

# Nia Foundation Annual Report, 2023



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**PROJECT: JOY - CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR AUTISM**

OWNER :  NIA FOUNDATION

Tel: +251-911210535 | Email: [info@nia-foundation.org](mailto:info@nia-foundation.org)  
+251-113-206160/59 | Web: [www.nia-foundation.org](http://www.nia-foundation.org)

CONSULTANT :  AT-CON ENGINEERING & ARCHITECTURE CONSULTANCY P

Nia Foundation Joy Center for Autism

Catalog

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# PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

Founded by late Mrs. Zemi Yenus, Nia Foundation is Ethiopian local development Civil Society Organization legally registered organization with registration No. 0854, since 2002 and has been operating in Ethiopia for the last 21 years. Nia Foundation came into its birth, with the vision to see a concerned society whereby less privileged community groups enjoy the quality of life to the best of their potential in spite of their different abilities, disabilities, and gender. Its mission is also to inspire, empower and improve the holistic well-being of less privileged children, women, and youth and mainly through education, rehabilitation, training, awareness-raising, dialogue, and discussion forums, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership development programs.

Nia is a community-based organization marked by its pioneering and really dedicated service delivering a heritage of change within the community. To achieve its vision and mission, Nia had been working with its pertinent stakeholders, creating strategic and operational partnership modalities. Nia is highly inclusion sensitive and had been promoting equal rights, opportunity, access ...etc. regardless of disability, gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, or any other identities, taking humanity as its first and last criterion. Center-based holistic services provision for persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder is one of the programs, through which, children have been released from the chain and confinement, having various services and growing towards change, parents had the knowledge to handle and support them, reduced marginalization and many forms of violations, etc. Many women have also been empowered economically, psychosocially, leadership-wise, and more.

In recent years, the hard work of Nia Foundation, Joy Center for Autism for the last two decades has been paying off a considerable number of youths who faced lack of job opportunity problems had vocational skills, got connected to job and growing to middle-level entrepreneurs today. As one of the bold achievements of its all-times, Nia has graduated its 1st round students (12), 2<sup>nd</sup> round (17) Autism rehabilitated children and youth from the center which marks historic in the history of Autism rehabilitation and service in Ethiopia.

The year 2023 has been endowed with multifaceted challenges in Ethiopia including internal civil war in Ethiopia, Internal conflicts & displacement, the burden of the pandemic and high

economic inflation, have been affecting the performance of Nia Foundation. Dealing with multiple national and organizational level bottle necks however, in fiscal year of 2023, Nia Foundation engaged in several initiatives, accomplished wide range of results and outcomes.

This report therefore, snapshot Key performances and achievements on initiatives, Institutional Leadership and Management, Holistic Autism Rehabilitation, Program Implementation, Joy Center of Excellence Construction Project implementation, Finance, Human Resource and General Administration. Challenges and the way forward.

## **OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

Our foundation has effectively and actively engaged with the existing partners and stakeholders, different international and local civil society organizations and government agencies which sought immense support in the overall performance and operation of our organization. Materials through financial contribution, monitoring and evaluation and developing our capacity building. To mention our key partners

- Ministry of Health,
- Ministry of Education and its subsequent Offices,
- Ministry of job and skills,
- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs,
- City Administration Education Office of Addis Ababa,
- Exodus Nations Charity Organization (ENCO),
- Finland Embassy to Ethiopia,
- Israel Embassy to Ethiopia,
- Ethiopia National Disability Action Network (ENDAN),
- Consortium of Reproductive Health Associations (CORHA),
- Share-Net-International,
- Ethiopia Center for Disability and Development (ECDD),
- Network of Organization of/for the Visually Impaired and Blind (NOVIB),
- Nehemiah Autism Center,
- Deborah Foundation,

# PART TWO: PERFORMANCE AND KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## 1. INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### a. BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

The relationship with the Board of Directors also improved with the engagement of members of board of directors in significant decision-making roles in the past nine month the Board held 2 meetings out of the expected 3 in every quarters. However, we believe that the engagement of each member board of directors should be more strengthened and improved. As we are facing more challenges facing especially in the construction project and overall operations are widening at Nia Foundation.

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### b. THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Nia Foundation embarked several institutional leadership and management initiatives in 2023 to improve the overall executions of plans and operations of the organization. Institutionalization, team leadership and setting the priority at senior management level has brought several improvements in the organizational capacity.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) of Nia foundation meet in regular sessions every 15 days and based on the priorities the management team made follow up on the implementation of different initiatives. The strong follow up and team spirit of the SMT helped the organization in enhancing the execution capacity of projects and performance of the organization.

The reform on the finance and procurement process of the organization is also another important improvement in the 2023. The change in leadership, redefining the financial management process of the organization, clearing back log on accumulated financial statements, improvement on quality and timeliness of project financial reports are among significant in the overall financial improvement.

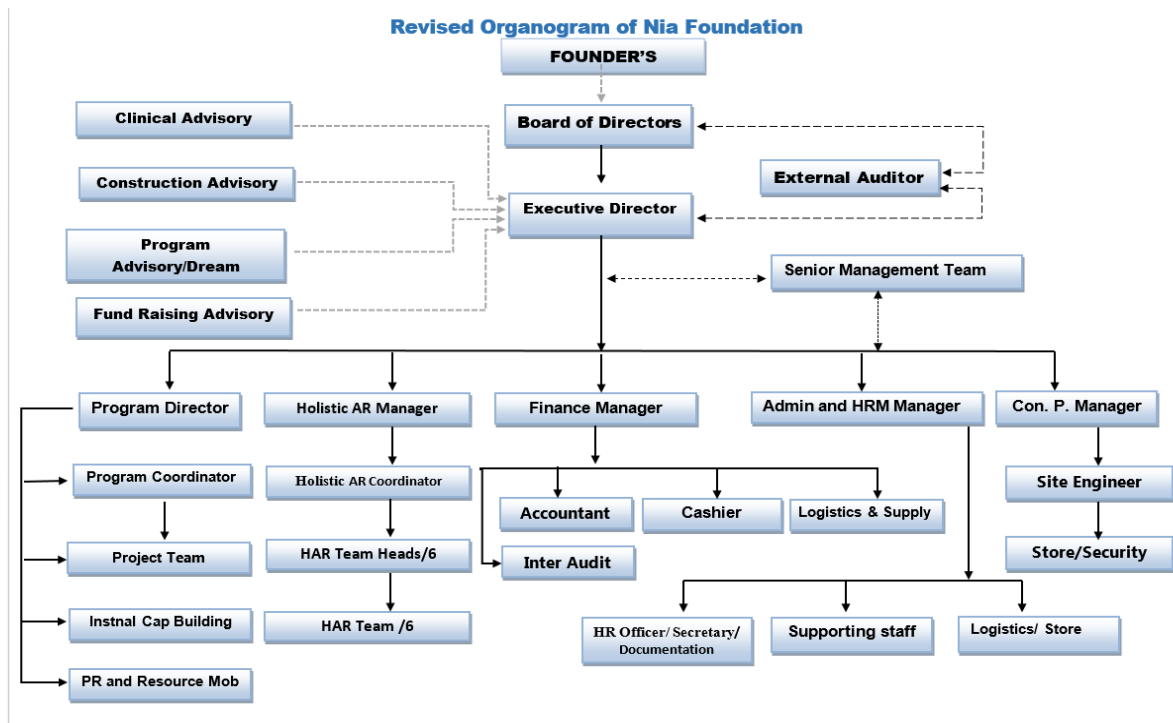
Moreover, the SMT also engaged with overall organizational and leadership redesigning exercise on the standard operating procedures and work process with Leadership and Management Advisor Mrs. Saba Kidanemariam, a volunteer to Nia foundation. With this exercise we are being able to come up with role and responsibility clarity, process improvements and work process that can virtually. To this end we are being able to revise Nia Foundations organogram and restructuring of teams and responsibilities.

The overall objective of the exercise was to evaluate the existing leadership and management cycle of Nia Foundation and come up with effective and efficient Leadership and management cycle in the organization. The following specific objectives were entertained in the due process.

- 
- Making Nia Foundation more effective in strategic planning and execution
  - Creating more transparency and accountability of structures and individuals.
  - Making Nia Foundation more responsive to the needs of customers and beneficiaries.
  - Improving organizational communication and effective chain of command between work processes.
  - Re- Clarifying clarify organizational goals, corporate level and process level indicators, Performance indicators etc.
  - Creating Nia as a human centered organization and a system that identify and utilize individual based potentials and talent pool.
  - Creating a system that responds employees personal and carrier development as well as staff motivation and recognition.

#### Methods employed

- Intensive evaluation of Organizational structure with in-depth interview with Management members,
- Dialogue and discussion on the existing structures, functions and roles of the organization,
- Reflections on the existing organogram of the organization in light of leadership and management perspectives and expertise,
- Consensus on the remedial actions on the vision of the existing organizational structures and functions.



### c. THE ADVISORY TEAMS:

Four Advisory teams were established have been engaged in supporting SMT on program implementation, Joy Center of Excellence Construction Project and overall operations of the organization. The role of these advisory teams had wide range of positive impact that helped the improvement of the overall performance of Nia Foundation in the past 9 month. The Dream team (advisory on program and organizational operations) played significant role in the overall operationse and engaged with different resource mobilization and financial mobilization mechanism.

The Construction Advisory team on the other hand put significant effort in support, consultation, engaged in problem solving on the construction project implementation. Nia Foundation is grateful for the support and the role they played. The clinical Advisory team in under establishment will have strong engagement on the improvement of Education Wing- Holistic Rehabilitation program of which the organization Nia Foundation believes needs major redesigning and restructuring.

## **d. THE STAFF:**

The relationship with the Nia staff also improving immensely, we have conducted 4 staff meetings in 2023 on quarterly basis and 1 annual performance review on annual closing of Joy Center for Autism. The overall performance of the organization was evaluated on the sessions and the participation & engagement of the staff solidified. We have been able to introduce individual based performance review appraisal and all staff members evaluated based on their individual performance.

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## **2. Human Resource and General Administration**

### **a. General Administration**

General administration supports the smooth running of Nia Foundation organizational performance by carrying out different tasks, arranging resources, and the general staff in each department together to achieve the vision and mission of the organization. The general administration wing as always was engaged in the following activities in the past nine months.

- Providing information about the organization's mission and vision
- Awareness raising on Autism & related developmental disorders
- Taking minutes and sending inter-office memos
- Arranging appointments for visitation to the center and meetings with the Executive director and program manager
- Booking meeting and conference halls facilities
- General office management such as ordering stationary, utility payments (telephone, electricity, water etc)
- Reporting to finance and senior management about employees who are on leave, on the job, new recruitment etc
- Processing and monitoring weekly and quarterly purchases
- Maintenance of the organization vehicles and handling fuel request
- Organizing travel and accommodation for staff

- Arranging both internal and external events with program department
- Providing administration support to program and finance department
- Assigning employees to represent Nia Foundation in different events where awareness raising on ASD & public support can be solicited

## **b. Human resource recruitment, retention and turnover**

In 2023 Nia foundation has recruited 2 new employees to program department and 1 new employee in the general administration wing. Similarly 4 additional support staff were employed during this period. And as an organization that believes in employee’s carrier development 3 employees were given the opportunity to move to a new roles within the organization. On the other hand the Nia had 2 voluntary and 1 involuntary employee turnover from program and finance department respectively.

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>New employees</b>	4	3	7
<b>Carrier development</b>	-	3	3
<b>Voluntary turnover</b>	1	1	2
<b>Involuntary turnover</b>	-	1	1

## **c. Training and Development**

Nia Foundation is always looking for opportunities to improve its employee’s skills and knowledge through different workshops, projects, and training. Nia has been able to continue its experience sharing with an Autism center called "Die Gute Hand" (The Helping Hands) from Cologne, Germany. The active engagement with Haromaya University is expected to create opportunities for employees to pursue a Master’s program in the Developmental Disability Department in the year 2016 E.C.

In collaboration with a PhD candidate Elisa Genovesi from King’s College London, Addis Ababa University Nia have been engaging on the pilot project “Mainstreaming and Inclusion of children with Developmental Disabilities in Learning in Ethiopia”. Four regular primary and kindergarten schools from Addis Ababa City Administration has been selected for the piloting phase.

As pioneering organization in Ethiopia in the sector Nia Foundation, Joy Center for Autism established and maintained partnership affiliation with this important project. So far we have been professionally engaged in the design and development process of full-fledged training manual of (9 sessions), including facilitation manual, participant's manual, and SNE manual.

We will maintain the important partnership with the role of working as experience sharing hub, Consultation and Coaching of the piloting and the actual implementation of the project pot.

#### **d. Asset Management**

Nia foundation has been working on a project called MIVA which has led to the purchase of a new Nissan URVAN Mini bus. Fixed asset Inventory for the current year will done as usual on December 30, 2023 and the fixed asset register will be updated accordingly and preparations has been started ahead of the schedule.

### **3. Holistic Autism Rehabilitation and Care**

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. Therefor therapies benefit individuals on the spectrum by improving skills or reducing challenges in communication, social skills, or motor challenges, or to learn other skills like feeding or self-care.



And since it is a spectrum each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges. The ways in which people with autism learn, think and problem-solve can range from highly skilled to severely challenged. Some people with ASD may require significant support in their daily lives, while others may need less support and, in some cases, live entirely independently. That is why at joy center the intervention is tailored to address the each child or adult specific needs. Students' treatment and intervention plan include behavioral interventions, occupational therapies, sensory integration therapy, and speech therapy.

There for the center is mainly engaged in delivering these 4 major therapies for its students.

- Behavioral therapy
- Speech – language Therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Sensory integration therapy
- Music therapy

### **Behavioral Therapy**

It is well known that children/ youth with in the spectrum have behavior/interest that seem unusual. Teachers focus on why the behavior happens (the purpose) by carefully evaluating what happens before and after a certain behavior occurs. Then help the student develop a desired behavior that replaces the undesired behavior that restricts them from developing and learning essential skills. The progress of each student is tracked through a specific, measurable short-term and yearly goal. Some of the behaviors the center has been working on include repetitive behaviors such as flapping hands, rocking body, or spinning self in circles but priorities are given to problematic behaviors like aggression, self-injury, running away and or screaming/ crying.

### **Speech – language Therapy**



With the use of the ABOGEDA Phonetics the center strives to help children/youth in the center improve their verbal, non-verbal and social communications skills. Here they are trained to develop both expressive and receptive languages. Speech therapy need of students may vary from non-verbal, echolalia or being able to talk but not maintain a full conversation, understanding facial expression and body language. Students are given different exercises to strengthen muscles in the mouth Jaw and neck like playing with balloon and Whistleblowing.

Students are guided by teachers to make clear sounds, to responding to questions, to modulating/ regulating tone of their voice, to slow down their speech when stuttering and so on.

### **Occupational therapy**

With this type of therapy center works with students with a goal to improve their everyday skills which allows them to become more independent.



For our students with autism, together with parents/caregivers the programs focus on identification of any impediments that prevent them from partaking in any typical day-to-day activities like independent dressing, eating, grooming, using the potty/ bathroom and self-care. After identification each students OT goal is set to track progress.



Another integral part of OT is fine motor skills and gross motor skills (coordination, strengthening and control). Fine motor skills are needed for everyday tasks like cutting with scissors, tying shoes, fastening buttons and zippers, coloring, and holding a pencil. Motor skills have different sub areas below are pictures of students working on them:



**Sensory integration therapy**

Sensory integration therapy is used to help our children and youth at the center to learn to use all their senses together (touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing). The hyper/hypo reactivity to sensory input can interfere with ordinary daily activities thus coupled with occupational therapies this therapy play another essential role in the rehabilitation service provided at Joy center. The center uses Sensory bin of different grain (Teff, black seed, Fenugreek, soy beans etc), sensory toys (Fiddle Fidget toys), stress balls of different sizes and textures, playdoh, physical massage therapy for students etc



### **Music Therapy**

Through Music therapy students are given musical activities such as singing, playing instruments and listening to music. These activities encourage communication and social skills like making eye contact, sharing attention and taking turns. The therapy is delivered as a group.



Each class mentioned below has therapy schedules that changes every ½ hour that allows students to receive the different types of therapy sessions with different activity throughout the day.



## Students General Report

### 1. Attending class room

Age group (4-7 years)

Major achievements

- ✓ Potty training (3 diaper free students)
- ✓ Ability to feed themselves
- ✓ Improvements in receptive language
- ✓ Sitting still in classroom

### 2. Pre-academics classroom

Age group (14 – 27 years)

Major achievement

- ✓ Hand writing skill
- ✓ Using restroom properly/with minimal support
- ✓ feeding themselves properly/with minimal support
- ✓ Physical exercise (jumping rope)
- ✓ Differentiate grains (part of sensory integration therapy)
- ✓ Improvement in self- care (brushing teeth)

### 3. Group B classroom

Age group (4-9 years)

Major achievements

- ✓ Potty training (3 students Diaper free)
- ✓ Behavioral changes (reduced occurrences of challenging behaviors)
- ✓ Sitting still in classroom
- ✓ Tracing with support
- ✓ Feeding themselves and starting to eat different foods (variety and texture like solid food, fruits etc)

### 4. Speech therapy classroom

Age group (11-18years)

Major achievements

- ✓ Feeding themselves
- ✓ Able to go and use restroom without support/minimal support

- ✓ Receptive language
- ✓ Sitting still in classroom
- ✓ Improvement in joint attention

#### 5. Occupational therapy classroom

Age group (8 - 27 years)

Major achievements

- ✓ Improvement's self-care skills (grooming),
- ✓ Tracing and hand writing (fine motor skills),
- ✓ Advances in interaction with the environment (outgoing/shopping),

#### 6. Academics classroom

Age group (8-22 years)

Major achievements

- ✓ Advances in self -help skills (self-grooming)
- ✓ Communication skills enhanced
- ✓ Hand writing

## A. Annual Closing and Autism Rehabilitation Graduation

Maintaining the course, Nia Foundation Joy Center for Autism came across graduating 17 youth and children have been put to Holistic Autism Rehabilitation and Care program in 2023 as well. This year, out of 17 students who graduated from the center, 3 of them are ready to be transferred to enter formal/regular education for inclusive education and there is a plan to connect the remaining 13 with different job opportunities primarily engaging members of their family. This will create great deal of window of opportunity for these youth with Autism to be productive citizens by benefiting from suitable businesses that will be started with their families in a project implemented in collaboration with the Finland Embassy in Addis Ababa.

The colorful event was held at August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 at Ethiopian National Theater and more than 300 + participants from different Ministries, Different Addis Ababa City Administration offices, Partners, Members of Nia Board of Directors, Advisors, families, organizations working on Autism Rehabilitation and representatives from different Media platforms & Organizations took part in the program. The program was opened with a minute of silence in commemoration for significant people whom the organization has lost the last couple of years. Late Zemi Yenus,

Mrs. Seada Adem, the former Nia Foundation Finance Manager and Abraham a student who we lost in sudden death from this year's graduates.

On the day, a circus show, Fikir Ethiopia's National Intellectual Disability music and dance group, our former student Deborah's musical performance and many other preparations were performed, and the graduates were presented with a certificate announcing that they have completed their stay at the center and moved on to the next phase of their lives by the representative of the advisory board members, Dr. Jacob Seman and Mrs. Elleni Damtew. The graduates and their families highlighted the ceremony by receiving the good news with great joy.

Key Note Messages delivered by different people on Graduation of our beloved youth and children, on the historic and biggest day for Nia Foundation, Joy Center for Autism.

### Executive Directors Message

Congratulations,

Dear Nia Foundation Joy Autism Center staff who have been helping us by working in the center from one day to months and even years. We express our happiness that this result has come about because we all agree and support each other. Dear parents, I congratulate you dear and angelic children and our children for this day. Congratulations to all the staff at Joy Center for Autism and our partners who have helped us wholeheartedly to make a difference. Dear parents, congratulations, your dear and angelic children and our children have made it to this day.

I would like to say congratulations to our partners who have helped us with their wholehearted support to make a difference. Of course, as we always say, when we think of the time, the

information is easy. Our work was and the situation it was in, for us and mainly families, we expect the development of our child from the day he was born. When we start to understand or think, please give us the honor of Ms. Zemi Yenus, the founder and owner of the first Joy Autism Center in our country. Ms. Zemi's message "Back in Semeles, Ethiopia, there was no awareness about autism. It was difficult to raise children with autism. At the time, I had two options. One was to return to the country where I came from with better understanding and support, and the other was to stay here and support my son and children like my son with autism as much as I could. "Helping and helping and relieving the burden of mothers who raise their children against the negative social influence and stigmatization. I chose the second one," she said.

From the day we received our children, we are giving our children various lessons to help them. For our children's enthusiasm for change, for the results of our tireless work in the past years, for today's second round of graduation, when we reached 17 children, the first one was by exploring the graduation of 10 and two of the children we included in our previous work. The idea has come true that they are paying their family monthly salary and taxes, for those of us who are in it every day and because our families are the foundation of our family, we will make it easier for the number I mentioned above to go to school together with our three children and their parents. Our faithful children are examples of how children with autism can work and live. We are deeply saddened that one of our 17 graduating students, Abraham Girma, (Abrsha,) passed away in an unfortunate accident during our plan to graduate this year.

Therefore, when we convey this message from our center, we want to help those who are imprisoned in their homes to come out, whether they can or not, so that no parent should be stigmatized just because

### **Message from Mrs. Sara Hussen, Chair Person, Board of Directors Nia Foundation**

My dear Zemi ... May Almighty creator of all and everything ALLAH, rests her soul in heaven she has always been among us and helped us to reach here.

Praise is to the creator of all creation.

they have an autistic child, not only in the city, but to work with a sense of belonging, because autism is a mental disability, not a curse. I would like to say congratulations to all the families that we have been with when we have been watching the change of your children.

Also, the sadness that remained in our hearts, we lost our working parent, Mrs. Seada Adem, who raised us as a mother and friend by advising and angering us.

It's been a year and the trust has become stronger for autistic children and their families Zemi, what a difficult time we are going through losing you, your son Jojo, who is a support for your children and the country every day, and everyone you breathe to autistic children and their dear parents are our angels as you see. To satisfy your thirst, we will sleep day and night and wait for your promise until we reach as far as you want and come to you.

Alhamdulillah!!! Dear all Nia's, Joy's families, administrative staff, teachers and board members, today is the pride and honor of our country and all the voiceless who live around the world for showing that it is possible to calculate the fruit of our children.

Congratulations!!!

### Messages from Co-Founder Mr. Billal Yousuf....

To the extraordinary graduating class of 2023, Congratulations on reaching this exciting milestone in your journey! As I address you today, I am filled with immense joy and pride for each and every one of you. This year has been nothing short of remarkable, and your growth and accomplishments have been an inspiration to us all.

As co-founder of this Autism center, I couldn't be prouder of the warm and vibrant community we've built together. You, our incredible graduates, are the heart and soul of this center, and it's an honor to witness your progress and achievements. While we celebrate your successes today, we also fondly remember two exceptional individuals who played pivotal roles in establishing this center. One of them my Dear Mother Founder and Executive Director, Zemi Yenus, whom had a boundless passion for creating a nurturing space where children with autism could thrive and flourish. Her legacy lives on in the love and acceptance that permeates this center.

We also cherish the memory of our head financial officer and my beloved aunt, Se'ada Adem, who expertly managed the financial side of our operations and played a significant part in making our dreams a reality. Her dedication and support were instrumental in our journey. Additionally, we remember a bright star that shined brightly among us for a

decade. This year, we said goodbye to a beloved student who touched the lives of everyone around him, Abraham Girma. His journey with us was filled with growth, joy, and countless precious moments that will forever remain in our hearts.

Together, they inspired us to create a place where every child is celebrated for their unique abilities, and it's evident that their spirit lives on in each one of you. Your enthusiasm, determination, and resilience are a testament to the impact they made on our autism center and the lives they touched.

As you prepare to take the next steps in your lives, always remember the lessons you've learned here—the power of friendship, the joy of discovery, and the strength that lies within you. Your potential is boundless, and the world is waiting for you to shine brightly.

To the families, educators, management, the board, the donors, supporters, staff, and particularly Elleni who have nurtured and supported these amazing children, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Your unwavering dedication has played a significant role in their growth and achievements.

Finding a place for special kids is important and necessary. My memories of growing up with Jojo proved the difficulty one has, to find a place, a center, a second home. A place where kids

and young adults like my brother would be welcome, to grow, being invaluable members of society and not social outcasts.

As co-founder, my commitment to carrying forward the vision of my mother is ensuring that this center remains a beacon of progress, a place of love, growth, and acceptance for generations to come.

Congratulations once again, dear graduates. The future is bright, and we are excited to see the incredible impact each of you will make in the world.

With heartfelt pride and excitement,

Billal Yousuf Co-Founder, Nia Foundation  
Joy Center for Autism

### **Message from JOJO, Son of Zemi Yenus**

Jojo's Message in Abogida Phonetics writing way

HELLO, HAY, HAW AR YU? MAY NEM IZ JOJO YUSUF AY AM 20 YRS OLD. DU YU NOW AY HAV OTIZM? YES, AY DU HAV OTIZM END AY AM SUPER OKEY! AY LAYK TU WAK, BAYK END TU SWIM. AY LAYK TU LISN TU Z MIYUSIK. AY LAV TU PLAY BASKET BOL TU. KAN YU PLAY BASKET BOL WIZ MI? AY LAYK TU IT PIZZA, PASTA, CIKN, RAYS END INJERA. YES, YU KAN TEK MI AWT TU IT. AY LAV MAY MAM, DAD, BILAL, FISUM, MAY FREINDS, FAMILIS END OF KORS OL OF YU. PLIS KAM END VISIT AWR JOY SENTER. BIKOŻ WI AR SO SPECIAL WI NID YUR HELP TU. YU KAN KOL MI AT 0911 21 0535. AY LAV YU END TANK YU.

JOJO YUSUF

### **Message from Dr. Feven Girma Representative of Federal Ministry of Health**

Ministry of Health, pointed out that the Ministry of Health has a structure that oversees the issue of rehabilitation and rehabilitation centers under the Chief Executive Officer of Medical Services by organizing it independently at the desk level and formulating an independent strategy and implementing it. She emphasized that the Ministry of Health has supported Nia of 5 million birr to

support the activities of Nia Foundation Joy Center for Autism and that the signatory of the memorandum of understanding has been providing various support and is active by paying special attention to the issue of autism and this support will continue to do so.

Dr. Feven Girma

### **Message from Mr. Alemayehu Girma, Representative of Federal Ministry of Women and Social affairs**

Chief Executive Officer of Disability Affairs of the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, the guest of honor of the day, Mr. Alemayehu, made an opening speech on behalf of the Honorable Minister Dr. Ergoge. He revealed that

the work he is doing in the end is very admirable and confirmed that his ministry will continue to strengthen the support it gives to the Nia Foundation and that they will stand by the organization in whatever it takes.

**Message from Mr. Zekarias Member, Board of Directors and Family's Representative**

The board member and representative of the communities, Mr. Zekarias G/Egzhabher, who pointed out that the work being done at the Nia Foundation Joy Center for Autism is amazing and he called on all Ethiopians, the government and non-governmental organizations to stand by this holy works so that this effectiveness continues.

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## Autism Awareness Raising: World Autism Awareness Day

### A. The press Release:

A successful joint press release was made on March 28, 2023, at Skylight Hotel. Over 50 participants from Board members, staff, teachers/ therapists were participated in the event and more than 20 Media representatives covered the press release. Organizations such as Nia Foundation/Joy Autism Center, from Addis Ababa, Nehemiah Autism Center, from Addis Ababa, Milue Foundation, from Addis Ababa, Bethel Adama Autism Center, from Adama, Oromia Regional State, Bright Autism Center, Hawassa, Sidama Regional State come together in one sprit and make a commitment to the yearly World Autism Awareness Day under the slogan of "Quality Education for All Children and Youth Living with Autism!" which was the motto of the 16th International Autism Awareness Day of the year.

One of the significant achievements in coming together was with very good commitment and initiation



of organizations working in Ethiopia to establish one strong association “Ethiopian Autism Society” that can represent all the stakeholders in the sector and bring organizations working on Autism and related developmental disabilities together, to influence policy/advocacy, increase community Awareness towards Autism, and brighten the future of youth and children with Autism.

In a joint press release, the leaders, directors, and managers (representatives) of different institutions appreciated the decision to establish the "Ethiopian Autism Society", which is the right action. This society might strengthen and work with

organizations, schools, and governmental bodies that work on autism in Ethiopia. It brings together the

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different experiences, capacity, and accessibility frameworks of organizations engaged in autism to become a national society with a high impact and contribute for creating a favorable environment to bring about changes. This decision is historic and it will be a great opportunity to expand access to the areas/ regions of our country where autism services have not been reached and to do advocacy work in an organized way.



As one of the relentless or progressive promotion and awareness raising activities, Nia foundation has been conducting, these emerging centers are now taking children with Autism and related developmental disorders and are on the way of providing services. As a unique development, these organizations have built a collaborative front called “Autism Society of Ethiopia”. As an organization that found and introduced this especial service in Ethiopia for the first time, Nia took the initiative of generating this idea and organizing these emerging organizations under the above umbrella name.

With this, the plan of the Nia Foundation is to build and strengthen the network of these like-minded organizations at the national level. It is also intended to create a collaborative network to advocate, promote, and claim demands, services in a right-based way, protection, and more that are expected from the government. The holistic rehabilitation services we have at a national level are so low.

In order to meet this need, multiplying/extending organizations, strengthening newly coming, and duplicating best experiences and findings towards remote communities are really imperative and what Nia Foundation is working on.



This network is the past of this larger goal. So that, Nia Foundation will continue to play a frontal role of leading and coordinating the network. It will share from its rich experience, work on capacity building. Voicing for the voiceless will continue jointly. The network will also carry on its contribution of building a value system within the community, which is responsive, service-demanding, and caring for people with Autism and related developmental disorders. Accordingly, Nia Foundation has made a cool upon these organizations and shared its initiative. The organizations were interested and accepted with happiness. Consecutive meetings were conducted and a joint press release was made (World Awareness raising month).



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**On the a speech Mrs. Elleni Damtew, Executive Director of Nia Foundation/Joy Center for Autism** thanked the organizations and autism center directors who made a decision to reach this historic position, and she said the founder and late executive director of Nia Foundation (Ethiopia's Autism "*Jegnit*" Mrs. Zemi Yenus) that who's long-term vision has translated into action today, and expressed that she felt joyful. She called on the government to provide all the necessary support for the process of strengthening the Ethiopian Autism Society, enabling it to meet its objective. At the same time, she said that, in Ethiopia, autism is not given much attention and they are being abused by their families and society. Particularly she said, the country's education system did not provide enough attention and opportunities for citizens living with autism.

As a result, many citizens could be an asset to their country, and families beyond themselves are abandoned. Based on this, Joy Center for Autism has rehabilitated and empowered twelve children and made them work in the institution. She pointed out that these citizens have not only supported their own lives but have also started paying taxes to the government. Finally, she transferred the message to government bodies and policymakers, that Ethiopia's education system and others should consider citizens living with autism.

The rest four founders/directors of the above centers made speeches turn-by-turn. In their main message, they have called on the government, partners, and society to work for the general well-being (inclusive services) for persons with Autism and related developmental disorders. Because they deserve all the services others are enjoying at school and outside school. They would also be included in education systems and work environments. Policies endorsed concerning services and protection/safeguarding for them shall be enacted accordingly. Not only that but also those policies should be revisited and amended and or added important articles that in the way that can access services in the context of the existing world. They also said that they will continue to include others working on Autism and Related developmental disorders.

Press release link in Social Media: - <https://www.press.et/?p=95601>, <https://youtu.be/d0Rpqf8Sn1Y>

## **B. World Autism Awareness Day Celebration (April 02, 2023)**

World Autism Day has been celebrated each year on April 2. One of the main purposes of celebrating this day is to raise awareness through different techniques, including Media coverage, public events,

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mass mobilizations, and others. Raising funds for the implementation of set goals is another activity of the day and month. Accordingly, we have celebrated this day on April 02/2023.

The event was arranged in **“Joy Center of Excellence for Autism”** for half a day. Over 600 participants participated in the celebration event. Members of the board of directors, staff, families and their children, volunteers, teachers, and therapists from Fikir Ethiopian National Association of Intellectual Disabilities, Bethe Mihret have participated.

9616 short SMS subscribers, Rotary club of Lewit, Ethiopia women sketchers group, Representatives from stakeholder government agencies (sub-city and Woreda Offices working on Health, Education, Women and Social affairs, and Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau) took part in celebrating the event. Partners including the Ministry of Health, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, JJcon Construction, Bamacon Construction, Atcon Architectural Engineering, Zemi Friends Group, and Ethio Telecom, also have taken part in the celebrations.



**“Quality Inclusive Education to all Children and Youth Living with Autism”** was the motto of the, whose theme shaped all the activities of the day. The whole program of the event focused on key components of awareness creation activities, such as the meaning of developmental disability in general and Autism in Particular, raising some myths about Autism among the community, the rights to education, and the health of Autistic children in Ethiopia, talent shows performed by youth and children with Autism and different celebratory, funny and entertaining and fundraising activities were included in the events. The events aimed to create awareness of Autism among the society and fundraising for Joy Center of Excellence Construction.



**Message from the board of members, Nia Representatives, and Semi's Family:**

Regarding the occasion, various messages were delivered by Mrs. Sarah Hussen , Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Nia Foundation/Joy Center for Autism, Mrs. Eleni Damtewu Executive Director of the Nia Foundation/Joy Center for Autism, Mr. Zakarias G/Egzehabher, Dr. Zenebe, and Mr. Bilal Abdella.

The messages of the above speakers strengthened the motto of this year, **"Quality Inclusive Education for All Children and Youth Living with Autism"** in one way or another. Ensuring accessibility of inclusive services for citizens living with autism in all parts of the country is vital. They urged participants to play an important role in bringing this issue to the ground together.



Fikir Ethiopian National Association of Intellectual Disabilities, one of our partner organizations, invited and participated in the event. They came up with their children and youth with special needs who performed dance and circus on the stage with a wonderful musical performance and won great [Nia Foundation Annual Report 2023](#)

appreciation from the audience. They were awarded 50,000 Birr for their wonderful show. The group trained and ended up with this result, a music dancer, choreographer, and Idol competition dance judge artist, volunteer Tadesse Gebre received high praise and was given an incentive prize of 25 thousand birr in the audience of the program. Nia's Circus team showed circus. Other students of Nia foundation played a game of targeting a pot from about 10 meters distance and hitting the pot, whose eyes are covered by wool/some textile.



This is a competition to test their ability to integrate their mind with hand, body balance managing and more, which has attracted the attention of the audience. The winners of the game were rewarded different rewards as motivation. Also a dance and music group performance was presented by the International Development Organization of Amnesty International was one of the color makers of the day. They entertained the participants together with teaching and motivating massages.

### C. Painting the Fence:



In the middle of the program, fence painting activity was done with all the participants. The fence of Joy Center of Excellence for Autism has been steel (house roof making). Different colors of paintings were brought, and

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participants painted the fence together. Varieties of colors indicate diversity in disability and other aspects in collaboration. Still its purpose is to decorate the fence with color.

## **D. Fundraising at the Event**

One of the main aims of the event was to raise resources in kind and in cash for the construction of the Center of Excellence for Autism.

Bringing into Action,

- Children and youths of our center prepared different ornamental materials of their own models/creative (Maps made up of wood and other local materials, flower material, and others). These materials were displayed for sale in the ceremony and generated some money. Along with income generating, it promoted their vocational capacity.
- Working in collaboration with different partners, water, soft drinks, and snacks were brought for sale. Moha soft drinks industry share company, KBF General Trading Plc. (Fham Water), and B.G.I. Ethiopia are some of the partner companies that cooperated with us with their products.
- One-child-one sponsor project was promoted. In the ceremony, sponsors promised to cover the cost of 9 children. In addition to these, 1 Million Birr was donated by an individual partner. All the donations of the day are committed to the construction of the Excellence Center.

## **C. The Rotary Club Addis Ababa West Weekly Fellowship and Fund raising**

### **Lunch event at Joy**

The Rotary Club of Addis Ababa West is a club to which Zemi had been a member. She had been participating and working with them until the time of her passing. The club in the same way has been a longstanding partner of Nia Foundation.

In the same April month/ April 04, 2023, they were invited to visit our center and get involved in our fundraising lunch program. Over 50 participants presented it. Mrs. Elleni Damtew made a welcome speech to them, expressing that the Nia Foundation is honored to have the club. Mr. Bilal Abdella, the Co-founder, was participated it and greeted them during the opening. He also made discussion and interacted with them during and after the lunch. It was for the first time since Zemi's rest that the .



Rotary Club of Addis Ababa West visited us. Because of this, achievements of the last two years (since Zemi's passing), challenges, and the way forward were presented by Kibreab Petros the program coordinator Nia Foundation. The case of Joy Center of Excellence for Autism was emphasized more, including updating them on its existing situation, and motivating them more to be involved.





Plus to the members of the club, Board members, and Zemi's Families and friends were participated in the program. The club demonstrated good emotional solidarity by encouraging us and motivated us telling that they will be in our side to attain the goal of Nia. 11 people among them promised to sponsor 11 children (one-sponsor-one -child), which is Birr 550,000 for one year for these 11 children.

Rotarians expressed their appreciation for the incredible achievements registered, and initiatives under implementation for the realization of Zemi's vision. They also promised to provide technical and financial support in the times to come. The Rotarians gave

appreciation to all Nia Foundation staffs and Executive

Director for continued service and vision of Zemi with better passion, and have gave advice to maintain her vision in all program areas. Nia Foundation by its side extended gratitude for all the support and solidarity and for their promise made to be ,materialized in the future.



## D. Special Celebratory Event in April Month

Mrs. Zemi became the winner of the 2023 African Women's Award. Zemi, who was a pioneer in the field of autism in Ethiopia for twenty years and founded the first Joy Autism for Center in Ethiopia, was won "**The African Women`s Award 2023**". As a country, she is known as a reason for many mothers with children living with autism, medicine and solution, for many families to survive from

disintegration, and brought social change in Ethiopia! As soon as Mrs. Zemi found out that her son Jojo was diagnosed with autism, thinking about the fate of mothers in Ethiopia who faced the same situation, she came decided to avoid to go to United States where she has been for 17 years and establish the Nia Foundation/Joy Autism Center, which achieved many successes in the past 21 years/ She caused it to be transmitted.



Especially since 2002, when there was no autism information or service, she has been an authentic source of information on the issue of autism, working to raise awareness for many Ethiopians. Presenter, Rotarian, member of the Ethiopian Mental Health National Policy Advisory Task Force, member of the Board of Directors of the Ethiopian Red Cross and many other institutions, Mrs. Zemi Yenus played a major role in many international charity works, has contributed an outstanding leadership and international social work during her lifetime. For these and more, she is awarded "**The African Women`s Award 2023**", which is given to women who have made outstanding contributions and great impact in Africa.

The award ceremony was held at the Sheraton Addis International Hotel. The award ceremony was attended by the Mayor of Addis Ababa, Honorable Mrs. Adanech Abebie, the Minister of Women and Social Affairs, H.E Dr. Ergoge Tesfaye, senior government officials and members of the House of Representatives.

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We believe that Mrs. Zemi's works should be remembered not only at the African level but also at the international level, not only for autistic mothers, children and families, but also as a symbol and change in the social and humanitarian sector. We all know how exciting this award if Mrs. Zemi was able to see this honor alive.

But a good work is beyond the grave, so it is the responsibility of all Ethiopian citizens to support the many works of the foundation by taking over its trust, we should work hard to achieve the vision of Mrs. Zemi Yenus and fulfill her trust! In this exceptional achievement, we congratulate her Family, friends, the staff and the country!

## 4. Program related activities and Implementation:

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### A. Project supervision and Evaluation:

Nia Foundation has implemented the project called *“Empowering mothers of children with disability and combating gender-based violence”*, which was donated by the Finland Embassy to Ethiopia in 2022. The goal of the project was to tackle social burden and economic dependency so that they can grow to self-independence/self-sufficiency. In line with our objective of realizing the benefits and improved services to our targets (empowerment of mothers of children, adolescents, and youth with autism). Accordingly, we trained and provided 10 more vulnerable mothers of children and youth with Autism with income-generating Activity start-up capital after a series of steps based on the business plan they submitted. These activities were done before the last January and the project was also ended at the same time.

But, as monitoring and evaluation of project progress is one of key components to check successfulness of project, and give important lessons, we were conducting monitoring and evaluation. Based on this, seven/7 mothers are working their business more or less. Having secured working shop and over increasing market inflation are main factors affecting their job. Three/2 of them have terminated their business and 1 even didn't started it. Two of them, their temporary business shade were distracted/Ruined because of the proclamation of the government. The rest one woman, material price of her business was immediately over increase just when she was in preparation. She didn't got matching fund and had stop to do.



## B. Awareness Creation, Internship and Volunteering Service

Nia foundation works with different organizations to increase betterment of Autistic children and youth for their bright future. To achieve this goal, we working on advocacy, increasing community awareness towards Autism, giving holistic service and support in Joy center, vocational training for parents, siblings, caregivers and therapists. In addition to this we are working to be center of excellence in east Africa and to increase the awareness Autism , we believe that starting form grass root level is important for better outcome, because of this we are open to visitation of students form primary school to high school.

In this year, different organizations, individuals, and graduating classes of different governmental and non-governmental Universities and colleges students (for example, graduating class students from Addis Ababa University, Saint Mary University College, and primary and secondary schools) came for internship, volunteering, and for research in the reporting time. In addition to these college and

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University students governmental and private school students visited our center and made their day with our precious children. As they took time in our center, they visited and got explanations with reference to the general goal and achievements of our organization, they got back with the image and burden to their community. They are also encouraged to share what they have with their friends and others. This has its own importance in increasing awareness, promotion and advocacy.

- Visit from bonga university department of special need has visited the center to do there paper work and better understanding on the children people with autism in the center.
- Zoma museum and recreation center teacher also visited the center to shear there experience with us,
- International youth fellowship also visited the center twice during the past 3 month. And did Lunch feeding, teaching the kids same taekwondo and musical instrument and spending quality time with the kids in the center.
- Student from Abader School also have visited and have been learning and volunteering for 3 days for half a day,
- Different people, individuals as well as in group, have visited celebrated their birth day's, their children's birth days' with our students and staff including Mrs. Sara Hussen, our respected board chair, Dagim and his family, Mrs. Bilen from US with child with Autism have celebrated their birth day at the center supported us with the birth day gifts to Joy Center for Autism. In addition, Also Abrham (one of our student who passed this year) family spent a day in the center with the student in the memory of their child.
- Mr. Eric from the US has also visited the center and give out gifts and invites the teachers for diner at yod-abisnya culture restaurant and finally student from different school, age limit in between 15-19 have also volunteered their summer at the center helping out the student and assisting the teachers and participated in coordination and facilitation of the graduation ceremony at Ethiopian National Theater.
- Dr. Emebet dental hospital is one to mention who agreed to give teeth cleaning serves to one of our student siffne Daniel. Who need the serves Also a health related training on Management of Common Emergency Situations as a first Responder, a four hour training for 3staff members and 3teachers have given in the center in collaborated with volunteer Hemen Webeshet Abebe. She Is an American heart association (AHA) Certified individual BLS instructor working under the Ethiopian resuscitation training - the only AHA training center.

**Fig. Students from Abadir Primary School Support Children with Autism at Joy.**



### C. Projects and applied Projects

In the reporting period the following project call proposals were prepared and applied to different organizations. Sofar, we have secure Finland Embassy local project fund for 2023-2024.



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**Other Submitting calls are under review.**

1. Canada Embassy local cooperation fund
2. Finland Embassy local cooperation fund
3. UN Women Ethiopia,
4. One-child-one Sponsor project to different government institutions, private companies and individuals,
5. Australian Embassy Local grant,
6. Jobs Africa,
7. Christian Child Relief and Development Association
8. Israel Embassy to Ethiopia,

**D. MIVA Project Accomplishment**

This project was applied last year. With financial support from Lilia foundation covered 75% of finance in order to procure Brand New Minibus vehicle that will service for improving the transportation service to children with Autism. We have successfully executed the project as per the project schedule and delivery of the vehicle was done in the colorful program organized at NIA foundation, Joy Center for Autism at the presence of Members of Board of Directors, Representatives from Cheshire Ethiopia our strategic partner and children with Autism as well as the staff and the SMT and other guests.



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## **E. Program Reforming Workshop: Reforming its internal programs at Gonder University.**

Pioneering Nia Foundation/Joy Center for Autism has achieved its two decades of dedicated service provision and celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in the last year, along with its first batch of students graduating ceremony and hired them to jobs. This year (2023) too, Nia Foundation is longing to graduate its second batch of students (17) and send children/adolescents to regular schools (some children and adolescents who have rehabilitated and become able to join regular schools). This is one of the top achievements of the organization, which was visualized and anticipated to have been achieved before a quarter of a century! Nia Foundation feels honored, having started Graduating and hiring, bringing the 25 years' imaginary picture and passion into reality!

With this and much more/with the rest of all activities, now, Nia Foundation is stretching and striving to reform its programs to improve its service provision strategy, especially in the system of rehabilitation. Enjoying the success on the one hand, Nia is working to reform the holistic rehabilitation program on the other hand. To be specific, this workshop gives due emphasis to Building the capacity of teachers, test resources/tools produced at home are functioning or not, establishing a unique curriculum along with the objective of preserving institutional memory, improving family services, assessing and readjusting service provision strategy, and strengthening exit strategy.

### **Why Reform?**

As it is known, Autism is a lifelong neuro-developmental disorder, affecting social interaction, behavior, nervous system, and other aspects of an individual. As its degree or level varies, intervention/rehabilitation requirements to be made for someone varies and depends on the individual with Autism. To coup-up with this condition and provide the service that fits best to each individual is found to be vital when we discuss improving service provision. By this, we mean that there is a probability of varying nature/character of the case from person to person, which desires respective intervention approaches, as it is just a spectrum disorder. On another side, all homegrown knowledge, skills, or experiences that have been developing in Nia Foundation and working for the last two decades would be better documented, improved, and maybe re-structured based on the result they have, then, formulate a curriculum that well indicates what and how Nia Foundation works holistic rehabilitation.

### **Action taken:**

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To realize this objective, Nia Foundation has organized a workshop of three days in Gondar for program staff. Professionals like Waga Zeleke (professor in the USA), and Henok Hailu, Associate Prof. At Addis Ababa University were invited to consult/coach the workshop. They are Clinical consultants of the Nia Foundation and are as close as the active staff still, who have been working committed for our organization. Prof. Waga was stationed at Gondar University for her short-term work with the university, which was one of the reasons to go to her location for the workshop. Henok (Associate Prof.) was also willing to travel with us and has committed three days, contributing his professional contribution to the workshop.

**List of participants:**

1. Mrs. Elleni Damtew Asfaw
2. Mrs. Azeb Kassa
3. Mrs. Azbe G/Silassie
4. Mrs. Bethelhem Tesfaye
5. Mr. Kibreab Petros

**Consultants:**

1. Waganesh Zeleke (prof.)
2. Henok Hailu (Associate Prof.)



**Mode of the Workshop:**

Even though they know the Nia Foundation for long years, both psychologists asked the staff to present all program activities, as if they know nothing. They were interested to hear from us about Nia's service-delivering systems, intervention strategies, service providers and service recipients

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interaction (relational environments), and human resource utilization environments including professional capacity, teamwork spirit, exit strategy (starting from registration of children to the graduation), which is a full-circle assessment. The following are presentations presented to the consultants in response base on their requirements:

**Registration:** - Children are received through the reception process (demographic information of the children and parents are registered, which could be in person or by phone call). They may come up with diagnosis information/papers diagnosed in other centers/clinics. If there is not that diagnosis before, they will be first diagnosed in the Nia foundation. That and more are completed in reception.

**Assessment:-** As children are received, they will be taken to the assessment room. Mrs. Azeb and Mr. Bethi are carrying out this process. They start by calling the child's name. They make materials/bell sounds and they will check whether they can look towards the direction or not. They will also check children's eye contact. Here, or in this room, more than this detail is done. Then, the child is taken to the parent, and Executive director, and a common discussion will be made. This time, families are asked different questions including Nutrition, behavior, concerning the child's self-help issues, the way they are handling their child, and much more. This is when the child is Autistic. Unless they will be referred to the concerned center.

**Bringing children into Holistic Rehabilitation:** After the above processes, children are waiting at home until the time they are called to start center-based rehabilitation. Their parents or siblings can take training in different topics and can have counseling services coming to the office or through the telephone to help their children at home. Children with double special needs are received in less time or given priority when they have more special cases like they are twins, or single parents/Mamas, or if the parents have special needs cases and related issues. If the case is normal, the child will wait until we get accommodation and will start.

**When Children start rehabilitation:** the child's full information (taken during the assessment process) will be provided to the teacher. The teacher will make a lesson plan to address those points found in the diagnosis and continue to provide services (holistic rehabilitation services). This will be evaluated every quarter, in order to check whether the intervention strategy is working or not. Based on the results of the evaluation, the next quarter's intervention plan will be set. This pattern works year to year on the progress level of each child, until graduation.

### **Graduation and related preparations:**

Of course, graduating youth from Nia Foundation ceremonially in mass is a recent phenomenon, mainly started in 2022, as a special achievement at the state level. Facilitating preconditions related to

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graduation has been one of the activities Nia Foundation was working to fulfill. The youth have been having vocational skills training with regard to their gift. Their parents took business and leadership training, prepared business proposals, and provided income-generating activity seed money (start-up capital). Parents have established a linkage with small enterprises, and microfinance at the woreda level, and facilitated to have bank accounts for saving. Communication and cooperation were made with Woredas and Kebele to provide them with shop-building places based on their business type.

For this, projects were prepared and approached different partners before the above activities. Donation was found and parents of 10 graduate youth were provided. Graduate youth and their parents are coordinated together in that business, with the objective to build sustainable living and economic independence for both parents and their youth. After the business activities are started, monitoring/supervision, and support continue. Working on an exit strategy got focus and it is proceeding with various project ideas.

After the whole pattern of holistic service provision is presented in the above way, the staff was asked to explain the challenges that the staff or the organization faced in the process of service provision, and the staff mentioned different challenges in the process of service provision. Among them, the consultants have identified the following lists of challenges:-

Challenges Identified:

- Limitation in exit plan - Brining old and too young children together has a big impact in delaying the rehabilitation pace. Small children can most probably be affected by learning from the older ones, and their learning time/age can pass before their change.
- Shortage of enough Parental involvement – can negate the service quality of Nia unless parents work at home and with Nia.
- Shortage of enough skills and resources in our hands to provide them, which is going to make the program from-less, we can't tell our pattern/curriculum of service provision for others.
- Shortage of basic documents – has relation with the above

Changing challenges into needs: it is important to change challenges into needs and work to respond to that needs unless the challenge will affect us.

- The need to have an exit Strategy – The case is calling to plan vocational skills improvement for the youth. This can include training them in their areas of interest or gift/ability and networking them with entrepreneurs (Hotels, Garages, Garment shops, woodwork and metalwork, and other arts...). Respected governmental bodies would participate. Nia has a clear strategy, prepares project proposals, and approaches entrepreneurs of the above types or

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more for entrepreneurship. As their skill grows, they can be hired there or build their own business. This will:-

- Help to build independence for the youth on time.
- Avoid rehabilitation delay for small children at the center
- Support families
- Gives opportunity for newly coming out of waiting list

➤ Develop a new plan for adolescents – Side by side with the above job, adolescents and youth who are above the age of 17 need to have another exclusive center. Those youth who are 18 and above and who have related cases like Epilepsy or other forms of comorbidity would have a new and full assessment (medical). Holistic rehabilitation/intervention going as it is, creating a separate center for this age group is suggestible for the following reasons:-

- Prevent the transmission of change delay effect to small children,
- Transmission of adolescent and youth sexual behavior to small children.
- Intake capacity increases as rehabilitation probability increases

• Plan Document developing program – Intervention activities or subjects (speech therapy, social skills, self-help skills...) that have been working in Nia for decades must be drafted, improved/developed to the level of curriculum, and documented. This also includes guidelines that can tell us which child would take which service and when, etc. which subject (rehabilitation type is learned by video, by written text ...). Documentation includes making authorized these documents as Nia's resources when they are approved through a series of steps by working with concerned bodies, uploading/posting them to our website, and having them in hard copy, etc. This will enable us to:

- Prevent competition on Nia's home-grown knowledge resource by others
- Have a clear curriculum, accessible to anyone
- Nia will have a clear road map for rehabilitation steps
- Nia's peculiar knowledge will be preserved, and its research wing will Continue to improve.

➤ Revising program for different levels of staff – Staff has been working for long years in this setup. By evaluating changes and the performance of employees, it is good to make rearrangements, whose results can change things. In relation to this, reforming and rearranging

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intervention strategies is suggestible. It is encouraged, therapies, skills, strategies of their application, and others are assessed/evaluated well and re-adjusted accordingly. through this:-

- Someone's potential might be boosted in a certain place/position
- Rearranging programs may bring change in the pace of children's change
- Evaluation/assessment (made for rehabilitation program) may result in unexpected findings.
- Still, the need for additional or new types of intervention could be found.

This includes checking that tools or programs like Abugida, SRH manual, and Parents Booklet and rehabilitation services (behavioral modification, speech therapy, gym, nutrition... are really working) This will help us to readjust or reform our intervention programs, to bring change in the system.

## **F. Media Engagement:**

Nia has been having Media engagement during the reporting period. As the technology is growing using media for an autism center can be beneficial for communication, skill development, social interaction and sharing experience. Consider incorporating visual aids, social stories, videos, and interactive apps to create engaging and personalized learning experiences for individuals with autism. It's important to tailor the media to each person's needs and preferences, while also ensuring a balanced approach that includes in-person interactions and sensory-friendly environments.

Regarding the conventional medias, we have been engaged with main conventional medias in Ethiopia covering our main events including FBC, EBC, EBS, Ahadu and like. Apart from the news coverage one to one interview sessions were also conducted in the radio and television programs with 4 FM radio channels and two television programs. In collaboration with purpose black from the KTV on the new year celebration was documented and aired. Nahoo and EBS television also documented our best practices in the documentary level and aired the program in their respective channels. Moreover in collaboration with Obongo kids an organization stationed in Tanzania we have been able to document the story of Mother and child with Autism and promoted Nia Foundation at international level.

The main action that have been on progress for the past four months are that opening different social media plat forms and updating the organizations appearance on the social medias. The Activities done sofar shows that we need more ways to address about the center and autism though social media.

Posting upcoming events ,different trains , facts, guest vacation ,and posting old pictures from the center attendant was also a part of the plan for the social media projects .

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In the past month we have also been attending different bazar and events for promotional purposes to representing our organization including back to school programs at the new library Abrehot open space, American embassy, and at Gion hotel prepared and organized by CSO.



## 6. Construction of Joy Center of Excellence Project

Joy Center of Excellence for Autism construction is one of the projects, to which, huge focus in placed. Fund raising activities, monitoring the ongoing construction activities, creating various events, meeting, networking, approaching different partners along with proposal, and related activities have been working in the reporting time.

The project being built in partnership with governmental sectors, partners, stakeholders and the general society. so as to strengthen its sustainability and public ownership in line with the current government policies promoting inclusive society. After the realization of the center's construction, the center is planned to have an integrated system of raising funds for the sustainability of the services to be rendered. The multi-purpose building

Section of the center is dedicated to commercial purposes and it is meant to generate the required financial resources to sustain the center's services while all the commercials of the building are going to be strictly made for relevant services such as; medical centers, playing and recreational facilities, and so on. The Center of Excellence construction is accelerating with good passion, in spite of different challenges, In this reporting year we worked with different governmental and non-governmental

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organizations and individuals, Major activities were: preformed agreement with a construction company, Preparing 20th-year anniversary events in the center of the excellence construction site, communicating with different stakeholders like Addis Ababa city Administration mayor office, finance and economy bureau, contact with diasporas community, communication with individuals and partners organizations, with the obtained money, the purchase of steel that works up to the sixth floor has been made, etc.





**Construction consultant: giving free service within their professional, employee worker in their own payments, materials support.**

- ❖ **Ethio Telecom. By giving short SMS code (9616) and Tele-birr for free**
- ❖ **EBS TV: promoting our SMS short code and our service for free.**
- ❖ **BamaCom and Flintstone construction**
- ❖ **Artists, famous persons, religions leaders, and public speakers: they did short SMS message promotion for free (Artists Mekdes Tsegaye, Artist Serawit Fikre, Dr. Wodajneh Mehari, and so on).**

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## 7. Finance Department

Overall the department works to:

- ❖ Maintaining financial records that are accurate and complete
- ❖ Regularly reviewing revenue and expenses, budgeted vs actual amounts, cash flows
- ❖ Preparing internal and external financial reports
- ❖ Preparing and meeting external reporting requirements
- ❖ Developing internal controls and policies such as ensuring internal controls for financial transactions are documented, followed, reviewed, and updated and conducting risk assessments to help prevent fraud and preserve financial data integrity
  - ❖ Preparing for and overseeing the auditing and follow-up process of the audit by external auditor

Source of income: -

- ❖ Different Donation
- ❖ Family Contribution
- ❖ From Project Remaining amount like MOH
- ❖ Share net

Regular Common expenditure:

- ❖ Income Tax
- ❖ Pension
- ❖ Withholding Tax
- ❖ Salary

Program Expenditure: -

- ❖ Therapy Material
- ❖ Nutrition two types ,1 For Students & 2 For Staff

Center of Excellency Building Project Expenditure

Strengths

- ❖ Salary pays periodically & Based on Organization manual
- ❖ Any payment pay periodically
- ❖ Any Purchase, Purchase periodically
- ❖ Give fast information for any third party Like, Auditor, Management & Donner etc