



Changing lives through education

Trustees' Annual Report

For the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Link Ethiopia

1112390

Objectives and Activities

Objectives

The advancement of education and the relief of poverty in Ethiopia and the promotion of racial harmony between the young people of the United Kingdom and Ethiopia, in particular but not exclusively by:

- A. The provision of training, information, advice and assistance to international link programmes between the United Kingdom and Ethiopia;
- B. The provision of financial and material support to schools, organisations, charities and individuals in Ethiopia;
- C. The raising of public awareness in the United Kingdom of Ethiopia's educational health and cultural issues, particularly in schools and among groups of young people.

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

This report covers activities from April 2020 to March 2021. The coronavirus pandemic began to have a global impact just before April 2020 and our teams worked hard to continue our support under new circumstances.

In addition, in September 2020 Link Ethiopia merged with The Kindu Trust to form Together We Learn. All our activities transitioned to Together We Learn from this time.

The main activities outlined below were undertaken under Link Ethiopia from April 2020 and were completed under Together We Learn for the second half of the reporting period. The transfer of Link Ethiopia's assets was made after this period.

School Construction

Link Ethiopia builds 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. The library is located in Hibret Elementary School, one of the largest in Gondar, which has 1,070 pupils. 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. In addition to subject reference books, the library also stocks children's storybooks from Ready Set Go: an attractive bilingual book series in English and local Ethiopian languages so children can read stories that they can relate to in their first language.

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, and its students who have completed a number of school visits to Ethiopia, since 2012. The funds 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. As the school operates in a shift system, the classrooms provided a learning space for over 200 students across eight classes in morning and afternoon shifts.

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. Previously, the kindergarten class shared a room with the Grade 1 class. The new classroom meant that kindergarten pupils were able to continue at the school in a safe environment, in line with COVID-19 regulations.

Water Station Projects

Our school construction projects have always been designed to provide facilities for state schools that would create the best learning environment for pupils. The coronavirus pandemic this year, shone a new light on the impact of our construction projects, showing that such facilities not only provide more conducive learning environments, but healthier and safer environments in general. This was especially clear with our water projects, which provide running water and tap points for schools to create access to water for handwashing and drinking for pupils. 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. This year we supported 174 students through our sponsorship programme.

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. As we sponsor students from disadvantaged families, most did not have access to TV or the internet to participate in remote learning initiatives. Most have illiterate parents, which made studying from home extremely difficult. In addition to this, many parents were impacted financially as there were fewer people around to support their small businesses and daily labour work was no longer available.

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.

Menstrual Hygiene Management

Girls in Ethiopia often lack access to sanitary products, information about periods, or even a private place to change. Cultural taboos around periods mean that it's difficult for girls to learn about what menstruation is and how to manage it. This has a negative effect on their education as girls struggle to concentrate in class, miss school to avoid embarrassment, and sometimes drop out altogether.

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. Each colourful pack includes liners, shields, pants, and soap as well as waterproof bags for cleaning and ease of transport.

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.

Teacher Training

Link Ethiopia 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. Our project is overseen by the Regional Education Bureau in Amhara with the eventual aim for every primary school in the region to receive training.

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.

In semester one, we held training sessions for teachers in four cities with 75 teachers from 37 schools attending as well as school directors. We visited each teacher throughout the year to observe their lessons and give them help teaching the sounds.

In semester two, we continued our work with the College of Teacher Education in Debre Tabor: delivering training for lecturers on teaching the phonics method to pre-service

teachers and training for students to practice and model phonics lessons to each other in groups.

We also held refresher sessions for teachers, though conflict in some areas of Amhara meant that we were not able to reach all our schools. Teachers faced unique challenges through the year with both the reopening after shutdown and regional unrest affecting where and when training could take place. Despite these hurdles, the project had a huge impact.

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.

We began the academic year with a resource on food and cultivation, encouraging linked schools to do an exchange of their favourite recipes and foods. 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

Where rural schools do exist in Ethiopia, they are often funded by the local community so facilities are basic and resources are minimal. Most school children don't have access to books at home and won't see books other than their school textbooks.

Link Ethiopia helps these children get access to books by bringing the library to them. 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.

Football Teams

We run football projects for girls and boys in Bishoftu. The teams offer children the opportunity to express themselves and develop new skills outside of the classroom.

Girls in Ethiopia tend to have fewer opportunities than boys because of concerns for their safety and a greater responsibility for household chores, so our girls' teams are an important space for developing fitness, confidence and togetherness.

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 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. 41 children were part of two football teams in 2020.

Thanking Volunteers

We are grateful to have had the support of 6 volunteers in this period. Volunteers have supported in our UK office and remotely on specific areas of our work such as the website or evaluation of data.

Achievements and Performance

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

- 2,700 pupils benefitting from new school facilities.
- 5 new classrooms built.
- 1 library built.
- 4 classrooms have been restored.
- 2 water stations built.
- 174 students were in university or higher education training.
- 23 students accessed higher education.
- 15 students moved from primary to secondary education.
- 11 students achieved their certificate of secondary education.
- 2 students graduated from university or training courses.
- 27 families received medical support.
- 300 food parcels were distributed.
- 150 girls received reusable period packs.
- 141 teachers received training to improve the quality of lessons.
- 3,750 students benefitted from learning with the phonics method this year.
- 31 global learning school links were facilitated.
- 17 rural schools had access to books through the donkey library project.
- 7,000 rural pupils had access to borrow books through the donkey library project.
- 41 children were part of two football teams.

Financial Review

As of 31st March 2021 the total funds carried forward were £131,895 which is sufficient to cover our planned activities and continuance of our work.

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 principle source of funds was from grants, which accounted for 67% of our income. Other sources include:

- 16% Sponsorship
- 12% Individual donations
- 5% Gift aid

Link Ethiopia merged during this reporting period and all activities will be continued under our new constituted charity – Together We Learn, registered number 1165953. Link Ethiopia's assets will be transferred in the next financial year.

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

Reserves Policy

The charity aims to have unrestricted funds of between three to six months running costs on deposit to meet unforeseen expenses that may occur in meeting its aims, and to bridge any temporary gaps in income. As of 31st March 2021 there was a net unrestricted funds balance of £60,107.

Principal Risks

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, under the new charity.

Structure, Governance and Management

Our governing document is the Trust Deed made on 18th September 2005. The charity is constituted as an unincorporated association.

New trustees are appointed by existing trustees.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name: Link Ethiopia

Charity number: 1112390

Principal address: 225-229 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DA

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)
1	Ashley England	Chair
2	Maria Gabriella Otty	
3	Elsabeth Gezahegn King	
4	Holly McKenzie	
5	Jack Sharville	Treasurer
6	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

Signatures		
Full names	Ashley England	Jack Sharville
Positions	Chair	Treasurer
Date	29/01/2022	31/01/2022

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Link Ethiopia for the year ended 31st Mar 2021, which are set out on pages 9 to 13.

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

28 January 2022





Link Ethiopia	1112390	
Annual accounts for the period		
Period start date	01.04.20	To 31.03.21

Statement of financial activities

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted income funds £	Total funds £	Prior year funds £
Incoming resources					
Income and endowments from:	2&3				
Donations and legacies	4	60,795	-	60,795	40,322
Charitable activities	5	850	215,911	216,761	276,981
Total		61,645	215,911	277,556	317,303
Resources expended	6				
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7	15,193	-	15,193	13,548
Charitable activities		12,910	226,497	239,407	335,728
Total		28,103	226,497	254,600	349,276
Net income/(expenditure)		33,542	- 10,586	22,956	- 31,973
Transfers between funds	13	- 17,544	17,544	-	-
Foreign exchange (losses)/gains	14	- 8,586	-	- 8,586	2,872
Net movement in funds		7,412	6,958	14,370	- 29,101
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		52,695	64,830	117,525	146,626
Total funds carried forward		60,107	71,788	131,895	117,525

Balance sheet

	Notes	Total this year £	Total last year £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	10	-	-
Total fixed assets		-	-
Current assets			
Debtors	11	17,810	36,775
Cash at bank and in hand		132,984	81,398
Total current assets		150,794	118,173
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	- 18,899	- 648
Net current assets/(liabilities)		131,895	117,525
Total assets less current liabilities		131,895	117,525
Funds of the Charity			
Restricted income funds	13	71,788	64,830
Unrestricted funds		60,107	52,695
Total funds		131,895	117,525

Trustee Signatures	Print name	Date of approval
	Ashley England	28/01/2022
	Jack Sharville	31/01/2022

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.

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.

Note 3 Analysis of income

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds	Prior year
				£	£
Donations and	Analysis				
	Donations and gifts	47,473	-	47,473	23,011
	Gift Aid	13,322	-	13,322	17,311
	Total	60,795	-	60,795	40,322
Charitable activities:	Sponsorship	-	43,773	43,773	42,870
	Global Learning	850	-	850	18,425
	Projects	-	172,138	172,138	215,686
	Total	850	215,911	216,761	276,981
TOTAL INCOME		61,645	215,911	277,556	317,303

Note 4 Donations and gifts

		Total funds	Prior year
		£	£
Donations and legacies:	Analysis		
	Individuals	16,309	21,995
	Schools	160	-
	Organisations	43	1,016
	Other (government grant)	30,961	-
	Total	47,473	23,011

Note 5 Projects

	Analysis	Total funds £	Prior year £
Projects:	Individuals	16,930	24,836
	Schools	344	746
	Trusts and Foundations	142,341	163,484
	Organisations	12,523	26,620
	Total	172,138	215,686

Note 6 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. Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the costs relevant to the strategic management of the charity.

Note 7 Raising Funds

	Analysis	Total funds £	Prior year £
Raising Funds:	Events	444	2,882
	Merchandise & other	325	335
	Shared operations	3,797	3,296
	Staffing	10,627	7,035
	Total	15,193	13,548

Note 8 Employees

Average number of full-time equivalent employees in the London office: 2.4 (2.5 in 2019-20). Number with annual remuneration of £60,000 or more: 0.

	Analysis	Total funds £	Prior year £
Employees:	Wages & salaries	48,958	43,231
	Social security costs	3,385	2,733
	Pension Contributions	953	694
	Total	53,296	46,658

Note 9 Trustee Remuneration

Trustees received no remuneration nor expenses.

Note 10 Tangible Fixed Assets

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

Note 11 Debtors & prepayments*Amounts falling due within one year:*

	Analysis	Total funds £	Prior year £
Debtors:	Trade debtors	17,810	11,323
	Prepayments and accrued income	-	25,452
	Total	17,810	36,775

Note 12 Creditors*Amounts falling due within one year:*

	Analysis	Total funds £	Prior year £
Creditors:	Accruals	3,342	-
	Social security	557	648
	Deferred income	15,000	-
	Total	18,899	648

Note 13 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 14 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.