

# S.E.E.D.S.

Sustainable East African Education and Development Society

*IMPROVING THE LIVES OF IMPOVERISHED AND  
VULNERABLE CHILDREN, WOMEN & FAMILIES IN ETHIOPIA*

Winter 2015

Page 1	Thank you Our Mission
Page 2	Highlights from Sendafa
Page 3	Site Visit: Legedadi Primary School Community Meeting
Page 4	Site Visit: Amanuel Challenges SEEDS
Page 5	SEEDS's Future Call To Action



*Thank you so much for your generous financial and time contributions to SEEDS over the last year. On behalf of SEEDS, we would like to provide you with a few updates that show the difference you have made through your financial support.*

*- SEEDS Board of Directors*



## OUR MISSION

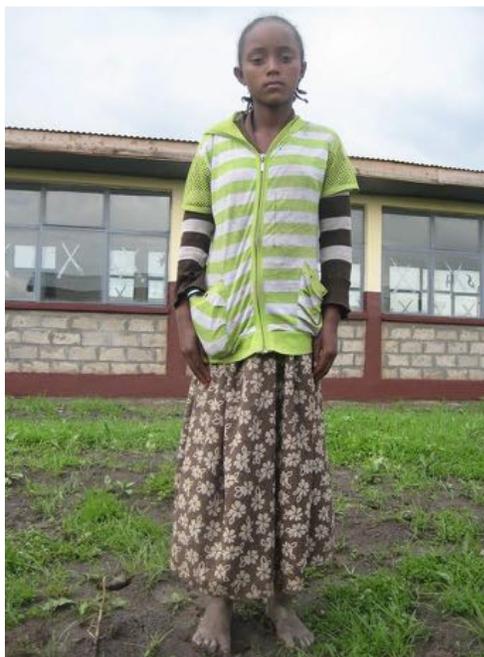
SEEDS exists in order to provide opportunities for at risk children and their families suffering from the effects of poverty, to meet their basic needs and access services that serve to break the cycle of adversity and develop greater independence. The society strives to empower families by supporting their communities to be better equipped to respond to their needs and capabilities.

Notable for this past summer and fall has been a trip that Scott made to Ethiopia in August to audit the programs and visit program sites. It was a short trip of only 2 weeks, so was a very busy trip.

We no longer have any programs operating in Addis Ababa, so there were no site visits in the city. However, SEEDS's staff all live in Addis and all our business contacts are in the capital. This past year, we have moved our head office out of Addis Ababa and relocated to Sendafa at Legedadi Primary School, approximately 40 minutes away. This is the location of our largest program site and the school has provided us with office space for a nominal fee. This has allowed SEEDS to substantially reduce operating costs of having a head office in Addis Ababa, which due to a shortage of business space, is quite expensive.

While in Addis Ababa, Scott met with a number of business partners of SEEDS. Scott reviewed some human resource issues with a lawyer SEEDS has on retainer and also met with a consultant SEEDS has contracted with to write our Human Resource Manual to review and discuss the manual.

Scott also met with the Director of ECCO (Ethiopian-Canadian Cooperation Office) an organization that was established by the Canadian Embassy in Ethiopia to assist Canadian Organizations working in the country. At this meeting Scott also met the Acting Country Director of CUSO. It was a great opportunity to share experiences and learn about the services that ECCO provides. Scott also met with the Coordinator of CANGO (Canadian Association of Non-Government Organizations in Ethiopia) a member based umbrella organization of small to medium sized Canadian organizations operating in Ethiopia. SEEDS was a member of CANGO two years ago but we did not renew our membership this last year, as our Country Representative didn't have the time to fully utilize the benefits of CANGO. Kathleen, the CANGO Coordinator has been very generous to SEEDS and has continued to include us in her e-mail distributions to members, events, and UN Security Updates. It was a pleasure to have finally met her and with a new Country Representative starting with SEEDS this fall, we hope that we will be able to renew our participation with the CANGO network.





The first site visit was made to Legedadi Primary School in Sendafa. This is our largest project site with approximately 200 sponsored children in the school and another 100 children in our pre-school program. We continue to provide funding to the school for staffing to operate the pre-school program. The school continues to report the many benefits of this program, which include being able to engage with at-risk children earlier as well as enhancing their early childhood development needs (the school consistently reports that the children who come through the pre-school program, on average, have better academic outcomes than the other school students).

A meeting with SEEDS project stakeholders, families and children took place during this visit. This meeting served 3 purposes: as a SEEDS community celebration, to confirm distribution of school uniforms to the children, and a separate meeting with local government officials, school staff, etc., to discuss any issues related to the SEEDS – Legedadi School Project. Scott was also able to confirm that the two capital projects (bringing running water to the school and the building of washing areas as well as the completion of an 8 stall latrine, had been completed).



**Please consider donating to SEEDS this year. Your support helps fund our important projects which help improve the quality of life of families in poverty.**



Thank you so much for your ongoing support!

### **TO DONATE**

Visit [www.seedseastafrica.com](http://www.seedseastafrica.com)

You may also write a cheque payable to SEEDS and send to:

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Scott also made a 3 day trip to Amanuel, Gojjam which is a 6-7 hour drive north, to visit the program sites at the town of Amanuel. SEEDS works with 3 primary schools in the town. The purpose and activities of this site visit were the same as the Sendafa site visit. The community and government stakeholders seem very committed and engaged in our work.

Some feedback was provided pertaining to the strengths and challenges SEEDS programs are experiencing. Perhaps the most meaningful feedback relates to our micro-credit programs. The stakeholders reflected that, stronger monitoring and support, needs to be provided to maximize the benefit of this program. This has been consistent with the SEEDS experience of having mixed results for beneficiaries of this program. The resources SEEDS has to support the program, limits our ability to monitor and support micro-credit project participants, who are parents of the children we sponsor. The Woreda government office has been encouraging greater volunteerism in the community and has offered SEEDS volunteers to support our single Field Worker with these activities.

Stakeholders requested however that SEEDS inject more funding resources into the program, as the initial loans are insufficient to sustain longer-term success for many of the women. Their rationale is that the difficulty of meeting daily basic needs and significant inflationary pressures in the country limits the benefits of the initial loans. At this point however, until our new Country Representative effectively transitions into her position and is able to more effectively evaluate the micro-credit programs, the SEEDS Board has decided to not meet their request and to continue to focus on our primary mission and successes, which are our school support programs. To this end, and due to our success in Sendafa, SEEDS is providing capital funding to purchase classroom equipment and materials (including desks and chairs) for the initiation of preschool programs at each of the 3 school sites in Amanuel.

In conclusion, SEEDS continues to experience success with its school based programming and mixed results with our micro-credit programming, which will continue to remain our main focus in the next few years. With approximately 400 children being supported overall, SEEDS will cap the number of children being supported to this number. Funding is always a challenge and SEEDS is not in a financial position at the moment to expand its programs and provide guarantees for sustaining this growth. Rather, the Board has decided that when there are significant gifts or excess funding, that these can be utilized as one-time capital projects for school site improvements, like the latrine, water, and pre-school development projects.

Our present challenges are completing our renewal for Charitable Status in Ethiopia, which is underway and occurs every three years. This is challenged by mixed messaging of requirements which all NGO's are experiencing, as well as bringing on a new Country Representative during this process. Completing annual evaluation and reporting requirements with each Zone Office that we have operating agreements with is occurring at the same time. For the Board, the charity renewal process, annual evaluations and reporting for each zone, bringing on a new Country Representative, holding Annual General Meetings and making auditing trips to Ethiopia has required a great deal of effort, energy and time over the past few months, when our focus should be on fundraising for the remainder of the year. Meheret will be making a trip over the Christmas break to support these activities and the orientation of the new Country Director to her role with SEEDS.

And so, as the Christmas season approaches, please keep in mind the important work of SEEDS. Please consider making a seasonal or year-end donation or making a donation in the name of a friend or family member, as part of your Christmas giving. And as usual, never hesitate to contact Meheret or Scott or anyone else on the Board, if you have any questions or ideas you'd like to share.



Thank you,

Please don't forget to check the [SEEDS](#) website throughout the year for updates.

TOGETHER we can do our part to break the cycle of adversity in Ethiopia!

