



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program Country Informational Reports

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Country: ETHIOPIA
Author: Anne Andrade

Program Contact Person: Nancy Cloud (ncloud@ric.edu)



Ethiopia

Language, Culture and Education

Anne Andrade

Population and Location

- Located in eastern Africa, with a tropical climate in lowlands and dry Somali Plateau.
- Population 93,815,992 (July 2012 est.)
- 16% urban, 84% rural
- Most populous landlocked nation and the second-most populous nation on the African Continent.
- 50% living below the poverty line
- Life expectancy 49.0 years
- Two main religions: Ethiopian Orthodox and Muslim.



Languages Spoken

- Oromigna (official regional) 33.8%,
- Amarigna (Amharic) (**official**) 29.3%,
- Somaligna 6.2%,
- Tigrigna (official regional) 5.9%,
- Sidamigna 4%,
- Wolayitigna 2.2%,
- Guaragigna 2%,
- Affarigna 1.7%,
- Hadiyigna 1.7%,
- Gamogna 1.5%,
- Other 11.7%,
- English (official) (major foreign language taught in schools), Arabic (official) (cia.gov)



Customs

- ❖ Ethiopian greetings are formal and courteous, consisting of a handshake with direct eye contact.
- ❖ The handshake is generally much lighter than in Western cultures.
- ❖ Men will wait to see if a woman extends her hand.
- ❖ Greetings are never be rushed. Ethiopians take time to inquire about the person's family, health, job, etc.
- ❖ People are addressed with their honorific title and their first name.
- ❖ Elders should be greeted first.
- ❖ It is customary to bow when introduced to someone who is obviously older or has a more senior position. Children will often be seen doing so.
- ❖ Punctuality is not strictly adhered to although considerable lateness is also unacceptable.

Political Climate

- ❖ Political turmoil both in Ethiopia and surrounding countries, punctuated by bloody coups, uprisings, wide-scale drought over more than 30 years, has led to widespread emigration both to neighboring countries as well as the U.S.
- ❖ Moved towards democracy in 1991, however extreme poverty and drought continue to inhibit the development of private enterprise.
- ❖ Religious tolerance is found between the 2 main religions and religion influences many aspects of life.



Education System in Ethiopia

- ❖ Literacy rates: males (age 15) 56%, Females (age 15) 33%.
- ❖ Primary- Elementary School - ages 5-10, Middle School ages - 11-12, Secondary, High School ages 13- 16. (classbase.com)
- ❖ University Education – extremely competitive.
- ❖ Grading system uses 100 pt. scale with pass/fail =50.
- ❖ 60:1 average teacher-student ratio.
- ❖ Instruction delivered in local language until grade 7 when instruction moves to English.
- ❖ Ethiopia has a national curriculum all schools must follow . (Flaitz, pg. 226)



Educational Issues

- ❖ Education is considered free and compulsory for all, however only about 45-60% of students are enrolled. The government fails to enforce policy.
- ❖ Attendance is difficult as many students needed to work at home to help family survive.
- ❖ Participation higher in the primary grades but falls off drastically in secondary school with only 23% of girls and 30% of boys participating.
- ❖ Schools often lack supplies, desks, even running water or electricity. Students highly value hard-to-get notebooks.
- ❖ AIDS is responsible for loss of teachers and parents, leaving thousands of orphans who are forced to leave school and work to survive.





Teachers

- ❖ Few opportunities for teacher training. Elementary Teachers receive 1 year course, middle school teachers receive a 2 year course and high school teachers receive 3 years of training.
- ❖ Salaries are low and generally lack benefits given other civil servants, including health benefits and vacations.
- ❖ 73% of teachers are male.
- ❖ Materials are scarce as is professional development.
- ❖ Some teachers feel unappreciated by the government.
- ❖ For a first person account of pay issues in Ethiopia now, see

<http://www.ezega.com/news/NewsDetails.aspx?Page=news&NewsID=32>

Students

- ❖ Uniforms are worn in urban areas but can cause a financial strain on rural families.
- ❖ Students often walk many miles to school each day.
- ❖ Urban families value education, sometimes to the extreme, causing stress over achievement for students.
- ❖ Rural students find that illness, harvest times, and lack of support from parents contribute to high dropout rates and difficult attendance records and can impede their progress.
- ❖ Students often copy work into notebooks as they lack textbooks.
- ❖ Students are generally well behaved.



Resettlement in the U.S



- ❖ In the early 1990's Ethiopians emigrated to urban U.S. areas like Los Angeles, Dallas, New York, and Washington D.C.
- ❖ Washington, D.C. with an established social and economic foundation, attracted a majority of Ethiopians in a secondary resettlement.
- ❖ Ethiopians are often unprepared to deal with the reality of being Black in America. They have a complicated relationship with African Americans.
- ❖ For a patriarchal society, the many freedoms afforded women cause friction in marriages in the U.S.

Classroom Implications



- ❖ English is an official language in Ethiopia and is used in the classroom after grade 6, therefore many students will have some familiarity with English.
- ❖ Ethiopia uses different naming practices than in the US. Students in your class may use what appears to be their last name for their first.
- ❖ Refugee families often full need wraparound services including medical and counseling services.

AIDS



- The AIDS epidemic has affected almost every aspect of Ethiopian life leaving millions of orphans in its wake and contributing to the loss of educated workers and qualified teachers. This “Brain Drain” continues to wreak havoc with a country that is struggling to move forward in an ever changing world.

Resources

Books

- Flaitz, J. (2006) *Understanding your Refugee and Immigrant Students*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (slides 4,5,6,7,8, 9,11, 14)

Websites

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/et.html> (slides 4, 5, 6,11)
- http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ethiopia_statistics.html (slides 5, 7)
- http://ethnomed.org/culture/ethiopian/copy_of_ethiopian-cultural-profile (slide 9)
- <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Du-Ha/Ethiopian-Americans.html> (slide 13)
- <http://www.ezega.com/news/NewsDetails.aspx?Page=news&NewsID=3256> (slide 7)
- <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/ethiopia.html> (slide 10)
- <http://www.classbase.com/Countries/Ethiopia/Grading-System> (slide 8)
- <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/docs/RefugeeGuideFinal9-10.pdf> (slide 13)

Images

- [Untitled stylized flag of Ethiopia]. Retrieved on Sept. 10, 2012, from: <https://encrypted-tbn2.google.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQDOiPr2psfbOSyxnbdBsOvPXgMc-OSMZMI44Gm7jsjQKs1S5xExg> (slide 3)
- [Untitled map of Ethiopia]. Retrieved on Sept. 10, 2012, from: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/images/etmap.jpg> (slide 4)
- [Untitled photograph of village schoolchildren]. Retrieved on Sept 12, 2012, from: <https://encrypted-tbn1.google.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSqf768tzzKIIWPt9RuMRtYsceILT5VrXSQYUoN4iUEyu-Oilrg0w> (slide 5)
- Heavens, A (Photographer). (2009). *Oromiya Region, Ethiopia*. [photograph], Retrieved on Sept 14, 2012, from: http://www.google.com/imgres?hl=en&client=firefox-a&hs=bqv&sa=X&pwst=1&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&biw=1366&bih=664&tbnm=isch&prmd=imvns&tbnid=HIFZQX7_3THI3M:&imgrefurl=http://sahelblog.wordpress.com/tag/jos/&docid=cHGkTeWcx5H3MM&imgurl=http://sahelblog.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/oromiya.jpg&w=3008&h=2000&ei=oNFmUM6pCYSF0QG8p4CoAw&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=604&vpy=35&dur=3243&hovh=183&hovw=275&tx=166&ty=110&sig=103412696198758833902&page=1&tbnh=145&tbnw=186&start=0&ndsp=18&ved=1t:429,r:8,s:0,i:99 (slide 7)
- [Untitled photograph of an Ethiopian demonstration]. Retrieved on Sept 10, 2012, from : https://encrypted-tbn2.google.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTeou0-aVQNmZ_Ji-oizE710ixmgYakcvmjs1kQPgkvB9oZv9jjdQ (slide 7)
- [Untitled photograph of Ethiopian teacher and students]. Retrieved on Sept 26, 2012, from: https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTJTC-mQ_oVDrAs07d-sqX4Jkbwnylxuj5133fXF9JiXlw0DoUZ_A (slide 8)
- [Untitled photograph of Ethiopian students]. Retrieved on Sept 12, 2012, from: http://www.sos-schools.org/images/Schoolsimages/harrar_ethiopia_primary_school_children.jpg/image_preview (slide 9)

Images Cont.

- [Untitled photograph of an Ethiopian teacher working with a student]. Retrieved on Sept, 14, 2012, from: <http://jewishmiami.org/news/federation/ethiopian.jpg> (slide 10)
- {Untitled photograph of h young students in uniform}. Retrieved on Sept 12, 2012, from: <http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-EHP0aHMUL6o/TehaxlDk1uI/AAAAAAAAAH78/0MC64vjGhS4/s1600/KH+Uniforms+1+May+2011.jpg> (slide 11)
- [Ethiopian girl writing at a black board]. Retrieved on Sept. 26, 2012, from: https://encrypted-tbn3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQSNUOAA0fEj-Blo6qr9hGaWCfN7-2wXwl5ahfpvc-l1z4k_kPt0w (slide 11)
- [Untitled photograph of a D.C. restaurant sign]. Retrieved on Sept. 10, 2012, from: https://encrypted-tbn3.google.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQE1bsb1_3LrSQb89lACjUceyiQqwCSqDA-hoTkWKtC58SFTtWKkQ (slide 12)
- [Untitled Photograph of a cap]. Retrieved on Sept. 26, 2012, from: https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTbT-Mpbu_dVsf-BY6yLNOvKrDPpG22BZ0Noi7ccau5f62z_ylFcQ (slide 12)
- [Untitled Photograph of Ethiopian demonstrators in D.C.]. Retrieved on Sept. 15, 2012, from: <https://encrypted-tbn1.google.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRmzdn4M6wqz9llwIJldY4TPIEF4reqz2nJJsXUZp4YIS9WTsoTVQ> (slide 13)
- [Ethiopian children and the ravages of AIDS]. Retrieved on Sept. 26, 2012, from: <http://alumnionline.aup.edu/view.image?id=796> (slide 14)

M.Ed. in TESL Program
Nancy Cloud, Director
Educational Studies Department
Rhode Island College, HBS 206 #5
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
Phone (401) 456-8789
Fax (401) 456-8284
ncloud@ric.edu

The M.Ed. in TESL Program at Rhode Island College
is Nationally Recognized by TESOL and NCATE



REACH
INSPIRE
CONNECT