



‘CONNECTING 100 TRADITIONAL WEAVERS TO THE EXPORT MARKET’

Monthly Report - February 2013

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**Center for African Women Economic Empowerment (CAWEE)
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Content

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1. Introduction

The project on ‘Connecting 100 Traditional Weavers to the Export Market’, which started to be operational in April 2012, was finalized in January, 2013. The project was aiming to create independent and innovative work force that can help the countries poverty reduction plan by creating job for themselves and for other artisans. In finalizing the project, CAWEE together with Sara Garment Designers and Manufacturers organized a closing event which included the graduation ceremony and an exhibition of the products of the trainees.

The other important activity performed during this reporting month was trying to find an appropriate work environment for the trainees and following up of their progress at their new work surrounding.

2. Project Closing Event

The project closing event was held at the Sheraton Addis on February 7, 2013. The purpose of the event was to inform all relevant stakeholders what the project achieved in its operation of one year. The closing event program had four main activities in it:

2.1. Documentary Film –

At the start of the project closing event, a documentary film was seen by all the invited ones. The documentary film covered different issue areas of concern, including the challenges that the trainees face before the training and their future worries after the training, the progress of the training, including what type of solution the training brought about on their life and skill, and the situation of the trainees after the training, particularly focusing on the first round trainees, which many of them are already involved in production, the majority of them employed by women owned and managed companies that are existing as well as potential/emerging women exporters.

The documentary film also tried to show the effort exerted by all the project actors to improve the situation of the trainees, to be able to preserve Ethiopian culture for future generation and also help the country’s economy by creating competitive work force which will be great input to the export oriented businesses and improve the country’s capacity to generate foreign currency.

2.2. Closing Event Remarks –

The welcoming speech and the first remark was made by the Executive Director of CAWEE. The Director thanked the guests of honor and all the invited guests for being part of the project closing event. She underlined that the implementation of this project was only possible with the financial support that CAWEE secured from the USAID/COMPETE.



Nigest Haile delivering her welcome remarks

Following the Director's remarks was, a remark delivered by Mrs. Sara Abera, Owner and Manager of Muya Ethiopia and Sara Garment Designers and Manufactures. Sara in her remarks noted that, emphasis was given to women traditional weavers, even though finding women in this area was very difficult



Sara Abera delivering her remarks

as weaving is traditionally dominated by men. Her remarks focused on how the training was very instrumental in building the capacities of the traditional weavers, equipping them with all the necessary knowledge and technical skills.

The third speaker of the closing event was Mr. Barry Fisher, representative from USAID/COMPETE. Mr. Barry described the main focus sectors that COMPETE is involved in and the reason for Ethiopia to be selected, being the country fast growing in textiles and clothing industry. As COMPETE's main focus is to build the capacity of the large work force involved in those sectors, which has transformational impact, and improve competitiveness of the work force, he indicates that the success of this project is one that COMPETE is proud to mention.



Mr. Barry Fisher from USAID/COMPETE delivering his remarks

The speaker following COMPETE's representative was, H. E. Tadesse Haile, State Minister, Ministry of Industry, whose message was read by his representative. According to the State Minister's message, the hand weaving sector employs a very large number of people in both in Urban and Rural area and there is a lack of technical skill along the value chain and access to appropriate technology, where there are huge problems curtailed in the development of this field. The project undertaken by CAWEE mainly focused in trying to improve the capacity of the major players in the value chain and connect them to already established women exporters. This activity will greatly help the export sector which faces an acute skilled human resource problem and it is in line with the Government's Growth and Transformation plan (GTP). The message read highlighted that the project has contributed a lot in that respect.



Representative of H. E. Tadesse Haile, reading the message of the State Minister

The speaker following the read out of the Minister’s message was, H.E Donald E. Booth, US Ambassador to Ethiopia, where he started his speech by appreciating the efforts made by CAWEE, Sara Garment Designers & Manufacturers and Muya Ethiopia for the success of this project. The Ambassador underlined that, Ethiopia’s traditional product, that is the reflection of its great cultural heritage, is getting in the global market including USA, where this project’s main focus was helping the traditional weavers through the provision of capacity building training, where this process created competent work force which will be great input to the businesses involved in export.

The Ambassador stressed that, this means better living conditions, where weavers can send their children to school and in general the country’s economy grows, in building future society of Ethiopia. Donald Booth also mentioned that, this project will act as a show case at the 2013 AGOA Forum as an example of how America is working with Ethiopia to build capacity and strengthen the trade ties.



H.E Donald E. Booth delivering his remarks

The final remark was presented by Mr. Seyfu Adane, trainee’s representative, where he tried to shade some lights about the historical aspect of traditional weaving, how it reached this generation and how the income generated through used to support large family. These modernized traditional closes now a days started to be exported to the different part of the world and generating income to the country.

According to Seyfu, traditional weaving represents Ethiopia’s culture and heritage so the main issue that needs great focus is the issue of copy writes. He presented his fear to the US Government how their product is being replicated by countries like China and India through their electric machines which only take an hour to produce the same product and this undermines the products produce purely by hand. He thanked CAWEE, Muya and everyone participated in the training.



Seyfu Adane, trainees’ representative delivering his remarks

2.3. Handing Over of Certificates –

Certificates of recognition, in the full participation of the training, was prepared to all the one hundred (100) trainees, but due to time constraint, only those 10 top achievers form each of the two training rounds were handed over their certificates by the guests of honors. Among the high scoring trainees, almost half of them were women.



Handing over of the certificates for the 1st round training top achievers, by H. E. Ambassador Booth



Handing over of the certificates for the 2nd round training top achievers, by Mr. Barry, COMPETE representative

2.4. Products Exhibition

The final activity of the project closing event was, the products exhibition that was displaying, mainly exhibiting trainees products. The main aim of the exhibition was to show to the guests of honors and the invited ones, the impact that the training has brought out, in building the technical capacities of the traditional weavers, to be able to produce such kinds of export focused products.



The US Ambassador and other invited guests visiting the exhibition stands



Invited guests visiting the exhibition stands

3. Follow-up of the Trainees of the 1st Round & the Situation of the 2nd Round Trainees

The situation on the first phase trainees has not changed much, as those that are employed by the exporting companies have continued working.

Concerning the second round trainees, lots of companies have shown their interest to employ the trained weavers, where the following companies can be mentioned:-

- Salem's Design – it has already employed 5 of the women trainees,
- Yoas Tibebe – requested for 10 trainees, 5 female and 5 male, and they are in the process of screening currently,
- Nigest Ethiopia also has shown interest for additional 10 trainees; where this company was the first top employer from the first training round.

The remaining 25 trainees of the second round are in the process of organizing themselves to be organized in cooperatives, clusters. In this aspect, CAWEE has started closely working with the Ethiopian Government, particularly the Addis Ababa Regional Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency, where the Agency is facilitating the availability of working premises for those trained weavers.

Once the production premises is secured, taking it over from Sara Garment Designers & Manufacturers, CAWEE will hand over the weaving looms with all their accessories, equipment that was bought by the USAID/COMPWETE project funding, to the organized trained weavers.

4. Conclusion

This reporting month was the time that the project 'Connecting 100 Traditional Weavers to the Export Market' was finalized. As the training was completed in January 2013, the month of February 2013 was devoted for the preparations for the project closing event.

In this reporting month, CAWEE was fully involved in major activities like – confirmation of closing event venue, preparations of different promotional material, preparation of invitees list, dissemination of invitation cards and other related tasks focusing on the project closing event.

5. Photo Gallery of the Closing Event



Guests of honor and invited guests



Invited Guest of the closing event



Trainees at the closing event



The Handing over of certificates



The Handing over of certificates



Invited guests networking



Invited visiting the exhibition stands