20 November 2011

Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA) and VSO Ethiopia had established commendable relationship to attain their common objectives specific to teachers’ morale and provision of quality education to attain EFA goals. Because of the cooperation that exists between the two organizations, VSO Ethiopia country office has been organizing different experience sharing events from which the association benefited a lot.

In March 2011 a half day workshop was organized by VSO Ethiopia staff & ETA at ETA’s headquarters in Addis Ababa for base line data collection in March 2011 to set target for 2012-2014 and later, on 1st July 2011, another workshop was conducted in the same place for organizational capacity scanning. One of the areas identified as limitation was then related to organizational capacity of ETA.

As part of building the capacity of ETA leadership, VSO Ethiopia in collaboration with CUSO-VSO (created in 2008 from the merger of two development agencies, Canadian University Service Overseas – CUSO, created in 1961 and Voluntary Service Overseas Canada-VSO created in 1995) has facilitated and has managed to secure a place for ETA’s president to attend a course for certificate program in Advocacy and Citizen Engagement in St. Francis Xavier University, Coady International Institute, in Canada, Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

The three week course was designed to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors and others dealing with issues of power, exclusion, inequity and inequality to plan and implement effective advocacy and citizen engagement initiatives.

It aims to enhance knowledge and skills through the active sharing of experience and ideas, and to explore opportunities for ongoing learning and collective action around issues of common concern. The course builds on experiences and literature in the areas of advocacy, communication, human rights, popular education, behavior and social change.
Supported by the wonderful facilitators—Olga Gladkikh and Nani Ram Subedi, the course was organized in an intensive training program arranged throughout the day from October 24th up to 11th of November 2011.

Depending on the content of the course, guest lecturers were invited to share their experiences in that specific area. Worth mentioning are Marie Brunelle, St. Francis Xavier University equity officer on human rights or rights based advocacy, to share her experience in human rights abuses and Moira Legere - esers & Deborah Gass, Nova Scotia supreme court justices, have shared their experiences in court procedure in dealing with court case specific to Nova Scotia and to Canada in general.

Part of the experience of studying at the Coady International Institute was the learning that took place outside the classroom by living and sharing with experienced development workers from many countries around the world. There were 27 participants from different countries of the world for the certificate program in Advocacy & Citizen Engagement for the year 2011 fall.

As a whole active participation and exchange among the participants and facilitators with in a collaborative learning environment was emphasized. Accordingly group work as well as individual activity was part and parcel of the training.

Facilitators assessed individual learning of the participants on the basis of a learning project related to an issue of participant's choosing—in Ethiopia’s case “Teachers’ Housing problem.”
ETA attended in Advocacy and Citizen Engagement training in Canada

ETA would like to thank VSO Ethiopia very much for facilitating the training in collaboration with the partners, CUSO- VSO, CIDA and Coady International Institute. ETA would promote the good job VSO is doing in land and internationally with its noble motive-sharing skills and changing lives.