



Mekelle Youth Center

Mekelle, ETHIOPIA

THE PROJECT

The Ethiopian government has requested that SIM open several youth centers in northern Ethiopia, an area historically virtually closed to evangelical missions. The Mekelle Youth Center is the first such center where youth are reached through growing relationships and youth oriented activities including HIV/AIDS counseling, computer education, English classes and clubs, tutoring and various sports activities (basketball, volleyball, weight training, taekwando).

THE NEED

The town of Mekelle is located in Southern Tigray with a population of about 150,000. The era of the communist government and war in the near vicinity has hurt the area economically resulting in increased poverty in the town. It has been noted that 40% of the population earns below \$1 US a day. Furthermore, 30% of the people in the town of Mekelle are illiterate. HIV/AIDS is another factor that highly impacts the youth. Mekelle being 70% youth, the above-mentioned problems are mainly prevalent among those under 29. To address these issues and reach the youth for Christ, SIM has established a youth center.

THE VISION

The vision is to see these youth community centers replicated in other Ethiopian cities. We hope to see many young peoples' lives transformed as they enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and become people of hope and productive citizens of Ethiopia. We envision the Center itself as a venue where Christians find opportunities to serve God where non-traditional methods of evangelism and discipleship may be attempted. In addition this will be a venue for voluntary service. We expect to see youth transformed. The youth's employment capacity will increase by gaining a fluency in English and computer applications. This transformation will also be seen in the youth's decision to live lives of abstinence until marriage.

CURRENT UPDATE

The Mekelle Youth Center has become the most attractive (and one of the only) places of recreation and supplemental learning in the entire city. There is still some more compound construction work to do. Our computer center needs to expand in order to accommodate more students. Approximately 700 youth per day frequent the youth center. We see leaders being developed among the youth who have a real desire to make a difference in their community. The families of the youth are also very pleased with the youth center as a place for their children to learn and grow.

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FUNDING

TOTAL PROJECT COST

\$223,393*

PROJECT NUMBER

ET 92742

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Serving In Mission

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*Please check www.sim.org for current project status.