



# Thinking Schools Ethiopia

## Building Schools From the Inside Out

### First Chapter

Never before has transformation been so real for me, as it has been in Ethiopia. The first chapter began with the Connection and then the Model was applied and the Impact & Results have been astounding. It's a wondrous first chapter – with the next chapter currently unfolding. I recently returned with a colleague, a graduate student developing sustainable networks for educators, and a person who is working with schools full time in Ethiopia for the upcoming school year. Please read on...



### The Connection

When my wife and I adopted two children, Ashenafi, age 3, and Salem, age 5, from the Children's Home Society and Family Services in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, the local schools learned of my background as an education consultant and asked me to conduct a workshop for 70 educators in the area. The Ethiopian educators knew that the best route to freedom and prosperity for their students was through education. They were deeply committed to finding sustainable new models to thinking that would provide the most advanced, student-centered approach for educating their students. I was deeply moved by their commitment. Because of our successful outcomes with the Thinking Schools USA, I was intrigued by the potential to create a sustainable, international learning partnership that would validate our basic principle: the Thinking Schools approach works regardless of a student's age, ethnicity, environment or geography. The Thinking Schools Ethiopia Project was launched in August 2009.



### The Model

The Thinking Schools approach uses visual tools; community building techniques; inquiry; collaborative learning; assessment and documentation; collegial coaching; habits of mind; and environmental mapping to build a sustainable thinking and learning community. The participant-centered workshops for the Ethiopian educators mirrored the same student-centered approach that Thinking Schools uses.

### The Impact

The first phase of the Thinking Schools Ethiopia Project included four large scale professional development sessions for over 1000 educators between August 2009 and October 2010. Participants included pre-K through high school teachers and principals as well as university professors and leaders from UNESCO, NGO's, the Ministry of Education, and government officials. Most recently 350+ government school educators showed up for a one day Thinking Schools introductory training showing the interest is growing. Additional workshops included six whole schools attending more comprehensive training, trainer of trainer and leadership sessions, and two parent sessions that included 190 participants.



### Read the Stories and Watch the Video!

[www.thinkingfoundation.org/ethiopia](http://www.thinkingfoundation.org/ethiopia)



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# Thinking Schools Ethiopia

## Building Schools From the Inside Out

### The Results

We're astounded and profoundly grateful for our remarkable success. To date, over 1000 participants have received the initial training in the Thinking Schools approach from Robert Price. In turn, each of these participants have used their training to reach over 40,000 of students, co-workers, and officials. While we are in the early stages of implementing measurements of success, there are a number of indicators very telling of the progress and potential including:

- participants leading Thinking Schools professional development sessions
- reflections from key participants (see attached page + more online)
- teachers shifting from teacher centered to student centered approach in classrooms
- observation of students actively involved with Thinking Schools methods including collaborative learning, visual tools, and inquiry

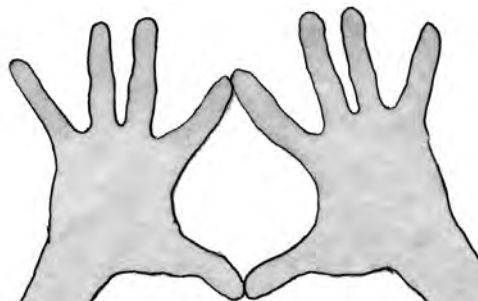
### Building Capacity 2010/2011

The next steps for the Thinking Schools Ethiopia are vital to its overall success by building additional capacity of the Ethiopian educators. Our leadership training will give them the expertise to develop model schools, become the facilitators of professional development in Ethiopia, and sustain Thinking Schools Ethiopia. I anticipate conducting three professional development sessions, each session consisting of two week intensive leadership training for 200 participants; cultivating sustainable model schools; developing an Ethiopian educator network; establishing an on-site Ethiopian education consultant; and continuing assessment, evaluation and documentation of the project.



### The Road to Success

Each educator who completes the workshop training will reach 60-200 students. Our goal is to train 5000 educators, including Ethiopian educators who will become the trainer of trainers. We invite you to partner with Thinking Schools Ethiopia to create a sustainable solution for educational success. We anticipate the successful completion of this project by 2014 (i.e. sustainable by Ethiopian educators) and will take this model to other countries who are seeking to transform their education systems and provide a sustainable future for their children. Continued involvement with Thinking Schools Ethiopia after 2014 would include continued action research, collaboration with Thinking Schools projects worldwide, Ethiopian trainers leading sessions outside Ethiopia, and building the Ethiopian educator network.



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"I would like to see this continue in some form. This was a complete success. It would benefit to have this training on an ongoing basis for public school teachers that would assist the whole education system in the country. This was a workshop about changing minds and acquiring a new set of beliefs about what education is all about."

*Awol Endris, Ph.D. ; Program Officer, Education and Training*

*UNESCO - International Institute for Capacity Building, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*



"This thinking process is a day to day activity with each individual [in all classrooms]. When applied in a government school, the people that come from different backgrounds will learn more. This training is very important to be practiced at all levels in government schools across the grades and all subjects. I suggest it is better to select a model school in different regions. In time these techniques will duplicate to all schools in the country."

*Tilahun Teshome - Ministry of Education - Special Needs Programme in Ethiopia Expert*

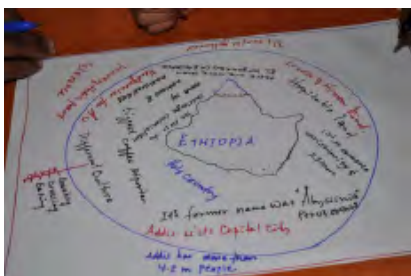
*Daniel Abebe - Ministry of Education - Curriculum Designer*



"It goes without saying that in-service training plays the role of enhancing teachers' competence of effectively imparting lessons. The training, in my view, did constitute an enlightening and capacitating workshop as far as teachers' roles in facilitating and suiting students' learning is concerned. It bore the idea that entitling students [children's] brains to learn of their physical and social environment by its own has in the long run the advantage of shaping independent learning at one's own pace, intellectual capacity and other particular circumstances. It generally is a shift towards making education students' responsibility."

*Dagim Melese - Teacher*

*Children's Home Academy, Adidas Ababa, Ethiopia*



**Watch and listen to more stories online!**

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# Thinking Schools Ethiopia

## Building Schools From the Inside Out

### Why Ethiopia?

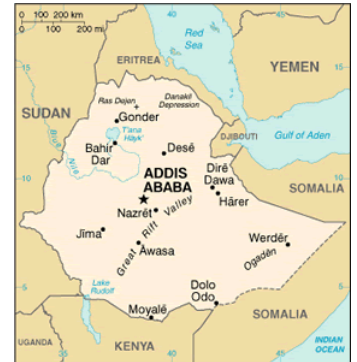
#### History

Ethiopia has been an independent nation since ancient times, being one of the oldest countries in the world, while most African nations are, in their modern form, are less than a century old.

A monarchy for most of its history, the Ethiopian dynasty traces its roots to the 10th century BC. Besides being an ancient country, Ethiopia is one of the oldest sites of human existence known to scientists today, having yielded some of humanity's oldest traces, it might be the place where Homo sapiens first set out for the Middle East and points beyond.

#### Size

Ethiopia is the second-most populous nation in Africa (and fifteenth largest in the world) with over 79.2 million people and the tenth-largest by area. The capital is Addis Ababa. Ethiopia is bordered by Eritrea to the north, Sudan to the west, Djibouti and Somalia to the east, and Kenya to the south.



#### Unique

Ethiopia is one of a few African countries to have its own alphabet. Ethiopia also has its own time system and unique calendar, seven to eight years behind the Gregorian Calendar. It has the largest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Africa.

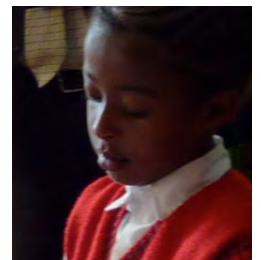
#### Independence

When Africa was divided up by European powers at the Berlin Conference, Ethiopia was one of only two countries that retained its independence. It was one of only four African members of the League of Nations. After a brief period of Italian occupation, Ethiopia became a charter member of the United Nations. When other African nations received their independence following World War II, many of them adopted the colors of Ethiopia's flag. The green recalls the land and hope for the future, yellow stands for peace and love, and red is symbolic of strength. Addis Ababa became the location of several international organizations focused on Africa. Ethiopia is one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), G-77 and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Today, Addis Ababa is still the headquarter of the African Union, the Nile Basin Commission and UNECA.



#### Education

Education in Ethiopia has been dominated by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church for many centuries until secular education was adopted in the early 1900s. Prior to 1974, Ethiopia had an estimated illiteracy rate well above 90% and compared poorly with the rest of Africa in the provision of schools and universities. After the 1974 revolution, emphasis was placed on increasing literacy in rural areas. Practical subjects were stressed, as was the teaching of socialism. Education received roughly 13% of the national budget in 1992. By 1995 the rate of illiteracy had dropped substantially to 64.5%. Projected adult illiteracy rates for the year 2000 stand even lower at 61.3% (males, 56.1%; females, 66.6%). As of 1999, public expenditure on education was estimated at 4.3% of GDP. The current system follows very similar school expansion schemes to the rural areas as the previous 1980s system with an addition of deeper renationalisation giving rural education in their own languages starting at the elementary level. The sequence of general education in Ethiopia is six years of primary school, four years of lower secondary school and two years of higher secondary school.



**Read the Stories and Watch the Video!**

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# Thinking Schools Ethiopia

## Building Schools From the Inside Out

### Pilot 2009/2010

- **August 2009** In March 2008, the groundwork was set for the Thinking Schools sessions on the 23rd-29th August 2009 for seventy participants from various urban and rural schools and UNESCO. The participants included three whole schools (one urban and two rural) and five smaller groups from additional urban schools. The sessions took place in Addis Ababa. The participant centered workshop mirrored a child/student centered approach. Reflections on the workshop showed that participants were more positive in their approaches to teaching and learning.
- **January 2010** The second of three pilot sessions in the 2009/2010 school year included over 200 participants representing government schools, private schools, and NGOs participating. Sessions took place in urban (Addis Ababa) and rural locations (Hossana).
- **May 2010** The third Thinking Schools pilot session included many more teachers and leaders from government schools, the Ministry of Education, private schools, and NGOs. The implementation of the Working Field Guide, development of a teacher network, and micro action research grants were important growth steps for the May 2010 sessions.

### Proposed 2010/2011

- **October 2010** Whole school training leading to establishing model schools; directors working with Ethiopian co-facilitators at large training sessions; expanding teacher to teacher and school to school networks; introducing action research.
- **January 2011; March 2011** Establishing three to five model schools; local trainers co-facilitating with directors at large group sessions; ongoing concurrent research in Ethiopia and the United States; Ethiopian teachers visiting schools in the United States; community video conferencing/distance learning developing with graduate assistants.
- **May 2011** Publishing a body of research from Ethiopian teachers and researchers; Ethiopian facilitators independently training within Ethiopia; new co-facilitators working with the directors; collaborating with the university network for new teacher training & ongoing professional development.

### 2011/2012 and Beyond

The facilitators will be independently training within Ethiopia including large group sessions, model schools and new co-facilitators with support from directors. The published research from micro action research grants become a model for the growing body of research. Teacher to teacher and school to school networks grow internally within Ethiopia and throughout the African continent, and globally as a model of school change. Thinking Foundation is currently seeking funding from multiple major funders to sustain the project.

**Read the Stories and Watch the Video!**

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# Thinking Schools Ethiopia

## Building Schools From the Inside Out

### Thinking Schools Ethiopia

#### communication



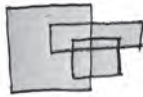
visual tools



habits of mind



assessment



documentation



working field guide



micro action research grants

#### community



collegial coaching



community building



collaborative learning



parents



teacher and leader network

#### inquiry



powerful questions



shared inquiry



inquiry mapping

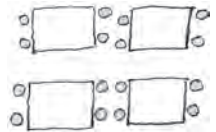


initial classroom observations

#### environment



design



student location



local materials & guided discovery

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# Thinking Schools Ethiopia



## Building Schools From the Inside Out Outcomes

Creating Thinking Schools to improve how thinking happens within a school building for every student, teacher and leader. Thinking Schools Ethiopia will become a model in Ethiopia, and a framework for other countries to learn from and collaborate with. A major outcome is changing how we think about schools so we begin to see that designing Thinking Schools is within reach, and Ethiopia is a change agent for education reform.



**Impact** Ethiopia with its unique place historically as a non-colonized African nation, changing views with increased investment on education, and current growing economy, is poised to be a model of educational change in a large country.



**Far Reaching** In our growing global economy, Ethiopia can connect and excel in the world as a collaborative model within Ethiopia and beyond its borders. Ethiopian teachers can use model technologies that support collaborations with Thinking Schools.



**Sustainable** The trainers and research will grow from educators in the Ethiopian classrooms with Ethiopian teachers the bedrock of training their peers. The Thinking Schools model will ultimately embrace how humans think cognitively within an Ethiopian cultural context led by teachers and leaders in Ethiopia.

**Assessment** There will be four key areas of assessment including:

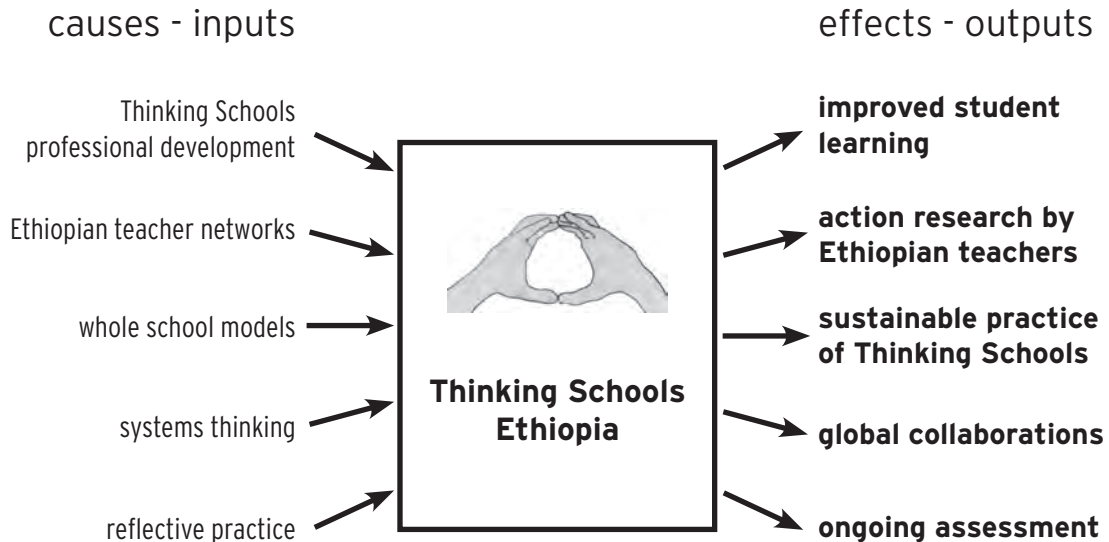
- ethnographic observation
- Interviews with students, teachers, and leaders
- evaluation of student work
- test scores

The four areas of assessment are monitored quarterly to reflect short term needs, and yearly to assess trends and impact. Several large scale student evaluation studies are currently in progress in Ethiopia contributing to a body of baseline data.

# Thinking Schools Ethiopia



## Building Schools From the Inside Out Outcomes



### Ongoing Assessment

#### Ethnographic Observation

Trainers/researchers will take fieldnotes during training sessions and conduct classroom and school observations. In addition, researchers will collect documents and interact with participants to determine reactions and outcomes of the strategies implemented.

#### Interviews with Students, Teachers, and Leaders

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with participants to determine the nature of the impact of the creation of Thinking Schools Ethiopia and the reactions/reflections of those most affected.

#### Evaluation of Student Work

Student and teacher work samples will be collected at regular intervals. In addition, teachers will be encouraged to keep journals and portfolios of student work.

#### Test Scores

Annual test scores will be collected and compared to baseline (prior to implementation) to determine if Thinking Schools outperform the comparison schools that have not yet created Thinking Schools.



# Thinking Schools Ethiopia

## Building Schools From the Inside Out

Thinking Schools practices and a brief description of each practice are listed below.

### Core Practices of Thinking Schools



**visual tools** visual representation providing form for cognitive processes



**guided discovery** intentionally introducing materials



**inquiry mapping** process of questioning leading to action



**documentation** reflecting on one's practice through observation

### Supporting Practices of Thinking Schools



**authentic assessment** tools of review that give more information where to go next



**collegial coaching** colleagues refining practice through experience sharing



**community building** developing relationships over time



**working field guide** collaborative reflective tool for understanding and considering options



**thinking schools network** support through regular contact and sharing



**environment mapping** understanding how the environment affects practice



**collaborative learning** methods supporting thinking and doing in a collaborative manner



**initial classroom observations** developing a reflective practice with intentionality



**micro action research grants** grants to provide reflective practices and sharing pedagogical learning



**habits of mind** dispositions skillfully and mindfully employed by students and teachers for problem solving



# Thinking Schools Ethiopia – Sustainability

## Descriptions of Professional Development Levels Leading to Sustainability

### practitioners



**Level 1 Introduction** to Thinking Schools approach including visual tools, inquiry mapping, community, collaborative learning, working field guide, initial classroom observations

**Level 2 Practitioner** visual tools, inquiry, community, collaborative learning, guided discovery, documentation, authentic assessment, collegial coaching, environmental mapping

**Level 3 Trainer of Trainers** trainers of the Thinking Schools approach in whole schools

**Level 4 Facilitator of Trainer of Trainers** facilitators of Thinking Schools approach in whole schools and large group sessions

### leadership



**Level 1 Practitioner** Thinking Schools approach for leaders to support implementation in whole school and using Thinking Schools methods for leadership of the school organization

**Level 2 Trainer of Leaders** facilitators of Thinking Schools approach as and for leaders in whole schools and large group sessions

### sustainability



**micro action research grants** grants to provide reflective practices and sharing pedagogical learning



**whole school** including leadership, teaching staff, support staff



**working field guide** collaborative reflective tool for understanding and considering options



**graduate assistants** technological logistics; educational technology; new media; comparative education

### supporting practices



**documentation** for reflection, understanding, sharing



**inquiry mapping** to pose questions and visualize answers for change



**visual tools** to enhance and support our cognitive thinking abilities, learning assessment, and collaboration



**design infusion** connects with learning, thinking, visual tools



**inclusion** provides education for students with special needs in the traditional classroom



**families** partnerships to transfer learning beyond the school and sustain learning for a lifetime are part of the learning community

# Thinking Schools Ethiopia



## Building Schools From the Inside Out

### Thinking Schools Ethiopia Studies and Reports on Ethiopia Education

What research has been done to assess the current state of education in Ethiopia?

ORGANISATION  
FOR ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT



#### **Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)**

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a system of international assessments that focus on 15-year-olds' capabilities in reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy. PISA is organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization of industrialized countries. Begun in 2000, PISA is administered every 3 years. Each administration includes assessments of all three subjects, but assesses one of the subjects in depth. The most recent administration was in 2006 and focused on science literacy. Results are now available.

PISA 2009 data collection will take place from September to November 2009 and will focus on reading literacy. The PISA 2009 National Report will be released in December 2010.



#### **USAID Report on Ethiopia**

Ethiopia has expanded access to primary education (grades 1-8) dramatically in the last 15 years, with gross enrollment rates rising from 20 percent to 80 percent. Despite this achievement, expanding enrolments have contributed to stagnating or declining quality, especially in the context of severely limited resources. The government is actively seeking strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. National student assessments carried out in 2000 and 2004 at grades 4 and 8 indicated serious problems with quality, although the 2004 assessment identified a positive correlation between teacher attitudes and professional development and improved student achievement. This study examines important aspects of this relationship, focusing on teachers' perceptions and practice of quality and the influence of professional development on improving practice within the context of Ethiopia's active-learning policies.