

✓ A project co-funded by The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ) and KNH

Major activity:

✓ Organizing poor women in SHGs/CLAs to enhance their capacities to withstand disaster risks by building their resilience

Targets:

✓ Around ten thousand poor women in nine

districts of Oromiya, Afar and Ethiopia Somali Regions

Duration: November 2012 to December 2015

3.Capacity strengthening of CoSAP, member organizations and grassroots women SHG institutions in Ethiopia

✓ A project co-funded by the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia and KNH

Major activity:

✓ Building the capacities of CoSAP, member organizations and SHG institutions

Targets:

✓ 8,000 poor women represented by SHGs, Cluster Level Associations and Timrets (Federations) representatives

Duration:

✓ March 2014 to January 2016

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EU CSF-II Project launched

EU CSF-II (European Union Civil Society Fund) Project entitled "Capacity strengthening of CoSAP, member organizations and grassroots women SHG institutions in Ethiopia" launched by CoSAP and its partners at Ethiopia Hotel on May 16, 2014.

Executive directors of 13 implementing partners, directors and representatives of four associates of the project, and Susanne Heidmann from the Technical Assistant Unit CSF-II attended the workshop.

The launching workshop officially opened by Ato Mulugeta Gebru, the Board chairperson of CoSAP, where he made remarks on actions to take and expressed gratitude to the EU for funding this project.

Sussanne Heidmann, as the next speaker had also made a presentation to introduce EU and CSF-II in brief. As the participants underlined, they have been involved from the inception of the project and the launching workshop has enabled to reaffirm the commitment and responsibility of the implementing partners, and collaborators.

This 22 months European Union Delegation to Ethiopia funded Project has been strengthen the capacity of eight thousand unprivileged women.

The project launching workshop helped to strengthen collaboration among TAU, CoSAP, and implementing partners.



Scene from the launching workshop

A much Anticipated Event Is Going To Be Celebrated

Consortium of Self Help Group Approach Promoters (CoSAP) has organized National Self Help Group (SHG) Day celebration from December 19 to 21, 2014 in collaboration with The Oromiya Women and Children Affairs Bureau.

Higher government officials, EU delegation to Ethiopia representatives, CoSAP Board members, invited guests and women who are organized in SHGs will come from different

SHGs will come from different regions of the country to attain the opening ceremony.

This much anticipated event will be marked by exhibition, best practice workshops, integration of SHG approach with other development programs and panel discussions. During the event CoSAP and member organizations will extend the cooperation, innovation and exchange of experiences with the thousands of delegates drawn from different parts of the country.



Who are pioneers of SHGs in Ethiopia?

Mr. Mulugeta Gebru is the Executive Director of Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JeCCDO) and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of CoSAP. He spoke with us on the pioneers of SHGs and other range of issues.

CoSAP: How and when the concept of empowering women through Self Help Group Approach started in Ethiopia?

Mr. Mulugeta: The concept of empowering women through Self Help Group approach started as early as 2002. The concept was introduced by a German based donor called KNH (Kinder Not Hilfe). They are the one for the first time who brought the concept to this country.

It was not easy to understand the concept for us because it was new. We had discussions and debate as how poor women can organize themselves in groups and ensure their eventual empowerment. Through dialogue we acculturate the concept. KNH brought two experts from India who elaborated the concept. Finally, we internalized the approach and methodology. This is the story in brief.

CoSAP: Who were the pioneers in terms of implementing SHG approach in Ethiopia? and why?

Mr. Mulugeta: Two organizations; JeCCDO and Ethiopian Kale Hiwot Church (EKHC) were identified to pilot. In May 2002, JeCCDO piloted in Debreberhan town, where the first ever SHG formed. Later EKHC began organizing women in to SHGs in Adama town. The main reasons why we promote this approach is that empowering a woman is more than assisting an individual. Women are the pillars of change in communities. Women empowerment spills over to children and the entire community. Therefore, when an organization works on SHGs it is not only contributing to the development of one segment of the society but the whole is included as women are the most important section in communities.

CoSAP: Do you feel you achieved your goals foreseen when starting the SHG approach implementation?

Mr. Mulugeta: Yes, purely we achieved our goals because SHG approach is mainly for economic and social empowerments. Some of the evaluation reports depict that it is beyond that. When

women coming together, they started learning about Family Planning, HIV /AIDS, Child Care, Adult Education etc. Women started a kind of stable life. They are coming together and identifying problems. So there is very interesting social and economic relationship happening in the family and communities. The SHG approach has a cumulative effect. Hence, even we can say it goes beyond its goal.

CoSAP: What is the ultimate goal of implementing SHG approach?

Mr. Mulugeta: It is about social, economic and self-empowerment. These are the ultimate issues. Women become organized and now they have a collective voice. Earlier most of them didn't know their internal capacities but thanks to SHGs, women are now able to unleash their potential and become active citizens and playing invaluable roles in their families, communities and at national level.

CoSAP: How do you see the prospects of SHG approach in Ethiopia?

Mr. Mulugeta: The approach was scaled up by others. Organizations that implement the SHG approach have formed their own network organization. CoSAP currently having more

than 26 organizations is striving to brand the approach. Even the government has embraced SHG approach as one of the development tools to mobilize and empower women. SHGs are escalating in rural and urban areas. It is interesting to witness that now those benefited women themselves are organizing other women in to SHGs. Hence, it is not only CoSAP members and government bodies but also women institutions are replicating the approach in different parts of the country.

CoSAP: What do you learn through the processes?

Mr. Mulugeta: We learn a lot. These women didn't have income before but it is reversed now. They didn't support each other but now they establish a strong solidarity among them. They couldn't even challenge their husbands at home. But what we learn, when poor women get the opportunity, they can do anything. Due to this approach they realized and unleashed their potential. On the other hand, they are becoming decision makers because they now own resources, capital and properties. This is a real empowerment. The relationship these women have within the family, neighbor and friends have greatly improved. Women really

are becoming busy. They know about time value. So, we have learned a lot.

CoSAP: Please tell us the major challenges encountered in SHG promotion?

Mr. Mulugeta: The major challenge is really a legalization issue because this approach is new to the country. There is no legal recognition and registration of groups. As result, the women groups are not interlinked with micro-finance institutions and other service providers. These are actually the challenges. Especially the legalization issue to the peoples' institution (at cluster level association and federation level) is a big challenge because the country has no experience about the issue. We have to learn from others about how to legalize such people's institutions. Unless they are legalized, they can't open bank accounts, conduct meetings and interrelate with others. It is really difficult to link them with resources and service providers without making them legalized. It is worth spending time to dialogue so that we can find most appropriate legal framework so that the SHG institutions can be registered. Efforts are being made in this regard in collaboration with the concerned government bodies..

CoSAP: Is there something that you need to say?

Mr. Mulugeta: I need to acknowledge the endeavors of KNH who brought the approach in this country. Right from the beginning, the entire concept, the approach as well as the experts and associated costs were covered by KNH. Besides, they were the one who made it possible for many organizations to start, organize and support SHG institutions at grassroots level. It is interesting to see now that other development partners, such as the EU, is on board to expand and scale up the SHG movement in different parts of the country.

CoSAP: Thank you!



Ongoing program/projects at CoSAP

1) Promotion of the SHG approach in Ethiopia: capacity building program support funded by Kinder not hilfe (KNH)

Major activities:

- ✓ Training and capacity building
- ✓ Backstopping, monitoring and follow up SHG projects

Targets:

- ✓ SHG implementing organizations in the country
- ✓ SHG Timrets (Federations)

Duration: July 2012 to June 2017
2. Women SHGs as disaster risk reduction and mitigation strategy in selected districts of three regions in Ethiopia;