



*The Nicolas Robinson School in happier times*

## **Christmas message from Rainbows4children**

**December 2020**

*Dear friends and supporters*

*We would like to wish you, your families and friends a wonderful Christmas. For everyone it will be a very different style of Christmas, this year, nonetheless we hope you can connect with your loved ones at this time.*

*The last couple of months have been particularly difficult for Rainbows4children and especially for our family in Ethiopia at the Nicolas Robinson School. In October we were looking at the implications of Covid, whether the children could return to school and celebrating the hard work of our science staff in the fight against locusts.*

*Then we found ourselves confronted with a war scenario, with the region totally cut off from all communication and the citizens suffering from a lack of electricity, internet, water, and food, with phone lines and banking all cut off.*

*On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December, we finally heard from the School. We are uncertain of the condition of our children and staff at the school in detail, but it does seem that the school itself is secure and the management team are meeting to start arranging creating a new normal. We do know that the children especially will have been affected by the traumatic events of the last few weeks, and we know the school will do everything they can to help the families.*

The school has cared for its staff in these difficult times and at the start of the conflict purchased bulk supplies of grains and instant noodles to share amongst all the staff so that they could eat, as they knew that most staff did not have enough cash to buy anything without receiving their monthly salary.

They managed to get some cash about 3 weeks ago and then the banks closed again, and are still closed.

At the school, the guards and teaching staff have protected the school from looting and it has been mainly undamaged. Now a group of staff meet at the school every day to play football and ensure that the school looks busy and attended.

Our head of school has been able to contact almost all of the staff and to check on their well-being. It will be a while before we know about the situation of the students, but we will let you know when they feel that it is safe for them to return to school.

Many have very kindly offered donations and other ways of helping us. For now, we are not certain what will be needed but certainly we will need support in running the school, as a lot of the local business support that we had in the past will not be available as the economy has been badly damaged.

We are sure that we will also need sponsors for more of our children, as the local company that supported 300 children in the past will have lost its assets and will take several years before it can make a profit again.

We will keep you informed of all developments as we find out more and we will hope we will hear from the school again soon. We will post information on our website which we know to be accurate and you can also follow us on social media. As in all wars, the truth is very hard to identify and we won't be passing on information unless it has been independently verified. Our focus and our only interest is the safety and well-being of our students, staff and their families, and to ensure continued education of the highest quality, as soon as possible.

Despite these challenges, our commitment to the children and our staff is as strong as ever. We are grateful for our own health, and we realise how little we have to complain about as we celebrate the holidays, even in these restricted times as we have food and security.

We wish you a very happy festive season and the best of health in 2021.

Max and Kathryn



Max and Kathryn

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