

Community led Accelerated WASH (COWASH) gave birth to Women led WASH enterprises development in COWASH phase III.



Training Participants/April 2018/Photo credit/Melaku Tekola.

As part of our capacity building programme in our community, COWASH Ethiopia implemented a capacity building training workshop to over 20 participants (4 females) for Basona Worena Woreda and North Shewa zones in Amhara region. The training was conducted in Debre Birhan town from 16 to 17 April 2018 in attendance of regional representatives from Bureau of micro and small enterprise (MSE) Development Agency and Amhara Regional Support Unit (RSU). Training participants were withdrawn from Offices of Water, Health, Technical, Vocational and Enterprise Development Agency, Women & Children Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs and Municipal Office of the Basona Worena Woreda and North Shewa zone.

COWASH Ethiopia's Federal team, Gender and MSE Specialist, Meaza Kebede facilitated the training as a lead trainer and was supported by COWASH Amhara Regional team. Meaza focused the need to intentional inclusion of persons with disabilities in Women led MSEs. She further created synergy of COWASH programme of community participation and empowerment of women packaged through women led micro and small enterprise development in COWASH phase III programmes. Inclusion of persons with disability (PWD) and general highlight on organizational communications and social media engagement was also part and parcel of the training facilitated by COWASH communications Adviser. The training workshop provided a detailed orientations and practical guideline for establishment of Women-led Micro and Small Enterprises Development.

According to the lead Trainer, Meaza Kebede, the strategic objective of the training workshop is to roll out women led MSE guideline and establish need based WASH focused enterprise in COWASH Woredas in Ethiopia. Mrs. Meaza added “COWASH developed a guideline on how to establish Women led WASH MSE in COWASH Phase III programme. Before we developed the guideline, we did some assessment in five COWASH regions.” She complements “The assessment findings as well as the existing government policies on establishment of women led MSE shaped the content of the guideline”. After completion of the training, the overall outcome is to establish need based WASH enterprise not only in sanitation marketing or water scheme maintenance but any WASH enterprise that is context specific and depending on the need of the local community. To do this, the guideline clearly states what steps to follow and what precaution to be taken in the establishment of the WASH enterprise and COWASH takes a pride in facilitating this project jointly with our government partners.



Lead Trainer, Meaza Kebede, April 2018/Photo credit/Melaku Tekola.

According to the lead trainer, the reason for inclusion offices heads across all the sectors mentioned above is to secure political and technical support during the actual implementation. As this is a pilot project, COWASH is committed in making this endeavour a success story to scale up at a national level. COWASH believes that this ingenuity will not only build capacity but also create enabling environment for establishment of women led enterprise in the country. In our context, we envision to see at least 40% of women take active leadership in top management of the women led MSE. Membership of women led WASH enterprise necessities' at least two top managerial positions (Chairperson / Manager and Finance Head) are expected to be hold by Women.

Aside the training achievement the unique aspect of this training is change of attitude on participants with regards to utilization of finances in construction of shades. The Trainer elucidates “due to budget deficit, construction of shades was paused until they were inspired once again by the specific information they get out of the training”. The training also encourages them to ponder on innovative approaches towards resource mobilization. Asked what she would envisage after end of the training, Meaza said “My vision is to see well established, functional and profitable women led MSEs and scale it up across all woredas and regions”.



Support Trainers Tadese Chekol, and Melaku Tekola, Trainer on Communications /April 2018/Photo credit/Melaku Tekola.

Teshome Shenkut, Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs, Social Security Team Leader, North Shewa, said that “this training is unique of its kind that I ever attended in terms of addressing two segments of society that have been neglected in my Woreda”. Teshome explained “the guideline focuses on women and persons with disabilities and provides lessons on the various types of business model for MSE, how to establish and support the enterprise”.

Erstu Teferi, Water and Energy Development Office Head, Basona Woreda, said that “the new lesson from the training is the idea of sanitation marketing and inclusion of women and persons with disabilities in all WASH MSE enterprises”. He added “spare part provision for water scheme maintenance is a unique idea that doesn’t exist in my zone...I haven’t seen any project idea that helps to maintain the existing water schemes”. He added “most NGOs come up with new projects and constructions; however, the idea of maintenance of existing water schemes through MSE, is not only unique but it also builds capacity of the MSEs, promote local ownership on the already constructed water schemes and helps sustainability”.

Both Erstu and Teshome, believed that the training built their capacity to establish MSE in their own respective woredas, provided them with pertinent skills and knowledge on how to establish and engage women led WASH MSEs and work with various actors. They also revealed that the guideline provides specific information on various equipment needs, standards and designs for establishment of shades. Asked what they would do in the future, Teshome said “I can’t wait until I run to establish and make this MSE’s a success story in my region” and on the other hand Erstu said “I will work with all stakeholders to recruit the right candidate for women led WASH enterprise and will conduct the same training”. In conclusion, they both applaud COWASH for involving the experts and bureau heads in one

platform to avoid confusions in the work ahead. Both Teshome and Erstu suggested market linkages and revolving funds to be considered for MSE start-ups in the future.

COWASH Ethiopia genuinely continues its effort to serve our community through enhanced synergy and programme integration and work towards innovative project ideas that targets marginalized segments.