

# **Center for Accelerated Women's Economic Empowerment** **(CAWEE)**

## **Profile**

*January 14, 2016*

### **1. Background:**

The Center for African Women Economic Empowerment (CAWEE) was established in 2004, registered under the Ministry of Justice, as a non-profit, non-governmental organization. Starting 2014, CAWEE changing its name to Center for Accelerated Women's Economic Empowerment (CAWEE) was registered as a membership organization, licensed under the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade.

The vision of CAWEE is to create globally competitive core women entrepreneurs class in Ethiopia. Thus, the mission of the Center is building the capacities of women in business, with a focus to export market operating at different levels, through the provision of different kinds of support services.

The membership of CAWEE targets the following five sectors:

- Agribusiness ( coffee and honey),
- Textiles/Garment/Hand-weaving/Hand-made Shoe,
- Leather (with a focus to fashion accessories and give away items),
- Gemstones and Jewelry and
- Services (Tourism, Export Management, Training, IT Services...).

CAWEE mainly works in supporting and promoting its members, with particular focus to export promotion.

The Center's other focus activity targets working on value-chains through the provision of technical skills/marketable skills to grassroots women (the poorest of the poor) and connect them to markets through women owned and managed Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), existing and emerging/potential exporting companies, where in this respect the Center works on value-chains of different sectors with the ultimate purpose of empowering the supply capacity of the exporting SME companies.

In this process of working on value-chains, CAWEE works in the following nine priority sectors (sectors that are of priority to Ethiopia):

- Hand-spinning (using modern spinning wheels),
- Hand weaving (using modern weaving looms),
- Embroidery, Crochet Works, Hand and Machine Knitting,
- Fabric Dyeing and Printing,
- Gemstones and Jewelry,
- Basketry,
- Leather (with a focus to fashion accessories and give away items),

- Coffee (focusing on Ethiopian specialty coffee in connecting exporting companies with women out growers supplying to exporting companies) and
- Honey (connecting exporting companies with women out grower farmers/out growers supplying to exporting companies).

Parallel to the provision of marketable technical skills, CAWEE works in connecting those trained women and young girls to high end markets, both domestic and export markets through existing and potential/emerging women exporters and other marketing channels, i.e. from grassroots to high end stores.

In working on those value-chains, working on the business model of connecting the trained grassroots' women to women in export operating SMEs, where one sector is feeding/supplying the other, CAWEE has proved such business model is working and is ready for replication to bring out multiplier effects.

## **2. Past Projects Accomplished:**

In the past years, 2004-2015, funded by different development partners, CAWEE was able to work on the following four major projects.

### ***I. International Trade Center (ITC)***

CAWEE served as a Country Focal Office for a program called "ACCESS! for African Business Women in International Trade," program financed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and executed by the International Trade Center (ITC), 2005-2011, that involved two project phases. The Executive Director of CAWEE served as the ACCESS! Focal Point.

The major activities in the ACCESS! Program included:

- Accreditation of international trainers and certified business councilors, that built the national in-house capacity,
- Providing trainings in international trade,
- Providing business counseling services,
- Providing product development services,
- Companies participation in international trade shows and
- Establishing market linkages through Business to Business (B2B) meetings.

In this ACCESS! Program, over 400 companies, women owned and managed were able to benefit (<http://www.womenexporters.com/access/Exporters-Profiles/>) where some of the beneficiaries profiles is posted in ACCESS! Website and had also news coverage on Ethiopian companies' participation: ([www.womenexporters.com/access/News](http://www.womenexporters.com/access/News))

## **II. PACT Program Partner**

CAWEE was also involved in capacity building of Ethiopian women exporters through product development, market promotion, preparation of marketing materials and participation in international trade shows. In a program called “PACT: Program for building African Capacity for Trade”, a country program implemented by the Ministry of Trade & Industry, where CAWEE was a joint partner, six handloom companies, all owned & managed by women, went through processes of product development, market promotion and preparations of marketing materials, for ten consecutive months, and the companies participated in trade shows in Montreal and Toronto, Canada, in May 2007, which was an entry point for the companies into the Canadian market.

CAWEE also organized business award event. The event was special because it happened in the year, when Ethiopia was celebrating its Millennium and it was after that, the event was named as a “**Millennium Award**” for women exporters in the hand loom sub-sector. The Millennium Award was unique in that the companies were recognized and were awarded at the National Palace, by the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in February 2008.

## **III. Spanish NEPAD Fund:**

CAWEE participated in conducting action oriented researches on challenges encountered by women in business, 2008-2009. The research paper is titled “Researches and Consultative Forums Findings on Challenges Women Face in Business” by Nigest Haile and Yared Fekade published on December 2009.

The study focused on the following five focus areas:

- Challenges Facing Small and Medium Enterprises Owned by Women Entrepreneurs in Selection and Acquisition of Commercial and Industrial Premise,
- Women Entrepreneurs Associations in Ethiopia: Opportunities and Challenges,
- Challenges in Financing Women’s Businesses,
- Barriers Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Developing Products and Establishing Services for Export Marketing and
- The Perspective of Women Business Owners in Trade in Services.

The research findings are compiled in a booklet and disseminated to all the concerned stakeholders, including policy makers, policy executing organizations and research centers and universities, serving as reference materials. The soft copy of the document is also posted on CAWEE’s website: [www.cawee-ethiopia.org](http://www.cawee-ethiopia.org).

## **IV. EU Funding:**

CAWEE was able to secure grant funding from the following two EU institutions in the years between 2010 to 2012, where major activities of those fundings focused mainly in complementing the initiatives of the ITC ACCESS! Program.

**a. EU Pro-invest Fund:**

In this funding CAWEE worked with partners of two other countries: Tanzania – Small Enterprises Development Organization (SIDO) and Uganda - Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited (UWEAL).

Major tasks accomplished in this project included;

- Capacity building of women exporters (existing, potential or emerging exporters) through the provision of trainings in international trade and business counseling services,
- Exporting companies took part at different international trade shows,
- Trade missions were organized into different countries, in Africa and Europe, for exposure visits and experience sharing,
- Award event was organized for women exporters with outstanding export performance, where this happened at the Ethiopian Presidential Palace, the President of Ethiopia awarding six companies at the time Ethiopia was celebrating its millennium, the award named after it “**Millennium Award of Women Entrepreneurs of Ethiopia**”,
- This project’s accomplishment was evaluated by an external consultant, which proved the excellent accomplishment of the project.

In this EU Pro-invest Program, over 150 companies, women owned and managed SMEs and associations of women entrepreneurs benefited.

**b. EU - Center for Development of Enterprises (CDE):**

This was a grant fund secured from the Center for Development of Enterprises (CDE) to complement the initiatives of the ITC ACCESS! Program, 2011-2012.

*The major tasks accomplished in this project included:*

- Capacity building of women exporters (existing, potential or emerging exporters) through the provision of trainings in international trade and business counseling services,
- Exporting companies took part at different international trade shows,
- Trade mission was organized with in Africa, for exposure visit and experience sharing.

In this EU CDE Program, over 90 companies, women owned and managed SMEs, and associations of women entrepreneurs benefited.

## V. **USAID/ COMPETE**

With financial support secured from USAID/COMPETE (Competiveness and Trade Expansion Program), 2012-2013, CAWEE was able to successfully accomplish a project “**Connecting 100 Traditional Weavers to the Export Market**”.

Major tasks accomplished in this project:

- Provided marketable technical skills training in hand weaving to the traditional hand - weavers, out of which 32 were young women. Most of the trainees are employed in exporting companies and some of them are working in groups receiving continuous product orders from exporting companies,
- This project was a breakthrough for CAWEE in building its capacity to plan for a huge project of empowering fifteen hundred women and young girls.

### 3. **Current Project on the Pipe-Line:**

The project “**Connecting 1,500 Women and Young Girls to the Export Market**”, where the owner of this project is the Office of the First Lady of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, CAWEE is identified as the lead implementing organization.

What makes this project unique from the rest of the other projects is the mix of its project partners, where concerned government offices, women owned SMEs targeting high end domestic as well as export markets, associate partners (Women’s Commercial Bank: Enat Bank, Kuriftu Ethiopian Cultural Village, Associations of Women Entrepreneurs, etc.). The project was able to attract multiple development partners and donors, like: UNDP Ethiopia, Governments of Canada and Japan, World Vision Ethiopia and others.

Major tasks that already started to be accomplished:

- Identifying and securing project partners and associate partners,
- Official launch of the project on February 2014,
- First round of technical skills training for the project was launched on July 2014,
- In the process of connecting the trainees to markets, some of the sectors have started feeding each other (spinners providing to weavers, knitters, to those involved in dyeing, etc.)
- In connecting the trainees to the existing export market through women involved in SMEs and other sells outlets, encouraging results are achieved (trained women processing gemstones, spinning, weaving, hand knitting, etc.) are receiving orders from SMEs exporting companies.),

- Exporting SMEs are building their supply side capacity and are expanding their market base, in both domestic and export market outlets,
- Concerned development partners are taking initiatives to replicate the initiative taken by this project
- Project under progress.

#### 4. CAWEE Staff:

In implementing its activities, recently CAWEE has a staff of twenty (20) people, where this number of the staff will increase when CAWEE continues to work on more projects.

<b>CAWEE's Staff Members (Current)</b>		
<b>No</b>	<b>Positions/Title</b>	<b>No. of Staff</b>
1	Executive Director	1
2.	Deputy Director	1
3.	Project Coordinator	1
4.	Admin. & Finance	1
5.	Project Manager	2
6.	Accountant	2
7.	Project Officers	4
8.	Community Facilitator	5
9.	IT Support	1
10	Cashier	1
11.	Office Attendant	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>20</b>

In the process of conducting trainings CAWEE has a team of internationally accredited four (4) trainers and internationally certified six (6) business counselors, where those tasks usually are outsourced when need be.