

The Aysanew Kassa Trust

Improving Education in the Azezo Schools

NEWSLETTER

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Registered Charity 1090931

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The newsletter of the Aysanew Kassa Trust, set up in memory of the late Aysanew Kassa by his wife Jean Bailey and friends.

The key activity of the Aysanew Kassa Trust is to help students in need, based mainly in Azezo, complete their education through sponsorship and the provision of educational resources. All of our activities are carried out by volunteers, based both in the UK and in Azezo. Our website, www.aysanew.org, will help keep you up-to-date!

2016 in Review!

Our sponsored students:

This year, **20 students have completed their university** and are now applying for jobs. **This is the highest ever in a single year** and brings the total number of AKT sponsored children who have completed higher education to 183! Well done to all of them!

In secondary education, **19 out of 20 sponsored students** have passed their exams and are now attending universities across Ethiopia, studying a wide range of subjects. This means that **we will be supporting 111 students in higher education** in 2017. In addition, 5 blind children (4 girls and 1 boy) are going to university. Congratulations to them all!



Azezo Senior High School

A new school director has been appointed and the school roll continues to grow, with 3,200 students at the last count. Our work with the school continues too, with **80 students**

being supported through monthly allowances and a school uniform. Additional **classes in IT** take place during weekends, with class sizes increasing. We have again supplied **additional library books and sports equipment** to the school.



Atse Fasile Elementary School

Your generous support enabled the school to **build a new dining room** for the kindergarten, so the children now have

a larger and more hygienic place to eat. Jean was lucky enough to be there for the grand opening!

St Raphael's School for Blind and Partially-sighted Children



The school this year has 72 blind and partially-sighted children living and studying there. With your help, we've been able to provide a teacher for **sports lessons twice a week**, as well as a **specialist IT teacher**. In

fact, it was noted that the children have now become more advanced than their other teachers! We therefore provided a short course to help our incredibly dedicated teachers and we are delighted to say that, thanks to a generous grant from the Gondar (Ethiopia) Eye Surgery (GEES), set up by the late Sandy Holt Wilson, we have been able to extend this work in the forthcoming year. The computer room, by the way, is none other than the famous, well-travelled container!

Other news:

We end our review of 2016 with the sad news of the passing away of **Eshete Ayele**. Eshete was an incredible sports teacher and an inspiration to many, including Aysan. He became an invaluable committee member of the AKT in Azezo. He will be greatly missed.

Fundraising in 2016

None of our achievements in 2016 would have been possible without your support. On top of your regular donations, we organised a few events throughout the year to fund some of the projects we have undertaken and are planning to undertake to improve the facilities of Azezo's schools: benefitting the people of Azezo for years to come!

These fundraising events included a follow-up to the hugely successful lunch at Brixton's Clink prison in 2016, this time at the **Clink restaurant in Styal prison**. A thoroughly good time was had by all who attended! At the time of going to press, one of our trustees, Pietro, was also getting ready to run the **Venice marathon** on Sunday 23 October, after a year of hard training!

Due to understandable restrictions, we don't have any photos to show you of the Clink event, and we don't have photos of the marathon yet, but overleaf is one of our runners (and a couple of spectators!) who took part in the **London 10K** in June.

Thank You!



How you can help in 2017

We have many new and exciting activities planned for 2017 but most important is our main work sponsoring the most disadvantaged young people of Azezo as they complete their education. The **Brexit** vote has resulted in an extremely poor exchange rate, which puts a strain on funding in 2017.

All of our **university students require transport** money to get to and from university, which may be on the other side of a very large country, once a year. This costs an average of £15 per student. On top of this, each student receives £4 per month to cover costs of books, pens and other educational materials, making a total of £63 per year per student. All of our sponsored students are achieving very high end-of-year grades at their universities despite their impoverished circumstances—and can do even better with your help!

As mentioned, our **IT classes** at Azezo High School have become extremely popular and **we aim to increase the provision of these** to cope with the increased demand. One course costs £500 per semester: if you can help in any way, it would be most appreciated.

Children love playing sport! Footballs are, however, extremely expensive in Ethiopia and of poor quality. Therefore, if you happen to be travelling to Ethiopia and **can fit a few footballs in your suitcase**, the children there would be delighted. You can carry these footballs deflated: any sports shop will be able to deflate them when you buy them.

The kindergarten at Atse Fasile Elementary School is looking for **children's books for its library**. If you have any old ones in good condition that you no longer need, perhaps you might like to consider sending them over. You can pack them in small packets (under 2 kg) and post them directly to the School Director, Atse Fasile School, PO Box 58, Azezo, Gondar. Of course, any other educational materials would also be welcome and if you want to send over books either for the Azezo community library we opened in 2011 or the High School, please get in touch!

At St Raphael's, the children are always in need of Braille or speaking watches, white sticks and other specialist equipment for the blind, which is hard to come by in Ethiopia. If you know of anybody **specifically interested in helping blind people**, please put them in touch with us.

As always, a very big thank you to our trustees who work tirelessly to help the AKT support the young people of Azezo. However, without the unstinting support of Melash and Eshete in Azezo, who continue to work voluntarily on top of their busy jobs and family commitments, we could not achieve anything. It's thanks to them that we are kept informed of the needs of the community and that our plans are carried out.

A million thanks also to St Mary's Church, Wilshaw; St Mary's Catholic Church, East Finchley; Soroptomists International, Reigate branch; and GEES, who have helped with the exciting developments at St Raphael's to increase the children's IT skills and access to reading materials in Braille.

We continue to work in collaboration with the local community and government departments, as well American Ethiopians from Azezo and other NGOs wherever possible.

And to all the very many individuals who continue to support us every month: a very huge thank you. Without you, all of this would be impossible.



We do hope that new readers may be able to help us in the coming years. If you have any ideas for an event that you or we can run, please let us know. Nothing is too small! Donations can be made via the website; or you can send a cheque payable to 'Aysanew Kassa Trust' to The Aysanew Kassa Trust, 72 Brackenhurst Road, London N2 0ST; or via bank transfer to account number 80808350, sort code 20-58-51. Please do also complete a gift aid form if you are a UK taxpayer as doing so will increase the value of your contribution at no cost to yourself.

More information can be found at www.aysanew.org or email us at aysanewkassa@hotmail.com.

Thank you. You are making a difference to so many lives.



Where is Azezo?

Azezo is a town situated approximately 10 km from the city of Gondar, famed for its enclosure of castles. However, the huge population growth, with over 50% under the

age of 15, means that Gondar and Azezo are slowly merging into one!