



NIA FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

To be submitted to Board of Directors

JUNE
2022
NIA FOUNDATION
Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia

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1. Introduction

Nia Foundation is an indigenous non-profit making organization, established in 2002 with a vision of seeing a concerned society whereby less privileged community groups enjoy quality of life to the best of their potentials in spite of their different abilities, disabilities and gender. In November 2009, it was registered and licensed as an Ethiopian Residents Charity Organization in accordance with the revised Charity's and Societies Proclamation No. 113/2019.

We are currently operating under a license which has been renewed in 2019. Based upon the need for advocacy, services, support, training and education, the Nia Foundation has established to play a key role in educating and training and serving children and adults with autism, families affected by autism, the autism community as well as vulnerable youths and women.

The organization have been playing pivotal role as a pioneer organization in introducing the issue of Autism and other Developmental Disorder in Ethiopia. The journey of the organization marked its hallmark of 2 decades lead by an exceptional leader, Beloved Zemi Yenus, her commitment and passion for the cause eventually created the level of Autism benevolence in Ethiopia and her contribution in the sector was immense. Although, her unexpected death due to Covid in May, 2021 brought much shock and disappointment on organization, co-workers, families and friends, the projects ignited by her vision throughout the journey are still shared by thousands of people.

The vision rests up on the heart of Nia Foundation that push every one forward in order to put the finger prints and legacy of Zemi Yenus in reaching her ever bigger dream of “leaving no one behind” in the long journey of expanding access to thousands of vulnerable children and youth with Autism other disadvantaged spectrum of the population in the multiple shackles in today's Ethiopia.

Apart from the organizational program initiatives running in good passion and enthusiasm at Nia Foundation on regular basis, Nia is now striving to challenge the

recognized embodiment of systemic consequences of poverty created vulnerability of Children, Adolescent and Youth with Autism in Ethiopia by the vision to establish State of Art, Zemi Yenus Center of Excellence for Autism which will be first of its kind in Africa and a monumental tribute to her life time selfless service and noble path way to reach many more in need.

The Foundation was actively engaged in community awareness creation activities side by side with the center based holistic rehabilitation services, and the center attracted different organizations and individuals interested to visit our work and be part of it. Our awareness creation engagements also encouraged parents to send their confined children with autism to the center so that the number of children we serve increased through time to time and in 2021 additional of 19 new enrollments and now reached around 80.

Moreover, based upon the need for advocacy, services, support, training and education, the Nia Foundation has established to play a key role in educating and training and serving children and adults with autism, families affected by autism, the autism community as well as vulnerable youths and women.

This report covers the activities accomplished that emanated comprehensive plan prepared and endorsed by the Senior management and The Board of Directors of Nia Foundation Ethiopia.

1.1. Major programmatic area,

The following are our major programmatic areas;

- Holistic development of children and youth with autism and related developmental disorders;
- Socioeconomic Empowerment and Livelihood Promotion of vulnerable women and youth;
- 'Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development';
- Promoting Education and Services on SRH and Addiction;
- "Yagebagnal!" which means "It concerns me!" movement;



1.2. Aspiration of Nia

The name of the Foundation 'Nia' originated from an Arabic word and has a meaning of 'High positive Intentions and Vision'. Its mother's company given name 'Niana' can be decoded as 'Our superior positive intention' and in Afaan Oromoo (one of the Ethiopian languages) can be interpreted in two connotations which are 1 "Let's move on" and, 2 "I care about you". It is our principle to move on with Nia carrying spiritual, cultural, environmental and loyal significance through the beauty and love of differences. Adding a spiritual and humanitarian attribute to the name helps remind that Nia has high positive intentions and a vision to move towards development. Engaged in the wellbeing of children, youth and the public at large, regardless of their different abilities, disabilities and vulnerability, Nia Foundation's heartfelt feeling encourages prosperous quality of life, one with great ambitions for the beneficiaries themselves, their families, communities, and their country.

Naming the Foundation 'Nia' has combined functionality with our values of; Mutual Trust, Love and Empathy, Hope and Optimism, Responsibility and Integrity, Commitment, Partnership and Collaboration, and Innovation and Excellence.

Vision of Nia: Nia Foundation aspires to seeing a concerned society whereby less privileged community groups enjoy quality of life to the best of their potentials in spite of their different abilities, disabilities and gender.

Mission: Nia strives to inspire, empower and improve the holistic well being of less privileged children, youth, and women mainly through education, rehabilitation, training and awareness raising, dialogue and discussion forums, entrepreneurship and leadership development programmes.

Values: Trust, Hope, Love, Responsibility, Empathy, Optimism, Integrity, Change, Commitment, Collaboration, Creativity, Achievement.

It is to and based on these organizational backgrounds, values and directions that we have endeavored to achieve as per the action plan of 2017.

1.3. Organizational Objectives

- Improve children and youth with autism and related development disorders' protection mechanisms,
- Improve the social and economic status of the vulnerable women and youth,
- Inspire and equip wo-men to reach their highest potentials to ensure their active participation in decision-makings, and benefit the outcomes,
- Improve behavioral change on SRH practices and reduce new HIV infection and new drug and alcohol addiction among youth, girls and women
- To motivate and create a concerned generation that broke "not in my back yard" thinking

1.4. Beneficiaries

Direct beneficiaries

- Children and Adolescents with Autism and related developmental disorders
- Parents and siblings of children with different abilities and disabilities

Indirect beneficiaries

- Population in the project implementation area
- Professionals of different relevant disciplines
- Students from higher education institutes
- The general public

1.4. Partner organizations

In the past year, the Foundation has effectively and actively executed new initiatives that came in to act within the year and others that were started from the years before in partnership with different international and local civil society organizations and government agencies. Among these partners that have been working with us at different capacities such as; financial contribution, monitoring and evaluation and developing our capacity our Key Partners include but not limited to,

- Agency for Civil Society Organizations,
- Ethio Telecom,
- Ministry of Health and its subsequent offices,
- Ministry of Woman and Social Affairs and its subsequent offices
- Ministry of Education and its subsequent offices
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Finland Embassy
- Consortium of Reproductive Health Associations (CORHA)
- Ethiopian National Disability Action Network (ENDAN)
- Ethiopian Airlines Foundation

- Enat Bank S.C
- United Bank S.C
- Niyal Motors Share Company
- Cure Hospital
- Saint Paul Millennium Medical Collage
- Saint Peter Specialized Hospital
- Pantha and Rhea Foundation, Paragon Philanthropy
- Intellectual and Developmental Disability Network Ethiopia (Under establishment)
- Grand Palace Hotel

In the past year, the Foundation has successfully and actively implemented the initiatives with Ministry of Health, Finland Embassy, Packard Foundation, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Panta and Rehea Foundation, Nyala Motors, etc the annual plan and the following report entails the accomplishments.

2. Major Activities Accomplished

The implemented activities as per the plan discussed as follows;

2.1. Initiatives 1: Holistic Rehabilitation – Reproductive Health Guideline for Working with Youth and Adolescent with Autism

The very purpose of this activity is aimed at executing an effective center based holistic rehabilitation and education services for children with Autism and related developmental disorder on daily based program in improving reproductive health and working with youth and adolescent with autism. Accordingly, 80 children with autism and related developmental disorders were enrolled in the Joy Center. The services which have been provided in the center included different therapeutic, educational and social interaction skills development interventions. As a result of this activity

endeavored, behavior, independent skills and academic skills of the 80 children enrolled in the center have been improved in implementing the primary objective of sexual and reproductive health approach.

To complement the therapeutic and rehabilitative services in sexual and reproductive health provided at the center, provision of nutrition to the beneficiaries was planned to be made throughout the year. With the recommended types of sexual and reproductive education diets that either help the therapy process or improve their health conditions on a daily basis. Consequently, behavior improvements in terms of new skills learnt and self-awareness raised among our kids have significantly been registered. Besides having a total of 80 children enrolled in our center for the year, we are working on pushing the number to increase another 31 within the shortest time possible by replacing the dropouts and recruiting new ones for quota while working on maintain a teacher deployment ratio.

Review of the existing reproductive health guideline for working with youth and adolescent with autism have been carried out to enrich the guideline at the foundation level. Identifying and establishment of technical working group is underway. The draft resource manual for professionals working with Children and youth with Autism has been finalized and make ready for printing. The launching program of the manuals will be carried out shortly following the printing in order to popularize the manual to workshop for distribution to different stakeholders and professionals from Universities, Ministry of health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Hospitals, and other relevant bodies.

Efforts also made to stabilize parents and children and brought them to the center. Zemi's 100th day memorial event was made in the beginning of 3rt quarter. It was coordinated together with class ending ceremony, followed by summer vacation arrival, who were sent back to their home for vacation. Parents, children, governmental guests including ministries, non-governmental bodies and various partners were participated.

As an event was involving different activities, different tasks were carried out on the day Memorizing Zemi, her Noble actions were remembered. Poems and poets were presented. Have presented her vision for which she had lived and died, All the participants were told and mobilized to stand together to achieve it. Parents were motivated to become courageous and work hard towards achieving the vision of Zemi and they are made to feel confident at services continuity in a more passionate way.

2.2. Initiatives 2: Training of Caregivers/Teachers

In implementing dynamic scientific training and therapeutic services for children with autism, continuous development of teachers' capacity is very crucial. Having that in mind, twice within a year, the teachers have been provided with practical on the job training's and guidance by volunteer professionals on the issue to develop their capacity of providing the teaching service up to the standards.

The training's were effective and being on-the-job type helped practically the teachers achieve new skills on how to better work with the children enrolled in the center. It in turn has also helped to effectively execute the holistic rehabilitation services being rendered at the Joy Center for Autism. The trainings also incorporated on the standards of keeping records of training sessions and developments.

The first phase capacity building training for teachers was focused on health, special needs, skills and psycho social support. The training session was organized for three consecutive days in Asham Africa Hotel, town of Bishoftu. Total of 31 teachers and professionals at Joy Center for Autism participated in the training. The training has sought basic concept refreshing on Autism and created an opportunity to have acquaintance of teachers with the recent scientific and research developments in Autism spectrum studies as well as latest interventions including social, health and psycho social program endeavors.



Professional and Researchers from Addis Ababa University, School of Health Science department Psychiatry Assistant professor, Mr. Henock Hailu and Dr Waganesh Zeleke. Associate Professor, School of Education, Department of Counseling, Psychology and Special Education from Duquesne University from the US has take part in mentoring, evaluating, training and transferring knowledge and practice to the participants in one to one training modality. The opportunity has also created a session of annual review meeting of Nia Foundation Joy Autism center with the presence of board members and management committee of the organization in order to evaluate the overall performance of 2020 and endorse the Yearly plan of 2021.

Phase 2 training was also held at Cure International Hospital about 40 participants from Nia Foundation Joy Center of Autism, Deborah Foundation, Nehemiah Autism Center, KoKebetsibah Primary School and other schools with special needs educational wing arrangement has participated in the training. The Training has

incorporated topics including First Aid, Autism intervention and therapeutic programs, Covid Prevention, Planing and Strategic Planning.

Keeping in mind effective center based training programs, technical staffing with a ratio of one-to-two is compulsory. Efforts have been continuously made to maintain the staff who were engaged in different capacities as of the previous years, but great challenges were experienced to do so and we still are not in a position to meet the one-to-two ratio. Though, staff turnover and inability to finance the hiring need of additional staff is affecting the service provision, mechanisms were emplaced to assure the provision of maximum amount of time and attention possible to each child under training as much as possible.

2.3. Initiatives 3: Parents counseling and support group

Parents of children with autism are highly vulnerable to social and psychological agonies resulted from their children's conditions. So as to give relief and help parents' better cope with and help their children, one-to-one counseling sessions have a decisive role. In this regard, more than 300 parents have been provided psychological support.

On the other hand, a formal parents' forum that regularly meets on monthly basis was conducted as per the plan. Using the monthly forum, different social and psychological supports have been provided to parents that are challenged in their daily life routines and community engagements as a result of their children's status. Parents freely express their feelings and concerns as well as communicate with each other for the purpose of sharing experience and developing coping mechanisms. During these meetings, training's have also been provided to help parents be able to positively influence the development and security of their children and even be able to lead their life free of or with less stress.

2.4. Initiative 4: Awareness raising and media interventions: Nia 20 years anniversary and world Autism month Celebration

Through the partnership plan of the implementation intensive awareness raising activities on autism and related disorders have been endeavored for the last 11 months. The gap still exists within the society. In this regard, we have organized more than five awareness raising workshops for different groups within the Joy center for Autism. Beside to this, one hour program about the deep rooted problem and our intervention has been broadcasted in collaboration with Afri-Health television and other Radio and Television program outlets as a news as well as a program level.

In addition to these, several programmes and interview were broadcasted through a number of FM radios and TV channels to bring the issue of autism and persons with autism. Virtual platforms such as organizational website and social media pages were exploited to inform several people across the globe with our news posts and electronic newsletters.

Press Conference on World Autism Month and 20 Years Anniversary

One of the key activities done with the activity year in the partisanship is 20 years anniversary of Nia Foundation and World Autism Month Autism Awareness programs carried out in the series of events that encompassed thousands of people in the celebration programs. The organized plan has ignited with the press release in the presence of Board of Directors, Representatives from different professional associations, Volunteers, families of Autism and partners. The Session was conducted by managing press release on the overall programs of 20 years anniversary and world Autism Month celebration organized by Nia Foundation Joy Autism Center. On the Press Conference session 30+ Media television, Radio and Print media outlet were presented and aired the program to their viewers.



National Policy Conference on Autism

Nia foundation held policy conference on “ inclusion of persons with autism at work force” the objective of this conference is to hold an effective conference on policy matters and current practice to understand and promote pathways of inclusion of persons with autism at workforce. the policy include different government body like ministry of health ,ministry of education, sub cites, different universities ,different association , college ,different autism centers like Nehemiya Autism Center , Deborah foundation, embassy in total of almost 200 people participate in the conference. The Conference has ignited the policy level endeavors of Autism in Ethiopia with setbacks of Education Polices and strategies, special needs and inclusive education policy implementation approach's in public and primary schools in Ethiopia.



In addition to the policy frameworks the conference has shade light on the recommendations in the challenges in the work and job creation for Adults and youth

with Developmental and Intellectual disability including Autism and prospects of creating an opportunity to the future inclusive modality to mainstream opportunities in public and private employment sectors.

2.5. Initiative 5: World Autism Day: Autism Awareness and Blood Collection

Nia Foundation's Joy Center for Children with Autism is a pioneer organization in East Africa commenced to serve persons with Autism and Related Developmental Disorders and one of its kind in Ethiopia. In the Ethiopian context, there is no reliable estimate due to the absence of surveys and researches on the area of intellectual disabilities in general and Autism Spectrum Disorders in particular. Nevertheless, according to our crude estimation based on the global indicator, there are an estimated 625,000 persons in the autism spectrum disorders in Ethiopia. Due to the severity as well as ever growing rate of the problem, effective intervention could increase quality of life for people with autism and their families.



Recognizing the need to address center based rehabilitation for children on the spectrum and creating community awareness on ASD, Nia foundation work with different organizations and held agreements with different governmental and non-Governmental organizations and Embassies, part of these Nia foundation held blood donation program with National blood bank service, for purpose of helping people in needs of blood and creating awareness on ASD, in world Autism awareness creation month April.



With the objective of creating awareness on Autism and other related development disability Nia Foundation has organized 2 days program of blood donation and simultaneous awareness creations at the center of excellence project site,



The key objectives of the program were:-

- Create awareness on Autism and help people in needs of blood
- Specific objectives of the events are listed below
- Create awareness on Autism
- Fund raising activities and promoting Joy center of excellence

The Picknic and outing program has engaged different sets of activities with the collaboration of Ministry of Health, National Blood Bank Services and other partners. The event helped us to mobilize considerably valuable amount of blood which in turn is highly required for the mothers and all those need blood to save life in every ward beds of hospitals and other health institutions else where in the country for their particular need.



The event also helped us to have get together with families, stakeholders, sister organizations, volunteers, members of our organizations and many more participants invited to be part of event. On the occasion of the event Autism awareness was carried out through different key message addresses, distribution of brochure, music performance by kids from Joy center and other programs as per the schedule of the

event. On top of that, there is also fund raising activities carried out side by side for the construction of center of excellence project in kind and financial contributions. Additionally all events activities are coordinated and done by Nia staffs, families, and Voluntaries from Mesheshegiya washa and others, Lemi Kura Sub city Woreda 08 youth office.



2.6. Initiative 6: Internal process efficiency improvement: procurement of office furniture's and equipment's

Nia foundation is taking holistic reform in developing the organizational execution capacity in reorganizing the department and working process re engineering of program finance and program departments in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the foundation. Initial organizational capacity assessment undertaken and outlined major bottle necks on the leadership of the organization to achieve its mission and vision in connection to this inventory of existing office materials at Nia

foundation premises have been reviewed and develop list of needed office furniture materials and other equipments and the procurement process has been initiated.



The renovation of class rooms has included changing of the painting of the class rooms and overall Nia Foundation working premises as well as replacing office equipment's including computers, lap tops, desk tops, chairs and tables, window shatters. It is also part of plan to renovate the playing ground for our kids and the whole playing ground is re painted and maintained based on the assessments. The renovation project at Nia foundation resulted wastes from damaged and used goods and resulted an opportunity to change it into revenue based on the rules and regulations of internal revenue collection. The organization was able to get revenue of 31,000.00 from the sale of damaged and disposable goods.



Commence Home to home Autism Service

Considering the ever increasing prevalence of autism in our country we are so enthusiasm and planned to expand our service for those whom are in need but unable to access. Though we have been able to draft the working manual to home to home Autism service. With competing priorities in the budget year we have not been able to implement it accordingly. The is an advantage training the the nurse and staff of Nia foundation in the transition time and prepare all working materials for the next fiscal year is a promising focus for the management.

Abugida Phonetics Digitization

The partnership has a plan to digitize Abogoda phonetics which was primarily Ethiopian made and innovated by Zemi Yenus. However, though we have commenced the project to hi Tech Solution firms to start the project, The Project is not yet finalized and implemented duto its time constraints to design application to the customized nature of Abugida phonetics. we are committed to pursuing to the establishment of a new center in Dire Dawa at least even though the longevity of the procedure may hold some uncertainties for the coming year.

2.7. Construction of the Joy Center of Excellence for Autism

Due to our internal organizational derive that fetched from our limited capacity to provide more service in the center and an ever increasing demand across the nation, we have planned to construct new center of excellence for autism. In realizing this, Project launching and after the cornerstone laying to commence the construction was done earlier the year 2017.

Even though, the death of Zemi Yenus has shocked in the middle of the project implementation every preliminary activities that are necessary to commence the work are done or under way, we have recommenced the project in mid 2021 and continued to support the involvement of the project to its basement the first floor according to its structural design.



With the ever growing price of construction materials however the real challenge of maintaining the construction project is becoming real elephant in the house to deal with for the charity organization like that of us. On the side though, different resource mobilization activities such as,

1. High level fund raising dinner is planned to host around 200 hundred people will participate with contributions ultimately goes to the construction of the Center of Excellence project.

2. Approaching Public and Private organizations : So far much follow up and communications were made with minimum of 54 government offices with frequent communications with different officials to bring the issue to their interest including The First Lady office, Addis Ababa Mayors office, Key Ministries, Ministry of Urban Development and Construction. Although the response rate is not as rewarding as the tireless efforts made there still hope and we will keep following the steps until getting some positive response.

3. In kind Contributions: The Advisory Construction committee have been devoted to mobilize construction materials for the commencement of the the project and completion of basement structure. The form Work, Re Bar Cement and concrete needs were fulfilled with the combined effort of the Construction Advisory, the Management and daily follow up of the contractor and the Consultancy organization.



2.8. Other Activities

- **Establishment of One Child One Sponsorship Program** : We have developed one child one sponsorship program to create enabled environment for individuals and all philanthropic people to cover the entitled needs for One Autistic Child to be fulfilled in Joy Center and establish a family relationship with the child and with Families on Mutual Consent. In doing so we have been able to mobilized full sponsorship pledges for more than 37 students for full years sponsorship program worth of 2 Milln ETB.
- **An Agreement with Ethio Telecom** : Ethio- Telecom has opened an opportunity for mass short texting fund raising program for the support of Jo Center of Excellence

project construction and we have been able to sign an agreement with Ethio-Telecom. The program was launched to the families and friends of Joy at April month 20 years celebration of Nia Anniversary program and we are working to National level robust advertising program with Artist Mekdes Tsegaye and other Celebrities to reach out to the public at large.

- **Settlement of Pension and Tax Debts:** It was one of the most difficult jobs achieved in this year with the support from Board members and Finance Advisory individuals. We have been able to approach Ministry of Finance, Economic and Development and Revenue to settle the Pension and Tax including its interest rates. Although, the financial sources were problematic at the time the management has thoroughly followed up the process until the end and settled all the debts including their interests.
- **Salary Increment:** In order to deal with ever growing cost of living in Addis Ababa, with the direction of Directors of Board and Management we have revised the salary scale and the 60 % increment to all staff members. The process was successful with thorough discussion of the Management, the staff and Advisors.
- **Fundraising activities were also proceeding during the last year.** Various governmental bodies including ministries were communicated for financial support, Different types of non-governmental partners, individual sponsors, business firms were approached, shared the vision and asked to support achieve it.
- MOH has granted 5 million project for 12 months. We have been implementing the project based support in the year as presented in the previous section of the report Five million Birr
- David Lucile and Packard foundation - 1,575,000 Birr Funded for a project on Reproductive health and another 1 million was transferred from the David Lucile and Packard foundation, through ACSO.
- Fund from Gofund around \$ 35, 000. Put in to implementation of the projects.

- 1 million birr support was gained from MoLSA.
- The MCWY has contributed in kind support of about 700,000 birr
- Others individuals and group contributions have been proceeding.
- Finland Embassy Funded a project 21 ,000 Euros.
- Share Net: Funded a Project for 12,000 Euros.
- Panta and Rhea Foundation Supported \$ 10,000.
- United Bank Donated 400,000. Birr,
- Nyala Motors Donated 400,000 Birr and in kind supports of Bags and Educational Aids,
- ET Foundation supported Educational Aids,

Activities of hunting funds, communication through proposals, letters, telephone and in person, planning different techniques and working on them are continued and will continue.

2.9. Major Problems / Constraints Encountered

- The emotional despair of the loss of Zemi Yenus, founder and late Executive director of Nia Foundation that exacerbated cultural and spiritual shock among the staff members and it was really tempted the management to bring the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff back-into track.
- Economic and Political Unrest of the country.
- The first and for most major challenge we are facing is the financial constraint to sustain our organizational services and meet our expansion needs. The year is by far the hardest in terms of having a donor dry spell, and efforts are being exerted to bring back old partners and establish new ones.

- Transportation service need of parents whose children are enrolled at the joy center are every increasing and it was felt most during the past year. As the kids are coming from all corners of the city and many are coming from far places through the process both the kids and parents are going under a huge stress and fatigue considering the behaviors of the children and the ignorance of transport service providers and communities
- Staff turnover is also a major challenge faced during the year especially affecting the teaching department and we fear for the service quality compromise is such a trend sustains.

2.10. Lessons Learnt

- The continued role of parents in the projects implementation and monitoring as well as cross learning is very pivotal and that shall be sustain and even enhanced for future engagements
- Widen donor and income base to the organization is of at most necessity and efforts need to be in place and exerted to revert the current trend of having a donor dry spell
- Systematic partnerships shall be forged with collaborating universities to control and guide the observed ongoing university students irregularities in their internship, practicum, paper work and researches.

Good Luck for 2015!!!







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MINISTRY OF HEALTH-ETHIOPIA
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HEALTHIER CITIZENS FOR PROSPEROUS NATION!

