

ETHICA'S ETHIOPIA TRANSPARENCY SURVEY

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

Response from Children's Home Society and Family Services

Agency Name Children's Home Society and Family Services

Website <http://www.chsfs.org/>

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

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

Scrutinize children's paperwork upon receipt of potential referrals

Staff of our in-country representative produce background DVD's on each child as part of the background investigation process

Many of DVDs are reviewed by CHSFS staff from the US during visits to Ethiopia for best practices and ethical work

CHSFS staff from the US provide each of following to the staff of our in-country representative approximately three times per year: social work staff training and monitoring visits, and administrative and program staff monitoring visits

Annual budgeting and review of monthly expenses by CHSFS in the US

Annual financial audit of our in-country representative in Ethiopia

CHSFS solicits client feedback on the program and takes any concerns from past adoptive or current adoptive clients seriously

Although Ethiopia is not a Hague country, CHSFS uses Hague standards of adoption practice in working with our in-country representative and care center collaborators

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

CHSFS has been licensed as a non-governmental organization (NGO) working through an in-country representative in Ethiopia since fall 2003. We were relicensed in November 2009 and our license is valid through November 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 – 205

2007 – 306

2008 – 276

2009 – 230

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

Approximately 400.

STAFF IN ETHIOPIA:

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

Our in-country representative's address is:

Nifas Silk Lafto, Sub City, Kebele 3

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

What are the names of your in country representatives?

In-country - Asnake Amanuel.

In-country representative - Abraham Amanuel.

Would you mind sharing a picture of your in country representative?

Abraham Amanuel, Asnake Amanuel



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

CHSFS has an NGO license which allows it to provide adoption services and humanitarian aid through retaining the services of two independent contractors, Asnake Amanuel and Abraham Amanuel. CHSFS' representatives subcontract other individuals to perform specific services such as finance, administration, humanitarian aid project management, social work, and journalists for child background investigations.

What are the names of your agency's care centers/transitional homes? In what areas of the country are they located (zone or region) and what are the addresses (PO Box)?

Not applicable.

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.

Non-applicable.

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)?

CHSFS through its in-country representatives has predominately worked with orphanages/care centers in the Hosanna area of the Southern Region. A new relationship with an orphanage in Nazaret was started in 2009.

Neither CHSFS nor its in-country representatives operate a satellite office in Hosanna or Nazaret.

Please give the name(s) of the person in charge of each satellite office and list the number of people on staff at each.

Non-applicable

Do you use freelance social workers or recruiters in Ethiopia?

No.

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

We do not have other African programs at this time.

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.

Neither CHSFS nor its in-country representatives have any exclusive arrangements with any orphanages/care centers in Ethiopia. We understand that Ethiopian law requires an orphanage to work with more than one adoption service provider.

Through client fees, a set monthly amount of support is provided to each orphanage/care center. We understand that Ethiopian law requires adoption service providers to sign Memorandums of Understanding with each orphanage/care center that it collaborates with and with local government authorities in that region.

CHSFS through its in-country representatives currently works with Mussie orphanage in Hosanna in the Southern region. It is a private orphanage that is regionally licensed.

CHSFS through its in-country representatives works with Betel orphanage in Nazaret in Oromia. It is a private orphanage that is regionally licensed.

CHSFS through its in-country representatives works with Help for the Needy in Addis Ababa. It is a private orphanage that is federally licensed.

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

CHSFS authorized our in-country representative to sign a memorandum of understanding with AHOPE to serve HIV+ Children.

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?

Scrutinize children's paperwork upon receipt of potential referrals

CHSFS staff from the US provide each of following to the staff of our in-country representative approximately three times per year: social work staff training and monitoring visits, and administrative and program staff monitoring visits

CHSFS solicits client feedback on the program and takes any concerns from past adoptive or current adoptive clients seriously

CHSFS has a unique partnership with the University of Minnesota, Department of Medicine. Every year the University sends residents to train at a clinic in Addis Ababa. During their time in Ethiopia, residents spend time at the orphanages/care centers with whom we collaborate and the children in care. These physicians frequently give CHSFS and our in-country representatives feedback about standards of care and ways to help children thrive.

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

When children have completed their court process, our in-country representative solicits permission from government officials to have the children moved from the regionally licensed orphanage (Mussie or Betel) to the federally licensed orphanage (Help for the Needy).

On occasion when a child is very medically fragile, the in-country representative of CHSFS will solicit and typically receive permission from local authorities to transfer the child to Help for the Needy in Addis Ababa so the child has access to highly quality medical care if needed.

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?

Since children are relinquished through the government to an orphanage, the government has the first determination about if a child is eligible for inter-country adoption.

Then the social workers and media journalists of our in-country representative conduct a thorough investigation of the details leading up to the child's relinquishment by contacting the birth mother/father. This documentary investigation is videotaped. It forms part of the investigation process and serves as part of the child's background DVD which is given to the adoptive parents.

CHSFS does not permit its adoptive families to pursue their own investigations out of respect for birth families. If the adoptive parents would like additional information after placement, the post adoption services department of CHSFS can facilitate.

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?

CHSFS through its in-country representatives only works with orphanages/care centers that offer birth parent counseling on more than one occasion. Birth parents who want to relinquish a child must go through local authorities and the child(ren) are relinquished to the orphanage (not to CHSFS or its in-county representatives). Neither CHSFS nor its in-country representatives assist with relinquishments in any way.

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

In 2009, approximately 85% of the children placed for inter-country adoption in Ethiopia through the CHSFS program were relinquished and 15% were abandoned.

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, through our in-country representative (see below).

Laboratory tests include:

HIV PCR DNA test for all children 18 months and younger and all children whose birthmother is known to be HIV+.

HIV ELISA test for all

Hepatitis B test for all

Venereal disease test for all (includes Syphilis)

Full blood panel for all

And more

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?

CHSFS summarizes the legal process.

CONTACT WITH BIRTH FAMILY:

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

The CHSFS policy for all adoptions is that birth family contact should be mediated through the agency. This is in line with the Joint Council on International Children's Services Standards of Practice for Ethiopia and the US Embassy in Addis Ababa. CHSFS has a comprehensive post adoption services department in the US.

Prior to the adoption, CHSFS through its in-country representatives and in conjunction with the local orphanage/care center facilitates a birth family meeting.

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.

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

CHSFS through its in-country representatives will begin audio recording of birth family meetings starting in spring/summer 2010.

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?***

CHSFS does not solicit charitable donations from families in process. Unsolicited gifts from clients are kept anonymous so as not to influence the adoption process. Once an adoption is finalized, former clients can give to the agency if they chose.

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

85% of the country fee is sent to our in-country representative in Ethiopia. The Ethiopia country program fee includes expenses related to child's care in birth country, required government documents (child's passport, child's visa, child's visa medical exam), legal fees, creation of child's "My Story" and "Birth History" DVDs and Lifebook, program development, humanitarian aid, and Ethiopia staff salaries of our in-country representative. Travel within Ethiopia and accommodations, including 7 nights lodging and family-style meals at the guest house in Addis Ababa for two adults and child(ren) being adopted, and bus transportation by staff for required group activities and appointments.

Are adoptive families charged periodic fees for maintenance of 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?

CHSFS and its in-country representatives strongly discourage tipping anyone directly related to the adoption process or the care of the children. Collaborating orphanages are expected to consider tipping by adoptive parents a serious matter.

The guesthouse where adoptive families stay has one box for tips. These tips would be for housekeeping staff, cooks and drivers if an adoptive family chooses to do so.

HUMANITARIAN AID

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

CHSFS' in-country representatives have established several humanitarian aid projects. These include:

3 schools provide education for over 1,000 Ethiopian children in Addis Ababa, Hossana and Ottoro.

Clean water access and sanitary latrines at all school sites

Electrification of Ottoro village

Meal program at Hossana school providing 2 meals a day

Family Development Program which provides financial education, savings co-ops and small business development for individuals and families in rural Ethiopia to promote self-sufficiency

Tseway convention center in Addis Ababa which is utilized for youth programming and as an income generator for school costs

Sipara Mother and Child Health Center in Addis Ababa that provides sliding scale fee based in and out-patient services for at-risk urban population

Partnership with AHOPE Ethiopia's community outreach/child development center through a CHSFS sponsorship program targeted at children with HIV living with sole parent or guardian in Addis Ababa. Project provides education, nutrition, medical care and psycho-social support.

Ambulance provision for community in rural Ethiopia

Provision of optical services including vision screening and eye glass distribution in Hossana area

Intermittent meal program for street children in Addis Ababa

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

CHSFS has raised and sent over \$320,000 in the past four years to Ethiopia for humanitarian aid projects in addition to a portion of client fees.

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

Neither CHSFS nor its in-country representative publicizes adoption in rural areas. To our knowledge, orphanages, with whom we collaborate through our in-country representatives, do not actively promote their services to vulnerable families. Families looking to making an adoption plan may know of the orphanage/care center or may be referred to the orphanage/care center by local authorities as part of their relinquishment process.

CHSFS and its in-country representatives develop humanitarian aid projects in collaboration with communities and with the approval of local government authorities. There is Ethiopian media coverage of the humanitarian aid projects from time to time.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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