



# Programme Review 2014

Africa Educational Trust

## Vision

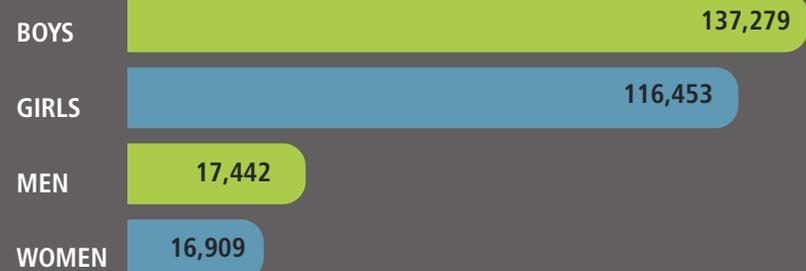
The Africa Educational Trust's vision is of a continent composed of fully independent, peaceful states, which are responsive to their citizens' needs and wishes, and provide appropriate education for all their inhabitants. Education is essential if people are to participate effectively in the life of their own communities and contribute to democratic processes in their countries. In short, we hold that education for all is the key to development.

## Mission

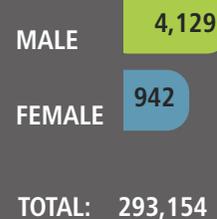
The current mission of the Africa Educational Trust is to support people in Africa who are excluded from an appropriate education, regardless of age or gender, religion or physical capacity, ethnic group or displacement through conflict. Such support enhances access to quality education and may be provided directly to marginalised people, or indirectly through existing organisations.

## Beneficiaries 2014

### Learners



### Trainers





Africa Educational Trust (AET) is all about education; how to improve it or make it more accessible and how to get education systems going again. How we do this is incredibly varied, working around what is possible and what is needed most.

Our work is mostly in countries such as Somalia and South Sudan, where war has taken a deadly toll. What AET has achieved in the midst of conflict is truly remarkable. And what has made it possible is the commitment of our in-country staff operating, where it matters, in Africa.

AET supports education for all, young and old. There's support for early learning in remote parts of Kenya. We work with street children in Uganda to help them integrate into local schools. There are also non-formal education and distance learning programmes for adults, offering literacy and numeracy to men and women who missed out on school.

AET also works to build institutional capacity. In Somalia and Somaliland we've supported local and national administrations to restore education systems where these have broken down. We have helped establish exam systems and supported the development of common school curricula.

Our outstanding in-country staff have a wealth of experience in educational development and a talent for innovation. To give everyone the best chance, AET has developed social programmes in South Sudan and Somaliland that make it easier for girls and people living with disabilities to go to school and to complete their education when they get there.

The challenges for education in Africa remain huge. We are a small specialist organisation with a clear focus and a good track record of getting things done. With your help we can do more. Please read about our work and support Africa Educational Trust. You won't regret it.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Healy". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sally Healy, Chairperson

Dear Supporter,

As I finish my third year as Executive Director of AET, I feel immensely proud of the work of our staff and partners. I am particularly proud of our dedication to girls' education, even in the face of conflict. In South Sudan – a beautiful country that I was privileged to visit last year – where as few as 3% of those graduating secondary school are girls, we have created the first example of an accelerated secondary school programme for women and girls. Covering a four year curriculum in just two, 50 young women are getting a second chance of secondary education and are already benefiting from increased opportunities in their community. This programme has continued despite being located in Rumbek, where there has been intense local conflict throughout the year. This programme is really emblematic of our work, and the dedication of both the staff involved and the young women themselves has been key to its success.



I find nothing illustrates the work of AET as well as the individual stories of those people involved in our programmes. As you read a few of them in this report, I hope you can see people's eagerness and dedication to education and the impact it can make on their lives.

Looking forward, I want to grow and share AET's inclusive and creative approaches to education. The robustness of our programmes is grounded in the involvement of local people who are living in conflict situations and remain determined to build a better future. It is vital that we continue to maintain our responsive approach, really listening to people and supporting their struggles for education.

Never has AET been more needed. Education is the top request from people in these countries and yet only 2% of emergency aid goes to education. Currently, the need far outweighs the available resources, and we look towards our new and current donors to help us increase the reach and depth of our work over the next few years.

I wish you good reading, and hope to hear from, and work with you, in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sara Cottingham'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sara Cottingham, Executive Director

"In India, I have no idea what to expect, but with my Africa Educational Trust supported certificate that is recognised beyond Somaliland borders, the sky is the limit and I am set to go for a master's degree in cardiology."



## AET's expertise ensures that Somali Students can continue their education anywhere

If you want to continue your education or enter the world as a professional, the quality and standard of your education are extremely important. Education certificates need to be seen as reputable, fair and rigorous. Since 2005, AET's education experts have been making the achievement of these types of certificates possible for Somali secondary students. The exams that AET sets, administers and certifies are designed to meet international standards and they are the reason why a student like Ali is on his way to saving lives.

Ali is the second born in a family of eleven. He attended secondary school and graduated with a C plus. He sat the AET coordinated examinations administered by the newly established Somaliland examination board in 2010. Not being a top student, he didn't manage to get a local scholarship, but his certificate was recognised in Ethiopia by the Central University College in Addis Ababa, where Ali was able to enrol for a Bachelor of Health. Ali will tell you that travelling to a foreign country for study is tough. Adjusting to a different language, different food and being away from home can be very difficult. But he says all of it was worth it and after 5 years of study he returned home to work as a medical intern. The past year, learning from doctors and working with patients has crystalized his dreams, and he is now determined to pursue his studies as a cardiologist.

With no local degrees available, Ali applied to university in India. Putting together his applications, he was once again glad that he now has education certificates that are recognised no matter where he goes.

Ali has been accepted by the Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeswara University and one day he hopes to be saving the lives of Somali children and adults.



To overcome the challenges of distance learning, all teachers are provided with a personal tutor and mentor who has already completed teacher training.



## Fostering quality teachers in the face of conflict

With one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world, finding qualified teachers in South Sudan is a challenge. Most school teachers are like David. David is deeply committed to giving his students quality education, but he has not completed any higher education or formal training as a teacher. This is not surprising, given the struggle David himself faced in getting an education.

David was born in South Sudan in the early 1980s. During the second civil war (1983–2005), his family fled to Kenya. Because they were able to find shelter in a refugee camp, David was able to attend primary school. But, as in so many refugee camps, there was no schooling available beyond primary level. It was only in 2010, after returning to South Sudan, that David was finally able to graduate from secondary school at the age of 32. Secondary schools are so desperate for teachers, he was able to get a job as a teacher immediately, despite only recently finishing secondary school himself.

Determined to upgrade his teaching credentials, David joined AET's diploma course for teachers in 2013. AET knows that schools cannot afford to lose working teachers, even for the chance to upgrade their skills. This is why AET offers recognised teaching certificates through distance education. To overcome the challenges of distance learning, all teachers are provided with a personal tutor and mentor who has already completed teacher training. The mentor visits them in their schools, observes their lessons and provides practical assistance and guidance.

When conflict broke out again in December 2013, David, along with the 60 other teachers on the diploma course, was getting ready to sit mid-term exams. In spite of the chaos, all 60 teachers showed incredible dedication to their studies and managed to make it to one of the AET examination centres to sit their first year exams.

While the conflict shows no sign of slowing down, the teachers have continued their training. Some of them are now in refugee camps near Juba, and we have been able to replace their learning materials so that they can continue with their studies. It's a struggle, but they remain determined to improve education for their students.



# Achievements in 2014



## Uganda

As Northern Uganda continues to recover from over 20 years' of conflict, AET has been supporting inclusive education systems that will give students the skills and knowledge they need to take their communities forward. Working to ensure no one misses the chance of an education, AET has focused on reaching unserved children and regions, including street children, and those living in remote rural communities in Eastern Uganda. In the past year, AET's programmes reached an impressive 170,000 children and adults.

### Key highlights of our work

- Through ongoing mentorship and support, our local school mothers have seen girls' enrolment increase by 31% in the schools where they work.
- IT 'boot camps' and career fairs in eight pilot schools marked the launch of an innovative project to improve IT skills and career guidance in secondary schools.
- Over 50 teachers have come together to act as 'change makers', sharing teaching methods and approaches to improve student engagement and learning.
- Another 20 primary schools in rural Uganda are now equipped with working libraries. Thanks to our volunteer trainers, qualified teachers will continue to support their schools and students and build a culture of reading and self-study.
- With the support of training and local radio, parents and teachers from five schools in Mbale are embracing the idea that street children can make a fresh start and have the right to an education.

*"As you may all now realise, we are the agents of change in the system, we are the ones who can lead improvements in our teaching."*

Primary School Teacher, Changemaker Network, Oyam County

## South Sudan

In spite of the renewed violence in South Sudan, education can and must continue. Even as communities have been forced to flee their homes, people continue to list education as one of their top priorities. AET has found innovative strategies to help schools and training programmes continue, and we have reached over 42,000 men and boys and 19,624 women and girls last year.

### Key highlights of our work

- Working with 436 teachers and education stakeholders to ensure 1,599 excluded students, mainly girls, receive cash transfers to assist with their education.
- Thanks to dedicated mentors and long-distance education, all our teachers in Western Equatoria have continued their registered training courses.
- Of the 50 young women completing our accelerated secondary school programme, 35 have passed their year 1 exams and some have already had job offers.
- 184 teachers and 195 parents have been trained in peacebuilding curriculum. They now hold bi-monthly peace clubs where they monitor reports of violence and plan activities.
- 500 refugees have completed IT and English training to help them rebuild their lives.
- Our library in Yambio continues to have steady traffic, lending books to over 1,700 users every term.

# Achievements in 2014



## Somalia

Somalia is AET's oldest area of operation. With a deep understanding of regional issues and strong connections with local communities, AET's expertise is in supporting the rebuilding of education systems and providing alternative education programmes for hard-to-reach communities. From large scale exam provision to early childhood learning in nomadic communities, this year over 61,000 people have been directly involved in our programmes across South & Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland.

### 2014 highlights

- 50 Puntland schools have been testing learning strategies for early reading to see which has the greatest impact on children's ability to learn.
- 10,000 out-of-school youth, including displaced people and people with disabilities, completed a full year of study in basic education and 800 received a scholarship to pursue their chosen vocational training.
- A newly established network for people with disabilities has emerged under the training and guidance of AET to advocate education and training for people with disabilities.
- AET's girl-friendly school spaces have proven so successful at providing girls with much needed privacy and sanitation that they have been adopted as standard government design for all secondary schools and will soon be introduced in primary schools as well.
- In supporting youth empowerment and involvement in peace, over 240 youth shared their educational priorities for the new curriculum. Those who participated said they felt more confident and that they too could make a valuable contribution to their community.
- 42 people from nomadic communities have been trained to provide early childhood education and support young children learning through play.

## Kenya

Kenya has made impressive advancements as a nation, and yet certain people face continued challenges in accessing essential services, including education. This is particularly true of the nomadic and pastoral populations of Northern Kenya. AET recently started working with these communities to help adapt schooling and education so that it is more compatible with their way of life. Our first project in the region has been to introduce local language instruction and English language preparedness for young learners. This year's class includes 3,000 young students.

### Key achievements include:

- 80 kindergarten teachers have been trained to teach children in their mother tongue of Maa.
- New learning materials in the local languages focus on locally relevant stories and make learning to read and write more fun for children.
- Working with the Ministry of Early Childhood Education will help spread the use of these materials to other communities.

"The bee project as a whole was very beneficial to the different families at the camp. I believe that because of this gift we now have a good income we can use for the wellbeing of our families. I am not a refugee any more. I have a home."



## Choosing your own path to rebuild your home

Fleeing your home and leaving everything behind can be your only option when you live in a conflict-affected area. When you finally find somewhere safe, picking up the pieces again can be very difficult. Meet Asli. Asli is a 55-year old Somali widow whose left arm is incapacitated. After fleeing her home, she found herself with seven children to support in a refugee camp. Even in a registered camp, people find themselves living hand to mouth with no security that aid will come every month. Without education, business skills, or a vocation, Asli was stuck living with this uncertainty.

But it is never too late to learn. AET offers adult education programmes for displaced people. These classes teach basic literacy and numeracy alongside discussions on social issues and business skills. With a solid foundation in literacy, mathematics and business, learners are better equipped to find employment or start their own business. In each class, a few students receive a vocational training scholarship, allowing them to pick a vocation of their choice to get training in. Allowing people their choice of vocation is important to their success, since they are the ones who best know their own community and opportunities. They also know their existing skills, the connections which they can capitalise on to build their businesses, and their limitations in terms of time, mobility and other commitments.

Asli received one of these scholarships and chose to train in bee keeping. With an incapacitated arm, and children to care for, she felt this was an ideal fit for her life and needs. She was able to work with a local trainer and received a small grant to get started. Her business is now booming. She has been able to sell honey from her 10 hives at the nearby market and she has also built up another business selling home-made biscuits, cakes and bread.

The profits from these ventures have allowed her three younger children to go to school while the older ones help with the family business. Asli has been so successful that she now also acts as a trainer to other people in the camp who are interested in learning bee keeping.



“Without the support of AET,  
I would have dropped out of school  
– I would be alone without anyone  
to help me.”



## Creating leaders through girls' education

Fiona is 18 years old and is in her last year of secondary school in Uganda. She lost both her parents during the conflict and she now lives with her older brother who is a farmer. Her brother has tried to support her but paying school fees is difficult. A few years ago she was slapped by the former Director of Studies for failing to pay school fees and now has ongoing problems with her hearing.

Fiona came close to giving up. But in 2010, AET's School Mother Programme was introduced at her school and she met Susan. Susan is a ground breaker in the community. At 49 years old, she is a local business woman and a district counsellor representing women with disabilities. She is exactly what we look for in a school mother. She is passionate about girls' education and an ideal person to provide ongoing mentorship, support and encouragement.

Susan meets with Fiona and the other girls at her school regularly. They talk about everything from challenges in studying, to how to make sanitary towels, to sex education. It was Susan who supported Fiona to study hard and stay focused on her goals. Under her guidance, Fiona started entering writing competitions and, after winning two of them, was awarded a scholarship. She is now more secure, and working towards her goal of becoming a lawyer. Fiona says that “without the support of AET I would have dropped out of school – I would be alone without anyone to help me.”

Susan will tell you that education is about much more than better job prospects. While she hopes that attending school will help girls in her community escape poverty, she also believes that education will give the girls more confidence and allow them to have a voice and speak up in the community. This is already happening for Fiona. Expressing herself through writing and gaining recognition for her hard work has not just improved her own prospects, but has given her confidence and made her a leader. Last year she became head girl of her school. She now supports younger students and speaks out about their challenges to the school administration.

Susan acknowledges that girls still face many challenges including poverty, pressure to marry and have children, and the ongoing legacy of violence in Northern Uganda. But she also says that she sees a “bright future for these girls in school, they have the drive to go on ahead and in the end their children and grandchildren will benefit from this work.”





## Meet Jenny, our library volunteer

### Your support makes education happen

We are grateful for the confidence placed in our expertise and programmes by our large institutional donors who fund projects across all our project areas. We also appreciate the hundreds of smaller donors who allow us to be innovative and responsive, and to adapt to the unstable conditions where we work. We want to recognise a few of our terrific supporters this year, including:

- Nick who raised over £2,200 during his bicycle ride.
- Ilinca who generously donated the proceeds from her piano recital.
- Our runners Tamara and Dyanna raised £500 in the British 10k London run.
- All our monthly donors who understand that education needs stable, ongoing support.
- Everyone who responded to our Christmas appeal.

Please consider getting involved with Africa Educational Trust and help provide support to all the people we work with, who believe that education is the key to a better future for themselves, their communities and their nation.

Jenny is a retired teacher and a dedicated volunteer with AET. Here is what she says about her experience working on our libraries projects.

**How did you get involved with AET?** I had always wanted to do VSO but opted at the time for marriage and children (three children, four grandchildren). On retirement I thought, 'Now could be the time'. I researched across the agencies and found the AET team encouraging and able to come up with a use for my library and teacher training skills within their programmes.

**Why are your UK skills needed?** It is hard to imagine learning without books and it is difficult for teachers to prepare interesting lessons with few resources. Library skills are therefore in great demand. AET asks primary schools they work with if they would be willing to construct a simple library with wooden shelves. I would then arrive with books I had collected from my local schools and train key teachers on how to use the books with their lessons. I also set up systems to allow children to borrow books to read at home.

**What are your favourite things about Uganda?** I'm always amazed at how Ugandans can turn a difficult situation around. They are so good at finding local solutions to their own problems. Sometimes a community will struggle to purchase shelves for their library. But then they will seem to make something out of nothing, recycling wood or sourcing things locally in the community. I think that if we here in the UK were faced with similar challenges we would find it very difficult.

**What do people in Yorkshire think?** When I go round schools talking about libraries and my Uganda experiences, the children and teachers really identify with so many of the interests and issues that Ugandan schools are looking at. Schools are keen to share projects involving everything from recycling, sports and managing local resources. It really brings out the fact that we are one world and we should be learning and sharing with each other.

*This is only one example of how you can give your time to support education. If you are interested in other ways you can volunteer, please get in touch with us to learn more.*



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