



**GIRLS GOTTA RUN FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT
2013**



**"Being part of this inspires
me to work hard."**
- Megurtu

OUR MISSION

Girls Gotta Run Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides support for impoverished Ethiopian girls who are training to be professional runners. While most do not become professional athletes, some do; and training allows them all to stay in school, avoid early marriage, and enhance their personal economic opportunities. It also develops their sense of well being and personal power. Material support provided by GGRF includes, but is not limited to, funds for running shoes, training clothes, extra food ("calorie money"), coach subsidies, and other training-related expenses. GGRF also advises local and partnering organizations on gender sensitive issues and advocates for gender equity in all running programs and organizations.

OUR VISION

Girls Gotta Run envisions a world that empowers and invests in the exceptional initiative of young women who are working to establish their place in the world as competitive runners and leaders in their communities, who are finding strength, courage and power in their pursuit of excellence, and who are achieving their fullest potential in running and society.

OUR WORK



The UNFPA identified early marriage as the single most important reason why girls' education is undermined in almost all regions of Ethiopia. Though the Ethiopian government has outlawed marriage before the age of 18, this practice continues to happen at alarming levels due to traditional norms, poverty and fear of violence. Girls in Ethiopia are often pulled out of school at the cusp of puberty, cementing their isolation. As a result, girls lack the support network and safe spaces needed to avoid or deal with the experiences that threaten to derail them: leaving school, forced sex, pregnancy or early marriage.

GGRF is the only non-profit organization in Ethiopia using the national sport of running as an innovative approach to creating safe spaces, ending child marriage and expanding access to secondary school for vulnerable girls. Since 2006, the Girls Gotta Run Foundation has empowered girls through running in Ethiopia and effectively eliminated early marriage before the age of 18 from the lives of the 50 girls with whom we have worked.

PROGRAMS



Athletic Scholarships in Sodo, Ethiopia

We're excited to launch our new athletic scholarship project in Sodo, Ethiopia with the support of two new partners, the Abba Pascal School for Girls and the CCL.

The objectives of this program are to create a running team of 15 girls in 5th, 6th and 7th grade, implement the GGRF/CCL life skills program and provide scholarships for the girls to continue their education at the Abba Pascal School.

- The creation of a safe space like this running team reduces girls' sense of isolation and increases their self-esteem and capacity to assert their right to choose when to marry.
- GGRF's implementation of the life skills program co-developed by the Center for Creative Leadership, USAID and GGRF delivers crucial information to the girls through experiential learning modules on community service, leadership, creative expression, healthy relationships, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and financial literacy.
- Education scholarships eliminate any financial restraints the girl and her family may face in keeping her enrolled in secondary school.



The team of 15 girls will meet three times a week (Monday, Thursday and Saturday) after school and in the morning on Saturday. During the school week, girls will attend class, attend the hour to hour and a half long practice after school and receive a snack. On Saturday, the girls will meet for two hours in the morning. One hour will be spent doing athletic training and the second hour will be spent eating a meal as a team and conducting the lifeskills workshop for the week. Program participants will complete the GGRF/CCL life-skills program after one school year and continue to be scholarship recipients for the remaining two years. Mentorship and leadership opportunities will be made available to participants who have completed the lifeskills program and are interested in further developing their skills.

The provision of safe spaces through running and secondary school scholarships work together to eliminate the threat of early marriage, the concern for the safety of the girl while attending school and the financial challenge in keeping her in higher levels of education. The participation of girls in safe spaces and running has proven to have a positive impact on their self-esteem, access to health resources, social inclusion, and identification of female role models. Combined with the delivery of the GGRF/CCL life skills program, the girls will graduate from the program after successfully navigating the challenges posed to them during their most vulnerable period of life and having developed the skills needed to secure a healthy and prosperous future for themselves.



Abba Pascal School for Girls: In Sodo, Ethiopia, unemployment and sub-unemployment is above 60% of the active population. Many of the daily workers in Sodo make less than 1.25 USD per day. The Abba Pascal School was founded in 1933. Since then, the school has seen an increase in students attending as well as a decrease in the number of students dropping out.

In 2009, the dropout rate for Abba Pascal Girls' School was 12%, in line with the rest of the country. Today the dropped rate has been reduced to 3.18%. All of the girls who attended the school through 12th grade, are now attending university courses. GGRF is excited to partner with the Abba Pascal School to provide strong academic scholarships for girls from disadvantaged communities in Sodo, Ethiopia.

Center for Creative Leadership (CCL): The CCL Africa Office is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and has offered to collaborate with GGRF to co-create the experiential learning modules on community service, leadership, creative expression, healthy relationships, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and financial literacy that will serve as the life-skills component of the GGRF athletic scholarship. The curriculum will build off of learning modules developed by the CCL and USAID for girls in Ethiopia.



Bekoji Project

The Bekoji Running Project is a collaborative effort by [Running Across Borders](#), the [Town of Runners](#), the Bekoji Youth and Sports Administration, and the Girls Gotta Run Foundation to expand the economic opportunities of youth in Bekoji through running. Bekoji is a small farming town in the Ethiopian Highlands with an astonishing record of developing long distance runners. Under the direction of Coach Sentayehu, Bekoji has produced some of the world's greatest distance runners, including Olympic medalists Tirunesh Dibaba, Kenenisa Bekele and Deratu Tulu. Some 250 local young people attend Coach Sentayehu's dawn training sessions every morning in Bekoji. The Bekoji Running Project provides training and funding for three assistant coaches for Coach Sentayehu and supports the athletic growth of ten young athletes.

The Girls Gotta Run Foundation increased the number of girl runners supported in Bekoji this year to six athletes. We also supported the training and funding of Bekoji's first-ever female coach, Fatia. In 2013, the girls competed and placed well in several local and national races this year in a range of distances from 5K to half marathon. The team of six is ready to have a strong year of running in 2014.



Bekoji Project Spotlight Story

Meet Fatia Abdi Kadir, a young woman supported by the Bekoji Project. Fatia is a 22 year old female leader and the first ever female coach in Bekoji. She grew up 35 km from Bekoji, Ethiopia. Her family trades goods at a small shop they own in her town. Fatia started running 8 years ago and likes to run the 400 meter and 21 KM races. Fatia says she started running because, “I wanted to run and change my life.” Today, she is developing her coaching skills under the direction of the legendary Coach Sentayehu. Here’s what Fatia has to say about having the opportunity to be a coach in Bekoji:

“I have always wanted to be a coach since I started running. I want to help develop the best athletes. I feel good about being a female coach. There are no girl coaches in Bekoji so that makes me feel special.”

In Ethiopia, only 36% of women have ever engaged in paid work. The most common forms of paid work for women in Ethiopia include being a petty trader, farmer or domestic worker. Fatia has found gainful employment through athletics and is now a leader in her community thanks to the generous contributions of GGRF supporters.



Team Tesfa and the Transitions Charity

Team Tesfa was the first team that Girls Gotta Run Foundation supported when it was established in 2007. The team originally consisted of four female athletes and has since grown to twenty athletes. The girls of Team Tesfa were provided funds for coaching, running clothes and shoes, entrance to races, a safe team environment and extra food over and above what their families can provide.

Two of the original Team Tesfa members founded the Transitions Charity to rescue homeless teenage girl runners and oversee and mentor their education and training. Since the establishment of their organization, Meseret and Amsal recruited five homeless teenage female athletes that benefit from the Transitions Charity. GGRF provided support for this initiative in addition to funding Team Tesfa. After six years of working with Team Tesfa, we are able to focus our funding on different programs as Team Tesfa is launching a new Team Tesfa Initiative in conjunction with the non-profit, Ethiopia Reads. The new program entitled, “Women Athletes for Literacy and Learning (WALL)” will give girl athletes opportunities to mentor and teach the kids within the Ethiopia Reads schools and libraries to enhance positive career training. GGRF is happy to see this program expand in an innovative way and looks forward to following the continued success of the athletes of Team Tesfa.

ACTIVISM AND OUTREACH



International Day of the Girl: GGRF celebrated the International Day of the Girl in October with a month long collaboration campaign with [Activyst](#) and [Every Mother Counts](#). To learn more about what it means to be a girl in Bekoji, [read the Every Mother Counts blog](#) featuring our runners in the Bekoji Project. Thank you to [Tadias Magazine](#) for covering our collaboration with Every Mother Counts in their article entitled "[GGRF Girls Training to Be Runners in Bekoji, Ethiopia.](#)"



Town of Runners Screenings: This year, we developed our partnership with the [Town of Runners](http://www.townofrunners.com) filmmakers to support girl runners in Bekoji, Ethiopia and raise awareness around the challenges facing the upward mobility of girl runners in Ethiopia. The feature length documentary about young runners from Bekoji - an Ethiopian highland town which has produced some of the world's greatest distance athletes, including Tirunesh Dibaba, Kenenisa Bekele and Derartu Tulu. The Town of Runners film distributors kindly offered to provide a discounted screening rate for those interested in screening the film as a fundraiser for GGRF. We are thankful to those who organized screenings in 2013 and look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Town of Runners and the athletes in Bekoji in 2014.

PRESS

GGRF was featured in the following magazines in 2013:



GREAT NONPROFITS AWARD



Thanks to our supporters, we were one of the first winners of a 2013 Top-Rated Award from GreatNonprofits! We are always looking to learn and grow as an organization and the feedback of our supporters helps make that happen. Read our reviews and/or add yours [here](#). Thank you!

LEADERSHIP

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FINANCIAL RESOURCES

GGRF solicits funds from private donations, local groups and supporters based in Canada, France, United Kingdom, Ethiopia and the United States of America. In 2013, we raised \$29,231 and expended \$28,268.

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Thank you to the donors who made our work possible this year.

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