

Sennheiser Helps *Thinking Schools Ethiopia* Facilitate Collaborative Learning Model through Donation of Wireless Audio Equipment

Non-profit Organization Captures Video of Training Sessions to Help "Build Schools from the Inside Out"

Old Lyme, Conn. - February 9, 2011: The Thinking Schools Ethiopia project, supported by the not-for-profit Thinking Foundation, is on a mission to implement the most advanced, student-centered approach to educating students throughout Ethiopia -- the fourteenth most populated country in the world and one of its poorest. Through charitable equipment donations, audio specialist Sennheiser is helping further the Thinking Foundation's efforts by bringing a high-quality sound experience to the project's professional training sessions and video productions.



Thinking Schools Ethiopia began in August 2009 when Robert Price, an education consultant with over 20 years experience in classroom training, did a pilot learning workshop with 70 teachers from seven different schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital. As a father of two adopted Ethiopian children, Price brought a great deal of empathy and firsthand experience to his role as project leader.

The Thinking Schools approach uses a combination of visual tools, community building techniques, collegial coaching and environmental mapping to build a sustainable learning and thinking community. Price says that this approach is effective regardless of a student's age, ethnicity, environment or geography.

"My initial focus was on what was going on *inside* the schools, versus the physical facilities or infrastructure," Price recalls. "At the time, I had no idea whether our sessions would be popular or if anyone would show up. As it happened, there were

80 students in the first week -- it was unbelievable." News of the Thinking Schools Ethiopia project quickly spread, and to Price's astonishment, attendees at his sessions would soon range between 100 and 400 people -- including teachers and local government officials.

Price quickly spotted an opportunity to scale his efforts by incorporating the use of video and wireless audio into his routine. "I wanted to capture our training sessions on videotape and broadcast them on the Internet so more students -- and other teachers -- could benefit." He reached out to Sennheiser, who promptly supplied him with several of its EW 100 ENG wireless microphone systems to ensure that the audio content would be captured with clarity and intelligibility. He then enlisted a handful of local journalists, videographers and editors, and quickly began capturing the training content.

Making it count with Sennheiser

The workshops took place in a theatre-in-the-round type setting. About 50 of the attendees were asked to participate in a mock classroom while the remaining 350 audience members observed Price leading the "students." A



videographer was on the scene, recording footage that would be used as part of a forthcoming DVD/CD Rom educational training series.

"To say that the Sennheiser equipment was important is an understatement," Price observes. "Without our EW 100 ENG microphones, there would have been no way to reproduce the sound and actively engage 400 people. The equipment was also fundamental in capturing high-quality audio for our DVD series."

The video recordings and subsequent DVD production is important to The Thinking Schools Ethiopia efforts for a number of reasons: First, a filmed documentation helps

attract funding and broaden exposure for the project overall. Second, teachers in Ethiopia -- and beyond -- can leverage high-quality training materials to learn about and adapt the Thinking Schools methodology for their own purposes. "These materials are vital because they empower the viewers to become trained leaders themselves," Price says.

"The Thinking Schools project has put Ethiopia on the cutting edge of educational reforms," Price concludes. "Change can happen very fast, and technology can accelerate that change to make it even faster. When a company like Sennheiser gets involved, it helps us realize the kind of fundamental support that is really needed to make the project a success."

Caption 1: Thinking Schools Ethiopia participants using visual mapping (Thinking Maps) to collaboratively explore their ideas and understanding on visioning, developing and implementing Thinking Schools, and for use with their students.

Caption 2: A collaborative community exercise in a theatre-in-the-round setting

About Thinking Schools Ethiopia

The Thinking Schools Ethiopia Project is a collaboration of Robert Price, and Children's Home Society & Services (CHFS), with support from Thinking Foundation to support a Thinking Schools approach in Ethiopian public (government schools, private schools, and NGOs).

About the Thinking Foundation

The mission of the nonprofit Thinking Foundation is to support high quality academic and applied "action" research on cognitive and critical thinking skills development at the pre-school, K-12 and college levels. Initial grant awards will emphasize qualitative and quantitative research on Thinking Maps as a foundational language for thinking, learning, teaching and leading across educational organizations.

About Sennheiser

Sennheiser is a world-leading manufacturer of microphones, headphones and wireless transmission systems. Established in 1945 in Wedemark, Germany, Sennheiser is now a global brand represented in 60 countries around the world with U.S. headquarters in Old Lyme, Conn. Sennheiser's pioneering excellence in technology has rewarded the company with numerous awards and accolades including an Emmy, a Grammy, and the Scientific and Engineering Award of the

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. For more information, please visit www.sennheiserusa.com.

CONTACTS:

Jeff Touzeau
Hummingbird Media
jeff@hummingbirdmedia.com
914 602-2913

Rachel Smolin
Public Relations
Sennheiser Electronic Corporation
rsmolin@sennheiserusa.com
(860) 434-9190, Ext. 180