

# Homosha School

*Pioneering Elite,  
Accessible Education  
in Remote Ethiopia*



Homosha School is a bold experiment: A state-of-the-art boarding campus for 240 girls, built in one of Ethiopia's most neglected regions. Situated 38 km from Assosa, the capital of Benishangul-Gumuz — one of the country's poorest and most remote regional states — its very presence challenges expectations of what development can achieve.

Operating such a school in this setting is not easy. Every day brings practical hurdles: moving supplies along rough roads, managing schedules around power cuts, and retaining staff willing to live and work in deep rural Ethiopia. In a context where even low-fee private schools cannot survive commercially, we fully subsidise tuition for all students. Homosha steps into the gap left by the state, offering the highest-quality education as a genuine public good.

Despite power shortages, internal displacement, and endemic malaria, the school is thriving. Its success is a testament to the commitment of its headmaster and teachers, and to the spirit that has come to define Homosha School. That spirit translates into results: year after year, our students achieve outstanding academic outcomes.



## The Problem

For girls in grades 9–12 in Benishangul-Gumuz, access to education is severely constrained. Schools are few and far between, forcing long and often unsafe travel. Poverty and traditional beliefs push many girls to drop out, taking on household duties or low-income work such as gold mining. With few female role models in leadership, educational aspirations remain limited.

In 2018, when we established Homosha School, the Gender Parity Index for secondary education in the region stood at just 0.75, compared to 0.86 at primary, showing how girls' enrolment drops sharply as they progress through school.





## Our Response

The barriers girls face in remote Ethiopia demand more than ordinary solutions. Boarding education offers a safe and supportive environment that removes many of these obstacles, allowing girls to focus on learning, build confidence, and achieve academically. For those displaced by conflict, it also creates a rare chance to continue schooling.

With this vision, we established Homosha in 2018 on a 16-hectare site as a dedicated secondary boarding school for girls. Boarding schools are uncommon in Ethiopia, and it took time and persistence to convince parents and communities of its value.

Today, that investment is paying off. Enrolment is rising, graduates are moving on to university, and the school has built strong momentum as a pioneering model of how targeted investment can expand opportunity where it is needed most.



## Facts & Figures

- ▶ First graduating class achieved **top test scores** in the BGRS, demonstrating **instant impact**.
- ▶ **137 graduates so far** — every single one admitted to university.
- ▶ Annual cost per student has **declined by 100% over the past three years to \$3,300** per student per year.
- ▶ **81 full-time employees**, bringing stable work to a remote area.

## Pharo and Family Fundraiser Brings the First Piano to Benishangul-Gumuz

The piano in Homosha's main hall is more than an instrument. It is a symbol of our commitment to holistic education. Purchased through a Pharo & Family fundraising concert in London, it travelled an extraordinary journey: flown eight hours to Addis Ababa, then stranded for months in customs and storage while the Addis-Homosha road was closed after armed attacks. Once the road reopened, it was driven eleven hours along treacherous terrain, at times threatened by militias, before finally reaching the school.

In September 2024, Ethiopia's celebrated pianist Girma Yifrashewa performed on this very piano at Homosha (between appearances at Carnegie Hall and Wigmore Hall!), bringing world-class music to one of the country's most remote regions. Reflecting on the event, Yifrashewa said it had become "a big celebration for the entire neighbourhood."

Today, the piano is more than a concert memory. It is part of an ongoing partnership with Addis Ababa University's Yared School of Music, which is helping design a pioneering piano class for Homosha's girls.



### Musical journey: lessons begin after piano finally arrives in Ethiopia

Saeed Kamali Dehghan

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Getting a piano to a remote school in Africa was no easy task, but concert pianist Girma Yifrashewa knows its value



► Girma Yifrashewa plays on the new piano at Homosha school for girls in September. He was playing at New York's Carnegie Hall in June. Photograph: Genaye Eshetu/Pharo Foundation

For those who contributed to the London fundraiser, the piano's presence in Homosha is a powerful reminder of how collective effort can create lasting cultural exchange and opportunity.