

## Negem Lela Ken



*Woman previously without income learning to weave at an NLK training centre*

Negem Lela Ken New HIV Positive Women's Support Organization (NLK) is an excellent example of how community-based organizations can grow and evolve and make a big difference with the right kind of support. NLK is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and has four branch offices located in Ambo and Sululta towns of Oromiya Regional National State, and ShewaRobit and Ataye towns of Amhara Regional National State. Here is the story of its evolution to date.

NLK is an indigenous, not for profit and nongovernmental association which was established in 2005 by 5 HIV positive women. At the time of its conception, it served as a meeting group for experience sharing and consolation.

The 5-member group did not realise that one day it would

become a large organization reaching thousands of women and children infected and affected by HIV&AIDS. Though NLK's primary target is those women living with HIV&AIDS and having very low economic capacity, it also attempts to improve the livelihood of the most marginalized and vulnerable women, who are susceptible to HIV&AIDS, through empowering them economically. The organisation now employs 19 staff and 2200 volunteers and has three training centres.

NLK's mission is "to contribute towards the fight against HIV&AIDS and the realization of the social, economic and health rights of HIV positive and vulnerable women". Between 2008 and March 2017, NLK programs reached:

- 36256 of the targeted HIV&AIDS affected and infected women, children, other vulnerable groups and members of the program community through HIV&AIDS awareness and skills building activities;
- 5000 low income and HIV Positive women with IGA (income generating activities)
- 1166 women living with HIV&AIDS with palliative care and peer support;
- 365 grandmothers and OVC (orphans and vulnerable children) households with food support and capital provision to expand existing household businesses;
- 340 OVC with educational and psychosocial support.

NLK has recently built its own building at Sululta Town. The purpose of the building is to create sustainable "safe spaces" for marginalized People Living with HIV, women, youths and children. The Building serves as one stop shopping for vocational and skill trainings, a community Library and resources to improve the economic and psychosocial wellbeing of the target groups.

This information and photos came from the NLK website: <http://www.nlk.org.et/>



*NLK volunteers, staff and graduates of a Parenting training program*