

Message from the Secretariat

Dear CoSAP partners and stakeholders, we are extremely pleased to share with you issue no. 3 of “Ras Agez” newsletter. Your contributions, feedback and inputs are very much appreciated and encouraged. Please forward them at info@shgconsortiumeth.org or cosap.doc@gmail.com.

Enjoy reading “Ras Agez”

Happy 2016

*Yosef Akalu
Director, CoSAP*

Developing information base in support of the dialogue towards improved recognition for the SHG approach through Action Research



A training on Action Research Skills was organized for three days (from June 29-July 01, 2015), at Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization’s Opportunity for Change Training Center (JeCCDO-OCTC), Bishoftu. It was facilitated by Abebaw Minaye (Ph.D.), an Assistant Professor from College of Educational and Behavioral Sciences, School of Psychology, Addis Ababa University. Total of 14 program staffs of CoSAP and project implementing NGOs participated in the training.

The intent of the training was developing information base in support of the dialogue towards improved recognition and support to the SHG approach. Accordingly, the trainees were provided with the basics of Action Research Skills, including designing case studies, data collection, analysis, report writing and promotion of findings.

The trainees were equipped with the basics of Action Research, including concepts, techniques, methods, documentation and publication processes. Finally, the trainees were given all the training materials both in hard and soft copies for their further reference.

At the end of the training, the participants worked out plan of action for applying the lessons learnt during the training to their respective contexts.

Finally, a certificate of participation was given to all the trainees.

Research Conducted on the Contribution of Self Help Groups for Livelihood Improvement of Women Living under Extreme Poverty

One of the key bottlenecks for the SHG approach in the country is lack of recognition and accommodating policy that best suits to grassroots women Self Help institutions. To solve this challenge, series of dialogues with all concerned stakeholders is being undertaken. However, these dialogue sessions needed to be supported by empirical evidence from research.

CoSAP in collaboration with the Ethiopian Economics Association (EEA) has conducted the research on the contribution of Self Help Groups for livelihood improvement of women living under extreme poverty.

The purpose of the research is to evaluate to what extent the SHG approach has contributed to livelihood betterment of women living under extreme poverty.

The research started with training of enumerators and supervisors. Data collected from total of 605 households in Addis Abeba, Lume-East Shewa, Adama, Hawassa, Harbu-North Wollo and Debremarkos areas. The research was substantiated by qualitative tools including Focus Group Discussions, in-depth interviews, observation and case stories. Draft report has been produced and publishing and distribution of the final report will be done in January 2016. The research is expected to provide reliable evidences on the roles and contributions of the SHG approach in poverty reduction, which will inform stakeholders about the approach and build their confidence for enhanced and sustained partnership.

National SHGs Day Celebrated



One of the key strategies employed to promote the Self Help Group model in the country is organizing National Self Help Groups Day with the participation of all member organizations. Accordingly, CoSAP and its member organizations have celebrated the annual event in Bishoftu town from November 22-23, 2015, in the compound of JeCCDO-OCTC.

Such SHGs day is celebrated for 4th time now: the first two (in 2012 and 2013) were in Addis Ababa; the 3rd (in 2014) in *Adama* and this year in *Bishoftu*. Especially the 2013 event in Addis Abeba was officially inaugurated by H.E The First Lady, W/ro Roman Tesfaye, and attracted wider media coverage.

What makes this year's celebration different is that it focused on inter-organizational experience sharing sessions among People's Institutions (SHGs, CLAs and Federations-Timrets) as well as sharing best practices among CoSAP member organizations.

This year's event was attended by approximated 350 participants, which was covered by Addis Radio FM 96.3, Dir Biaber Radio Program on Sheger FM 102.1, and the Ethiopian Herald and Daily Monitor Newspapers.

CoSAP hosted National SHG Approach Coordinators' Meeting

The German donor, KinderNotHilfe (KNH) annually organizes international forum for National SHG Coordinators, to share experiences among themselves and discuss on contemporary issues of the SHG approach. Ethiopia was selected to host this year's meeting, which was held from 18-28 November, 2015 in Bishoftu town, JeCCDO Opportunity for Change Training Center.

A total of 33 participants, drawn from 14 countries including Burundi, Ethiopia, Germany, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Somaliland, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe attended the meeting.

Participants had the opportunity to participate in the SHGs Day event, shared experiences from People's Institutions and NGOs promoting the SHG approach in Ethiopia.

Journalists Witness the Unique Features of the SHG Approach



As a legally mandated institution to represent SHG promoting organizations in Ethiopia, CoSAP aspires to inform the wider public in general and policy makers in particular on strategic issues relevant to the Self Help Group (SHG) approach. It has been involved in various activities that demonstrate the visibility of the approach to federal and local government officials as well as other stakeholders.

With a belief to initiate partnership with the media, CoSAP organized exposure program to media professionals from different institutions to SHG practices at grassroots level in North Wollo (Women Support Association's intervention site), from September 16-19, 2015.

Among the contents of the visit were briefing sessions, presentations by SHG women, home visits, discussions with government officials and feedback session.

The visitors were highly inspired by the tremendous achievements of poorest women organized in SHGs. The visit was covered by The Daily Monitor, Fana Broadcasting Corporate (Dessie Branch), Addis Radio FM 96.3 ('Temsalet' program), "DirBiaber" program on Sheger FM 102.1, Amhara TV and Radio on their respective media outlets. Above all, the fact that SHGs have a unique feature and cannot be regarded as Cooperatives or ordinary Community-Based Organizations or Small and Micro-Enterprises was clarified.

It is also noted that CoSAP, taking into account the powerful role of the media in advancing the cause of the SHG approach, should continue engaging with the media professionals on future endeavors..

Consortiums can Cooperate on Strategic Issues

CoSAP partnered with Pro Development Network (PDN), a consortium of Ethiopian Residents Charity organizations, to facilitate training on the *'Promotion of Self Help Group Development Approach and Practical Techniques'*. CoSAP was preferred to handle the assignment due to its excellence on the approach and also demonstrated commitment for the further follow-up of the trainings provided.

The training was provided for 36 staffs of PDN member organizations from August 31, 2015 to September 04, 2015 at German Hotel, in Adama. Of the five-day duration, the training was also augmented by a practical field visit to the nearby SHGs. During his keynote address , Ato Yakob Ahmed, Executive Director of PDN, stressed the importance of the Self



Help Group (SHG) approach for empowerment of poor women in communities.

Ato Yosef, Director of CoSAP, on his part appreciated the partnership with PDN that will not be limited to this training but continuous engagement of the two consortiums on strategic issues. He also added that CoSAP is delighted to facilitate the training as it is sowing best seeds to replicate and expand the SHG approach in different locations where its members are not operating.

CoSPAP CSF-II Project Mid-review conducted

Mid-term review of the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia funded project under Civil Society Fund II (CSF-II) was conducted on May 27, 2015 at CoSAP office in Addis Abeba. The intention of the daylong session was to review the progress of the project in relation to the planned activities and expected results, in a participatory way. This was attended by staffs of CoSAP, member organizations and EU-CSF-II Technical Assistance Unit.

After the presentations updating the activity and financial progresses of the project were made, best practices of selected implementing partners were also shared as model experiences.

Ms. Susanne Heidmann, Deputy Program Manager of the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) has congratulated CoSAP and the implementing partners for their successful achievements so far and also raised some questions for discussion, which were reacted by CoSAP and the project implementers. Ato Manaye Bialfew, Finance Officer of the TAU, reminded all partners should be alert about the financial procedures and requirements of EU. Finally, the session was adjourned after way forward and remaining activities were presented and discussed.

Experience shows communities can reduce disasters by their own initiatives

CoSAP piloted a project with support of KNH with focuses on activities that strengthen resilience of at-risk community groups/ women against disasters.



In order to supplement the resilience building efforts of women in South-East Ethiopia through sustaining the existing initiatives, establishing community-managed disaster risk reduction committees (CMDRRCs) was envisaged.

It was with this intention that an experience sharing visit was organized for 3 CoSAP program staffs as well as 14 Social Workers and Community Facilitators of the nine SHG-DRR project implementing partners. The visit was held from July 13-16, 2015 in Diredawa City Administration..

These mission-specific CMDRRCs are to be established at Kebele level, comprising representatives from DRR sub-committees of CLAs, Development Agent (DA), Women Affairs expert, local government administration focal person, and religious leaders/elders.

Having gained practical experiences, the visiting team has reached on consensus that each organization shall establish at least two model CMDRRCs, at two selected Kebeles of its respective intervention district, till December 31, 2015.

Words of Reflections from Veterans in the SHG Approach

CoSAP together with its member organizations has continued to celebrate the national SHGs Day in the presence of women organized in SHGs, government representatives, the media and donor partners. During this year's event, which was colorfully marked with exhibition and bazaar, we encountered with a representative from KNH that supported the SHG approach expansion in Ethiopia since its start in 2002. We also met Mr. Thomas Paul, who is well known to many SHG actors in Ethiopia for introducing the SHG concept and continuous technical supports. We asked the two individuals their reflections, excerpts.



My name is Dr. Karl Pfahler, Head of Africa Department in

KNH. I am happy on behalf of KNH to celebrate successes of an initiative with 13 years' duration in a country with 13 months of sun shine!

I remember Ethiopia, at the beginning, was hesitant to the SHG approach, but became among the most successful target countries currently. I have learned from the SHG day that numerous people own the SHG approach.

We have already achieved our first intent to make NGOs owners of the SHG approach; however, my ultimate dream is to create the ownership in the federations to gradually handle the overall process by themselves.

We don't consider the SHG approach as the only way to development; yet we witness it as the best fit for the impoverished community groups.

Finally, KNH is happy for being at the back of all these successes achieved through the SHG approach which it introduced to the country.

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My name is Thomas Paul, an Indian who has been working as KNH's consultant for the past 15 years. When I came the first time (in 2001) to introduce the approach in Ethiopia, I remember that most NGOs who participated in the orientation workshop resisted saying, "this may work in India, but never in Ethiopia!" Later, only few NGOs



were convinced just to try it; and lately found it to be an important tool for the very poor women. And gradually, I am happy to see that many have taken it up.

Ethiopia is one of the first countries to start implementing the SHG approach and now with the highest group of women established. However, the quality could have been even better than the current one had more efforts been exerted.

Although I understand that this too needs availability of some funds, many think that the SHG approach demands more investment. In practice; however, what the approach demands is commitment from the promoting NGOs and their respective community workers.

The first conviction we should have is believing in women's potential. Such a confidence and attitudinal change may not be attained overnight; yet need to be developed through time as the SHG approach itself is a process. The promoting NGOs themselves should first be convinced that women can do it; their role is just to facilitate that change process.

We can practically see that the approach best fits poorest women: we expect them to do something; yet they do more than that.

I would like to note here also that SHG approach is not a project [which starts at one time and ends after a definite period]; it is people's movement. An ultimate success is, therefore, when this movement starts [positively] influencing the country at large, including government officials. To make this happen, not one or two organizations but as many as possible need to be involved.

Acknowledging the remarkable achievements so far, we still envisage a very long distance to go in the future. Especially, I suggest if the representatives of the 22 federations in the country could meet once in a year and discuss towards voicing their common causes at national level.

ለአደጋ የማይበገረው ጥበበኛ ቡድን!

«ሐዊ ጉዲና» የራስ አገዝ ቡድን በምዕ/አርሲ ዞን፣ አዳባ ወረዳ፣ ገደዶ ቀበሌ ውስጥ የሚገኝ በ2006 ዓ.ም በ Action for Basic Development Initiatives (ABDI) አማካይነት የተመሠረተ 19 በአነስተኛ የኑሮ ደረጃ ላይ የሚገኙ ሴቶችን ያቀፈ ቡድን ነው። እነዚህ ሴቶች የሚኖሩበት ቀበሌ እጅግ ገጠራማ ከመሆኑ የተነሣ መሠረታዊ የማኅበራዊ አገልግሎቶች (መንገድ፣ ውኃ፣ መብራት፣ የጤና ጣቢያ፣ ት/ቤት፣ ወዘተ) የሉትም። ነገር ግን የቡድኑ አባላት በሌሎች አካባቢዎች እንደተለመደው የአደጋ መከላከልና ቅነሳ ተግባራትን ለውጭ አካላትና እርዳታ ሰጪ ድርጅቶች ብቻ ሳይተው «እንችላለን!» በሚል የቆራጥነት ስሜት እየተንቀሳቀሱይገኛለ።

ለምሳሌ፡- አካባቢያቸው ለድርቅ ተጋላጭ እንደመሆኑ መጠን ለሰውና ለእንስሳት የሚሆን የመጠጥ ውኃ ሲጠፋ አባላቱ ባለቤቶቻቸውን በማስተባበር ለእያንዳንዱ አባል የጉድጓድ ውኃ ይቆፍራሉ። ይህ በመሆኑም መጠጥ ውኃ ፍለጋ ሕጻናትን በጀርባቸው አዝለው እስከ 7 ኪ.ሜ. ድረስ መጓዛቸውን ከማስቀረትም አልፈው የጓሮ አትክልቶችን ማልማት በመቻላቸው ከሌሎች የአካባቢው ሴቶች የበለጠ ለአደጋ ተጋላጭነታቸው ቀንሷል፤ በድርቁ ምክንያት ለሚከሰተው የምግብ እጥረትም የማይበገሩ ሆነዋል።



የውኃ ችግራቸው ሲቀረፍ ደግሞ ሌላ ፈተና ከፊታቸው ተደቀነ፡- እርጉዝ ሴቶች ስለጤናቸው ክትትል የሚያደርጉበትና የሚወልዱበት ሁኔታ። በተለይ አንዲት ሴት ምጥ ሲይዛት ከተፈጥሯዊው ምጥ በላይ ምጥ የሚሆንባቸው «እንዴት ወደ ሕክምና ቦታ እንወሰዳት?» የሚለው ነው። በአካባቢው የጤና ጣቢያ ካለመኖሩም በተጨማሪ አምቡላንስ ለመጠቀም የሚያስችል መንገድ ስለሌለ ብዙ እናቶች የራሳቸውንና የልጃቸውን ሕይወት አጥተዋል። ስለዚህም በአደጋ መከላከልና ቅነሳ ኮሚቴአቸው አማካይነት ተወያይተው

ዘየዱ፡- ሌላ አካል ከመጠበቅ ይልቅ (አስተማማኝ መፍትሔ እስኪያገኙ ድረስ) የራሳቸውን «አምቡላንስ» ሊሠሩ።

እጅግ በገብቅተኛ ወጪ ከአካባቢው ቁሳቁስ ብቻ የጤና ጣቢያዎችን አልጋ አስመስለው ሠሩ፤ ስሟንም «አዮ ባቱ» (Aayyoo Baattuu) አሏት፡- በጥሬ ትርጉሙ «የእናት ተሸካሚ» ማለት ነው። እነሆ ከዚያን ጊዜ ጀምሮ በዚያች ተጠቅመው ምጥ የያዛትን እናት በፍጥነት ወደ ጤና ጣቢያ ያደርሳሉ። በዚህም እንደ ወ/ሮ ከድጃ ጎበና ያሉ ብዙዎችን ከሞት ታድገው በሰላም ወልደው ለመሳም አብቅተዋል። ለዚህም ነው ወ/ሮ ከድጃ አፏን ሞልታ፡- «በዚህ ምድር ላይ ካሉት አስጨናቂ ነገሮች ሁሉ ምጥን የሚያክል የለም፤ ከማውቃቸው ሰዎችም ውስጥ የቡድኔ አባላትን ያህል የምወደው የለም፡- ከከባዱ ጭንቀት የገላገሉኝ የቁርጥ ቀን ወዳጆቼ ናቸውና!» ስትል የምትናገረው።

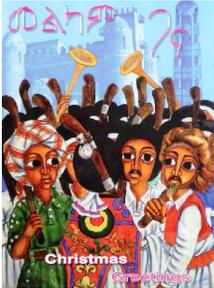
በእርግጥ በአፋን ኦሮሞ «ሐዊ ጉዲና» ማለት «እድገትን መመኘት» ማለት ቢሆንም የቡድኑ አባላት ግን እድገትን ከመመኘት አልፈው እውን ያደረጉ ጀግኖች ሆነዋል!

Upcoming Events

- ☞ Research Results’ Sharing Conference to be held in January, 2016: CoSAP member organizations, federal and regional government officials and representatives of people’s institutions are expected to take part.
- ☞ CoSAP annual General Assembly meeting
- ☞ Workshop on Strengthening of Cluster Level Associations to CoSAP member NGOs.



CoSAP wishes Merry Christmas and Happy New Year for all its stakeholders’ in Ethiopia and abroad!!!



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