



MANCHESTER  
YOUNG LIVES

# Expedition to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

With Out of the Box and Manchester Young Lives

5th - 13th May 2018



**In Spring 2018, Out of the Box (OTB) and Manchester Young Lives (MYL) led an eight day expedition to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. The trip was designed to encourage cross-cultural dialogue, youth-led activities, collaborative working and partnership building.**

The expedition was jointly led by OTB's Barney Francis and Sally Duncan, with MYL's Zara Manoehoetoe. The project facilitated valued voluntary work in Ethiopia, whilst offering a once in a lifetime opportunity to five young people living in inner-city Manchester.

The trip was attended by 4 students enrolled on MYL's Study Programme and one of MYL's Play Worker Apprentices. Throughout their stay, these young people became immersed in Ethiopia's rich culture, whilst taking part in numerous social action activities.





MANCHESTER  
YOUNG LIVES

## An Expedition with an Emphasis on Youth Participation

Youth Participation was central to the week's activities, and the young people took the lead on all decision-making processes. They were responsible for setting the overall budget, and nominating themselves to manage expenditure. They also participated in an activity planning session, where the itinerary for the week was expertly designed.

During the expedition, the group stayed in the Taitu Hotel, which was built for Queen Taitu in 1898. This choice of location allowed the young people to be immersed in Ethiopian art, architecture and tradition in everyday, as they volunteered to promote the importance of play to the wider community.

### Playground Maintenance at Balderas Condominium

As part of their social action work, the young people carried out basic maintenance work on the Balderas and Yetesfa Mesk Adventure Playgrounds, built by OTB in 2016-17. After locally sourcing resources they got to work with landscape gardening, painting and repairs to structures. They were not deterred by the heat, working alongside local volunteers for around 4 hours each day. The changes and improvements made to each site were highly rewarding and instantaneous.

### Play Sessions at Yetesfa Mesk Day Care Centre

The young people planned and delivered play sessions at Yetesfa Mesk, alongside the day-care provision staff who are responsible for the care and feeding of the children, as well as providing early-years play and learning. Each morning, the staff and young people shared ideas for future sessions, whilst over-seeing free-play activities. In the afternoon, the young people led and participated in additional activities, including dance and music lessons..

## Cultural Activities

Over the course of the week, the group researched and selected a number of cultural activities to visit and attend. They chose to pay a visit to the Ethiopian National Museum, housing many of Ethiopia's finest artistic treasures and local archaeological finds. On their last night they went to Fendika, a dance and music house, to experience contemporary Ethiopian Jazz and dance first-hand.

They took as many opportunities as they could to sample the local cuisine, as well as experimenting with the globally diverse selection of foods made available by local cafes and restaurants. A favourite among the young people was the local Ethiopian juices, and many quickly got a taste for fresh Ethiopian Coffee (buna), after participating in a coffee ceremony with staff and parents/carers at Yetesfa Mesk.

**One of the most meaningful experiences offered by the expedition, was the opportunity to interact with those living, working and studying in Addis, speaking in-depth to the teachers and staff at the centres about play methods and youth provision. The hope is to repeat this project next year, expanding the group to 8-10 attendees, so that more young people have the opportunity to work and explore within Ethiopia's unique culture.**