



The road to Addis Ababa.....Ethiopia,

even though a picture is worth a thousand words it is not a substitute for experiencing actual visual sights, sounds, smell and the feeling of being there.



Living outside next to the hospital

Our journey to Ethiopia started when Dr. Solazzi, the President of SAO (Seattle Anesthesiology Outreach) was explaining how difficult it was for the SAO group of volunteer doctors from Swedish Medical Hospital to perform surgery without proper plumbing facilities in Ethiopia. Dr. Solazzi realized that the hospital's plumbing was critical for hygienic and safe operating conditions, and mentioned to one of his assistants, Susan Lockhart, that he wanted to try and find some Plumbers to assist their team on their next visit. Susan contacted her cousin Jim Lockhart, who is a member of the Plumbers/Pipefitters Union Local #32 for help. Jim wanted to go himself, but couldn't at that time, so he contacted Plumbers Without Borders, as he was aware of Local #32's support for PWB's mission.



PWB committed to accompany Dr. Solazzi and this amazing group of SAO volunteer doctors, nurses, and related medical professionals on their November 2013 trip. PWB's objective in this initial phase was to assess the existing plumbing

infrastructure and advance the dialogue with local hospital personnel and tradespeople to develop a path forward. While there, SAO & PWB also wanted to perform the site survey in preparation for a Kidney Dialysis clinic in partnership with the Kidney Failure Dialysis Association and the Zewditu Hospital in Addis Ababa. Now that you know the scope here are the details.....



SAO volunteer doctors



Operating during power outages is common

SAO Doctors and staff were already hard at work performing surgeries and conducting Medical training seminars with the resident doctors for 2 weeks prior to PWB volunteers arriving.

Fred Volkers and I, along with Isa Abdul Salaam (the Seattle-based Dialysis Technician), and Alex Alemayehu (KFDA Administrator & our interpreter) were afforded access to inspect the 4 very limited and expensive dialysis clinics in the Addis Ababa area. Although definitive statistical data is limited, estimates of 6 or more people die every month in the Addis Ababa area due to lack of Dialysis treatment, a staggering statistic by any measure. Visually this was very disturbing to see up close and real, the absolute life and death critical need for accessible and affordable Dialysis.

Joint discussions ensued with the Zewditu Hospital Director, hospital staff, Dr. Solazzi, KFDA personnel and PWB volunteers to start the process of defining how to accomplish this monumental task. The proposed KFDA clinic would be housed in a building soon to be vacated by existing hospital personnel as they were moving to a newly built larger building recently dedicated by the USAid/CDC. PWB measured the site, inspected the building and prepared initial draft plans for location of 2-3 cargo containers that would house the ultra-purification equipment required, as well as retrofitting the building properly to perform as a 24hr/7day hygienic Kidney Dialysis clinic. This necessitates procuring new or reconditioned equipment and securely mounting it in the containers for shipment to Addis Ababa.



R/O Dialysis Filtration Equipment

This all seemed pretty insurmountable at this early stage of discussions... Thankfully, Fred Volkers' dedication and years of relationship building came through. Fred secured a generous contribution from Stirrett Johnsen Mechanical Contractors in Seattle, who were involved in upgrading an existing water filtration system in Seattle, and donated filtration equipment in working order to the KFDA project, under the auspices of SAO, who will coordinate the process of upgrading the filters, pumps and tanks for the proposed clinic.

***PWB, SAO, KFDA, and Zewditu Hospital all express their sincerest gratitude to Stirrett Johnsen for their generous contribution and desire to help dialysis patients in desperate need.***

While in Addis Ababa, PWB also provided technical advice for the Kidney Dialysis unit at St. Paul's hospital as well as two other private clinics in Addis Ababa. PWB volunteers noticed there were cross connections from the Dialysis machines and the respective drains and provided detailed explanations & procedures on the importance of eliminating the possibilities of cross-contamination. Their staff was already making the necessary corrections before we left the facility.

Dr. Solazzi and medical staff took Dom & Fred to the Operating Rooms Pre-Op washing area of Zewditu Hospital where there were 4 old and inoperable sensor type existing faucets, forcing the resident doctors to have the nurses pour water from a bucket to wash their hands before surgery. This was something Dom & Fred could and did fix by purchasing and installing four new faucets the doctors could turn on and off hands-free after washing for pre-op. This installation was done while the doctors were performing an operation we witnessed thru a window in pre-op area. Dr. Solazzi received an email immediately upon our arrival back in the US from the resident doctors at Zewditu Hospital stating: his "plumbers" made a major difference in providing sanitary conditions for them to perform their difficult surgeries, and they welcomed us to return anytime to maybe get hot water running the next time... **these were single valve cold water faucets that we installed.**



Fred Volkers in the Pre-Op Washing area

Sounds simple and almost insignificant to us here in the USA, but in Ethiopia the conditions are considerably less conducive to health and hygiene, and the "Supply House" does not exist as we know it.

Here in the USA this would not be tolerated, we demand operating areas to be hygienic and safe. This is often not the case in developing countries, where funding, equipment and/or expertise are not available. The maintenance crew did a phenomenal job keeping this hospital running with basic hand tools, ingenuity and perseverance.....nothing was thrown away and everything that could be repurposed, was indeed put to use.



While at the 50 year-old, government-run Black Lion Hospital, also the largest hospital in Ethiopia, Dr. Solazzi introduced us to the operating room staff and we were shown the OR, pre-op, boiler room, laundry and several other areas of the hospital. Imagine a hospital built in the early 60's and virtually nothing has been upgraded or repair...this is the Black Lion Hospital present day. The doctors and staff do a phenomenal job with very limited resources. Black Lion is presently preparing for a major upgrade but Ethiopians will tell you that the government is long on promises but short on delivery.

Experiencing this first hand provides an absolute appreciation for the life-giving aspects of a safe and hygienic plumbing and waste system.... **"especially in a hospital"** ...which is where people go for **healing!**

***Please help us save lives by making a donation now.***

**Our current fundraising goals are directed toward the containerized construction, delivery and implementation of the Kidney Dialysis project for the Ethiopian Kidney Failure Dialysis Association and their grateful patients.**



<http://www.plumberswithoutborders.org>



<http://www.seattleao.org>

***Thank you!***

***Domenico DiGregorio  
Plumbers Without Borders  
President/Volunteer***