WE ARE

WEEMA
INTERNATIONAL

FALL 2015

WELCOME TO OUR FALL NEWSLETTER

Water plays a very prominent role in the history of WEEMA International. Yet, water is only one aspect of the wholeness of what we do. In fact, the name WEEMA is an expression of wholeness in a local Ethiopian dialect, and that is our goal; to bring wholeness to communities. Our focus areas are Water, Education, Economic empowerment and Medical care. WEEMA works in Alliance with local partners in southwestern Ethiopia who determine the needs of their own communities. We take a holistic approach to international development by strengthening existing systems, nurturing local talent, and encouraging community feedback. This first issue of our newsletter will focus on the impact we have made in bringing clean water to thousands of people. In future issues we will focus on the other aspects of our work to bring a more complete understanding of our projects to our supporters.

MEET THE WEEMA STAFF

Tewodros (Teddy) Belachew, WEEMA’s Ethiopia Country Director who is based in Addis Ababa, and Lianna Tabar, our Director of Operations and Programs Technical Advisor who is based in the US, make a formidable team leading WEEMA’s programs. They work together to ensure that each project WEEMA undertakes is built upon a genuine and transparent relationship between the community and the decision-makers. Teddy is the trusted eyes and ears on the ground, ensuring efficient use of resources and identifying focuses for future projects. Lianna collaborates to fill in the gaps, update operational plans and budgets, and communicate with US partners. Lianna describes the working relationships of WEEMA partners in the US as multiple mechanisms operating in unison; “Communicating and collaborating across continents, oceans, culture... is far from easy. Yet on both sides, we are patient, persistent and supportive to one another to make the best decisions possible for WEEMA and our beneficiaries.” Teddy discusses how the differing perspectives serve to benefit WEEMA: “I know more about the local context, and Lianna does well on the international one. I believe this has been very important for the effective and efficient undertaking of WEEMA’s work.” Together they work tirelessly to benefit the community.

Teddy was born and raised in Mudula, Ethiopia. He graduated from Mudula High School in 2000 and then attended Debub University where he received a degree in public health in 2004. Teddy has since obtained a Master of Public Health degree from Debre Markos University.

Lianna joined WEEMA after living and working in Ethiopia for 18 months as the in-country director of Kissito Healthcare International. Lianna received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of San Diego, and her Master of Public Health with a concentration in International Health from Boston University. She also has extensive public health experience in other countries, including Uganda where she served as Program Manager for the Massachusetts General Hospital Division of Global Health and Human Rights.

Lianna Tabar & Liz McGovern

COMMUNICATING AND COLLABORATING ACROSS CONTINENTS, OCEANS, CULTURE... IS FAR FROM EASY. YET ON BOTH SIDES, WE ARE PATIENT, PERSISTENT AND SUPPORTIVE TO ONE ANOTHER TO MAKE THE BEST DECISIONS POSSIBLE FOR WEEMA AND OUR BENEFICIARIES.
WEEMA was founded in 2011 as Mudula Water to bring clean water via a gravity flow pipeline to over 10,000 people living in Mudula, Ethiopia. In completing this project we witnessed firsthand additional needs in the community and the home of many Ethiopian adoptees living in the United States. Driven by local interest and involvement we expanded services into other parts of southwestern Ethiopia. Our model helps communities identify their needs, employees and community members in meeting those needs and continues to monitor the communities moving forward.

**Koshinda**
- **Location**: Mudula Town, Tembaro Woreda, Kembata Tembaro Zone, SNNPR
- **Date of Construction**: Initial 2012, extension 2015, Repairs scheduled 2015-16
- **Beneficiaries**: 10,000
- **Type**: Gravity Flow
- **Number of Water Points**: 8
- **Length**: 10 miles

The Koshinda Water Maintenance and Extension Project is where it all started for WEEMA. We began construction of a pipeline in the spring of 2012. In early 2015, showing our ongoing commitment to the region, WEEMA began a project to further improve the quality of water by performing maintenance work; which included disinfecting, plastering and fencing. We also extended the existing line 5 miles and added three water points. In the near future WEEMA will undertake repairs to damages to the line caused by road construction.

**Debolebole**
- **Location**: Mudula Town, Tembaro Woreda, Kembata Tembaro Zone, SNNPR
- **Date of Construction**: 2013
- **Beneficiaries**: Entire project supports 17,884, WEEMA work on one of three lines supports 10,000
- **Type**: Gravity Flow
- **Number of Water Points**: 5
- **Length**: 4 miles

There were three pre-existing lines before WEEMA began work. One line was never fully functional due to pump failure. WEEMA upgraded the failed water system at Debolebole by purchasing a new hydroelectric water pump. Due to road construction, this line was also damaged. WEEMA has budgeted to repair this pipeline as soon as the construction is complete.

**WEEMA’S EVOLUTION TO WATER**

**Q** Why is Bachira II different than other water projects we have undertaken?

**A** WEEMA will be implementing the project with Water Action. Water Action is an indigenous NGO established in Ethiopia in 1995, “specialized in water and environment duty of solving water, sanitation, hygiene and environmental problems in Ethiopia.” They are well respected and have a history of success. Thus during this project, WEEMA will not only be constructing clean water access for communities that are lacking such resources, but we will also be learning from our partners as we together implement a more integrated project.

**Q** Is it bigger? Are we doing something different in our approach?

**A** Yes, it is bigger. The estimated population to benefit from this project is 21,384, versus our largest project to date benefited 10,000 people. This project is expected to take two years in total, during which not only construction will take place but also education and training within the community to improve sanitation and hygiene practices; and to establish and mentor local water committees to maintain the water points after our construction is complete.

**Q** Describe the integrative approach?

**A** While our previous water projects led water committees, this project will also include capacity building among government Water Office staff and volunteer community members to maintain the water system after construction is complete. Additionally, we will implement special training in the community to improve hygiene and sanitation behaviors. It will be community members who take ownership of both the water system maintenance and promotion of hygiene to further improve health outcomes.
WEEMA was founded in 2011 as Mudula Water to bring clean water via a gravity flow pipeline to over 10,000 people living in Mudula, Ethiopia. Mudula is a rural community and the home of many Ethiopian adoptees living in the United States. In completing this project we witnessed firsthand additional needs in the community. Driven by local interest and involvement we expanded services into other parts of southwestern Ethiopia. Our model helps communities identify their needs, supports employees and community members in meeting those needs and continues to monitor the communities moving forward.

**Bachira Phase I**

**Location** Bachira Kebele, Tembaro Woreda, Kembata Tembaro Zone, SNNPR

**Date of Construction** Late 2014-early 2015

**Beneficiaries** 5,000

**Type** Gravity Flow

**Number of Water Points** 4

**Length** 2 miles

The Bachira and the Surrounding Communities’ Gravity Water Supply Extension Project was construction WEEMA undertook on an existing pipeline. WEEMA built four water points for the population of residents; in addition to three wash basins and cattle troughs for livestock (pictured below). We repaired leaks in the reservoir, and built a washing gate and cover on the existing water cap at the source of the spring.

**Bachira Phase II**

**Location** Tembaro Woreda, Kembata Tembaro Zone, SNNPR

**Date of Construction** Anticipated January 2016-January 2018

**Beneficiaries** Estimated 21,384

**Type** Gravity Flow

**Number of Water Points** Minimum 16

**Length** Minimum 10 miles

In the Bachira and the Surrounding Kebeles’ WASH Project WEEMA will install pipes, collection chamber, water reservoirs, water points and valve boxes, river crossing structures, anchor blocks, as well as promotion of hygiene-sanitation, and community capacity development interventions. This project will have a more integrated approach than past WEEMA-water projects.

**Farawocha**

**Location** Farawocha Kebele, Boloso Bombe Woreda, Wolayita Sodo Zone, SNNPR

**Date of Construction** October 2015-March 2016

**Beneficiaries** Estimated 22,988

**Type** Gravity Flow

**Number of Water Points** 7

**Length** To be determined

Farawocha Spring Rehabilitation and Extension Project will repair and extend a failed water system. The system failed primarily due to inadequate construction and a flooded pump. The repair will again provide water to seven water points serving four rural kebeles. WEEMA will purchase and replace the damaged pump, protect the spring box permanently by constructing protective layers, build an additional water point, and connect it to the existing line to increase water coverage in the population. WEEMA will monitor and evaluate the project in collaboration with the local Water Office.

**SPOTLIGHT ON WATER**

**WEEMA’S EVOLVING APPROACH TO WATER PROJECTS**

*Q* Why is Bachira II different than other water projects we have undertaken?

*A* WEEMA will be implementing the project with a new partner, Water Action. Water Action is an indigenous NGO established in Ethiopia in 1995, “specialized in water and environmental sectors with a primary duty of solving water, sanitation, hygiene and environmental problems and have a history of success. Thus not only is continuing our success of building clean water access for communities that are lacking such resources, but we will also be learning from our partners as we together implement a more integrated project with additional components.

*Q* Is it bigger? Are we doing something different in our approach?

*A* Yes, it is bigger. The estimated population to benefit from this project is 21,384, versus our largest project to date benefited 10,000 people. This project is expected to take two years in total, during which not only construction will take place but also education within the community to improve sanitation and hygiene practices; and to establish and mentor local Water Office staff and volunteer community members to maintain the water points after our construction is complete.

*Q* Describe the integrative approach?

*A* While our previous water projects have also involved community-led water committees, this project will give more emphasis and time to capacity building among government Water Office staff and volunteer community members to maintain the functioning of the water system after construction is complete. Additionally, the project will implement special training in the community to improve hygiene and sanitation behaviors. It will be community members who take ownership of both the water system maintenance and promotion of hygiene and sanitation to further improve the health outcomes for the population.
BOSTON FOUNDATION HOSTS WEEMA EVENT

On the evening of September 17, 2015, more than 70 WEEMA supporters visited the Boston Foundation to hear about the work of WEEMA International and to sneak a preview of our new video. This event was moderated by WEEMA friend Tanya Jones and featured Executive Director Liz McGovern, who delivered a powerful speech about WEEMA’s work to date. Habtamu Lamore, a long-time WEEMA collaborator, also spoke of his experience going back to Mudula, his hometown, and working with the community to identify projects that WEEMA has since undertaken to have the largest impact on the area. Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean closed out the evening speaking about how important funding is to WEEMA, stating “there is no better way you could spend your money” than to support WEEMA.