**Global Initiative for the Blind in Ethiopia**

**Activity report**

**Submitted to the Fifth annual General Assembly**

**January 28, 2024**

**Introduction**

The 4th general Assembly was held on April 30, 2023 and heard reports for 20222. this report covers activities planned and carried out as of January 1-December 31st 2023. In line with the direction given at the previous General Assembly, the board did its best to make sure that the General Assembly meeting for 2024 will take place at least in the first month of the new year.

Throughout the year, the board conducted about 10 meetings and carried out the following activities:

1. A consultative workshop was held in Addis Ababa in February 2023. As noted in the 2022 report, the purpose of this consultative meeting was to discuss the need for a conference on education in Ethiopia and seek support of stakeholders in the process. A good number of organizations attended and assured their respective support for the idea of organizing a national conference on education in Ethiopia. The board also attended the workshop via zoom. Moreover, the event served as a good opportunity to introduce GIBE and was even well-recognized and praised.

2. In order to effectively facilitate the preparation of the conference, a coordinating committee has been set up and began its work. The committee comprises Ethiopian National Association of the blind (eNAB), Help for Persons with Disabilities (HPDO), Addis Ababa University Support Services Center for the disabled, Special Needs Education Professionals Association, Ethiopian Network for Organizations of the Visually Impaired and Blind (ENOVIB), and two representatives of GIBE). Mekonnen Nega from the board and Alemtsehay from the volunteer’s will represent GIBE. Then, the board approved an additional budget of $500 for the committee to run its business. In addition to the other administrative cost items, the budget allocated includes transport expenses for committee members (600 Ethiopian birr each). However, considering the workload on Alemtsehay, the board agreed to pay him 800 birr till the completion of the conference planned to be held in 2024.

3. Having received the proceeding of the consultative meeting, the board continued to work on the planned workshop. This included: establishing the local coordinating committee

* Preparing terms of reference for the committee
* Drawing the budget plan and
* finalizing the project document.

To enrich the project document and increased its quality, the board had it reviewed by two external experts. After multiple revisions, the project document is now ready for circulation to donors for fund solicitation. In addition, it has now been sent to the committee in Ethiopia for comments before it began to be submitted to donors for funding. In the meantime, the board is trying to find a way of designing the format of GIBE’s business letters.

4. The board organized a webinar on information and technology for the blind. A renowned IT professional made an interesting presentation on the latest adaptive technology tools. Pleased with the presentation and his cooperation, the board wrote him A letter of acknowledgement to the professional, Ato Fisiha. On his part, he promised to work with GIBE in the future.

Around 30 participants worldwide including those from Ethiopia attended the webinar. In particular, Participants from Ethiopia expressed their gratitude to GIBE and gave positive feedbacks after the webinar and requested for more webinars on other topic.

5. Two members were recruited, one had joined us before and now decided to rejoin us. Yonas from Israel is a new member of GIBE. Another member who was with us before and rejoined GIBE is Hilina from Sweden. We welcome and thank both members for subscribing to our organizational objective and joining us.

6. The board is working on strengthening the financial operation and management of the organization. To this end, Mr. Girma Woressa has been assigned as a deputy treasurer to support Mr. Melesse Demissay. Furthermore, the board is working hard to find an external auditor to have our accounts audited. These measures are hoped to maintain our financial records and keep them to the standard.

**Challenges**

The old challenges we had before persisted. This includes:

* non-functionality of the committees
* Lack of resource
* Failure to use media outlets including our own website and
* Failure to implement the plan fully.

**Recommendations**

**In moving GIBE further and making it a vibrant organization, the board should work harder and design more effective strategies. For 2024, we recommend the following measures:**

1. **If committee work is not effective, we need to change the modality.**
2. **GIBE should be active and utilize the social media outlets.**
3. **Re-design/update the website for any possible fundraising and soliciting support.**
4. **Improve performance of the board by focusing on strategically important activities.**