



Visions & Kal Center for Special Needs (Ethiopia):
Model Deafness Center & Programs Impact Data
January 2015 - February 2016

Youth Education

- Total student enrollment at the 3 public schools & 1 preschool we serve in Bahir Dar has increased from 32 individuals in 2012 to 84 individuals in 2015 (a 163% increase)
- 14 children are now enrolled in the Deaf preschool at our Visions Model Deafness Center (whereas no such early education option was available earlier)
- 96% of children in Grades 1-4 (49 out of 51 children total) satisfied grade competencies and were able to graduate on to the next grade
- 93.3% of youth in Grades 5-8 improved their average academic marks (across 9 subjects)
- 80% of youth in Grades 5-8 improved their class ranking
- 7.39% - the average % increase in academic marks (across the 9 subjects) for youth in Grades 5-8 over the past 2 years, which is almost a full wrung up on the Ethiopian scoring system
- Amongst the youth in Grades 5-8, those who scored "above average" increased from 20% to 67% over the past 2 years
- Amongst the youth in Grades 5-8, those who scored "below average" decreased from 27% to 7% over the past 2 years
- Yekatit 23 School (our main hub for all school-related efforts) was named the Top Performing School in the Bahir Dar District for 2 years in a row (2014 & 2015), with our work cited as one of the reasons for this distinction and our Deaf teachers & support staff honored for their contributions
- 100+ hearing children across the 3 public schools have attended Ethiopian Sign Language after-school trainings (offered daily at Yekatit 23 School and weekly at Donna Berber & Tsehay Gibot Schools), of which approx. 50% attend regularly

Hearing Testing & Counseling

- 111 individuals received hearing testing & counseling from a professional volunteer audiologist
- 98 individuals received an ear medical check-up from a local physician (ENT)
- 48 individuals received a hearing aid
- Approx. 85.4% of individuals (41 out of 48 total) have retained and are using their hearing aids

Livelihoods Development

- 40 individuals received training, mentorship, and financial support in our Livelihoods Development Program over the past year (in addition to 11 individuals who previously received such support)

- 90% of these individuals (or 18 out of 20 persons total) are now actively engaged in their vocation in industries such as sewing / knitting, weaving, commerce (including selling injera (bread), coffee, wood, plants, etc.), shoe polishing, and operating a small roadside restaurant.
- 85% are now earning enough to provide for themselves (*note: 3 beneficiaries received a government subsidy during this period of 200 birr (approx. USD \$9.50) per month that is given to children with disabilities who are continuing their studies*)
- 85% now have savings, whereas only 50% had any savings before
- On average, those with savings have been able to save the equivalent of USD \$299

Community Education & Outreach

- 65+ parents and family members of deaf individuals have attended Ethiopian Sign Language weekend trainings, of which approx. 50% attend regularly
- An estimated 1,000+ students, teachers, parents, family members, university students, social workers, government officials, doctors & health workers, school administrators, and others have attended and participated in trainings & awareness-raising events
- An estimated 5,000 – 7,000 individuals reached through community education & awareness-raising outreach events
- 57 government officials (*kebele* representatives (from various assignments) & social workers) have attended trainings & supported deaf census collection efforts
- 4 exchanges with Bahir Dar University took place over the past year
- 5 short films in “Understanding Deafness in Ethiopia” produced for community education & awareness-raising events
- 88 international volunteers & visitors spent time at the Visions Model Deafness Center over the past year (including exchanges with 3 U.S.-based universities)

General

- 202 deaf individuals were identified during the deaf census conducted in Bahir Dar
 - From the deaf census data collected, we can extrapolate that there are more than 400 deaf persons living within Bahir Dar city center itself, the majority of whom we have not yet been able to reach due to transportation constraints
- 5 deaf individuals were directly employed through the Visions Model Deafness Center, as well as 6 women (of which 1 is deaf)
- 3 Center staff were trained in Cued Speech at a week-long training in Addis Ababa

Testimonials

- “Before, I was spending my time mostly doing routine housework and errands, and have been dependent on my family at home for many years. Now that I am starting to earn money on my own, it makes me feel happy. I wish the same for my friends who still remain idle at home.”
– Tsegie Alemu, *Livelihoods Development Beneficiary*
- “I quit school at Grade 8 and have been at home ever since. Now, I have already finished the tailoring training that was arranged for me and others. I am eager now to start working and earning money.”

- *Emebet Mezgebu, Livelihoods Development Beneficiary*

- “My daughter used to go to regular school. However, she was not able to communicate with her schoolmates and teachers. After I became informed of Visions’ efforts, I started bringing her here to access the services provided. With the unwavering support from her teachers and other facilitators, now my child is progressing well.”
- *Mother of Deaf Student (Atsede)*
- “The support provided to us has demonstrated the possibility that we, people with disabilities, can perform and change ourselves. In the future, it will be nice if we have a sustainable plan and identified markets where we can sell our goods.”
- *Tigist Desalegn, Livelihoods Development Beneficiary*
- “It’s great to be where we are today. We have seen our children now attending school in clean classrooms and being regularly supported and taught in their own language. We won’t forget those stressful years before.”
- *Zemenay Biresaw, Parent of Deaf Student*
- “Many times, you see deaf children with communication problems. But they have their own ways of communication - we must learn it. We are now learning sign language. Community awareness must also take place. [Deafness] can happen to anyone, we must educate the community about that. In class, we learn theory, but the Visions Global Empowerment presenters gave us practical knowledge and examples drawn from experience. I learned how to identify and assess children with hearing loss and how to intervene. We must teach them in ways that makes learning accessible to them so that they can succeed.”
- *Tadele Yismau & Birhane Seyoum, Special Needs Education Students at Bahir Dar University*
- “I am benefiting a lot from this Deaf education and empowerment project. I was idle before a year, I have work and salary, I have boy friend to get married soon. I am so happy, and my family is so, so happy for me. This helps me see myself differently from the past.”
- *Askal Tamir, Deaf Preschool Teacher/Staff*
- “I’m lucky. Except for my dad, everyone in my family now signs with me.”
- *Mahlet Hailu, Deaf Student*
- “We are benefiting from learning sign language. The more we learn and use sign it, the more we can express ourselves to our children and they will do the same for us.”
- *Fikrte Anteneh, Parent of Deaf Student*
- “One thing very nice about this Center is that Deaf people are getting support from many angles. Family involvement, school training, community education programs, hearing amplification ... you have the multi-faceted support that is really needed for their overall education and empowerment.”
- *Dr. Miriam Redleaf, ENT Specialist (Chicago, USA)*
- “The hearing aid I have is benefiting me a lot. I do better at home, at the work place, and in my neighborhood.”
- *Kere Desta, Hearing Aid Recipient*

- “I didn’t expect to find this Center to come together in such a short period of time. The project idea is great – wide in its range. I am so happy seeing this all happen for such a neglected group in the community...”
 – *Almaz Bekele, Education Expert (BCAED)*
- “The recent support from Vision has helped me to better my life and feed myself, and has enabled me to breastfeed my baby. This is what I have gained, because I used to eat only once per day. The market in the place where I’m living is not encouraging to start saving.”
 – *Acham Necho, Livelihoods Development Beneficiary*
- “Formerly, I was involved in household activities and mainly relied on my sister to cover my costs. The financial support from Visions has enabled me to stand on my own now... I am progressing well.”
 – *Yemisrach Taye, Livelihoods Development Beneficiary*
- “Dropping out of school at Grade 8, I spent many years without work. I am lucky to get this support. I’ve started saving money. I’m able to feed and dress my baby girl well.”
 – *Amsal Girmay, Livelihoods Development Beneficiary*
- “I was totally dependent on my family before. Now, I am able to afford to cover my expenses on my own and am saving for my future.”
 – *Tsegiereda Abebe, Livelihoods Development Beneficiary*
- “It’s good to be alive. We have seen our children attending school now in a clean classroom with their peers and learning in their own language. We won’t forget those stressful years when this was not the case. It brings us a deep happiness that brings tears to our eyes.”
 – *Zemenay Biresaw and Alemitu Engida, Parents of Deaf Student*
- “I spent many years moving from place to place, trying to give my son access to a proper education that would also address his interests. I won’t forget how we suffered. Now the day is bright.”
 – *Ayal Tsegaw, Parent*
- “Today...I wanted to say thank you so much for your invaluable help to those who are really in need of your help. Without you, their life was so much in trouble. Plus, for the very nice lectures presented by Prof. Catherine [which inspired] my students to become interested in ENT. We greatly appreciate your help!!!”
 – *Dr. Asnake Bitew, Local Volunteer Physician*
- “I spent yesterday reflecting on the awesome experience I had with you at the...Center! The amount of support I was given by [Kal Center and Visions], exceeded my expectations. It was a unique experience for an audiologist. The sense of community at the Center was very strong. So glad I could be a part of it!”
 – *Catherine Clark, Volunteer Audiologist (Rochester, NY)*
- “I am really happy because I got the opportunity to see the daily progress of deaf people, especially youngsters and children. From my observation, your project is helpful

for the deaf people in three ways. Firstly, you hired the right people for the right place (deaf teachers, interpreters and deaf education professionals).

Secondly, as we all know, the deaf people had no (none at all) chance to meet each other, to share their life exposure, to play games, to improve their signing skill...etc. However, now thanks to your project, they have got the opportunity at school, at the center and other working places.

Thirdly, the most useful point. You (we) are making a lifelong progress for the deaf. Imagine, in the world there are in millions of projects but very few of them work to change the life of people. So your project is one of the best few projects. Do you know why?

To me, making people happy is the most and the best work. When I see the deaf kids playing together, having fun, talking about different issues they like, improving their signing skill, I can imagine their bright future.

At last, I would like to say please keep it up. When I realise the deaf youngsters those who were at the leadership training yesterday and even last time, I feel sad because I couldn't communicate with them to the extent I expected. This is because they hadn't any opportunity at early ages. But now the youngster and children are using a lot from your project. I am curious to see you expanding your project and changing the life of deaf people. Many thanks."

- Luel Zeray, Local Volunteer Interpreter

- "My recent trip to Ethiopia was another wonderful and eye-opening experience. I was a bit worried going in as Ethiopia is a different Visions program than I'm used to. In my lifetime I've never come across anyone that was Deaf; this was a completely new world to me. It was so interesting learning about how they communicate with one another. The work that Visions has been doing in Ethiopia is incredible. Thanks to Visions, Deaf young adults and adults have a place to gather with one another and learn Ethiopian Sign Language and be integrated into their local communities. Aynalem is truly amazing in all that she does to help the Deaf community.

I had a wonderful time in Ethiopia with the Visions team; another great group of volunteers. What I really enjoy about Visions is the Leadership program that we give the young adults. We had a very quick version during this trip; I wish we had done a bit more of this. I understand that the audience is quite different than Sri Lanka and India. I can see myself coming back to Ethiopia with Visions in the next couple of years. Ethiopia is a wonderful country full of incredible individuals and I look forward to seeing the progress that will be made. The Ethiopia trip is right up there with the Sri Lanka trip I did in 2013; can't decide which one I enjoyed more."

- Sabine Wyss, International Volunteer - Switzerland