan each month and eventually aspires to grow his business and build himself a house in his aunt's compound.

Amanuel's situation today is thanks to his aunt's recognition of the importance of education for him, of his own hard work and dedication, and his sponsor's support meant that he could stay in education and meet his potential. We want to make sure that no child misses out on the chance to because of poverty. Sponsorship helps students most at risk of dropping out due to poverty to stay in education, and achieve their full potential.

# Sponsorship Forums

## Bringing Families Together

We were pleased to be able to run our sponsorship forums again this year after a hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Sponsorship forums are held annually to bring sponsored parents and students together, share key messages and hear feedback from them about the programme and their needs.

This year was our first year holding the forums as Together We Learn, bringing together sponsored families that were previously associated with either Link Ethiopia or The Kindu Trust.

The forums were an opportunity to inform people about the merger, why it happened, and what adjustments there would be to the sponsorship programme. We also introduced the new elements such as increased direct financial aid and a new reporting system.

**267**  
families attended  
the sponsorship  
forums



We took the opportunity of having all the families together to discuss certain key topics, such as child marriage, explaining the harm it causes and our duty and intention to report any cases of child marriage.

A psychosocial trainer provided information about positive parenting skills, discussing raising children through puberty, helping children stay committed to their education, and preventing early pregnancy. She emphasised the importance of giving children as much educational support as possible to help them get the most out of their schooling. The feedback from the parents about this session was particularly positive and we have now introduced psychosocial support for students as a regular part of our sponsorship support.

In Gondar the day concluded with a performance by the Kindu Klub students, which led to an outbreak of spontaneous dancing from the parents. It was a pleasure to see that the forum could provide a brief respite and moment of enjoyment at what had been a stressful time for many families due to the nearby conflict.

# Supporting through Conflict

The conflict in Northern Ethiopia started around November 2020. It was mainly contained within Tigray but affected some areas in the surrounding regions of Amhara and Afar. We were lucky that most of our office and project sites were not directly affected, however the community in Lalibela was. Together We Learn supports 19 families in Lalibela through sponsorship and communication with all of them was cut off during the conflict. As soon as it was safe to return to the town, we took action to help the families recover and rebuild.

Lalibela was occupied by TPLF forces in August 2021. The community living there was cut off from the rest of the country and could not leave Lalibela. Banks, hospitals, schools and government services were closed. There was no electricity and no water. Residents had to give their food to occupying forces and crops were destroyed. The forces finally withdrew from Lalibela in December 2021 though the security situation remained uncertain.

By March 2022 we were working again in Lalibela and ran a campaign to support the families there who had been affected by the occupation.

Using these funds we supported families in two ways: providing food parcels to address immediate survival needs; and providing grants and training to help families rebuild their lives.

Our team distributed food parcels and worked with the local social affairs office and microfinance office to support the families. With their support, we brought the families together, provided training on small business management, and established a savings cooperative. Each family was given a grant to help them establish, or re-start, a small business so that they could begin to look ahead. The families each save 100 birr (£1.70) each month through the cooperative and loan the saved funds to help each one develop their business.

During the year, we also supported families who had been displaced by the war and were living in temporary camps around Amhara with donations of flour and sanitary towels.



**19**  
business grants

**400**  
packs of sanitary  
towels

**3,925**  
kilos of flour, wheat and teff

# Quality of Education

Together We Learn improves the quality of education through teacher training and by providing quality learning environments.



# Teacher Training

We work with teachers to help them deliver more effective lessons. In most Ethiopian classrooms, lessons are very basic with a teacher lecturing to a crowded classroom from the blackboard. In this environment, it is easy for children, especially those with little support at home or with special educational needs, to fall behind. Our teacher training projects help to build the capacity of teachers to make their lessons engaging, impactful and inclusive.

# A Model of Rural Excellence

We are working with Gendit School and our partner Building Futures Ethiopia to develop their school into a replicable model of excellence in rural education. This year we began our third year of working with the school and in September the school started serving Grade five students for the first time. A school is required to have a certain level of facilities in order to teach from Grade 5, having this locally meant that many children could continue to attend, rather than drop out of education or have to travel to a school outside of town.

We celebrated the new academic year and the introduction of Grade five in October at a welcome ceremony. The day was an opportunity to bring the community together and re-energise teachers, parents and pupils towards the vision for the school. Four refurbished classrooms were officially presented. The highest achieving and most improved students from the previous year received recognition and prizes.

We had planned to build a new block at the school this year, providing a classroom, library and director's office. Unfortunately, the conflict meant that construction was not possible. We continued to work with the teachers and director at the school to improve leadership, learning environments and quality of teaching.

We are trialling a teacher competency framework model at the school to identify areas of improvement and support teachers to target and develop their skills in a progressive and practical way. Teacher training was delivered at the start of the year, targeting the areas identified as priorities by our team and the teachers: lesson planning, student centred teaching, and creating teaching aids from available materials.

We also collaborated with leading schools in Gondar to provide mentorship to the teachers and director at the school. A director and teachers visited the school once a fortnight to observe the teaching and leadership and to work with the staff to implement training and improve teaching practice.

Following a mid-year review, more tutorials were added to the programme to provide extra support to the students. The teachers had already started delivering weekend tutorials providing general support to students who needed help catching up after Covid-19-related school closures. We added literacy-focussed tutorials in the afternoon, providing bread and fruit to attending students, to ensure adequate nutrition to study for a longer day.

**227**  
students are enrolled at  
Gendit School

**87%**  
of pupils passed their end of year  
exams and progressed  
to the next grade



## Expanding our Early Years English Improvement Project

For the past 10 years, our work on teacher training has mainly focussed on supporting early years teachers to improve the quality of English teaching using the phonics method. We have focussed on this area because English literacy is vital to secondary education, when all subjects are taught in English, and because we have consistently seen a significant positive impact from teaching using this method.

Pupils learn to read English from Grade one. Most teachers base their lessons on the alphabet and word memorisation. In general, lessons are traditional with teachers reading from the board. Across Ethiopia, many children end primary school unable to read in their own language, so learning a second language in a different alphabet is even more difficult.

Using the phonics method and the resources and training from Jolly Phonics, teachers are able to teach English in an engaging, effective and a memorable way, which we have seen have a dramatic impact on pupils' reading outcomes year on year.

**“Before I got the Jolly Phonics training, only a few of my students could read by the end of the year. Having had the training this year, almost all of my class students are now starting to read simple words within two months. In addition, my students who did not speak at all that are able to start saying a, a, a, a and c, c, c, c, are a living testimony of the effectiveness of this programme.”**

— Senayit ♦ Grade one teacher, Dukem

2021 brought an expansion of the project with our first Jolly Phonics training for teachers in Oromia since 2015. We trained 24 teachers from 12 schools in Bishoftu and Dukem. At the end of the year the trained classes achieved the best results we've seen in our phonics projects. Students could read 40 new words compared to only 1 in schools not teaching phonics. Students in project schools had a reading age of 7 years and 5 months at the end of the year while students in schools not teaching phonics scored too low to compute a reading age.

In Amhara, we had planned to train lecturers in all ten Colleges of Teacher Education in the region but our work was affected by the conflict. We were able to work with three, Finite Selam, Debre Markos and Injibara where we trained seven lecturers to include the phonics method in their training for new teachers.

After four years working together on pilot projects, we were also delighted to receive the backing of the Regional Education Bureau on an expanded roll out for 2022-23, to work with 400 teachers from 200 schools across the Amhara region, our first step to training every Grade one teacher across the region.

## Kindu Klub

The Kindu Klub is an educational club based in Gondar that provides homework support, access to learning spaces and organised play. It provides a valuable space for children who attend state schools for only half a day, where they can be in a class of over 60 pupils, and whose parents are often illiterate and unable to help with school work.

This year we received an average of 48 pupils per week at the club. Children attend in small group sessions with other children of their grade level. The youth worker arranges lessons to support their learning, provides homework support and leads games, including weekly football sessions on Fridays. The club also provides access to computers so that children can learn IT skills, and a library where they can borrow fiction and study books.

In April, our Amhara team moved the Gondar office to a new compound. Having our own compound means freedom to adapt the space to our needs. Now, as well as a room for the Kindu Klub, we have built an outdoor space that can be used as a canteen for lunch and as additional learning space in good weather.



**31**

teachers  
trained

**1,320**

pupils benefitting from  
improved English teaching methods

# School Linking

School linking continues to be an important part of what we do, encouraging UK/US and Ethiopian schools to learn from and about each other. This year we have been moving towards a more equitable school partnership model. As such, Together We Learn has worked with a qualified teacher to create classroom resources for linked schools which reflect and engage with modern Ethiopia.

The lesson themes this year have included water usage, biodiversity, the Ethiopian coffee ceremony, Christmas, and sustainable cities. Through these resources, children were encouraged to draw similarities and differences between their country and Ethiopia and teachers were challenged to expand their subject knowledge and reflect on culture and values.

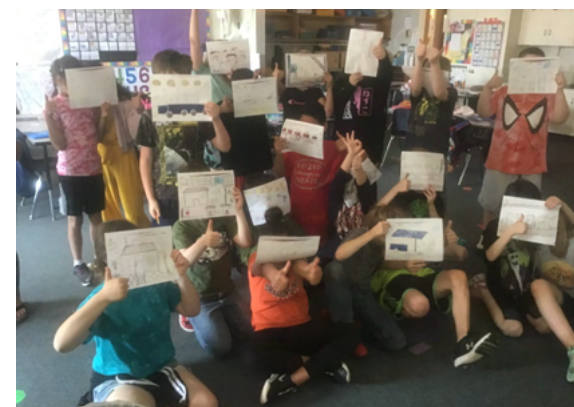
Teachers value the annual shared learning activity (SLA), where pupils create learning around a shared theme and exchange it via post. This year's theme was "My Locality" so pupils were encouraged to reflect on their immediate surroundings, be it their homes, school, town, village or, in the case of very young children, their walk to school. As inspiration, schools were provided with a list of books that teachers could share with the class as well as a teaching prompt and visual examples.

A number of schools took part in this activity although many of them reported difficulties running their usual programme due to the ongoing pandemic. Bottesford Infant School in Scunthorpe and Tokuma Elementary in Bishoftu took part for the first time, making posters for each other. There was much excitement when the packages arrived.

We sent termly newsletters to schools to keep them up-to-date with their school partnership and Together We Learn. We also celebrated and shared good practice and the latest educational research into global learning.

**“The staff have been telling me how engaged the children were completing the SLA because it had a real purpose. We can't wait to receive theirs back. It is so lovely to see their enthusiasm!”**

— Becki Watson ♦ link coordinator at Bottesford Infant School



**60**  
schools are engaged in our  
linking programme



## Donkey Library

Our donkey library programme supports rural schools who do not have their own libraries. We have three donkey libraries, two located in the Oromia region, in the rural areas surrounding Bishoftu, and one in Amhara in the Gondar Zuria zone. Each year they visit 13 rural elementary schools, supporting students from seven to 15 years old.

The objective of the donkey libraries is to encourage reading for pleasure and as a life skill. We know that access to books is strongly correlated with levels of literacy.

Our donkeys carry a selection of fiction and reference books to schools. During their visits the donkey librarians work with the school to organise reading sessions and to lend books to students and teachers. Together they conduct more than 400 school visits to their partner schools in a school year.

**“Abebe is a Grade five student. He doesn’t have books at home except his school textbook. He likes reading very much. He feels happy when he sees the donkey with books at its back. He likes reading Ethiopian folktales.”**

— Kassaye ♦ Grade one teacher

**400**  
school visits were made  
by donkey librarians

# Children's Wellbeing

Together We Learn enables children to flourish through after-school activities and programmes supporting families at home.



# Football Teams



Together We Learn runs football projects for girls and boys in Gondar and Bishoftu. The teams offer children the opportunity to build confidence, improve their fitness and develop skills outside of the classroom.

This year was a special year for the Gondar girls' football team as they were able to take part in their first football tournament. Previously, the nearest girls' football tournament was in Bahir Dar, a city four hours away by car. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and conflict it wasn't possible to participate in recent years. Happily, the 'futsal tournament' was introduced to Gondar meaning that our girls' team were able to play competitive games against teams like them in their home city.

Ten new girls joined the team this year, as older members move away for university. Four members were even invited to join Gondar University's football team.

In Bishoftu, the boys and girls teams received new uniforms and training materials. The teams also took part in local tournaments during the year.

**“[Since I joined the team] I developed confidence to speak with my friends and my coach. I feel confident both at school and at home but at the beginning I was shy in both. My physical fitness is also improved. Though I am thin I am strong and healthy.”**

— Adina ♦ Member of the Gondar girls' football team

**100**  
children took part in  
our football  
activities

# Home Improvements

As part of our mission to enable children to succeed in education, we undertake projects wherever we can to improve living environments. Adequate housing means security for the child, a safe place to live and a place to study and do homework.

Many of our sponsored families live in very basic accommodation with few, if any, basic conveniences. We facilitate the construction of new homes, improve existing homes, install taps and electricity and provide bedding and furniture.

Housing improvements directly improve the quality of life for families and the opportunities for students to study at home and therefore succeed at school. Improvements also reduce living costs and make homes healthier, safer and happier places to live.

We also help families by providing start-up funds to set up their own businesses wherever possible. This builds their capacity to generate their own income, improve their skills and self-esteem and support their families independently.

This year we began work on a significant construction project that will provide housing for eight families living in Tikil Dingay.

The land was offered to us by the government and we raised enough funds through our Christmas campaign for building to start. The compound will provide homes to single mothers with an average of four children. The women have low levels of education and do domestic work or run small businesses but have to spend 90 percent of their income on rent. This makes it impossible for them to support their families or plan for their futures.

Work on the compound started in February 2022 when a committee was established by the women to help with the construction process. When the compound is finished, there will be access to running water and electricity, so children can study after dark and new businesses will be possible. A shared block of toilets and showers will improve sanitation and reduce the risk of assault that girls face when they have to travel to access these facilities.





## Playgroup

The playgroup is a space for pre-school sponsored children to socialise and play, where they develop both by interacting with each other and with toys they often don't have at home. The first years of a child's life are vital to lay the foundations for learning in the future, but primary school starts at age seven in Ethiopia, and few schools have kindergartens attached for earlier learning. The Playgroup exists to provide crucial early years education, as well as support and resources for parents and guardians, who accompany their children to playgroup.

*Each week:*

**35**

*children received hot meals*

**25**

**parents and guardians got peer support**

**5**

**families received business start-up funds**

**9**

**received new beds and bedding**

**5**

**received funding to help improve their homes**



# Our Team



# Ethiopia Team



**Elsa Kebede**  
Country Director



**Tatek Ezezew**  
Amhara General  
Manager



**Binalfew Alemu**  
Amhara Accountant  
and Administrator

## Project Teams



**Dawit Megerssa**  
Oromia  
Projects  
Manager



**Zemene Mersha**  
Amhara  
Projects  
Manager



**Gebre Ayechew**  
Projects  
Coordinator



**Asfaw Admas**  
Kindu Klub  
Youth Worker



**Chekula Gebre-Egzabhier**  
Playgroup  
Youth Worker

## Sponsorship Teams



**Marta Bekele**  
Sponsorship  
Manager



**Aster Molla**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator



**Lensa Abera**  
Oromia  
Accountant  
and  
Coordinator



**Sitotaw Ambachew**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator  
*until July 2022*

## Supporting Staff



**Selamawit Abebe**  
Cashier and  
Purchaser



**Askalech Astatkie**  
Cook



**Melat Getu**  
Cook



**Abebech Mequanent**  
Cleaner



**Enanye Tadele**  
Cleaner and  
Messenger



**Abate Taye**  
Guard



**Tigabu Bera**  
Guard



**Wagnew Shumeye**  
Guard



**Abebe Dinku**  
Gardener

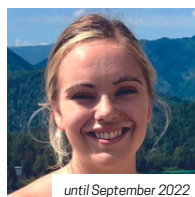
## UK Team



**Caroline Walker**  
Chief Executive



**Rory Dillon**  
Projects Manager  
*until October 2022*



**Ellie Chesshire**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator  
*until September 2022*



**Elle Harris**  
Sponsorship  
Coordinator  
*from October 2022*

# Special Thanks



## Organisations

- ◇ Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust
- ◇ Amhara Ministry of Education
- ◇ The Archer Trust
- ◇ Baillie Gifford Foundation
- ◇ Building Futures Ethiopia
- ◇ Corvallis Sister Cities Association
- ◇ Days for Girls UK
- ◇ Elsie Kerr Trust
- ◇ Enable-Ed
- ◇ Ethiopiaid UK
- ◇ Eva Reckitt Trust
- ◇ The Foundation for Social Improvement
- ◇ Gondar College of Teacher Education
- ◇ Guernsey Overseas Aid
- ◇ Hosking Charitable Trust
- ◇ Jolly Futures
- ◇ Leicester Women's Welcome Fund
- ◇ Paradigm Norton Trust
- ◇ Peter Stebbings Memorial Charity
- ◇ The Rhododendron Trust
- ◇ Small International Development Charity Network
- ◇ Souter Charitable Trust
- ◇ Studiosus Foundation
- ◇ The Sycamore Trust
- ◇ The Tula Trust
- ◇ Tutu's Fund for the Future
- ◇ TUUT Charitable Trust
- ◇ UK Literacy Association
- ◇ The Waterloo Foundation
- ◇ Wild Frontiers Foundation

## Link Schools

- ◇ All Saints Church of England Primary School, Harrogate
- ◇ Backwell School, Bristol
- ◇ Bedford Academy, Bedford
- ◇ Bramford Church of England Primary School, Ipswich
- ◇ Brocks Hill Primary, Oadby
- ◇ Bryn Offa Church of England Primary School, Oswestry
- ◇ Dr Challoner's Grammar School, Amersham
- ◇ Furze Platt Junior School, Maidenhead
- ◇ Gunthorpe Church of England Primary School, Gunthorpe
- ◇ Holland House Infant School and Nursery, Sutton Coldfield
- ◇ Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School, Dartford
- ◇ Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Primary School, Leeds
- ◇ Impington Village College, Cambridge
- ◇ Kenmore Park Infants and Nursery School, Harrow
- ◇ Killinghall Church of England Primary School, Harrogate
- ◇ Longney Church of England Primary Academy, Longney
- ◇ Moyles Court School, Ringwood
- ◇ Naseby Church of England Primary School Academy, Naseby
- ◇ Nun Monkton Primary School, Nun Monkton
- ◇ Rhyddings Business and Enterprise School, Oswaldtwistle
- ◇ South Avenue Elementary, New York, USA
- ◇ St John's Church of England Primary School, Caterham
- ◇ St John's Church of England Primary School, Walsall
- ◇ St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea
- ◇ St Peter's Primary Church of England Academy, Stonnal
- ◇ Stanion Church of England Aided Primary School, Stanion
- ◇ Stratton Primary School, Stratton
- ◇ Tannery Drift First School, Royston
- ◇ Unicorn School, Richmond

## Fundraisers

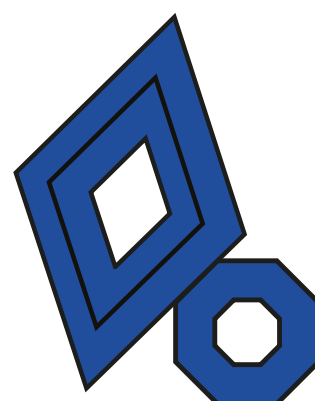
- ◇ London Marathon - Michelle Caldeira
- ◇ New Forest 10k - Sarah Walker
- ◇ Royal Parks Half Marathon - Ellie Chesshire, William Davies, Rory Dillon, Tim Otty, Mark Papasavva, Daniel Perfitt, Nadia Serroukh, Akhil Shah and Gavin Walker

## Volunteers

- ◇ Abbey Anson
- ◇ Pete Belfield
- ◇ Nadine Carle-Edgar
- ◇ Ashley England
- ◇ Liya Getachew
- ◇ Elisabeth Gezahegn King
- ◇ Meron Haile
- ◇ Caterina Ionescu
- ◇ Priya Kara
- ◇ Holly McKenzie
- ◇ Gabriella Otty
- ◇ Jack Sharville
- ◇ Matthew Stockdale

## Gifts In Kind

- ◇ Alice Hearn: voluntary services to examine accounts
- ◇ Days for Girls - reusable period packs
- ◇ Dropbox - storage solutions
- ◇ Finsbury Park Trust - discounted office space
- ◇ Mailerlite - mailing service
- ◇ Salesforce - database

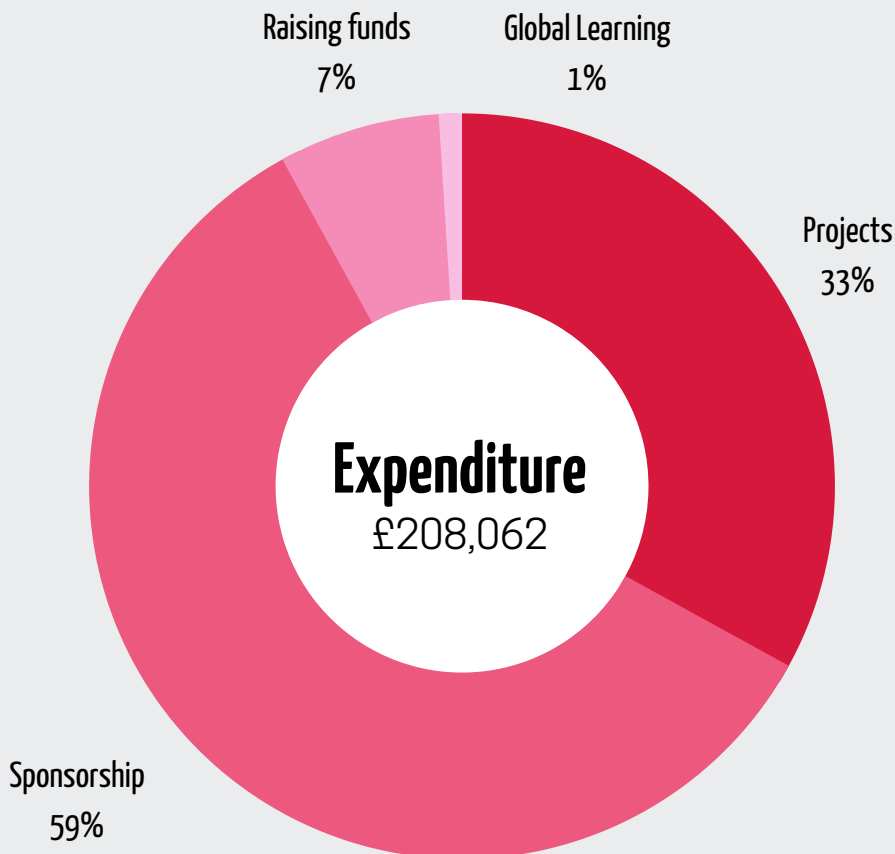
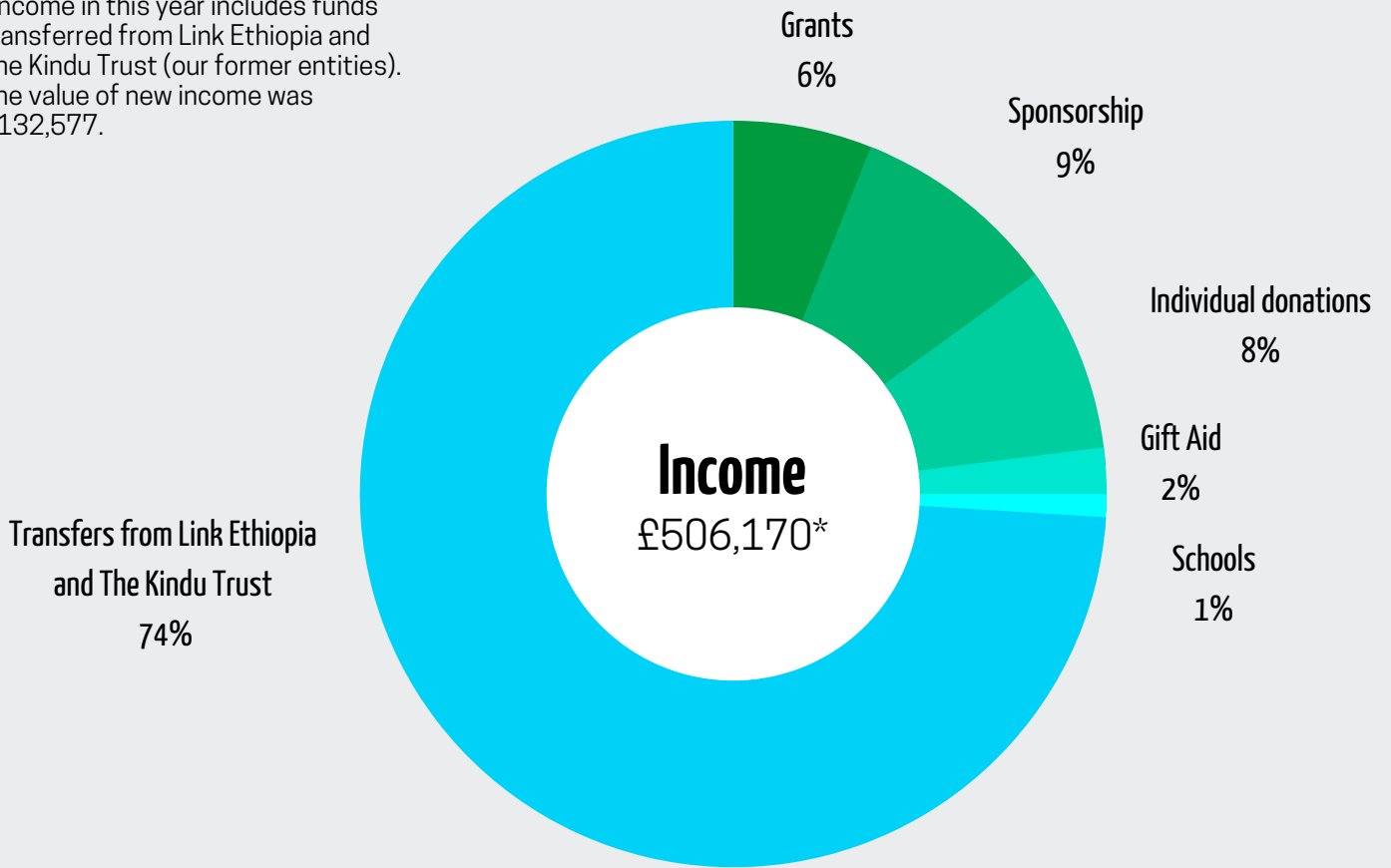


# Our Finances



# Income and Expenditure

\*Income in this year includes funds transferred from Link Ethiopia and The Kindu Trust (our former entities). The value of new income was £132,577.



# Statement of Financial Activities

	Note	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted income funds (£)	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Incoming resources</b>	2&3				
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
Donations and legacies		48,124	16,784	64,908	10,293
Charitable activities		5,900	61,769	67,669	179
Transfers from Link Ethiopia and The Kindu Trust		195,897	177,696	373,593	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>249,921</b>	<b>256,249</b>	<b>506,170</b>	<b>10,472</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>	4				
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds	5	14,200	-	14,200	-
Charitable activities		2,462	191,400	193,862	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>16,662</b>	<b>191,400</b>	<b>208,062</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		<b>233,259</b>	<b>64,849</b>	<b>298,108</b>	<b>10,472</b>
<b>Transfer between funds</b>	11	-	28,209	-	-
<b>Foreign exchange (losses) / gains</b>	12	-	419	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>204,631</b>	<b>93,058</b>	<b>297,689</b>	<b>10,472</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		10,293	179	10,472	-
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>214,924</b>	<b>93,237</b>	<b>308,161</b>	<b>10,472</b>

# Balance Sheet

	Note	Total this year (€)	Total last year (€)
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	8	-	-
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	9	9,696	-
Cash at bank and in hand		324,914	10,472
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>334,610</b>	<b>10,472</b>
Creditors: amounts failing due within one year	10	- 26,449	-
Net current assets / (liabilities)		308,161	10,472
Total assets less current liabilities		308,161	10,472
<b>Funds of the charity</b>			
Restricted income funds	11	93,237	179
Unrestricted funds		214,924	10,293
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>308,161</b>	<b>10,472</b>

# Notes to the Accounts

## Note 1 - Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charitable trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', and Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of investments. There were no related party transactions for the period.

## Note 2 - Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

## Cash Flow

A cash flow statement has not been prepared as the Trustees have taken advantage of the exemptions afforded by Financial Reporting Standard Number 1 (revised) as the charity is of similar size to a small company.

## Corporation Tax

The charity is exempt from taxation in respect of Corporation Tax and Capital Gains under Section 466 et seq of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 and Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

## Note 3 - Analysis of income

	Unrestricted funds (€)	Restricted income funds (€)	Total funds (€)	Prior year funds (€)
<b>Donations and legacies</b>				
Donations and gifts	22,537	16,784	39,321	293
Git Aid	10,990	-	10,990	-
General grants	14,597	-	14,597	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,124</b>	<b>16,784</b>	<b>64,908</b>	<b>10,923</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Sponsorship	-	45,519	45,519	179
Global Learning	5,900	-	5,900	-
Projects	-	16,250	16,250	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,900</b>	<b>61,769</b>	<b>67,669</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Transfers from Link Ethiopia and Kindu Trust</b>				
Transfers from Link Ethiopia	75,051	109,333	184,384	-
Transfers from The Kindu Trust	120,846	68,363	189,209	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>195,897</b>	<b>177,696</b>	<b>373,593</b>	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>249,921</b>	<b>256,249</b>	<b>506,170</b>	<b>10,472</b>

## Note 4 - Resources Expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes VAT which is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates. Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Costs are split between categories based on staff time.

## Note 5 - Raising Funds

	Total funds (€)	Prior year funds (€)
<b>Raising Funds</b>		
Events	2,855	-
Merchandise & other	1,560	-
Shared operations	3,279	-
Staffing	6,506	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,200</b>	-

## Note 6 - Employees

Average number of full-time equivalent employees in the London office: 2 (July 2021 to March 2022). (0 in 2020-21). Number with annual remuneration of £60,000 or more: 0.

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Employees</b>		
Wages & salaries	35,967	-
Social security costs	2,309	-
Pension Contributions	619	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,895</b>	<b>-</b>

## Note 7 - Trustee Remuneration

Trustees received no remuneration nor expenses.

## Note 8 - Tangible Fixed Assets

Purchases of under £1,000 in value are written off in the year of purchase.

## Note 9 - Debtors & prepayments

Amounts falling due within one year:

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Debtors</b>		
Trade debtors	9,696	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,696</b>	<b>-</b>

## Note 10 - Creditors

Amounts falling due within one year:

	Total funds (£)	Prior year funds (£)
<b>Creditors</b>		
Accruals	10,000	-
Social security	630	-
Deferred income	15,819	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,449</b>	<b>-</b>

## Note 11 - Movement in Funds

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

The charity maintains detailed restricted funds. Unexpended balances remained in 14 restricted funds at the year end relating to different projects and sponsorships.

## Note 12 - Foreign Exchange Calculation

Transactions in Ethiopian Birr are translated at rates prevailing when funds are transferred to Ethiopia. Balances denominated in Ethiopian Birr are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year end.

## Declarations

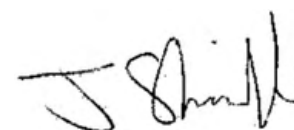
The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

## Signatures

**Full name**  
Holly McKenzie  
**Position**  
Chair  
**Date**  
29/01/2023



**Full name**  
Jack Sharville  
**Position**  
Treasurer  
**Date**  
29/01/2023



# Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Together We Learn for the year ended 31st Mar 2022, which are set out on pages 34 to 37.

## Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

## Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Alice Hearn ACA**  
Redhill, Surrey

30 January 2023





### Registered Address

225-229 Seven Sisters Road,  
London, N4 2DA

### Trustees

Nadine Carle-Edgar  
Ashley England  
Elsabeth Gezahegn King  
Holly McKenzie  
Gabiella Otty  
Jack Sharville  
Matthew Stockdale

### Chief Executive

Caroline Walker

### President

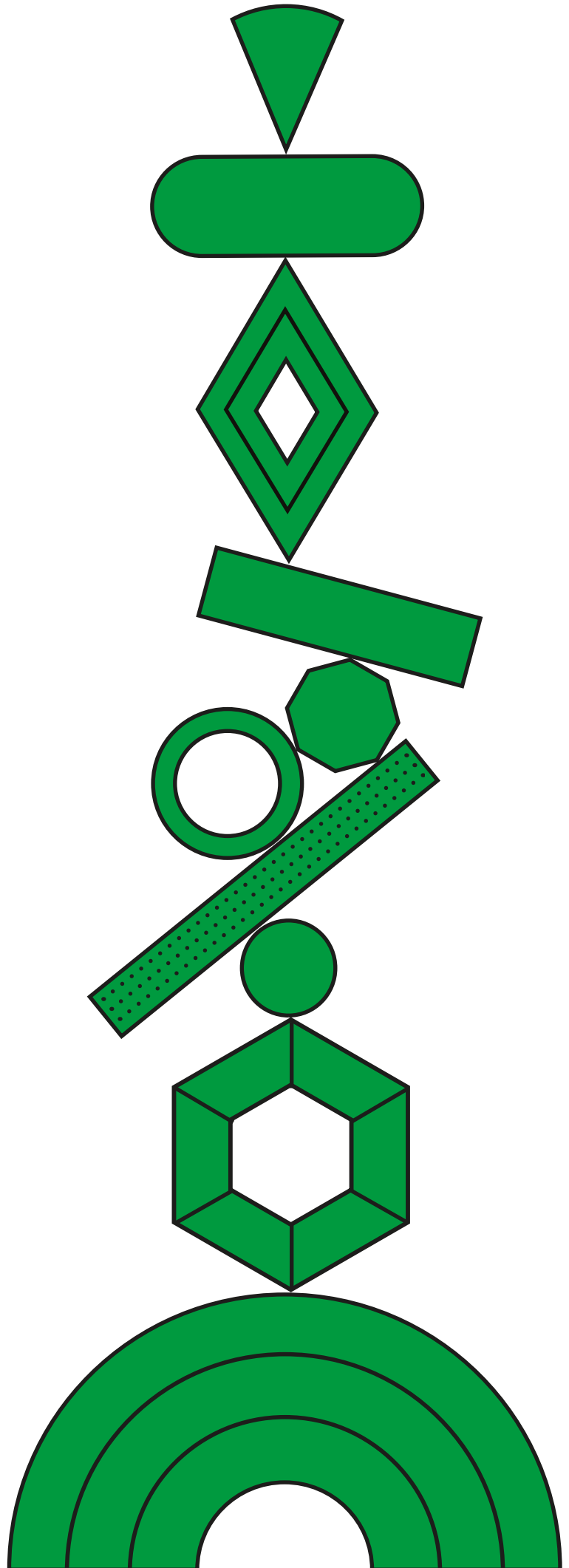
Helen Pankhurst CBE

### Banker

The Co-operative Bank p.l.c.  
P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street  
Manchester, M60 4EP

### Registration

Registered charity number: 1165953  
Charitable Incorporated Organisation  
Constitution last amended 8 May 2020



**Together We Learn**

England & Wales - Charity number 1165953

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# Accounts

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## **Trustees' Annual Report** **For the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

**Together We Learn**  
**1165953**

### **Objectives and Activities**

#### **Objectives**

The purposes of the charity as set out in our governing document are the advancement of education and the relief of poverty in Ethiopia and the promotion of equality between people in the United Kingdom and Ethiopia, in particular but not exclusively by:

- A. Supporting children, families, individuals, schools, communities, organisations, and charities in Ethiopia;
- B. Raising public awareness in the U.K. of Ethiopia's history and culture, educational and poverty issues, including through lessons and a range of visits.

The trustees have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future objectives.

#### **Activities undertaken to meet our objectives**

Together We Learn is formed by the merger of Link Ethiopia (registered charity number 1112390) and The Kindu Trust (registered charity number 1069574). The merge was announced in September 2020 and the transfer of financial assets and activities will commence from the start of the next financial year.

This report covers an account of finances received by Together We Learn in the financial year 2020-21 and covers activities jointly completed by the three charities over the reporting period. A full report of combined finances and activities can be found on our website (<https://twlethiopia.org/impact/#aranchor>).

### **Access to Education**

#### **School Construction**

We build facilities at schools to increase access to learning for children in rural areas and improve the quality of educational facilities. This year, five new classrooms were built; four classrooms were restored; one library was built; and two water stations were built.

#### **Gendit School Project**

Our project at Gendit School, in partnership with Building Futures Ethiopia, aims to transform Gendit School into a model of rural education. In September 2020, we refurbished four old classrooms, making structural repairs and replacing the furniture to make the classrooms functional again. We installed a new water station near the toilet block, providing hand washing facilities and clean drinking water for students. We also completed construction of a fence around the school compound which will safeguard school buildings and enable the

school to run farming activities on the grounds to generate income for school expenses. We also worked closely with the teachers and the director at the school from the start of the academic year, providing training on teaching English using the phonics method, on lesson planning, and creating teaching aids.

### **Hibret Library Project**

We collaborated with US organisation Open Hearts Big Dreams to bring a new library to Gondar town. Construction began in early 2020. It was disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic but resumed later in the year and by February 2021 the library was furnished with areas to read, stocked with books, and open for pupils to enjoy.

### **Silingo School Project**

This year also saw the completion of new concrete block classrooms at Silingo School in Asella, Oromia. The classrooms were funded by Headington School, Oxford, who supported the construction of a four-classroom concrete block at the school, which was in use in time for the new school year, when students were able to return to school in smaller class sizes with safety measures in place.

### **Kumbursa Kindergarten Project**

A new kindergarten classroom was completed at Kumbursa Elementary in rural Oromia this year. The classroom was completed in time for the new year in 2020.

### **Water Station Projects**

This year we built two new water stations, at Gendit School and at Atse Bekaffa School where 1,300 pupils are able to benefit.

### **Student Sponsorship**

Our sponsorship programme enables children from low income families to go to school. The coronavirus pandemic this year led to a swift and decisive move from the Ethiopian government, announcing a state of emergency from April to August 2020. These measures meant that our students were not able to access education for the second semester of the academic year. We took a number of steps to continue supporting students and their families throughout this time; we provided an advance on monthly sponsorship funds to enable families to bulk buy before prices increased. We bought soap, masks and other sanitation materials and our team ran a handwashing campaign for families in Gondar. Our Gondar office was open to students twice a week to access laptops, the internet and a printer so they could download and print lessons, worksheets and resources sent by teachers to continue their learning. In August, the rainy season further reduced income opportunities already affected by the lockdown, so we ran a fundraising campaign to buy food parcels for families in urgent need and were able to provide supplies of oil, teff grain and flour to 587 families. Schools were reopened in October and our team acted quickly to distribute educational materials to students so they could resume their studies as soon as possible. Throughout the state of emergency our sponsorship coordinators remained in contact with families via phone to ensure their continued wellbeing.

### **Girls' Education - Lijinete Women's Network**

This year the Lijinete Women's Network project trained 13 women who had experienced child marriage and motherhood to support girls in their community who are at risk of child marriage, assault or dropping out of school. Following leadership and confidence building sessions, all the women received business training and start-up loans to enable them to be financially independent. The women met up every month to provide peer support to each other, discuss cases in their community and share experience from their businesses.

## **Girls' Education - Menstrual Hygiene Management**

As part of our work to support girls' education, we provide reusable period packs and training about menstruation for female students. Days for Girls UK make the kits which provide a comfortable and reliable solution for girls to manage their period. This year we were very happy to work with the Disability Coordinator at Azezo Primary school to provide 40 reusable period packs to girls affected by autism and blindness, as well as distributing a further 110 packs to disadvantaged pupils.

## **Playgroup**

The playgroup is a space for pre-school sponsored children to socialise and play. Children visit with their guardians where they develop both by interacting with each other and with toys they often don't have at home. Primary school starts at age seven in Ethiopia and few schools have kindergartens attached for earlier learning. The first years of a child's life are vital to lay the foundations for learning in the future and the Playgroup exists to provide this, as well as support and resources for parents. 46 children a week attended the Playgroup when it was running this year.

## **Quality of Education**

### **Teacher Training**

Together We Learn has been partnering with Jolly Phonics to train Ethiopian teachers to use the phonics method of teaching English. 2020 marked our seventh year training Ethiopian teachers to use a phonics approach. For the first time in our Amhara project, we trained teachers outside of Gondar with schools in the cities of Dessie, Debre Markos and Debre Tabor invited to training sessions. The director and two early grade teachers from ten schools in each city were invited to participate and each group was supported by a local fieldworker throughout the year. Our work with Colleges of Teacher Education also expanded – with eight lecturers and 20 students from Begemdir College in Debre Tabor receiving training in how to use phonics when they qualify as teachers. Our first semester training sessions took place as planned but unfortunately, before we could hold our second semester training sessions, Ethiopian schools were shut to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In October 2020, thanks to the support of our donor, The Waterloo Foundation, we were able to rerun all our planned activities, working with the same schools and the same students now in grade two as well as trainee teachers in Debre Tabor.

### **School Linking**

Our school linking programme invites schools to join us in changing lives through education by engaging young people to learn more about the world around them. We facilitated 31 school links in 2020. When the coronavirus pandemic led to a shutdown of schools in the UK and Ethiopia, we made all of our school resources publicly available to support remote learning, and developed a number of new resources focused on issues related to coronavirus, to encourage students to consider how the pandemic was impacting people across the globe. One resource concerned global health, the World Health Organisation, and Dr Tedros Gebreyesus, its Ethiopian Director-General. Another resource looked at water access and consumption in the UK and Ethiopia, and how this affects the ability to manage sanitation in relation to health and issues such as the pandemic.

### **Donkey Library**

Our donkey libraries are equipped with safe harnesses to transport reference books and story books to isolated schools. A trained donkey librarian travels with the donkey to schools in rural areas where they lend books to children to support their learning and to teachers to enhance their lessons. They also help children to select books and hold reading sessions

while at the school. School visits were not possible when schools closed in March 2020, but the donkey librarians supported other children locally by lending books for them to read at home. The donkey library supported 17 schools this year, benefitting 7,000 pupils.

### **The Kindu Klub**

The Kindu Klub is an educational club based in Gondar that provides homework support, access to learning spaces and organised play. This year we received an average of 97 pupils per week at the club where the dedicated youth worker arranged lessons to support their learning, provided homework support and led games, including weekly football sessions on Fridays. The club also provides access to computers so that children can learn IT skills, and a library where they can borrow fiction and study books. We ran a number of activities to support students during the pandemic. In May, older pupils who attended the club supported our youth worker and sponsorship team to set up handwashing stations around our compound, to distribute soap to families in the area and to deliver training on good handwashing practice. In June, our library facility was opened so students could borrow books and study from home, and pupils were invited to download and print worksheets sent by their teachers at the club. In August, we redirected funds that would normally be used to provide meals at the Kindu Klub to deliver emergency food parcels for families particularly in need. In December, when activities were able to resume, we adapted the club space for socially distant learning, running sessions in smaller groups and with regular handwashing. We also took advantage of the extra space provided by an office move to build an outdoor canteen area so that students could enjoy their meals more safely under the shelter outside.

## **Children's Wellbeing**

### **Football Teams**

Together We Learn runs football projects for girls and boys in both Gondar and Bishoftu. Our teams hold regular training sessions and participate in friendly matches and tournaments. Training sessions and matches were paused in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic but our coach in Bishoftu was able to continue to stay connected with the team by holding fitness training sessions over the phone. We were able to restart in-person sessions with new teams in January 2021.

### **Home Improvements**

As part of our mission to enable children to succeed in education, we work with families and communities to improve the living environments of children. Adequate housing means security for the child, a safe place to live and a place to study and do homework. Many of our sponsored families live in very basic accommodation with few, if any, basic conveniences. We facilitate the construction of new homes, improve existing homes, install taps and electricity and provide bedding and other furniture. These improvements can reduce living costs and make homes healthier, safer and happier places to live. We built six new homes, installed six taps, installed four electric metres and supported six families to improve their homes in other ways.

## **Achievements and Performance**

As a result of our work this year, the following has been achieved:

### **Access to Education**

- 2,700 pupils benefitted from new school facilities.
- 5 new classrooms have been built.
- 1 library has been built.
- 4 classrooms have been restored.

- 2 water stations have been built.
- 489 students were sponsored through education.
- 41 students moved from primary to secondary education.
- 30 students achieved their certificate of secondary education.
- 55 students attended university or higher education training.
- 5 students graduated from university or training courses.
- 219 families received medical support.
- 185 girls and women at risk of gender based violence and child marriage received advice or support.
- 150 girls received reusable period packs.
- 97 children received educational support at the Kindu Klub.
- 36 children had access to books at the Kindu Klub library.
- 17 rural schools had access to books through the donkey library.
- 7,000 rural pupils had access to borrow books through the donkey library.

### **Quality of Education**

- 141 teachers received training to improve the quality of lessons.
- 135 teaching staff received training on improving English teaching using the phonics method.
- 3,750 students benefited from learning with the phonics method this year.
- 31 global school links were facilitated.

### **Children's Wellbeing**

- 955 families received special help through the coronavirus pandemic.
- 687 food parcels were distributed.
- 300 families received soap and handwashing training.
- 94 children were part of 5 football teams.
- 46 children had access to food, toys and early learning at Playgroup each week.
- 6 families had new homes built.
- 6 families had running water installed by their homes.
- 4 families had electricity installed in their homes.
- 6 families received funding to help improve their homes.

### **Financial Review**

During the financial year 2020-21, Together We Learn only received funds at the end of the financial year. Assets from the merger will be transferred in the next financial year and the trustees are confident in the charity's ability to continue achieving its objectives with those funds.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

#### **Reserves Policy**

The Trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. They have established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be between three and six months of the expenditure.

Budgeted expenditure for 2021/22 is £300,000 and therefore the target range is £75,000 to £150,000 in general funds. The reserves are needed to meet the requirements of the charity

and the Trustees are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding. Currently the charity holds £10,293 in reserves. Once assets are received from the merging charities (Link Ethiopia and The Kindu Trust) we expect to meet the lower end of our target range for reserves.

### **Sources of Funds**

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The charity's principal sources of funds this financial year were grants (96%) and individual donations (4%).

### **Principal Risks**

The coronavirus pandemic has created a low risk for the charity, impacting the income of a number of individual supporters and causing some grant makers to redirect funds to national, rather than international, causes.

At the time of writing, the conflict in Northern Ethiopia poses a risk to our ability to deliver our activities, to ensure the safety of our staff and beneficiaries, and our ability to run income generating activities in-country.

The Trustees are aware of the risks, have contingency and risk limitation plans in place and review these at quarterly meetings, or exceptional meetings should these be required.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

Our governing document is the Constitution last amended on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The charity is constituted as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO).

Together We Learn is formed from the merger of two registered charities: Link Ethiopia (registered charity number 1112390) and The Kindu Trust (registered charity number 1069574). The merge was announced in September 2020 and the transfer of financial assets and activities will commence from the start of the next financial year.

Apart from the first charity Trustees, every Trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the charity Trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

The charity Trustees will make available to each new charity Trustee, on or before his or her first appointment:

- a) A copy of the current version of the constitution; and
- b) A copy of the CIO's latest Trustees' Annual Report and statement of accounts.

## Reference and Administrative details

Charity name: Together We Learn  
Registered charity number: 1165953  
Principal address: 225-229 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DA

### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Nadine Carle-Edgar		From October 2020	
2	Ashley England	Chair		
3	Maria Gabriella Otty			
4	Elsabeth Gezahegn King			
5	Holly McKenzie			
6	Jack Sharville	Treasurer		
7	Matthew Stockdale			

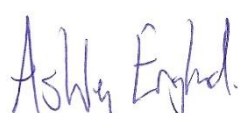

### Name of chief executive

Caroline Walker, Chief Executive

## Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

### Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

<b>Signature(s)</b>		
<b>Full name(s)</b>	Ashley England	Jack Sharville
<b>Position(s)</b>	Chair	Treasurer
<b>Date</b>	24/12/2021	24/12/2021

Together We Learn			1165953
Annual accounts for the period			
Period start date	01.04.20	To	31.03.21

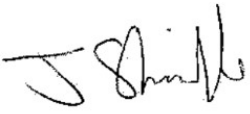

## Section A Statement of financial activities

Categories by activity	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted income funds £	Total funds £	Prior year funds £
<b>Incoming resources</b>	2 & 3				
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
Donations and legacies		10,293	-	10,293	-
Charitable activities		-	179	179	-
<b>Total</b>		10,293	179	10,472	-
<b>Resources expended</b>					
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-
Charitable activities		-	-	-	-
Separate material item of expense		-	-	-	-
Other		-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		-	-	-	-
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)</b>		10,293	179	10,472	-
Net gains/(losses) on investments		-	-	-	-
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		10,293	179	10,472	-
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward		-	-	-	-
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		10,293	179	10,472	-

# Section B

# Balance sheet

		Notes	Total this year £	Total last year £
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors			-	-
Cash at bank and in hand			10,472	-
	<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>10,472</b>	<b>-</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year			-	-
	<b>Net current assets/(liabilities)</b>		<b>10,472</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>10,472</b>	<b>-</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year			-	-
	<b>Total net assets or liabilities</b>		<b>10,472</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>				
Restricted income funds (Note 27)			179	-
Unrestricted funds			10,293	-
	<b>Total funds</b>		<b>10,472</b>	<b>-</b>

Trustee Signature	Print Name	Date of approval dd/mm/yyyy
	Jack Sharville	24.12.2021
	Ashley England	24.12.2021

Note 1 **Basis of accounting**

The financial statements of the charitable trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', and Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of investments. There were no related party transactions for the period.

Note 2 **Incoming Resources**

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Note 3 **Analysis of income**

Analysis		Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds £	Prior year £
<b>Donations and legacies:</b>	Donations and gifts	293	-	293	-
	Gift Aid	-	-	-	-
	Legacies	-	-	-	-
	General grants provided by government/other charities	10,000	-	10,000	-
	<b>Total</b>	10,293	-	10,293	-
<b>Charitable activities:</b>	Sponsorship	-	179	179	-
	<b>Total</b>	-	179	179	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		10,293	179	10,472	-

Note 4 **Tangible fixed assets**

Purchases of under £1,000 in value are written off in the year of purchase.

Note 5 **Trustee Remuneration**

Trustees received no remuneration nor expenses.