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Projects Abroad

FERENGE

ETHIOPIA

The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Ethiopia

May 2011

Issue No.36



WHAT'S INSIDE...

EDITORIAL	1
ETHIOPIA INSIDE OUT	2
FEATURE	4
NEWS AND UPDATE	6
PHOTOS IN MONTH	9
PROJECT ARTICLE	11
VOLUNTEERS CORNER	13
MAIL BAG	15
PRACTICAL INFO	18
MISCELLANEOUS PAGE	21

Welcome to the May 2011 Projects Abroad Ethiopia newsletter. This newsletter aims to inform all our volunteers with news and information about the latest happenings in Projects Abroad Ethiopia, and the country in general.

May is very well known in Ethiopian Orthodox Church believers in the called Easter (Fassika). It's celebrated after 55 days severe Lent fasting (Hudade or Abye Tsome). Orthodox Tewahedo Christians do not eat meat and dairy products for the whole 55 days.

We would like to thank all the people who have volunteered with us – we really appreciate all the valuable time and great help you gave at the different placements. We would like to say thank you to all the volunteers who decided to choose Ethiopia for volunteering through Projects Abroad.

Enjoy reading this issue and I hope that you will find something that you like. Thanks to our volunteers who have shared their stories and photos with us.

We encourage everyone to join us in making the newsletter interesting and exciting by sending in your own written articles and pictures of your experiences here with us. Your stories and pictures will help others to understand and learn about Ethiopia. If you have anything you'd like to contribute, suggest, or comment on, please contact:

bikeseghaileleul@projects-abroad.org

Enjoy!!!!

Fasika (Easter)

The Ethiopian Easter Festival is called Fassika and is celebrated after 55 days severe Lent fasting (Hudade or Abye Tsome). Orthodox Tewahedo Christians do not eat meat and dairy products for the whole 55 days. Vegetarian meals such as lentils, ground split peas, grains, fruit and varieties of vegetable stew accompanied by injera and/or bread are only eaten on these days. The first meal of the day is taken after 3 PM (9



o'clock in the afternoon Ethiopian time) during the fasting days, except Saturdays and Sundays, where a meal is allowed after the morning service.

Palm Sunday or **Hosaina** happens the Sunday before Easter. This day marks the beginning of Holy Week and celebrates the story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Ethiopians wear headbands of palm leaves on this day to remind them of the palm leaves that were laid in Jesus' path.

On Easter eve people go to church and celebrate with candles which are lit during a colourful Easter mass service which begins at about 6 PM (12 o'clock in the evening Ethiopian time) and ends at about 2 AM (8 o'clock

after mid-night Ethiopian time). Everyone goes home to break the fast with the meat of chicken or lamb, slaughtered the previous night after 6 PM, accompanied with injera and traditional drinks (i.e. tella or tej). Like Christmas, Easter is also a day of family re-union, an expression of good wishes with the exchange of gifts (i.e. lamb, goat or loaf of bread).

At the Easter service all Ethiopians wear traditional white clothes, called **yabesha libs**.



During all their holidays, Ethiopians eat huge special sourdough bread called **Dabo**. They bake enough to offer a slice to everybody who visits the house. On Easter morning, the bread should be cut, after saying a prayer, by a priest or by the main man of the house.

Source : - different websites including www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk/pages/festival.htm

The Dallol (Danakil) Depression – in Ethiopia



Dallol is at the northern most extension of the Great Rift Valley. It is below sea level and acts like a cauldron, trapping all the heat.

Dallol is a field of phreatic craters in the barren salt plain NNE of the Erta Ale Range in one of the lowest (and hottest) areas of the desolate Danakil depression.

The Dallol craters are the Earth's lowest known sub aerial volcanic vents. The most recent of these craters, Dallol, was formed during an eruption in 1926.

This is a desert with some areas that are more than 116 meters (328 feet) below sea level. This is special because it is one of the lowest points on earth not covered by water. There are hot yellow sulfur fields among the sparkling white salt beds. Heat isn't the only thing people feel in the Dallol Depression. Alarming earth tremors are frequently felt. There are also several active volcanoes.

The active volcano Mount Erta Ale (in whose crater lies the world's only below sea level land volcano, and the world's only permanent lava lake), techno-

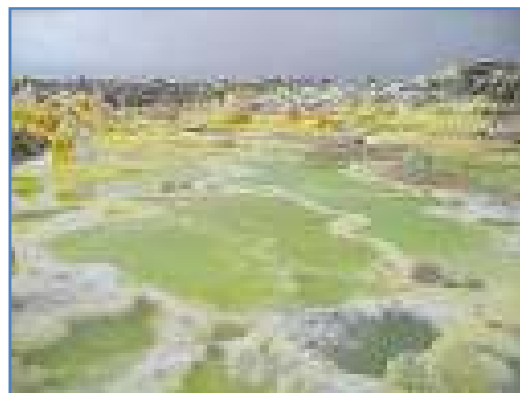


coloured landscapes, incredible mineral deposits, sulphur lakes and bubbling sulphur springs, are fascinating sights not to be missed.

Dallol Depression is one of the hottest places on earth like Death Valley in California. Temperatures can reach as high as 145 degrees Fahrenheit (63 degrees Celsius) in the sun, and top 93 degrees Fahrenheit (34 degrees Celsius) every day of

the year. In the summer, not a single day dips below 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius). Dallol holds the record for the highest average annual temperature.

Despite the harsh conditions, the Dallol Depression is a truly extraordinary place to visit with superb scenery, a fantastic experience for the adventurous traveller. Moreover they are unique to Ethiopia, as they are not found anywhere else.



Source: Dinknesh Ethiopia Tour

its and pieces of information of the happenings in Ethiopia.

WHAT IS HAPPENING



23 April 2011 – the office organized a Dirty Weekend program at Lemlem School due to American National Volunteers' Day; volunteers, staff members and some of the school community did mural activities at the school. It was a very good and worthwhile program in general.

29 April 2011 - We had our monthly volunteers dinner at 2000 Habesha Cultural Restaurant. It was good and there was live Ethiopian cultural music and some volunteers tried Ethiopian cultural dancing on stage –wow, lots of fun.



7 May 2011 - the office organized a visit and shopping programme for volunteers at Merkato (big open air market), volunteers did visits and shopping, and they were happy and socialized with each other.



14 May 2011 - The office organized a visit of Ethnographic Museum at Addis Ababa University – Ethnographic collection. Volunteers had a tea and coffee programme; it was very nice programme to help volunteers socialize with each other.

22 May 2011 - Volunteers had participated in a Chernet Wedding ceremony – it was nice to see what an Ethiopian wedding looked like.



MAY EVENT PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEERS

PROJECTS ABROAD ETHIOPIA OFFICE EVENT PROGRAMME - May 2011

DATE	TIME	PLACE	PROGRAMME	DESCRIPTION	EVENT IN CHARGE
Friday, May 6	2: 30 pm - 5: 30 pm	Projects Abroad Ethiopia office	Workshop for care and teaching volunteers	Workshop will organize for teaching and care volunteers.	Bikeseegn
Saturday, May 7	3:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Edna mall Cinema Hall	Watching English Cinema	There will be an English Movie and get together all volunteers	Bikeseegn
Saturday, May 14	2:00 pm – 6:30 pm	Addis Ababa University	A Visit of Ethnographic Museum.	Visit of Ethnographic Museum at Addis Ababa University – Ethnographic collection.	Bikeseegn
Saturday, May 21	7:30 pm - 11:00 pm	2000 Habesha Traditional Restaurant	Monthly volunteers Dinner	All volunteers get together for dinner and Watch Ethiopian traditional Dance	Sami and Bikeseegn
Saturday, May 28	8:00 am – 11 :00 am	Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Sar Bet.	NGO market and hand craft event	Fantastic opportunity to see and buy a wide variety of Ethiopian souvenirs. There is a huge variety of beautiful fabrics, scarves, bags, Jewelries of all sorts and styles, baskets, woven plates and dishes, wooden arts, pottery in every style with lovely decoration and much, much more.	Bikeseegn



Volunteers - Mural activity at Lemelem School



Volunteer - Mural activity at Lemelem School



Volunteers - Mural activity at Lemelem School



A quote from one of our volunteers placement .



Ghion Hotel green park

(Nice place for volunteers to visit over weekend)



Projects Abroad
Ethiopia Office

Lemlem School - A school striving to provide Quality Education

Lemlem School is one of our placements for our volunteers.

Background Information:

Lemlem School was established in 1996. The school has three campuses; in Addis Ababa, Axum and Adwa.

Currently the school has more than 80 teaching, administrative and line staff. They are dedicated to providing quality education in an environment which emphasizes on self discipline, academic excellence, creativity and pleasant social communications.

The school's primary objective is to provide standardized and quality education to the nearby community with minimal fees and for free for those who cannot afford to pay the monthly fee. Currently, the school is rendering the service for a very minimal fee. Moreover the school is teaching more than 150 female students for free in the three campuses.

Since its establishment the school has been gradually growing in size and in capital. The number of students was only 45 in the year of establishment and currently has increased to more than 900 students'; the quality of education and the service it provides has also been improved considerably through these years.

In addition, in collaboration with different NGOs and individuals, the school has helped three students to get medical assistance abroad.

Vision

Our Vision is to offer young children an advanced education related to scientific and technological developments which take the nation's demand and social and cultural aspect into account. We strive to produce confident and hardworking citizens.

Mission

1. To give quality education and guide students to be creative, competent and capable of problem solving.
2. To provide the required knowledge to enable students to pass the national exams successfully and prepare students enter the university.
3. To work to improve the system of the learning and teaching activity and relate it with modern technology.
4. To work to produce democratic, independent and confident citizens.

Objective

www.Projects-Abroad.net



Working to meet the demands of the government, society and parents in order to build capable citizens, who keep their promises and identify and recognize Ethiopia's beauty and history.

Achievements

- ✎ 99.9% our students who took the National Exams in the last five years have passed the exam with remarkable results.
- ✎ The school is providing free education for needy female students in its Addis Ababa, Axum and Adwa campuses.
- ✎ The school has managed to render quality education for a minimal fee.
- ✎ The school has managed to establish a strong relationship with the kebele, Subcity and regional educational bureaus.
- ✎ The school has strong relationships with parents.
- ✎ The school has built its own G+3 building in its Addis Ababa Campus.
- ✎ All our students who took the GEQAEA last year have passed with distinction marks. For these the school stood first from all schools in the Yeka sub city.

(Source Lemem School broacher)

Dance, movement, and urban space

By Henry Guyer from Switzerland – Journalism volunteer

Dance plays an important role in both Ethiopian lifestyles and traditions

Dance plays an important role in both Ethiopian lifestyles and traditions. When it comes to contemporary dance, however, this form of artistic expression lacks much support here. It isn't from lack of effort or latent talent, but rather from a lack of appreciation and institutional development.



Collaboration between various dancers and performing artists will put on a performance at the National Theatre, entitled 'Dance Move Urban Space', aiming to bridge the gap between contemporary and traditional dance.

Supported by the Goethe Institute and coached by Berlin-based Choreographer and Director Helena Waldmann, the performance will center on life in urban sprawl,

mainly in Addis. The name of the piece in Amharic is 'Dance Addis', a title that takes on many layers of meanings.

"First, Addis is the name of the city," explains Mintesnot Getachew, 26, dancer and performance artist. "Secondly, it can be the name of a person, mainly women. Thirdly, this title is meant to express a new method of expression, the mixture of many different styles."

Addis Ababa is a city in a constant state of flux; a characteristic it shares with its inhabitants, including the dancers. Mintesnot explains the connection, "The concept comes from Helena but the movement came from the dancers, from their life and experience." Based on this idea, the dancers and the city share a mirrored relationship that manifests itself in 'Dance Move Urban Space'. The constant movement, various states of creation and destruction, birth, death, and rebirth; the only constant is the perpetuity of change.

"There are many talented dancers in Addis but they just don't have the chance to show their talent. Therefore, Goethe's support is good, it helps to expand and help grow the art form. They are very eager to show their talent, to develop and learn more."

The connection to the established dance forms of either cultural or hip-hop dance is very strong but according to Mintesnot they are too fixed. Contemporary dance offers ingenuity, exploration, combinations, and expression, something he hopes to see more of in the future, starting with Saturday night's performance at the National Theatre.

From Arielle blog [by Arielle and Sarah, Care volunteer for three months, from USA]

Playing Catch Up ...

.....Continued from last time



Friday the OPRIFS ladies went to an art park for some art therapy. It was located in a huge park so we got to see some African nature which was pretty cool (minus the ants everywhere that really freaked Sarah out!) So we got to see some authentic African art (all very expensive

otherwise we would have bought some) and got to see the girls paint and create sculptures! It was nice to once again see the girls expressing themselves creatively and they loved showing us what they made. After we had lunch and a coffee ceremony and everyone sat around in a tent. One of the girls made a clay microphone so they decided to put on a little show. They danced and sang and some did little plays that obviously Sarah and I didn't understand because it was in Amharic. But I always love seeing them dance. We've tried to take a couple of videos because it's their favorite thing to do and awesome to see, so hopefully I'll be able to post those.

The next morning we spent the day with our family at Mercato. It was nice to spend the entire day with them in a different atmosphere than our house, but it was definitely tiring. We were doing back to school shopping for the kids, who were each given 1,000 birr to spend for the day; which is pretty generous and furthered our beliefs that our family is upper middle class. Mercato was the same as last time-

tacky clothes, etc. but it was nice to go there with our family. Our host sister was looking for gray skinny jeans but by the time she found them she had already spent all her money for the day. She pouted a little bit and our host mom kept asking if she wanted them or not and finally got them for her. Sound familiar mom?

Later that night we were supposed to go out with our Supervisor but she wound up cancelling on us, which was good because we were so tired. We wound up playing cards with the kids - we taught them a game but called it Loser so every time they ask to play Loser it takes a minute to figure out what they're talking about! We were getting a little bored of the game so they asked if we wanted to play Truth or Dare. I'm not even kidding. We said YES, obviously! They play the same way, except one person closes their eyes while the others pass around a piece of paper until the person with their eyes closed says stop. Whoever has the piece of paper is then asked truth or dare by the person who had their eyes closed. So we got to find out if they've lied to their parents (yes, they have) and who their favorite sibling is (the baby). So while I could probably write a 10 page essay on how different Ethiopians are from Americans, we also have so many similarities, which I find extremely interesting. I also made my host brother run outside around the house twice in the pouring rain on a dare... I'm so evil.

Sunday morning we went to Entoto to see some famous church (not really sure what it's all about) and to see the view from the top of the mountain. We met up with our volunteer friends and started our journey. The church was nice - very colorful - but we couldn't go in so it was really pretty boring. Once we took enough pictures with the red, yellow and green we started our way up the mountain. On the way we ran into little children beggars and our friend Nick decided to give them some candy, so obviously they started to follow us - all the way up the mountain! If you saw the pictures, you'd know how cute the kids were. All of a sudden one reached out and grabbed Sarah's hand and it was honestly the most adorable thing I've ever seen. Soon they were grabbing mine and we were skipping up the hill and they were giggling and loving life. We took a pit stop so the boys could play some soccer. When I sat down I immediately had about 20 pairs of hands in my hair. They love blonde hair here, I guess. I really should be grossed out by all these dirty hands touching my hair, but for some reason I'm not.

Anyway, we continued up the mountain and took some group pictures before heading down and getting some delicious pizza! The other volunteers are a great group. They're all hilarious and super fun so it's been nice to meet so many different people.

This Wednesday we also got massages for our friend Helaina's birthday. African massages - pretty sweet!! But I must say I'm more excited for the massages we'll get in Asia. The spa was very cool though, with lots of African art and mosaics.

Not sure if I wrote about this, but we also joined a gym! Haile, the famous Ethiopian runner, owns it so I feel like it's sort of a cultural thing. Plus with all the injera we eat here, we felt like we needed to join. The first day we were there I nearly broke a machine (go figure) and a man came over to me and taught me to use it. We got to chatting and it turns out he works there and offered to train Sarah and me for free! Not exactly Ed, but he'll do for now! We had our first session with him last week and he must be blind because the weights he was telling me to use did not correlate with the actual size of my arms. But it was a good work out so I can't complain! We also do yoga once a week and I think it's the best yoga class I've ever taken! The instructor is amazing and it makes me want to go to an Indian Ashram as soon as possible. Except one week the instructor wasn't there so some guy substituted for her. He was your typical yogi - ripped and could do anything. He started balancing on his head and doing all this other weird stuff so I couldn't help it and started cracking up hysterically. Before I knew it Sarah was also laughing and we totally ruined the whole class. Thank goodness he has not returned!

Well I think that's about all we've been up to that's exciting. I'm going to post another blog now with something else that's been going on, but I feel like that needs it's own post! So ciao for about ...15 minutes!

ABOUT ETHIOPIA

Location

Horn of Africa.

Time

GMT + 3.

Calendar

Ethiopia uses the Julian calendar. This year is now 2002. Their New Year (Enkutatash) in on 11 September. Most Western countries now use the Gregorian Calendar.

Area

1,133,380 sq km (437,600 sq miles).

Population

82.5 million (2008).

Capital

Addis Ababa. Population: 3.6 million (2007).

Religion

Ethiopian Orthodox (Tewahido) and Coptic Church, mainly in the north, 40%; Islam, mainly in the east and south, 40%. There are also significant animist, Evangelical, Protestant and Roman Catholic communities.

History

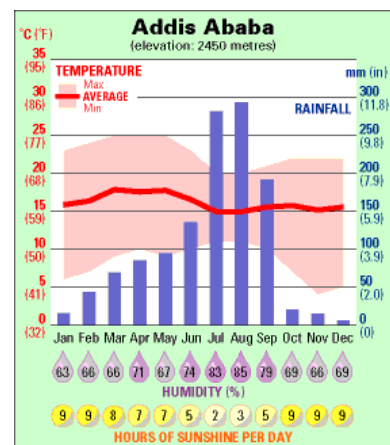
The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) of incumbent Premier Meles Zenawi won bitterly contested elections in May 2005. The elections this year in 2010 were far more peaceful and delivered Meles his fourth five-year mandate as prime minister. Ethiopia is currently enjoying a relatively stable political period despite a sharp increase in public support for opposition parties.



Language

Amharic is the official language, although about 80 other native tongues are spoken including Oromo, Somali and Tigrinya. English and Arabic are widely used and some Italian and French is spoken.

ADDIS ABABA CLIMATE



Electricity Supply



Electricity in Ethiopia is 220 volts AC, 50Hz.

Most modern electrical devices will accept input power supplies of 100~240v and 50/60Hz so they should work with Ethiopian power supply.

Most Ethiopian hotels have 2-PIN round power sockets of various types that will accept the standard Euro plug 2-pin plugs. Some places will

also have power adapters that are of Chinese origin and will accept most types of power plugs.

However, it is recommended to bring several 2-PIN round plug adapters to suit your equipment plugs.

ETHIOPIAN MONEY

Ethiopia's currency is called birr. It's divided into 100 cents in 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, and there are 1, 5, 10, 50 and 100 birr notes.



One Birr note



Five Birr note



Ten Birr note



Hundred Birr note

SOCIAL MEDIA – PROJECTS ABROAD ETHIOPIA OFFICE

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&group_guid=2873](http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group_blogs.php?gl=true&group_guid=2873)

Out of Addis – For your Visit

(Taken from what is out Addis)

The Rock-hewn Churches of Lalibela



Though I am an Ethiopian, I had never visited the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela. However, when some of my friends told me how amazed they were by the place, I decided I must see it for myself. Lalibela is uniquely 'Ethiopian'. Experiencing the extraordinary buildings, the pervasive atmosphere of peace and tranquility fills you with an awareness

that you are somewhere that is so different from anywhere else in the world. Lalibela possesses an atmosphere that is entirely “otherness”. Even if the time of your visit is not during a religious festival, you will meet Ethiopian priests in the churches and get a taste of the rituals, which generally take place in inner sanctums containing the “Ark” and are inaccessible to all but anointed clergy.

To witness such impressive architecture, one can only marvel at the feats of construction that the builders undertook to accomplish such magnificent churches. I was in awe of how human beings could achieve this without modern equipment. What about the debris? If you were to excavate a building out of solid rock, where would you put the residue? Legends abound, citing angels as the master-builders. Whatever the mystery of Lalibela's origins, it is sure to amaze the visitor, whether Ethiopian or foreigner, and will be an experience that will remain with you, as exceptional as and one of the great wonders of construction that exist in this world, along with such marvels as the great pyramids and Inca temples.

The town of Lalibela now offers a reasonable choice of hotels and restaurants, and Ethiopian Airways fly there daily. Don't wait for others to tell you how incredible it is, go and see for yourself.