

Tara Centre News

Issue 4
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Serving the Community

The Tara Centre community centre in central Gondar is now in its fourth year. So what's new at the Tara Centre? It now has attractive gardens, a new kennel block (funded by The Dinkenesh Fund), a monkey enclosure, a play village for children, and a handicraft workshop for weaving and basket-making.

"There are currently 33 employees at the Centre, working on various projects to improve the lives of people and animals, and to enhance the environment," said Kate Fereday Eshete, Founder and Manager. "During the past year, 17 volunteers from England, Canada, the USA, Australia and the Netherlands have also helped."



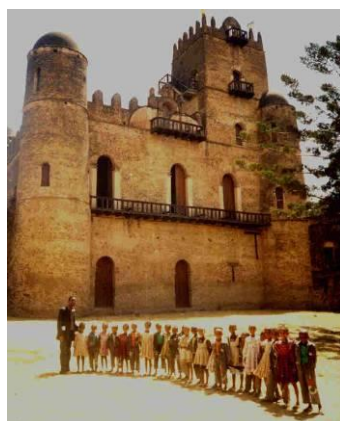
playtime at the Tara Centre

Hunger

Since the beginning of the year, Ethiopia has suffered from runaway inflation of more than 70% on some food items. In January one kilogram of bananas in Gondar was 3.50 birr; now the cost is 7.00 birr (a 100% increase).

Local grain such as *tef*, used to make the staple bread *injera*, cost 420 birr per quintal last January, but now people in Gondar pay at least 900 birr for the lowest grade of *tef* (a 115% increase).

How are the poor coping? By eating less food daily. On average the second-year Empress Mentewab School pupils lost one kilogram in weight during their school holiday from July until the middle of September.



outing to Fasil's Castle in Gondar

Educating Poor Families

Twice a year, the beneficiaries of the Sponsorship in the Community Project who live in the Gondar area come together for a meeting in the city centre.



Kassahun talking to 300 beneficiaries in Gondar

July's event was chaired by Kassahun Demissie (Sponsorship Project Controller, Tara Centre). Guest speakers talked on subjects including dental hygiene, eye care (trachoma prevention), HIV/AIDS, training opportunities, and Circus Gondar. In addition, young women (former beneficiaries) who had completed hairdressing training and were now working in local salons described how the training had transformed their lives.

Empress Mentewab School

For 2008-09, the school, located at the Tara Centre, has 64 pupils - 24 in a Grade 2 class and two Grade 1 classes of 20. All the children are from supported families in Gondar's city slums.

In June, the pupils and staff enjoyed a day trip to Lake Tana, the largest lake in Ethiopia. They also visited the Simien Mountains in August.

In October, Gondar Education Office inspectors visited the school and were very impressed.

"This non-profit school is supported entirely out of donations we receive," explains Kate, who is headmistress. "We are in great need of funds for uniforms, school dinners, teachers' salaries, and transport for educational outings."



working at the Sheraton Hotel

Sheraton Cook

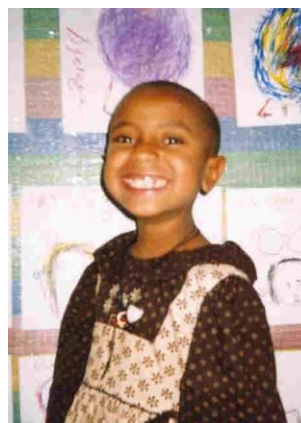
A poor young woman from Gondar's city slums, Alemitu* (now 26), was supported by sponsors through The Kindu Trust for one year, 2005-06, as a young adult in full-time education. The Trust, which Kate set up in England in 1998 (www.kindustrust.org), funded Alemitu's place at a one-year International Hotel Services course. Alemitu now works as a cook in Addis Ababa, at the Sheraton Hotel, the most prestigious hotel in Ethiopia. She is the biggest income-earner in her large family.

"Alemitu's youngest sister, Mulu, has been sponsored through our child sponsorship scheme for three years," said Kate. "When we work with a family to overcome their poverty, we look at how we can help all members of the family towards a better life."

Kate is currently paying for Samrawit, another of Mulu's sisters, to do a Hairdressing course in Gondar.

Mulu lives with her widowed mother, four siblings and three other relatives in a slum hut. She attends a local state school and participates in Tara Centre youth club activities.

* name changed to protect her identity



schoolgirl

News Snippets

Tara Centre Library

This year Books Abroad, a Scottish charity, has donated hundreds of books to the Tara Centre. During August the books were catalogued by an orphan beneficiary of the sponsorship scheme who worked at the Tara Centre during his school holidays to gain experience and earn some extra money.

Funding is urgently needed for shelves and a part-time librarian. Can you help?

The library will be used by staff at the Tara Centre and Empress Mentewab School, as well as beneficiaries, youth clubs and schoolchildren.

Play Equipment

As a result of last year's appeal a German donor kindly paid for tricycles, scooters, pedal cars and toddlers' pushcarts for the Tara Centre.



The play equipment is used by the poor children who attend the pre-school playgroup, Empress Mentewab School, and the youth clubs.

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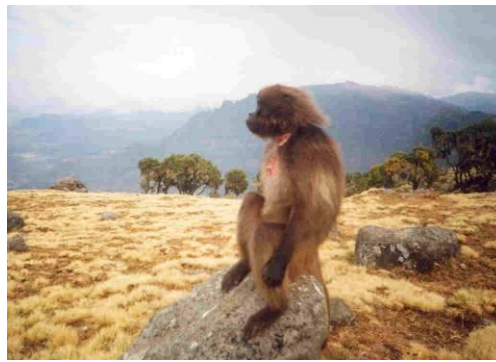


Kate with a rescued baby Gelada baboon

Monkey Rescue/Release

Since January 2008, Kate and her monkey team have returned ten rescued Gelada baboons to the Simien Mountains for release into the wild by the University of Michigan's Gelada Research Project.

"These endemic baboons endured appalling conditions while in illegal private ownership," explained Kate. "I rescued Babs from a local hotel - she is now part of a wild group and had her first baby in July."



Babs the Gelada baboon back in the wild

Monkey House

Thanks to funding by American biologists, the Tara Centre now has a monkey enclosure. The number of 'guests' varies, but there are currently 13 primates of four different species: Hamadryas and Anubis baboons, Grivet and Patas monkeys.

Three keepers exercise the rescued monkeys in meadows at the Angereb River daily, returning them to the enclosure at night time.



a Canadian volunteer working on the monkey enclosure

Bright Faces

Thanks to the UK-based children's charity, Facing the World, this year two boys (both beneficiaries of the child sponsorship scheme) flew to London for corrective surgery.

Mohammed was given a nose while Zerihun had uro-genital operations.



happy Mohammed

Animal Birth Control

Dutch veterinarian Rein Blanken worked with Dr Ramasamy from India to spay bitches and castrate city dogs at the Tara Centre in January. Dr Ramasamy teaches Surgery at Gondar University's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

Over several months, Dr Ramasamy brought fourth-year students to observe operations he carried out in the Centre's veterinary clinic. Some students performed operations under supervision.

"In 2007 the Public Health Office poisoned over 1,000 street dogs in Gondar because of the fear of rabies," explained Kate. "Capture, neuter (with rabies vaccination) and release is a more humane method of controlling the number of stray dogs."



spaying at bitch at the Tara Centre

Sponsorship in the Community

The numbers of cases currently being helped by the Sponsorship in the Community Project and on the waiting list for a sponsor are as follows:



a life transformed by sponsorship

Sponsored Cases	*Child	Young Adult	Elderly Person	Total Cases
North Gondar	281	16	5	302
South Gondar	17	1	0	18
North Wollo	28	0	1	29
Addis Ababa	29	0	0	29
Tigray	5	0	0	5
TOTAL	360	17	6	383

Cases (assessed and approved) waiting for a Sponsor
TOTAL 184

* A child sponsorship case is usually a family in which a sponsored child is a part. In most cases the sponsorship not only helps the named beneficiary, but also his close relatives or foster carers because shelter, water, electric light, cooking fuel (charcoal and firewood), food and clothes are shared. So the benefits of sponsorship reach many more people than the number of names recorded for administrative purposes. Assuming an average case is a family with five members, a total of 1,915 people are currently being assisted by the project.

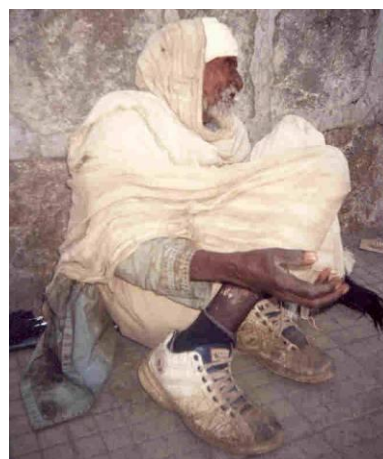
Sponsorship amounts paid out in Ethiopian birr to beneficiaries monthly:

Child (ie, a family)	180 birr (£13, €16, \$20) [†]
Young Adult (in full-time education)	230 birr (£16, €20, \$23) [†]
Elderly Person	150 birr (£10, €15, \$17) [†]

[†] These foreign currency figures are set slightly high to allow for adverse exchange rate fluctuations when sponsorship money is sent to Ethiopia.

Helping the Aged

Having no family to help him, 78-year-old Mr Mesele, a former priest, used to survive by begging until a Dutch lady offered support for a needy old person. Mr Mesele was chosen to receive her monthly sponsorship. He can now pay his rent and buy food and clothes.



elderly beggar who now receives aid

News Snippets

Days to Remember

As a result of our appeal, 15 poor families and elderly folk (beneficiaries of the sponsorship scheme) have received bags of gifts from abroad.



The bags contained practical and fun gifts, giving each recipient a day to remember.

For details about the Days to Remember Appeal, please see Kate's web site.

Play Village

A play shop now stands next to the thatched round Wendy House at the Tara Centre, enabling children to play at buying and selling and to practise their arithmetic. The shop and house are also used for drama rehearsals and performances. **Can you help fund and equip a play clinic?**

Composting

Steve and Roger, tourists from England, gave up one day of their holiday to construct composting bins at the Tara Centre and to give training in their use.



Walter Plowden

In 1860 the British consul in Ethiopia, Walter Plowden, was murdered by tribesmen and buried in Gondar, at Gimjabet Mariam Church. "The tomb was neglected and vandalised," said Kate, "so, as the only Englishwoman permanently resident in Gondar, I've taken responsibility for its upkeep." In recent months the surrounding railings have been repainted and a gardener now tends a flower garden around the grave.

Income 2007-08

Kate's charitable income from donations and sponsorship for her financial year 2007-08 was almost one million Ethiopian birr (that's £62,500, €81,000 or \$101,000). Kate's accounts are available upon request.