

Ethiopian Rural Education Project

Project Description: The Ethiopian Rural Education Project (EREP) will establish six inexpensive yet highly effective model schools to teach the first four grades of curriculum in Western Wollega, Ethiopia. This area is in great need of rural schools, having had many schools confiscated or destroyed during the Marxist regime in the 1970s-early 1990s. Four years is commonly accepted as the level necessary for permanent literacy and numeracy. The schools will use the Ethiopian state curriculum using the system developed by the Rishi Valley Institute for Education Resources (RIVER) in Andhra Pradesh, India. Drawing on the expertise of RIVER administrators and teachers, the EREP will adapt the Ethiopian curriculum to the RIVER methodology. The schools will be administered by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY); admission will be open to all students in the community regardless of religious affiliation.

Methodology: The Rishi Valley model is efficient, inexpensive, and highly effective, and was selected by the EECMY leaders in Dembi Dollo, Ethiopia, to implement in their community. The schools use inexpensive, computer-generated, instruction cards, referred to as the "school in a box"; the cards are shared among all students in the school. The cards are laminated, thus their life-use is extended to about three years. Children progress through the cards only after satisfying the teacher that they have mastered the previous step. Children study in groups defined by learning level (not age), and help each other learn under the supervision of a teacher.

Effectiveness: Teachers in these schools require less formal education than do teachers in government schools. Children who complete the curriculum in India perform as well or better on state examinations compared to children who attend the Indian government schools. The "school in a box" has more than 16 years' success in India. It has been adopted by many localities in the State of Andhra Pradesh, India, and has been adapted for tribal peoples and for other states (and languages) in India. The Rishi Valley administrators are adept at adopting the methodology to other languages and cultures.

Environmentalism: The schools require buy-in by the village community to sustain the school. In addition, the schoolchildren and villagers annually plant seedlings grown in the Rishi Valley plant nursery. The EREP will incorporate similar land reclamation and reforestation activities, including a garden by each school. The leaders at Dembi Dollo are especially eager for this aspect of the project.

Population served: The EREP schools in rural areas of Western Ethiopia will serve up to 240 students (35-40 in each school) taught by one teacher in each school. Girls will participate equitably. Children are the primary target group, but the schools also will offer instruction at night, especially to village women. The funding proposal is for two years. Upon successful completion of this project, EREP anticipates establishing additional schools based on the model schools.

Cost: An initial feasibility study by the Ethiopians in India, and a consultancy in Ethiopia to define project schedule and budget have been completed at a combined cost of \$13,000. Initial project start up, however, includes costly airfare, subsistence, and educational supplies for four Ethiopians to work at Rishi Valley in India for up to five weeks for training and development of educational materials; and a later consultancy in Ethiopia during early implementation. The project will fund school and furniture construction, equipment, and a centrally located resource center. Funds sought for project implementation in 2004-2005 are \$119,820. Development costs are detailed on the following page. After initial setup and operation for a year, the project will seek grants to sponsor continuing operation of the schools.

Contact: Mary Rhodes, Wellspring, Inc., PO Box 41, Corvallis, OR 97339; wellspring.inc@comcast.net; 541-752-6691.

Contributions: Make payable to **Susquehanna Valley Presbytery** and designate for **EREP**.

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Development Costs (listed in priority order):

Construction and furnishing of one school (approx. 23' x 26'); 5 round tables, 40 small chairs, 2 large chairs; dry latrine; environmental protection/school garden/land reclamation demonstration plot for village. **Funds urgently needed by March 30, 2004 to facilitate construction before the rainy season begins at the end of May:**

\$6,840 each. Need: 6 schools

Curriculum development and training the trainers: transportation, board & room, training, supplies:

\$4,726 each. Need: 4 trainers

Construction and furnishing of resource center (approx 46' x 52'); tables and chairs.

\$8,600. Need: 1 resource center

Equipment for resource center: Dell laptop computer, color printer, scanner, manual laminating machine:

\$2,850. Need: 1 set of equipment

Laminating film: \$2,500 for each of Year 1 and Year 2. The project will seek donation-in-kind or a reduced price from 3M Corporation for this film:

\$4,200

Completing curriculum in 2005

\$9,458

Monitoring and support

\$8,060

Contingency (10%)

\$11,138

Operation of school for one year:

\$2,440 each. Need: 6 schools

Operation of resource center for one year:

\$3,630. Need: 1 resource center

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) in Dembi Dollo will administer the schools. EECMY operates Berhane Yesus Primary School (pictured on left, below) and Bethel Evangelical Secondary School (BESS) in Dembi Dollo. (Compare Berhane Yesus School with the government school pictured on the right.)



First grade children in the Berhane Yesus Elementary School in Dembi Dollo, operated by the EECMY.



Children in the elementary school at Chanka, (about 40 miles from Dembi Dollo) operated by the government.

The new schools will be operated by EECMY using the Ethiopian curriculum. The schools will be furnished with round tables and chairs to permit students to study in groups, under supervision of a teacher, according to the method developed at Rishi Valley, India. (The Indian schools pictured below do not use tables and chairs.)

