Annual Report for Authority to Civil Society Organizations (ACSO)

July 2023 to June 2024

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Contents

Executive Summary 3
Introduction 4
Organizational Overview 7
Program and Project Highlights 11
Activities 11
Financial Summary 22
Challenges, Opportunities and Lessons Learned 22
Challenges 22
Opportunities 22
Plans for the Future 23
Strategic Focus Areas 23
Planned programs and initiatives 23
Anticipated challenges and strategies to address them 24
Acknowledgements 26

Executive Summary

In its inaugural year, the Africa Women Peace and Security Institute (AWPSI) has made significant strides towards advocating for women's involvement in peace and security. The official launch on July 26, 2023, was graced by key dignitaries, including the President of Ethiopia, marking the institute's commitment to its mission. AWPSI successfully secured a central office space and furnished it with support from UN Women, creating a functional workspace to enhance operational efficiency. The institute expanded its human resources by hiring essential staff and successfully co-organized two training workshops with Inclusive Peace, focusing on empowering women mediators in Ethiopia. AWPSI's efforts to build partnerships are evident through its engagement with various ministries and participation in significant events, including the AU 4th High-Level Forum on Women, Peace, and Security.

Despite these achievements, AWPSI faced challenges, such as limited engagement with influential officials due to their busy schedules, difficulties in timely recruitment, and delays in the implementation of verbal commitments from partner organizations. However, the institute also identified opportunities for growth, such as productive interactions with the Irish Embassy that facilitated donor engagement. The experience highlighted the importance of group consultative meetings, which proved more effective than individual engagements in raising AWPSI's profile.

Looking ahead, AWPSI aims to enhance its research capabilities, expand training programs, and amplify advocacy efforts through strategic partnerships and social media engagement. The institute will focus on institutional strengthening by investing in human resources and technological infrastructure to support its growing demands. Core programs will include research and publication on women in conflict zones, capacity building for women in leadership and negotiation, and establishing a real-time monitoring system for current affairs.

As AWPSI continues to navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities, its commitment to advancing women's roles in peace and security remains steadfast, positioning it as a vital player in the peacebuilding efforts taking place in Ethiopia and beyond.

Introduction

African Women Peace and Security Institute (AWPSI) is a civil society organization conceived and founded by Ambassador Kongit Sinegiorgis and Ambassador Tadelech Haile Michaeal. African Women Peace and Security Institute (AWPSI) has been registered and accorded legal personality registry Number 6906 on 07 June 2023, as a local organization in accordance with the Civil Society Organizations Proclamation No.1113/2019.

Vision

AWPSI envision a peaceful and secure Africa where women can play a central role in conflict prevention, mediation, and peace-building processes.

Mission

- To empower women as effective peace negotiators, catalysts for positive change, and advocates for gender equality and inclusivity in all aspects of peace and security as well as post conflict reconstruction.
- To enhance the capacity of women in Ethiopia and beyond in a manner that contributes to peace and security.
- To contribute to a more peaceful, inclusive, and gender-responsive Ethiopia and Africa in general, where women are active agents for positive change and key contributors to sustainable peace.

Goals for the year 2023/2024

- To create an efficient institutional mechanism that enables AWPSI to effectively fulfill its mission and contribute to peace and security initiatives.
- To empower women in areas affected by conflict by enhancing their skills and capacities, ultimately contributing to sustainable peace and security in these regions.
- Fostering collaboration with educational institutions to promote gender-inclusive peace education, ensuring that educational initiatives contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable approach to peace and security.
- To empower women negotiators with advanced skills, knowledge and perspectives in conflict resolution, mediation and prevention enabling them to play a meaningful role

in facilitating dialogue, consensus-building and contributing to sustainable peace efforts.

- To strengthen collaborative efforts with government entities, ensuring active participation in the development and implementation of a comprehensive National Action Plan that promotes women's involvement in peace and security initiatives.
- Increase Awareness and Understanding of Key AU and UN Policy Instruments on women among target audiences.

- **Context or background information relevant to the year's activities.**

In 2023/2024, AWPSI took significant strides toward advancing its mission of promoting women's role in peace and security. The institute's official launch on July 26, 2023, marked a key moment in its institutional development, with a prestigious event hosted at the Hyatt Regency in Addis Ababa. The presence of high-level dignitaries, including H.E. Sahle-work Zewde, President of Ethiopia, and H.E. Dr. Ergoge Tesfaye, Minister of Women and Social Affairs, highlighted the significance of AWPSI's mission. The speech by Mrs. Cecile Mukarubuga, UN Women Country Representative for Ethiopia, underscored the importance of women's involvement in peace processes, as she reflected on her personal experiences during the Rwandan genocide. This launch positioned AWPSI as a key player in Ethiopia's peace and security landscape, especially in amplifying women's voices.

AWPSI's activities in 2023 were framed by its establishment phase, which included securing a prime office location on Bole Road, Addis Ababa. Although office partition work took longer than expected, the institute successfully moved into its new office in November 2023. The acquisition of office space, combined with furnishing support from UN Women and AWPSI's own investments, provided the necessary infrastructure for its operational work. The institute also grew its team, employing an Executive Director, Deputy Director, and key staff to manage administrative, financial, research, and programmatic functions.

In the latter half of 2023, AWPSI began engaging in key activities aimed at building partnerships and sharing knowledge on peace and security. On October 27, 2023, the institute hosted a consultative meeting on knowledge and experience sharing, with discussions focusing on women's representation in peace processes, transitional justice, and collective

action by women's organizations. The presence of State Minister Woizero Alemitu Omout and actionable outcomes from the meeting signified the growing recognition of AWPSI's role in shaping peace and security policies in Ethiopia.

The year was also marked by AWPSI's active efforts to build partnerships. The institute engaged with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and joined the National Action Plan Technical Committee, while exploring collaborations with other ministries, international organizations, and peacebuilding bodies. This networking was further enhanced by participation in regional and continental platforms, such as the AU 4th High-Level Forum on Women, Peace, and Security.

In terms of institutional development, AWPSI worked on establishing its brand and presence, with the design of a logo, the creation of a website (to be completed October 2024), and an active social media presence. Internally, the institute focused on preparing strategic documents, such as the Five-Year Strategic Plan and manuals for administration, finance, and human resources, laying the groundwork for effective governance and operations.

AWPSI also expanded its programming in 2024 by organizing a series of training workshops aimed at supporting women mediators in Ethiopia. These workshops, co-organized with Inclusive Peace, saw enthusiastic participation from a wide range of sectors, including parliament, ministries, civil society, and media. The success of these training programs, evaluated as highly effective by participants, reinforced AWPSI's role in building capacity among women mediators and contributing to peacebuilding processes.

By mid-2024, AWPSI had fostered strong partnerships with international organizations such as ACCORD and had taken steps toward formalizing these collaborations. Ms. Pravina from ACCORD visited the office during the AU's WPS 4th High-Level Forum in December, expressing a commitment to funding high-level training and providing capacity building for existing staff members.

Engagement with the Ethiopian National Action Plan (NAP) Technical Committee also allowed AWPSI to contribute to policy development, especially through consultations held in various regions and insights gained from participation in community-level meetings.

AWPSI's capacity-building efforts were further supported by an Organizational Capacity Assessment conducted by the Irish Embassy, which confirmed the institute's readiness for strategic collaboration. This was followed by a roundtable meeting with 18 Embassy representatives, where AWPSI presented its vision and plans, resulting in pledges for partnership and support.

In the digital sphere, AWPSI strengthened its online presence, with active social media accounts and a website nearing completion, ensuring that the institute could engage more effectively with stakeholders and the broader public. As AWPSI looks ahead, its achievements in 2023 and early 2024 set a strong foundation for future growth, collaboration, and impact in promoting women's participation in peace and security.

Since its establishment, AWPSI made contacts with the Embassies and organization in an effort to network and solicit funds. Embassies visited were Ireland, Portugal, Australia, Denmark, England, Norway and EU. AWPSI also contacted organizations like National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) and African Union (AU) Commission. We have also submitted concept note to some of the Embassies and Organizations we communicated.

Organizational Overview

- **Structure and governance: Description of the organizational structure and key leadership roles.**

The Board of Directors is the highest in the governance structure of AWPSI. Its power is stated in the Articles of Association of the Institute (Article 13: 1υ).

Institutional Structure and Governance

1. **Board of Directors:** At the pinnacle of the institution's governance structure is the Board of Directors. This group of individuals is responsible for providing overall strategic direction and oversight for the institution. The Board is composed of esteemed professionals and stakeholders who bring a wealth of experience and expertise. Their primary duties include setting long-term goals, ensuring financial

stability, and establishing broad policies that guide the institution's operations. They are also tasked with selecting and evaluating the performance of the Executive Director.

2. **Executive Director**

The Executive Director is the highest management level of the Institute. It is the key leadership role responsible for providing strategic direction, operational oversight and effective management of the Institute.

- Develop and implement strategic vision in alignment with AWPSI's mission and objectives.
- Identify emerging trends and issues in peace and security and integrates them into AWPSI's strategic priorities.
- Provide effective leadership to a diverse team of staff, encouraging collaborative and inclusive work environment.
- Support staff growth and development through mentorship, training, and performance management.
- Strengthen collaborations with regional and international organizations, governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to enhance AWPSI's impact.
- Lead and manage the design and implementation of innovative programs, training, and initiatives that promote the active participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Manage and monitor AWPSI's budget, ensuring prudent financial accountability.
- Seek funding opportunities through grants, partnerships, and donor relationships to sustain and expand AWPSI's activities.
- Represent AWPSI at the highest level to advocate for WPS agenda and elevate the Institute's profile.
- Strengthen AWPSI's capacity to provide training, education, and mentorship to women leaders in general and in conflict-affected regions in particular.
- Oversee the development of training materials and resources that promote gender-sensitive approaches to peace and security.

- Lead the planning, design and implementation of gender-sensitive peace and security programs and projects.
- Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact and outcomes of AWPSI's programs.
- Approve and oversee the preparation of regular operational and financial reports for the submission to the Board of Directors, donors and stakeholders.

The Executive Director will possess: -

- ❖ Extensive experience in leadership roles within the fields of diplomacy and international relations, peace building, conflict resolution and gender equality.
- ❖ Strong understanding of African peace and security dynamics as well as the challenges faced by women in these contexts.
- ❖ Proven track record in program development, strategic planning and organizational management.
- ❖ Demonstrated ability to mobilize resources and secure funding from various sources.
- ❖ Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, with the ability to engage effectively with diverse stakeholders.

3. Deputy Director

The Deputy Director works directly under the Executive Director and is responsible for managing and overseeing AWPSI's operations. The Deputy Director works closely with the Executive Director and staff to provide strategic leadership, program management, and operational oversight.

- Support staff in the fulfilment of their roles and responsibilities, assessing and addressing their capacity and skills development needs. Manage and supervise Research Unit Head and Finance & Administration Head.
- Provide coaching, guidance and support; set professional development plans to assist employees to reach their full potential through performance management.
- Oversee and ensure the production of high-quality AWPSI research outputs, program reports and policy briefs, etc.

- Under the Executive Director, monitor programs expenditures, financial reports and administrative processes so as to maintain accountability and transparency.
- Serve as a bridge between program team and the leadership effort by ensuring overall institutional activities are interlinked.
- Ensure the team deliver the highest standard of institutional teamwork and service.
- In consultation with the Executive Director lead program planning including annual work plan process and strategy development.
- Manage key strategic partnerships with existing donors and identify the capacity of other organizations involved in the WPS agenda for possible future collaborations.
- Ensure AWPSI's program implementation, monitoring and supervision.
- Follow up AWPSI's annual work plan on a regular basis and ensure activities and programs are on track; suggest necessary adjustments in case of variances.
- Ensure AWPSI's programs is in alignment with regional strategy and frameworks.
- Initiate and coordinate training workshops, seminars and conferences that contribute to sharing best practices and achieving the Institute's mission and vision.
- Maintain efficient collaboration and cooperation with partners and stakeholders.
- In consultation with the Executive Director cultivate and maintain strong relationships with regional and international organizations, governments, NGOs and academic institutions.
- Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to influence resource mobilization and share best practices.
- Identify potential donors, partners and oversee the preparation of project proposals.
- Ensures project proposals are prepared in advance.
- Diversify and increase AWPSI's funding to ensure the sustainability of its programs.
- Represent AWPSI when delegated and in the absence of the Executive Director.

The Deputy Director will possess: -

- ❖ Several years of experience in leadership roles focused on diplomacy, peace, security, gender and development.
- ❖ Strong knowledge of African peace and security dynamics and the role of women in these contexts.

- Demonstrated expertise in program management, strategic planning, and capacity building.
- Excellent communication, negotiation, and networking skills.
- Proven experience in research, policy analysis, and advocacy related to gender and security.

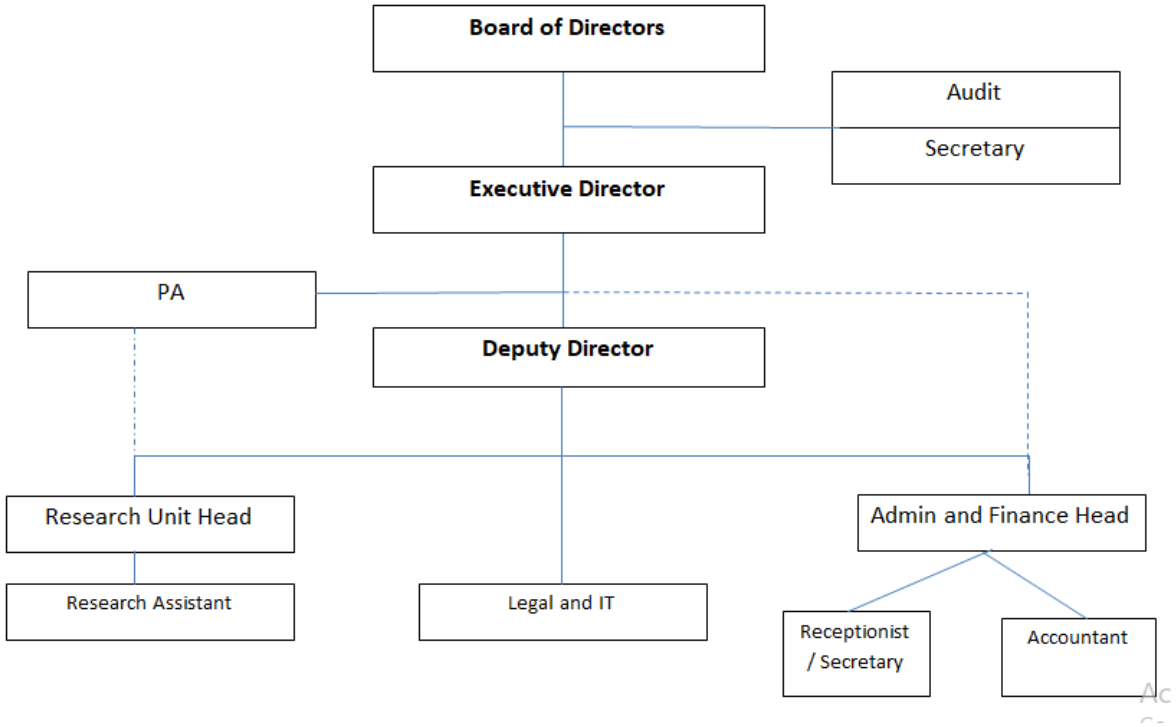


Fig. 1 Institutional Structure

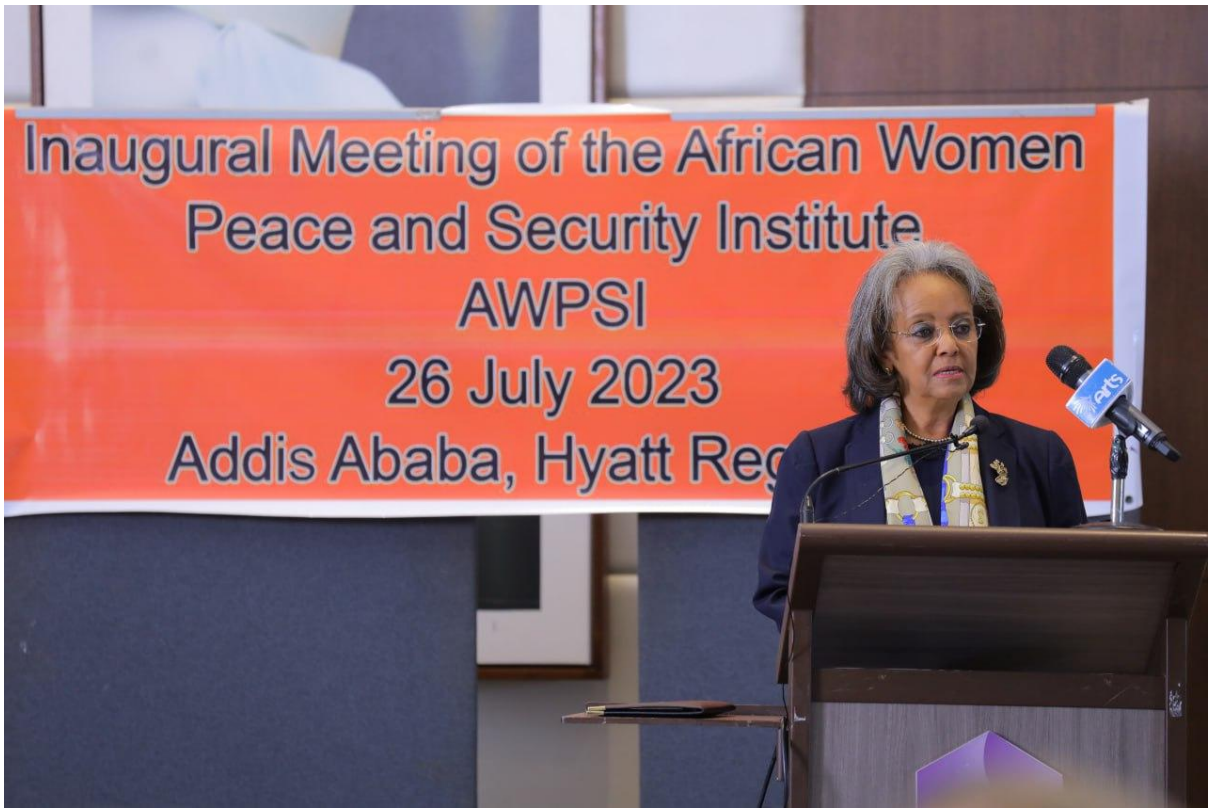
Program and Project Highlights

Activities

Official Launch

On July 26, 2023, the Africa Women Peace and Security Institute (AWPSI) was officially launched at the Hyatt Regency in Addis Ababa, under the theme "The Status of Women in Peace and Security." The event was honored by the presence of H.E. Sahele-work Zewde, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and H.E. Dr. Ergoge Tesfaye, Minister of Women and Social Affairs. A highlight of the launch was the participation of Mrs.

Cecile Mukarubuga, UN Women Country Representative for Ethiopia, who delivered a powerful speech about her experiences during the Rwandan genocide. This prestigious gathering set the stage for AWPSI's role as a critical player in advocating for the involvement of women in peace and security in Ethiopia and across Africa.







Photos taken from the launching event of AWPSI

Office Space

AWPSI secured a centrally located office space on Bole Road, at Nicolas Mitsopoulos Tower, marking a significant milestone in its establishment. The 200-square-meter office space was leased from Enat Real Estate, and although the partition work, managed by Yema Architecture PLC, took longer than anticipated, the institute successfully moved into the new premises in November 2023. The acquisition of a permanent office in such a central location demonstrates AWPSI's growing institutional presence and commitment to advancing its mission.

Office Furniture and Equipment

AWPSI's office was furnished through a combination of donations and purchases. UN Women contributed essential items such as a conference table, large workstations, filing cabinets, guest chairs, and whiteboards, while AWPSI itself invested in office tables, chairs, managerial desks, a desktop computer, and other office supplies. These resources were crucial in creating a fully functional workspace that would support AWPSI's operational needs as it continued to expand.

Human Resource

The institute continued to build its team, employing a mix of leadership and support staff. In addition to the Executive Director and Deputy Director, AWPSI successfully hired key personnel, including an Administrative and Finance Officer, Research Officer, Personal Assistant, Program Officer, and Office Cleaner. This well-rounded team plays a crucial role in driving AWPSI's programs and initiatives forward.

Consultative Meeting on Knowledge and Experience Sharing (27 October 2023):

On October 27, 2023, AWPSI hosted a consultative meeting that focused on key areas such as the National Action Plan, women's meaningful representation, collective action of women's organizations, transitional justice, and research and advocacy. The keynote address was delivered by the State Minister of Women and Social Affairs, Woizero Alemitu Omout. The meeting generated actionable points for future work, with a follow-up meeting planned to ensure the continuity of these discussions.

AWPSI'S Branding

Efforts to establish a strong institutional brand have been underway, with a new logo designed and patent rights obtained. The institute has set up a Zoom account and a domain name (www.awpsi.org), while its website is under construction and expected to be completed by October 2024. AWPSI has also enhanced its social media presence, engaging with audiences on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

Documents Preparation and Strategic Planning:

AWPSI has made significant progress in formalizing its organizational structure through the preparation of several key documents. These include the Administration and Human Resources Manual, Finance and Accounting Policy Manual, a Five-Year Strategic Plan, a Five-Year Indicative Budget, and a Salary Scale. Additionally, concept notes on core programs—such as training women in conflict areas, strengthening AWPSI, and promoting peace education—have been developed in-house with expert guidance, laying the foundation for the institute's future programs and growth.

Training Workshop

- Successfully co-organized and facilitated two rounds of mid-level training workshops with Inclusive Peace on "Supporting women mediators in Ethiopia".

The first round of the training was conducted on March 18-20, 2024 at Ellily hotel, Addis Ababa. Out of the invited 25 participants, 16 attended the training for consecutive three days, which has 64% accomplishment. Participants of the training were gathered from various sectors, basically from the parliament women coccus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, civil society organizations, media, and private consultancy firms. The training was conducted by exceptionally skilled instructors from Inclusive Peace, who shared their vast experience. Because of the students' enthusiastic participation, it was successful and effective.





Photos taken from the second round of training on 18-20 March 2024

Moreover, we were also successful in organizing the second round of training on 27-29 May 2024 similarly at Ellily hotel, Addis Ababa. Out of the invited 37 participants 33 of them were trained for three consecutive days. Participants of the training were gathered from various sectors, basically from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Civil Society Organizations, Media, Embassy, International Organizations and Private Consultancy Firms. Like the previous one, this was also co-organized with Inclusive Peace. All in all, it has 89% accomplishment with 9.1% male and 3% regional state representative participation. This training was also special since it included an evaluation tool that participants could use to gauge how they felt about the course content and overall evaluation of the training. Our assessment of the training's effectiveness—which we rated as excellent—is better highlighted by this tool.



Photos taken from the second round of training on 27-29 May 2024

Furthermore, for the women mediators trained cohorts in the first and second training rounds, a networking, discussion, and additional training platform was made available at the Ellily hotel on 31 May 2024. The occasion was used to discuss about and create further techniques for women mediators to be included in the ongoing national process of establishing, maintaining and promoting peace. We were able to select 15 women mediators for the upcoming ToT training by ranking trainees according to the selection criteria that were provided.

Communication with ACCORD for further Cooperation

AWPSI maintained regular communication with ACCORD to explore opportunities for future collaboration and cooperation. With a first in person office visit of the deputy director of ACCORD, we held above 4 on-line meetings and discussed potential joint initiatives aimed at advancing our collaboration and mutual goals. Based on that, we developed a concept note for joint 3-year project to be undertaken with AWPSI taking the lead. Furthermore, we also

drafted an MoU for further formal cooperation. This fostered a strong partnership and laid the groundwork for future collaborative endeavors.





Photo of the deputy director of ACCORD at her visit of AWPSI office

Engaging in the Development and Effective Preparation of NAP

We were also successful to make AWPSI a member of the Ethiopian National Action Plan Technical Committee. Through our colleague direct involvement, we are putting a valuable effort on the process of drafting Ethiopian NAP. With his representation, AWPSI was able to be part of various meetings with local stakeholders and government officials to exchange best practices. Especially, from the community level consultations held in Harari, Dire Dawa, Afar (Sammera), Bishoftu, and Tigray (Mekelle) and Adama, AWPSI gained valuable knowledge and experience.

Our colleague also got a chance to travel to Uganda with the Ethiopian National Action Plan Technical Committee and gained experiences and insights on National Action Plan (NAP) development and implementation.

Networking and Partnership

AWPSI has been actively working to forge partnerships with key stakeholders. To explain its vision, mission, and main programs, AWPSI visited the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Peace, several Embassies, and AU structures. The main purpose of these visits was to introduce AWPSI, advance its visibility, facilitate networking and forge solid partnerships.

The Deputy Director of AWPSI conducted communication with the Ministries of Women and Social Affairs and Peace in this manner, and it proved to be fruitful in that it enabled us to draft a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and reach an agreement to sign MoU with the Ministry of Peace. In addition, the Ambassadors of the UK, Ireland, Norway, and Australia had discussions with the Executive Director of AWPSI. After a briefing session every Ambassador expressed their happiness over the establishment of the organization and expressed willingness to collaborate and create partnership with AWPSI. Beyond their promised contributions, the Irish Ambassador specifically pledged to set up a round table Ambassadorial level discussion at the Embassy of Ireland to assist us to better introduce the vision, mission, goal and planed initiatives of AWPSI to number of ambassadors.

The Executive Director of AWPSI also got the opportunity to speak with Commissioner Bankole Adeoye, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security, and they both agreed that there are many areas in which partnerships and collaboration may be formed. AWPSI has also agreed to sign an MoU with the commission and now in the process of being drafted. Additionally, AWPSI got in touch with AU and acquired a variety of material supports, such as used furniture and desk and laptop computers.

Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA)

Representatives from the Ireland Embassy's financial and program teams paid us a visit and did an OCA on May 23, 2024, as a first step toward establishing a strategic collaboration. They have examined AWPSI's organizational state in terms of its internal governance framework, finance system, organizational design and ability to carry out projects. As a result, we met the requirements and benchmarks set forth by the program and finance teams of Ireland Embassy.



Photo of representatives from Ireland Embassy with AWPSI staff after conducting OCA

Ambassadorial Level Meeting

At a round table Ambassadorial level meeting conducted on 27 May 2024, which was hosted by the Irish Embassy, AWPSI presented its vision, mission, core programs, and yearly plan for 2024, planned new projects, and anticipated challenges. At the meeting, eighteen Embassy delegates and officials attended; the majority of them endorsed the plan and pledged to assist and establish partnership with AWPSI.





Photo with delegates and officials of various Embassies at the Embassy of Ireland

Staff Enrollment

On April 15, 2024, a Program Officer was successfully enrolled during this reporting period. She has fulfilled expectations in terms of performance and has effectively assimilated into and actively contributed to AWPSI's mission and goals.

AWPSI's Digital Space

As of May 2024, AWPSI has an active Face-book page, Twitter account, and Telegram channel in addition to its 70% complete website. AWPSI maintains over 200 followers across various social media platforms, and currently timely news and updates are shared on all active accounts.

Financial Summary

The financial summary of AWPSI is provided separately, as an audit report.

Challenges, Opportunities and Lessons Learned

CHALLENGES

Over the past year, the following major challenges were encountered:

- There is a problem of engaging a number of influential officials of various core organizations and institutions due to their extremely busy schedule.
- Finding a communication and IT officer seems to be an up-hill task.
- Organizations seem to be taking time to deliver their verbal pledge.

OPPORTUNITIES

During the past 12 months, we were able to schedule sessions with the Ambassadors of Ireland, UK, Canada, Australia, etc to inform them about the vision, mission, goals, and planned activities of our Institute. This led to the convening of donor's meeting by H.E. Ambassador of Ireland. The effort deployed by H.E. Ambassador Nikolas Brennan was a tremendous opportunity to introduce our Institute to several Ambassadors, Deputies and representatives.

Lessons Learned

During the last year, we have gained extensive knowledge about the hectic schedules of heads of Organizations and Institutions. Finding a time to introduce AWPSI is becoming

challenging. If possible holding group consultative meetings with various funding Institutes or Organizations is deemed to be preferable than individual meetings. Thus, in addition to the follow-up meetings, consideration is given to find a willing partner to co-organize such a meeting with different funding agencies to promote AWPSI and its initiatives.

Plans for the Future

- **Strategic goals and objectives for the upcoming year.**

Strategic Focus Areas

- Enhance research capabilities and networks to generate actionable insights and promote women's engagement in peacebuilding efforts.
- Expand training programs to develop leadership and negotiation skills for women at all levels.
- Amplify advocacy through strategic partnerships, social media, and high-impact conferences and campaigns.
- Invest in human, technological, and internal systems to improve organizational efficiency and support the institute's growing program demands.
- Develop robust systems to monitor emerging trends and foster greater engagement in influential forums to elevate AWPSI's profile and influence.

Planned programs and initiatives

Core programmes

1. **Research and Publication**
   - Publish studies on women in conflict zones and develop research findings through partnerships with institutions.
2. **Capacity Building**
   - Train 275 women at various levels in conflict areas and enhance programs with advanced negotiation and conflict management modules.
3. **Advocacy**
   - Strengthen partnerships with organizations and governments, increase social media engagement, and host a major Women Peace and Security conference.

4. **Institutional Strengthening**
    - Recruit new staff, upgrade training and technology, and implement a new project management system.
5. **Current Affairs**
    - Establish a real-time monitoring system, increase forum participation, and launch a newsletter for stakeholder updates.

Anticipated challenges and strategies to address them

To achieve our mission and goals for 2025, AWPSI acknowledges the potential risks and challenges that could impact our success. Effective risk mitigation strategies are essential to navigate these uncertainties and ensure the successful implementation of our plans.

1. Limited Staff Capacity and Technological Infrastructure

AWPSI will address this risk by prioritizing the recruitment of additional staff members and investing in advanced technological infrastructure. A thorough needs assessment will guide the recruitment process to fill critical gaps. Additionally, we will upgrade our technological resources to support remote work and enhance our program delivery capabilities.

2. Dependence on External Funding

To reduce reliance on external funding, AWPSI will explore diverse funding sources, including grants from international organizations, partnerships with private sector entities, and fundraising campaigns. We will also implement a robust financial management system to ensure sustainability and prudent use of resources.

3. Political Instability and Conflict

Given the volatile political environment in some operational areas, AWPSI will develop contingency plans and maintain flexibility in our program implementation. Establishing strong local partnerships will help us navigate and adapt to changing circumstances. Regular risk assessments and updates to our security protocols will also be integral to our strategy.

4. Limited Visibility and Engagement with Key Stakeholders

To enhance our visibility, AWPSI will implement targeted communication strategies, including increased social media engagement and high-profile advocacy campaigns. We will also strengthen our relationships with existing partners and seek new alliances to broaden our influence and outreach.

5. Deep-rooted gender stereotypes

AWPSI will address this risk by Encouraging the implementation of comprehensive education programs to challenge and transform deep rooted gender stereotypes.

Acknowledgements

We extend our sincere gratitude to the various embassies that have been instrumental in supporting our institute. In particular, we are deeply thankful to the Embassy of Ireland for its generous grant. We also appreciate the interest shown by the embassies of Portugal, Australia, Norway, the United Kingdom, Spain, and the European Union in becoming our partners and supporters.

We are especially grateful for the funding and other forms of support we have received thus far:

- The Centre for International Reproductive Health Training (CIRHT) provided the seed funding that enabled the establishment of AWPSI.
- The Embassy of Ireland not only organized a donors' meeting but also awarded us a project grant.
- Inclusive Peace facilitated and covered the costs for two rounds of mid-level training sessions.
- UN Women generously donated essential office furniture, including a conference table, workstations, filing cabinets, guest chairs, and whiteboards.
- The African Union Commission contributed valuable equipment, including desktop and laptop computers, a refrigerator, and other office essentials.

We are truly grateful for this support, which has been crucial in advancing our mission.