

We were invited by Operation Smile to join the mission they were going to have for 10 days in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. On this mission we were together with about 40 professional health care workers, 7 plastic surgeons included, from all over the world. We feel honored to have been a part of such an amazing team.

This was truly a lifetime experience. Despite many challenges (screening and two days of surgery without cargo, a high regard for safety, stomach problems etc), it was through teamwork that we were able to make the mission a success. It is once and for all proven that the most important ingredients of a strong team and excellent work are creativity, flexibility, humour and a positive attitude.

In the end, during this mission, we were able to transform the lives of 71 children through surgery. However, the measure of our success cannot be fully expressed in numerical form. You

Operation Smile – Mission Ethiopia

can only imagine how much this operation means to the patients. Hopefully these children will now be accepted in society, and some children will be able to return to school, where they before got rejected because of their look. Without the help from Johnson & Johnson, these children's smiles would not be possible!

Elin Johansson, DePuy and Stig Lea, ETHICON



Tiftu came with his mother. He is a shy and under-nourished boy from the countryside and has travelled for hours, through fields and on dirty roads from their little village. Tiftu is born with a cleft lip and now they are hoping for a transformation that can change his life. Tiftu waits his turn to begin the physical examination and screening process.



A chilly morning at 6.30 a.m., weary from days of travel, parents anxiously wait in the University hospital waiting hall to tell their story to the team of doctors. The parents have brought their children, some by bus for several days, some by foot, to be screened for potential surgery.

The children are shy. Many have been outcast and ostracized. Some have cleft lips, cleft palates or both, but each of them has lived with pain, shame and embarrassment. Now they dare to hope for what most of us take for granted: the chance to live a normal life, the chance to be healed, the chance to smile.



Physical examination and screening.



Tiftu is undergoing a cleft lip surgery which will take about one hour. Elin is watching plastic surgeon Bart's fantastic work.



OR-room, two beds in each room.



Saron before he is prepared for surgery.



Stig has followed Saron to the post-op room.



Melissen and Bart, two happy plastic surgeons.



Amran before and after the successful surgery.



Kedere before and after surgery. 15 year old Kedere from Somalia travelled for two days to get to Addis Ababa to get a cleft lip and palate surgery. Luggage: a bottle of water.



Tiftu and his mother at recovery. She is very happy and emotional while sitting on his bed.



Tiftu and his mother at pre-op waiting to be called to the playroom and thereafter operating theatre.



Pictures are taken as part of Kedere's medical records.



A child life specialist will prepare Tiftu and his mother for what will happen during and after surgery. Meanwhile Elin is playing with Tiftu in the playroom right before he is going to surgery.

Organization Operation Smile

More than 200 000 children are born with a severe cleft condition each year. The children are often unable to eat, speak, socialize or smile. In some places these children are shunned and rejected. And in too many cases, their parents can't afford to give them the surgeries needed to live a normal life.

That is where Operation Smile comes in. Since 1982 Operation Smile has provided free surgeries to children around the world. With a presence in over 50 countries, Operation Smile is able to heal children's smiles and bringing hope for a better future.

Thanks to voluntary workers and supporters like Johnson & Johnson, Operation Smile heals thousands of children every year and, today, more than 145 000 girls and boys have a new chance at a new life.

Operation Smile has about 100 missions every year, all over the world. On every medical mission Operation Smile hope to fulfill their greatest wish - a chance for the patients to be normal.

If you want to know more about the organization, and how you can help, have a look at www.operationsmile.org