African Women Peace and Security Institute (AWPSI)

Annual Activity Report

July 2024 – June 2025

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1. Executive Summary

The reporting period from July 2024 to June 2025 marked a pivotal year of growth and consolidation for the African Women Peace and Security Institute (AWPSI). As an Institute of gender-responsive peacebuilding. AWPSI intensified its outreach, capacity-building, advocacy and institutional development activities across Ethiopia.

Key achievements included the successful delivery of national and regional training programs, establishment of a national cohort of trainers, advocacy on integrating peace education into national curricula, and increased visibility through strategic partnerships and events. With critical funding secured from Ireland and the UK, and proposals submitted to Austria and NIMD, AWPSI is building grant management capacity and sustained its programming amidst logistical and administrative challenges.

Institutional strengthening was a central focus during this period. Strategic hiring, office development, automation of systems, and the launch of the website development process marked significant steps toward professionalization. At the same time, the Institute's advocacy efforts reached new heights, with the celebration of the legacy of H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde serving as a symbolic milestone in advancing women's leadership in peacebuilding.

Challenges such as delayed disbursements, coordination hurdles, and logistical constraints were met with adaptive strategies, including decentralization, strengthened internal systems, and proactive donor engagement. The lessons learned from these experiences will inform future programming and help consolidate AWPSI's position as a trusted, innovative actor in Ethiopia's peace and security sector.

As AWPSI prepares to scale its impact in the year ahead, the priorities include completing the peace education curriculum integration, finalizing regional trainings in Amhara, deepening partnerships, and transitioning from project-based work to more structured policy influence and systems change. The successes of this reporting period provide a strong foundation for continued advancement of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Ethiopia and the region.

2. Introduction

The African Women Peace and Security Institute (AWPSI) entered the July 2024 – June 2025 fiscal year with a renewed commitment to catalysing changes in the women, peace and security space. With operations rooted in women values, participatory engagement and institutional credibility, AWPSI expanded its reach across conflict-affected communities in Ethiopia and strengthened its engagement in the Horn of Africa region.

This year saw significant growth across five interconnected pillars: capacity development, institutional consolidation, stakeholder engagement, knowledge production and strategic communications. From grassroots communities in Afar to high-level discussions in Addis Ababa, AWPSI became a visible and respected voice in advocating for gender-responsive peacebuilding.

3. Capacity Building and Trainings

3.1 Mid-Level Training in Bishoftu

A central milestone this year was the mid-level training workshop in Bishoftu held in October 2024. The five-day residential training brought together **54 professionals (36 women, 18 men)** from all 13 Ethiopian regions. Participants included representatives from regional peace bureaus, CSOs, media organizations, and youth coalitions.

The curriculum emphasized:

- Gender-responsive mediation
- Trauma-informed conflict analysis
- Dialogue facilitation techniques
- Local peace architecture and NAP frameworks

Training methods combined classroom learning, simulations, role-play, storytelling, and community conflict scenario analysis. Post-training assessments showed a 62% increase in participants' confidence in leading mediation efforts and designing gender-sensitive peace strategies.

3.2 Training of Trainers (ToT)

Building a national cohort of WPS trainers was a key goal of AWPSI's professional development agenda. In January 2025, the Institute conducted a four-day **Training of Trainers (ToT)** session, targeting 20 facilitators, including 12 women from federal institutions, civil society, and academia.

Outcomes of the ToT include:

- Creation of a facilitator database for regional deployment
- Development of adaptable training modules
- Initiation of peer-mentorship networks

Graduates from the ToT cohort have since co-facilitated regional training events and contributed to AWPSI's curriculum contextualization for conflict-affected regions. They continued to have an online training and supposedly to graduate in December 2025.

The most recent Training of Trainers (TOT) participants have been engaged in monthly online sessions focused on experience sharing, story writing, and practical conflict resolution activities within their respective conflict-affected regions.

AWPSI is in the process of developing detailed profiles of these TOT trainees, which will be compiled and printed in booklet format. This booklet will serve as a resource for like-minded organizations, offering a well-organized hub or roster of qualified trainers. The current pool of TOT trainers consists of 20 individuals, 19 women and 1 man.

3.3 Grassroot level Trainings in Afar and Tigray

In early 2025, AWPSI delivered community-level peacebuilding trainings in Afar regional state, Semera town and Tigray regional state, Mekelle town. Each training reached 21 (17 Women, 4 Men) and 20 (16 Women, 4 Men) grassroot level women leaders, elderlies, youth, Faith Based Institution leaders and Community Based Organizations leaders respectively.

Grassroot level capacity building training sessions covered:

- Concepts and causes of conflict
- Basic conflict resolution tools

- Early warning signs of community violence
- Localized peace dialogue practices
- Incorporating women's voices in local governance

On both regional state grassroots-level capacity-building training was successfully conducted, beginning with a pre-training assessment and a post-training evaluation. The comparison of pre- and post-training results enabled AWPSI to measure changes in participants' knowledge and understanding of the training content and key concepts as follows

Assessment Results Summary (Tigray Region)

S.No	Assessment Score (%)	Number of Participants (Pre-Test)	Number of Participants (Post-Test)
1	25–49% (Low – Yellow)	4 participants	3 participants
2	50–74% (Medium – Orange)	6 participants	7 participants
3	75–100% (High – Green)	10 participants	11 participants
Average Score		62%	72%

Conclusion

The pre-training assessment and post-training evaluation show that the training effectively enhanced participants' knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, showing a measurable improvement of 10 percentage points from 62% to 72%.

The inclusive model fostered trust and healing across divides. In Mekelle, a local women's association collaborated with the AWPSI team to initiate a peace dialogue forum between returnees and host communities.

3.4 Upcoming Training in Amhara

Preparations are underway for the final regional grassroot level training in Amhara regional state, North Wollo, Woldiya town, scheduled for **10 - 12, July 2025**. The region's complex conflict dynamics and recent unrest necessitate a sensitive, adaptive training design. Pre-assessments and security check have been completed, and participant selection is underway in collaboration with local partners and local facilitators.

4. Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Partnership and Donor Engagement

AWPSI maintained active Partnership engagement to foster trust, attract funding and promote inclusive peacebuilding:

- The **Irish Embassy** remained a strategic partner, disbursing €50,000 out of the €100,000 for capacity-building projects.
- The **Austrian Embassy** engaged AWPSI in multiple dialogue sessions and encouraged proposal submissions.
- Bilateral engagements with the **UK, Australia, Portugal**, and **Austria** broadened AWPSI's visibility.

These engagements culminated in invitations to high-level consultations and networking events, strengthening AWPSI's role as a policy-shaping actor.

4.2 Role in the WPS National Action Plan Process

AWPSI played a pivotal role in Ethiopia's WPS National Action Plan (NAP) development. The Institute:

- Participated in civil society dialogues organized by MoWSA and UN Women
- Hosted a national workshop in **Bishoftu (July 2024)** with over 20 CSOs
- Served as a technical committee member with one of its staff as a rapporteur.

AWPSI's technical and coordination contributions earned it recognition as a core civil society partner in Ethiopia's NAP implementation.

5. Project Implementation and Grant Management

5.1 Irish Government Funded Project

The Irish-funded project entered Phase II in early 2025 with disbursement of 50% of the annual allocation. Deliverables completed include:

- Recruitment of 3 project staff
- Conduct of mid-level and grassroots trainings
- Submission of narrative and financial reports

A mid-year project review in May 2025 rated implementation "Highly Satisfactory." AWPSI also began exploring a multi-year extension.

5.2 UK-ACCORD Peacebuilding Initiative

AWPSI partnered with **ACCORD** under a UK FCDO-funded initiative to support peacebuilding interventions in Ethiopia. Key outputs include:

- Support to the Training of Trainers session
- Contribution to a national peacebuilding learning series
- Technical input on community-based reconciliation

This partnership strengthened AWPSI's credibility in implementing multi-stakeholder peacebuilding initiatives.

5.3 Austrian Development Agency Proposal

A comprehensive project proposal was submitted to the Austrian Development Agency in March 2025. The €10,000 request focuses on: **Procuring Teleconferencing Materials to Enhance Digital Communication with Women Trainees in Peace and Security.**

Follow-up meetings have been held, and feedback from ADA was positive. AWPSI is hopeful for approval.

6. Institutional Development

6.1 Human Resource Growth

AWPSI made strategic investments in human capital to strengthen its operational and programmatic functions. A **Monitoring and Evaluation Officer** was recruited in January 2025, tasked with streamlining data collection, strengthening evaluation frameworks, and producing evidence-based learning outputs.

In addition, part-time consultants were engaged in the following areas:

- Communications and visibility strategy
- Training facilitation and curriculum design advocacy

6.2 Systems and Operations Enhancement

AWPSI's operational systems saw significant enhancements:

- The office was equipped with new furniture and IT equipmen.

- Internal filing systems were reorganized using digital cloud solutions for shared documentation.

A priority in the coming period is the introduction of a basic **enterprise resource planning (ERP)** tool to centralize HR, finance, and project management systems.

6.3 Website and Digital Visibility

A key milestone in organizational visibility and communications was the **initiation of AWPSI's website development project**. A competitive vendor selection process was conducted, and a prototype is being finalized.

The AWPSI website has been reviewed and validated by both internal staff and external experts with relevant experience and skills in website development. Feedback and comments were collected from AWPSI staff and the recruited website development expert. The website developer compiled all inputs and incorporated the suggestions to enhance the overall quality and functionality of the website.

The site will include:

- Programmatic updates and publications
- Training opportunities and event announcements
- Resource centre on WPS themes
- Working on organizational visibility.
- Networking with likeminded organization and donors on the thematic focus of AWPSI.

Once launched, the website will enhance AWPSI's capacity for advocacy, partner engagement, and donor reporting.

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7. Proposal Development and Fundraising

AWPSI adopted a proactive, goal-aligned fundraising approach anchored in its strategic plan. During this reporting period, the Institute:

- Submitted a grant proposal to the **Austrian Development Agency** (status: pending)

- Responded to a call under the **UK FCDO Women, Peace and Security Mediation Fund**
- Applied to the **Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)** Rapid Response Window
- Held pre-submission consultations with Irish Aid and UN Women

Lessons learned include:

- The importance of proposal pre-validation with partners
- Need for detailed M&E frameworks in all concept notes
- Prioritizing scalable and innovative pilot projects for external funding
- Activities were rescheduled to align with the donor's budget disbursement plan.
- Most regional states in Ethiopia possess their own unique indigenous conflict resolution strategies.

AWPSI will continue to diversify its donor base, targeting multilateral funds, foundations, and private sector alliances.

8. Peace Education Program

8.1 Curriculum Development Process

In May 2025, AWPSI launched its flagship Peace Education Program by contracting a national consulting firm to lead the **curriculum design process**. The scope includes:

- Desk review of peace education efforts in Ethiopia
- Mapping of stakeholders
- Identification of gaps in gender and inclusion in civic education
- Peace education curriculum advocacy strategy document.

Stakeholders Consultation Workshop: to Advocate the need for the development of Peace Education Curriculum in Ethiopia was conducted among participants (Female = ------, Male ------ and Total = -------)

Presentation on the Assessment on Peace education and Curriculum in Ethiopia, this assessment aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of peace education and curriculum development in Ethiopia, covering:

- Background and methodologies of the assessment

- Key findings and
  - Policy Analysis
  - Curriculum Content
  - Existing Peace Education Initiatives
  - Literature Review and Scholarly Perspectives
  - Stakeholder Mapping and Roles
  - Cultural and Historical context
- Recommendations; details of recommendation expected from key actors directly responsible for the peace education curriculum.

Panel Discussion: Following the presentation, a panel discussion was held on the topic: "Enhancing Peace Education and the need for curriculum in Ethiopia; challenges and prospects." The panel included representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Peace, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, AAU- Institute for Peace and Security Studies and African Women Peace and Security Institute providing diverse reflections and initiating a broader dialogue among stakeholders. Panelists also pointed out key actions to be taken as a way forward to realize peace education in Ethiopia.

Presentation on the draft peace education curriculum advocacy strategy document. The advocacy strategy developed to advocate for peace education was presented

The firm submitted an **inception report** in June 2025, outlining the methodology, work plan, and consultation strategy.

8.2 Stakeholder Consultations

The peace education initiative has convened one stakeholder sessions so far:

1. **Kick-off meeting** with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Peace, and Ministry of Women and social affairs.
2. **CSO workshop** in June 2025 attended by 18 organizations working on youth, gender, and civic education

Feedback highlighted the need to integrate peace narratives into basic education, teacher training, and parent engagement strategies.

We will hold a second-round workshop and come up with an advocacy strategy for peace education.

8.3 Prospects for National Integration

AWPSI aims to position peace education as a foundational part of Ethiopia's future civic education system.

9. Celebrations and Advocacy Events

9.1 Tribute to H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde

On **November 28, 2024**, AWPSI hosted a landmark celebration in Addis Ababa to honour **Her Excellency Sahle-Work Zewde**, former President of Ethiopia, for her diplomatic contributions and trailblazing leadership.

The event featured:

- Speeches by women leaders and International organization leaders.
- Musical performances by women artists
- A documentary video highlighting H.E. Sahle-Work's career

The event was co-organized with the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA), UN Women and attended by over 200 guests, including youth leaders and foreign ambassadors.

9.2 Visibility and Strategic Communication

AWPSI continued to grow its national and regional profile through the website and other social media platforms.

Future priorities include launching a podcast and building a stronger social media presence.

10. Reporting, Monitoring, and Accountability

AWPSI adhered to high standards of internal and external accountability during the year. Major achievements include:

- Timely submission of **narrative and financial reports** to the Irish Embassy and other donors
- Completion of the **2024 annual financial audit**
- Submission of compliance reports to the **Agency for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO)**
- Full documentation of all **Board of Directors meetings**

In addition, AWPSI conducted:

- **Pre- and post-training evaluations**
- Partner debriefs after each project activity
- Quarterly internal review meetings using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Institutional policies and manuals reviewed during this period:

- **Procurement Manual**
- **Safeguard and Code of Conduct Manual**

11. Challenges and Lessons Learned

11.1 Operational and Programmatic Challenges

Despite notable achievements, AWPSI faced the following key challenges:

- **Funding Delays**: Delayed grant disbursements, slowed down training schedules.
- **Logistics**: Transport and security-related disruptions affected the delivery of grassroots trainings.
- **Technology Gaps**: Website development faced setbacks due to initial vendor capacity issues.
- **Capacity Constraints**: Limited administrative staff created bottlenecks in documentation and reporting.

11.2 Lessons Learned

- **Early donor engagement** increases proposal success and alignment
- **Local partnerships** improve logistics and community ownership of trainings
- **Clear Terms of Reference** and milestone-based contracts are essential for external consultants
- **Internal learning reviews** after each activity enhance institutional memory and quality assurance
- The strong interest and commitment from key government ministries (Ministry of Peace, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs) are crucial for successful integration of peace education.

12. Key Achievements

Key Achievements (2024–2025)

- Trained **100+ individuals** across mid-level, grassroots, and ToT tracks
- Mobilized over **€150,000 in donor funding**
- Hosted national recognition event for women's leadership
- Played a strategic role in **NAP development**
- Launched advocacy on **peace education design** process
- Began digital visibility via website

13. Financial Overview

The financial overview is annexed

14. Conclusion

The July 2024 – June 2025 period was transformative for AWPSI. Through bold programming, collaborative partnerships, and institutional maturity, the Institute advanced its mission to promote inclusive, gender-responsive peacebuilding in Ethiopia.

AWPSI emerged stronger—more visible, more trusted, and more effective. As Ethiopia continues to grapple with deep-rooted conflict and transition, the Institute is committed to remaining a principled and visionary actor in shaping a peaceful, just future.

Looking forward, AWPSI will deepen its commitment to empowering women, engaging youth, influencing policy, and nurturing a new generation of peacebuilders.

Annexes

Annex 1: financial Overview