Reported on: April 12, 2012

Synopsis: The team visited several government, police and medical offices in Haromaya to research these cases. We found a consensus that due to several factors; transient populations, local universities, cultural influences and the availability of the Bifitu center, abandonments are very common in the region. Police investigations into the abandonments are cursory at best and the orphanage makes no attempt to locate the birth parents. The notices submitted with the applications are not posted in the areas. The Bifitu orphanage is recognized as the preferred destination for abandoned children in the region and many people may be drawn to the area specifically to abandon children at Bifitu. Interviews with Haromaya zone officials raised questions as to whether Bifitu is authorized to participate in inter-country adoptions.

Haromaya

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer
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They provided the following:

Child abandonment is common in the area. In 2010, 9 children were found abandoned and in 2012, 4 children were found. Most of abandoned child are found early in the morning and early evening time. When an abandoned child is found it is referred to the police. The police respond to the scene, collect the child and refer the case to the town “Paralegal committee” under the kebele level to search for a pregnant woman who gave birth in the surrounding area. The report shows no one was found. There is no budget in the kebele to take care of the abandoned child so the police write to the woreda Women and Children’s Affairs office, who forward the case to the Zone office. The Zone refers the child to the orphanage.

Constable Tarekegn Hailmesikel (0910761886) one of the finders works in Chiro Woreda police (Gender Affairs Work Process Representative). She reported that she received a call from the Chiro police station at approx 3 pm to respond to a report of an abandoned child. She responded and found two abandoned children left in the mud and took them to the police station. She entered a statement into the log book and recorded that one child looks sick. She went to the Bifto orphanage to temporarily take care of the children. In the orphanage one of the children was given medicine. She met with the paralegal committee and posted a notice for those who have lost their children to report to the police but no one responded.

The team visited the home of one of the finders, Fatuma Yusuf, Chiro, Kebele 02, Got 58. She reported the bio mother was living in a vacant home next to her. One morning the mother said she was going to wash clothes and asked Fatuma to take care of the child and took her other child (daughter age 4) and never returned. In the late afternoon Yusuf went to the kebele to report the incident. The kebele told her to keep the child for a day and they will try to find the mother. After a day the child was given to the police.

We went to the Bifto orphanage and met Aynalem Mengistu (0911799996), the orphanage coordinator. She told us that Bifto started operation in Chiro 2011 and up now they received 50 abandoned children from 16 woredas and sent them to the Addis Ababa head office. Most of the abandonment cases come from Chiro and Gelemso woreda. At the orphanage the team saw two abandoned newborns, two nannies and six women receiving training on sewing. The orphanage is in the rented house and paid 3000 ETB for a month. Their monthly budget is 12000 ETB.