



SUNY New Paltz & Visions Global Empowerment Ethiopia Service-Learning Trip Itinerary

May 30th – June 11th, 2019

Addis Ababa * Bahir Dar * Gondar * Simien Mountains

DAY 1

Thursday, May 30th

USA → Addis Ababa

- Group departure from U.S. to Ethiopia! (flight details TBD)

DAY 2

Friday, May 31st

Addis Ababa

- Group arrival at Addis Ababa Airport at night
 - Upon arrival, our private vehicle & driver will meet you and help to load all non-essential luggage into vehicle for direct transport to Bahir Dar (*you will receive your luggage at the hotel in Bahir Dar the following evening, so please pack in your carry-on enough clothes, toiletries and whatever else you would like to have with you for the first 2 days*)
- Brief welcome and orientation upon arrival
- Rest & overnight at Addissinia Hotel (<http://addissiniahotel.com>) or comparable

DAY 3

Saturday, June 1st

Addis Ababa → Bahir Dar

- Depart hotel for Addis Ababa Airport (domestic terminal) via hotel shuttle
- Take (direct) domestic flight from Addis Ababa to Bahir Dar on Ethiopian Airlines (flight details TBD)
- Hotel shuttle to pick up group on arrival; check in at Jacaranda Hotel (www.jacarandahotelbahirdar.com)
 - Dinner will be at the hotel restaurant every evening at 7:00pm unless directed otherwise
- Visit to Yekatit 23 School (where you will find a Deaf resource room, Deaf classrooms, and Deaf vocational training center), and then to the Visions Model Deafness Center for a welcome tour of facilities, services introduction, and meeting with our local nonprofit partner – the Kal Center for Special Needs (www.kalcenter.org)

DAY 4

Sunday, June 2nd

Bahir Dar

- Breakfast (buffet) will be at the hotel restaurant every morning (starting from 6:00am)
- 8:30am departure for Yekatit 23 School or Visions Model Deafness Center to conduct special program for Deaf youth (specific plans TBD)
- Lunch will be a catered (traditional, vegan) meal
- Attend a traditional dancing performance at local dance hall



DAY 5

Monday, June 3rd

Bahir Dar

- Conduct education program at Visions Model Deafness Center for Deaf youth (specific plans TBD)
- Lunch at Deset Lodge on the shores of Lake Tana
- Take a sunset boat cruise on Lake Tana to view local wildlife (hippos, birds, etc.)

DAY 6

Tuesday, June 4th

Bahir Dar

- Continue service activities at Dona Berber and Tsehay Gibot Schools, both of which have Deaf-only classrooms for Grade 0-4 students (specific plans TBD)
- After lunch, continue service work at the Visions Model Deafness Center



DAY 7

Wednesday, June 5th

Bahir Dar

- Continue service activities at Yekatit 23, Dona Berber and Tsehay Gibot Schools (specific plans TBD)
- After lunch, continue service work at the Visions Model Deafness Center

DAY 8

Thursday, June 6th

Bahir Dar

- Continue service activities at Yekatit 23, Dona Berber and Tsehay Gibot Schools (specific plans TBD)
- After lunch, continue service work at the Visions Model Deafness Center

DAY 9

Friday, June 7th

Bahir Dar → Gondar

- After breakfast, depart for Tis Abay (Blue Nile) Falls where we will enjoy a nature walk (approx. 1.5 hour drive each way + 2 hour hike & boat ride)
- Lunch back in Bahir Dar before departure for Gondar (approx. 3-hour drive north)
- Check in to Goha Hotel (www.gohahotel.com)

DAY 10

Saturday, June 8th

Simien Mountains

- Morning departure for the Simien Mountains where we will enjoy guided nature walks and take in the breathtaking sights of this UNESCO World Heritage site known as the “Roof of Africa” or “Africa’s Grand Canyon”
 - ***Please note:** we may be visiting elevations of up to 12,000 feet or more
- Check in to Limalimo Lodge (www.limalimolodge.com) and enjoy a leisurely afternoon
- In the evening, we will do a group trip reflection and enjoy dinner at the lodge

DAY 11

Sunday, June 9th

Gondar → Addis Ababa → USA

- Morning departure for Gondar
- Visit Fasilides Castle and other ruins of the country’s old capital city
- Depart Gondar for Addis Ababa on Ethiopian Airlines (flight details TBD)
- Lunch and sightseeing in Addis (exact plans dependent on return airfare details)
- Overnight at Addissinia Hotel (www.addissiniyahotel.com) or comparable

DAY 12

Monday, June 10th

USA

- After breakfast, depart for Ensessakotteh Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation Center
- Visit the National Museum of Ethiopia to see “Lucy” & “Ardi” and more
- Day activities in Addis Ababa (group to decide on a specific plan depending on everyone’s interests)
- Group evaluations, trip review, and discussions on future plans

DAY 13

Tuesday, June 11th

USA

- Early morning departure from Addis Ababa Airport (international terminal) for return flight to the U.S. (flight details TBD)
- Arrive home in the evening

***Please be advised: this itinerary is subject to change**



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Best estimates show that upwards of 40% of all children in Ethiopia are left out of formal education entirely. Factor in having a disability to that equation, and students with special needs are even more unlikely to access a formal education. Ethiopian Deaf children and adults in particular experience tremendous discrimination in education, healthcare, employment, public services, and everyday communication and activities.

In an effort to improve the situation for Deaf youth & adults in Bahir Dar (in the northwest of Ethiopia), Visions Global Empowerment (“Visions”) has been spearheading various initiatives since 2012 aimed at improving education, inclusion and the overall quality of life for Deaf persons. Working in close partnership with our staff at the Kal Center for Special Needs, we have been collectively striving toward the development of thoughtful interventions including increasing the accessibility and quality of life skills training, Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) instruction, job training and opportunities, public education and awareness raising, medical care, early childhood education, social activities, and other educational support for Deaf Ethiopians and their families. More details of this ongoing, year-round work can be found on the Visions website (www.VisionsGlobalEmpowerment.org) and Kal Center for Special Needs website (www.kalcenter.org).

SUNY NEW PALTZ’S 4TH SERVICE-LEARNING TRIP

This volunteer program represents Visions’ 16th scheduled group service-learning trip to Ethiopia over the past 6 years (in which over 110 individuals have volunteered their time already), and our 4th service-learning trip in partnership with SUNY New Paltz. As part of this experience, program participants will be spending time with local Deaf leaders, staff, and teachers; conducting site visits to local schools and ongoing Visions’ projects, including the Visions Model Deafness Center in Bahir Dar; conducting training programs for schoolchildren, young adults, & parents at 4 public schools in Bahir Dar and at the Visions Model Deafness Center; and learning about the issues that shape the lives of Ethiopian schoolchildren.

In addition to the volunteer component, this trip will provide an opportunity to see local development projects in action. Participants will meet with local NGO workers and make field visits to various projects designed to make a difference in communities in need. Volunteers will also have time for periodic sightseeing and leisure, providing an opportunity to see some of the many fascinating sights that Ethiopia has to offer. Participants will experience some of the historical and archaeological heritage, nature/wildlife, and more. All of this will give volunteers an opportunity to experience Ethiopian culture and engage in what amounts to a powerful cross-cultural exchange and learning experience. This trip also provides an opportunity to gain exposure to Amharic & Ethiopian Sign Language and to share insights & experiences with our Ethiopian counterparts about culture, language, development, and more.



SIGHTSEEING & LEISURE

Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, is a bustling cosmopolitan center and the home of the African Union, many UN offices, embassies, and more. It serves as our entry point into the country as well, with the group arriving and departing from Bole International Airport (ADD). Students may have a little time to explore this major African city, including visiting the National Museum to see the infamous “Lucy” and “Ardi”; Meskel Square; and other interesting sites (*dependent on international flight arrival & departure details*).

In Bahir Dar, we will have several opportunities for exploration and sightseeing as well. A boat ride on Lake Tana to visit the monasteries and see the wildlife of the lake (ie: hippos, 80+ species of birds, etc.) is a must. We will also organize at least one night out for cultural dancing and music. Visit the local markets for

shopping – coffee, textiles, traditional dress, spices, honey, and silver items are all good options for bringing gifts back home.



Finally, students will have a few days for leisure and reflection at the end of the trip as they visit the Simien Mountains – a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its unique flora & fauna and stunning views of the steep terrain. We will have time for nature walks and some much deserved rest before heading home. Please note, we will be at high altitude (up to 12,000 feet above sea level) during this visit.

BUILDING LOCAL BONDS

Our program has been designed to work concurrently to develop skills in students, adults, local partners, teachers, university students, other community members, and volunteers abroad. Using facilitated learning techniques, team building, and gradual ownership of curriculum and activities leadership, volunteers and children develop confidence, skill, and teamwork capabilities. Our goal of supplementing the educational opportunities for students and professionals in Deaf education in Ethiopia while honoring Ethiopian Sign Language, indigenous language, and the richness of Ethiopian cultures provide an experience for all participants that is both rich and respectful of all. As Visions' development work continues year-round, we will follow up on any program-specific goals or projects that emerge from this service-learning trip, and encourage all participants to stay involved in these efforts long-term.

TRAVEL MAP

