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## **Changing Lives in Ethiopia**

ABM has supported the Community Library in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia for many years. There are now 1,970 registered users the library which is a resource for local students to study and access the internet. Children can borrow text books they would otherwise not have access to and many locals use the facility to study after school. Rev'd Roger Kay, rector of St Matthew's church and coordinator of the library, recently began a process of interviewing former students, to see how the library had impacted their lives.

"My name is Blen Aynetsehay. I was a member of the St Matthew's Community Library in 2010. I started to come here when I was in grade 12 and it helped me to prepare myself for entrance exam. At that time when I was in grade 12 there was no library around my home. Of course there was a school library, with not sufficient books and no light which wasn't good to study. St Matthew's gave me the opportunity to study till 8pm which was so great. The memory of studying here is still amazing. The silence, the safety of our bags and property .... I can't express in words and I believe that this library has biggest role in my success. I graduated in Civil Engineering from Adama University, now am working in private company. I'm so blessed to have a chance to thank the founders of this great library. Since we are in one of developing countries, there are so many children who don't have a place to study, and I can tell that the future of many children rely on it."

"My name is Daniel Bekele, I was a member of the library from 2005 – 2010. I was grade 8 then and spent most of my time here reading, playing and sharing experiences with my peers. I met great persons and lifelong friends. Without any exclamation this library was the greatest thing that ever happened to my childhood. When I think of my childhood memories back in time, I end up here all the time. Now I am a graduate engineer from Addis Ababa Institute of Technology and am working on my masters there too. I am actually working on private business in construction with a friend I met here at the library!

"My name is Surafel Mekonnen. I was grade 10 and didn't have a good quality library around. Then I met some friends who used St Matthew's Library and were really excited about the place and the available books that the library provides. And they told me that I can be a part of it so I joined immediately. From that time on my life shifted to a better place, with the access to St Matthew's Library books and computers. In my four years in St Matthew's Library I have made friends, mentors, business partners and a family with the workers and users of the library. The other thing was that I got the opportunity to communicate and share experience with foreign students who came every summer and showed us the other side of the world. After I finished my entrance exam, I was able to join Addis Ababa Institute of Technology University along with ten of my St Matthew's Library friends. And then I studied Civil and Environmental Engineering in 2014. After working for six months I decided to start my Masters in transport and road engineering and at the same I opened my own construction company. I thank you (the founders of the library) for the environment you have created for me and for the other students. That make my life to be a successful one. God bless you!"

Find out more about the Community Library in Ethiopia at [www.abmission.org](http://www.abmission.org).

**ENDS**

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*The Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) is the national mission agency of the Anglican Church of Australia. For over 160 years ABM has been assisting people all over the world to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, provide health and education services, improve agricultural practices and strengthen the Church.*