



Annual Report

2015

Introduction

Women's Health Association of Ethiopia (WHAE) will celebrate its fifth year on January 2016. WHAE was established with the core idea of socially and economically empowering Ethiopian women and centers its activities on mothers. It believes that empowering mothers by creating knowledge about health will enable them make better decisions and enables them lead a better life. Additionally, WHAE invests in group businesses so that they can have economical income to lead a better life for them and their families. It undertakes the above activities by creating women groups in every region and training women informally and formally as a group. Groups have helped create a wave of active women in the community with strong support system for their day to day life and also give them a stronger voice for lobbying about collective social challenges to the community and government bodies.

WHAE has been undertaking these activities since January 2011. It now covers 9 regions and 14 local units. In 2015 WHAE successfully graduated one local unit and added five new local units in Addis Ababa, South, Oromia, Mekele and Bahir dar. WHAE also renewed five regional agreements in 2015 for additional three years for graduating five existing local units and establishing and capacitating 5 new local units. This is one of the biggest phases for WHAE; whereby it will be ending one phase of a local unit in a graduation and start with new ones.

Organically, WHAE has a new board elected during the membership meeting; a vibrant board that is revising the strategic plan for WHAE. The strategy of WHAE is also being revised to transform the organization into a sustainable development organization.

Accomplished Activities

1. General Assembly Meeting

The general assembly meeting took place on February 21, 2015 at Monarch hotel. The meeting was attended by all the nine local unit presidents and coordinators, board members, professional members of WHAE, government representatives and guests from the sister organization in Norway, NKS. Mrs. Grete Herlofsen, the new Secretary General of NKS and Mr. Jan Mosbakken, the special advisor to NKS were present.

The annual membership meeting took place on February 21, 2015 at Monarch hotel. The meeting was attended by all the nine local unit local unit presidents and coordinators, board members, professional members of WHAE, government representatives and guests from the sister organization in Norway, NKS.

The membership meeting comprised of three major activities:

- The presentation and discussion of WHAE's activity and financial report for the year 2015. The annual financial report was presented by the accountant and the external auditor. The audit report was completed without a single error and members were happy about both the activities and finance process of WHAE.
- Thereafter financial and activity plan of WHAE for the year 2016 was presented and the members discussed in detail about it.

- The third agenda was the farewell of the existing board. The board members were awarded for their great achievement and three new board members were selected with the majority voting system among the members.

Accordingly Hiwot Tefera, A renowned writer with a vast experience of working in international NGO's, Hiwot Emishaw, a famous blogger and journalist who worked on health promotion for more than a decade and Hereni Melesse, a professional with an immense experience in women health especially on HIV with a rich management and organizational development experience were voted in addition to Ms Netsanet Assaye and Mrs Sara Tabit, who were existing members.

2. Membership

By the end of 2015, WHAE has 149 members from all eight regions where it has local units, 115 professional members (only) and 116 database members. In 2015, 16 new members from Addis Ababa joined the organization and are all working in different areas. This number is highest from the last years due to a one on one channel of communication and needs to be strengthened by motivating members to bring a minimum of one or two members. The other channel used for recruiting more members is organizing conferences and other events.

3. Lecture Series

WHAE organized its annual conference on Sustainable Development Goals and Women's Health on November 07, 2015. Sustainable Development Goals will be guiding the way our world tackles poverty after 2015 and WHAE organized this meeting to understand its role in the coming fifteen years and learn about new trends nationally and internationally. For this, WHAE invited speakers that are researchers and people working in the Ministry of Health. The first presenter, Mr. Mengistu Wolde; Policy Plan Directorate and Health Reform Head at Ministry of Health, gave a General Presentation on SDGs, Steps and contents of SDGs.

The second presenter, Dr. Ewenat Gebrehanna, who is a Senior Reproductive health expert in Addis Continental Institute of Public Health, explained the second issue of the conference which is SDG's and Women's Health. The last presenter, Mr Hezkias Tadele, a Project Officer in Talent Youth Association presented SDG's and Women Empowerment. This meeting was attended by more than 80 Professional members and NGO's, twinning partners from Norway, Kristiansand and Vestfold, and Mr. Jan Monsbakken from NKS head office.

4. Experience Sharing

Two experience sharing events took place in 2015

The first experience sharing event took place on February 19-20 in Classic hotel. For two days in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Coordinators and Local unit Committee leaders from 9 regions undertook a two days meeting in Ethiopia. The attendees presented their work and shared their challenges and successes. Best practices were also shared. This event helped the local units to network and shares their experiences.

The second Experience sharing event is mainly organized to exchange information between the regions, update staffs about new manuals and job descriptions and learn from success and discuss about challenges faced. WHAE conducted a five days consultative meeting and training for all the regional coordinators, marketing support staffs and nurses from eight regions from October 26 – 31, 2015 in Debrezeit, Pyramid Hotel. The meeting was mainly focused on capacity building and narrowing the communication gaps between the head office and regional staffs. The discussion also focused on ongoing challenges on local unit activities and discussions were conducted on how to resolve them and change them into opportunities. The regional staffs worked on their annual plan and reported their activities. The Nurses were also trained on how to utilize the new health education manual. All regions were introduced to new reporting and planning formats during this event.

5. Steering Committee

The establishment of Steering committee members comprising of government officials from health Bureau, Women Affairs, Regional BOFED and other concerned government bodies and community leaders is found to be a very useful tool to provide continuous support for the local unit.

Accordingly, the steering committee in Shonie was able to conduct five meetings with the local unit and help them through the audit process for their business and monitor and report the update to WHAE on a monthly basis.

The steering committee in Harar met twelve times. The committee is helping the women kick start their business and facilitating a space to undertake their business effectively. It also helps them in running an accountable system while running their business and overlooks their general activity.

In addition WHAE established Steering committees in three regions in Ethiopia namely Addis Ababa, Chanco and Asossa. These steering committee members met 3 times in Chanco 5 times in Asossa and 2 times in Gulele

Experience Sharing among Steering Committee Members

To Strengthen the activity of the Steering committee and for them to create a close working relationship among each other, WHAE organized a meeting for all steering committee members in Addis Ababa from December 7-9/2015 in harmony hotel. The attendees presented their annual planned activities on how to assist the local units and shared their challenges and successes, they discussed about the steering committee by law and approved the bylaws. To increase their efficiency in working together and assist the local units, the steering committee members were trained on team work. The total number of steering committee members that attended the meeting was 35 steering committee members.

6. Staff Capacity Building

In 2015 two staffs were able to complete their degree studies on Public Health and Management. Three more staffs were also able to get skill training.

The staffs also undertook a planning and reflection meeting from December 16-25 in Arbaminch.

7. Formal Training

A total of 99 women (Mekele- 19, Bahir dar-25, Gullele- 25, Chanco-30) were trained for six days in four regions in Ethiopia. This training was planned to equip the women members that would be graduating this year. This six day training was organized under a theme called 'Sinq'. Sinq being a word meaning storage of food people take along with them for a long trip. This training was also symbolic as it focused more on revising important health concepts like reproductive health issues including Anatomy to help the women understand their body in a better way. It also included concepts like hygiene and decision making as a general life skill component for the women to take along with them, The training empowered women on personal planning and the women were all encouraged to include a six month personal plan at the end of their training. This is followed by the nurses in the region. This is done to make sure the women have acquired the skills on health and to see if they can change it into action and also provide support before they graduate.

Additionally two local units, Harar(42) and Diredawa (26) local units, were trained on Communication and mentorship as they are going into the community engagement phase. They were trained for five days on major health information dissemination, communication among group and mentoring their peers.

Asossa(45) local unit were trained about basic health refresher training for three days on reproductive health and life skill.

8. Monthly Meeting

The monthly meetings for the women are the events where they converse and update each other about current affairs, discuss about their health and undertake their saving. This event takes place in a community center rented by WHAE specifically for the women to have a safe space to converse. This monthly event is attended by a community nurse and always has a coffee ceremony with refreshments.

- 1- **Health education:** Every month a nurse discusses a title based on the manual prepared based on the women’s needs. The nurse facilitates and leaves the platform open for discussion while the women are making and drinking coffee. This event enables the women to share their worries about their health and provide local experiences and understand concepts more clearly.

Local unit	Titles covered	Times of meeting	Number of people
Mekele graduating local unit	Women’s right, Gender and sex , HTP, Family planning, Intoxication, Cancer, MDR TB, Environmental sanitation, PMTCT,	12	18
Mekele new local unit	MDR TB, cancer, PMTCT	5	41
Bahir Dar	Abortion, Anti natal care, high Blood pressure, Asthma, Malaria, Hepatitis, Anemia, Fungus, causes of Allergy, pneumonia	12	25
Asossa	Hepatitis, Typhoid, Gastritis	12	38
Addis Ababa graduating local unit	Nutrition, Maternal health, Malnutrition, Renal problem, How to use and clean toilets, how to use sanitary pad during menstruation, waste	12	7

	disposal system, Malaria, importance of Iodine salt, cervical cancer,		
Addis Ababa New local unit	Anti natal care, Breast cancer	3	46
Harar	Nutrition, pneumonia, communicable diseases, Malaria, mental illness, Breast feeding,	12	41
Dira Dawa	Hepatitis, Cancer, HTPS ,Family planning , High Blood pressure,	12	21
Shone	Food Hygiene	6	36
Chancho	Pre-natal care, Trachoma, Sexually Transmitted Infection, Environmental Hygiene, Gastro intestinal diseases & Vomiting, Family law, communicable diseases	8	26

2- **Saving:** The women saved money every month in two ways. The first way is by contributing membership fee directly every month and the second means is the lottery program using auction items purchased by WHAE. All local units have been able to save and the money is saved in their accounts for their health emergencies. This year the lottery is special as half of the lottery gift item was purchased from Gullele local unit, a curtain.

9. Twinning Projects

9.1. Community Health Project

The community health project is the phase where local units are expected to give back to the community. This process takes place in different forms in all the local units. These projects are fully funded by the twinning partners.

9.2. - Community Health Education

Community health education is where each woman takes five women under her and undertakes a monthly health education with her peers. To facilitate this health education, five women get together and form a group of 25 women and men and undertake a coffee ceremony in their village with the attendance of a community nurse.

Harar local unit has undertaken 12 community health education sessions, a total of 49 women graduated. WHAE prepared the graduation ceremony and certified participants that fully attended the program and awarded Active participants. Government bodies like women affairs, Health office representative, Health extension workers and heads of the Sub city administration were present.

Bahir dar local unit undertook 12 community health educations sessions, a total of 56 women and 4 Men graduated. WHAE prepared the graduation ceremony and certified participants that fully attended the program and awarded Active participants. Government bodies like women affairs, Health office representative, Health extension workers and Sub city administrators were present.

Mekele local unit undertook 11 sessions with 99 community members.

Shonie carried out 12 sessions and graduated 40 women and 4 men after training them for one year. The community participants had a warm graduation ceremony attended by government officials and the community coordinator of WHAE. This ceremony included certifying the

community members that attended the CHE for one year as health role models and awarding the highly achieving members.

Gullele local unit carried out 12 sessions and graduated 27 women and 3 men after training them for one year. The community participants had a graduation ceremony attended by government officials and the community coordinator of WHAE. This ceremony included certifying the community members that attended the CHE for one year as health role models and awarding the highly achieving members.

Chancho local unit undertook 12 community health educations sessions, a total of 35 women graduated. WHAE prepared the graduation ceremony and certified participants that fully attended the program and award Active participants. Government bodies like women affairs, Health office representative, Health extension workers and Sub city administrators were present.

Asossa:- This local unit has undertaken 5 community health educations sessions, a total of 30 women attended and are still undertaking the program..

10. Toilet and Shower

Local unit	No. of people that used the toilet and shower/month	Money Generated
Mekele	450	21,989.00birr
Bahir Dar	400	38,305.35birr.
Chancho	100	198.00birr.

Mekele, Bahir dar and Chancho local units built a toilet and shower with the funding from their twinning partners to provide a community toilet and shower service with a reasonable fee. Accordingly the three local units are running this service by taking turns. The women also run a

small shop with soaps, tissues and razors to help them generate more income and promote hygiene.

In Chancho local unit there was a huge challenge with water to run the toilet and shower so the toilet is closed until access is granted.

11. Home Based Care

Chancho local unit takes a different approach to the community health project. The local unit selected ten bed ridden patients and decided to provide a home based care service. Three women take one patient and clean the patient three times a day. They provide milk and food flour for them making sure the community around helps in the cooking. The home based care patients are selected in collaboration with the local government. They are bed ridden patients that do not have any help.

12. - Cleaning campaigns

One of the materials WHAE provides upon the establishment of the local unit is cleaning materials with uniform. This is to encourage the women to undertake cleaning campaigns.

Accordingly the following local units undertook cleaning campaigns

Local Unit	No of Cleaning Campaigns Organized	Number of Women involved/Campaign
Shone	2	36
Dire Dawa	5	80
A.A	6	200
Mekele	5	409
Harar	4	232

13. Economical Empowerment

13.1- Business trainings

By 2015, three local units, Gulelle, Harar and Chancho, were trained on how to run a business. Harar local unit was trained on basic entrepreneurship and business management for five days. Chancho local unit undertook training on general management of dairy farm for five days and Gulelle local unit was trained on designing and quality production for 22 days.

13.2-Local unit Business

Now six local units in five regions in Ethiopia are running their own business as follows.

Chancho

This group has built a cow shed on the purchased land and has purchased four cows. They are selling milk to distributors and earn 12,157 birr. The local unit also hired one of the local unit members at the dairy farm to clean the place by 535.00br/month. This data only includes the information before the month of September as they have graduated

Shonie

Shonie local unit is running a pepper milling place and a bridal dress shop in the center of the town. The local unit started the business by August 25, 2015. The local unit generated a total amount of 12,590 from the bridal dress and 10,498 birr from milling place. Additionally the local unit started a new business to generate more income- beauty salon and coffee house.

Mekele

This local unit has been running a milling place since 2014. For 2015, the local unit generated 19,682.50birr from this business activity. Due to the distance from the center the milling business has been incurring a lot of transport expenses

Bahir dar

Bahir Dar Local Unit Opened their renovated Restaurant in Bahir Dar city which is located on the Southern shore of Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile (or Abay), in what was previously the Gojjam province. The local unit opened the restaurant by the end of 2015. The restaurant now serves both cultural and international foods with fair prices.

In 2015, the local unit generated a total amount of 10,322.59 from the restaurant. In this restaurant, the local unit hired three members of the local unit and is paying 700br/ person and one guard 700br/month from the area. The second activity of the local unit, shower & toilet, has generated a total amount of 38,305.35birr. By the end of 2015 (October - December) the local unit celebrated the opening of their renovated restaurant. The restaurant is now serving both cultural and international food with fair prices.

Addis Ababa

This local unit is producing 100% handmade cotton scarves and curtains. They were trained on better designing for one month in March 2015 and are now producing quality products. For 2015, the local unit raised a total amount of 233,207.00birr from selling in local and Norway market.

In December the local unit participated in a Christmas bazaar at Millennium hall and generated 5,081.00birr from this event. The local unit had also participated in Molde Jazz festival in Norway. Bazaar has been found as a good strategy to the local unit mostly to promote and introduce their products to the local market and internationally.

Harar

Harar local unit is engaged in “Baltina” and “peanut butter production”. The local unit went through a thorough discussion for the business plan assessment and agreed on starting with making injera and Baltina(Food processing) WHAE granted a total amount of 415,000.00birr for their business start up. The local unit is also granted a place for production and preparation for five year time by the government. The local unit opened the business start up by the end of year 2015 and invited government representatives, hotel managers and guests from different organizations on the opening.

Assosa

Assosa local unit started its business on Milk production and Processing in 2015. This local unit got its license for the business in November 2015. A thorough assessment was undertaken and a business plan was produced for this same business. The local unit was granted a 500 square meter land from the government. WHAE has invested 150,000.00 ETB for the business start up and cow sheds are being built.

14. Establishment of New Local Units and Leadership Training

The agreement for Mekele, Chanco, Bahir Dar, Addis Ababa and Shone to start new local units is finalized and new local unit members totaling to 275women are selected and monthly meetings and monthly contribution have already started.

Twenty women from each local unit totaling to 100 undertook leadership and team management trainings in all the five regions to enable them lead the group by themselves.

15. Commission on the Status of Women

Norske Kvinner Sanitetsforening in collaboration with Women's Health Association of Ethiopia organized a side event on March 11, 2015 in New York at the Church center during the 59 CSW event. This side event had both Norwegian and Ethiopian perspectives on Gender Based Violence. This event helped raise diverse issues from Harmful traditional practice and intimate partner violence to institutional and policy approaches towards this issue. The side event presenters included Mrs Grete Herlofson, Secretary General of NKS, Thea Bull Skarstein, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion Norway, Gro Lindstad, Director at FOKUS, Elisabeth T. Swärd, Senior Advisor gender equality and women's rights; NKS, Mrs Asmaru Berihun from Ethiopian Human Right Commission, and Birikit Terefe, Director of WHAE. It was facilitated by Mr Jan Monsbakken from NKS. It was attended by more than 80 participants including Norwegian delegations to the CSW, UN.

16. Cooperation with Students from Molde University

One of the cooperation WHAE undertakes for advancing the health education is partnering with Molde University. This cooperation started in 2012 and has increasingly been a fruitful partnership with students coming and working with the women group once a year for two to three weeks. This year in February (16-26) four nursing students stayed with WHAE for two weeks. The students undertook a community visit in Gullele and Chancho local units to understand the project and thereafter held three day training for 22 women and three men in Gullele. They covered titles chosen in advance by the women on contraceptive, healthy sexual practice and hygiene. This training was special as it included the members of the community health education and men in addition to seven local unit members.

17. Documenting WHAE with Photography

In February 2015 a professional photographer, Trine Melhuus visited the project in Gullele and Beninshagul and documented the women's stories with photography. This was the first time the activities were recorded. Ms Trine stayed with the women for three days in each region in February.

18. More twinning partnerships

This year WHAE has doubled the number of local unit partnerships with the local units. This partnership helps promote active community engagement and encourages the local unit members to give back to the community by funding community projects that the women come up with. This partnership is organized between a local unit in Norway and a local unit in Ethiopia. The following are twinning partners with their twinning units in Ethiopia for 2015.

- Bahirdar- ØSTFOLD
- Bahir Dar-Møre and Romsdal/ Todalen – new local unit
- Chancho-Oppland
- Chancho Buskerud – new local unit
- Diredawa – Aust- Agder/ Mandal
- Gullele– Vestfold
- Gullele- Molde - new local unit
- Harar – Hamar
- Mekele – Stavanger region
- Mekele- Leinstrand - new local unit
- Shonie – Kristiansand
- Gambella – Blindern og vinderen
- Assosa – Trondheim/Orkdal

19. Partner Visit from NKS

The new Secretary General of NKS(our sister organization) Mrs Grete Herlofson and Mr Jan Monsbakken visited the project for one week in February. The visit included attending the General assembly meeting of WHAE, meeting with the new board members and visiting local units. The visit included visiting Gullele, Chancho and Bahir dar local units, discussing with the women and visiting the projects they are undertaking including attending a community health education and visiting the toilet and showers.

20. Partner Visit in Norway

The Board president of WHAE, Ms Hiwot Teffera and the Directress of WHAE, Ms Birikit Terefe visited Oslo in September 2015. The visit was intended to introduce the project to government bodies, held meeting with the major partner-FOKUS and attend the general Assembly meeting of NKS. Accordingly the visitors met people from NORAD and also from Ministries and with twinning partners.

Thereafter attended the general assembly meeting of NKS and also held a meeting with FOKUS, on new improvements and also new formats and challenges for 2015.

21. Communication Strategy Finalized.

WHAE finalized its communication strategy to attract new members and keep the existing ones active and also to increase the visibility of WHAE.

22. Media Coverage

WHAE started its first media coverage program in 2015. Accordingly it had 30 minute TV coverage on EBS, mostly covering the work on WHAE and promotion of the Gullele local unit. WHAE also had 4 consecutive radio programs on Bisrat FM focusing on the general goal and mission of WHAE and also reporting the outcome of the conference on Sustainable Development Goals. WHAE also had two coverages about Gullele and Chancho local unit activity on Sheger Radio.

Things that were not achieved

- ✚ Dire dawa local unit was not able to start business due to the delay of the government to grant them a license.
- ✚ IGA plan for WHAE- There was no resource to run this and alternative business has been under assessment during this period.
- ✚ Car purchase- Even if WHAE secured the budget, there was no clear direction on how to purchase the car without it affecting the administrative cost of the office. So WHAE is in discussion with the Agency on how to import or purchase the car.
- ✚ Strengthening Gambella local unit has been a challenge as the security in the region was very challenging. The regional BOFED has not been cooperative to sustain the local units and it is still a challenge to keep the local unit.

Not planned and Achieved

- ✚ Assosa local Unit was able to start business one year earlier as they have undertaken their health education and community mobilization process faster than other local units.

Challenges

- 1- The slow and bureaucratic process to sign agreement with the regions delayed the formation of new local units
- 2- The lack of capacity of some regional coordinators to organize and assist the women created a huge gap in the implementation
- 3- The lack of entrepreneurial skills among the women is a challenge and needed very close follow up in their business process
- 4- The bureaucratic and corrupt process in some regions to facilitate selection of women
- 5- The deflation of Norwegian Kroner
- 6- The need of regional government offices for WHAE to have offices in each region has been a challenge for WHAE as it requires a lot of resources.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring takes place at two levels. The first part is through monthly reports submitted by local unit nurses and regional coordinators. Every month titles of issues discussed and minutes of the meetings are sent to the community coordinator. The reports are filled in the format designed by the office.

Additionally field visits are carried out as required and meetings with local unit members and government bodies are conducted. Mekele, Gullele, Bahir Dar, Shonie and Chancho & Gullele local units were evaluated by the Government Bureau of Finance and Development, Women Affairs and Health Bureau in the first half of this year. Feedbacks from such evaluations were useful for the project.

NKS visited two local units in February and two more local units in November.