

## Link Ethiopia would encourage all schools which have been linked for longer than six months to consider a visit.

Visits allow staff to experience their partner school's educational system first-hand and so strengthen their understanding of how best to develop the partnership for the benefit of both schools. Visits are also beneficial on a personal level, as staff and learners can gain first-hand experience of different countries and cultures.

The first visits should lay the foundations for long-term, joint curricular work on a global theme.

What teachers have said about visits:

*"This was an experience I will never forget.....and I would return tomorrow! The impact has already been felt in school. Children are talking and sharing about my visit and I can now answer questions with greater clarity. Shared learning will have more meaning and friendships will continue to develop through letter writing." – Joy Hardy, Head Teacher, Queniborough School linked with Yekatit 23 School in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia*

*"The Ethiopian people are genuinely friendly, supportive and honest." - Mike Hill, Science Teacher, Wreake Valley Community College linked with Ghion School in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia*

### Before your visit

- Think about the aims of your visit. What do you want to achieve? What ideas for curriculum project do you have in mind? **Link Ethiopia can share with you with examples of curriculum projects other schools have tried and advise you where to look for support.**
- Get your students to prepare some materials you would like to take with you. Suggestions include pictures and information about your school and local area, questions they would like to ask, perhaps some work for your partner schools to respond to.
- Draw up a provisional programme.
- If your visit is being funded, prepare for any requirements the funder may have – do you need to gather information to complete a report for example?
- Familiarise yourself with Ethiopian culture. Start by reading the culture guide section below. Download our "Ethiopia – an overview" guide from <http://news.linkethiopia.org/resources/document>.
- Further information about Ethiopia can also be found in the Ethiopia guide section of our website. It is also worth investing in a guidebook such as the Lonely Planet.
- Make sure we are aware of any dietary, medical or religious needs you have. We may need to advise you or make special arrangements.
- Check the FCO travel advice at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/sub-saharan-africa/ethiopia>. Link Ethiopia will advise you if we feel there are any issues you have to be aware of, however insurance providers often require that you follow FCO FCO advice or risk invalidating your insurance.

## Accommodation and Travel

**Link Ethiopia can assist you by booking your flights and in-country accommodation.** We have a dedicated travel agent we have worked with for many years and our in-country staff are familiar with all the accommodation options close to our linked schools.

*Please note there is a discount on internal flights if you enter the country on Ethiopian airlines.*

## Standards of Accommodation

Ethiopia has a wide variety of accommodation to suit all budgets. A basic, but clean and, comfortable room with ensuite bathroom in a mid range hotel costs between £10-£20 a night. We can also arrange accommodation in more 'luxurious' hotels.

Please do be prepared that standards of service may not be what you are accustomed to in the West! Ethiopia does also suffer from occasional electricity and water shortages and you should be prepared for this during your trip (bring a torch).

## Visa

You will need a visa to visit Ethiopia. A 30-day single entry tourist visa is available on arrival in Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa at the cost of \$20/17. This should suffice for most teacher visits. If you are staying for longer than a month, you may have to apply for your visa in advance. Link Ethiopia can help you with applications.

## Immunisations and Malaria

You will usually need immunisations before travelling to Ethiopia. Your doctor will be able to advise you which immunisations you need. Make an appointment with your doctor at least a month before travelling to ensure you have enough time as some immunisations require a course of injections. Although malaria is not common in the areas where our linked schools are found, you should seek the advice of your doctor before travelling and take precautions.

## Money

There are more and more ATMs appearing around Ethiopia these days, which currently accept Visa debit and credit cards. However, you should bring the bulk of your money in cash, either as pounds sterling, euros or dollars as ATMs may be unreliable. You can change cash in Bole Airport on arrival and at banks in all the towns where are link schools are located. Traveller's cheques are possible also, although some banks may not change them. If you do bring traveller's cheques, ensure you keep the bank receipt with you as you will not be able to change them without this.

## What to wear

Ethiopians dress fairly conservatively and an effort to fit in with local standards is appreciated. For visiting schools, a shirt/blouse and trousers/long dress is suggested. Shorts and strappy tops/t-shirts are generally not appropriate in public. Women need not cover their hair. A pair of sturdy shoes such as walking boots are very useful, particularly if visiting rural schools or the Simien Mountains. A hat and sunglasses are also very important in Ethiopia's hot climate. Finally, it is worth bringing a light sweater for the evenings as it can become quite chilly in the highlands.

## Suggested kit list

- Hat and sunglasses
- Appropriate clothing
- Sturdy shoes such as walking boots
- Digital camera, battery charger, blank CDs
- Torch or head torch
- Tissues
- Notepad and pens
- Laptop (optional)
- Camera
- Reading material
- Continental adaptor
- Dioralyte / Imodium
- A course of standard antibiotics
- Mosquito pills/sprays
- Anti-histamine cream/tablets for insect bites
- Antiseptic cream
- Paracetamol
- Sun-cream
- Iodine droplets for water (if visiting rural areas)
- Neutralising tablets
- Vitamin pills
- Sanitary pads
- Antibacterial handgel
- Pen knife

## During your visit

### Arriving at Bole International Airport

Even if you are catching a connecting flight, you will still need to collect your visa at Bole International Airport, clear customs and transfer to the domestic terminal. There are two money-changing offices before the visa office, where you can change cash if necessary (**note, there is no ATM and traveller's cheques are not accepted**). You must pay for your visa in Euros or Dollars but it is still a good idea to take the opportunity to change money before you arrive at your final destination.

### Meeting you at the Airport

Link Ethiopia will endeavour to have a member of staff collect you from the airport when you finally arrive or arrange for a member of staff from your host school to meet you. In the rare case that this is not possible, you will be able to take a taxi to your accommodation and we will advise you about this.

### Supporting you in Ethiopia

Our Ethiopian staff are on hand to assist you during your stay in Ethiopia. They have years of experience of welcoming visiting UK/US teachers to Ethiopia and know all our linked schools personally. A member of staff, usually the school links coordinator, will escort you to your partner school on the first day and make sure you are settled in. Our staff are also on hand to answer any questions or provide any support you should need during your visit. You will be introduced to the local Link Ethiopia office and this should be your port of call if you have any difficulties.

## At your partner school

### Suggested Activities

- get to know your colleagues, particularly the Director and Link Coordinator
- identify areas of joint interest for shared curriculum projects
- observe lessons
- attend staff
- get involved in teaching
- plan joint curricular work
- plan for the return visit
- evaluate the visit
- take lots of photos and collect objects – involve your partners in choosing what you would like to take back with you
- visit local areas of interest

**If your visit is being funded, make sure you are familiar with any requirements such as stipulated number of days you must spend at your partner school.**

## Practicalities

### Food

The staple food in Ethiopia is *injera*, a kind of flatbread, served with various meat or vegetable stews called *wot*. Nowadays, it is also very easy to find Western '*ferenji*' fare such as pizza and pasta, sandwiches, steaks, fish cutlets and burgers in the towns where you will be accommodated, though may not always be easily available when on day visits to schools in villages. Vegetarians need not worry either: Ethiopians fast for several periods throughout the year and vegetarian staples as well as Western food are widely available. Fruit can be purchased at markets and freshly squeezed fruit juice is available at juice shops. Coffee is Ethiopia's national drink, and unsurprisingly is very popular, both in its traditional form and as lattes, cappuccinos, espressos etc. Breakfasts of eggs, bread, tea and *fuul* (beans) are common. Soft drinks such as pepsi, coca-cola, mirinda, fanta and sprite are ubiquitous and bottled water is available at most shops and restaurants. It is not advised to drink the tap water.

Ethiopians commonly wash their hands before eating and it is advised you do the same, especially if eating *injera*, which is eaten by hand. A jug of water and soap will be offered to you if you visit someone's house where as restaurants will generally have a wash basin in the corner.

### Transport

There is a variety of public transport in the towns where you will be based. You can get around by minibus, *bajaj* (3-wheel taxi), taxi, or horse and cart. Journeys typically cost only a few birr (around 10p/20¢). Minibus fares are fixed but you should always negotiate the price before getting into a taxi, *bajaj* or horse and cart. Our staff can give you the latest information about prices and assist you in finding transport.

### Medical Attention

There are pharmacies and clinics in all the major towns where our link schools are located, which sell a variety of standard antibiotics and medicine over the counter. For anything more serious, there are hospitals in Gondar, Bahir Dar and the capital, Addis Ababa, all in easy reach of our link schools. However, standards can be very basic and it is recommended to return home if serious medical attention is required. It is worth bringing essential to bring a medical kit with you, containing at the very least the following items:

- Dioralyte / Imodium
- A course of standard antibiotics
- Mosquito pills/sprays (if recommended by your health advisor)
- Anti-histamine cream/tablets for insect bites
- Antiseptic cream
- Paracetamol
- Sun-cream
- Iodine droplets/chlorine tablets for water (if visiting rural areas)
- Neutralising tablets (for use in conjunction with iodine/chlorine)
- Plasters/bandages and safety pins

## Emergency Contacts

During your visit, your local Link Ethiopia office should be the first port of call in the case of any difficulties:

### Northern Office:

Address: PO Box 1021, Gondar, Ethiopia  
Office number: +251 (0)581 122 769

Country Manager: Belayneh Shewaye

Mobile number: +251 (0)918 776 792

Email: [belayneh@linkethiopia.org](mailto:belayneh@linkethiopia.org)

Email: [belayneh@linkethiopia.org](mailto:belayneh@linkethiopia.org)

Project Coordinator: Mulugeta Derso

Mobile number: +251 (0)911 748 055

Email: [mulugeta@linkethiopia.org](mailto:mulugeta@linkethiopia.org)

School Links Coordinator: Elsa Kebede

Mobile number: +251 (0)918 788 952

Email: [elsa@linkethiopia.org](mailto:elsa@linkethiopia.org)

### Southern Office:

Address: PO Box 446, Debre Zeit, Ethiopia  
Office number: +251 (0)114 371 388

Child Sponsorship Manager: Yohannes

Mobile number:

Email:

Southern Coordinator: Hailemariam Ayano

Mobile number: +251 (0)912 062 413

Email: [haile@linkethiopia.org](mailto:haile@linkethiopia.org)

If you are unable to contact any of our Ethiopian staff, you can contact the following staff members in the UK:

Chris Grant, Director: +44 (0)7890 407 353 / (0)207 241 3544

Matt Stockdale, Project Manager: +44 (0)7747 696 998

James Love, School Links Coordinator: +44 (0)7811 259 507

## Cultural Considerations

Here are a few suggestions and points to consider which should help smooth your visit to Ethiopia.

- Ethiopians are extremely friendly and it is not unusual for strangers to stop and greet you in the street. Do not worry, curiosity rather than any thought of material gain is the most common reason for Ethiopians wishing to engage with you. Being friendly and courteous and returning any greetings offered to you will be much appreciated.
- Shaking hands is very important in Ethiopian culture and is the normal form of greeting. Always shake with the right hand. Touching your left hand to your elbow and bowing slightly whilst shaking hands is a mark of respect and is an appropriate way to greet someone older or in a position of authority.
- Learning some basic greetings such as '*Dehna neh?*' ('How are you?') is well worth it and will guarantee you a friendly reception whenever you meet someone new.
- Ethiopians look down on strong shows of emotion, especially anger. Patience and a smile are far more useful than becoming angry when faced with a frustrating situation.
- If eating with your hands, use your right hand only.
- Time in Ethiopia is generally more 'elastic' than we are used to in the west. If you are given an appointment, be prepared that the person you are meeting may be late!
- The Director is an important figure in Ethiopian school affairs. How involved the Director is in your link will depend on your partner school, however it is important to introduce yourself to the Director on arrival. Involving the Director as much as possible in any discussions and future plans is also recommended as this will ensure the support of the school management.
- Be prepared that affairs may move more slowly at your partner school than you are used to at home and that there may be less rigorous organisation than you are used to. It is worth double-checking agreed plans and being as specific as possible when requesting something or making plans for joint projects.
- Prices in hotels, restaurants, cafes and most shops are usually fixed. Prices in markets and at souvenir shops may often be open to bargaining. In particular, always agree a price before getting into any form of taxi.
- Religion is highly important to the social and historical fabric of Ethiopia. Officially, Ethiopia is an Orthodox Christian country but there is also a large majority of Muslims. Protestants make up a growing number of Christians and some peoples in the south practice various animist religions. Inter-religious relations are generally peaceful.
- As education and the economy slowly develop, females are benefitting from increased opportunities, especially in the bigger towns and cities. In these areas it is not uncommon to see female teachers and police officers. As tourists, all 'Westerners' are generally treated the same, regardless of gender, although women can't enter certain Island monasteries in Bahir Dar.

## Areas of interest in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a fascinating and unique country, with a range of natural and historical attractions and a growing tourist trail. Although the primary purpose of visits is educational, many teachers plan in time at the end of their trip to visit one or two places in Ethiopia. Below are a few suggestions for places you might like to visit; for fuller information, visit our online Ethiopia guide: <http://www.linkethiopia.org/guide>.

- The rock-hewn churches and monasteries of Lalibela
- The island monasteries and Blue Nile falls in Bahir Dar
- The castle and churches of Gondar
- The Simien mountains
- The stelae of Aksum
- The national and ethnographical museums and the Merkato market in Addis Ababa
- The walled Muslim city of Harar