



**Enabling communities
to help themselves**

ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2024

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INTRODUCTION FROM SECRETARY

2024 was a year of working within our reduced budget. We consolidated our projects, focussing heavily on our core objective of providing libraries to the area in which we excelled and further extended our reach in both footfall and books lent. We continued our other projects where funding allowed. Huge thanks to Murti and her team. The project committee is to be thanked for their keen attention to the details of the projects and budgeting.

The Year of The Teacher raised £2056 which was a great achievement and covered the cost of 650 books. We chose The Year of Rural Schools as our focus for 2025.

Our newsletter continues to evolve and be a vital form of communication.

Murti is growing our engagement with schools and has restarted the linked schools' initiative. This is an area of great potential and her regular schools newsletter is proving a big success in raising interest.

In Nekemte there continued to be challenges with security issues and we thank the whole team for their resilience and determination to keep projects running where it is safe to do so. Murti has worked tirelessly to ensure the safe and efficient continuation of the work.

We are delighted to have secured two significant grants in 2024. Thanks to Mark and Murti for their skilful proposals.

I would like to extend sincere thanks and appreciation across the spectrum of EEL. From our members and supporters through to our board of trustees and treasurer, our project committee, our volunteers Lee and David and our Nekemte team working with our teachers, librarians and local communities.

Thank you for your continued support.

Dawn Swettenham

2024 PROJECT UPDATES:

2024 was a hugely challenging year because of the political and security situation in and around Nekemte with regular armed conflict around and at times in Nekemte.

Nekemte was declared (and still is) an area which the FCDO advises against all travel to.

However, EEL is continuing to work with the EECMY CS-DASSC. It puts the security of the team as a total priority but uses local knowledge to identify areas where it is safe.



Thank you from the team in Nekemte

I) LIBRARIES

- In 2024, EEL supported 40 primary school libraries:
- **35 librarians were employed** (27 Females) in the context of the area where the unemployment rate is 30%. This enabled them to access a monthly income often paying for their studies.
- **5 librarians** were employed by the government (an additional 3 librarians compared to 2 in 2023). The project supports the schools by providing librarian training.
- The libraries had a total average monthly footfall of **27,400 students** and an average of **2,056 books** were lent each month.



LIBRARIES



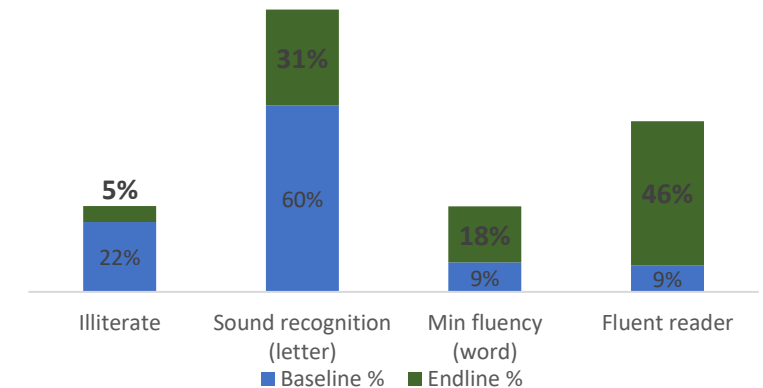
- We have planned to extend the project agreement for an additional year, starting in June 2025. Under this we are planning to:
 - Support an average of 20,000 students a month to access class libraries
 - Employ 35 librarians each year
 - Carry out support visit to disability associations or parent support groups with VSLAs which were set up in previous years.

2. LITERACY

- **12 teachers were trained** in the teaching of early grade reading from four rural schools.
- We have continued **girls' literacy tutorials in four schools**. This resulted in **85** girls who otherwise were not achieving literacy in mainstream classrooms to reach a minimum word level of literacy and out of this **71** girls to become fluent in reading.



Grade 2 Girls' Literacy Assessment in (2024/5)

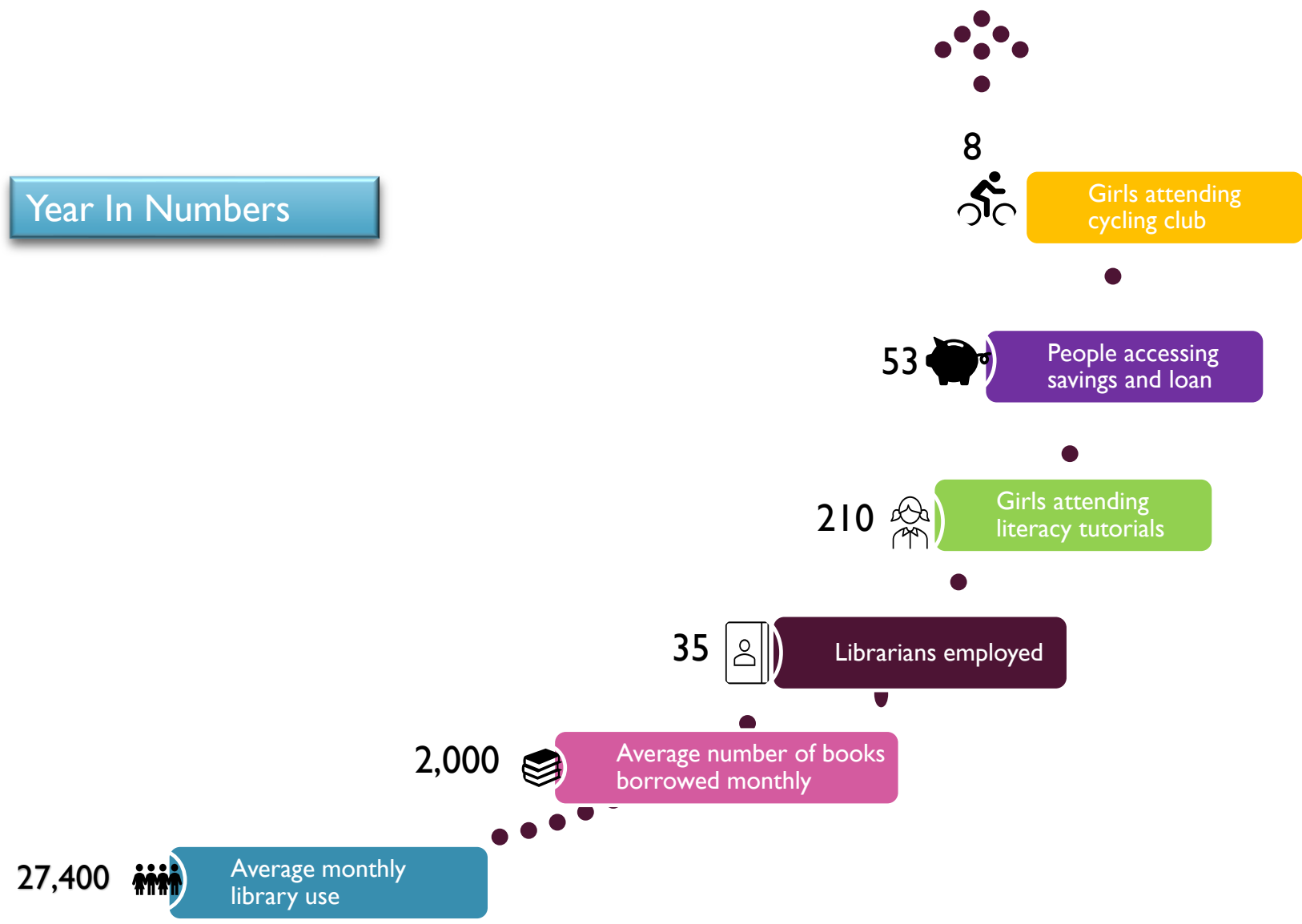


3. GIRLS' BIKE PROJECT

- 8 girls from two secondary school have been training in our girls cycling club. They meet three times a week with Coach Takele, a former professional cyclist, to build their skills and confidence.



Year In Numbers



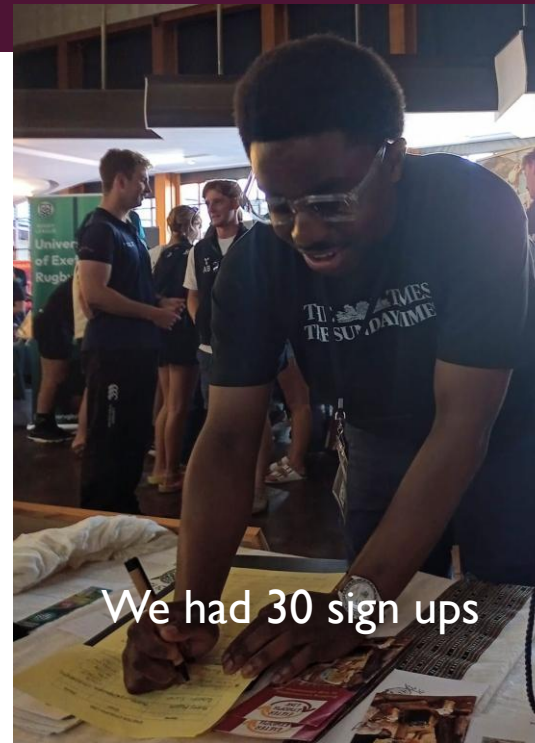
Fundraising by Annie Bainbridge and members



Annie, as usual, ran her stall at The Respect Festival. She also organized a walk and talk and attended South Molton Market to sell hand made knitted items kindly donated by a member. Money raised was added to our Big Give campaign and doubled!



Our trustee Ken organized a stand at Exeter University Fresher's Week to raise awareness



2024 FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN: UPDATE



£2056 raised

**2,680 books donated
to libraries**

EEL UPDATES: MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

A big thank you to all our members whose subscriptions help fund our much needed and appreciated projects in and around Nekemte.

We have 20 more members than in 2024 and of course our aim is to increase membership year on year. The annual fee is £10 single and £15 joint membership. It is easy to subscribe online through our website.

I would also like to thank those who are not members but give their time and energy to the Respect Festival and other fundraising activities.

Please email me if your contact details have changed

membsec@exeterethiopianlink.org

Annie Bainbridge Membership secretary

CURRENT MEMBERS = 164



Update: March 2024

Welcome to our quarterly newsletter keeping you up to date with what's going on at EEL and reporting on the progress we are making with our projects in Nekemte, Ethiopia

We have focused on inviting friends and followers to sign up to our newsletter.

We hope that this is an easy step towards membership.

We currently have 147 people signed up to our newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The trustees have approved the accounts and Emerald Davies in the process of examining our accounts for January to December 2024 in line with financial legislation and submit her report to the Trustees.

Exeter Ethiopia Link has finished 2024 with total funds of £20,384 (2023: £32,119).

We raised a total of £21,997 compared to £20,042 the previous year). This slight increase is mainly due to an additional grant we received. We again carried out a very successful Big Give campaign in which we raised £9,837. Money from this is included in both fundraising and donations lines (from our match funders Ethiopia Aid and Enable Ed CIC) of our Statement of Financial Activities. We spent £33,732 of which 90% went as grants out to Ethiopia and 7% as a stipend and expenses to our volunteer project manager in Ethiopia.

Currently the accounts for Exeter Ethiopia Link are declining, with totals of £12,965 in unrestricted funds and £7,419 in restricted funds (£20,384 in total).

By Mark Smith EEL Treasurer.

EEL has finished 2024 with total funds of £20,384

(See separate Financial Report for detail)

What's Next:

Our projects come to an end in June 2025 but with a recent grant (Feb 2025) of £10,000 from the Waterloo Foundation we will be continuing our projects and Murti is developing a project budget for sign off initially with the project committee.

GOVERNANCE, PEOPLE AND ROLES

OFFICERS:

Role	Officer during 2024:
General Secretary	Dawn Swettenham
Treasurer	Mark Smith
Membership Secretary	Annie Bainbridge
Fundraising, social media, publicity	Lee Davies
Website Editor	David Scarbrough
Project committee chair	George Dexter
Project committee	Penny Pullen, Liz Horsefield, Aynsley Jones Jordan Jones, Sue Parks, Marc Zuiderveen Joanne Keenahan, Sue Parks, Murti Uma, Mark Smith

GOVERNANCE, PEOPLE AND ROLES

TRUSTEES:

Trustees during 2024	Changes During Year:
Penny Pullen (honorary/ ex officio)	
Liz Horsefield	
Dawn Swettenham	
George Dexter	
Selam Uma	
Cynthia Palmer	
Kenechukwu Leonard	

Trustee Changes at 2025 AGM	
Dawn Swettenham	Standing down
George Dexter	Standing down
Cynthia Palmer	For re election by rotation
Ruth Smith	Nominated to become trustee

Ex-officios	
Selam Uma	Secretary
Mark Smith (Treasurer)	Treasurer (non trustee)

2025/6 STRATEGY

Build on Our Strengths

- Continue empowering partners who work diligently on the ground despite limited staffing.
- Encourage trustees and members to sustain fundraising through community networks and events.
- Strengthen our partnerships with UK schools and explore additional collaborations.
- Support and celebrate the growing number of students using the school.
- Harness the enthusiasm of librarians to further enhance student support.

Seize Opportunities

- Proactively engage with other schools to exchange knowledge and foster collaboration.
- Create more platforms for sharing experiences within and beyond our network.
- Deepen connections with the local community to build mutual trust and support.

2025/6 STRATEGY

Address Weaknesses

- Improve social media presence to enhance visibility and outreach.
- Identify and recruit a dedicated individual or team for fundraising to ensure availability of funding .

Prepare for and Mitigate Threats

- Stay informed and adaptable in the face of political arrests, ensuring the safety of staff in Nekemte.
- Develop strategies to cope with inflation, such as budgeting adjustments and alternative resource sourcing, to keep children at school i.e. attendance and enrolment

2025 FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN: UPDATE



We have chosen rural schools as our fundraising focus for 2025.

The purpose of our fundraising is to purchase essential classroom equipment such as school desks, blackboards and bookshelves.

We are seeking a volunteer to help us to promote this cause and to organise fundraising events.

Could you organise an event and give the gift of education which will last a lifetime?



Could you support our rural schools?

A sponsored event :

- An opportunity to reach a personal goal
- An opportunity to improve your fitness

A coffee morning / book swap or supper:

- An opportunity to meet up with friends

**AN OPPORTUNITY
TO MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**