

The Genesis

Personal Story:

My name is Mesfin Atlaye. I'm an Ethiopian national, a Canadian citizen, academic, and a visionary. In the Fall of 2012, my wife and our five children relocated from London Ontario to Awassa Ethiopia for the main purpose of opening a purpose driven school. For some time, it has been my desire to return to Ethiopia and contribute to the social and economic development of my homeland. The idea of building a school in Awassa was born during my visit in 2007. At that time, I observed a drastic decline in education quality, an alarming number of lower grade dropouts, and a high level of brain drain in the country.

During that visit, I also saw a number of school aged children roaming around the cities aimlessly when they were supposed to be at school- young boys and girls, most of them under the age of ten, begging the passerby for pennies to feed themselves. According to some of them, they beg on the street to buy bread for their siblings. Their playground was the underground drainage holes where the city filth flows.

I had the opportunity to talk with many of them and I was disturbed by the fact that most of these children were unable to go to school simply because that opportunity did not present itself to them. Some of them claim to have no parents. Some are runaways from abusive care givers. Yet others, either their parents could not afford to pay the little registration fee at the public school or to buy for them the basic writing materials- so they quit school.

Panafric International Academy (PIA) is a humble response to that need. I'm part of a group of Christian educators and other professionals in Canada, organized to give quality education to those who cannot dream it. Our short term goal is to immediately open a KG-8 school in Awassa using a leased premises and locally hired staff. Our long term goal is to build a (K-12) progressive school in Awassa that will accommodate between 900-1300 children where a significant number of children from destitute families will be included. This will be a school for all children without discriminating against them through ethnic, religious, economic or other labels. PIA will use the national curriculum as its base. All fulltime teaching and administration staff will be Ethiopian nationals- carefully recruited and retrained according to the PIA policy and principles. We will have a wide volunteer program where educators and people with various skills from Canada and elsewhere will volunteer their time to train and share their expertise with

our school community. That is the vision.

Panafric International Academy is a progressive school. It has started its operation in Hawassa, Ethiopia in 2014 academic year as a Kindergarten. In our second year of operation, we have now opened a branch in another location within the same city for grades 1-4 in order to widen our service to more communities and to give the opportunity for more children. In the next academic year we plan to grow to grade 8; and in five years to open grade 12.

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