



Saving and enriching lives in Ethiopia



The Water Committee at Endagewrgs, with Mark and Jenny Harwood. You can see the location of this well using Google maps: 14.25236, 39.22498. Every one of our wells has GPS coordinates enabling exact location for monitoring.

One of our WellWishers Trustees, Mark Harwood, and partner Jenny have just spent time in Tigray visiting some of our wells completed in 2018. It was Mark's first visit to Ethiopia and the wells visit was facilitated by the Relief Society of Tigray (REST). Mark reports:

With a population of nearly 113 million, and density of 102 persons per square kilometre, Ethiopia stands in stark contrast to Australia's 25 million and just 3 persons per square kilometre. Of significance though, is that 85% of Australia is urbanised compared with only 21% in Ethiopia. This particularly stood out for us over the 3 ½ weeks of our Ethiopia itinerary through

the highly modified landscape that has succumbed to centuries of farming. At times we could also be forgiven for thinking we were still in Australia owing to the proliferation of wattles and grevilleas and the eucalyptus tree which was adopted from Australia in the late 1800s for building material and firewood.

Most Ethiopians survive through subsistence farming, their days revolving around water and firewood collection, farming (crops and livestock), food preparation and the weekly market which for many villagers involves an all-day round trip due to the distance travelled, usually on foot.

Our visit to four wells was extremely rewarding. We were accompanied by three staff of the Relief Society of Tigray (REST): Gidey, Kibrom and Aregai.

On the first day we drove south-east from Axum into the hills. The 4WD road was heavily used by the locals to access the markets, clinics and schools in Enticho. Our first stop was the village of Endagewrgs. It was a short walk from the village to the water pump, located on the edge of an intermittent creek on a steep, narrow valley. We were greeted by the Well Committee, with singing and throwing of popcorn. The well was completed in 2018, less than 12 months ago. Prior to this the villagers, or more particularly the women, had a three hour return journey to collect water, and from a source that was unclean. This time saving is positive for the whole family. Meals can be prepared earlier, children fed and sent off to school, men able to get out to the fields earlier and often with extra help from their wives. The clean water and improved sanitary practices also mean less illness, thus avoiding lengthy trips for health care and fewer missed school days. One man also commented on the improved harmony within families. Their gratitude was very real and humbling.



Biogas at Guhmi village - animal waste collector and latrine combine to provide gas for lighting and cooking. A 'by-product' of the sanitation and hygiene program!

We were invited back to the dwelling of one of the Committee members where we were offered food and drink. Injira, dips and cooked chicken, and coffee. The locals fast every Wednesday and Friday to the extent of avoiding all animal products, so the chicken had been prepared solely for Jenny and me. The second well serviced the village of Mai Dur, again alongside an intermittent creek. All the wells we visited had been completed in the last 12 months.

Our second day took us to the villages of Guhmi and Andi Hutsa, again both off the main roads. The walk into Guhmi took us through their crop fields which were looking particularly healthy. Many of the villagers were hand weeding among their crops of teff and wheat.

(Cont. overleaf)

The Well Committee for Guhmi presented Jenny and me with a handwoven scarf each and insisted we stay for coffee and popcorn after the inspection. We enquired about the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program as part of the well installation and inspected a latrine that had been constructed beside a family hut as part of this program. It was heartening to see a little ingenuity employed whereby the latrine, together with a dumping hole for animal manure, had been connected to a methane collecting point which was piped into the family hut to burn for cooking and provide light. The WASH program encouraged the construction of a latrine for each family unit, with provision for hand washing with soap.

At Andi Hutsa the well Caretaker had taken the opportunity of terracing up a garden beside the well, using any overflow from the well to raise a variety of cash crops that she could sell. We enquired of the Committee whether all families could afford the monthly well charge. They responded that everyone chips in to cover struggling families so that no-one in the village is denied access to the well.

Our last visit brought home the gratitude and humanity of the Ethiopian people, when the Well Committee thanked us for the well and asked that we continue to raise money so that other villages can similarly benefit, as they had, from having convenient access to clean water.

What are we on track to achieve in Ethiopia in 2019?

Tigray: northern Ethiopia:

28 new hand dug wells constructed, 12 hand dug wells rehabilitated, 40 WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Committees established, 240 WASH Co members trained, and 40 villages engaged in improved hygiene and sanitation behaviour. At the end of 2019 we will have funded water supplies for 842 village communities since WellWishers began.

Oromia: southern Ethiopia:

Our local partner, the Meki division of Ethiopian Catholic Church Social Development Office is working with local villagers to construct a spring cap at Kelo Tulu in Negele Arsi District. This tank will collect clean water for 2542 villagers.

Across Ethiopia we will have funded accessible clean water for over 310,000 Ethiopians since 2003. A great effort from our WellWishers family!

Christmas or Occasional Gift Cards

Our cards are available again this year. **A description and Order Form is attached.**

Cards cost \$30 and are a great present for someone who already has enough. We can personalise the greetings on a card if you want to give a substantial or special gift. Perhaps a family might want to celebrate the Season by giving a water supply for an Ethiopian family (\$150) or a complete well for an entire village (\$6800) as a present to one another. We can adjust the comments on the inside to match your donation.

Manager's report

Our four Trustees – Guy Gilbert, Janita Radford, Mark Harwood and Graham Romanes are pleased to have carried forward the work begun by Community Aid Abroad (now Oxfam Australia) in 1984, continued with the support of Ross and Marianne Allan who then established the WellWishers Trust in 2007.

In Australia we function without paid staff, relying on committed volunteers to assist with fundraising, publicity and administration. Thank you to Lyn Fulford for her admin support, and to Nick Lawson and David Bell and Mazars Accountants for their pro bono audit work.

Our income for the year to June 30, 2019 was \$296,135, and our expenses were \$5,369, keeping our overheads below 2%. We forwarded \$307,311 to Ethiopia for our valuable program work, absorbing some of our small reserve. We will aim to continue funding at this level in 2020.

A little help goes a long way

\$30 will ensure a permanent supply of clean domestic water for someone in northern Ethiopia, **\$150** supplies a whole family with water. Behind these figures is a lot of voluntary support and effort and goodwill both here and in Ethiopia. Thank you for your continued support.