



Newsletter December 2021

Dear friends of Rainbows4children,

As you have surely seen in the media, the civil conflict in Ethiopia has continued throughout the past year, having started on 4th November 2020. Despite the extremely difficult circumstances, thanks to your generous support we have been able to continue providing food and education to our school community in Mekelle. Our teachers, the children and their parents have asked us to pass on to you their deepest gratitude and thanks for your kindness and generosity. Your loyalty at this time of great hardship means the world to all of them and to us.

We manage to speak to the school staff from time to time with the help of local NGOs who still have access to satellite communications, but sometimes two weeks pass by without any news. The mobile phone network and internet has been cut off for the past 6 months in the entire Tigray region.

There is no electricity from the grid now in the entire state of Tigray (population approx. 8 million people), after the Ethiopian national air force bombed the Tekeze hydroelectric dam, destroying the transformer/substation. This means it is no longer possible to pump clean water around the city of Mekelle and to power grinding mills to produce flour from grain. People are now having to resort to grinding grain between two large flat stones by hand in order to eat.

The school has been helping to purchase and distribute food for the neediest families and we are supporting them wherever we can. Although it was planned for schools to re-open in October, this has been postponed following drone attacks which have hit civilian targets in Mekelle. Parents are afraid to send their children to school where they would be vulnerable to attack as a large group in one location. Our staff are therefore continuing to take educational materials to the homes of our school children and have recently been able to install some additional solar panels to provide electricity to power laptops and printers.

It is a real challenge to work in these extremely tough circumstances, but for sure, with your great support, we will continue to do everything within our power to assist our "family" - staff, children and their immediate households. This represents a responsibility for more than 10,000 people and we must do our best to give them hope for a better future when peace eventually comes to the country.

We wish you all a very happy festive season and thank you for your continued support.
Kathryn and Max