



March 2022

Dear friends and supporters,

Our thanks to you all for your continued support during these difficult times in Ethiopia and especially in Tigray.

The good news we are able to report is that on 21st February the Nicolas School team were able to re-start teaching for our younger students – from Kindergarten to Grade 6 (ages 3.5 to about 13). All the students are having health checks and are being fed and provided with medical help where possible.

We had a very good response; about 75% of the eligible students attended. Those who did not were mainly students who live too far away (there is no fuel for transport). The classes will start with revision and then start catching up on missed schooling. We have invited in some of our older students who live near the school, as well as some of our recent alumni (university students, mainly) to come and help as teaching assistants.

Whilst the blockade on the Tigray region continues, there are some glimmers of hope for the future. There are peace negotiations underway, and we are hoping for a positive outcome. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been able to fly in a few small planeloads of urgently needed medical supplies (such as insulin and kidney dialysis fluids) for the Mekele main hospital.

Unfortunately, no food aid trucks have reached Tigray so far, and people are doing their best to survive by sharing food and eking out the recent harvest, but the level of hunger is reaching a critical point.

At the Nicolas School, we have planted many vegetables and had help with local experts who have given advice on the care of our vegetable plots.

Our school staff were able to install and operate solar panels and equipment provided by a Rainbows4children supporter, in October and this has been extremely helpful to the school as there is still no power available from the national grid.

Everyone is happy to volunteer and to contribute. Recently local youths have had a collection of exercise books for the school, from within the community. There was a shortage, but now we can give each student a book for their classes.

Our focus at the moment continues to be to feed everyone and to care for their physical and mental health. When the blockade stops, and banking services open again, we will be able to pay our loyal staff and support transport programmes to help the other children who live further away to get to the school. We are convinced that the children's morale will be vastly improved by the chance to see their friends again and to play sport and other group activities.

Thank you again for the continued support in these very difficult times.

Best wishes,

Kathryn and Max