

## **Success Story: Bachi Youth Club: Taking Responsibility for Tomorrow's Generation**

---

Ethiopia HIV/AIDS Care and Support Project  
February 2011

This report was made possible through support provided by the US Agency for International Development, under the terms of Contract No. 663-C-00-07-00408-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Agency for International Development.

---

HIV/AIDS Care and Support Program (HCSP)  
Management Sciences for Health  
784 Memorial Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
Telephone: (617) 250-9500  
[www.msh.org](http://www.msh.org)



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# HIV/AIDS Care and Support Program

## Success Story

### Balchi Youth Club: Taking Responsibility for Tomorrow's Generation

Alemu (extreme right), Wondiwosen, Masay, Yared and Alaye- some members of Balchi youth club



Photo by Temesgen Bentli

**“With self initiation and understanding our responsibility for tomorrow’s generation, we as volunteers have come together and established this club to serve the community” Alemu- community volunteer in Arerti.**

**“One as Thousand and Thousand as One: stopping HIV/AIDS through the power of voice and unity”- the youth club motto**

*“Before actively participating as members of Balchi Youth Club, we were all engaged in dangerous behaviors – chewing chat, alcohol abuse, gambling – you name it. Now we are agents of change”* says Wondiwosen Tibebe, a 20 year old member of the Balchi Youth club at Arerti Health Centre in Amhara region.

After their basic training in Debre Berhan, Alemu, a community volunteer and Wondiwosen were motivated to form a youth club with the objective of reaching out to youth and other community members through drama, poetry and song. In October 2009, they approached their local HAPCO office for the registration process. Although the request was initially rejected, the two youth were not deterred. They recruited sixteen more youth from their kebele and started conducting coffee ceremonies, as skill building workshops themselves to prepare for engagement with the wider community. Their local kebele office recognized their efforts and provided them with an office and some furniture. They developed an activity plan and organized for a colorful yet educative community event in Arerti town with the officials from HAPCO, Ministry of Cultural affairs and NGOS as guests of honor. Their potential to influence community behavior was recognized and HAPCO immediately issued them with a license to operate.

The youth lead by example; all the 45 members of the group know their HIV sero status. Through song, poetry and drama, the group is disseminating messages targeting HIV stigma and discrimination, traditional norms that condone gender inequity, reduction of risk behaviors, and promotion of PMTCT and ART adherence. Members of the community now regard these youth as a source of vital information regarding HIV/AIDS. At least 157 adults and 200 high school students have been tested for HIV as a result of the youth outreach program.