

The Exeter-Ethiopia Link

In the mid-1980s Ethiopia's droughts and consequent famine came to everyone's attention. Following a visit at that time we established a community link between Exeter and the village of Hareto and more recently, the town of Nekemte.

The rural people of Ethiopia are amongst the poorest in the world. Their income is less than 50 pence a day. Their life expectancy is 46 years. Their well-being is challenged by the diseases of poverty.

At the same time Ethiopia is making progress. For example most children are gaining a primary education.

In the town of Nekemte there is a new library and a state regional university, now under construction, will join the New Generation private university. Water supplies and electricity services have become more reliable and there is Internet availability.

- ◆ Nekemte is similar in size to Exeter. It lies about 200 miles west of Addis Ababa.
- ◆ Approximately 26,000 children and adults living in the environs of Nekemte (the Wellega region) have avoidable or treatable blindness.

- ◆ About 65% of these will benefit from cataract surgery or spectacles.
- ◆ The region does not have an optician.
- ◆ People cannot afford to travel to the capital, Addis Ababa, 350 kms away for help.
- ◆ The Ministry of Health has prioritised expenditure on the care of people with tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV. It is however providing basic salaries for the doctor and nurse and has donated the clinic land.
- ◆ Development expert Qes Alemu Nega advocated on behalf of the community for support to those with eyesight problems.
- ◆ The Exeter-Ethiopia Link responded, and gained a grant from the Four Acre Trust (UK). Construction of the new Clinic started in October 2006. The donation also provides for training, equipment, supplies and salaries for 3 years.
- ◆ The Clinic should be operational in 2007. Meantime Hirut, the ophthalmic nurse and Dr Mohammed, ophthalmologist, are working in temporary accommodation provided by Nekemte hospital. They will go for 3 months specialist training in India during 2007.
- ◆ The Exeter Ethiopia Link team is seeking donations to support a comprehensive rural eye care service based at the eye clinic.
- ◆ Facilities for Spectacle making, Eye Drops production, Health Promotion and identification of patients in need of eye care services are amongst the objectives which require additional funding.

A pair of spectacles for a child costs £1

◆

A cataract operation costs £10

◆

Books and teaching aids cost £20

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Training school teachers about eye health and how to recognise the child with eye problems costs £100

◆

Training community health workers in the prevention of infectious eye disease, and in referring people to the clinic costs £450

◆

A vehicle to provide an ambulance and mobile clinic services to outlying villages costs £5000

How you can help

I would like to make a donation of £.....

I would like to set up a direct debit of £.....

I would like to become a member of the Exeter-Ethiopia Link and receive newsletters:

Individual annual membership (£10)

Joint annual membership (£15)

Cheques payable to "Exeter-Ethiopia Link"

I am a UK taxpayer
(this enables us to claim Gift Aid)

Name:

Address:

.....

Postcode:

Tel:

Email:

Contact: Mark Howells, Treasurer

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The Eye Care Project

This is a North-South-South Link to support the people of Nekemte in their endeavour to prevent or treat blindness.

There is an international global programme to address avoidable blindness – VISION 2020. The International Centre for Eye Health (London) are advisors to our project.

Additionally, staff at the International Centre for the Advancement of Rural Eye Care (Hyderabad, India) will provide some training and technical advice.

Ex-patriates with clinical, technical, research, and development experience will support the Eye Clinic team.

Good outcomes in eye care depend on teamwork

More information

Please contact the Exeter-Ethiopia Link Eye Project Leader, Dr Alexis Taylor.

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Enabling communities
to help themselves

EYE CARE PROJECT



NEKEMTE, ETHIOPIA

Tackling avoidable blindness

(UK Registered Charity No. 1000293)

In association with Devon Aid

www.exeterethiopia.org