In our first release, it is to be recalled that we discussed about Youth and Youth Friendly Reproductive Health (RH) Service and about the essence of the program and activities accomplished, objectives of our ongoing project being implemented in MoretinaJiru, SiadebirinaWayu, Kewot Woredas and ShoaRobit Town Administration of North Shoa Zone in Amhara Region.

In continuation of our quarterly newsletter, we are once again coming to you with some of our quarterly project implementation news and antiquity philosophers’ perception about abortion, and thereby laws of the contemporary world nations and Ethiopia on abortion and related issues.
In this quarter, July through September 2014, we have supported 4 RH clubs providing them with various capacity enhancement trainings and mini-media equipments. 527 peer educators, teachers, health workers, youth leaders, Health Development Army (HDA) members, health service providers, unemployed youth, youth associations’ members and club leaders out of whom 215 were female received a 5 to 10 days training on Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH), integration of Maternal Neonatal Child Health (MNCH) and Anti-HIV/AIDS services, gender sensitive and Youth Friendly Service (YFS) provision, SRH service programming, research, Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) and, youth-led accountability systems.

Awareness creation

On top of this, a 10 days awareness creation work on Reproductive Health (RH) was carried out for 5,300 people (3,500 male, 1,800 female) through Edutainment Musical Dramas. The dramas were performed at ShoaRobit, Inewari and Debea Towns by an Edutainment based RH club. Out of the 5,300 audiences, youth under the age of 24 account for 90%.
Abortion and Ethiopian Penal Code

Before explaining the penal code of Ethiopia with regard to abortion, we would like to say something about the global view over abortion. According to several studies, abortion has been a universal issue since antiquity which is said to exist even before 4700 years (African Journal Online, nd).

Historical facts confirm that both induced abortion and deliberate termination of pregnancy had prevailed being moral, religious and legal discourse in the time of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Hippocrates. Except Hippocrates, these philosophers had been purported to be supporter of abortion as they believed that abortion maintains stable population. Even Hippocrates who was against abortion had supported abortion if the life of the mother is expected to be jeopardized because of the fetus.

In the contemporary world, abortion has remained being a global controversial issue. The competing arguments are based on two major points such that the fetus right to be brought on to life and the right of the mother to abortion based on her interest or choice (African Journal Online, nd).

Considering these antiquities’ philosophical arguments and other contemporary global discourses, countries have enacted different laws on abortion. Accordingly, some countries have strictly criminalized abortion in their Penal-Codes while others decriminalized it. Consequently, some scholars have reported that life of pregnant mothers in countries where abortion has been strictly criminalized is put at risk as a result of proliferation of hidden, poor professional and illegal abortion practices. For instance, as per Ipsas, 67,000 women die each year from complications related with unsafe abortion-most in countries where abortion is legally restricted (Ipas, nd)).
Dynamically, laws of countries pertaining to abortion have been changing and improved from time to time. As a result, now, most of the countries liberalized their laws. Similarly, Ethiopia has also liberalized and revised its penal code of 1957 sections (528-535) which was permitting abortion very limitedly. According to the revised Criminal Code of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, not withstanding to the legal prohibition of abortion in the 1957 penal-code, abortion allowed by law in the following conditions:

- when the pregnancy results from rape or incest;
- when continuance of the pregnancy endangers the health or life of the woman or the fetus;
- in cases of fetal abnormalities;
- for women with physical or mental disabilities;
- for minors who are physically or psychologically unprepared to raise children;
- in the case of grave and imminent danger that can be averted only through immediate pregnancy termination.