

Simugn*

*Amharic for 'listen to me'

AWSAD Commemorates 16 Days of Activism

'16 Days of Activism' is the United Nation's annual campaign to end violence against women and girls. From November 25 to December 10, the color orange is used to commemorate survivors of violence and to bring attention to the issue. At this time of the year, major landmarks in Addis Ababa such as the African Union Headquarters building, the US embassy and the Economic Commission for African building are adorned in orange in solidarity with the movement of ending violence against women and girls. This year's agenda, 'Raise Money to End Violence Against Women and Girls' aimed to shed light on the need to mobilize resources to bring about gender equality as the benefits far

outweigh the investment needed to do so.

AWSAD also joined the 16 Days of Activism campaign by supporting events in Addis Ababa and Adama, and by holding a candle vigil with survivors at its Addis Ababa safe house. In Addis Ababa, AWSAD provided financial support for a community and stakeholders' meeting organized by the Yeka Sub-city Women's and Children's Affairs Bureau where 1,500 people attended, and an event in Adama to mark white ribbon day was also supported.



Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development

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Ethiopia Establishes the First Ethiopian Network of Women's Shelters

On 04 November 2016, Ethiopia established its first Ethiopian Network of Women's Shelters (ENWS) for women and girl survivors of violence. The Network was founded at the end of a training for such shelters held in November 2016 in Addis Ababa and facilitated by UN Women. Participants included a total of 29 delegates from 13 organizations that provide shelter/one-stop services for women and children in Ethiopia. A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed upon, and AWSAD - which runs the

largest shelter in the country in Adama, Oromia - was appointed chair of the Network, and the Organization for Prevention, Rehabilitation and Integration of Female Street Children (OPRIFS) as the vice-chair. The Network

also developed an annual action plan and selected top three priority actions for its first year, including developing a standard referral protocol, looking at a joint finance mobilization approach and advocacy activities.



AWSAD staff at the training

The three-day Training for Rehabilitation and Reintegration Centers is the first of its kind to be undertaken in Ethiopia. Led by a technical expert and practitioner based in East-Timor, the training was based on the Global Guideline on Essential Services Package developed by UN Women

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and other partners in 2015. (The Association for Women’s Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD) had taken part in the development of the Essential Services Package.) Topics covered during the training include case management systems, counselling, code of conduct in shelters, providing legal aid to clients, reintegration, human and financial resource mobilization, referrals and community outreach work. Participants extensively shared experiences among one another, and the trainer also shared from her work experience in East-Timor.

It came out in the training that many of the shelters in Ethiopia adhere to the core

principles set out in the Essential Services Package in their operation, although gaps remain due to financial limitations, limited implementation capacity and other factors. Among the challenge areas pointed out by shelters was reintegration, some of the reasons being clients being unwilling to return to their family; clients feeling incapable of starting life on their own; clients’ unsuccessful economic empowerment initiatives; and lack of affordable daycare services where women can leave their children while they are away working. Another challenge area identified by the participants is clients’ lengthy legal proceedings that are not survivor- or child-friendly. A pending legal case often means that shelters have to keep clients longer than they need to stay.

AWSAD Holds Capacity-Building Interventions with Community Members in Ziway

AWSAD Oromia held its third round of capacity-building activities with community members in Ziway town aimed at prevention of violence against women and girls. From December 3-4, a two-day life skills training was given to school children aged 13-15, and community consultative meetings were held with parent-teacher committees and community members.

In the life skills training, school children are taught about peer-pressure, assertiveness and leadership skills in addition to basic lessons about gender and gender-based violence in order to equip them with the awareness and tools they need to help protect themselves and others from violence. The community consultative meeting were facilitated by representatives of AWSAD and police officers. The consultations encouraged community action against violence against women by allowing

community members to exchange experiences and reach consensus on how each member of the community should play their role in fighting violence against women wherever they see it happening. AWSAD’s presence in these events

adds value to the efforts owing to AWSAD’s vast first-hand experience with women victims of violence.

Since its opening in May 2015, AWSAD Oromia has given life skills trainings to 232 primary

school students, and has held community consultative meetings with over 400 community members. The town of Ziway was selected after an assessment by AWSAD indicated that it was a hotspot for violence against women and girls due to its location at a crossroads between towns where many trafficked women and girls arrive.



Community members during the meeting

Girl-Friendly Primary Schools Prevent Violence Against Girls

Geno Jilo is an English teacher and coordinator of the girls' club in Batu Number 2 Primary School – one of the beneficiary primary schools of AWSAD's community capacity-building programs in Ziway. Geno takes part in the parent-teacher committee consultative meetings organized by AWSAD to sensitize and educate members of the school community about violence against girls. "Now I know how to counsel and support my girl students when they come to me with issues. I have gained a lot from these consultative trainings," Geno says.

teacher who leads our girls club [Geno] about it. When the teacher was informed, she directly went to speak to the girl's family. She told them that they had to help the girl continue her education. She told them that if they refuse to stop plans to marry off the child, she will inform the authorities."

Negeso, the school director. "There was a student who was raped and three months pregnant and was so distressed she wanted to kill herself. Another girl student informed us about her and we investigated the issue. We reported to police and also referred the girl to AWSAD." When girls miss school, teachers and the school director pay special attention and speak to



Beriso Negeso and Geno Jilo

"There is a lot of awareness created in the school about violence against girls."

Geno indeed supports her students. Amane, a member of the girls' club and a grade 8 student tells a story. "There was a girl in our school whose brother wanted to give her hand in marriage," Amane shares, "very reluctantly, she came and told us about what was about to happen to her. We convinced her to tell the

Out of the 2,053 students enrolled in Batu Number 2 Primary School, 1,195 are girls and AWSAD also works with the students of the school. Life-skills training on gender, gender-based violence, peer pressure and assertiveness skills are given to 13-15 year-olds. "There is a lot of awareness created in the school about violence against girls," says Beriso

parents about issues such as child marriage. A separate girls' toilet has been built and the school has turned into an environment where girls feel safe and supported. AWSAD's intervention has helped create a gender-sensitive, women and girl-friendly community where violence against women and girls is not tolerated.

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Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD) is an Ethiopian resident charity association established to advance women's social and economic development and provide support for women and girls fleeing physical and psychological violence. It currently operates in Addis Ababa and Oromia region, Adama town.

In its safe houses, AWSAD provides shelter, psychological support, food, medical services and offers basic literacy education and skill development trainings for survivors. Since 2003, AWSAD has supported over four thousand women and girls. **(In this quarter year, AWSAD provided services for 279 survivors and their 162 children.)** It also runs capacity-building trainings for communities, elementary school students, Women and Children Affairs Bureaus, police and other stakeholders.



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Attention to Women's Rights Beyond the Orange Days

By Maria Munir, Executive Director of AWSAD

Those of us who work in the ending-violence-against-women sector get excited when it's November, the time for 16 Days of Activism. November 25 – December 10 is the United Nation's 16 Days of Activism - a global 'orange' campaign to end violence against women. It's the time of the year when our cause gets a lot of attention – in the media, among stakeholders and even in the general public – and we also get a chance to once again make the case for a world free from violence for women. But I always wonder if the issue of violence against women shouldn't be urgent, high on the agenda all year round. Indeed the scale of the problem is appalling: violence against women is one of the most widespread violation of fundamental human rights, affecting close to half of our entire population. Everyday, women and girls are psychologically, physically and

sexually abused, and they face an array of gender-related challenges that limit their advancement. From an economic point of view, this entails significant costs to economies and to households due to decreased productivity, and decreased or lost incomes in addition to response costs such as medical and legal expenses. But more importantly, from a moral point of view, it is a stain on the integrity of a society and a massive injustice to live with. At AWSAD, we are faced with terrible examples of violence against women everyday and the issue is always forefront in our minds. So the issue of violence against women and girls should always be given high consideration. All days of the year should be days of activism to eliminate it from our homes, our communities and our world.