



Airbus Project Report
November 2024

Ethiopia Digital Schools

Project Overview

Introduction

The Ethiopia Digital Schools project has setup 3 fully functioning computer labs across two locations at Mary Help Catholic school and Mary Help college in Ziway, Ethiopia. While there were some delays in the equipment being released from customs, the computer labs are now running and students across Primary, Secondary and college level are benefitting from digital educational resources and gaining digital skills in the process.

Supply & Shipment of Equipment

Equipment was refurbished and ready for shipment by June 2023 and included 80 desktop computers, teacher laptops, 3 projectors, a printer., and headphones for each computer. The equipment was shipped in August 2023 by plane due to difficulties in getting shipment documentation by sea to Ethiopia (worsened by the political instability). The equipment arrived in Addis Ababa on the 25h September 2023.

Release From Customs

Once in Addis, the equipment was held in customs for a number of months. The equipment was classified as new IT equipment even though it was refurbished and was valued at a greater cost per unit. Therefore, a charge of \$31,000 was added in order for the equipment to be cleared from customs. Computer Aid appealed this charge through various channels including the involvement of our in-country partners, however, at the risk of the equipment being resold by Ethiopian customs, Computer Aid covered the additional amount and the equipment was cleared from customs in early March 2024. The funds were covered through contingency and staff time funds. The equipment was in good condition upon release.

Computer Lab Installations and Staff Training

Equipment was delivered to the schools in Ziway (around 170km South of Addis) after release from customs in March 2024. The equipment was installed by Mary Help College staff with assistance from college students (aged 18+) who specialise in ICT. Three separate computer labs were setup with an average of 26 machines in each lab.

Two of the labs are located at Mary Help Catholic School: 1 lab for Primary students (Grade 1-8, ages 7-12), and 1 lab for Secondary school students (Grade 9-12, ages 13-16). The final lab is at Mary Help College where beneficiaries aged 17 and older use the computers either for ICT or for the Fashion Design course. School teachers from both Primary and Secondary levels were trained in basic ICT skills by the school ICT teacher whilst the equipment was being held in customs.

Beneficiaries and ICT Access & Usage

The computers at Mary Help Catholic School were connected to an intranet server which hosts educational content provided by Computer Aid and is accessible by all the machines without the need for internet connectivity. The primary school students use their computer lab to learn English mainly. Primary grades 7-8 also learn about ICT basics which is a compulsory part of their curriculum. Secondary school students also learn about more intermediate ICT content such as Microsoft office, and digital safety.

Primary and secondary students are around 60% female, whilst college students at Mary Help College are 50% female. Fashion design students use Adobe Illustrator to design patterns for textiles printing.

Generally, the students at the school are mostly from economically poor backgrounds with around 80% of the school cohort being economically disadvantaged. Sister Nieves from our in-country partner the Salesian Sisters noted that "the computers we received are better than much of the new ICT equipment being sold in Ethiopia. The projectors and printers have really helped teaching staff amplify engagement through the technology."



Learning Structure

The school calendar year runs from mid-September until mid-July. The computer labs are mostly open from 8:30 till 12:30 daily, then from 14:00 till 16:30; staff are always present when students are using the lab. At Mary Help College, the computer lab also opens after hours from 17:00 till 19:00. This allows the college students to complete assignments in the lab and also conduct research.

The primary school students' curriculum is taught In Amharic, so the ICT resources are helping them to learn English ahead of Secondary school where teaching materials are in English. Grades 1-6 of the Primary school are using the computer lab exclusively to learn English. Secondary students are aged 13-16 across Grades 9-12.

College students have the opportunity to gain ICDL and Cisco accreditation for hardware and software maintenance; many of them obtain jobs in the service sector. Those who are Oromia speakers tend to stay locally for their careers whilst those who speak Amharic occasionally move to larger cities such as Addis.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Quality Education

This project contributes to Target 4.4 of SDG 4 which states:

By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Both teachers and students at project schools are directly gaining and have the opportunity to gain relevant technical skills that will improve their job prospects, contributing to Target 4.4.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



Gender Equality

This project contributes to Target 5.B of SDG 5 which states:

Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

By working exclusively with schools with similar ratios of boys to girls and in some cases having more female students, usage of equipment by all ensures that no individual is excluded.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Industry, Innovation And Infrastructure

This project contributes to Target 9.C of SDG 9 which states:

Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries.

By providing schools with computer labs and assistive technology such as projectors, thousands of students have access to information and communications technology.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Responsible Consumption And Production

This project contributes to Target 12.5 of SDG 12 which states:

By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

ICT Equipment used in projects is donated largely from companies; equipment is data-wiped and refurbished before being sent to projects. Therefore, this project is promoting the reuse of equipment and reducing e-waste.

Next Steps

Regarding the next steps of the project, we will monitor the continued access and usage of the computer labs by students. We expect their IT literacy and confidence to grow. We also expect the proficiency of Primary school students' English to improve through their continued access of English learning materials and language content.

Given that there are 1,276 students accessing the computer lab at Primary level, 407 students accessing from Secondary level, and 427 students accessing from Mary Help College, we anticipate roughly 2,110 beneficiaries to utilise the computers each year and almost 15,000 to access the computer lab over the lifecycle of the equipment.

