

## Simona Pelà in Addis Ababa

**Simona works as fundraising advisor in Dawn of Hope Ethiopia (DHEA), which is one of the prominent associations of People Leaving Which HIV in Ethiopia. It was founded by 11 PLWHA who discovered their HIV zero-positive status, in June 1998. It has over 14.000 members all over the country in the 13 existing branches & sub branches.**



The mission of the association is to advocate the rights of PLWHA and keep their interests right at their localities. As I'm working in the head office in Addis, to better understand the activities the branches are carrying on, during the first month I visited some branches in the south west of Ethiopia.

Each branch tries to offer a comprehensive care program for its members, consisting of home-based care (HBC) service for the bedridden, counseling, orphan support (enabling them to continue their education), and for the most needy some form of economic support (such as financial compensation, if they have to buy medication, nutritional supplements, or emergency livelihood support).

Along with their care program, branches are active in education and prevention activities, advocating for the rights of PLWHA and fighting stigma and discrimination. Moreover, branches stimulate members to live positively and to remain or become economically independent, by endorsing them in income generating activities (IGA). Exposure, testimonials and the peer principle are strategies where Dawn of Hope uses throughout its activities. The role of the head office is mainly to coordinate branches' activities and to develop and manage relationship with donors, other associations and governmental bodies.

The main problems DHEA is facing are the high staff turnover and the growing number of 'competitors' due to the introduction of a nation-wide multi sector approach by the government. For these reasons I'm reviewing DHEA Strategic Plan, a document that could "guide" the Association's activities in the coming years, even if the management will change, and I'm developing an activity plan to better manage existing and potential donors.

Following the VSO participatory approach, I'm working closely with the Project Coordinator, involving the Branch Coordinators in defining goals and priorities.

But you probably want to know what I did in practice and what am I planning to do for the incoming two months! As far as fundraising activities is concerned I supported the Project Coordinator in writing some reports to explain donors as PACT US how we managed their funds, I did research on donors interests, to let the Association have a matrix to refer to for reach funds and we submitted to potential donors some project proposal, trying to create a "Project Proposal model" that it could be used in the future as a reference.

I also had the chance to build a partnership with the Italian Cooperation with which we are organizing an HIV Information day at the Italian Embassy that will take place in February.

To involve the Branch Coordinators in the Strategic Plan review, using a VSO Ethiopia small grant, we organized a training session on topics like "Strategic Plan, Activity Plan, Monitoring and Evaluation". During this training the Management presented the Strategic Plan draft to have comments and suggestion from people working in the branches.

For the incoming month I would like to finalize the Strategic Plan and to let the Management present it to all the stakeholders, share the donors' interest matrix with my colleagues in DHEA and with other VSO volunteers working in the HIV sector, and prepare the field for the next volunteer!

Not that much, it's true, but I'm learning appreciate small changes and I was really excited to see all the coordinators discussing and planning together their future!

Of course I'm facing some challenges, but this experience makes me feel more positive and proactive!

Simona Pelà