

## ETHICA'S ETHIOPIA TRANSPARENCY SURVEY

SURVEY FOR U.S. ADOPTION SERVICE PROVIDERS PLACING CHILDREN FROM ETHIOPIA

*Response from America World Adoption Association*

**Agency Name:** America World Adoption Association

**Website:** awaa.org

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

***What efforts does your agency employ to ensure ethical adoptions in Ethiopia?***

- 1.America World follows all laws of the Ethiopian and US governments.
- 2.America World or any affiliated organizations do not have or operate an orphanage in Ethiopia (or any other country).
- 3.America World only works with licensed orphanages, respected within their region, who are actively involved in orphan and family care projects – orphanages who are not just devoted to placing children for inter-country adoption.
- 4.America World only accepts referrals of children who have paperwork approved by the regional Ethiopian authorities.
- 5.America World closely inspects paperwork of all children who are referred to us and completes background investigations.
- 6.America World has project agreements with our partner orphanages to support family and community based initiatives.
- 7.America World never provides support or donations to an orphanage based upon the number of children referred or on a per child basis.
- 8.America World works to place all eligible children referred to us by our partner orphanages. This includes children ages infant – 15 years old, siblings, healthy and special needs children, with a focus on placing HIV positive children.

***How long has your agency operated in Ethiopia? In what year is your license up for renewal?***

America World was licensed in Ethiopia in May 2006 and began working in Ethiopia after we received our license. America World was re-licensed in December 2009. Our next license renewal will be in December 2012.

***Does your agency partner with any US agency that is not currently licensed to process adoptions in Ethiopia?***

No

***How many Ethiopian adoptions has your agency completed for the years 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009?***

2006 – 0

2007 – 6

2008 – 71

2009 - 174

***How many waiting families, approximately, are currently in your program?***

Approximately 130 families

**STAFF IN ETHIOPIA**

***What is the address of your agency's office(s) in Ethiopia?***

America World Ethiopia Office  
Kirkos Sub City. Kebele 02/03 House # 228  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

***What are the names of your in country representatives?***

Tigist Duni Zenaye – Ethiopia Program Director

***Would you mind sharing pictures of your in country representatives?***



***Are your Ethiopian offices managed and run by your US office? If not, who runs them? Please explain.***

Yes

***What are the names of your agency's care centers/transitional homes? In what areas of the country are they located?***

America World Transitional Home 1  
Kirkos Sub City. Kebele 02/03 House # 228  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

America World Transitional Home 2  
Kirkos Sub Sity. Kebele 02/03 House #249  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

***Please give the number of people on staff at each center and whether they are full- or part-time, along with the average number of children cared for at any one time within the centers.***

Transitional Home #1: All care givers are full time. There are on average 45 children ages 0 – 2 years old at any given time. There are 25 total care givers and support staff.

Transitional Home #2: All care givers are full time. There are on average 35 children ages 2+ – 15 years old at any given time. This includes 20 school age children (ages 4 to 15) and 15 toddlers and preschoolers (2+ to 4 years). There are 12 care givers and support staff.

Our Transitional Home support staff includes home directors, 7 nurses, 2 part time doctors, a psychologist, 2 teachers, cooks, janitors, and guards.

***From what areas (zone or district) of the country do you receive children available for adoption? Do you have satellite offices there? If so, what are the addresses (PO Box)? Please give the name(s) of the person in charge of each satellite office and list the number of people on staff at each.***

America World receives referrals from Amhara region, Addis Ababa, Oromia region & Southern Region (Wolieta, Kembata, Awassa, Sidama , Benchi Magi, Hossana zones).

No, we do not have satellite offices in any region of Ethiopia.

***Do you use freelance social workers or recruiters in Ethiopia?***

No

***Please list agency programs in any other African countries and briefly describe.***

America World has a program to assist families to adopt from Rwanda.

#### ORPHANAGES/FOSTER HOMES/NGOS

***With which orphanages/foster homes/NGOs do you work? Does your agency have an exclusive contract with these orphanages/foster homes/NGOs? Does your agency donate money to assist these orphanages/foster homes/NGOs? Please note whether the orphanages/foster homes/NGOs are state run or private and in which city they are located, along with the director's name.***

America World does not have an exclusive contract with any orphanages/foster homes/NGOs. America World provides humanitarian donations and funds to our partner orphanages to support their work and projects. Donations are never based or given on a per referral or number of referrals basis. America World currently partners with the following private orphanages:

1. Kids Care

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Director: Dr. Zegeye Yegezu

3. Kingdom Vision International

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Director: Eyob Kolcha

2. Shalom

Awassa, Ethiopia

Director: Israel Batiso

America World has previously worked with Gelgela Integrated Orphans and Destitute Family Support Association under director Zewditu Yahu and Initiative Ethiopia under director Arega Melaku.

***Please list any other facilities/organizations from which you are referred children available for adoption and include the name of the facility's director.***

America World has received a few referrals from government orphanages under Addis Ababa Women's Affairs Bureau with director Zaid Tesfaye.

***What kind of oversight does your agency provide in orphanages/foster homes/NGOs to ensure that they are acting ethically and children are being kept safe and healthy?***

America World conducts regular visits of our partner orphanages and reviews work and care. America World staff assists in educational programs for orphanage staff. We review all children's documents thoroughly and complete background checks and investigations. Birth parents are interviewed and communicated with during the adoption process.

***At what point in the adoption process are children moved from orphanages/foster homes/NGOs to your agency's care center?***

America World is contacted once a child has paperwork approved by regional authorities. America World reviews dossier ready prospective adoptive families for potential matches. America World and the Orphanage Director then discuss the best time for the child to transition to the America World Transitional Home.

#### BACKGROUND OF CHILDREN FOR ADOPTION

***How does your agency assess the adoptability of each child? Please describe what sort of investigation is done. Are adoptive families permitted to pursue their own investigation of their referred child's background if they so choose?***

America World thoroughly reviews each child's paperwork. We send field investigators to the child's birth place to conduct an investigation and interview birth parent/family. Families are welcome to pursue their own investigation if they so choose or desire.

***In what way, if any, does your agency assist prospective birth mothers with the relinquishment process? Are prospective birth mothers counseled as to options other than adoption? Do you accept children directly into your care from relinquishing mothers?***

America World does not interact with birth mothers in any way during the relinquishment process and does not accept children directly into our care from relinquishing mothers. Our orphanage partners agree to provide birth mothers with thorough counseling and alternative options. Counseling information is discussed during investigations and interviews with birth families. America World's psychologist is available to birth parent/family if any additional questions are expressed during the adoption process.

***What percentage of children is available for adoption as a result of relinquishment vs. abandonment?***

Roughly 70%

#### DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

***Do you provide medical information, social report, photos and video upon referral? What specific tests are run on children being referred (please specify type of test run)?***

Yes, we provide medical reports, social/biographical information and photos. We also send photo, medical and overall updates of the child(ren) every month after referral until an adoptive family is united with their child. Families are welcome to request additional medical consultations with a doctor of their choice at any time.

General blood work

-WBC count

-RBC count

-Hemoglobin levels

-Hematocrit

-Platelet count

Stool Examination

Hep B antigen test & antibody test

Hep C antibody test

HIV Elisa test

HIV DNA PCR as needed/requested

Chest X-ray to screen for TB

Bone X-ray for age as needed/requested

Rapid Plasma Reagin (Syphilis)

General Physical Exam

Developmental Assessment

***Do you provide copies of your contract to prospective clients upon request and without charge?***

Yes

***Does your contract contain any gag clause? If so, why?***

No

***Do you provide clients with a copy of Ethiopia law pertaining to adoption and adoption agencies?***

Yes when requested by a family

#### CONTACT WITH BIRTH FAMILY

***Does your agency have any policy regarding contact between adoptive families and birth families either pre- or post-adoption?***

America World strongly supports meetings between adoptive families and birth families. Adoptive families indicate if they would like to schedule a birth family meeting once they pass court. America World representatives coordinate the meeting between adoptive families and birth families during their time in Ethiopia. Adoptive families and birth families are informed that the exchange of gifts, money or materials is strictly prohibited. The exchange of photos and letters are the only items that are permitted. Correspondence post adoption between birth families and adoptive families can be processed through America World once families return home.

***When adoptive families travel to Ethiopia to complete the adoption process, are adoptive families and children able to meet birth family?***

Yes

***Is birth family contact information shared with adoptive parents?***

No, but America World is happy to contact or share letters/photo or coordinate calls from a birth or adoptive family on behalf of either party's request at any time.

***Are adoptive families permitted to independently tape birth family meetings or have an independent translator available?***

Yes

#### FEES AND DONATIONS FOR ADOPTION

***Does your agency directly accept tax deductible donations on behalf of a specific adoptive family?  
Does your agency partner with or is it affiliated with any organization that accepts tax deductible donations on behalf of a specific adoptive family?***

No; however, America World offers an assistance program for families. Contributions become part of a fund used to assist America World families with their adoption expenses. America World retains discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.

***What fees charged to clients go directly to Ethiopia? How are these fees used in Ethiopia (care centers, orphanage support, etc)?***

America World's International program fee. This fee is used for the prospective adoptive family's adoption process (court, translation, authentication etc), referral medicals, care for child/Transitional Home expenses and humanitarian aid/orphanage support.

***Are adoptive families charged periodic fees for maintenance for the child?***

No

***Do you advise prospective adoptive families about tipping individuals in Ethiopia such as nannies and lawyers? If so, what do you advise?***

Tipping is strictly prohibited to any America World staff or other associated party (nannies, lawyers, representatives, travel guides, etc). Families are welcome to tip outside travel service providers such as hotel staff or drivers as they desire or see fit.

#### HUMANITARIAN AID

***What humanitarian projects does your agency participate in? Are these programs run through a separate organization or managed directly by your agency?***

America World has humanitarian projects and participates in projects run by our partner orphanages. America World projects include sponsorship of children with HIV and their families, sponsorship of students from poor families, micro finance program for poor mothers, and domestic adoption awareness. We have partnered with Kids Care in a school building project and with Kingdom Vision International on a Family Empowerment Project. America World has also worked in support of the Institute for Orphan Advocacy for an Ethiopian Permanency Center and third party referral system.

***How much money does your agency dedicate to humanitarian aid in Ethiopia per year?***

Roughly \$225,000 to \$250,000

***How are your adoption and child service projects publicized in rural areas?***

Adoption with America World is not publicized in rural areas, or any areas. Our projects are not publicized to individuals but are shared with local government officials to pass on referrals of families in need.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

***Is there any other information your agency wishes to share about its programs in Ethiopia?***

America World operates in Ethiopia to serve children in need. We believe in and support permanency for all children and see services to children on a spectrum from programs to support children living with

their birth parents on one end of the spectrum to being adopted internationally on the other end. We believe all children deserve a family and should not grow up in institutional care.