



***This report is a short summary of the activities of Rainbows4Children in the year 2024. Details on any specific issue are available by contacting Max & Kathryn Robinson at [info@rainbows4children.org](mailto:info@rainbows4children.org)***

## **Project Progress - Nicolas Robinson School**

**Major achievements in 2024, despite on-going challenging circumstances:**

- **100% pass rate of students at the grade 8 regional examinations**
- **98% success rate for university entrance examinations at the end of grade 12. 140 students from 144 are now at university.**
- **4 students were granted overseas scholarships by external grant-giving organisations during the course of the year**
- **The school continued the accelerated learning programme condensing 3 semesters into 1 year of study**
- **Educating 500 extra students at the school as a community contribution to post-war recovery. These students' own schools remained closed following the war in the region (2020-22)**

### **1. The current situation and the Nicolas Robinson School**

Since February 2023 teaching has resumed at the Nicolas Robinson School.

Many schools in the Tigray region were unable to open for several reasons: a shortage of teachers, severe damage to the school premises, use of schools as housing for Internally Displaced Persons. As a consequence, the Nicolas Robinson School has supported the local community by initially accepting an extra 700 students. This number had reduced to 500 extra by September 2024, as some students could return to their communities. A total of 1,900. Extra teachers were recruited on a contract basis to support the extra classrooms.

To help the students catch up on their lost years of learning, the Tigray region operated an accelerated learning programme. Summer holidays were cut short from the normal 3 months to 3-4 weeks. Longer days were operated with a focus on maths and languages, especially for the younger students. Extra opportunities were given to students to take key regional (at the end of grade 8) and national exams (Ethiopian University entrance) at the end of grade 12.

Extensive maintenance work was carried out in 2024, to freshen the classrooms, especially in kindergarten.

Food production continued in the school gardens, and the school supplementary food programme provided fruit, eggs and yogurt or milk to 1,500 students (up to grade 7). Lunches were given to 150 students who could not get food at home.



*New painting, KG school*



*Food production at school*



*Eggs for students*

### **2. Building and equipment installed during 2024**

During 2024, maintenance and painting work was carried out at the school to create a conducive learning environment and improve comfort and equipment following the war. On a temporary basis we are helping the community by educating an extra 500 children at the school. To support



this, we have purchased extra chairs and tables. They can be re-sold when school numbers are reduced.

### **3. Students and educational performance**

The Nicolas Robinson School has resumed its teaching activities with its usual high standard. Since school resumed in 2023, 4-year groups of grade 8 students have taken their regional exams and 100% have passed to secondary school. A total of 472 students.

3-year groups of grade 12 students have taken the Ethiopian National University Entrance Exams. A total of 209 students. 179 students took natural science and 174 were accepted at university (97% success), (30 students took social science and 29 were accepted at university passed (97% success). Older students, both at the school and recent graduates, were assisted in applying to universities and scholarships overseas. Our first blind student won an award for being the highest scoring blind student in the country. Our outstanding students are being helped to apply for overseas scholarships and students have won places at African Science Academy (Maths/Physics A levels for girls), African Leadership Academy, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, US International University in Africa (Nairobi).

### **4. Nicolas College**

Plans to re-open the Nicolas College were developed during 2024 with a re-opening date of early January 2025. Funding has been given by FEPS to support the college reopening, so that students can attend free of charge. Cooking school starts in January 2025 (20 registered students), IT starts in February 2025 and household equipment maintenance will start in July 2025. Entrepreneurship training for all study groups is also planned, as short courses within the training period.

As peace returns, the chance to train young people to start their own businesses will be extremely important. Unemployment is estimated at > 90% in the city of Mekele, so self-employment will be crucial.

### **5. Sponsorship programme**

Background: Previously about 250-300 students were sponsored by the EFFORT group of companies. This group uses its profits for the benefit of the people of Tigray, especially those from families who have disabilities. Most of their businesses were destroyed during the war and there is no chance for them to re-open. A lot of damage and looting occurred, and it will be many years before profitability will be restored. Rainbows4children has found sponsors to help these children finish their education.

By the end of 2024, 700 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, 80 sponsored school students are also now supported in their university studies, after they left the school. We still need about 200 more sponsors, as many families have been impoverished by the war.

### **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.

In the report of 2020, the leadership of the School during Covid and the locust invasion was recorded.

During the war and siege of November 2020-November 2022 the school led in the community in several ways:

They organised feeding programmes for the children to ensure they all got one meal per day.

They organised health checks for the children and sought advice from the local paediatric doctors.



They installed solar panels on the roof of a building in the school to power computers, a printer and refrigerator.

They grew vegetables and cooperated with the local Bureau of Agriculture to train the community.

## 7. Supplementary food programme

Started in 2011, the supplementary food programme continues for students at the kindergarten and primary schools. Every day the students are given extra food to provide better nutrition (protein, vitamins) in the form of eggs, banana, milk or yogurt, orange or other seasonal fruit. All foods depend on availability, which is variable. 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. In 2024 we provided supplementary food for 1,500 students and lunches for 150 students whose parents cannot provide lunch for them.



*School children enjoying yogurt in the food programme*



*fruit & vegetable production*

## 8. Volunteers

During 2024 Kathryn and Max visited the school twice, for a total of 8 weeks. Our first volunteer, from Sweden, visited in November to teach English for 2 weeks. He was a returning volunteer.

## 9. Care for the Whole Child

The school's student welfare director ensures the welfare of all the students in the school. She also provides home counselling when needed and advises parents on good parenting and helping their children. Our school nurse assists in these and related issues. We operate a "special fund" to cope with emergency care for critical medical cases and families in extreme financial stress. It also supports families and our students who are experiencing difficulties in their lives at home.

## 10. Fund raising activities in 2024

Our annual Swiss fundraiser raised about CHF 52,000. This is the primary single fund-raising event of Rainbows4children. This income is much reduced from previous years following two years as an online event during Covid.

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.

During 2022 Rainbows4children established a cooperation with a US registered 501c3 organisation, Friends For African Education. They pass-through donations to Rainbows4children Stiftung, to enable US donors to claim tax benefits and has been a great success in attracting US donors.

Dutch taxpayers can also now benefit as we are now registered with the ABNI.

## 11. Legal and accounting

The statements of the 2024 accounts for the UK Foundation and Swiss registered foundations have been submitted to the appropriate governing authorities following the audits.



The trustees of both foundations during 2024 were:-

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

UK: Philip Stockbridge, George Potts, Alison Burgh, Kathryn Robinson, Richard Max Robinson.

In Switzerland, Sophie Bayley will join the board of trustees in 2025.

In the UK, Walter Brown will join the board of trustees in 2025.

Reported by:

Kathryn Robinson

14.04.2025

Rainbows4children Foundation

Registered with the Swiss government, number: CH-130.7.009.779-5

Registered in the UK, number: 1116387

Patron: Michael Buerk