



KILTE AWELALO

2014 PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT





HOW WE GOT STARTED

In 2010, armed with experience from working on our first project in the district of Hintalo Wejirat in the region of Tigray, imagine1day began to look for new districts to partner with. Our priority was to find a district with a large gap in quality and access to education, but we also had to consider how to best utilize the resources we had in place. At the time, we only had four team members working out of our office in Tigray, which was based in the city of Mekelle, and we had access to just one vehicle. As a result, we needed to partner with a district that was easily accessible from our office, as well as from the district of Hintalo Wejirat, where we were still implementing our education programs.

After consulting with the Regional Government of Tigray, we assessed three districts. We met with key stakeholders spanning each sector office of the district governments including the District Administrator, the Head of Agriculture, the Women's Affairs Office, the Youth and Sports Office, the Water Office, and the Construction Office, Education Office, Social Affairs Office and the Health Office. Our goal was to understand each sector offices' commitment to quality education, and what they were willing to contribute to the project.

On a grassroots level, we also met with elders, women's association leaders, parents, teachers, students, religious leaders and village administrators spanning dozens of communities in each district to understand what issues they were facing.

After one month of research we settled on the district of Kilde Awelalo, where a significant gap in access and quality of education was present, and where a commitment to improve the current circumstances was visible both on a district and a community level.



In May 2011, thanks to the generous financial contributions of the Canadian International Development Agency (which is now known as the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development), together with other corporate donors and individual contributors, and with the full support of Ethiopia's Federal Ministry of Education, the Regional Government of Tigray, and the District Government, we embarked on a holistic project targeting all 59 schools in the district of Kilde Awelalo.

Between May 2011 and December 2014, we dedicated \$1.35 million on improving the access and quality of education for over 28,000 children annually in the district of Kilde Awelalo. This was our first project on such a large scale.



THE CHALLENGE

In 2010, in the district of Kilde Awelalo, children were attending school beneath trees, seated on stones and dirt floors. Teachers were disengaged because of the poor teaching conditions, and learning outcomes were far from being achieved. Only 57% of students ever completed Grade 8 and of those who did finish primary school, only 38% progressed to Grade 9. Many parents were prioritizing their need for domestic labour and their cultural and religious beliefs above their children's right to an education.

Girls especially struggled to attend school past Grade 4. A lack of gender-segregated latrines prevented most girls from attending class once they hit puberty. If they were able to overcome this barrier, the long distances students needed to walk to reach Grades 5 to 8 would keep girls at home—parents were too concerned about gender-based violence to let them walk alone for long hours.

When the district administrators, school faculty, and community members asked for imagine1day's help, we explained our model. We shared that alongside bricks and mortar and financial support, we would endeavour to strengthen their leadership such that at the end of three years, they would be able to carry their education system forward on their own.





GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Our objective was to improve access, equity, quality and efficacy of schools in Kilde Awelalo.

These were our goals:

- To increase the amount of children who complete primary school and progress to Grade 9 from 57% to 81%.
- To inspire gender parity in schools and to increase overall school enrolment from 70% to 85%.
- To reduce the distance kids walked to school from 10 km to 2 km in four communities.
- To improve students' GPA in all schools by at least four percentage points.
- To train 174 teachers from throughout the district.
- To ensure that community leaders, parents and educators were successful in their income generating activities so that they could sustain their schools and continue giving their children the best quality education for the long haul once we left.



THE GAME PLAN

1. NEW SCHOOLS, LATRINES, WATERPOINTS & LIBRARIES

- We built four new Grade 1 to 4 schools in communities where children were attending school beneath trees or in makeshift open air structures.
- Six new Grade 5 to 8 schools were built in communities where girls and boys would otherwise have to walk between 8 km and 25 km to continue their education.
- Eight gender-segregated latrines were constructed to ensure better sanitation and to help girls stay in school after they hit puberty.
- 13 water points were provided as a much-needed source of fuel for children during the day.
- Five libraries were created to offer a happy place for readers to study after class or to discover a new book.
- One Early Childhood Education (ECE) classroom was constructed as a pilot project. ECE classrooms are now an integral part of our program.



2. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EDUCATORS & COMMUNITY LEADERS

- We trained 413 Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members from 59 schools for three consecutive years.
- Cumulatively, 775 teachers also received training in Active Learning, Life Skills and Exam and Measurement between 2011 and 2014.
- A total of 59 school principals and nine district education supervisors were trained in school management and leadership over three years.
- We held three annual experience-sharing workshops with 177 PTA members, principals and model teachers over three years.
- Nine Project Advisory Council (PAC) members from the district government were trained in project planning, monitoring and evaluation, leadership, communication and goal setting.

3. EDUCATIONAL SUPPLIES & SUPPORT

- We provided combined desks, blackboards, science kits, reading corners, sports materials and school club supplies to eight priority schools.
- We also planted 24,415 fruit and 16,675 shade trees in 39 schools and 13 communities throughout the district.
- Finally, 22 schools received income generation training and seed funding to ensure long-term sustainability of their school programs. The schools generated a total income of \$12,564 in three years.



OUR RESULTS

During this three-year project, imagine1day and our project partners improved the access, quality, equity and the efficiency of schooling for more than 28,000 children annually from 59 primary schools in the district of Kilde Awelalo. A total of 775 teachers, 59 school principals, 292 PTA members and 400 households benefitted from our efforts. We didn't just meet our goals and objectives in Kilde Awelalo, we helped the district become recognized as a model for quality education throughout the country.

In late 2012, the Federal Minister of Education selected one of imagine1day's schools, Beati-Akor, as a "Centre for Experience," and invited the Heads of Education from each region throughout the country to tour the school. Then, in November 2013, Kilde Awelalo was rated by the Education Ministry of Tigray as offering the highest quality of education compared to 46 other districts in the region of Tigray. By 2014, the Grade 8 students of Kilde Awelalo were outdoing all the other districts in the region: 96.2% of them were passing their national exams.



Here are 11 project highlights we achieved between May 2011 and June 2014

1. In 2013, 88% of girls in the Kilte Awelalo district progressed from Grade 8 to Grade 9, up from just 32% in 2010.
2. The dropout rate decreased from 4% to 0.72%, and a 0% drop out rate was achieved in 21 out of 59 schools.
3. The average GPA of students in Grades 1 to 8 increased from 69.4% to 79.75%.
4. In just three years, we increased the amount of boys and girls who complete Grades 1 through 8 from 57% to an outstanding 95.7%.
5. In the communities where we built schools, student attendance swelled significantly from 76% to 98% in three years.
6. Since new water points were built in 13 communities, there are far fewer absent students due to common sicknesses like influenza, cough, and waterborne stomach diseases.
7. Inspired by the Reading Corners created by imagine1day in five communities, 39 schools in the district created Reading Corners on their own initiative.
8. The amount of children in the district who could not read properly dropped from 45% to only 22% in three years.
9. 100% of students are now participating in at least one school club and girls lead 51% of school clubs.
10. As of June 2014, 22 schools generated a total of \$12,564 through income generating activities – this is a return of 29% on investment.
11. Enticed by our teacher training activities, the amount of teachers leaving the district fell from an average of 58 teachers a year to just seven.



WHAT WE LEARNED

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PRESENT

Our team found a remarkable difference in community involvement and implementation of our programs when they took the time to be present in communities and work closely with local leaders, teachers, parents and principals on a regular basis. When we send instructions on paper, they tend to be put on the shelf, but when our team is on the ground, things get done quickly, efficiently and with enthusiasm.

2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FROM START TO FINISH

In our first project in Hintalo Wejirat, although we worked with the district throughout the project's lifespan, we didn't have the foresight to properly establish a Project Advisory Council (PAC) until half way through the project lifespan. In Kilte Awelalo, we established a PAC including representatives from the Agriculture Office, the Women's Affairs Office, the Youth & Sports Office, the Health Office, the Water Office, the Administrative Office, Construction Office, Social Affairs Office, and the Education Office at the very inception of our project. We also trained all our PAC members in quarterly Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) techniques to ensure that they could monitor and maintain our infrastructure and programming in the long-term without imagine1day's support. As a result of these efforts, the District Government of Kilte Awelalo became an instrumental partner in this project, and helped facilitate and fix any problems we encountered along the way. The PAC's active involvement in our project from start to finish also created a sense of ownership on behalf of the district government which will ensure the sustainability of the project long after imagine1day is gone.

3. COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

In the district of Hintalo Wejirat, we paid for 100% of the building costs for new infrastructure. However, we found that this resulted in low community ownership of the schools we built. As a result, in Kilde Awelalo we tried a new concept: we asked that communities contribute 10% to 20% of our construction costs. The community of Tsabat was the first to participate in this experiment. Initially, our team was resistant and worried that the community would not be able to raise the funds. Instead, they exceeded our expectations; they had one month to fundraise, but after just two weeks, the community gave us the 125,000 birr we needed. After Tsabat's achievements, other communities started raising money on their own and invited us to build in their villages. Some communities even started raising money to fund their own self-directed projects. As we had hoped, community-school partnerships improved as a result. With a financial stake in the project, people started monitoring their school construction and becoming more active in their PTAs. Asking for community contributions transformed our efforts from an exercise of charity, to an exercise in cooperation.





WHERE WE ARE NOW

Having met all our goals and objectives in school access, quality, equity and efficiency, imagine1day is phasing out of this district. This fall, our team started compiling phase-out reports for all 59 schools in Kilde Awelalo.

Each report outlines the progress a school has made, the improvements that still need to be worked on, and our recommendations for how these targets can be achieved. This November, these reports were presented to PTA groups throughout the district. Each PTA group signed off on these reports and officially took over the school projects entirely on their own.

Similar overall project phase out reports were presented to local village leaders, to the PAC leaders in the district government, and to the regional government. We don't leave a district until all these stakeholders are satisfied with the progress we achieved and are ready to take on the project's long-term sustainability on their own.

In December 2014, imagine1day completely phased out of the district of Kilde Awelalo, but that doesn't mean we're gone for good. Although we will no longer be dedicating funding and programming to Kilde Awelalo, our Tigray team will continue to stay in touch with district leaders to ensure the long-term sustainability of our schools. Each year, our team will create an update report to monitor how students are progressing through the education system.

In the words of Daniel Atikilti, imagine1day's Manager of Operations and Monitoring & Evaluation: "Until imagine1day leaves Ethiopia in 2030, we will continue to follow up."





A STORY FROM THE FIELD

Meet Abi Adi's next female leader

Samrawit Kahsay isn't just another student at Abi Adi Primary School, she's a role model. "I joined The Girls' Club because I want to be a part of a support system that offers girls encouragement to continue learning," says the club secretary. "During our meetings we talk about a variety of topics ranging from how to manage our periods to gender equality. From these meetings, we developed a peer tutoring system, devised a plan for how to generate income for our club, and created a strategy on how to re-enroll female students who have dropped out of school."

"Before I was in the club, I was too shy to speak up in class, but now I have lots of practice in public speaking and leadership. Because of my involvement with the Girls' Club, I am an active participant in my class. I want to become a role model for the younger girls, so I study hard and encourage them to do the same," she says.

Samrawit wasn't always so optimistic and engaged in school. Just four years ago, learning conditions in Abi Adi were bleak. Built from branches and stones, the community's homemade school did not make learning comfortable. For five years, students learned in classrooms with no desks, a dirt floor, no windows and no teaching supplies.

After meeting this community in 2011, imagine1day got to work. We didn't just build brand new Grade 1-8 classrooms, we also ensured that students got proper desks, teachers finally had teaching aids and that the school received reading corners, a science kit, creative writing materials, and materials for sports clubs and school clubs. Parents, teachers, community leaders and the school principal also received training to improve their school conditions.

By May of 2012, student outcomes were blossoming. The Grade 4 completion rate was 99%; student attendance had increased from 78% to 99% in just one year; and there were more than 249 kids attending classes.

Meanwhile, thanks to our school club orientation and supplies provision, six new school clubs popped up in Abi Adi, including Samrawit Kahsay's Girl Club.

Thanks to donors like you, Abi Adi's School Principal, Mebrehit Girmay, says that her school is reinvigorated.

"You have provided us with two beautiful school buildings and the resources that we need to create generations of life-long learners. On behalf of the teachers, community members and students thank you! Your investment has impacted every member of Abi Adi and will continue to do so in the years to come."



Samrawit Kahsay

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