May 2020

Gadisa after cleft surgery
Cleft Mission February 2020
On the 17th and 21st of May, Author and Journalist William Skidelsky aired on BBC Radio 4 to present our charity appeal. The appeal focussed on our outreach work and year round cleft programme in Ethiopia.

William has a strong connection to our work, as 8 and a half years ago his eldest son was born with a cleft lip and palate. William describes how although any child will a cleft lip or palate will face physical and emotional challenges, families in countries like the UK have the significant advantage of access to the very best treatment for free.

William presents his story and our work with genuine passion and sincerity.

“We are so thankful to Will and everyone at the BBC who made our appeal possible. A huge amount of work and preparation went into the appeal and we couldn’t be happier with the overwhelming response we have received. Every single kind donation will transform a life.”

- Jackie Riley,
CEO of Project Harar

It is no longer possible to donate via the BBC Radio 4 website, but if you still would like to make a donation, you can do so through our website - www.projectharar.org

Click here to listen to the appeal

Click here to bid on a signed copy of Will’s critically acclaimed novel, Federer and Me, a story of obsession.

Kindly donated by Will Skidelsky to our mid-year silent auction

Click here to browse the auction, all proceeds will go to our current work in Ethiopia, read the rest of the newsletter to find out more
We want to say a huge Thank you to Kufani and her mother Alima, for allowing us to share their story. If you would like to hear more about Kufani’s journey, please watch our latest film about our cleft programme in Ethiopia, Click here.

Kufani and her mother Alima before Kufani’s surgery for her cleft lip.

We thank Abraham, the Programme Officer who identified Kufani and arranged for her and Alima to come to Addis for surgery along with other patients and families from rural areas of the West Haraghe zone.

Project Harar Programme Officers are dedicated in their support of families throughout the whole of their journey to receive treatment and return to their homes.

Abraham, with patients and families from our latest cleft mission in Addis Ababa in February of this year

Kufani and her mother Alima a day after Kufani’s surgery. Alima is very emotional: “I am so happy. I am speechless, I say nothing because I am so happy. You have changed my daughter, I am crying because I am so happy, thank you so much.”

Abraham, with CEO of Project Harar, Jackie Riley
In addition to our year round Cleft Programme, Project Harar run a Complex Surgical Mission once a year. Patients treated on the Complex Mission have complex facial disfigurements which are often life threatening, such as large tumours or a condition called Noma which eats away at the flesh. Patients with complex conditions are identified through the same outreach network as children with cleft lip and palate. Outreach work is a continuous process. During the Complex Mission patients are treated in collaboration with Yekatit 12 Government Hospital in Addis Ababa. The team consists of specialist medics, based at Yekatit and a visiting international team, the majority of whom work within the NHS in the UK.

We met young patient Tirusew on our 2020 Complex Surgical Mission in February this year, she had a large growth on her chin. Tirusew is 13 years old she is from the Amhara region of Ethiopia. Before she came to Addis for Treatment, she would sit inside the house all day, her brothers would bring home some of their school work to show her. Sometimes, she would get to go to the market with her mother, but would cover her face with a scarf.

“I used to go to school, but I was forced to stop going at 4th grade.

I felt pain in my face. But the main reason was that other students were laughing at me.

I felt really happy when I heard the good news that my operation was going ahead.” - Tirusew
Over her time at the centre, Tirusew became so much more confident. Her surgery was very successful, the mass was removed from her chin. The area that was operated on was left swollen after the operation, but this swelling will eventually settle. Tirusew and her family were so happy with the results.

Due to the bullying she had faced in her home village, Tirusew was definitely amongst the shyer patients we met on our 2020 Complex Mission. During the mission Tirusew found a best friend, fellow patient Sifan who was also being treated for a large mass on her face, the two became inseparable.

“I came for treatment and I met Sifan, I love her she is my best friend. Sifan protects me.” - Tirusew

The Project Harar Programme Officer for the Amhara region was able to follow up with Tirusew and her family just a few weeks after she had returned home. The swelling around her chin had gone down and she was excited to return to school soon.

Tirusew was welcomed back into her community with a cultural dancing ceremony.

Sifan and Tirusew pre-operation.
Sifan’s story was featured in April’s newsletter, click here to read.

Photo taken around a month after Tirusew’s surgery in her home village, by her father.
Our work in Ethiopia

Project Harar have been working in Ethiopia since 2001. Identifying young patients who need surgery for a cleft lip and palate or a complex facial disfigurement and helping them to access treatment.

What are we doing now?

Due to the Global Pandemic, Project Harar are currently unable to transport patients from remote areas for treatment. However Project Harar Programme Officers are continuing to use their outreach network to identify young patients who need treatment for a cleft lip and palate or a complex facial disfigurement.

Since the beginning of March, 290 young patients have been identified in rural communities. As soon as it is safe again, Project Harar will be ready to help the children who are waiting, access the specialist treatment that they need. Until this time comes the strong outreach network that has been built in Ethiopia is being utilised in contracting an emergency Covid response programme that will help the marginalised and most vulnerable families that we work with in rural Ethiopia.
The outreach network that has been established in Ethiopia over the years means that Programme Officers have a strong and direct line of communication with health institutions on a regional and national level, from local health clinics to the Federal Ministry of Health.

It is this network that allows Project Harar Programme Officers to distribute awareness creation messaging in rural communities about cleft lip and palate and complex facial disfigurement.

In 2019, 328 Health Extension Workers were trained during integrated refresher training on awareness creation. 130 Health workers were trained in the management of congenital anomaly focusing on cleft and the management of complex cases. A Mother’s support group was also established, and awareness was created to support mothers, this improved understanding and practices in ways of improving their child’s health.
Disseminate Vital Covid Awareness Messaging

Project Harar Programme Officers have been safely visiting household to household, in the rural areas that they work, explaining to the most vulnerable people the threat of the virus and practical steps towards preventing spread.

Programme Officers have also been running Covid awareness seminars with local health extension workers, so that they can diffuse the same messaging in their communities. These communities are some of the most remote in Ethiopia, digital communication means are not universal so word of mouth is best practice.

£25 will keep a Programme Officer and Health Extension Worker on the road for a day.

Distribute Water Barrels and Soap

In the rural areas in which we work, there is no access to running water, water is collected from a communal source in barrels. It costs £7 to provide a family with an additional 25 litre water barrel and bars of soap, so that they have the extra facility to wash their hands in their own home. This is vital to prevent the spread of the virus.

£50 will provide 7 families in a community with a water barrel and soap.

Keep Project Harar Outreach Workers Safe

It is so important to keep outreach workers safe at this time. Social distancing is being practiced. We are providing all outreach workers with PPE, such as disposable gloves, hand sanitizer and N-95 masks. It costs:

£10 to provide outreach workers with the correct PPE so that they can continue their vital work to keep identifying young patients with a cleft lip and palate, or complex facial disfigurement and spread important Covid awareness messaging in the poorest and most remote areas of Ethiopia.

To donate to provide any of these services you can click on the relevant photo, or click here to be taken to the pledge page on our mid-year silent auction.
How can I help?

Share our message

We want news of our work to reach as many people as possible, to help us do so, you can share our newsletter, website and social media posts. There are many great fundraising ideas on our website, why not nominate Project Harar as your monthly charity at your place of work? You could even work towards one of the donation figures on the page above.

Browse our Online Auction or make a pledge!

Project Harar’s mid year auction launched on the 1st June and will run until 5pm on Sunday 14th June.

We have many unique ‘money can’t buy’ prizes and experiences up for offer, perfect for a gift idea or a treat for yourself during lock-down.

Click the link to browse our auction www.projecthararauction.com

If you don’t want an auction prize and wanted to make a pledge instead, you can do so under the ‘make a donation’ tab on the auction homepage, or directly through this link: https://projecthararauction.com/pledge

The editors pick - a feature on our favourite prizes in the online auction

Click on the photos to be taken to the prize

- Pink Ginger Luxurious Three Course Dinner for Six - Pre cooked and delivered to your home in London. A bottle of Tattinger champagne is included for good measure.
- Monthly Gin Subscription - Delivered to your home
- Traditional Ethiopian Bird Ornaments - Beautifully hand crafted, all the way from Addis Ababa, set of 3 also available
- Beautifully Framed ‘The Elephant Man’ Poster - Signed by our late Patron, Sir John Hurt.
- Traditional Ethiopian Coffee Pot and Stand
- Set of 3 Uniquely Designed Ethiopian Baskets - click to view more photos
At the start of our 2020 Complex Surgical Mission, back in February, Project Harar donated a washing machine to the centre we used, pre and post-op for the 35 patients that would be treated over the course of the mission. This washing machine played a very important role during the mission as hygiene was instrumental in stopping the spread of post-op infection in the centre.

It was a very exciting day when we bought the washing machine, the UK team went with the Ethiopian team to a large shopping mall to select it. It took a lot of time, going from shop to shop comparing the best price for each. We finally settled on a ‘manual’ machine, that had a separate manual spinner built in.

Two weeks ago we decided to donate the washing machine to Yekatit 12 Government Hospital in Addis Ababa, which is our partner hospital for our annual Complex Surgical Mission.

This washing machine certainly has been on a journey. It will now be used as part of the Covid prevention strategy at Yekatit 12.

A washing machine is an essential part to our annual Complex Surgical Mission, if you would specifically like to donate a washing machine, click here.
Last, but by no means least, we want to thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter! Project Harar have had another fantastic month but we couldn’t have achieved everything without your support. Thank you in particular to everyone who donated to our BBC Radio 4 Appeal, we are unbelievably grateful. Thank you to all our dedicated trustees and volunteers and everyone who joins us on a Wednesday evening for a virtual quiz!

Until next month,

The Project Harar Team