



Ethiopian Education Fund

Newsletter | Fall 2022

Dear Friends of the Ethiopian Education Fund,

Much has happened since our last newsletter. Students have graduated and found jobs. The fighting has ended in the north of the country. And I (Stephanie) had the privilege last month of visiting Ethiopia and talking with the students supported by the EEF. This year is the 20th anniversary of our first arrival in Ethiopia to run a health center. Neither I nor Jeff ever thought that first visit would turn into a lifelong relationship with the village of Chiri and its youth. It has been a long and rewarding journey to where we are now, enabling 41 students to advance their education, engaging the community through the Scholars Committee, and contributing to worthy government community programs that reach homeless and impoverished children.

Zelalem, our in-country manager, and Bereket, our advisor and driver, accompanied me on a week-long visit to Chiri and neighboring Bonga. We had such a fun time visiting old friends, drinking coffee, solving problems and giving emotional support to the students. Now that international texting apps are common, I find myself ever more connected to the students even after I returned to the US. My trip reinforced the flexible approach used by the EEF. It meets students and their families where they are. I saw once again how students are not always on a linear path; stuff happens. The mother of an EEF student falls sick and needs care from her only son, a student at a distant university. A student becomes pregnant and wonders if we will continue to support her. Violence breaks out on a distant campus and an EEF student needs to take shelter in her home village. Along with our in-country advisers, we are able to work through challenges.



Your support enables young women like Embet, Grade 11 (photo) to continue her education. When I visited, three of our students were taking the National 12th grade leaving exam, which will determine if they are admitted to university, college, or a technical school. A stressful time indeed, but also a hopeful time for them and for us. It may take a month to find out test scores and the fate of these three students, but we are confident that their ability to focus on schoolwork during school will allow them to earn good scores and keep their education alive.

Further along the EEF education pathway, several students will graduate college in IT soon and are thinking about how and where to find jobs. I just want to pause on this...clever students who had no chance of finishing grade school are about to graduate from a four-year IT program. That is how the EEF makes a difference at the individual and community levels.

Our work occurs in a remote part of the country called Kafa. In the past, students reluctantly went to different parts of the country to go to University, reluctantly because that meant being dropped into high pressure environments that had a different culture and leaving family and friends

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behind. Now, Bonga, the capital city of Kafa, has a new University so students will not have to travel far and will be able to focus on studies and continue to be encouraged by nearby family and friends.

We are hopeful for the new African Union-brokered cease fire agreement between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF in the north. Everyone we spoke to just wants peace. May the powers that be allow for hostilities to end and rebuilding to begin.



I know that we all look at the world and its problems and wonder how to make a difference. Let me assure you that you are making a difference. I see how the students of EEF have grown and matured. I have increased hope for their futures. It puts a smile on my face as I think of Mihret's enthusiasm for her studies, Meleku's ideas for graduation, Meron's self-confidence and the other students who are focusing on their studies, finding motivation, and bringing economic security to themselves and their communities.

It is with your support that I saw the increased confidence and knowledge of the students I visited. Please consider donating to the EEF at www.ethiopianeducationfund.org or by sending a check to the address below. It only takes \$30 per month (\$360/year) to support a girl in grade school and her family; \$40 per month (\$480/year) supports a college or university student. Any amount counts in this work; every donation goes to supporting students. And we always donate our time and personally cover travel expenses to support the work.

Remember: Ethiopia has the best coffee in the world. Ask us about purchasing Ethiopian coffee, roasted by Olympic Crest Coffee Roasters. All proceeds go to the students we serve (thanks Chuck!)

All the best from the EEF Board,

Stephanie, Annie, Jeff, Rochelle and Azeb



Primary school students in Chiri

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