

ABIDE



Alliance for Brain-Gain
and Innovative Development

2010 ANNUAL Report February 2011

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Alliance For Brain-Gain and Innovative Development (ABIDE) 2010 Annual Report, Presented at Annual General Assembly 16 February 2011 at Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC)

Introduction

This Annual Report covers the period 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010. The report is based on the work-plan and budget approved by the General Assembly (GA) at its 13th February 2010 meeting.

As per its Strategic Planning Document ABIDE envisages the full mobilization and utilization of Diaspora's technical and intellectual resources and thereby contribute to the country's capacity building towards economic and socio-cultural transformation of the Ethiopian people. To this effect, since its establishment in January 2006, the organization has continued to strengthen its partnership and network with institutions in the country and Ethiopian professionals in the Diaspora. By so doing, ABIDE is emerging as a bridge linking professionals and institutions in the country with willing and committed professionals in the Diaspora for institutionalized and incremental channeling of technical and professional resources into the country through synergistic and win-win partnership.

In 2010, ABIDE, continued to strengthen partnerships with key Sectoral Ministries, leading Institutions of Higher Learning and with related stakeholders. It has established and maintained contacts with professionals in the Diaspora who are willing to contribute to the country's development. Through these efforts, ABIDE is gaining recognition by institutions in the country, and professionals in the Diaspora as a promising and timely organization that can link and foster increased participation of professionals and friends of Ethiopia in the Diaspora for optimal *brain-gain*. This could be greatly enhanced by streamlining related policies, strategies and processes in the country.

The reporting period has remained another challenging year financially and organizationally due to the following main reasons.

- 1) Lack of financial resource for project implementation and institutional capacity strengthening especially the lack of funds for basic staffing, resulting in the burden of work primarily left on the MD.
- 2) The inflation (global economic crisis) and associated price increase on most vital commodities
- 3) ABIDE's office location (AAU Akaki campus) adding to the financial stress and to discouraging volunteers to be physically available to provide needed support.

As a result some activities planned for the year were not fully implemented. The General Assembly while encouraging ABIDE to focus on mobilizing funds has also appreciated the fact that implementation of the 2010 planned activities will be dependent on availability of financial and other resources. During the year activities primarily focused on resource mobilization and in continuing with establishing and strengthening networks and partnerships with key stakeholders.

Activity One - Strengthening ABIDE'S Operational Capacity

a) 2009 Annual General Meeting

- ABIDE's 2009 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 13th February where the 2009 annual activity and audit reports and the 2010 planned activities and budget were reviewed and endorsed.
- At the AGM Ato Tsegaye Bekele was introduced as the new Board Member replacing Ato Yohannes Abebe. This was a great addition to the Board as Ato Tsegaye has a law back ground which was a useful addition to the competencies in the Board.
- At the AGM the three Diaspora volunteers who came to serve with the AAU Medical Faculty , Medical Education Unit, with HAPSCO and ABIDE respectively were introduced and gave u8seful inputs at the meeting.

b) Submitting General Assembly Report to the Societies and Charities Agency

- The minutes of the General Assembly including the 2009 Annual and Audit report of and the 2010 Annual work plan and proposed budget was submitted on time to the Societies and Charities Agency.
- Also submitted to the Agency were the detailed particulars of Ato Tsegaye Bekele as the new member of the Board endorsed by the AGM.
- Both reports were fully accepted by the Agency.

c) Promoting and Strengthening ABIDE:

- During the re-registration process in November 2009, the organization had seized the opportunity to change its name from Hibret Le'Limat Ma'ekel (HLM) to Alliance For Brain Gain and Innovative Development (ABIDE) this was primarily to reflect the organization's core business in its name for clarity and ease of understanding. As result there was need to introduce the new brand name to public, key stakeholders, partners and the Diaspora community. Efforts were made in this regard and the new name ABIDE was disseminated through news paper articles, brochures and posters using every opportunity and platform that was available which helped to familiarize the new brand name among the various groups.
- The Board has identified and nominated Ms Woubalem Taye as a new Board member to replace the outgoing member, Dr. Medhin Zewdu.

There is one more opening in the Board that need to be filled as soon as possible.

d) Staffing

Deployment of Staff: No staff was recruited and deployed during the year due to lack of funds.

While having both technical and support staff in the organization is critical for its efficient performance, so far the Managing Director (MD) has remained the only person engaged full time as volunteer. She undertook most of the tasks of the organization with support from some Board and founding members who volunteered their time. The MD carried out the day to day operations of the organization and continued networking and engaging in dialogue with Ethiopian professionals in the Diaspora as well as maintained the dialogue and partnership with key institutions and organizations in the country and outside related to Diaspora engagement.

Engaging Volunteers: Through arrangement and collaborations between VSO Canada, AHEAD, VSO-Ethiopia and ABIDE, a volunteer was placed in ABIDE for a period of two and a half months from mid January till end March. He primarily engaged in streamlining the database. This placement was a part of the VSO-E, VSO Canada AHEAD and ABIDE collaborative pilot project. The pilot project focused on engaging Diaspora volunteers within the regular VSO program. The implementation of the placement of these volunteers, which was successful, has opened the way to a four party collaborative partnership and also to expand the deployment of Diaspora volunteers as part of the regular VSO program in which ABIDE will play a part.

e) Office Equipment and Furniture

ABIDE has furnished its office through the kind support of Addis Abeba University Akaki Campus that provided essential used office furniture on loan. A direct telephone line has also been established through the AAU support. A direct telephone line is also provided, and the No. is **0114349420**. This has made it possible for ABIDE to have a functioning office located at B14-CA7 within the AAU Akaki Campus premises located 20 km from the Bole Airport circle. This arrangement, has freed ABIDE from paying rent and utilities. A major challenge has however continued to be the increasing fuel price and the ever growing traffic jam on the Addis-Bishoftu road.

Contact has been made with a number of organizations for free donation of computers and laptops that will be needed when ABIDE deploys its VSO and other volunteers.

f) Day to Day Operations

On the basis of the approved work-plan, and with guidance and oversight from the Board, the day to day running of ABIDE has been maintained as follows:

- Since its move to Akaki office, due to the distance of the office from the city, the volunteer support that ABIDE used to get from its members have been severely constrained. As a result this year's volunteer participation from members has decreased.

Also expenditure on fuel, telephone and stationary as well as other consumables were higher than the previous years.

- The Board has remained active. Three meetings were held, against the four planned for the year. As usual the Board provided the necessary guidance and support. On several occasions, the Board has used e-mails for information exchange and to share ideas and views. This arrangement has helped to maximize Board's input despite the challenges of internet connectivity.
- During the year resource mobilization was given high priority attention. Over twenty donors were contacted through letters jointly signed by the Chairman of the Board and the Managing Director. Also funding proposals were submitted to different potential donors. Please see page six for more information.
- New partnership building and strengthening the existing ones was among the planned activities actively pursued during the year. Please see page seven for details.

Activity Two: Communication, Networking and Mobilization including Resources Mobilization

The demand for qualified professionals has escalated as a result of the rapid expansion of various development programs in the country including institutions of higher learning in the public, private and NGO sectors. With such accelerated expansion, the country cannot afford to ignore professionals in the Diaspora as well as friends of Ethiopia who are keen to help. Also qualified professionals in the country who are not actively engaged in their respective area of profession and competence are seen important resources that could be meaningfully engaged and help in national capacity building. Many organizations and institutions in the country could greatly benefit from the rich pool of technical, intellectual, financial and other recourses from the Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia. Many institutions in the country are mindful of the exorbitant cost implications of employing expatriate professionals and are keen to utilize the expertise of available professionals in the Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia to contribute to alleviating human resources shortage in the country.

Based on these ABIDE has forged ahead in promoting this important development concern to help in systematically engaging professionals in the Diaspora to effectively participate in national capacity building. ABIDE plans to work more aggressively to establish and maintain stronger contacts and relationships with a wide range of development actors including the public at large, professional groups, development institutions, the academia, embassies, the donor community, regional and international organizations, Government, NGO the media, and the Diaspora community as well as friends of Ethiopia. ABIDE believes that this would help in creating a national movement to attract and optimally utilize Diaspora's intellectual, technical and related resources for building capacity and to help the country achieve the MDGs. It could also contribute to professional fulfillment and gratification for participating Diaspora professional.

Following are key tasks undertaken during the year under this activity.

a) Website Update

- ABIDE updated its website by changing the domain name and URL to www.abideethiopia.org . However the active and effective use of the website has remained low due to lack of resources to deploy someone for continued update of the site. Volunteer support is being sought to overcome this problem.

b) Resource mobilization

- Based on the World Bank announcement regarding call for proposal ABIDE responded to the call and submitted a proposal. Unfortunately, the proposal was not selected for funding. Through informal sources we were told that the funds this year were provided only to those NGOs with whom the Bank has ongoing partnerships.
- Another proposal was also submitted to an NGO that donates computers to small scale NGOs involved in grassroots development work. Request was made for four computers (two laptops and two desktops). The proposal passed the initial screening process but in the end ABIDE did not get the computers because of shortage of supplies and the increased demand. Here too priority was given to those with already established partnerships with the NGO.
- Over 20 letters jointly signed by the Board Chairman and the Managing Director were sent to selected potential donors. Follow-up calls were made to these organizations for joint meetings to explore possibilities for collaboration. In this regard the Chairperson and MD met with the Director's ECA and CIDA. The discussions with these organizations were very positive, although no immediate concrete funding possibility was identified. In addition, the MD visited FAO and UNICEF Representatives and again in principle both supported ABIDE's aims; but no indication for immediate funding. However ABIDE was encouraged to keep in touch in the event that opportunities may arise in the future linked to their ongoing activities.
- ABIDE also submitted a proposal to IOM to compete for on undertaking a study on Diaspora policy impact assessment. ABIDE's submission was not selected instead the consultancy was given to AAU.

- Another proposal has been jointly developed by ABIDE and AHEAD. It will be submitted to IDRC for funding. AHEAD in Canada is following up on the submission. No decision has been communicated yet.
- A sponsorship application to participate in a Global Conference on Migration and Development in Mexico was accepted. However we did not participate due to program changes that conflicted with other prior commitments.

c) Networking and Partnership Building:

Partnership with VSO-E, VSO-C and AHEAD

- ABIDE contributed to various documents developed by VSO Ethiopia for its national programming. These include “Feasibility Study on Engaging National and Diaspora Volunteers ” and “Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning Documents”. Throughout the study and during partners meeting where the above documents were discussed, ABIDE actively participated and made significant contributions using its knowledge and experience on the subject. This was highly appreciated by partners.
- A three day partnership consultation involving VSO-E, VSO-C, AHEAD and ABIDE was held at the VSO Ethiopia office. At this meeting, along with the other partners ABIDE made a presentation on its organizational set up, activities, aims mission and vision. Also a Diaspora volunteer, Ato Solomon Belay, who worked with the AAU Medical Education Unit, shared his experiences that were highly appreciated by all parties. It is the positive contribution and experiences of these volunteers that contributed to the VSO decision to engage the Diaspora in their volunteer program.
- In the consultation, modalities for collaboration among the four parties i.e., AHEAD, ABIDE, VSO-Ethiopia and VSO- Canada were discussed in detail and agreed upon. The MD and Dr. Tamerate Retta participated and made useful suggestions in the above consultations
- Following the above consultation an MoU was jointly developed and signed by the four parties in September 2010. The main focus of the collaboration is to enhance the engagement of National and Diaspora Volunteers within the VSO program.
- As a follow-up to the MoU, a workshop was organized in Toronto, Canada from 13 to 15 January, 2011 where, despite our effort, to send a high level delegate, the General Assembly Chairman, Ato Tsegaye Kassa, to represent ABIDE, unfortunately this did not materialize as visa was denied.

Participation at the presentation of Diaspora Policy Analysis Study

- The study (sponsored by the MOFA and IOM) was conducted by the AAU. Finding was presented to a wide range of stakeholders where ABIDE was also invited. Dr. Tamerate Retta and Ms. Mebrat Woldetensae represented ABIDE at the meeting.
- Main highlights of the presentation included issues related to remittances, investment and knowledge transfer.
- Remittances were found to be of paramount importance for national development, especially in terms of its contribution towards the availability of foreign currency in the country- a much needed input to the country's economy.
- Investment has also been encouraged through various regulations and policies that continue to attract more Diaspora investors in the country.
- In regards to knowledge transfer and capacity building, it was clear that not much has been done on this issue. There is not much attention given yet in terms of specific regulations and or policy support to enhance brain-gain.
- It was recommended that more study be conducted to clarify many of the issues that require special attention in making a difference to attract the Diaspora to contribute to national development through financial participation as well as in knowledge and technology transfer.

Initiated partnership with the Minister of Education

- The Managing Director had a meeting with His Excellency Ato Demeke, Minister of Education to discuss the possibilities for collaboration between ABIDE and the Ministry of Education in the engagement of Diaspora to strengthen the capacities of higher education institutions. The Minister was very positive and interested to work with ABIDE as an indigenous NGO working on Diaspora issues. He designated his officer working on Diaspora, Ato Mitiku, to work with ABIDE on modalities for collaboration and present a proposal to the Minister for his consideration.
- The MD is working with Ato. Mitiku on a proposal.

Progress of collaboration between ABIDE and AAU

- The plan of action that was jointly developed between AAU and ABIDE in 2009 has been reactivated after the arrival of the new AAU Vice President, Dr. Hirut Gebremariam.
- Three consultative meetings were held between AAU and ABIDE with Dr. Hirut and Dr. Teshome Nekatibeb (Director for External Relations) representing the AAU and Ms Woubalem Taye and the MD representing ABIDE.

- Due to the reorganization of the AAU as a result of the BPR there is a renewed interest to engage in partnership with ABIDE for enhanced and sustained mobilization of Diaspora Academicians and Researchers to assist the AAU's accelerated post graduate programs. A special unit has been established for Alumni and Diaspora mobilization.
- A joint AAU–ABIDE Committee is established under the External Relations. The committee is composed of officers assigned to work on different aspects of Diaspora and Alumni matters. Ms Woubalem Taye and the MD continue to represent ABIDE in the joint committee. The Committee, chaired by ABIDE meets every two weeks.
- The work of the committee will produce concrete actions that would result in developing an AAU-wide policy towards mobilizing and engaging Diaspora academicians and researchers. It will further be used for advocacy in attracting the Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia for sustainable partnership.

Collaboration with Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS)

- Informal discussion has been initiated with the EAS where ABIDE will take an active part in the organization and conduct of the “First EAS National Congress” planned to be held in December 2011. ABIDE will be responsible for and facilitate a session that will discuss on the role of Diaspora scientists and researchers in the country's capacity building in science.
- The above is a result of discussions which took place online and via email among Ethiopian universities, ABIDE, EAS and Ethiopian Scientists and Academicians Network (ESAN).

Signing of Memorandum of Understanding

During the year, ABIDE has finalized the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the following institutions and organizations. However follow-up activities has not taken off due to resource limitations.

- **St. Mary's University College:** A follow-up meeting was held with University President, Prof. Wondwossen Tamerat to discuss the way forward towards realizing the objectives of the MoU.
- **People To People :** a USA based Diaspora organization focusing on medical care. Prof. Enawgaw Mehari the Founder and President of P2P signed the MoU with ABIDE. Based on this MoU ABIDE partnered with P2P to organize a national workshop entitled “Enhancing Capacity of Women for National Development”. ABIDE Chaired the local organizing

Committee for the workshop. The Conference was officially opened by His Excellency Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Federal Minister of Health.

- **Gondar, Bahir Dar University:** Follow-up is being done to implement activities identified in the MoUs.
- **Jimma University:** Here too follow-up is being done to implement envisaged activities within the MoU.

Meeting with Diaspora Volunteers and Benefiting Institutions

- Three tripartite meetings each were held between the Diaspora Volunteers that include, Ato Solomon Belay and Ms Bethlehem Kebede and the AAU Medical Education Unit and HAPSCO management respectively to discuss assignment, progress of work and outcome. The process was a learning exercise for ABIDE as this were the first group of volunteers whose placement was facilitated by ABIDE.
- All the three volunteers satisfactorily completed their tasks and left to their respective place of residence 30 April and 31 July 2010 respectively.
- Both parties were happy with the arrangements and performances and the benefit this has offered.

Engagement of Friend of Ethiopia

- Based on a gap identified during a visit to Mekelle University (MU), Prof. Mathew Nindi, a Zimbabwean Analytical Chemist from UNISA in South Africa was contacted for support. The Professor volunteered to combine his trip to UNISA in Ethiopia that also include a visit to MU. The cost of international and local travels was covered as part of Prof. Nindi's activity within UNISA that also covered MU.

Contact with Ethiopian Professionals and organizations in the Diaspora

- ABIDE has maintained its contact with, Ethiopian Scientists and Academicians in Network (ESAN), Ethiopian Physicist Society in North America (EPA-NA), Ethiopian Tree Fund Foundation (ETFF), Ethiopian North American Health Professionals Association (ENAHPA) and People to People (P2P).

- In addition ABIDE has also initiated contact with Ethiopian Professionals in Huston (EPH), a newly organized association of Ethiopian professionals.
- Opportunities have been maximized to establish and maintain contacts with individual professionals in the Ethiopian Diaspora and with friends of Ethiopia to widen and strengthen contacts and networks.

Activity Three: Development and Maintenance of Database

This activity is only partially implemented due to inadequate resource to get the work done. Existing database was up-dated by a volunteer from Canada who was placed with ABIDE for a period of two and a half months. More work needs to be done in this area to have up-to-date source of information on the pool of Diaspora professionals that is readily accessible.

Also database on skill gaps by institution has not been done yet. Work is in progress with the AAU to develop and maintain this information.

Both these information when ready will be posted on ABIDE website to be accessed both by Diaspora professionals as well as by benefiting institutions.

Activity Four: Human Resource needs and skill Gap Analysis

Extent of achievement under this activity has been limited due to staff shortage and resource limitations. However through the ABIDE AAU collaboration work has been initiated to assess human resource needs of the AAU to serve as basis for Diaspora mobilization and engagement. Progress of this activity has also been too slow.

Activity Five: Documenting National and International Experiences and Lessons Learned On Diaspora Engagement

This activity has not been implemented due to lack of funds.

Please see ABIDE's 2010 Annual Income and Expenditure Summary table below.

ABIDE 2010 Annual Income and Expenditure Summary Table

A) 2010 Approved Annual Budget		
NO.	DESIGNATION	AMOUNT (Birr)
	2010 Approved Annual Budget	Birr 902,550.00

B) RESOURCE MOBILIZED DURING THE YEAR			
NO.	INPCOME TYPE	DONOR	AMOUNT (Birr)
1	CASH	MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION	BIRR 1,000.00
	TOTAL CASH CONTRIBUTION		BIRR 1,000.00
2	IN KIND VOLUNTEER SERVICES	1. Managing Director's one year salary (Birr 15,000.00 x 12 months)	Birr 180,000.00
		2. Office space and utilities @birr 4750 /month/8monts	Birr 57,000.00
		3. Rent of laptop (Birr 1,000 x 12 months)	Birr 12,000.00
		4. Member's Voluntary Services in Committees as individuals (Est. 10 persons x 10 days @ birr 500/person/day)	Birr 50,000.00
		5. VSO volunteer @birr5000.00/m 2.5m	Birr12,500.00
	TOTAL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION		BIRR 311,500.00
3	DONATION	1. ONE REEM PAPER	80.00
	TOTAL IN KIND CONTRIBUTION		BIRR 311,580.00
	GRAND TOTAL INCOME	CASH+IN KIND+DONATION	BIRR 312,580.00

C) 2010 ACTUAL ANNUAL EXPENDITURE		
NO.	EXPENSE ITEM	AMOUNT (Birr)
1	Printing and Stationary.	1,715.50
2	Photocopy and Binding	1,455.60
3	Fuel	12,633.00*
4	Telephone	5,673.73
	Mobile	4,315.00
	Internet	1,358.73
5	Bank Charge	16.15
6	Postal Service and Rent	93.40
7	Miscellaneous Expenses	543.45
	Total	22,130.83

Please Note: The difference between income and expenditure, Birr 21,130.83 is payable on availability of funds

*** This does not include maintenance, lubricant and spare parts for vehicle used.**