NEWS-STORY

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A Pathway to an African Presence to Ethiopia CSOs

CCRDA, in collaboration with VENRO, VANI, and Abong, hosted a conference on the establishment of AU-ECOSOCC Ethiopian Chapter.

AU-Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) an Advisory Organ for African CSO engagement with the AU, establishment of Ethiopian chapter took place on October 30,2024, at Mado Hotel in the presence of the representatives of Ethiopian government, Civil Society Organizations, African Union and ECOSOCC.

Legzier Bekele, Senior Advisor of ECOSOCC gave highlights on ECOSOCC and its National Chapters establishment. A Pathway to an African... Page 1

German Parliamentary delegates visited CCRDA

On November 22, 2024, the delegates visited CCRDA with keen interest on the CCRDA Core Group Partners Project (CGPP), GAVI project which aimed at reaching Zero Dose and Under-immunized Children. German Parliamentary...Page 2



Enhancing Right-Based Gender Sensitivity-Game Changing ?

CCRDA Conducted a Training on Gender-Responsive Advocacy for Mainstreaming Peacebuilding and Human Rights. Enhancing Right-Based..Page 8



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The senior Advisor emphasized the ECOSOCC's vital role within the AU, "ECOSOCC is an advisory wing of the African Union. Its goal is to bring in the voices, concerns, hopes and dreams of Africans into the policy making table of AU. And it's a very important organ of the AU because without the voice of our citizens in Africa, all our policies would be meaningless so definitely we need to engage our citizens across the continent".

The inception of ECOSOCC emerged from a series of decisions aimed at actively involving the civil society in AU processes, focusing on Africa's integration and development. Established in July 2004, ECOSOCC consists of various social and professional groups and now promotes dialogue among Africans.

Regarding the National chapters, the senior advisor explained "the national chapter intention is to enforce AU's presence at the grassroot level. Basically this network of CSOs to come together and discuss AU and AU's activities and programs, and then advocate, ideas like Agenda 2063".

Fasikaw Molla, Deputy Director General of the Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO), detailed the recent government reforms aimed at fostering a supportive environment for CSOs. He remarked, "the relationship between our office and CSOs is a very constructive, based on the spirit of partnership and collaboration. We are expecting our CSOs to integrate, to partner, to network with at African level also at international level".

The Deputy Director General complimented the CCRDA for taking the initiative to organize a high-level climate change conference and the launching of ECOSOCC chapter in Ethiopia. He assured his office support for its activities, saying, "we are very happy that ECOSOCC establishment as a Ethiopian chapter, and I can assure you that we will provide all the necessary support in the process of formalizing the establishment of ECOSOCC Ethiopian Chapter".

German parliamentary delegates...



Eshetu Dub, CCRDA, Senior Director, Communication and Social Marketing, representing Executive Director of CCRDA, presented a welcome address that highlighted the organization's history from its inception to its current state. The Representative said, "we are growing responsible, we are growing to carry the burden, in fact it's not a burden it's a privilege we are standing to serve more than 10% of legally registered CSOs in our country".

The Representative added that, for more than five decades, CCRDA has played a significant role in creating CSOs relation with government and development community, which have previously been marked by mistrust.

Tsehay Admassu, CCRDA, Senior Director, Program Development and Management, highlighted the organization's 51-year history, which began with 13 CSOs and has since grown to 469 members. The Senior Director stated that "CCRDA which has members in all over the country in diverse issues, has now five regional chapter and continue working on relief, rehabilitation, development and advocacy"

Legesse Kidane, CGPP, Ethiopia Secretariat Director, gave insights on the CGPP Ethiopia Secretariat, which was formed in 2001.

The Director noted that "the goal of CGPP is to contribute towards the national polio eradication efforts as well as outbreak preparedness and response of Priority Zoonotic Diseases (PZDs) and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (VPDs) in the border, pastoralist, and hard to reach areas."

Melaku Tsehay (PhD), CGPP GAVI project coordinator, provided a summary of the project, which has been underway since 2010.

Regarding identifying, registering, mapping, and reaching Zero Dose Children (ZDC) and Under Immunized Children (UIC), the coordinator stated that 96% and 67% of identified ZDC and UIC were vaccinated during two rounds of the GAVI CSO fund project until March 2024, respectively.

The coordinator also provided a summary of the project's results regarding demand creation and documentation. "Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) advocacy meetings were held, and more than 170 religious and influential leaders participated. Community Conversation (CC) manual has been rewritten and translated into Afar and Somali languages. 110 CC sessions were also conducted."

Game Changing Food System? It needs Nothing Short of Transformation

CCRDA in collaboration with Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) conducted awareness creation workshop on Ethiopian food System Transformation for CSOs. CCRDA, Food Security and Environment Forum members attended the session. The workshop was held on October 16,2024 at Skylight Hotel.

Wubet Girma, GAIN Country Director, noted during the welcoming address that "GAIN has contributed to food system transformation activities with partners. Food system transformation needs collective responsibility, and this workshop gives us the chance to share insights on the roadmap, approach, and documentation that will contribute to the transformation of national food systems".

The Director continued to say that "the workshop is organized to gather inputs on how we may collaborate and engage to achieve a transforming food system, as well as views from CSOs, businesses, development partners, and other stakeholders to help build stronger and healthier food systems".

Tsehay Admassu, CCRDA, Senior Director, Program Development and Management in her keynote speech emphasized every actor needs to work together in collaboration to create a resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system.

She stated that, "governments should provide enabling policies and investments, while the private sector can leverage its resources and expertise to drive innovation and efficiency.CSOs can advocate for policy reforms and support small-scale farmers. And farmers themselves are the key actors in implementing sustainable agricultural practices".

Mulugeta Teamir (PhD), Senior Food System Advisor at Ministry of Agriculture gave a highlight on Ethiopian food system transformation development. Gave overviews on process of Ethiopian food system transformation development from initial document design of "Game Changing Solutions, Governance and Implementation Arrangements to Transform Ethiopia's Food Systems"

Akalu Teshome (PhD), Food system Advisor at Stichting Wageningen Research Ethiopia (SWR) gives highlights on component of Food System.

Genet Gebremedhin, GAIN, Head of Policy and Advocacy highlights on multi-sectoral approach to food system.



Seed Security vs Food Security -Chicken or Egg Kind of Debate ?

CCRDA conducted Policy Round Table Discussion on a study conducted on Seed Security Assessment. CCRDA Food Security and Environment Forum members and Members of FDRE House of People Representatives from Standing Committee of Agriculture and Rural Development attended the session. The discussion was held on October 2, 2024, at CCRDA Conference Hall. Regassa Feyissa (PhD) conducted the assessment.



In his keynote address, Nigussu Legesse (PhD), CCRDA Executive Director highlighted the importance of promoting genetic diversity and encouraging farmers to adopt local gene pools of traditional race, stating that “Adequate access to the preferred, good-quality seeds that are climate-resilient and nutrition-dense is essential to farmers’ food and livelihood security. These farming systems are important for food production and maintenance of genetic diversity but have so far been largely neglected”.

The assessment mainly focused on the functioning of seed channels that smallholder farmers use. At three selected sites: Ejere, Ejeresa lefo, and Dendi.

Regarding Ethiopia's seed supply system, the researcher raised certain concerns. The primary difficulty with formal seed systems is that they are unable to meet the needs of most small-scale farmers who rely on a variety of indigenous crop types. According to the study, there are few to no formal crop varieties accessible for less favorable environments. Technologies in use are more suited to favorable conditions and do not meet the needs of farmers in marginal conditions.

An additional challenge for the seed supply system is a shortage of new crop varieties, as well as the low durability and stability of newly introduced varieties in diverse locations. According to the study, the potential of new formal crop types declines shortly after their release.

The study claims that CSOs have a huge role in supporting the community on ensuring local seed security and contribute to increasing crop diversity on farms. according to Regassa (PhD), “CSOs play roles in facilitating seed access and in building capacities, particularly in the intermediary seed flow systems. They support community-based and local seed business approaches which involve establishment of primary cooperatives and unions for achieving local seed security, with the aim to contribute toward ensuring local food security”.

Shifting the Attitude, to top the Summit- Women Empowerment in Action



Badiriya Hussien is a resident of Amuma Arago Kebele, Guna Woreda, Arsi Zone, Oromia Region. She is a member of a Self-Help Group (SHG) in her location. She is part of the CCRDA/ David and Lucile Packard foundation partnership project that has been running with the goal of creating and strengthening an enabling environment for expanding quality Reproductive Health Family Planning (RH/FP) service provision.

The project is being implemented by Education for Development Association (EFDA), a member organization, in Guna Woreda. EFDA uses community conversations as an approach to facilitate dialogue and foster understanding among community members. This method allows for the identification of community needs and the development of strategies to address these needs.

Badiriya and other women in reproductive age groups were organized into groups based on their neighborhood. Their groups underwent six dialogue sessions before graduating and transforming into SHGs at their localities.

EFDA identifies potential SHG members within the community and helps transform these community conversation teams into SHGs by providing financial support. SHGs are small voluntary associations of people, usually from the same socioeconomic background, who come together for the purpose of solving their common problems.

Badiriya stated about her journey as a member of SHG, “The SHG was formed as part of the collaboration of EFDA and HEW-facilitated discussions and learning sessions. After completing these discussions, the members determined to stay organized and continuing their collective effort".

Regarding empowerment and confidence Badriya said that "as a group, we've grown in confidence. We actively participate in decision making, voice our opinions, and take charge of our lives. Women find their voices amplified within the SHG."

Badiriya stated that, SHGs women refer their peers to health facilities when needed. For instance: If a woman experiences reproductive morbidities such as menstrual disorders, infections, SHG members guide her to seek professional care. According to her, this referral system bridges the gap between community knowledge and formal health services.

Establishment of Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

EFDA in collaboration with Health Extension Worker (HEW) provides training and orientation to SHG members. This includes understanding SHG principles, financial literacy, and group dynamics. SHG members gain skills necessary for effective functioning. EFDA ensures that SHGs are equitable platforms.

According to the EFDA, four SHG groups are now functioning, with eight SHG groups in the process of being established. The number of SHG members varies from group to group. Each SHG can have between 25 and 45 members. As an instance, Badiriya is a member of a SHG comprising 27 women.

The SHG saving techniques include monthly savings of varying amounts ranging from 50 to 100 birr. They have a chairperson, a note-taker, and a cashier. Those three individuals were chosen by members through votes. Regarding income-generating activities of SHGs, the SHG chaired by Badiriya concentrates on sheep fattening, as do the other two SHGs, while one is focused on farming. Then they maintain their account for a year, and then they start buying sheep for each group member.

Badiriya added that "I am an empowered individual who believes in collective strength and mutual support. I actively participate in our SHG meetings, contribute to savings, and engage in income-generating activities. My journey involves learning, sharing, and uplifting fellow members. Together, we strive for financial independence, community development, and positive change."

The CCRDA/David and Lucile Packard foundation partnership project has been running in Oromia region, Arsi Zone Jeju, Merti, Guna, and Chole Woredas, with the goal of creating and strengthening an enabling environment for expanding quality RH/FP service provision.

Making the Horn Livable, Peace Beyond Boarder

A high-level panel discussion on the Role of CSOs in Conflict Resolution and peace building in the Horn of Africa with Special Emphasis on Ethiopia were conducted by CCRDA in collaboration with American Friends Service Committee in Addis Ababa on October 25,2024.

The panel discussion was organized to draw the attention of member CSOs to the issue of peace building and conflict resolution and intended to increase their knowledge on the issues capacity and desire to take action to address peace building and conflict resolution within their communities.

In her opening remarks Aynalem Ashebir, CCRDA board Chairperson welcomed the participants and remarked that the discussion topic carries profound human, economic, social, political, and spiritual implications, particularly for the Horn of Africa. She expressed the paramount role of CSO's in being a peace actor, capable of mobilizing communities, advocating for rights, and bridging gaps between the state and the people.

Moses Chasieh, Director, Salama Hub Program expressed that the topic is very interesting which concerned every individual because without peace the whole system becomes paralyzed. He added that Ethiopia as a country, which have many opportunities to cultivate peace. Establishing the Ministry of Peace is among them. He added that Ethiopia's multi-cultural and indigenous knowledges should be harmonized and implemented for fostering peace and conflict resolution.



Hundera Teferi, Program Manage, APCfC, in his presentation stated that the organization is currently operating in the East Borana and Borana zones of Oromia region, with cross-border activities in the Dukana District of Marsebit County, northern Kenya. Kenya-Ethiopia border has experienced a continuing degradation of the environment leading to food insecurity and increased competition for scarce resources mainly water and pasture. These phenomena have often resulted in cross-border conflicts among Borana and Gabra communities in Kenya,

Tadesse Zeray, from compassion international presented Trauma healing Experiences in Tigray region. He presented the devastating effect of the war in Tigray, resulted in loss of many lives and left many disable especially women and children. He added that "the deepest scar of war is unseen".

Enhancing Right-Based Gender Sensitivity…



30 experts from CCRDA member CSOs actively engaged in gender advocacy and peacebuilding, especially in conflict-affected regions attended the session, which took place from November 6-8, 2024

Trainer Fisseha Zewdie emphasized that "addressing global concerns such as peacebuilding, human rights, and gender issues requires collaborative action from all stakeholders, not just government efforts. These topics are intertwined and demand a unified approach".

The trainer further added that "the training is aimed at enhancing the capacity of CSOs experts by equipping them with essential knowledge and strategies for gender-responsive policy advocacy and inclusive practices. The goal was to foster collaborative dialogues for effectively integrating gender perspectives into their various initiatives".

Frehiwot Getachew, Youth Friendly Health Service (YFS) Officer at the Youth and Cultural Development Foundation (YCDF), shared her thoughts:

"This is my first training focused specifically on gender advocacy. As my organization's gender equality and social inclusion focal person, the insights I gained here directly apply to my work, particularly through practical exercises that enhance our gender advocacy efforts."

Aster Gezahegn, project coordinator from Save Life, stated that the training is invaluable, stating, "I learned how to integrate gender issues into our project implementations. The trainers, with their extensive experience, provided critical insights that helped refine my understanding."

Melesse Animaw, Project Coordinator at Health, Development and Anti-Malaria Association (HDAMA), added, "having training on gender and peace advocacy is essential. The diversity of perspectives from experts across various organizations enriched my experience. I plan to incorporate the knowledge I gained to ensure our future projects are gender sensitive."

CCRDA-Global Fund HIV Prevention Project officially launched.

The workshop held on Decebmer 18,2024, brought together stakeholders from six regions, alongside local implementing partners, to introduce the project, discuss its objectives, and plan initial activities.

Nigussu Legesse (PhD), Executive Director of CCRDA, delivered the opening remarks, highlighting CCRDA's achievements and the challenges in HIV prevention. He outlined the strategic direction of the CCRDA-GF HIV Prevention Project and urged participants to collaborate for greater impact.

Mohammed Abatemam Representative from Ministry of Health provided the keynote address, reflecting on Ethiopia's 30-year journey in HIV prevention. He noted significant national achievements and the vital role of CSOs in this effort. He emphasized the importance of stakeholder commitment to ensure the project's quality, timeliness, and cost efficiency.

Nigussie Tefera, CCRDA-GF HIV Prevention Project Coordinator, presented an overview of the project, which will run for three years until June 2027.

The project targets:

Establishing 27 Drop-In Centers (DICs) in hotspot towns to reach 72,900 female sex workers with HIV prevention programs by the end of the project.

Mentoring over 95,000 adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in 22 higher learning institutions by the end of the project period.

Reaching more than 643,000 workers in hotspot areas with HIV prevention programs.

In total, the project aims to directly benefit over 842,000 Key Priority Populations (KPPs).

Demelash Misgana (PhD), Representative from Ministry of Education, discussed the role of CSO-university partnerships in supporting mentorship programs for AGYW, emphasizing their critical role in HIV prevention and control.

The workshop marked a promising start for the CCRDA-GF HIV Prevention Project, setting a solid foundation for effective implementation across target regions. The active participation and collaboration of stakeholders underscored their shared commitment to achieving the project's ambitious goals.



Strengthening Government-NGO Platforms.

CCRDA gave training on Conflict Early Warning and Early Response to member CSOs. From October 2 to 4, 2024.



On December 26, 2024, CCRDA, in collaboration with South Omo Zone and CSOs, hosted a Government-NGO Platform event in South Omo Zone, Turmi City.



Commemoration of International Days

Commemoration of world HIV/AIDS day, was held at CCRDA on December 11,2024



On December 15, 2024, CCRDA, in collaboration with Ministry of Health, Addis Ababa City Administration, and other partners, commemorated Universal Health Coverage Day in Ethiopia.





CCRDA commemorated International Peace Day in Gambella Region, from December 3-4, 2024.





CCRDA showcased its impactful work at CSOs Week 2024, held at the Ghion Hotel from December 6-8, 2024.





CCRDA gave training on Conflict Early Warning and Early Response to member CSOs. From October 2 to 4, 2024





CCRDA conducted a training from December 2-4, 2024, focused on building organizational capacity for survivor-centered, trauma-informed GBV case management in humanitarian settings.



