



The Asra Hawariat School Fund ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Introduction

The Asra Hawariat School is a non-fee paying, non-religious and non-political voluntary organization working with those children and families who could not otherwise afford to get an education. The school began in 1957 when Asfaw Yemiru, the founder, was a 9th grade student at the British Council-run General Wingate School. When his classes were over Asfaw started to teach local street children under a tree in the local Church yard; the children were fed on left-over food from Wingate, and they slept in the Church yard. This was put on a more permanent footing in 1961, owing to a grant of land from the then-emperor Haile Selassie – and the children were able to sleep under cover, on shelves at the side of the classrooms.

In 1965, when the number of students had reached 1000, the school was officially recognized by the ministry of Education. Since then the school, in addition to its core educational work, has run a number of additional humanitarian projects: an orphanage, child and family aid (including fostering children with local families), a vocational farm, a feeding centre for malnourished children, a kindergarten and various training programmes. Since its foundation it has reached and helped over 120,000 of the poorest citizens of Ethiopia's capital city.

The Asra Hawariat School Fund (UK Registered Charity 325121) exists to support this work.

New Build Arts and Science block

The main infrastructure work this year has been the building of an impressive new Arts and Science block, which will also house a school museum (displaying the school history and the cultures of the various ethnic groups that make up our student body); a dedicated IT centre, an educational resource centre, ; music theatre and art (all in the basement). A new toilet and shower block is also being constructed.

As you will see from the attendant photographs, this is an impressive building, quite unlike anything we have built before. It is causing huge excitement amongst the staff, students, parents and local community, partly because it is sending out the message that our students deserve the best, even if they are poor. That is proving a huge morale booster.

Information Technology

The Hon. Secretary (Timothy Kinahan), on his visit to the school in early 2016 was hugely impressed to see how the kids had taken to IT, and how relaxed and confident they were with computers compared with the previous year, when the IT suites had only just been installed. Credit must go to the IT teacher, Ato Techale.



Legal & Administrative details

The Asra Hawariat School Fund was founded by a Declaration of Trust dated 10th October 1974, and is registered with the UK Charity Commission as Charity No.325121. The objects of the Charity are the relief of poverty and the advancement of education in Ethiopia through the work of the Asra Hawariat School. The Fund has no paid staff and is run on an entirely voluntary basis. The Trustees of the Fund are Gillian Cloke, Richard Cloke, Nicholas Kaye, and Timothy Kinahan.

Regular School Operation

Student Enrolment

We admit only those children whose parents would have real difficulty affording the small costs involved in a government education – the poorest of the poor, children from single parent families, the homeless, those with no defined source of income, slum-dwellers and orphans.

We believe strongly in encouraging female education as a primary means of tackling poverty and, as a result, out of a student body of 1036, 569 are girls.

The student body is served by 49 teaching staff, of whom 8 are qualified to Certificate level, 26 to Diploma level, and 15 with Degrees. All are encouraged and financially assisted to further their studies and offered in-house training.

The school follows the National Curriculum as laid down by the Ministry of Education, with some adjustments – English is taught from Grade 1, and science and maths given greater emphasis. We also keep class sizes small, averaging 30, which is much smaller than most other schools in the country. Academic progress is regularly assessed, and children assisted as necessary. In this academic year 84 children took to 8th Grade national examinations, and all passed. Being poor, our children are fully aware they the education we offer is their one route to a brighter future, and they work hard. This year, in various local competitions in Addis Schools, the Asra Hawariat School has produced 5 of the top 6 students in the entire city (population at least 6 million, average age 19).

The Hon Secretary's visit this year coincided with a Festival Day at the Old Land: in addition to food and dancing from a variety of ethnic groups represented in the student body, there was also a sack-race, and egg (lime) and spoon race, a gymnastic display and a truly disgusting banana eating contest! Most of the photographs in this report were taken at that event.

School Clubs

There are several lively and educational school clubs, including Health and Sanitation (60 members), Literature Drama and Music (80), Girls' Club (150), Sports (80), Civics (70), Environmental Protection and Beautification (70), Child Rights and Advocacy (70).

School Administration

One thing that the trustees are frequently asked is: 'what is the planning for the future?' There is understandable concern that, as the school's charismatic founder gets older, that there are competent people in place to run the school. In his visits over recent years the Hon Secretary has been delighted to observe the same people doing the same jobs each year, and doing them efficiently and competently. This is true of finance, procurement, maintenance and all other aspects of school life as well as the academic Asfaw's vision is in good hands.





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Other Activities

Agriculture

The farm thrives, acting both as a demonstration farm and as a source of fresh milk and vegetables for the Child Aid families. There are 60 head of cattle, and significant production of spinach, carrots, cabbage, beetroot, lettuce, onion, garlic and various local delicacies such as kitma, gesha and koba. We also have a small greenhouse to grow fruit-tree seedlings, such as apple and plum. These seedlings are then given out to students and their families to plant at home or in their neighbourhood (space permitting).

Health Service

In the school's health service and awareness creation program, more emphasis is given on preventive methods than cure. The important issues in health education are videotaped in Amharic and English and are used as visual aid to stress the importance of leading a healthy and happy life. The lessons in health education deal among other things with keeping the body, hair, clothes, shoes and homes clean. Sex education, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases prevention methods are also taught.

The clinic also gives first aid and small scale medical service to the school community. Headaches, worm infestations, minor skin wounds, etc. are the most frequent student health problems. Treatment of minor infections is carried out at the level of the clinic. Basic vaccination services are also provided to all children. Severe cases that cannot be treated are referred to health centres and hospitals accompanied by our nurse to help the helpless children.

The School Library

The school library is widely recognized as a resource centre for the teaching and learning activities. It has a wide range of subject books, periodicals, reference materials and teaching aids. There are over 7000 books in the library classified into different subjects. The reading room of the library is used by students, teachers and interested members of the school community throughout the week except on Sundays and public holidays though seasonally closed for inventory and rearrangement purposes.

The library would be vastly improved with an influx of new, up-to-date books: much of what is in stock is well past its sell-by date.



Thanks

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And, not least, thanks to all our supporters, whose remarkable generosity in difficult economic times has ensured another good year, and who have helped turn so many dreams into reality.

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