

RELEASED IN PART B6

6-18

**Sit Visit to the Adera Child and Family Support Association
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Summary: The Addis Ababa branch of the Adera Child and Family Support Association is a clean and well-run facility. Of concern, however, is that the association relies solely on Government of Ethiopia provided documentation and does not conduct any independent verifications or investigations of the status of the children they receive. The documentation of one of the two cases under investigation had conflicting information and, given the lack of an independent verification mechanism by the orphanage, ConOff recommends that this case be investigated further.

Background: The Adera Child and Family Support Association operates two facilities, one in Addis Ababa and the other in Debre Zeit. Their facility in Addis Ababa is well run, clean, and staffed with a director, secretary, and four child-care givers. The Addis Ababa branch has 27 beds, but is currently supporting only 6 children. In the absence of the director, the secretary was helpful and supportive of our visit. ConOff spoke to the Director over the phone. He explained that he was visiting their facility in Debre Zeit, but available to answer any questions that we had.

In addition to operating two orphanages, Adera also provides school fees and school materials to some 180 children in Addis Ababa and an additional 200 children in Debre Zeit. When asked, the Director clearly indicated that no children enrolled in the school program have ever been placed for adoption.

Over the phone, the director explained that for cases of relinquishment, their orphanage cannot accept a child until they receive a letter from the Regional Women's and Children's Affairs Bureau (WCAB). He indicated that the Regional WCAB reviews documents submitted by the Zonal WCAB, Police, and Kebele before approving a case.

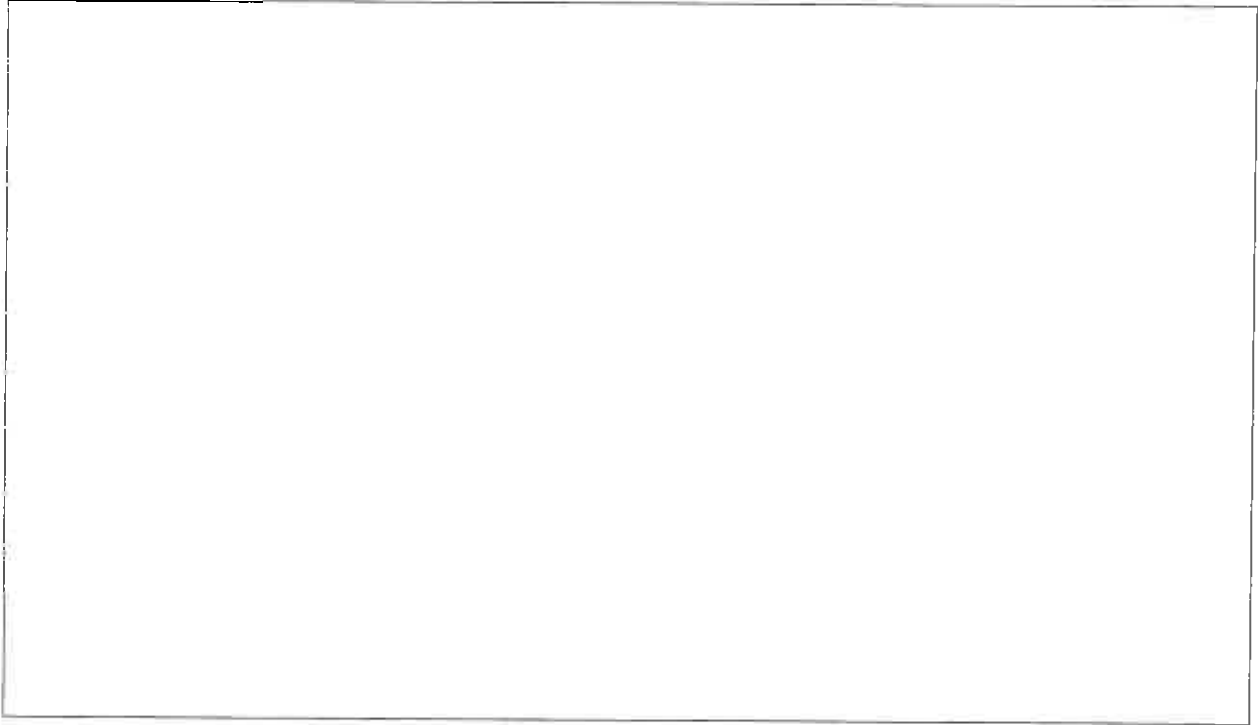
In the cases of abandonment, the orphanage can accept children with the approval of the Zonal WCAB only. In order for the Zone to approve, they require Kebele and Police documentation. The orphanage then works with the Regional WCAB to get the necessary letter of approval at the regional level. This process can take 1-2 months, while the child remains under Adera's care. The Director indicated that this is an Oromo Region specific policy, and that this guidance recently replaced an old policy where police could write directly to the orphanage. Abandoned children are kept in Adera's care for 5-6 months before being referred to an adoption provider.

The orphanage provides no additional review of cases outside of the receipt of Government-provided documentation and a medical check-up. The medical check-up consists of a visit to a local pediatrician and lab work conducted through ARSO. There is no standard list of pediatricians.

Documentation: It should be noted that records were easily available and the secretary was able to find case files in less than one minute. ConOff did not find any concern in a review of documentation at the orphanage, but records photocopied and reviewed in Oromiya at the Consular Section raise concern in the case of Meskerem Girma.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer

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B6