



# EMPOWERING RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO BE HEALTH ADVOCATES

SCOPE ANNUAL REPORT  
JULY 2015 - JUNE 2016



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# FOUNDER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Thank you for making this year another remarkable year for SCOPE. It's hard for me to believe that eight years have passed since UW's Judd Walson, UPC's Ken Kierstead, and I sat down with our University of Gondar colleagues and formed the amazing partnership that has become SCOPE.

We began with fellows Miho Sato, Anteneh Girma, and Sarah Rawlins researching how the medical and faith communities in the Gondar area could work together to improve the health of women and children and to prevent HIV. We implemented the first ever AIDS testing campaign on the grounds of the North Gondar Diocese proving that the medical community and the faith community could, in fact, work together. With confidence in our partnership we began our clinic work – training priests and community health workers we call maternal health advocates to mobilize their communities to prioritize maternal and neonatal health. These volunteers go into their communities, find pregnant women not already in care, and encourage them to come to the clinics.

We have had tremendous success with our clinic programs this year. At the Tseda Clinic where we had worked for nine months, the midwife there proudly told me that since SCOPE had come, he had delivered nine HIV+ mothers and nine HIV- babies. In addition they have had 168% increase in the number of women completing all four recommended antenatal care visits, and a 73% increase in assisted births. And this is just one of the five clinics where SCOPE has worked!

In April I visited our projects in Gondar. We had a meeting with the priests and community health workers. I am so grateful to them because they do our work. But what I heard from them was how grateful they are to SCOPE for giving them the tools and knowledge to save the lives of the women and children in their communities. I saw and heard that what SCOPE is doing is making a real difference – it is, in fact, transforming communities.

In April I also visited SCOPE's projects at holy sites where people go to receive healing. There SCOPE trains priests who administer the holy water about HIV and the importance of knowing your status and getting and staying in treatment if you are HIV+. Each month our fellows, clinicians from the University of Gondar Hospital, and SCOPE's trained priests, run an HIV testing campaign at these ancient sites of healing. Priests encourage HIV positive parishioners to take their medications AND drink the holy water together honoring both tradition and science-driven guidelines for treating HIV/AIDS. Priests' instructions are very powerful in this culture, so this, too, is saving lives.

I thank you wholeheartedly for being part of the SCOPE family and for supporting our work, our fellows, and our community. We are looking forward to much more in 2016-2017 as we continue to advance our mission and realize our vision of improved health for families affected by HIV/AIDS.

Warmest regards,



Nancy Andrews, SCOPE Founder and Board Chair



# ABOUT SCOPE

## SCOPE PARTNERS WITH MEDICAL AND FAITH COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE HEALTH IN ETHIOPIA THROUGH OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

SCOPE, a partnership between the University of Washington, University of Gondar, and faith based institutions in the United States and Ethiopia, envisions a world where creative partnerships between medical and faith communities bring lasting, positive change to healthcare access and service. Our programs harness the broad and influential reach of faith communities to expand understanding of and access to healthcare.

Ethiopia is home to a high prevalence of HIV [1.2%] and preventable maternal deaths [maternal mortality ratio of 353/100,000 live births compared to 14/100,000 in the United States]. In the Gondar region of Ethiopia where SCOPE works, 85% of people belong to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and religious leaders play an important role in influencing the opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of their followers.

SCOPE programs empower religious leaders to be health advocates in their communities by giving them the education and skills they need to talk about health with their parishioners and neighbors. Our programs address social and cultural barriers to healthcare including stigma, education, and harmful traditional practices in order to increase demand for health services that save lives. SCOPE programs are carried out and evaluated by graduate student fellows from the University of Washington and the University of Gondar. Current SCOPE programs focus on two intersecting domains: HIV/AIDS and maternal health.

## WHERE WE WORK

SCOPE works in the Amhara state of Ethiopia in the North Gondar region.



# PROGRAMS

## HIV TESTING AND COUNSELING AT TRADITIONAL HEALING SITES

Holy water sites in Ethiopia are traditional places of healing. People of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian faith travel for miles or even days to seek the curative powers of holy water blessed by Orthodox priests. Visitors drink holy water and submerge themselves in pools to receive healing. Those who visit these sites believe that holy water can heal any illness from HIV to depression or anxiety. This tradition offers a unique opportunity to reach populations that are typically difficult to access for health education and services.

SCOPE trains Orthodox priests and health workers at six traditional healing sites in Gondar so that they can encourage holy water users to be tested for HIV and, if positive, to supplement holy water with modern medicine. In some cases, religious followers refuse modern medication because they believe its necessary to receive divine healing a practice that, in the past, was encouraged by some religious leaders. SCOPE works with priests to educate them about what HIV/AIDS is and how it can be treated using both traditional and modern medicine.

This year over 130,000 people received education on HIV/AIDS and 390 individuals were tested for HIV at holy water sites where SCOPE is active. The effort resulted in new HIV diagnosis and an opportunity to counsel patients who had discontinued their medicine, or antiretroviral therapy, in favor of traditional healing. Each person who was tested received counseling from a trained healthcare worker about how to prevent the spread of HIV, cope with and reduce stigma, and treat the virus. Religious leaders were also on site to counsel parishioners if requested.

**See a summary of this program's progress for fiscal year 2016 below:**



18

Religious leaders  
trained by SCOPE



130,000

People received  
HIV/AIDS education



38

Individuals who  
discontinued medication  
reinitiated on ART



16

People diagnosed with  
HIV/AIDS for the first  
time counseled by  
health workers



390

People tested at holy  
water sites

# BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER TO PREVENT MATERNAL AND NEONATAL DEATH

SCOPE trains and mobilizes teams of priests and female health workers to encourage pregnant women to seek care. Trainees known as “maternal health advocates” ensure women receive antenatal care, give birth in a health facility, and prevent the spread of HIV from mother to child through medical diagnostics and treatment.

In 2015-2016 SCOPE trained 34 priests and health extension workers to be maternal health advocates through a week-long intensive training program hosted at the University of Gondar. Trainees then educated women in their communities and their families about the risks of giving birth at home and the importance of maternal and neonatal health.

SCOPE trainees engage with their communities in a variety of ways from speaking from the pulpit, to visiting with parishioners individually, to attending associations of village elders to report on what they’ve learned and resources they need. Their effort over the last year has resulted in more pregnant women visiting clinics for antenatal care and increased rates of assisted births at the health facilities where SCOPE works.

## THE TSEDA CLINIC STORY

In the summer of 2015, 10 priests and 10 Health extension workers in the Tseda village were trained by SCOPE. For the next year they would perform tireless community outreach and meet monthly to discuss their progress, challenges, and advocacy for pregnant women and mothers in their community. Through their efforts, dialogue, and communication their community made tremendous strides towards ending preventable maternal and neonatal deaths. A summary of their accomplishments one year after initiating SCOPE’s maternal health program are shown below:

168%

Increase in women completing all four antenatal care visits

73%

Increase in women who gave birth at the health facility

24%


Increase in the number of pregnant women completing at least one ANC visit

20

Priests and health extension workers trained

18,900

People educated about maternal health at community gatherings



“We can see people’s attitudes changing around home deliveries, this encourages us to continue reaching out to new mothers and working with the religious community.”

Yeshwork Getenet  
Tseda Health Extension Worker (HEW)





SCOPE proudly handed over three former project sites (Woleka, Dabat, and Azezo) to the Zonal Health office in a ceremony that included speakers from the North Gondar Diocese and University of Gondar in February 2016. This transition is part of SCOPE's sustainability plan to incorporate SCOPE trainees into the existing health system in Ethiopia. We are grateful to our partners in the Ethiopia Zonal Health office for their cooperation and leadership in the next phase of SCOPE's work.

## SCOPE GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS

SCOPE's programs are supported by graduate student fellows from the University of Gondar and the University of Washington. Experienced global health leaders are essential for improved health in resource-limited settings and SCOPE's 3-6 month graduate student fellowships and opportunities provide a hands-on experience for students interested in global health leadership. SCOPE fellows from the University of Washington and the University of Gondar partner to research, design, implement, and evaluate projects that link medical and religious communities to increase uptake of existing health services to improve the lives of people living in vulnerable communities.

SCOPE has supported 20 fellows since it began its graduate student fellowship program in 2011; fourteen from the University of Washington and six from the University of Gondar. SCOPE fellows come from diverse backgrounds and disciplines such as public health, medicine, social work, public policy, and nursing to work on SCOPE community service and research projects. Today, SCOPE fellows are public health and global health leaders in the United States and around the world with fellows working as faculty, research fellows, clinicians, and program managers at organizations like the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), University of Nagasaki, Australian National University and the University of Washington.



## GET TO KNOW OUR 2015-2016 FELLOWS



Anna Schmidt, MDc  
SCOPE Fellow January-June 2016  
University of Washington

Anna spent six months in Ethiopia this winter and spring opening the Aymba site for a SCOPE maternal health program. She participated in the program's training and focus group meetings in addition to compiling a comprehensive SCOPE training tool to be used by SCOPE trainees. She is currently a fourth year medical student at the University of Washington interested in pursuing family medicine. Prior to medical school Anna received a master's of environmental health from University of Washington and travelled to Peru and Panama to develop and work on public health projects with assorted non-governmental organizations.

"This experience has given me a more nuanced view of the world and has improved my approach to problem-solving in challenging contexts. Learning to accommodate and work with exceedingly different perspectives while maintaining my core values was a delicate balance. While my values inform and motivate my work, the success of a partnership like SCOPE does not depend on everybody seeing eye-to-eye on all issues. I think these skills will translate well to providing culturally competent care for patients in my medical career. – Anna Bazinet, SCOPE fellow December 2015-May 2016, Medical Student at the University of Washington



Adino Tesfahun, MPH  
SCOPE Fellow January 2015-Present  
University of Gondar

Adino Tesfahun is the architect and implementer of the SCOPE HIV/AIDS testing and counseling project at Holy Water sites in the Gondar region. He is a SCOPE fellow and an instructor of Public Health at the University of Gondar where he teaches undergraduate epidemiology, communicable disease control and research methodology courses. Adino is a Deacon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and is actively involved in the local Orthodox community. Born in Dabark, Ethiopia he's worked in rural health centers where he was engaged in antenatal and delivery care, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), postnatal care, and HIV care coordination.



Geta Asrade, MPH  
SCOPE Fellow January 2015-Present  
University of Gondar

Geta has been hard at work as a SCOPE fellow. He currently leads a maternal health program at one of SCOPE's most successful sites, the Tseda Clinic, and is in the process of putting together a manuscript outlining his process and results. Geta Asrade was born in Simada, Ethiopia and works at the University of Gondar Institute Of Public Health as a lecturer where he teaches undergraduate and post-graduate courses. His research interests are community health, and the monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects. He lives with his wife and two daughters in Gondar.

# SCOPE AT ICASA

SCOPE is continuously innovating ways to partner with faith communities to improve health. This year, SCOPE had the opportunity to bring together experts working in this arena to discuss challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned for successful partnerships with faith communities at the International Conference for AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) hosted in Harare, Zimbabwe. The panel discussion, entitled “Faith, Medicine, and Health: An Integrated Approach,” brought together five different panelists who have experience partnering with faith communities on HIV/AIDS initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa:

**Getahun Asres, MD, MPH, DTM&H**

Associate Professor of Public Health, University of Gondar, SCOPE

**Vuyelwa T. Sidile-Chitimbi, MSc, MBA CMC**

Executive Director, Zimbabwe Association of Church Hospitals (ZACH)

**Lilian Dube, D.Th.**

Theology and Religious Studies Department Chair, University of San Francisco

**Echezona Ezeanolue, MD, MPH, FAAP, FIDSA**

Professor of Pediatrics and Public Health, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**Peter Okaalet, M.B., Ch.B, M.Div, M.Th**

Executive Director, Okaalet & Associates Limited

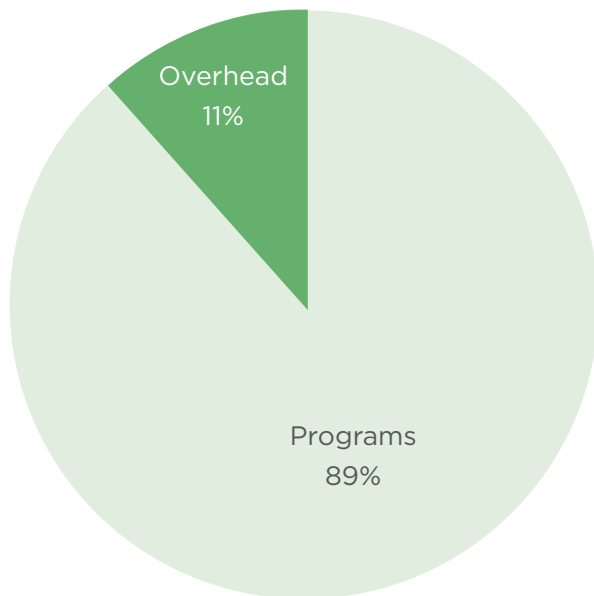
The panel discussion was led by SCOPE's Program Manager, Kate Pfizenmaier and highlighted the need for working with religious communities when designing HIV/AIDS initiatives and their unique position to be able to change behavior and influence norms. Speakers outlined best-practices for faith-medicine partnerships and highlighted the unique challenges of working with religious communities and strategies for overcoming these challenges. The session was attended by more than 150 individuals from over 34 institutions and was made possible through a generous grant from The Gilead Foundation.



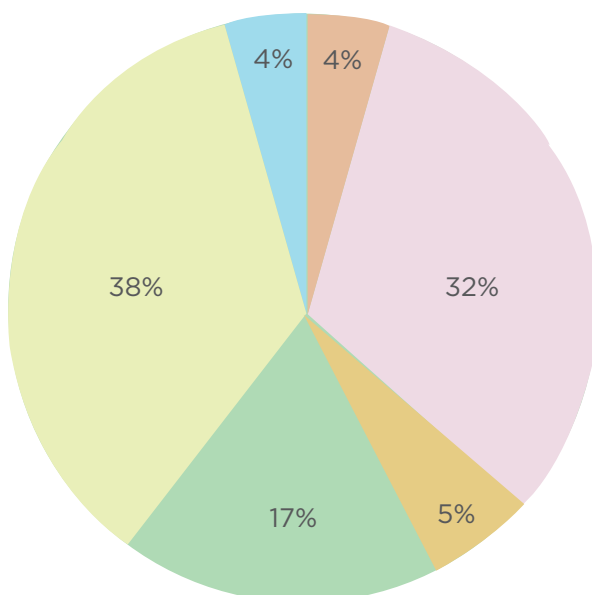
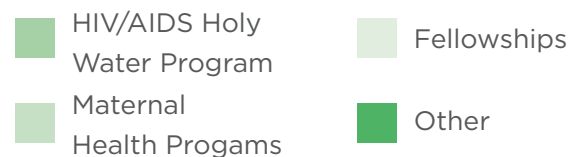
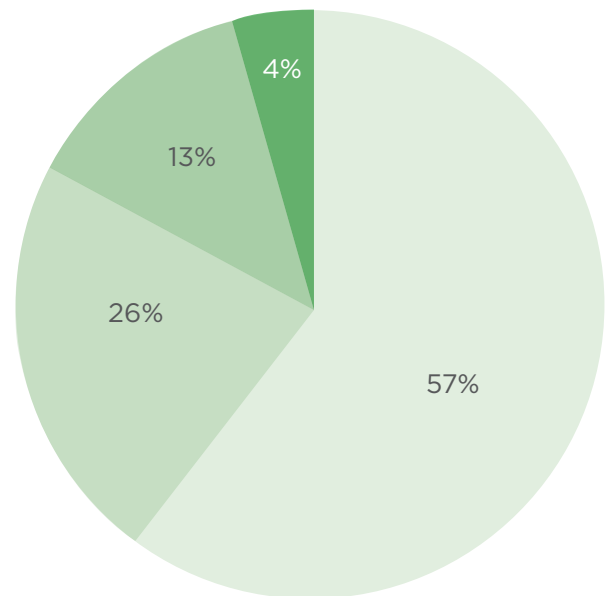
# OUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

This year SCOPE had an annual budget of \$70,000. Our expenditures funded extraordinary graduate student fellows and health programs at eleven sites in the North Gondar region. The SCOPE Board made the decision to use reserves from a generous gift made last year to expand programs in fiscal year 2016. In addition, our team fundraised almost \$60,000 from private supporters and private foundations to support SCOPE's growth. Below is a visual representations of how SCOPE stewarded funds to improve health in Gondar, Ethiopia.

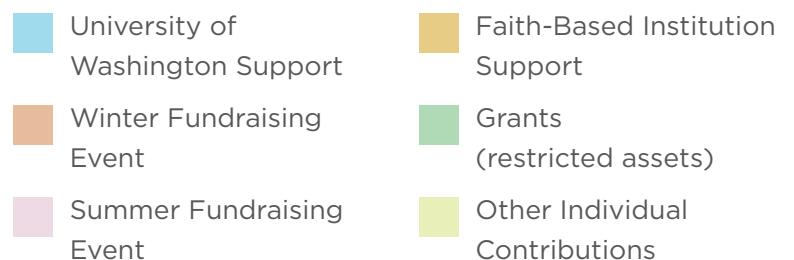
TOTAL BUDGET: \$70,000



PROGRAMS: \$62,000



INCOME: \$60,000





# VISION TRIPS

SCOPE took its first group of supporters on a Vision Trip to Ethiopia in Spring 2016. Participants were able to see first-hand the work SCOPE is doing and meet with community members and clinicians who carry out our mission. The group travelled to project sites and enjoyed stimulating discussions with religious leaders, University officials, and health workers who are engaged with SCOPE. They heard stories from the maternal health advocates about how profoundly SCOPE has empowered them to serve their communities.



## **Emebet's story:**

While on a home visit, Emebet came across a woman who had recently miscarried. She had severe abdominal pain and fever and was continuing to get sicker. She likely had retained some of the products of conception which had become infected. The family was not planning on taking this woman to the hospital, but with insistence by Emebet, they took her to the health center where she was treated and recovered. In an effort to thank Emebet, the family invited her to dinner when the patient returned home. Emebet felt honored by their gestures and grateful for her SCOPE training.

After their site visits a maternal health advocate from the Tseda site welcomed the vision trip group into her home to enjoy a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony under the trees where they were able to relax and get a glimpse into the daily life of Ethiopian farmers. Vision trip participants experienced Ethiopian culture, traditions, and natural beauty with visits to the Simeon Mountains and Lalibela where rock hewn churches are built into the earth.

If you are interested in participating in a future vision trip, please contact [scopehealth@gmail.com](mailto:scopehealth@gmail.com) for more information.



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Judd Walson, MD, MPH  
Associate Professor,  
Global Health University of Washington





“This experience with SCOP E is the first time we have had trainings that combine religious leaders and clinic staff. This is very exciting for our community.”

Tsehay Meqnenet  
Aymba Health Extension Worker (HEW)



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