

Country Handbook: Ethiopia

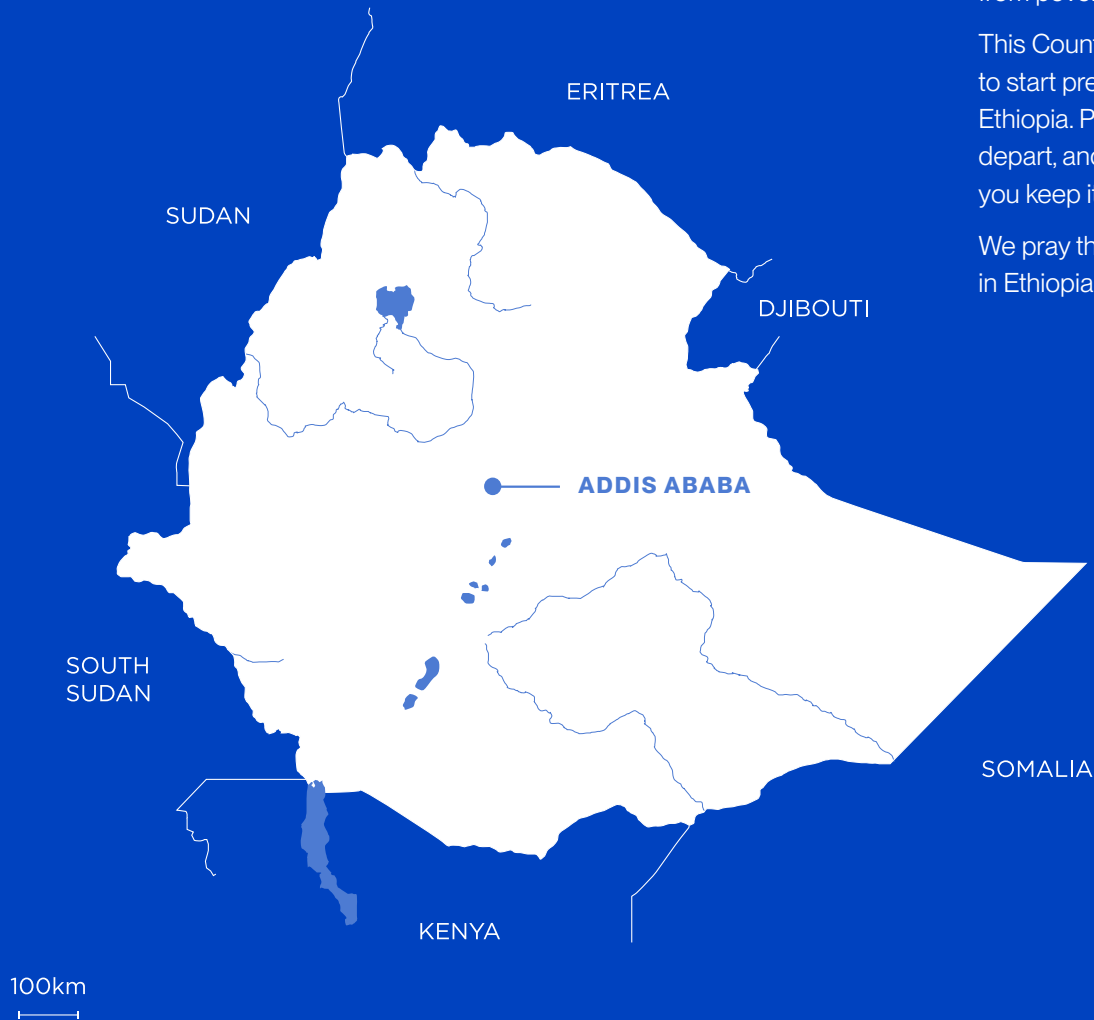


Introduction

Travelling to see the work of Compassion and our local church partners firsthand is an unforgettable experience. On this trip, you'll see for yourself how children are known, loved and protected by their church communities and are being released from poverty in Jesus' name.

This Country Handbook is designed to start preparing you for your trip to Ethiopia. Please read it before you depart, and we'd also recommend that you keep it handy for easy reference.

We pray that God will bless your time in Ethiopia!



Country Information



Ethiopia is often said to be the land of 'Thirteen Months of Sunshine', as it has 13 months in a calendar year. As the coffee bean originated in Ethiopia, making coffee is one of many rituals important to their culture.

Main languages:

Oromo, Amharic, Somali

Climate:

High temperatures in the lowlands, mild temperatures in the highlands

Main religions:

Ethiopian Orthodox (43.8%), Muslim (31.3%), Protestant (22.8%)

Currency:

Birr



Compassion in Ethiopia

Compassion has been working to release children from poverty in Jesus' name in Ethiopia since 1993. 24 per cent of people live below the poverty line.

Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program is tailored to be age-appropriate for each child.

Children **AGED 1 TO 3** receive home-based care.

Children and youth **AGED 3 AND OLDER** attend their local Compassion centre on weekends, usually on Saturdays.



For more information on Ethiopia, scan the QR code or visit:
compassion.com.au/where-we-work/ethiopia

Compassion assisted children in Ethiopia typically attend program activities at their local child development centres. Here is an example of what a typical program day looks like:

8:00am - A time of prayer and devotion.

9:30am - Spiritual lessons, in which children sing songs and learn Bible stories.

10:30am - Break time where children can play in a safe environment and develop friendships.

11:00am - Social-emotional lessons ranging from conflict resolution to developing healthy self-esteem and a godly character. Children often come from challenging home environments and are taught social and personal skills.

12:00pm - Snack and social time. Light snacks are usually provided at the centre, including bread, tea and crackers. Every three months, supplementary grain and cooking oil is provided to families. If a child shows evidence of malnutrition, centre staff will seek the advice of a doctor and provide additional food and nutritional support accordingly.

1:00pm - Health lessons, in which children learn practical health and hygiene tips. Example topics include how to prevent malaria and HIV transmission.

2:00pm - Letter writing and career planning. Older children work with local staff to identify their strengths and interests and set goals for their future.

Students can elect vocational training skills depending on their area of interest and often receive professional certification in the skill they are learning. Children in Ethiopia are offered additional classes in topics such as work ethics, study skills and entrepreneurship.

Cultural Considerations



Clothing

- **Men:** Casual clothing such as shorts and t-shirts are acceptable in most contexts, but please wear long pants when visiting local church partners or attending services.
- **Women:** Jeans, long pants and knee-length shorts are acceptable in most contexts. Please dress modestly when attending church services with a long dress or skirt and a shirt that covers your shoulders.
- Layered clothing is recommended as temperatures can change significantly throughout the day.
- It is best to wear closed-in shoes when visiting local church partners or children.

Greetings

- Shaking hands while maintaining eye contact is a polite greeting. Some adults may initiate a hug.
- It is customary for elders to be greeted first.

Toilets

- Most hotels have Western toilets, but squat toilets are common in Ethiopia. Toilet paper is available if you don't want to use water to clean yourself, but it is recommended you carry some toilet paper or tissues when you are out for the day in case you need to use a public toilet.

Security

- Please ask permission before you photograph any local people. This can include photos taken from a moving vehicle, so be sure to check with your driver or Trips and Visits Specialist first.

Emergency contact information:

Local emergency number: 911

Compassion Ethiopia office: 011-251-11-5-540610

Australian Embassy: +61 2 62 613 305

Body language

- Couples may hold hands, but it is best to avoid further affection.
- Beyond handshakes or hugs when saying hello or goodbye, other physical affection should be avoided.
- The left hand is considered unclean, therefore it's polite to pass items using your right hand.

Language

- Useful Amharic phrases:

Hello: Selam

May God give you health (common greeting):

Tenayistilign

How are you? (plural): Dehna nachu?

I am fine: Dehena negn

Goodbye (plural): Dehna hunu

Thank you: Ameseginalehu

Excuse me: Yikerta

I don't understand: Algebagnem

No: Aye

Yes: Awo

Eating and drinking

- When visiting someone's home, it is customary to be offered a drink (typically coffee). It is considered polite to accept.
- In most settings, guests and women are served first. It's polite to wait until everyone has been served to start eating.
- Food is often served from a communal bowl and scooped using your hands or injera (bread). As the left hand is considered unclean, your right hand should be used for serving.
- Most people pray before eating meals.
- It is uncommon for Christians to drink alcohol.
- It is polite to bring a small gift, such as food, when visiting someone's home.



Key Challenges and Prayer Points

Malaria remains one of the leading causes of death, particularly in young children. Over two-thirds of the population live in areas that put them at risk of infection. Our local church partners are addressing this issue through education and the distribution of mosquito nets. Please pray that this work will continue to be effective and that God will heal those who are sick.

Many children are suffering from malnutrition. Thirty-four per cent of children under 5 are experiencing stunted growth. Severe weather events, such as drought, greatly impact the availability of food. Please pray that God's provision would be over families without adequate food and ask that our local church partners can continue to provide tailored care to help children recover.

Ethiopia has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, with 48 per cent of people over 15 years old considered illiterate. This issue disproportionately affects women and can make everyday activities difficult. Please pray that children will be supported with education opportunities so they can develop key vocational and life skills.



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