

Ethiopian Trip

November 2014



UK Registered Charity No. 1110814

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Monday 10th November

Veronique Rizzuto and Susan Middlehurst depart for Addis Ababa to raise funds for Building Hope by taking part in the 10K Ethiopian Great Run.

Tuesday, 11th November

We woke up to a beautiful day with a clear blue sky. The temperature in Ethiopia always catches you out, as it is hot in the sun but as soon as you step into the shade you need a sweater. We met up with Carole Ashurst a humanitarian charity worker and Nega Birhan, one of our sponsored students who were accompanying us to Dessie. Tuesday gave us a chance to acclimatise to the 2300m altitude and to finalise arrangements for our trip to Dessie the following day.

Wednesday 12th November

An early start catching the 5.30am Selam bus to Dessie travelling through stunning mountain and valley scenery which always takes one's breath away. Susan Middlehurst spotted a Gelada baboon by the roadside, this baboon is only found in the Ethiopian Highlands.

Thursday 13th November

Susan celebrated her 70th birthday.

After breakfast we travelled to Karagutu School where we met up with the teachers and Headmaster, who took us around the classrooms so we could see the progress made since our last visit. We asked if we could sit in on English Classes and put questions to the pupils who were rewarded with a pen for a correct answer. A visit was made to the library, which was built by Building Hope, and we were impressed to see it full of students busy studying, and stocked with plenty of reference books. The previously donated sports equipment was in use and we gave the Headmaster a small selection of stationery.

The science teachers surprised Susan by presenting her with a bunch of flowers and singing Happy Birthday which was a lovely gesture. The school has made great strides over the years and is now one of the top performing schools in the Wollo region.



Library

After lunch we were invited to Beza, a charity set up by Hanyea Mohammed, and some volunteers to learn about the fantastic work they do with educating kids on sexual health matters and supporting sex workers and vulnerable communities in the region. A surprise party was arranged for Susan with a birthday cake, coffee ceremony and supported by a traditional cultural music group. It

was a fun afternoon which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. Dinner at Hotel Time, Dessie for another surprise birthday celebration with invited guests, Hanyea and Marta from Beza, Samson Fekadu from EECMY, Muluaem Mengesha from Environmental Health Woreda Office (Addis), Carole and Nega. Susan thanked Veronique and Carole for organising such a memorable day which she will never forget.

Friday 14th November

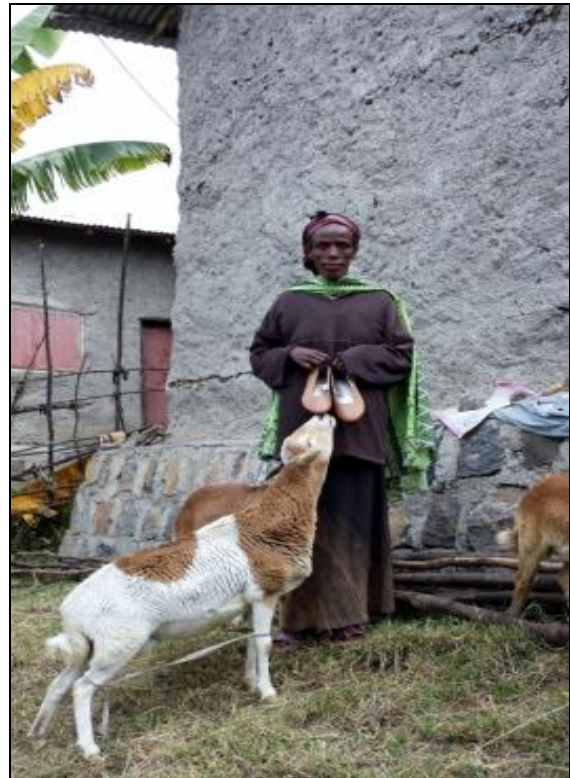
Morning visit to Tita School, to meet the new Headmaster and give the football team, a kit consisting of shirts and shorts which were donated by Building Hope. While we were there, we asked if we could observe an English Class and repeated what we did at Karagutu School, this time asking the pupils simple geography questions and rewarding correct answers with a pen. The school is very underfunded and desperately needs toilets for the Kindergarten children and the older children (the present one is now in a dangerous state). We suggested they provide us with a quote which we would consider funding. We also gave them £483 to buy an electric microscope and some digital multimeters for the Science Laboratory and a small supply of school stationery.



The afternoon was spent inspecting sites in Dessie with Hanyea and two of the local government officials, for income generating projects providing desperately needed communal showers and toilets for the surrounding communities. Hanyea and the local Council will provide us with a project proposal and costing which we would consider funding.

Saturday 15th November

Veronique, Susan, Carole, Nega and Muluaem visited the ex Leprosy Community in the morning to meet up with the homeowners of the houses which were built by Building Hope. We were very impressed to see that many of them had cultivated their gardens, were growing vegetables and had acquired sheep. Donations of shoes were given to the women and we were able to see firsthand, the houses connected to the electricity supply, provided earlier in the year.



In the afternoon we went back to Tita School for a meeting with the Headmaster and staff, PTA members and interested parties regarding the school toilets. Muluaem kindly offered his services to help with the project proposal and costing for the toilets as he is experienced in this field. The community also said they would contribute to the project. The meeting was accompanied by a thunderstorm, and a downpour which fortunately was nearly over by the time we left, as none of us had any raingear.

Sunday 16th November

A morning visit to destitute families in Dessie who received a stove donated by Carole and afterwards to the Stove Producers. Susan purchased four stoves which will be given to four needy families.



In the evening we had farewell drinks at the hotel and said our goodbyes to Hanyea and Marta from Beza.

Monday 17th November

Early start again for the Selam bus back to Addis Ababa. No baboons spotted this time but Nega and Susan saw a hyena at the side of the road. Overnight at the Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa, meeting up with Fentaw Marsie, one of our sponsored students, who had travelled that day from Bahir Dar where he is studying Public Health. Nega and Carole will not be joining us for the next few days as they have separate business in Addis Ababa.

Tuesday 18th November

Veronique, Susan and Fentaw travelled to Arba Minch where we were met by Sharon Daly, Yoseph Menna and Vera from Mossy Foot Project International. They arranged transport for us to Soddo which is 100ks away and we were greeted by the news that unfortunately our hotel rooms had been taken by Government officials because the Prime Minister was in Soddo and had extended his visit. Four of us (females) had to share Sharon's room (a good

way to get to know each other), and Fentaw stayed with Yoseph in his house. Originally we were going to visit Action on Podoconsiosis Association in Soddo but they have now moved to Kucha and we were unable to arrange a visit. The Mossy Foot Project and Action on Podoconsiosis Association are separate organisations covering different areas in the Woreda region.

Wednesday 19th November

Hoorah!! The Prime Minister is leaving Soddo today so we can now have our own hotel rooms.

A visit to the Mossy Foot Project. Mossy foot (otherwise known as Podoconiosis) is a disease that manifests itself as a massive swelling of the feet and legs. Its common name describes the appearance of the skin that becomes very rough and bumpy and changes to look like moss. It is caused by exposure to irritant soil as a consequence of wearing no footwear and an absence of basic skin care. We met a carpenter who had set up his own business after his condition had improved and a hairdresser who was running her own salon despite many obstacles.



We attended the weekly Mossy Foot clinic and were invited to a meeting of patients who recounted their stories of how life had improved for them since their treatments. Many of them ran their own successful business. We noticed that many of the children were barefoot and asked why they were without shoes. The answer was that the children probably did have a pair of shoes but they were being kept (for best). Without shoes they are at a great risk of developing mossy foot.

Thursday 20th November

The Mossy Foot Project run 15 clinics and we visited another clinic in Shanto where patients were having their weekly foot checks. We were shocked to learn that a young man did not have shoes despite suffering from the condition and in addition, there were three men with open wounds which needed urgent attention.



There were no funds to treat them so Veronique and Susan agreed to help by paying for medical treatments. Sharon then arranged for them to stay at the Mossy Foot Project headquarters so they could get daily care from Feleke, their wound care specialist and go to Soddo Christian Hospital for any necessary appointments there. We also purchased a pair of shoes for the young man as his need was urgent and there was a waiting list.

We also visited the shoe workshop managed by Mossy Foot Project where custom made shoes are made for the Podoconiosis patients. It costs \$20 to make a shoe.



Friday 21st November

An early start for our trip back to Arba Minch where we had lunch at the Paradise Lodge overlooking Lakes Abaya and Chamo which are divided by the lyrical 'Bridge of God'. We had a relaxing time admiring the views before travelling back to Addis Ababa. On arrival we met up with Carole and arranged a visit to the Alert Hospital the following morning.

Saturday 22nd November

Veronique, Carole and Susan visited the Handicraft shop at the Alert Hospital which is an outlet for the sale of goods made by members of the ex Leprosy community. The Berhan Taye Leprosy Disabled Persons Work Group produces and sells beautiful handbags, pillow covers and wall hangings, each emblazoned with vibrant embroidery. ALERT is a medical facility on the edge of Addis Ababa, specializing in Hansen's disease, also known as "leprosy". It was originally the All Africa Leprosy Rehabilitation and Training Centre (hence the acronym), but the official name is now expanded to include tuberculosis: All Africa Leprosy, Tuberculosis and Rehabilitation Training Centre.

Veronique collected her official tee-shirt for the Great Ethiopian Run, from the Hilton Hotel and attended a party held that evening for all the foreign participants. We said farewell to Carole who had business in Nekemte the following day and everyone retired early to bed in preparation for the big day ahead.

Sunday 23rd November

Great Ethiopian Run - The 10K event is the biggest running event in Africa with more than 37,000 participants. 500 elite runners and several hundred runners from overseas. The event takes place in Addis Ababa which is 2500 metres above sea level, making it a must do event in the running calendar.

We all woke up refreshed and eager to start. It was a beautiful day, sunny with a light breeze and not too hot, perfect for running. Veronique, Nega and Fentaw made their way to the stadium and Susan followed on later, accompanied by Eretaban (a friend of Nega's). There was a carnival atmosphere with numerous stalls offering face painting and selling merchandise linked to the run.



The run was a great success and gave us all an opportunity to soak up the atmosphere and culture provided by over 80 nationalities. Susan met Veronique, Fentaw and Nega at the finishing line and we all agreed it was an incredible experience which we will never forget. Veronique raised over £500 in aid of Building Hope. After the run we were invited to a delicious Ethiopian lunch at Nega's sister house.

Monday 24th November

Visit to Sara's Centre - The Sara Cannizzaro Child Minders Association (SCCMA) was established in November 2004 by Sonia Pasqua and bases its principles on Sara's wishes, which she had written a couple of months before her unsuspected death at the age of 12.

SCCMA mission is to prevent the 'streetism' phenomenon by focusing on strengthening families and communities by promoting lasting solutions to break the cycle of poverty. We were impressed by the work they were doing to educate young children and support their single mothers and the achievements they have made in the last 9 years. We attended a class where the children were learning English and also visited the sewing room where single parents (women) were and have received training.



This enables them to join the tailoring market and supplement their income. Since 2004, 255 children 3-6 have attended the kindergarten school. 200 children 7-18 have attended grade 1-12, received schooling materials and their school fees have been covered. 100 children participated in extracurricular activities like Karate, music, painting, gardening etc. and 120 children have benefited from counselling services. 150 mothers



have received awareness training e.g. family planning, child upbringing and financial planning. This was a very inspirational visit although it was tinged with sadness due to the death of Sonia's daughter Sara at such a young age.

Tuesday 25th November

Veronique, Susan and Fentaw travelled to the African Vacation Club at Lake Langano, a 250k drive from Addis Ababa for a well deserved three nights rest and recreation. Langano is a beautiful soda lake, rich in bird life, and unusually brown in colour.

Friday 28th November

Last few hours in Addis before flying home -
In the morning Fentaw, Veronique and SCCMA's Manager had a meeting with the Manager of the Organization for Women in Self-employment (WISE) in Addis where 35 mothers received the Basic Business Skills training course. 10 of those women are organised into saving schemes through which they will access loans from WISE and 5 mothers are currently in SCCMA's sewing/tailoring training programme. The others are too poor to engage in savings so Veronique suggested that those mothers could be supported by giving them start-up capital in kind to run their own small business. Once their business is well established these women will be organised into saving and credit cooperatives through which they will access financial services. Unfortunately SCCMA do not have the resources to fund start-up capital projects.

We said our farewells to Nega and Fentaw for looking after us so well. The trip would not have been the same without them and everything was arranged very professionally. Our thanks also to Carole for her invaluable help and support.

There are many ways to support our work in Ethiopia

You can donate or create your own fundraising page online and raise money for Building Hope or donate online.

<https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/buildinghope>

Gift Aid - If you pay income tax, capital gains or any other tax, you can increase the value of your donation by 25% - without costing you an extra penny. Building Hope simply claim back the tax you have already paid to the Inland Revenue.

Workplace Giving Scheme - With Workplace Giving, you can make a regular donation to Building Hope directly through the payroll system. Contact your employer about the Workplace giving Scheme.

eBay - Donate to Building Hope when you trade on eBay! If you sell goods on eBay, you can choose to give a percentage of the sale to Building Hope.

<http://www.ebay.co.uk/egw/ebay-for-charity/charity-profile/Building-Hope/19837>

Give as You Live - Sign up and discover how you can turn every purchase into a donation for us, at no cost to you.
<http://www.giveasyoulive.com/buildinghope>

Easyfundraising - Raise money for Building Hope when you shop online with easyfundraising.
<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/buildinghope>

A gift in your will - Leaving a gift to Building Hope is a way you can make a huge difference to people in Ethiopia. Do let us know if you are including Building Hope in your will so we can thank you and keep you in touch with our work. For a confidential chat email rizzutov@buildinghope.co.uk

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