

Program Brief: Men and Boys Do Care Yenigat Weg Radio Program የንጋት ወግ ራዲዮ ንግግራም

Hiwot Ethiopia

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1. Introduction

Hiwot Ethiopia was initially established in 1995 as a youth club by fourteen young people who were committed to making a difference in sexual reproductive health (SRH)/HIV/AIDS and livelihoods. From this small beginning, Hiwot Ethiopia grew and developed into an association in 1997 and is now re-registered as an Ethiopian resident charity.

Given its beginnings, a major focus of Hiwot Ethiopia's work has been to raise awareness among young people about HIV and AIDS so that they can protect themselves from infection. Major activities have included raising awareness through community discussions and music and drama performances. In particular, Hiwot Ethiopia initiated the use of the traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony as a forum for discussing issues such as HIV, SRH, harmful traditional practices (HTPs) and gender. The organisation has also completed substantial work using the 'youth to youth' approach to establish other Anti-AIDS and SRH youth clubs and support their development and outreach activities to young people. Hiwot Ethiopia is particularly proud that a number of these youth clubs have since gone on to legally establish themselves as organisations in their own right. Hiwot Ethiopia has become well known for its pioneering work with boys and men to tackle youth HIV/AIDS, SRH, HTPs/CM. In particular, Hiwot Ethiopia's work on engaging men and boys has been recognised as an innovative and important contribution to achieving gender equality and reducing gender based violence (GBV), HTPs/CM and SRH problems, including HIV infections.

Hiwot Ethiopia has expanded its work into the area of child development, particularly child protection and has started raising awareness on the issue of child abuse and exploitation by using different media, establishing children's clubs (both in and out of schools) to provide forums in which children can discuss the issues of abuse/exploitation and providing mechanisms for abused children to be supported. As part of its child development work, it is also helping to improve school environments by improving safety for children and therefore the schools are better places to learn and grow. In addition, it provides children with school materials such as uniform and stationeries and has also established safe homes

to support disadvantaged rural girls to continue their education and to raise awareness about SRH and family planning (FP). Hiwot Ethiopia has also started working in new geographical areas, particularly four zones of Amhara region (Bahir Dar, North Wollo/Lalibela, East Gojam and North Shewa) where intensive work is taking place to change attitudes and practices relating to child marriage, child labour and sexual abuse.

Hiwot Ethiopia currently runs a number of projects under three programs: child development, sexual reproductive health/HIV/AIDS and livelihoods. Its focus on the engagement of men and boys in promoting gender was a new approach developed in 2005. Before this time, the issue of gender equality and SRH rights were only dealt with by focusing on the empowerment of women and girls as agents to bring about change. Hiwot Ethiopia runs different activities with men and boys in the country to advance gender equality which benefits all. Efforts to increase men and boys' engagement in preventing violence against women are expanding throughout the country.

Yenigat wog radio program is among the projects that Hiwot Ethiopia has been implementing since 2008. Motto of the project is men and boys do care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. The program focuses on increasing public recognition of the positive role of men boys in protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

2. Why male involvement

The 48th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women report by the Secretary-General provided an overview of the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality. It specifically focused on socialisation and education; and the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality in the labour market, the workplace; in sharing of family responsibilities (including caring roles), and in preventing HIV/AIDS. It emphasised that men can bring about change in attitudes, roles, relationships, access to resources and decision-making which are critical for achieving equality between women and men. It underlined the need for men to be actively involved in developing and implementing legislation and policies that foster gender equality, and in providing positive role models for other men.

The *Beijing Platform for Action* (1995) also emphasized the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality including the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities. It stressed that gender equality can only be achieved when men and women work together in partnerships, and that the principle of equality of women and men has to be integral to the socialisation process. The *Platform for Action* identified gender stereotypes as a major obstacle to the attainment of gender equality.

The International Conference on Population & Development/ICPD1994: the ICPD Programme of Action, sometimes referred to as the Cairo Consensus, was remarkable in its recognition that reproductive health and rights, as well as women's empowerment and gender equality are cornerstones of population and development programs. The Consensus is rooted in principles of human rights and respect for national sovereignty and various religious and cultural backgrounds.

3. Choosing the Strategy

Hiwot Ethiopia has chosen this strategy reflecting on the previous projects' experiences and learned lessons for the following reasons. First of all, as the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognises, children are – and should be – active subjects of rights, and the state authority, parties, institutions and parents/families have a non-transferable responsibility for creating and protecting the necessary conditions for the full exercise of these rights. Reflecting on this convention, Hiwot Ethiopia's program recognises the importance of the involvement and empowerment of boys, young men, and parents to promote the protection of community, especially children.

Secondly, involvement of boys and men in particular is relevant in the context of Ethiopian society where patriarchy is one of the essential social values determining many peoples' behaviour and idea. In most Ethiopian communities, fathers hold unrestricted power to make decisions on issues regarding households, including child bearing and education, while mothers are often the ones who are given the responsibility for bearing and development of children. This aspect of family roles can widely affect the relationship between children and parents negatively, often neglecting the wellbeing of children in many aspects. Thus, Hiwot Ethiopia's program recognizes that working with parents – particularly the fathers (i.e. decision makers of the family) – is an effective strategy to impact and improve the communication among men and women, the parenting skills/styles, and the protection of children within the households and communities.

Finally, participation of men in the effort to promote gender mainstreaming and gender equality is a topic of concern that is given too little attention and value. Gender equality is often perceived as an issue of women, while men are perceived to be privileged and/or not affected by the gender issues. In a patriarchal society like Ethiopia, men are assumed not to be involved and/or their attitudes and behaviour towards family and gender relationships difficult to change. This is counter productive as men are often perpetrators of violence against women, children and other men. Considering the major roles of men as decision makers in Ethiopia and other patriarchal societies, it is of importance to reconsider Hiwot Ethiopia's contribution to boys' and men's dominant (and sometimes violent/oppressive) attitudes and behaviours. Rather than judging their behaviours, we should understand the underlying cultural values and promote changes in the socialisation process of boys and appropriate gender norms.

4. Hiwot Ethiopia's experience on male involvement

Hiwot Ethiopia's focus on the engagement of men and boys in promoting a gender program is a new approach developed in 2005. Before this time, the issue of gender equality and SRH rights were dealt with by focusing on the empowerment of women and girls as agents to bring about a change. The first women's gender equality program was implemented in collaboration with IPAS Ethiopia in 2003.

Engaging Boys and Young Men was launched in the two sub-cities of Addis Ababa (Arada and Gulele sub-cities) with the support of Save the Children Sweden. They assisted through the learning process, and the development and implementation of the strategies over the past ten years.

Gender equity for HIV and violence prevention in Ethiopia, focusing on male normative behaviour, was implemented with the support of Engender Health/PEPFAR/USAID from 2008-2012. Male gender norms and social expectations about how men should behave have been shown to promote HIV risk and related behaviours such as partner violence. As a result of this intervention the male norms initiative had a few main positive effects. Firstly, young men participating in the interventions groups expressed more equitable gender norms. Secondly, participants from both intervention groups reported less violence. Finally, at the end of the project intervention, Hiwot Ethiopia learned that combined intervention was essential to bring about change.

Hiwot Ethiopia has partnered with 18 organisations that are supported by OAK Foundation that aims to ensure that the rights of children are fulfilled and protected.

The partners employ a strategy of mainstreaming male involvement to end sexual abuse. This program focuses on the potential influence that mainstreaming male involvement could have on ending child sexual abuse and exploitation in Ethiopia. As a result of this intervention, the partner organisations' staff capacity improved on conceptual understanding of male involvement, cleared any misunderstanding in translating the concept of male involvement into practice and committed to mainstream the issues in their existing project documents and strategic directions.

5. “Yenigat weg” radio program

“Yenigat weg” radio program is among the projects that Hiwot Ethiopia has been implementing since 2008 with the support of OAK Foundation. The motto of the program is “men and boys do care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation”. It aims to create an opportunity for public discussions to take place by providing information. In order to reach this aim, the program creates a radio program called “Yenigat Weg” which is broadcasted on Sheger Fm 102.1 since April 23, 2008 and Fanna FM 98.1 since March 28, 2013.

As a different means of media communication, public service announcements are also broadcasted for a minute in prime times to communicate to the public. It is broadcasted on Fana FM 98.1 and also Sheger FM 102.1

5.1 Theme

Theme of the program is “let’s protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation by promoting boys and men involvement”. This makes the program unique because it is the only radio program at this time in Ethiopia which focuses on *boys and men involvement* and entails working with men and boys as change agents in order to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

5.2 Purpose of the radio program

To increase public recognition of the positive role of men and boys in the protection of children from abuse, with a specific focus on sexual abuse and exploitation.

To increase collaboration between the radio programs, schools and other child focused organisations to promote the positive engagement of men in addressing child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation

5.3 Brand of the program

The program has its own brand starting from the theme music to the jingles in the middle of the interviews and discussions of programs. It has also its own logo consisting of a sunrise and a microphone on the left side, as can be seen in the below picture.



5.4 The issues covered on the program

Yenigat weg's main focus is to engage boys and men in the enhancement of public awareness to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation and other harmful behaviour. This is important as men are mostly considered the perpetrators and difficult to engage. Therefore, the focus is on:

- Positive roles males can play at home, in the community and at an institution level
- Change male gender, social and cultural norms
- Ending violence against children and women
- Preventing children from sexual abuses and exploitation

5.5 Approach

Approaches of the radio program are:

- Making the radio program interactive through interview, discussions, music, and short plays
- Public service announcements
- Social media
- Linking the radio program with the organisation's website
- Establishing a listeners group

5.6 Target Audience

Men and boys are our main targets to create a safe and protective environment for children and women at home, in the community and at an institution level.

Girls and women are also an important group to work together with in order to change male gender norms.

5.7 Media ethics

Media ethics requires that the best interest of the public be considered in any broadcast and therefore the focus is mainly on the limitation of harm. This often involves the withholding of certain details from reports such as the names of minor children, crime victims' names or information which might harm someone's reputation.

Insisting on accuracy is another aspect of media ethics that is important. This requires the cross-checking of facts and the consideration of the context and

circumstances so as to give precise information to the general public. When reporting on sexual violence against children, we should always ask “will the child victim and/or other potential child victim and the audience benefit from this story?”

Care should be taken not to re-victimise the victims by making him/her re-live events. It is also important to understand that sensationalising or exaggerating events has a damaging effect. Therefore the production team is always trying to keep stories objective and truthful. These are some of the media ethics that Hiwot Ethiopia follows while producing the radio program. Legal issues and cultural norms are also considered at all times.

5.8 Production team

The production is managed by the editorial team which has four members who have rich experience in radio production and communication. This team formally meets every month to plan radio program issues, comment on the broadcasted program and evaluate the program’s impact.

5.9 Promotion

There are different in house productions used to promote Yenigat Wog radio program. Raei (ራዲዮ) newspaper is printed and distributed to different government, NGO offices and beneficiaries. The Yenigat wog radio program logo and air time schedule is printed in the newspaper to promote the radio program. Stickers posted on vehicles, pocket calendars and CD stickers are also produced as a means of promoting the Radio program.

5.10 Monitoring

To monitor the radio program’s impact, different methods are used. One of the methods is collecting feedback from the audience. The radio program announces its telephone number at the end of each program and people call to give their comments. Additionally, a facebook page created with the name *Yenigat Wog* collects data through the number of viewers who *like* the page and *wall posts* on the page.

Listener groups have been established as a method for collecting feedback. The program establishes and strengthens listener groups in and out of school settings. The in-school listener groups have member students who listen to each broadcast, have a discussion about what they hear and submit

their feedback by a format prepared for this specific purpose. Out of school listener groups have members comprised from Women, Children and Youth Offices, community based organisations (Idirs), child led initiatives (CLIs), police and parents. They meet twice a week to discuss the programs broadcasted, and then submit their feedback. The production team collects these feedbacks and discusses the issues so as to ensure the quality of the production. By and large, we can conclude that the program has created a great revolution and awareness.



Listeners Group

5.11 Changes

Public attention: When the program was first started, it was hard to find people to share their experience. Now people often use their own initiative and call to request to be a guest on the program. This shows that the program has created public awareness and dialogue within the society.

Media engagement- It is clearly seen that other electronic and print media publications are giving attention to the issue of fatherhood, positive parenting and male engagement in making the environment safer to children.

Partners- since the format that the radio program follows is new and unique, it attracts the attention of large audiences. With the understanding of this fact, many partners make the approach/strategy part of their programs and are willing to work together with Hiwot Ethiopia.

5.12 Future Direction

There is an option to scale up the program and expand the coverage to reach a larger audience. Increasing the frequency of the program from weekly to twice a week or more is an option. It is also possible to add a new approach of a talk show or phone in program to make it more attractive and increase the audience.

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