



This report is a short summary of the activities of Rainbows4Children in the year 2020. More details on any specific issue are available by contacting Max & Kathryn Robinson at info@rainbows4children.org

Project Progress - Nicolas Robinson School

1. Building and equipment installed during 2020

Plans were being made to build a STEM centre at the School and also to improve English teaching by creating some form of Language Laboratory. Both projects were put on hold when the Covid-19 pandemic started in March 2020 and have not been able to resume due to the current war in the region.

2. The political situation and the Nicolas Robinson School

On November 4th, war broke out in the region between the Ethiopian National Government with Amhara region and Eritrea, against the Tigray Defence Forces of the Tigray region. At the end of 2020, The City of Mekele was occupied by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops and movement through the city was very dangerous for its citizens. Rainbows4children and the Nicolas Robinson School are non-political organisations, and so no comment will be made on the situation.

School had restarted for some grades in September 2020 after Covid, but the students all stayed at home after Mekele was occupied by external troops at the end of November 2020.

At the current time, we do not know when school will start again, but an interim Bureau of Education is being set up and so they will tell the schools when they should re-open.



Green compound, primary school English zone in use at lunchtime Walls used for teaching, KG

3. Students and performance

In the school year 2020-21, the student registration is 280 students in the kindergarten, 760 students in the primary school (grades 1-8) and 345 students in the Secondary School (grades 9-12). A total of 1385 students. Approximately 70% of the students come from families where the parents have disabilities. The male:female ratio is 50:50, and there is no discrimination on gender, politics, religion or race. The Nicolas Robinson School was ranked no. 1 in Mekele after an evaluation by the Education Bureau. Due to Covid, no new registrations were taken and the students were catching up on missed classes until the end of November 2020.



Grade 10 in class

KG learning by play

IT classes start at grade 1

4. **Nicolas Youth & Adult Learning Centre now renamed Nicolas College**

In February 2017 formal training started in hospitality in the Nicolas Youth & Adult Training Centre, and by early 2020, 7 cycles had completed their training. Students, who chose to take the test, all passed their Certificate of Competence exam and were able to gain employment in local hotels, restaurants and cafes. We also provided practical training for 2 weeks for students of Mekele University Hotel Management Course. This was repeated in 2019. In 2019 we added training in ICT for managers and office workers with the first course being attended by our own teachers. PUM have now led 2 entrepreneurship training sessions very successfully and have now trained our own staff to continue the project for the next training cycle. A training cycle was conducted in early 2020. When the Covid-19 pandemic started in March 2020, all students had to stay at home. As the courses are almost entirely practical, they could not study at home, so the courses were not re-started. In November 2020, war broke out in the region and for many months most services were cut off. We did use the facility to train our own teachers and improve their IT skills

5. **Sponsorship programme**

By the end of 2020, 491 students were sponsored to go to school through the Rainbows4Children sponsorship programme thus giving them a chance that their families could not otherwise afford. In addition, 61 sponsored school students are also now sponsored in their university studies, after they left the school. We still need 200-300 more sponsors.

6. **Leadership of the Nicolas Robinson School in the Community.**

The Nicolas Robinson School is rated the top-quality School in the Tigray region. This is based on the quality of teaching, its services and facilities and its operations and interaction with the community.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the school and its staff lead by example in many ways:

They prepared classes for students, parents collected them, and brought back homework to be assessed and then new lessons were prepared.

They prepared bleach (from the electrolysis of salt) and hand sanitisers, in the school laboratories. They distributed this to staff, families of the students and also to local health clinics.

In September/October 2020 there was a plague of locusts in Tigray. The science staff researched and developed a natural pesticide from the neem tree which is grown in the region. They worked with Mekele University to take it to the farmers fields and kill the locusts. It was very successful.



making sanitiser in the lab

hand washing at school entrance

Field work – locust eradication

7. **Supplementary food programme**

Started in 2011, the supplementary food programme continued for all students at the school. Every day the students are given extra food to provide better nutrition (protein, vitamins) in the form of eggs, banana, milk, orange or other seasonal fruit. This program continues to pay dividends in the form of better health - especially elimination of anaemia, skin ailments and better levels of concentration and learning in class. We have a new sponsor since 2017, who has promised to continue to support the food programme. When the school was closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this programme was temporarily halted. However, food was provided to families experiencing financial difficult and food shortages.



KG children enjoying their milk in the eating room

8. Volunteers

During 2020 only 3 volunteers from Europe gave their time and skills to teach English and teaching techniques. In late March these volunteers had to leave Ethiopia, due to the Covid pandemic. We were starting to think about returning to support the school in late 2020, but then the war started and the region was closed to visitors.

9. Care for the Whole Child

The school's student welfare director ensures the welfare of all the students in the school and she also provides home counselling when needed. Our school nurse assists us in many of these and related issues. We operate a "special fund" to cope with emergency care for critical cases and also to support families and our students who are experiencing difficulties in their lives at home. The successful intervention to save a young student diagnosed with leukaemia in 2014 was one success of the fund and our supporters.

10. Fund raising activities in 2020

Our annual Swiss fundraiser raised about CHF 51,000. This is the primary single fund-raising event of Rainbows4children. This is much-reduced from previous years as it was an online event, due to the Covid-19 pandemic

The charity shop in Stade, Germany (sales of second-hand clothes and household items) closed, but they have kept their German registered foundation active to enable German taxpayers to make donations through them and benefit from tax deductions.

11. Legal and accounting

The statements of the 2020 accounts for the UK Foundation and Swiss registered foundations will be submitted to the appropriate governing authorities after being audited. The trustees of both foundations during 2020 were:-

Switzerland: Richard Max Robinson, Kathryn Robinson, Jean-Paul Rigaudeau.

UK: Paul Reynolds, Philip Stockbridge, George Potts, Kathryn Robinson, Richard Max Robinson.

Reported by:
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