

The Aysanew Kassa Trust

Improving Education in the Azezo Schools

NEWSLETTER

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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.

This has been a year that seems to have disappeared in a blink. However, our Azezo students have worked hard and really achieved despite the ongoing security situation in Ethiopia, which remains challenging—especially in the Amhara region where Azezo/Gondar are. This has meant that Jean has not been able to visit this year as the UK Foreign Office advice is against all travel to the Amhara region. However, we remain in contact with both Melash and St Raphael's school on a weekly basis by telephone, and we receive all of our receipts from the country by post. As you can imagine the economic situation for many families is precarious. So thank you very much to all of you who have supported us this year: this has made such a difference to our many students and their families.



The AKT trustees organised three fundraising events in the UK and thank everyone who took part or sponsored those who did. The London City Walk again proved popular in May, while the 10k run in July was exhausting in the heat but our 6 runners raised an amazing amount. Our Buxton walks unfortunately clashed with weddings, holidays and flu, but those that trekked had a great time and the rain only hit us once everyone had finished and were having their refreshments.

Our volunteer team in Azezo has experienced a very tough year and despite the situation they have remained committed to helping those less fortunate than themselves and their families. The AKT trustees offer a huge thanks to them for administering the charity to improve the lives of so many children in these most challenging times.



Please support us!

If you're stuck for ideas for Christmas or birthday gifts, you can buy a complete set of school text books (£30), a football for a blind child at St Raphael's (£32), digital recorders to allow blind students to record lessons (£45) or a new laptop for a blind student to use at university (£600).

Donations can be made by cheque, payable to The Aysanew Kassa Trust, or by bank transfer (account number 80808350, sort code 20-58-51). If you are able to Gift Aid your donation, please complete the Gift Aid declaration you will find on our website, thus increasing the value of your gift at no extra cost to yourself.

www.aysanew.org

Higher Education. We had **130 students** in various universities and colleges across the country this year. Notwithstanding the challenges, **25 completed their degrees** in medicine, law, civics, English, engineering, etc. Jean and Mulugeta are exploring the possibility of **setting up an alumni group** to consider how they might contribute to future Azezo students in a coordinated way, either through friendship, mentoring, sponsorship etc. One previous student who is now well established in his chosen profession in Ethiopia and is married with two children says that *'none of this would have been possible without AKT support at a critical time in my life at Azezo High School and then at university'*.

Atse Fasile school. We have continued supporting the library and kindergarten in this old much-loved school. They desperately need more desks and chairs, and we hope to fund this in the coming year.



Azezo High School. This year, we supported a total of **80 students** in years 9 to 12. **All 20 year 12 students** have gained places at various universities throughout Ethiopia. Overall, **200 students from Azezo High School** will enter higher education this year. We have come a long way from when Aysan and Jean got involved: then, only two or three per year passed their exams for higher education and none of them were girls. Now 50% are girls. The school got an award as **the most outstanding in all the Gondar region**. This year, we also helped to **buy new uniforms** for the school guards who are so proud and grateful to you.

AKT library. The library continues to be well used as a quiet, clean place to study especially due to the government schools' shift system. We again provided additional resources this year.

St Raphael's school for blind and partially sighted children. This school and home faced two dilemmas just as the children were going home for their annual vacation: first, many children had to wait longer than usual for family members to collect them due to the difficulties on the roads and **two children were totally abandoned** and so spent their whole vacation at the school; secondly, the **cow shed collapsed and killed two precious milking cows**, which provide milk for the children. With your help, we **replaced the cow shed** and we are now looking to fund the purchase of another milking cow. This is especially important for the little children who often arrive at the school. This year's new intake includes two little girls who are orphans.

The school is currently **home to 65 children** from September to June each year and also supports the blind university students. The children live and have all their classes in St Raphael's compound from kindergarten until the end of year 4. From year 5 they join the government schools, in which there are up to 100 students in each class, while continuing to board at St Raphaels. They face many barriers in their education, including the lack of braille textbooks.

This year, **6 St Raphael students have completed university** graduating in law, civics and English. Three more have gained places and are joining Gondar university as this newsletter is drafted.