WEEMA was founded in 2011 to provide water in Ethiopia. To date, our repairs and construction of water systems have provided over 15,000 people with reliable clean water sources. Now, in light of Ethiopia’s worst drought in decades, this work has become even more imperative to save lives and empower communities. Our in-country staff have been working tirelessly to prioritize needed interventions and we are increasing our water work five-fold this year!

Projects scheduled for 2016:

- Debolebole spring and pipeline project will serve 41,800 people. It will repair a 65 water-point pipeline and extend it to include 3 new water points and a cattle trough as well as construct a new water reservoir.
- Farawocha water project will repair 7 water points and add another serving nearly 23,000 individuals.
- Bachira II Water Pipeline, which is scheduled to be completed in 2017, will construct 16 new water points bringing clean water access to a community of 21,384.

SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WEEMA programs continue to provide sustainable support to thousands of individuals and families in Southwestern Ethiopia. WEEMA is gearing up to launch several new programs in Spring of 2016, some in response to immediate circumstances and many collaborative projects that involve our alliance with the community as well as other non-governmental organizations working in Ethiopia. This issue will highlight how the programs that you support continue to empower families in long-term sustainable ways, they bring much-needed water and literacy projects, and increased medical care to Ethiopian communities.
One of WEEMA's goals is to increase the number of households with sustainable livelihoods in the KT Zone. We empower individuals by incorporating modern techniques into existing systems and traditions, like honey production.

WEEMA began our beekeeping project in early 2014. Initially we equipped and trained 40 local beekeepers to transition to modern, high-yielding hives by constructing improved hives from local materials. Working with the local government Agriculture Office, WEEMA has since continued capacity building for these beekeepers. The annual income of most WEEMA beekeepers has doubled thanks to the new hives.

Over the next 18 months, WEEMA will continue to support beekeeping by training community members, developing other bee-based products to sell, and constructing additional hives.

WEEMA's Literacy Project is taking early child literacy learning from books, pencils and paper to digital/mobile learning within a rural Ethiopian public library setting. Our project launched March 30, 2016 in Mudula Town and teaches children to read with the use of tablets donated by WEEMA.

In some parts of Ethiopia, 50% of children still lack basic reading and writing skills even after attending school for several years. WEEMA will use these tablets as a tool to achieve high quality education by teaching the most marginalized children in the community to learn to read and write on their own.

WEEMA is implementing this project in partnership with Selam Company, an Ethiopian consulting company that supports education and literacy projects. This project will also collaborate with scientists in MIT and Tufts University under their Curious Learning program. A total of 80 young people will participate over the next 12 months. During the initial phase of the project 40 children will receive tablets.

WEEMA is happy to support a project that opens the mind of a child to a potential lifetime of learning, personal growth, and critical and creative thinking. The development of literacy skills fuels discovery, productivity, and innovation, which drive economic growth and social development.
In 2015 WEEMA International collaborated with We Care Solar to provide solar lighting to health facilities by installing 23 Solar Suitcases in Hadiya Zone and two in Halaba Special Woreda. The light provided by Solar Suitcases allows healthcare professionals to deliver babies during the night and increase the safety for the mothers and infants. Installations were extremely successful, despite difficult weather conditions and dispersed geographical location/remoteness of the facilities.

The importance of the electricity that the Solar Suitcases provide in labor and delivery rooms cannot be overstated. The electricity they provide has a profound effect on the people whose lives we touch.

It was a bright day for the last installation in Hadiya Zone at the Mirabhomma Health Center. WEEMA Program Officer Nigist Sbsebie was sitting on the bench on the MCH block waiting for health staff when a pregnant mother arrived. She looked upset and told Nigist she felt sick. When asked what exactly happened and she said that she was carrying too much water in a jerrican and that she hadn’t felt her baby move since. As this was her fifth child, she knew this was a bad sign.

She told Nigist she was 6 months along and started crying. Nigist assured her that we would help her and called the midwife.

The midwife arrived and we used a new piece of technology, the Fetal Doppler, to check the baby’s health. This machine runs off the electricity generated by the Solar Suitcases, and allows healthcare professionals to search for the baby’s heartbeat. Upon hearing a soft murmur coming from the machine, the mother was all smiles. Nigist asked her if she felt better, and she explained how happy and grateful she was. This was the midwife’s first time using the Fetal Doppler as well, and she was overjoyed at the technology and how it allowed her to confirm the baby’s health.

WEEMA’s Solar Suitcases will continue to make high quality healthcare accessible to individuals, day or night.
GETTING TO KNOW WHERE WE WORK
THE SOUTHERN NATION NATIONALITIES AND PEOPLE’S REGION OF ETHIOPIA, (SNNPR)

In Ethiopia, locations are divided from largest to smallest, like country to state to town. Here’s how that division works:

Country → Region → Zone → Woreda → Kebele

Ethiopia → SNNPR → Hadiya → Soro → Jhukera

Where we work in Hadiya Zone

WEEMA has installed solar suitcases to allow health centers to function at night across the region. This map is an approximation of our work to date.

ALLIANCE
Our growing in country staff

For WEEMA, partnering with the community means hiring community members as employees. Our in-country staff are a big part of the alliance we forge that allows our work to be so effective. They are our eyes and ears on the ground, and have an in-depth understanding of the context of each project. In the past year our staff has grown from 6 in Ethiopia to over 50. Jobs vary from our Addis home office staff to self help group social workers to construction managers. We are very excited to continue to grow and sustain the important work we are doing.

WEEMA staff gathered in March for their first annual retreat.