



June - August 2017

Dear friends of AWSAD,

Here's the June-August issue of our Simugn newsletter.

The past few months were productive and happy at AWSAD. We were happy to receive H.E. Demitu Hambisa, Minister of Women and Children's Affairs at the Addis Ababa safe house, and the subsequent employment opportunities she helped create for 10 of our survivors!

We would also like to share with you a video showing the dreams of some of our young residents at AWSAD.

Every day, we are moved by the positive change we help bring about in the lives of the women and girls at our shelters and we share this feeling with you in a survivors' story.

Please feel free to share the newsletter with friends and colleagues, and do let us know what you think.

With warm greetings from all of us,
Maria Munir
Executive Director,
Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD)

10 AWSAD ex-Residents Hired by Kombolcha Textile Factory



Welcoming ceremony for the new hires at Kombolcha Textile Factory

During her visit to AWSAD, Her Excellency Demitu Hambisa, Minister of Women and Children's Affairs, had promised to do all that she can to help the women and girls at AWSAD (see below for full story). Shortly after her visit, the Minister informed AWSAD that she has secured job opportunities for 10 AWSAD residents at the state-owned Kombolcha Textile Factory.

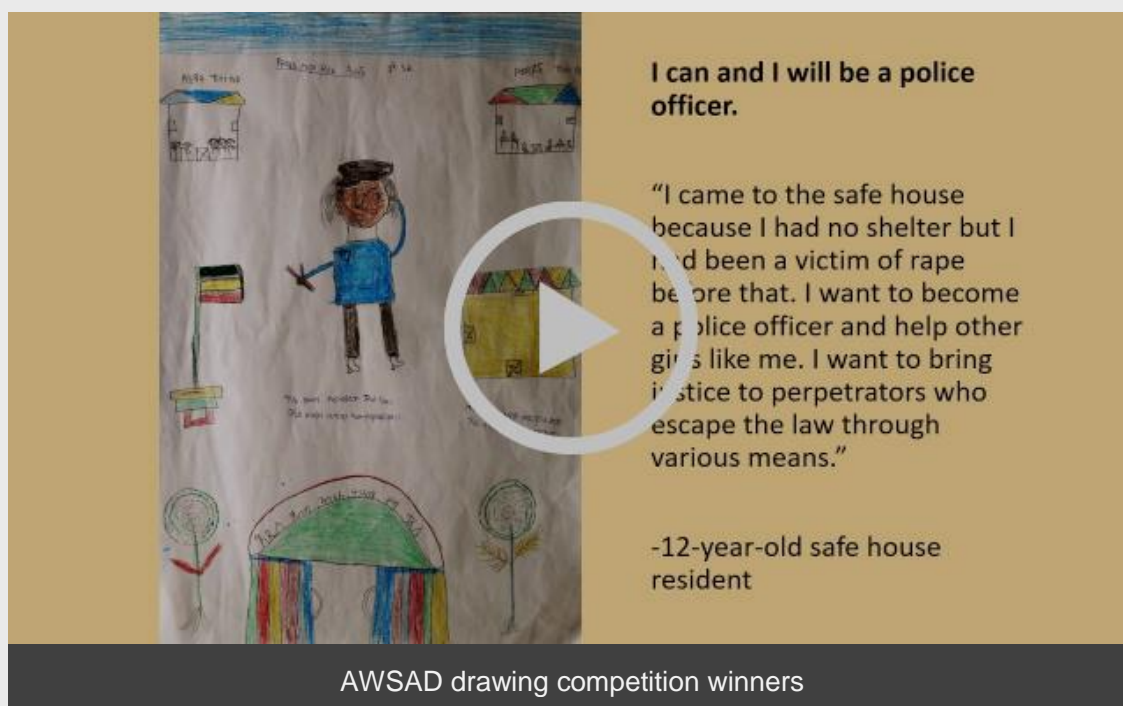
10 survivors, aged 18-26 and trained in sewing and embroidery were selected and travelled to Kombolcha accompanied by AWSAD staff including the Programme Coordinator, counselor, sewing and embroidery trainer and driver. Before they departed, AWSAD held a farewell ceremony at the safe house and gave financial and in-kind support to the women, giving them food supplies, mattresses, kitchen ware and sanitary materials. A coffee ceremony and dance as well as advice-giving session from staff and successful ex-residents were part of the farewell ceremony.

Maria Munir, Executive Director of AWSAD, expressed great happiness that the women got this chance and advised them to be responsible and wise, and to be sociable and respectful to others in their new job. She also expressed heartfelt thanks to the Minister and the factory officials who made this possible. When she was told about the opportunity, 18-year-old Tsedale said, "I was really hoping to find a job and start supporting myself. It was like a dream for me, but thanks to AWSAD, it is real."

Kombolcha Textile Factory welcomed the women on July 27. The factory provided them with rent-free housing on the factory premises, giving one room for two residents. Five of the survivors are with young children aged 4 months – 1 year and will be hiring help to care for their children while they are away working. The women will be receiving monthly wages of about ETB 1,900.

Video: I Can and I Will

AWSAD announced a drawing competition titled I can and I will, and safe house residents made several entries.



Demitu Hambisa, Minister of Women and Children's Affairs Visits AWSAD

Her Excellency Demitu Hambisa, Minister of Women and Children's Affairs (Ethiopia), visited the AWSAD Addis Ababa safe house in July 2017. Accompanied by her aides and representatives of gender programmes in UNFPA Ethiopia (including Bethlehem Kebede, who facilitated the visit), the Minister toured the safe house including the day care, clinic and skills training rooms after Maria Munir, Executive Director of AWSAD, briefed her about the organization and its services.



The Minister talking to residents attending a literacy class

Drawings by AWSAD survivors were presented to the visitors and one of the girls who won the drawing competition described to the guests that her drawing depicted a court scene and that one day she hopes to become a judge that presides over women's issues.

During the visit, some survivors raised questions to the Minister. One survivor, a 4th year Engineering student at university said that although she is grateful she has the support of AWSAD, she asked, *what about the many other women and girls living in the streets? How can the Minister help in this regard and help AWSAD to get land so that it can help more women and girls?* Another one mentioned the challenge she and her groupmates are facing in relation to their lack of government ID cards as their places of origin are remote and they cannot go back.

Later, when the Minister held a brief meeting with AWSAD staff, members of the AWSAD staff reiterated the need for land saying that operating from rented property creates many challenges. Maria Munir thanked the Minister for coming to see them saying that she is the first Minister to do so. She added that the visit raises the morale of both her staff and resident women and girls. The Minister expressed appreciation for AWSAD's work and promised to help with what she can because she feels great concern for women and girls' issues. She also said that she would look for ways of helping AWSAD to acquire land.

Art and Dance Therapy at AWSAD Safe House



Art and dance therapy trainees presenting shows at the closing ceremony

AWSAD has been assessing the efficacy of offering art and dance therapy at the Addis Ababa safe house. The classes include lessons in acting (musical drama and one-act plays), vocal lessons, traditional dance lessons, and poetry, individually and in groups. The purpose is to improve and maintain the mental and emotional well-being of survivors. A total of 56 participants took part in the classes for two months from May to July held twice weekly. During this period, they completed, among other things, *Ethiopia Hagere*, a musical drama.

Dance therapy is known to help people stay physically fit and enjoy the pleasure of creating rhythmic motions with their body. Generating, viewing, and talking about it provides a way for people to manage emotional conflicts and increase self-awareness. It also allows them to express unspoken and often unconscious feelings. The therapists began helping the residents to process emotions and feelings that they were struggling with, so they can heal, by creating an environment that encouraged survivors share personal experiences. Trainees also learned a lot about themselves through their own creative expressions; it helped them to relieve stress and discover themselves in new ways, they said. They also said that "it's truly a beautiful thing" when they bonded over the experience and learned trust-building. The safe houses staff also said that the results of the activity were visibly positive.

The two female therapists are trained and experienced in the field. Bethlehem Birhanu and Meron Regassa are university graduates of Theatre Arts and Music respectively, and clearly demonstrate love for what they do. They previously worked with the Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO) where they

received training on therapeutic instruction of art and dance by trainers facilitated through the American Embassy.

On the closing day, the women and girls presented dances, music, plays and poetry.

Survivor Lemlem*, 18, said “I have been through a lot of ups and downs and because of this, I had serious depression and anxiety. After starting the art and dance therapy training everything started changing radically. I feel relief, my self-confidence is improving, and I feel I've discovered a talent.” She said she wants to be a multi-skilled professional as well as being a musician. At the closing ceremony, she presented an Afan-Oromo song.

Survivor Sewit*, 17 said “I was extremely shy, I used to be very afraid to express my opinion and I didn't have confidence. When I thought of having a conversation with others, my stomach turns. But this training is changing me completely, now I am almost perfect in acting, dancing as well as in music.” At the closing ceremony, she played the character of Ethiopia. She said “I never knew I was so good. At the end of the drama everybody expressed their appreciation, this made me feel like I can do anything.”

*Names have been changed.

Simugn, this is My Story



I was born in Adama town, Oromia region, and there I lived with my mother who was a housewife, and my father, a tailor. I have one brother and one sister, Fatuma. Before we came to AWSAD, Fatuma was in 3rd grade and I'd also attended school up to 7th grade, until one Tuesday, my father killed my mother in front of me.

I try to forget how it happened. We were at home, back from school and my mom was making coffee and my father was there too chewing chat. He sent Fatuma to buy milk and when she returned with it, he stirred something in it and gave it to us to drink. We slept heavily that night. But in the middle of the night, I woke up to sounds of beating and shouting. When I went to see, my father was beating my mother with rods of metal. I was frightened and tried to scream but he threatened me. He killed her using pieces of glass right there in front of me. He tried to run away but the police caught him. Later at the station, I told the police that he always used to threaten my mom that he would kill her because he once raped me and my mother had seen and told our neighbor about it. My father knew that she told the neighbor and he threatened to kill her and me if we told anyone. So, we kept quiet. Previously, my father had also attacked my mother, and she had received support from AWSAD.

When we came to the Adama safe house with my sister Fatuma, they gave us a clean place to sleep, meals and counsellors to talk to us. They accompanied me to court hearings and took care of our legal case. At first, we were withdrawn and didn't want to mingle with anyone, but the counsellors and our friendships with the other residents slowly helped us to forget what happened and be positive and hopeful about the future. Both of us got enrolled in a regular school. Fatuma completed 4th grade and passed to grade 5 with good scores; she stood 4th in her class! I just passed the 8th grade national examination and I'm awaiting the results. I have been through a lot, and I feel that education is what I need to be able to face future challenges in my life. Both me and my sister are working hard at school and want to become doctors. The courses we took on hygiene, empowerment and self-defense were all very useful to us and made us confident again. I am very happy that I am at AWSAD together with my sister: if we were staying with relatives, I may be separated from her and they may also make us work and not let us go to school.

*Names have been changed.

[Subscribe to this newsletter](#)
You can [unsubscribe from this list](#)

The Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD) is a resident civil society organization that provides holistic rehabilitation and reintegration services for women and girl survivors of violence such as rape and domestic violence. AWSAD provides its clients with a transitional, women's-only shelter, psychological counselling, legal aid and other services to help clients recuperate from their trauma and be reintegrated in to society. AWSAD offers various skills training to its residents and supports their initiatives to be economically self-reliant.

For their generous support, AWSAD thanks its many donors including:



Canada

UK, Ireland, Australia and

