



# **GIRLS GOTTA RUN FOUNDATION**

## **2014 ANNUAL REPORT**



## **OUR MISSION**

The Girls Gotta Run Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that invests in girls who use running and education to empower themselves and their communities.

## **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 90 girls with whom we have worked.





GGRF Athletic Scholars Libanos and Miguar in class. Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

## **GGRF PROGRAMS**

In 2014 we launched our new signature GGRF program, the GGRF Athletic Scholarships Program, with our pilot model program being established in partnership with the Abba Pascal School for Girls in Sodo, Ethiopia.

### **Athletic Scholarships Objectives**

The objectives of this program are to create a running team of 60 girls in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, implement the GGRF/CCL life skills program and provide scholarships for the girls to continue their education.

- The creation of a safe space like the GGRF 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.



GGRF Athletic Scholars Libanos, Maron, Merawit hanging out after a life-skills lesson.  
Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

## **Athletic Scholarship Program Activities in Sodo, Ethiopia**

Sodo is a city in the Southern Nationalities region of Ethiopia and is home to the Wolita nationality. **The majority of families in Sodo subsist on 25 Birr a day, the equivalent of \$1.25.** Economic opportunities are limited in Sodo and 60% of the active population is unemployed or sub-employed.

Sodo is also home to one of the highest birthrates in Ethiopia due to the limited availability and use of family planning options. As a result, many families have to make difficult decisions about how to provide basic nutrition, education and healthcare for their many children with their limited income. **The girls in the family are usually the ones who are forced to leave school and begin working, taking care of their siblings or entering into early marriage to alleviate the family's multitude of unmet needs.**



GGRF Athletic Scholar Betelhem presents her thoughts to her Amharic class. Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

## EDUCATION

GGRF provides each Athletic Scholar with a full scholarship to attend the Abba Pascal Girls School in Sodo, Ethiopia. **In Ethiopia, 35% of girls enter secondary school and only 6% graduate. Additionally, only 1.7% of female students enroll in higher education after completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade.** The limited availability of higher levels of education for girls affects their ability to support themselves and their families as adults. **For every year a girl stays in secondary school, her eventual wages increase by 15 -25%.** These statistics reveal the enormous personal, professional and social benefits that each completed year of education presents to girls in Ethiopia.

**At the Abba Pascal Girls School, 100% of students graduate 10<sup>th</sup> grade and move into higher levels of education, with the majority of students completing college.** This is an incredible achievement on behalf of the Abba Pascal Girls School and GGRF is proud to partner with them to provide greater access to quality education for disadvantaged girls in Sodo.





GGRF Athletic Scholar Merawit studies with her classmates in Sodo, Ethiopia. Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

The GGRF Athletic Scholarship works to eliminate the multitude of barriers that families face in sending their girl children to school. **Our scholarships provide the following for each Athletic Scholar:**

- Annual uniform and school supplies
- Healthcare for the student and mother. When the mother of a family is ill, it is often times the girl of the family who must leave school to take care of her mother or the rest of the family until her mother is well again.
- Daily lunches. Many of the students eat only one meal a day and are often too hungry in school to concentrate on studying or retaining knowledge in their classes.
- After school tutoring. Tutoring provides an opportunity for students to get one-on-one support with subjects in which they are struggling and creates a time and place for students to complete homework before they have to go home and help the family with chores.
- Annual school fees and exam fees
- Access to library and after school clubs such as student council, sewing class, and book club.
- Access to a place to wash their uniforms and clothes on the weekend. This allows students of every income level to be able to come to school in a clean uniform and feel proud of their appearance and hard work as students.



GGRF Athletic Scholar Maron running at team practice. Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

## **ATHLETICS**

**In Ethiopia, running is more than a sport.** Running is a national identity, a way to escape poverty and a new outlet for women and girls to express their physical power. GGRF builds upon the incredible Ethiopian legacy of running to provide alternative safe spaces for girls to develop personal strength, find a group of peers with whom to grow and gain the tools they need to navigate the many challenges they face.

GGRF Athletic Scholars meet three times per week to train as a team under the supervision of their coach and female mentor. This schedule allows them to train without sacrificing the time they need for homework and family obligations. The GGRF Team is also invited to compete in one race outside of Sodo annually.

This year the team competed in one local race in Sodo Ethiopia. GGRF Athletic Scholar Maron received 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 400 Meter Dash and her teammate Merawit placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the same race. Go, girls!





**As part of the Athletic Scholarship, each girl is provided with the following for team practice:**

- Athletic gear including running shoes, team uniform, training outfits, sports bras, running socks and a water bottle.
- Sanitary pads and soap for showering and washing their clothes
- Access to private showers after practice for proper hygiene and health
- Healthy snacks and water after every weekday practice
- Team meal after practice on Saturday





GGRF Life Skills Mentor Fasica explains the discussion topic for the day. Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

## LIFE SKILLS

**To further develop the safe space GGRF creates through our Athletics, we also engage girls in a weekly life skills workshop.** These workshops provide an environment for girls to discuss sensitive topics, learn from their peers and retain important knowledge on how to overcome the daily challenges they face in Sodo, Ethiopia.

Each Saturday, the GGRF Athletic Scholars complete a life skills lesson organized by their life skill mentor, Fasica. **The curriculum for these lessons was co-developed by the Center for Creative Leadership and GGRF to create safe spaces for girls and provide experiential learning modules on family planning, financial literacy, HIV/AIDS awareness, nutrition, healthy relationships, leadership, and creative expression.** Each month features a different topic over the course of the year long curriculum that has been adapted to engage Ethiopian girls in their first language, Amharic. After each life skills lesson, the girls attend practice, shower and then eat a meal together at the Abba Pascal Girls School.



The flag ceremony at Abba Pascal Girls School in Sodo, Ethiopia. Photo by Marie Claire Andrea

## **PROGRAM PARTNERS**

**Abba Pascal Girls School:** 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 dropout rate has been reduced to 3.18%. All of the girls who attended the school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade are now attending university courses. GGRF is happy 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 collaborated 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 serves as the life skills component of the GGRF athletic scholarship. The curriculum builds off of learning modules developed by the CCL and USAID for girls in Ethiopia.





GGRF runners in the Bekoji Project. Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

## **BEKOJI RUNNING PROJECT**

The Bekoji Running Project was a two year collaborative effort by the Girls Gotta Run Foundation, [Running Across Borders](#), the [Town of Runners](#), and the Bekoji Youth and Sports Administration. 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, the small town of Bekoji has produced some of the world's greatest distance runners, including Olympic medalists Tirunesh Dibaba, Kenenisa Bekele and Deratu Tulu.

The Bekoji Running Project provided training and funding for three assistant coaches for Coach Sentayehu and supported the athletic growth of twelve young athletes. From 2012-2014, the Girls Gotta Run Foundation supported six female athletes (one of whom is featured in the film "Town of Runners") and the training and funding of Bekoji's first-ever female coach. All of the girls from this program have gone on to compete for professional teams in Addis Ababa and Asella, Ethiopia.

In the summer of 2014, GGRF completed the Bekoji Running Project and prepared the development of an Athletic Scholarship Program in Bekoji. The Athletic Scholarship Program will build upon the past success of the Bekoji Running Project and will provide greater access to education, life skills training and early marriage prevention for young girls and their families in Bekoji.



## ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP IMPACT STORIES



GGRF Athletic Scholar Maron stands with her mom in their front yard in Sodo, Ethiopia.  
Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

Meet Maron! She's 12 years old and in 7th grade. Maron lives with her parents and three siblings in Sodo, Ethiopia and attends the Abba Pascal Girls School. Maron's mom was married at age 14 to her husband, who was 45 at the time. Maron's mom had completed her education until grade 10 and was struggling to contribute to her family's income because of her limited education.

Maron is now a GGRF Athletic Scholarship recipient and was one of the top five students in her grade this past semester. Maron's mother explains, "I hope my children complete their education and join the workforce so they can live independently before they get married at an older age." Maron is rewriting what it means to be a girl in her family with each year that she completes in school. Through running and education, Maron is able to be a girl and build a future for herself and her family.





GGRF Athletic Scholar Betelhem helps her mom show off the injera she sells in the market.  
Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

Meet GGRF Athletic Scholarship recipient, Betelhem Demitaw, and her mom, Tadelech. When Betelhem's father left their family a year ago, her mom began selling injera (the national bread of Ethiopia) to make enough money to send her three girls to school. Despite her hard work, Tadelech wasn't able to make enough money to keep Betelhem in school and was planning to take her out of 7th grade this year.

Thanks to the generous support of GGRF Athletic Scholarship Sponsors, Betelhem is in school this year with a full Athletic Scholarship. Her mom is now able to save money and build a new life for her family. We are incredibly honored to work with strong girls and mothers like Betelhem and Tadelech who are working to make a new reality for themselves in Ethiopia.

**For information on how to become an Athletic Scholarship Sponsor please visit <http://www.girlsgottarun.org/sponsor-an-athlete/> or contact Kayla at [kayla@girlsgottarun.org](mailto:kayla@girlsgottarun.org)**

## GIRLS GOTTA RUN FOUNDATION ALUMNI



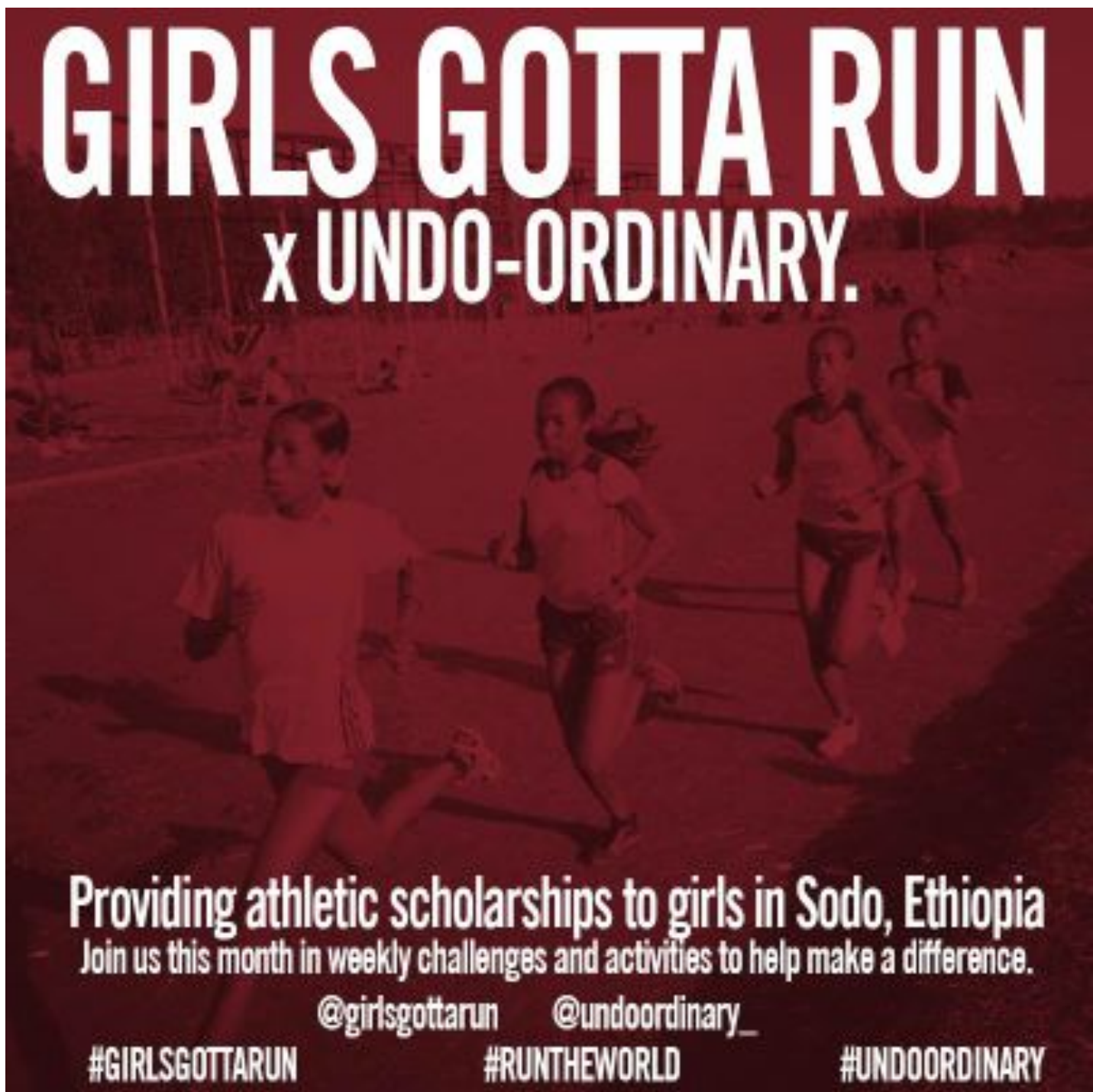
GGRF Alumni Dinknesh, pictured left, at the Toronto Marathon Expo Event in 2014.

GGRF Alumni, Dinknesh Tefara Mekash had a great year of racing in 2014. Dinknesh was part of the Girls Gotta Run Foundation and Running Across Borders Program based in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. She was an athlete supported by the Girls Gotta Run Foundation from 2009 – 2011.

Dinknesh raced the Toronto Marathon and the Mumbai Marathon in 2014, two internationally recognized and competitive marathons. **Dinknesh was the champion of the Mumbai Marathon in 2014, winning her first-ever international marathon.** Congrats to Dinknesh on her incredible professional achievements. We look forward to what she will accomplish in the near future.



## ACTIVISM AND OUTREACH



**GIRLS GOTTA RUN**  
**x UNDO-ORDINARY.**

Providing athletic scholarships to girls in Sodo, Ethiopia  
Join us this month in weekly challenges and activities to help make a difference.

@girlsgottarun @undoordinary\_  
#GIRLSGOTTARUN #RUNTHEWORLD #UNDOORDINARY

### Women's History Month

Only 28% of girls attend secondary school in Ethiopia and one in five girls marries before the age of 15. GGRF supports girls who Undo-Ordinary in Ethiopia. Through running and attending school, girls in Ethiopia are avoiding early marriage and rewriting their future. To raise awareness for Women's History Month, GGRF partnered with the Wellness Collective, UNDO-ORDINARY, in a 4-week fitness challenge. Together, we celebrated strong women of the past and how women #UNDOORDINARY today.



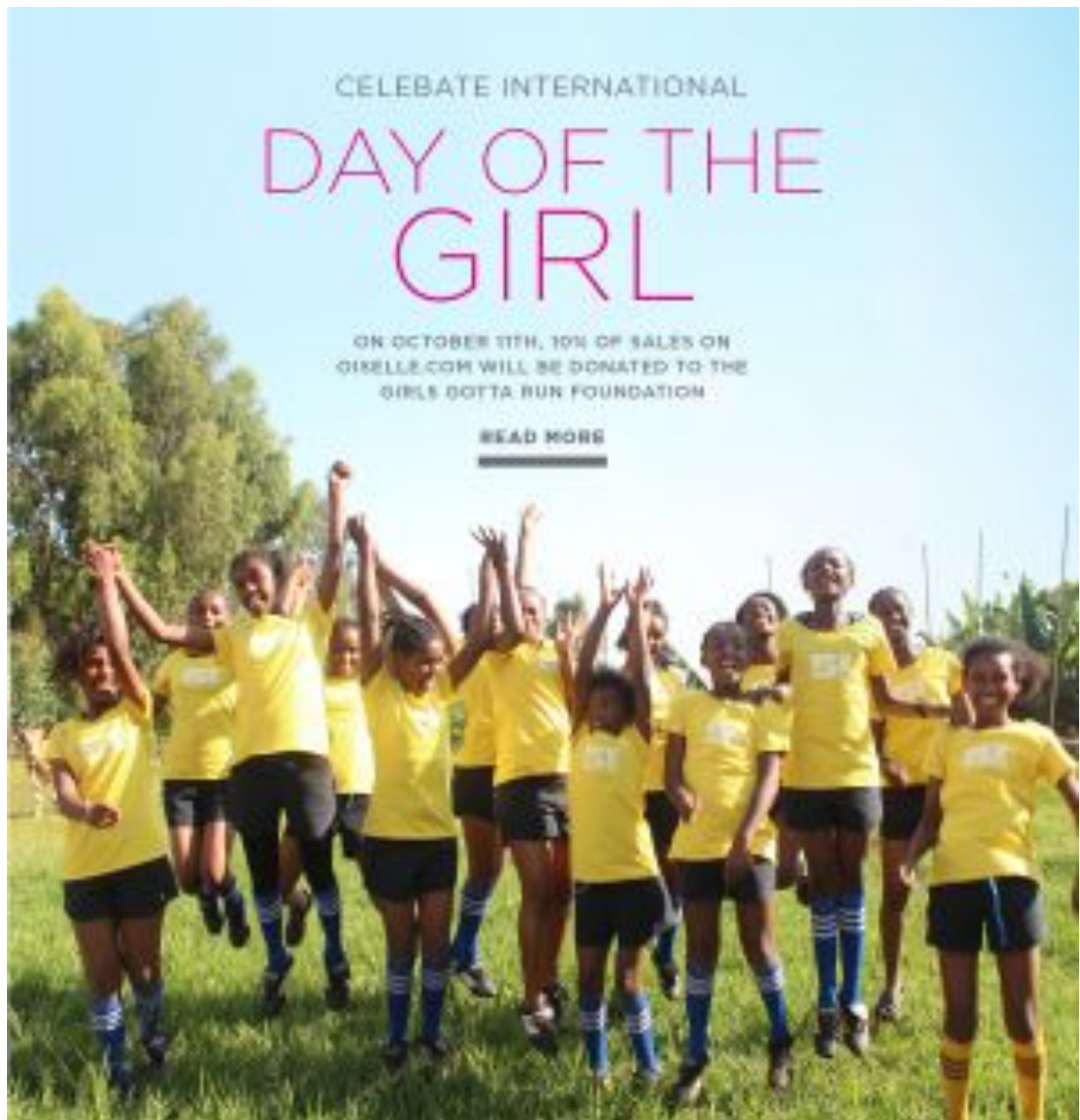
GGRF Athletic Scholar Zelalem and her siblings in their home in Sodo, Ethiopia.  
Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

## **Mother's Day**

GGRF partnered with the Center for Creative Leadership to create a short video that tells the story of GGRF Athletic Scholar Zelalem and her family in Sodo, Ethiopia. Zelelam's mother was married when she was 12 and left school shortly after. Zelelam's mother has since had seven children as a result of limited access to family planning resources. She works all day fetching water, cooking, cleaning and caring for her family.

Zelalem is rewriting the story of motherhood in her family through running and education. Zelalem wants to be the first person in her family to complete high school and attend college. To learn more about Zelalem's journey and watch the video in full, visit <http://vimeo.com/94827719>.





## **International Day of the Girl // Oiselle Running Company**

Last year, we partnered with Oiselle to organize a sports bra drive for girl runners in Ethiopia. In just a few weeks, we collected nearly 300 new and lightly used sports bras for the girls who participate in our running programs in Ethiopia!

This year, we were excited to provide more ways for GGRF and Oiselle supporters to invest in girl runners as change-makers in Ethiopia. On the International Day of the Girl, Oiselle donated 10% of sales to GGRF Programs, raising over \$600 for girl runners in Ethiopia! Oiselle also kindly organized and donated top quality running gear for our Athletic Scholars. For more information on our partnership, please visit

<https://www.oiselle.com/blog/celebrate-international-day-girl>.



GGRF Athletic Scholar Merawit in her home in Sodo, Ethiopia. Photo by Marie Claire Andrea.

### **International Day of the Girl // Volt Women**

GGRF partnered with Voltwomen to celebrate the strength of girl runners on the International Day of the Girl. GGRF shared the story of one of our Athletic Scholars Merawit on the VoltWomen social media platform. To view these stories and more, visit <http://voltwomen.tumblr.com/>.

GGRF's work was also featured on the social media accounts of Activyst, Allegro Coffee, Addis Exporter and Falcon Specialty in celebration of the International Day of the Girl.



## AWARDS

The Girls Gotta Run Foundation received the following awards in 2014:



### Getty Images Lean In Creative Grant

In 2014, GGRF was awarded the very first Getty Images Lean In Creative Grant, in partnership with photographer Joshua Kristal and the Inspired Storytellers Collective.

For more information about this project and award, please visit:

[http://imagery.gettyimages.com/getty\\_images\\_grants/recipients.aspx?date=8-2014&grant=good&who=Kristal](http://imagery.gettyimages.com/getty_images_grants/recipients.aspx?date=8-2014&grant=good&who=Kristal)



### Good for Girls Grant

Good for Girls chose GGRF as their very first grant recipient to support the GGRF Athletic Scholarship Program in Ethiopia. Good for Girls is a not-for-profit organization that supports girls in countries around the world to gain the education, skills and self-esteem they need to become independent, empowered adults able to realize their full potential and be forces for change in their communities.

For more information about this partnership and grant, please visit:

<http://goodforgirls.org/sodo-athletic-scholarship-program/>

## PRESS



### Getty Images Grant Recipients of 2014

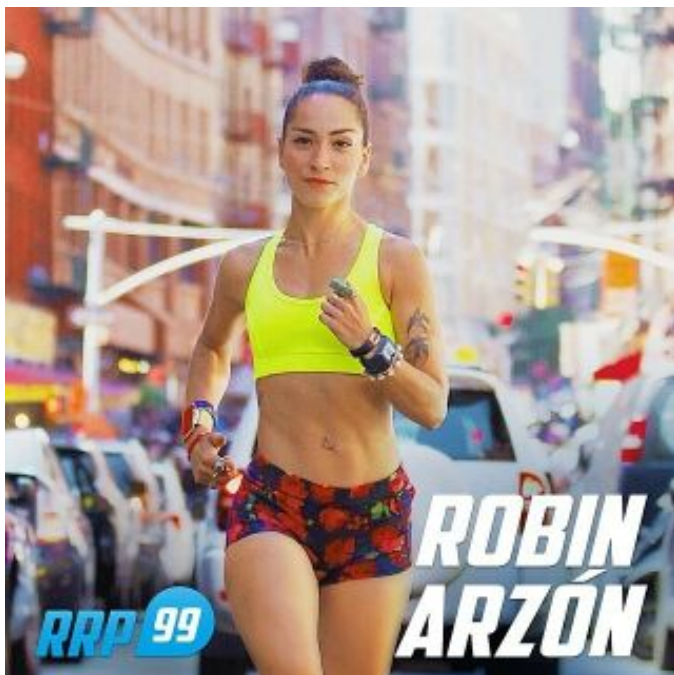
GGRF was selected as the first ever grant recipient of the Getty Images Lean In Creative Grant. GGRF was featured in the Guardian along with the grant recipients of the annual Getty Image Grants. For the full article, visit: <http://www.theguardian.com/media/gallery/2014/sep/08/getty-images-grant-recipients-2014-in-pictures>



### UNDO-ORDINARY Magazine

GGRF was featured in the first ever UNDO-ORDINARY health, art and lifestyle editorial. 10% of the funds raised to launch this publication were donated to GGRF programs. The magazine was sold in Urban Outfitters and select independent retailers globally.

To purchase the magazine visit: <http://www.undoordinary.com/undomag>



### Rich Roll Podcast

GGRF's collaboration with Undo-Ordinary was featured in the Rich Roll Podcast during an interview with Undo-Ordinary's co-founder, Robin Arzon. The Rich Roll Podcast features leaders in the fields of wellness, health, entrepreneurship and goal setting.

To listen to the Rich Roll podcast featuring GGRF, visit: <http://bit.ly/richroll99>



## PRESS CONT.



### **Running for More, 2014 IDG Campaign**

GGRF partnered with Oiselle to celebrate the International Day of the Girl in 2014 with our “Running for More” Campaign. Oiselle featured our partnership with two blogs on the Running for More Campaign and the Oiselle/GGRF IDG Fundraiser. Read the blogs below:

#### **“Running for More “**

<http://www.oiselle.com/blog/running-more>

#### **“Celebrate the International Day of the Girl”**

<http://www.oiselle.com/blog/celebrate-international-day-girl>



### **Muses and Visionaries**

Muses & Visionaries is a savvy lifestyle publication inspiring women to create a life well-lived through smart and impactful content. GGRF was featured in the Muse & Visionaries December 2014 Issue as a project from around the world that empowers girls and women. Read the article here: [www.magazinemv.com](http://www.magazinemv.com)

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## SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

Thank you to our sponsors and partners: Allegro Coffee, Addis Exporter, Activyst, Sweet Maria's Coffee, Oiselle, Falcon Coffees, Falcon Specialty, Undo-Ordinary and the Center for Creative Leadership.



# UNDO-ORDINARY.





## **LEADERSHIP**

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**Executive Director** | Kayla Nolan

## **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

GGRF solicits funds from private donations, local groups, businesses, and supporters based in Canada, France, the United Kingdom, Ethiopia, and the United States of America. In 2014, we raised \$55,357 and expended \$38,084, with \$17,273 committed for 2015 scholarships and operations.

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

### **GGRF Athletic Scholarship Sponsors**

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Alegneta Asfaw  
Etayenesh Asfaw  
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Palmore Wonder  
The Runner's Shop

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Addis Eats Tours  
Allegro Coffee  
Atlas Coffee

B'Uniqu  
Falcon Commodities  
M.C.A. Photography  
MGK Design  
Oiselle

Potter's Workware  
Sweet Maria's Coffee  
Undo-Ordinary  
The Runner's Shop

## Grants

BP Match Foundation  
Exxon Mobil Foundation

Good for Girls  
MacArthur Foundation Match

Gorlitz Foundation  
Riverstyx Foundation

## Individuals

Roman Abate  
Marie Claire Andrea  
Jeff Angevine  
Alegneta Asfaw  
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