A SHORT REPORT
ON
EXPERIENCE SHARING BETWEEN
CAREGIVERS IN HAWASSA
AND
KENYAN GROOTS CARE GIVERS DELEGATE

December, 2010
Hawassa, Ethiopia
Ato Getnet Kassahun, Executive Director of SHAFON warmly welcomes the participants attended on the experience sharing, and briefly described the objective as to Share information and experience between the Kenyan Groots Caregivers delegate and Ethiopian Caregivers working with OSSA, Medan Acts Hawassa and Mary joy who are member organizations of SHAFON.

He thanked and introduced the Groots Kenyan delegate Mrs Jael (Programme Coordinator) who came after a long journey to Hawassa to share their experience.

In his speech the three member organizations caregivers attended on this meeting are caregivers who are working effectively in and around Hawassa. He mentioned in his speech that caregivers are unheard heroes who gave themselves to others give more than they have to revive life again.

He underlined such a meeting will help to strengthen the initiatives SHAFON took to establish the first caregivers alliance (Association) in order to pay a real attention and publicity for these voiceless but strong caregivers who gave themselves for the wellness of others (bedridden PLHIVS), most of them neglected by their relatives. He finally opened the floor for Mrs Jael for further discussion.
Mrs Jael started her speech by thanking the organizer SHAFON giving her a chance to share Groots Kenyan Caregivers experience to fellow caregivers in the Ethiopia. She continued describing the achievements and challenges of Groots Kenyan Caregivers Alliance from the date of its inception.

Some the achievements she mentioned are:-

- Groots Kenyan Caregivers Alliance was established in 2003 and legally registered and completely started functioning in 2005.
- Funding opportunities increased from time to time for HBC activities.
- Supports are given based on the interest of the needy ones and HBC providers
- Duplication of efforts avoided in many parts of its intervention areas
- Caregivers are highly involved in strategies development
- Strong community groups who had the capacity to develop project proposals and lobby funds from different partners were formed. These groups even supports other in developing proposals
- They are implementing their projects in 6 provinces out of the 8 provinces in Kenya
- They already organized the Alliance at the district level in all the 6 districts and continued to build a strong movement of caregivers.
Some of the challenges she mentioned are:-

- Forming an alliance was not an easy task, many of the caregivers demanded money immediately after its formation.
- Some of the caregivers dropped out when they didn’t get the benefit they expected after its formation.
- Not being visionary to meet the goals and objectives of the alliance are some of the challenges they faced.

Ato Asamre Sahilu and Ato Tewdros Ketsela SHAFON’s Communication & Public Relation Officer and Senior Programme Manager respectively tried to translate, for Ethiopian caregivers in Hawassa, interchangeably what Mrs Jael said in Ethiopian official & local language “Amharic”.

After Mrs Jael presentation & the two translators, most of the caregivers participated in the meeting exceedingly appreciated Mrs Jael visit to Hawassa and the recognition she gave to them. Some of the participants forwarded some questions for Mrs Jael. Some of the questions raised were:-

- Caregivers high interest to be benefited from the alliance may disintegrate the union which we are going to establish. So, how can we manage if we face such challenges in the future?
- Is the alliance should be lead by strong, committed, and highly educated persons?
- What is the benefit of forming the alliance?
- What will be the role and responsibilities of caregivers in the alliance?
• Some of caregivers who completed their mission and graduated from the hosted organizations feel as they were abandoned and neglected. What should have to be done to avoid such feelings?

• Officials are the one responsible for recruiting HBC givers in our context. If the alliance is responsible to do such a task conflict may arise between local officials and the alliance. If this is happen, how can you manage to avoid such a challenges?

Mrs Jael started responding for the questions raised by expressing Groots Kenya experience how they register and accept members using the 8 steps criteria’s they developed for membership registration. Regarding the qualified personnel, she replied better persons who are responsible and committed to manage and serve the alliance selected from the members themselves.

She briefly described using a chart, how the HBC Alliance networking in Groots Kenya from village to district level looks like

![Diagram of HBC Alliance networking in Groots Kenya from village to district level](image)
She mentioned Groots Kenya Alliance establishment was planned immediately after the 2003 ICASA meeting held in Kenya. Then, they formed a task force who is responsible to facilitate the realization of the alliance formation. After the alliance was established, its first mission was to raise awareness among caregivers from village to district level, to come and join the alliance. Subsequently, they performed a lot of tasks including capacity building trainings to ensure caregivers to provide the service effectively & efficiently.

She described representatives are assigned at each level to actively participate on the alliance matters and decisions. She underlined the role of the caregivers must be providing the service that they are voluntarily engaged to serve the community is as a mandatory. The alliance and its’ leaders should have to make visible their members and their work, and create attention and publicity to be heard for these voiceless strong caregivers who gave themselves for the wellness of others.

Ato Getnet (Executive Director of SHAFON) also emphasized considering Medan Acts experience regarding caregivers as an example. Caregivers who hosted in this organization only stay for three years and then graduated with their recognition from this organization. This doesn’t mean that they are not continuing providing the HBC service they loved and as a member of the alliance. They are graduated from the organization, but not from the community. There are a lot of people demanding their support and still they are providing the care giving services for the needy ones.

Ato Tewdros Ketse also added by saying care giving is a life time commitment, and some of the caregivers steel feel they are abandoned & neglected. So, that’s why we believe and advocate the establishment of this alliance will leverage the caregivers initiation to work strongly & effectively.

Regarding the recruitment challenges, Mrs Jael expressed her view as saying; such a challenge may exist every where, even this happened in Kenya. The only solution to
avoid such a challenge is building good relationship with the local or concerning institutions rather than individual officials. Make everything formal by requesting with written letter and taking a minute for every decisions made. Besides, it is advisable to have proper documentation and to organize a file on both sides. She also pointed out that, with the intention of benefit even chiefs in Kenya selecting their wives to be caregivers. But, we told them their mistakes and tried to convince them to recruit active and committed appropriate caregivers. In doing so, we tried to minimize such confronts.

Ato Getnet vividly expressed, the alliance we are going to form even expected to feed caregivers to NGOs who are providing HBC services to the needy ones. SHAFON can also facilitate and encourage its member organizations to recruit HBC providers who are members of the alliance. He also added the main intention from your presence expected to provide the service for the needy, in the course you may get any benefit supposed to be yours’. That’s how the two caregivers, W/o Sada from OSSA and W/o Gete from Mary Joy became benefited as being a permanent staffs of these two organizations. So, you should have to focus on providing the service instead of being receiving benefit.

He also added, SHAFON will facilitate and arrange discussion events on continual basis with officials on ways to support caregivers and how to avoid any challenges that will arise during the course of events.

The participants forwarded their opinions and feeling regarding the experience sharing discussion. One of the caregiver expressed as she was felt very happy with the overall discussion, and the discussion makes her everything clear especially the discomfort she felt regarding the retired caregivers.

The participants convey their future expectation and the way forward as
• Similar experience sharing programs should have to be arranged on a regular basis.
• Events should have to be arranged for retired caregivers to share their ample experience.
• Experience sharing visit to Groots Kenya should have to be arranged for Ethiopian caregivers.

Mrs Jael emphasized that caregivers and other stakeholders should have to work hand in hand and strengthen the efforts made. Besides, in the name of Groots Kenya she promised to continue their support in strengthening this infant alliance till stand on its own.

Before officially closing the meeting, Ato Getnet expressed what SHAFON and the caregivers alliance will expected to be done and what will be the next steps. In his remark he pointed out that SHAFON formulated a project proposal and won a grant an amount 8,100.00 USD (133,650 Ethiopian Birr) from Huairou Commission to strengthen the position of Home-Based Caregivers Alliance. He also mentioned the activities of the project to be implemented by SHAFON and the caregivers alliance starting from January 2011 will be:

• Mapping of HBC providing organizations and caregivers (Data collection) from 30 NGOs member organizations to SHAFON with active participation of caregivers
• Developing draft constitution for the Alliance
• Consultation on the draft constitution with the presence of Hawassa based caregivers

• Conducting Regional meeting:- to consult on the significance of forming the alliance, to approve the alliance constitution, to introduce the draft HBC guideline developed, to nominate caregivers alliance board members from the caregivers themselves and further to develop annual plan and strategies for the alliance,

• Identifying and documenting good practices of the caregivers are the activities that could be implemented throughout the project period.

Finally Ato Getnet officially closed the day’s meeting by thanking all the participants for their active participation and for their promise to work hand in hand to realize the objective of the alliance.