

# ABIDE



**Alliance for Brain-Gain  
and Innovative Development**

**ABIDE Annual Report  
1 January - 31 December 2014**

**Address: Akaki Campus Premise (AAU) - Block 14 –CA7  
P.O. Box 11966, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia  
Phone: 0114.34.94.20 | Fax: 0116.47.14.38  
E-mail: [abide@abideethiopia.org](mailto:abide@abideethiopia.org), [bishawtewabech@yahoo.com](mailto:bishawtewabech@yahoo.com)  
Website: <http://www.abideethiopia.org>**

# **Alliance for Brain-Gain and Innovative Development**

## **Annual Report: 1<sup>st</sup> January - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014**

### **Executive Summary**

The year 2014 has been a successful year. Relationship with lead sectoral partner has been consolidated. Networking with different stakeholders have been strengthened and expanded nationally and internationally. ABIDE continued with championing the potential of knowledge Diaspora for sustainable development and it is increasingly recognized among professionals and partner institutions in the country and outside as a credible and experienced organization for increased and systematic participation of Diaspora professionals.

The ground work was done for subsequent needs assessment and process analysis in eight selected universities. However need based mobilization and deploying up to 20 Diaspora professionals for placement in the eight universities is pending. The process has begun and ground work initiated to stimulate Institutions of Higher Learning for proactive planning to increase systematic partnership with qualified professionals in the Diaspora for sustainable and evidence based joint action for the most constructive and win-win engagement.

The lesson learned this year is that ABIDE is better positioned to be a champion for the potential and need for engaging the Knowledge Diaspora as a critical development partner, rather than as an executing body facilitating the actual engagement and placement of professionals in institutions in the country. ABIDE's comparative advantage lies in its vast networks and its credibility and integrity, which will enable it to be an effective source of data and information on issues around the Knowledge Diaspora; and serve as an information powerhouse on the topic!

The number of players on knowledge Diaspora engagement is increasing. The need for coordinated action and high level consensus on issues related to Knowledge Diaspora engagement for sustainable development is urgent and very important. A paradigm shift is evident for ABIDE to be a more relevant development partner and effective in facilitating partnership and joint action for increased coverage and synergy.

Strengthening operational capacity of ABIDE is imperative. A robust and interactive website and strong network using social media and you tube is urgent for increased and sustained promotion, information exchange, for matching, networking, partnership building and experiences sharing. to increase organization's effectiveness, visibility for wider reach and influence Ready availability of required resources, human, financial and material is vital to ensure a stronger and a more effective ABIDE nationally and internationally.

## **1. Introduction**

The year 2014 has been another year of success in championing the Knowledge Diaspora's tremendous potential as a contributor for a nation's sustainable development. ABIDE's networks have been expanded, experiences have been shared, challenges have been overcome and clarity has been gained regarding ABIDE's comparative advantage and best use of its knowledge, resources and position. ABIDE as a champion and leader of the idea of brain gain for sustainable development has managed to popularize and disseminate the concept through consistent promotion, use of the media and other platforms. A credit to ABIDE is that it has been a great contributor towards what now appears to be a tipping point regarding the Knowledge Diaspora's vast engagement in Ethiopia's development. ABIDE's communication and promotion has resulted in creating increasingly positive attitude and a growing interest in a number of national and subnational organizations and societies to adopt Knowledge Diaspora engagement as an important development strategy that can contribute greatly to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

According to ABIDE's 2014 work-plan, while the ground work to engage twenty professionals through ABIDE was done, some of the selected universities have engaged or are in the process of engaging members of the Knowledge Diaspora in their respective institutions. With strengthened operational capacity, ABIDE continues to have the best potential to be a key partner in promoting and building streamlined and institutionalized systems to maximize the effective tapping into the Knowledge Diaspora's potential for sustainable knowledge exchange.

The lesson learned through this year is that ABIDE is better positioned to be a champion for the potential and need for engaging the Knowledge Diaspora as a critical development partner, rather than as an executing body facilitating the actual engagement and placement of professionals in institutions in the country.

ABIDE's comparative advantage lies in its vast networks and its credibility and integrity, which will enable it to be an effective source of information on issues around the Knowledge Diaspora; an information powerhouse on the topic! Using its expertise, ABIDE will continue to promote proactive planning and preparedness and the creation of enabling, systematic and institutionalized approaches by the host institution as the key modality for sustainable and evidence based joint action for the most constructive and win-win engagement.

## **2. ABIDE's Performance in 2014**

### **2.1. Implementation of Strategic Plan**

The year 2014 is the first year of the three year strategic plan, as approved by the Board and General Assembly. The five strategic areas remain the main focus so as to maximize effective and increased Knowledge Diaspora engagement in the country. These include:

- (1) Capacity building, knowledge and skill exchange and technology transfer
- (2) Database development and membership drive
- (3) Networking and partnership building
- (4) Information communication and promotion
- (5) Monitoring, evaluation and operations research

## **2.2. The Board**

The year 2014 was exceptionally a very sad year for ABIDE. Dr. Tamerat Retta, Secretary of the General Assembly, passed away in July 2014 after an extended illness. This created a major gap as he was one of ABIDE's strongest pillars and an exemplary and dedicated volunteer who worked tirelessly to promote and encourage the organization. Also during the year, a number of Board members, Ms. Woubalem Taye, very sadly lost her husband and also her brother. Ms. Misrak Elias also was faced with the tragic loss of her son, daughter-in-law and grandson. Dr. Tewabech Bishaw also lost her youngest brother who died suddenly, and finally, during the year, the Board Chairperson Ms. Mebrat Woldetinsai was out of the country, in Thailand for medical reasons.

These sad, very trying and unfortunate circumstances have significantly affected all of us personally, and as a result, also affected the performance of ABIDE's Board, though the Board did continue to give its guidance and oversight to the best of its ability. It has met, reviewed and approved the 2014 Annual Report, and Audit Report and the 2015 Annual Work-plan and estimated budget for review and approval by the AGM..

## **2.3. Partnership with the Ministry of Education**

Based on the MOU signed between the Ministry of Education (MOE) and ABIDE, the 2014 work-plan defined the role and responsibilities of the MOE. Accordingly, the State Minister assigned the Director General for Research and Academic Affairs to be the designated officer to work with ABIDE. This was to be revised after six months, at which time, the Director General for Administration and Capacity Building took over the task. Hence, fully engaging the MOE took considerable time that was further delayed due to a very busy schedule of all those in the ministry. However, the most important outcomes of our partnership were:

- 1) A meeting was held with H.E the Minister of Education, Ato Shiferaw Shigute where the Managing Director introduced ABIDE's vision, mission and activities. The Minister fully supports the partnership and its potential to contribute to strengthening capacities of institutions of higher learning in the country. He expressed the Ministry's interest in identifying institutional modalities to alleviate the shortage of qualified human resources, especially in the new universities. Follow-up actions are

- to be jointly developed and implemented, including the development of a Ministry guideline on Knowledge Diaspora engagement.
- 2) It was agreed and a letter of support has been drafted by the MOE to be sent to different partners and potential donors soliciting their active participation with ABIDE's work, including availing resources in kind or through funding opportunities.
  - 3) A questionnaire has been jointly drafted between MOE and ABIDE that will be completed by selected university presidents. This is to assess past performance, current status and future intentions of these universities in systematically engaging the Ethiopian Knowledge Diaspora in meeting their institutional goals.

## **2.4. Knowledge Exchange and Technology Transfer**

The 2014 annual work plan targeted needs assessment and process analysis in eight selected universities, and based on the needs, ABIDE was to mobilize and deploy up to 20 Diaspora professionals to the institutions. The ground work has been done and ABIDE has continued to champion the potential of engagement of knowledge Diaspora for institutional capacity strengthening, but, actual deployment through ABIDE needed more resources than what ABIDE currently has available. Proactive planning needs to be strengthened and systematic and institutionalized approaches streamlined to maximize the benefit of the engagement.

### **2.4.1. Addis Ababa University**

Addis Abeba University is the first university to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with ABIDE. As the oldest and largest university in the country, AAU has the largest number and mix of professionals in its alumnae. A number of self-motivated Diaspora professionals have participated and contributed in academic and research areas within in AAU. However, the partnership modality used has been mostly individualized and sporadic and often unsustainable. Under the AAU- ABIDE partnership a "Joint AAU and ABIDE Project" was developed. Unfortunately, the high turnover of staff, lack of institutional memory, unsustained interest and protracted processes has restricted the progress. Now, there seems to be renewed interest to reactivate the project, and AAU could benefit from identifying key issues that could help to influence policy and practice for improved and coordinated Knowledge Diaspora participation in local university. Relocation of ABIDE's office from Akaki to AAU's Addis Ababa Campuses is still being pursued by ABIDE

### **2.4.2. Mekelle University**

Mekelle University is among those showing interest in partnering with the Ethiopian Diaspora. The university's leadership, together with the Regional Administration, has continued to mobilize and engage members of the Diaspora, originally from the Administrative Region, to participate in their regional administrations' development initiatives. In 2014, there was a major initiative by the Regional Administration that is believed to increase the participation of the Diaspora community, including the Knowledge Diaspora. ABIDE will partner with Mekelle University in documenting its experiences and lessons learned to identify gaps and improve performance.

### **2.4.3. Jimma University**

ABIDE is actively engaged with Jimma University (JU) and has visited the university and met with officials there in three occasions. We had agreed on developing and implementing a university wide strategy. Unfortunately, the sudden death of a senior professor designated to lead the partnership disrupted the progress. However, we are again in discussion to reactivate the plan. On the other hand, ABIDE is also currently working closely with a UK Knowledge Diaspora team where over 20 professionals are organized and have expressed to Jimma University of their readiness to support the university in advising Masters and Doctoral students (EDMA) in their academic pursuit. JU and EDMA have signed a bilateral MoU with detailed plan and expectations drawn. ABIDE is a part of the discussion and development of the project. An MoU has already been signed between ABIDE and EDMA. A formalized tripartite arrangement is also being considered that include JU.

### **2.4.4. University of Gondar**

University of Gondar is another institution making efforts to systematically engage the knowledge Diaspora for institutional capacity building. The university used its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a landmark event to push on Diaspora engagement using their alumnae networks. University leaders visited and talked to professionals in the Diaspora and used the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration as the occasion to strengthen the bond between the university and its alumnae. The Managing Director being an alumnus of the university participated at the anniversary celebration and used the opportunity to link with officials and staff of the university, and professionals from the Diaspora alumnae community. The university is now considering creating a dedicated office at a Director General level for Diaspora and Alumnae Affairs. This will enable the university to focus and closely follow-up with their Diaspora professionals and friends of Gondar University for sustained and systematic participation. The MOU between Gondar University and

ABIDE is still on, and ABIDE will continue its close working relationship within the new direction ABIDE is taking on for the next years, for what we believe will yield better results.

#### **2.4.5. St Mary University**

St. Mary University has been fully recognized and granted a full university status. It is one of two private universities working with ABIDE for need-based partnership with the Knowledge Diaspora. During 2014, ABIDE held a series of meetings with the President of the University, Prof. Wendwessen, and other officials of the university, including Ato Tedla and Dr. Misganaw Solomon who are leading the Diaspora partnership project. Currently, the university is expanding its scope and increasing the number of specialized disciplines of study. To meet the increased demand for qualified human resources, the university is keen to partner with the Diaspora. To this end, the university has specified, on its website, the kind of incentives and facilitations they will provide to interested Diaspora professionals during their stay with the University. St. Mary's University is actively engaged in discussion with ABIDE to identify professionals in the Diaspora with the needed expertise to meet identified needs. ABIDE will need to strengthen its network with professionals abroad and streamline the mechanisms to identify and link needed experts with the university.

### **2.5. Mobilizing Resources and Capacity Strengthening**

#### **2.5.1. In-Kind Support**

- **Office Space:** Based on partnership with Addis Ababa University, ABIDE still enjoys the in-kind support of the university with office space made available to ABIDE at the AAU Akaki campus free of charge. However the location has been one of the reasons for the diminishing participation of volunteers. Also because of the location ABIDE has compromised its visibility and its ability network and to link up with Diaspora professionals when they visit the country. It will be in the best interest of ABIDE to relocate to Addis Abeba proper.
- **Participation at the 2014 Global Forum on Migration and Development:** ABIDE was sponsored to participate at the 2014 “Global Forum on Migration and Development” Civil Society Forum, held in Stockholm Sweden from 6-9 May, 2014. The support was obtained through a competitive arrangement where ABIDE won the sponsorship as one of 160 global civil society participants out of a total of 800 NGOs that applied globally. The support covered round trip economy class ticket and meal and accommodation. It was a very high powered meeting with high level participants. Global decision makers, Civil Societies, researchers, donors, practitioners and leaders on migration were in attendance. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban

Ki Moon and the Princes of Sweden presided over the closing session and made key statements that would serve as a guide for global action on migration and development. ABIDE actively participated in the meeting, championing the potential of Knowledge Diaspora migrants in sustainable development. It was an excellent opportunity for information exchange and networking opportunity for ABIDE.

- **Membership fee:** The fee collected during the year was very minimal at 100 birr per year per member. Intensive membership drive is an urgent necessity to increase its individual and institutional membership.
- **Conference Facility and Refreshment:** Through partnership with St. Mary University conference facility and refreshment was kindly provided by the university free of cost for the 2013 General Assembly held in February 2014.
- **Participation at a National Workshop on Community Based Education:** The Managing Director was invited to participate at a National Workshop on Community Based Education. Flight and accommodation of the Managing Director was covered by Jimma University during the Community Based Education Workshop where ABIDE was represented and also facilitated a session. During this meeting, the Managing Director introduced ABIDE to the Minister of Education that opened opportunities for stronger and empowered relationship between ABIDE and MOE. Also during the same occasion, discussions were held with several university presidents present at the workshop for closer working relationship with ABIDE.
- **Volunteer's time:** ABIDE's work is carried out by volunteers. There is no salaried staff. Everyone, including the Managing Director, have dedicated their time and expertise without any remuneration or compensation.
- **Operations cost:** There is no budgetary provision for operations cost. Cost of transport, telephone fuel, and parking service are covered by volunteer staff.

#### **2.5.2. Action to Mobilize Funds:**

- **Presentation to Donors:** Through contact established with the USAID's Education Department and MOE, a formal presentation on ABIDE was made to major Donors in the Sector. The platform is a monthly scheduled meeting of donors in the sector co-chaired by the Ministry of Education and US Embassy representatives. The MOE is represented by Head of Planning. There were about 13 major donors were present for the presentation including DFID, GTE, Netherlands Embassy, SIDA CIDA JPAIGO, WB and JAICA. ABIDE's brochure was also distributed at the meeting. In the discussion session some participants expressed interest on follow-up discussion with ABIDE.
- **Planning a Consultative meeting:** In consultation with volunteers, a tentative plan is being drawn for a high level consultative meeting next year. The meeting will address key issues of national importance related to Ethiopia's brain gain. It will also address



concerns of Diaspora professionals and benefiting institutions. High level and prominent individuals from Education, Health, Foreign Affairs, Trade, Industry, Construction Environment, Women, Youth and Children, Science and Technology sectors. Universities, Research Institutions, Academy of Sciences, Diaspora Organizations, Diaspora Professional Volunteers, Diaspora Returnees, selected Embassies, AUC, NGOs, UN and bilateral agencies, Universities the private sector etc., are being identified to participate in the discussion. Evidence based presentations will be made by different groups, including policy level, host institutions and universities, Diaspora professionals, sectoral ministries at national and regional levels. The AU, EU and international participants including from, selected African countries, the US, UK and Germany will participate. Existing approaches and modalities will be examined and new ways explored. Based on outcome of the deliberations and consensus reached recommendations will be made to streamline processes, policies, and coordinated actions for increased, effective and sustainable Knowledge Diaspora engagement. The forum will also serve as a fund raising platform to solicit pledges and commitments as well as recommendations for improved financial sufficiency and operational capacity of ABIDE. Facebook, e-newsletter, and other social media pages will be used to promote and solicit support participation.

- **USAID:** A meeting was held with the Programme Officer at USAID to explore possibilities and action required to solicit partnership between USAID and ABIDE. USAID expressed its keenness and informed availability of matching resources in partnership with the MOE to increase the number of Fulbright Fellows, mostly Ethiopian Diaspora, coming to Ethiopia. The process requires identification of needs and preparing the ground work for placement of Fellows. In the arrangement, the MOE is required to ensure accommodation and small per diem to the fellows. Based on the joint MOE-ABIDE MOU needs assessment, process analysis and placement can be taken care of by host universities facilitated through ABIDE as a focal partner jointly working with MOE and different institutions of higher learning. This activity will be followed up in 2015.

### **3. ABIDE Operational/Institutional Capacity Strengthening**

**3.1. Human Resource:** Human resources are required for ABIDE to fully engage and stimulate partners. In addition to the need for more and active volunteers a few full time core staff are necessary for effective follow-up of activities with different partners. Other means of human resource are interns and young professionals. An intern from the US worked with ABIDE for the months of January and February 2014 (her last two months of the 6 months attachment). She worked on updating ABIDE's list and Database of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora, which is a vital and core task of the organization.

**3.2. Office Space:** ABIDE is still located in the Akaki campus of the AAU. Commuting between Addis and Akaki has remained a constraint. This is one of the factors for the dwindling number of ABIDE's volunteers because of distance and heavy traffic congestion. This arrangement has contributed to limiting accessibility of the office to visiting Diaspora professionals coming to the country for short visits. ABIDE's own visibility has also been hampered.

**3.3. Operational budget:** There was no substantive budgetary allocation to cover the 2014 annual operational cost of ABIDE. Many of the activities have been covered by the managing Director and from contributions in kind. Financial viability of ABIDE is imperative for active engagement of the organization.

**3.4. ABIDE Website:** ABIDE's website is still unstable and the system collapsed twice. A private IT person was contacted who developed a technically sound proposal but awaiting implementation due to funding. The three options to activate the website are:

- 1) Get funding and get it fixed with a dedicated technician to manage the system
- 2) Use volunteer services from Jimma University IT department or
- 3) Mobilize and engage IT volunteers among friends of ABIDE in the US and elsewhere.

ABIDE has initiated discussion with JU and may be a promising approach to solve the problem. The website [www.abideethiopia.org](http://www.abideethiopia.org) is a key tool for communication, information exchange, for networking, to upload data on needs and on Diaspora resources for matching purposes and need to be on and efficiently functioning as it is a lifeline for ABIDE.

## **4. Database and Membership drive**

**4.1. Expanding Database:** The number of professionals on ABIDE's list has now exceeded 300. There are many more professionals that have expressed interest to be in the list and participate in the initiative. Completing, updating, collecting and compiling information on Knowledge Diaspora is an ongoing process. 2015 will be an active year to expand and up-date networks and list of professionals and members, and upload information on the website.

**4.2. Expanding membership:** There is need for more intensive approaches using lessons from AWiB. Urgent attention is needed to mobilize individuals as well as institutional membership to promote ownership, participation and mobilization of resources. Extra efforts are also needed to mobilize professionals in the Diaspora to attract them to become members.

## **5. Communication, Networking and Partnership Building**

### **5.1. Collaboration Information and Communication**

**5.1.1. Collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** ABIDE has continued its close working relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The new deputy

Director for Diaspora Affairs, is keen to work closely with ABIDE and to sign an MOU to formalize and guide our collaboration. The MOFA is emphasizing and strengthening its commitment to mobilize and facilitate engagement of knowledge Diaspora to support the national effort to meet its MDG and GTP goals. ABIDE will soon prepare and submit a concept note to the Ministry in early 2015. ABIDE is a respected partner of the MOFA and often invited to participate in different Diaspora related meetings.

**5.1.2. Collaboration with the Ministry of Health:** ABIDE has continued to participate in the Ministry of Health's National Diaspora Steering Committee chaired by the MOH. Within this committee, a task team on communication and promotion is established, where ABIDE is actively involved in guiding, follow-up and overseeing the development of appropriate communication material for the promotion and mobilization of Diaspora professionals' participation and related technical support in the sector. The Twinning Center (TC) and VSO Ethiopia are active members and the project is funded by the TC. The content and presentation of the communication material including brochures, hand book, web posting and a video are the materials developed. These will soon be finalized and used widely.

**5.1.3 Promotion and Awareness Raising:** ABIDE continues to champion the potential of Knowledge Diaspora for a country's sustainable development. Its relationship with the media has been strengthened and continued. During the year, a number media were used to promote ABIDE and the role of knowledge Diaspora for capacity building in institutions of higher learning and in science and technology. There was coverage on EBC with wide local and international coverage. Both the print and electronic media continue to be used including local newspapers, Sheger Radio, other FM stations and ETV as well as local papers. Through these efforts ABIDE has managed to increase public awareness on matters related to knowledge Diaspora engagement and ABIDE is now strongly associated as a household name with Knowledge Diaspora

## **5.2. Networking and Partnership Building**

ABIDE continues to establish and strengthen links and networks. A number of highly qualified Ethiopian Diaspora professionals some holding leadership positions, are highly interested and would like to contribute to the country's development.

There are immense opportunities to expand collaborative relationships among academicians, researchers and professionals living in the country and abroad. Compared to the rich pool of knowledge Diaspora resources, only very few self-motivated professionals make special efforts to participate and contribute in development of different institutions in the country. The missed opportunities are huge, and the potentials very high.

There is need to systematically approach the strategy, streamline processes and institutionalize mechanisms to maximize this potential and the benefit therefrom. Ethiopia has to fully use the opportunities that exist and effectively mobilize and engage these highly needed professionals to partner with professionals in the country who together can contribute towards accelerating the achievement of MDG and the GTP goals.

ABIDE should strengthen its capacity, engage actively and demonstrate proof of the effective link, support and facilitation it can provide for productive partnership between professionals and institutions in and out of the country. Next generation can then pick up the mantle because there are now real possibilities for many to see the success of many to then come and engage.

**5.2.1 Global Knowledge Exchange Network – UK (G-KEN UK):** Discussion initiated between G-KEN and ABIDE in 2013 has led to the signing of an MOU between the two groups. G-KEN facilitates exchange of knowledge and experiences among Ethiopian Professionals in the UK through conferences, publications and other modalities of interaction. It also mobilizes Diaspora professional volunteers who through their network partner with institutions in the country to support in academic and research areas. The plan is to expand modalities of collaboration and ABIDE is a part of the collaborative arrangement. An international workshop is planned for 2015.

**5.2.2 Society of Ethiopian Women in Science and Technology (SEWIST):** Established in 2014 with support from the Ethiopian Science and Technology Ministry, SEWIST is evolving as an important organization on women in science. ABIDE's Managing Director is also a founding member of this society. Initial discussion has taken place between ABIDE, SEWIST and the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences to identify and mobilize Ethiopian Women Scientists in the Diaspora to participate in capacity building of institutions and professionals in the country. Proposal is being jointly developed between ABIDE and SEWIST.

**5.2.3. Ethiopian Physicist Society in North America (EPS-NA):** ABIDE has established strong link with EPS-NA there is a potential to enhance existing practice and contribute to knowledge exchange and capacity building. A few members of this society are already involved in supporting especially higher learning institutions. There is ongoing discussion for organized relationship between the two organizations.

**5.2.4. People to People and Doctors for Africa:** Following to the discussion in 2013, ABIDE continued its partnership and engagement with P2P and Doctors for Africa. Through this partnership ABIDE participated as member of a steering committee that organized the “1<sup>st</sup> Pan African Conference for Medical and Health Care Providers” . A high level meeting was held at the African Union Conference Center from 26-30 May

2014. The conference was presided by Dr. Teshome Mulat, President of FDRE, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Dilamini Zuma, AU chairperson. High level African Diaspora Professionals and scientists from different parts of the world and Africa attended the meeting. ABIDE's role was highly appreciated in actively engaging and helping the local organizing committee. Main outcome was promoting the role of Ethiopian and African Diaspora in Health development of people in Africa.

**5.2.5. 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Private Higher Education:** This international conference is organized by St. Mary University. This year it was held at the UN-ECA in Addis Abeba on 23 August 2014. It is an annual event where participants from different countries in Africa and the world were in attendance and made research and scientific presentation. Key note speeches and major papers were also delivered by prominent personalities in the field. The meeting hosted by Prof. Wendwessen, Founder and President, St. Mary University, was officially opened by H.E Ato Shiferaw Shigute Minister of Education. ABIDE participated in the meeting and also chaired a session on "Retrospect and Prospect Provision of Private Higher Education in Africa". It was a successful conference and ABIDE's contribution was appreciated. It also provided ABIDE opportunity for networking.

**5.2.6. American University of Africa:** There is a new initiative that envisages the establishment of AUA to train high caliber post graduate students from Africa, to be trained as leaders, managers, academicians, researchers etc. The initiative has a lofty idea of creating a grand institute for the training. It also focuses on using the Diaspora as one of the sources for training staff. Because of this ABIDE was contacted and is taking part in the deliberations especially pertaining to Knowledge Diaspora participation. There is interest by Government, Regional Administration, US Government, the AU, major donors, and world class universities from the US and elsewhere. The MOFA, MOE and the Oromiya Regional Administration are key players, Meki has been identified and the future home of the university. ABIDE participates in the task team.

**5.2.7. Ongoing Collaborations and Partnerships:** Collaboration has continued with Ethiopian Diaspora Association (EDA), Voluntary Service Overseas – Ethiopia (VSO-E), International Organization on Migration (IOM) and Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Oregon State University (OSU), Doctors for Africa (DFA), African Diaspora Policy Center (ADPC) and Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD) is also discussing for renewed partnership, .

## **6. Training on Capacity Building for Policymakers**

Invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ABIDE participated in a five day training program that was organized by the African Diaspora Policy Center (ADPC) based in the Netherlands. The workshop was held in UN-ECA Conference Center in Addis Abeba

Ethiopia from 24-28 November 2014. Training was for capacity building for Policy Makers Serving in the Newly –Formed Diaspora Ministries in Africa. The Conference was hosted by the Capacity Development Division of the UN-ECA and the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was a useful training and the networking was also helpful for ABIDE’s work.

## **7. Monitoring Progress and Conclusion**

Performance of 2014 can be summarized as a successful year where ABIDE continued with strengthening its networks and championing the potential of knowledge Diaspora for sustainable development. ABIDE is increasingly recognized as a credible and promising organization for increased and systematic and participation of Diaspora professionals and has gained the respect among professionals and partner institutions in the country and the Diaspora.

Partnership with the Ministries of Education, Health and Foreigner Affairs has been strengthened. The Ministry of Education is very keen and sees ABIDE’s potential to mobilize engagement of professionals in the Diaspora. Many IHL are in dire need of qualified professionals and are keen to engage with ABIDE. The process has begun and ground work initiated to stimulate Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) for proactive planning to increase systematic partnership with qualified professionals in the Diaspora. Conversely professionals in the Diaspora are also ready to share their expertise, time and knowledge.

Strengthening the operational capacity of ABIDE is an important step towards accelerated action. The Website will be the main tool for information exchange and matching needs with resources. There is a growing interest in the country to engage knowledge Diaspora. Different ministries organization and societies are attracted to the concept and are initiating activities to engage knowledge Diaspora for capacity building and institutional development

A platform for coordination of different players on Diaspora engagement is urgent and necessary. This will help to improve synergy and maximize output by knowing who is who in the area. At present resource players are mostly welcome by institutions and government.

The big national conference that will be held in 2015 will have specific tasks to energize both ABIDE and its members as well as the knowledge diaspora and institutions. It will provide the opportunity to showcase successes and possibilities and gather momentum for accelerated action. Hence it is imperative to bring all players together and to objectively assess what is done and not done and map the way forward for inclusive and constructive engagement by all. 2014 has further clarified ABIDE role as a leader in championing the potential of knowledge Diaspora for sustainable development will be strengthened also to serve as information powerhouse and for networking.

