

## An Education Success Story



### The 360° Government Adoption of Speed School in Sidama Region

This school building may need a serious facelift, but do not judge it by its looks. What it definitely doesn't need is to change what happens within these walls. There you will see the joyous energetic learning of boys and girls aged 9 to 14 who are part of the Speed School program in Ethiopia.

More exciting, this is just one example of the Ethiopian government's successful adoption of Geneva Global's Speed School initiative in Sidama and other regions.

This is **Tula Primary School**, in Hawassa City Administration, Tula Sub-City, Sidama. The building is home to the school's Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) class, the government-funded and operated version of Speed School. The Sidama Regional Education Bureau (REB) took over the funding, management, and expansion of Speed School just last year. With technical support from Geneva Global and our local grantee civil society partner, Haneshsa Assistance and Development Association (HADO), the Sidama REB opened 90 ALP classes in 2021 then added 140 new ones in 2022.

What makes Tula Primary School's ALP class stand out is the combination of a highly motivated teacher, a well-trained, supportive school principal, and a forward-looking Sidama REB official.



Meet **Rijal Aman**, the teacher! Mr. Aman is a dedicated, smart, and hard-working teacher. He facilitates the learning in class by dividing his 25 students into groups. He uses student-centered methodologies in his teaching and inspires his students to be creative. His class is full of materials and teaching aids that he and his students have made from recycled and locally available items. For example, you will find numbers molded into shape from wet clay and dried under the sun, shapes cut out from

discarded boxes, and posters adorning all four walls with information such as parts of the body, numbers, keywords, and the like. In the classroom's four corners, students access a functioning workshop, a lending library, a mini store, a bank, and a handicrafts center.

**379,646**  
CHILDREN EDUCATED

**\$31M**  
GRANTS PROVIDED

**312,505**  
MOTHERS SUPPORTED

**37,551**  
TEACHERS TRAINED

**9,385**  
SPEED SCHOOL CLASSES

When we visited, Mr. Aman was teaching word formation using different vowels. Each group of students received a different yet complementary task to play with the words. One group sang a song, the next formulated a short story, and yet another created words using flash cards. Following their groupwork, the boys and girls were excited to present their results to their classmates, sharing in the learning as they learned from one another.

This stimulating class would have been difficult if not impossible without the vibrant learning environment supported by the school principal.



Meet **Jamal Bariso**, the school principal. Mr. Bariso is a serious-looking, yet warm leader. He is not just an administrative-focused principal whose work revolves solely around attendance sheets and reports, important as these tasks are. Mr. Bariso is also a pedagogical leader who follows, coaches, and motivates his teachers in class. With his notebook and pen in hand, he moves from class to class to observe, take notes, and discuss with the teachers. He said that from the moment he attended his first Speed School training, he was hooked. He enjoyed the instructional methods both presented and used by the trainers and took steps to ensure that his school's ALP classroom would excel. Despite, his limited school budget, Mr. Bariso has been able to provide abundant materials for Mr. Aman's class, which

he visits often as much to offer support as to learn from Mr. Aman's lessons and to share in the students' joy of learning.

Mr. Aman and Mr. Bariso would not have had this opportunity to lead a successful ALP class if not for the ambition and commitment of the Sidama REB officials.



So lastly, meet **Tefesse Gebremeriem**, the Deputy Head of the Sidama REB. Mr. Gebremeriem is a staunch advocate of the Speed School program and of accelerated education for out-of-school children in general. When Geneva Global conducted its first Speed School training in Sidama in 2011, he was one of the beneficiaries. He knew well that the government was not truly addressing the issue of out-of-school children and found that the Speed School program offered children who had either dropped out or had never entered school the opportunity to enroll in formal school *and succeed there* after only 10 months. The initial Speed School classes were all funded by Geneva Global's clients, but in 2021 Mr. Gebremeriem led the Sidama REB to establish 90 ALP classes that it funded and managed entirely. In 2022, the number of classes more than doubled, adding 140 new classes. The REB is currently managing a total 230 classes in 34 of its

37 districts. Counting this and last years' classes, the Sidama REB has now brought 6,380 of the region's out-of-school children into formal education.

When asked about the secret to the success of the Tula Primary School's ALP class, Mr. Gebremeriem attributed it to the combined efforts of the teacher, the school principal, the supervisors, and the continued technical support from Geneva Global and its local partner, HADO. Without these combined efforts, and without the inspired decision of the Sidama REB to adopt the Speed School program, these children would have been left behind, and we would not have seen the joy on their faces!

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is a mission-driven company  
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through effective  
philanthropy.**

### About Speed School

Speed School is an accelerated education program that delivers the first three years of primary schooling in ten months to bring out-of-school children aged 9 to 14 back into formal education. Geneva Global originally adopted the Speed School model from the [Stromme Foundation](#) in West Africa and has implemented the program in Ethiopia since 2011 and in Uganda since 2016. The model's learner-centered, activity-based pedagogy is augmented by a Self-Help Group that engages all students' parents (usually mothers) in income-generation activities and group savings schemes to cover the future costs of their children's schooling. The groups also undertake direct actions to address external, community-based barriers to children's school enrolment and success. Over 90% of children enrolled in Speed School transition to conventional primary classes, where they tend to excel.