



**Jerusalem Children and Community Development  
Organization (JeCCDO)**

***Ato Dawit Bedhanie:  
Champion of SA in Bishoftu***

**A Personal Story Document Prepared for:  
“SAC Hero Competition 2015”**

**Author**

**Anteneh Berhanu (M and E Manager)**

**Submitted to:**

**Management Agency (MA)**

**Addis Ababa**

**August 2015**

## **I. Background of the Nominee**

Ato Dawit Bedanie, 73, is a retired teacher. He had worked in the education sector for about 46 years in various capacities. He started his service as primary school teacher and came to be one of the senior government officials of the Country in the education sector. Ato Dawit is a father of 5 children who all got married. He mainly lives with his small pension and support from his children.

Ato Dawit has been working as chairperson of Bishoftu Town Social Accountability Council (SAC) since 2008. He spends about 90% of his working time on social accountability works. He says his membership to the SAC happened not by chance. He proudly mentions his previous tasks on community works to evidence that he was already been engaged in same tenure, even before ESAP. What more interesting engagement should I have other than serving the community at this later time, he justifies his engagement.



*Ato Dawit Bedanie, Bishoftu SAC  
Chairperson and Nominee for  
'SAC Hero'*

## **2. Testimonials of Others about the Nominee**

Ato Gezahegn Gebre Kidan, 63, is secretary of the Bishoftu SAC. He had served in the education sector for more than 4 decades and is now pensioner, and is also working as principal in one of private schools in Bishoftu.

'What can I tell you about Ato Dawit', said Ato Gezahegn. 'He is a man of integrity and kindness. He devoted almost all of his time for social and charity works. I can say he is the backbone of SAC and its successes. He has also good relationship with all stakeholders. The credibility and good image he had developed during his incumbency as a top government official of the region has helped him to maintain smooth and strong relationship with government officials. I was always amazed at the respect and warm welcoming he individually and we as SAC receive from the City Officials including the Mayor. As he is old enough and also chairperson of one of the largest 'iddir' in the Town, I always see him enjoying high respect from the community as well', he added.



*Ato Gezahegn  
Gebrekidan, Secretary of  
Bishoftu SAC and  
testimonial.*

W/o Tiruwork Teferi, 56, lives in Bishoftu Town. She contracted HIV/AIDS some 16 years ago. She is a mother of 4 and currently lives with 2 of them and her elderly mother. She makes her living by engaging in garbage disposal, washing clothes in private homes and teaching the community about HIV/AIDS. She knows Ato Dawit for the last 4 years since she was elected as community representative from her village. For her, he is a very kind hearted man. I even forget my being HIV positive when I meet him' she says. As to Ato Dawit's engagement in community works, she explained there is no community work that he says 'I am not concerned with', to use her words.

Major Tesfa Degu, 48, is House Speaker of Kebele 09 Council. He is a father of 5 and makes his living by engaging in small businesses. He dubbed Ato Dawit 'a man of his community. He says 'I don't remember a community meeting where he was not present nor got out of it without having a say. 'I admire Ato Dawit that he doesn't hesitate to criticize both the government and the community. He is also persuasive enough in his speech and capable to influence people' he added.

### **3. Key Results of the Nominee**

All interviewees agree that the success of Bishoftu SAC is mainly attributed to Ato Dawit. W/o Tiruwork testifies 'we had no adequate water supply, even to wash dead bodies. He was the one who has been consulting with the community and persuaded the local government to construct water points. Now we have 3 water points in our kebele alone and has now got uninterrupted water supply', she witnessed. She in fact didn't go without praising the positive response of the City Administration..

Ato Gezaheg proudly remembered the huge success of Bishoftu SAC under WaSH. He enumerates the successes as the purchase of a truck with 4.8 million Birr for waste disposal, 1.2 million Birr water truck for water supply and 13 plastic tankers which are all currently functional; and added the construction of 4 new water points and renovation of 4 others. Above all, the Administration has initiated and implemented 148 million birr water project for the Town which is now completed. He gives the primary credit of these successes to Ato Dawit. 'Had it not been for his frequent visit to the Mayor's Office and continuous push, these successes wouldn't have been achieved', he added.

Ato Gonfa, on his part acknowledges that it is through the effort of the SAC that 450 student tables were supplied; 23 new teachers were recruited; two G+2 blocks and 2 ground blocks were constructed and gone functional in the target schools. 'I believe Ato Dawit is forefront of these all successes', he added. Ato Dinka, representing the user community says it is Ato Dawit's passion and commitment that inspire the community to come together and act on local development issues.



*G+1 Block built through the effort of Bishoftu SAC*

**4. The Nominee’s Innovation in Community Mobilization**

Ato Daiwt as got his favorite role, I think’ says Ato Gezahegn. According to him, Ato Dawit raises the issue of SA in every meeting he participates. ‘As he is leader of different ‘iddirs’, he uses all the ‘iddir’s meeting to sensitize and mobilize the community on SA. Ato Dinka on his part added ‘Ato Dawit arranges special session during school events and gatherings, and aware teachers and students on SA’.

The other innovative work of Ato Dawit is that he is strongly working to institutionalize SA in every service providing sector ESAP focuses on. He has thus far succeeded that SA has become part of the annual plans of the education sector.

In addition, he has been using service providers as representative of the community as well. ‘In every meeting with service providers, he reminds them that they are also part of the community, and thus encourages them to see local challenges as service users too’, testifies Ato Gezahegn. This approach has helped to smooth the interaction and oneness of the two parties.

W/o Tiruwork witnessed that as Ato Dawit is elder, he has got the trust of the community. The recent success of SAC has also added further trust and respect from the community’, she added.

What all interviewees agree is that Ato Dawit goes to extra mile on SA than anybody else. He spends much of his time working for the SAC and has also incredible commitment that encourages others to engage in SA. 'I can say he is a full-timer on SA. That is why he secured an office and furniture for SAC Office', affirmed Ato Gezahegn.

## **5. Ownership and Motivation**

All interviewees agree that the motivation of Ato Dawit is mainly due for the issue of SA is his area of interest. Most importantly, the progressive success has further motivated him further. 'It is to respond to the communities love and respect that I go to extra mile to my capacity' Ato Dawit says. Ato Gonfa has remembered that Bishoftu SAC was performing its regular duties even in the transition period between ESAP I and ESAP II. This was simply for the great ownership and motivation of Ato Dawit on SA', he added.

## **6. Resource Mobilization**

One of the extra mile engagements of Ato Dawit is on resource mobilization. Ato Gezahegn acknowledged that there are no governmental and non-governmental organizations that Ato Dawit has knocked their doors. He had a catalytic role for allotment of some 13.8 million birr by the Town Administration in different times. He has also a role in mobilizing above 69000 Birr together with PTAs from one NGO for the construction of separate toilet in Kera Hora Primary School. Above all, Ato Dawit took the lion's share in convincing local communities to support local development initiatives in finance, labor and in kind. This effort is fruitful in that the community in all the target areas are now regularly contributing their resources on annual basis through participatory planning and budgeting process.

## **7. Sustainability**

The sustainability of SA is the key issue that makes Ato Dawit so anxious. Ato Dawit strongly believes it is only when the future generation is aware of SA and owns it that SA become sustainable. 'That is why he goes to schools to aware students, Ato Gezahegn witnessed. For the future, Ato Dawit proposes the issue of SA to be mainstreamed in primary education curriculum and be included under civics education, and he hopes this will happen very soon. In addition, Ato Dawit reiterates CBOs (Iddirs) can best mobilize the community on SA. So, as a

sustainability strategy, he is working to enable these CBOs voice communities' needs in government's development agenda. Ato Dawit, referring to his age, jokes 'I am on red line', so I want to pour all my time and energy to make the SA changes sustainable. I am sure that the changes in SA will never move backward here in Bishoftu, he reaffirms.