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Norad

About ActionAid

ActionAid is a global federation working in 45 countries to achieve social justice. In Ethiopia ActionAid has been operating since 1989 to ensure gender justice, good governance and poverty eradication.

ActionAid works to strengthen the capacity and agency of people living in poverty and exclusion, especially women, girls and young people to demand their rights, build their resilience and ensure redistribution of power. We work with communities, people's organizations, women's and young people social movements, and other allies to overcome the structural causes and consequences of poverty and injustice. We connect the work we do at community level with broader efforts and struggles for justice at every level to make the greatest contribution towards a just, equitable and sustainable world. Guided by human rights-based principles and approaches, we seek to shift and transform unequal power among people living in poverty, through empowerment, solidarity, campaigning and the generation of alternatives to ensure that every person can enjoy dignified life and freedom from all forms of oppression. We create platforms for collective action and solidarity by enabling people around the world to unite and contribute to social justice struggles. Around the world, we are rooted in the communities where we operate and responsibly uphold our primary accountability to the people we work with and all other stakeholders.

Theory of Change

Gender Justice, Good Governance and Poverty Eradication are achieved through purposeful individual and collective action to shift unequal and unjust power whether it is hidden, visible or invisible, from household level to local, national, and international levels. Empowerment of PLIP and exclusion is crucial. People's organization through their agencies is important to drive change that will transform power when led by Women, Girls and Young People and their allies committed to achieve justice, equity, and sustainability. ActionAid's theory of change is embedded and underpinned by the Human Right Based Approach that inculcates Power analysis.

VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES of AAE

Our Vision:- A just, equitable and sustainable Ethiopia, in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity and, freedom from poverty.

Our Mission:- To achieve Gender Justice, Good Governance and Poverty Eradication, by working with Women and Girls, people living in poverty and exclusion, their organizations and supporters

Our Values:-

Mutual Respect, requiring us to recognize the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity.

Equity and Justice, requiring us to ensure the realization of our vision for everyone, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, ethnicity, class, age, HIV status, disability, location, and religion.

Integrity, requiring us to be honest, transparent, and accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and our use of resources and open in our judgements and communications with others.

Solidarity with people living in poverty and exclusion will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty, injustice, and gender inequality.

Courage of Conviction, requiring us to be creative and progressive, assertive, and innovative without fear of failure - in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty, injustice, and gender inequality

Independence from any religious or party-political affiliation

Humility, recognizing that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice.

Excellence, we work with a sense of professionalism to maximize high quality standards and value for money. ActionAid Ethiopia is committed to apply feminist lens and values in our work, which will guide us in interpreting and advancing our mission.

AAE with financial support of (Norad) Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation has developed a three-year project lasting from Jan 2021- Dec 2023 in combatting child labor, human trafficking, and exploitation. It implemented the project in collaboration with four partners namely: Emmanuel Development Association (EDA), People, Health, and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHE-EC), Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations (CEHRO) and Union of Ethiopian Women and Children's Associations (UEWCA). And 3 sub-partners namely; Ethiopian Human Right Commission (EHRC), Ethiopian Labour Right Watch (ELWR), and Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO) The project location areas are at national level (Addis Ababa), Amhara Region (South Wollo Zone, Harbu and Kutaber woredas) and the then SNNPRS now Central Ethiopia region (Hosana town and Soro woreda). The overall goal of the project is to decrease the scale and prevalence of human trafficking and child labor, in Ethiopia. Promoting decent work is one key area of the project as attention to respect and protection for the right to decent work are some of the growing concerns of the labor force in different sectors. The Government of Ethiopia accepted the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and committed to implement the Decent Work Country Program for Ethiopia (2021-2025).

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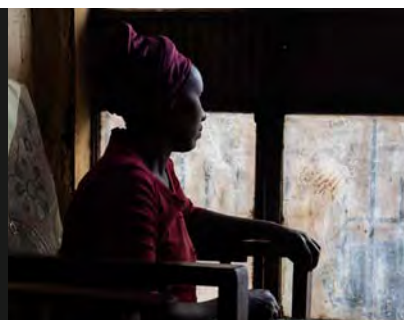
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"I would rather
starve and beg in
my country than to
go through that
journey again!"



Abebech's Story

From suicidal thoughts to hopes for the future

Abebech Handino, 38, lives in a small but well kept compound. Three hens and a rooster are seen roaming around in the yard. The house is full of potted vegetables which she grows for her household. She also has a small crop of corn growing in her backyard. One can hear her children playing and laughing inside the house. However, her compound was not always this well-kept, and her home was once filled with the joys of laughter.

Abebech has never completed school. She was forced to drop out of school in 6th grade, to care for her deceased father. After years of caring for her father, she was betrothed to her husband at the age of 17. She has eight children with her husband, five of them went to Addis Ababa looking for work. The remaining three live with her. Abebech struggled to provide for her children when she was going through a divorce. When her marriage of more than twenty years shook, she was forced to move to Addis Ababa, to find a job. She worked in construction as the head of a daily laborers crew for two years, leaving her younger children with their father. She planned to save some money and go back to Hossana to raise her children until her youngest daughter came to her from Hossana with unexpected news. Her daughter wants to go to the Middle East like her older sister, who moved to Saudi Arabia a couple of years before. Thus, she dropped out of school and ran away from her father to get a passport. She came to ask her mother for money she needed to migrate to the Middle East illegally. Abebech gave her daughter all her savings, and she headed out to Beirut.

Consequently, Abebech decided to keep working in Addis Ababa to save money. But soon after, she heard that one of her children had left the house and was living on the streets. So she returned to Hosanna. Though she brought her son back home, she didn't find her house in a proper state. The old house they lived in was a run-down lean-to where they had to stretch the canvas to substitute the walls and keep out hyenas.

For her daughter who left for Beirut, the situation was not to her liking. She worked long hours in an abusive environment, to be able to send money to her mother. During the COVID season, her employer died, and the man of the house ended up in an ICU. Consequently, their relatives sent her back to Ethiopia. When she came back, she had a few close calls with the virus as well and struggled with depression. Thus, she stayed with her sister in Addis Ababa.

Abebech's eldest daughter also returned from Saudi Arabia with a broken tooth, as she endured working in a physically abusive house. She came back after three years, during a period of tensions in Ethiopia. On her return, she learned that the money she tried to send to her mother, like her sister's, never came through. Due to the hardships Abebech was facing as a single mother, she had also considered fleeing abroad like her daughters. "I wanted to leave the country and seek employment abroad. The situation here was so demoralizing. I tried many things to make something of my life but couldn't. It's so hard, especially when you have children who only know how to ask, and when you can't provide for your children that is the most heartbreaking thing for a parent to face," she says choking back her tears. , "I'm just brushing the surface of my story, it was hard. I spent my youth suffering; I don't even want to remember all that happened. I don't want to speak of it. I really don't. I had gotten to the point when I attempted suicide but that's all in the past. I thank God because at least I have something now," she adds.



Abebech is one of the right holders of Action Aid's Combating Modern Slavery project, which is implemented to prevent, identify, and address modern slavery, and to protect and monitor vulnerable groups and victims of modern slavery. The project aims to reach returnee migrants and vulnerable women with life skills and business training as well as seed money support to help them start their own businesses. Abebech was recruited for this project to be a part of the training. She also received seed money support of 8000 Birr to help her start a business.

According to Yonas Ashagari, Combating Modern Slavery project focal person, from Action Aid's local partner Emmanuel Development Association, the project has benefited 684 people who are affected by illegal trafficking; people who are at risk of modern slavery and living in poverty. The right holders have received life skill and business training and received seed money support to help them start a business.

"I was so grateful to receive the training. I learned so much and I still have my notes. More than the seed money I got, I am so thankful for the knowledge I gained, Knowledge about starting a business, growing a business, direction, saving, and spending... all these things helped me so much in what I do. I'm just so thankful," she says.

Abebech bought Teff and rice with the seed money she received to start an injera selling business. She also bought chickens and fattened them before selling them at 100% profit. She then bought four more chickens to keep the business going. “When teff became expensive, I decided to switch over to wholesale grain, because I was also trained about studying the market and diversifying my business. I am turning a profit, I didn’t waste a single cent of the money I received. I am now able to pay for my son’s school fees, we have food to eat, I have bought furniture for my house and I still have savings,” she says.

Abebech’s plans for the next year are to expand into poultry. She had a chicken coop built for her chickens but was unable to find materials for the finishing. In the far future, she plans to settle into the spice trade as she is growing older and cannot keep up with the work she has now. Abebech is also very active in the various women’s unions she is involved in her community. Merkiya Jmal, a Women and Social Affairs worker in the Kebelle of Dichi Amba kebele says, “She has done very commendable work, she not only wants to improve herself but encourages change in the community as well. She is very dedicated and a hard worker. She has been able to bring several women together and is teaching them the things that she has learned. I am very proud of her.”

Abebech adds on her contribution to the women’s group she leads in her community, “I encourage them to work with what they have; some of them sell coffee, some have bought sheep, some make Injera and more. I tell them to keep saving. We have a common savings account where we all save together. We bought bonds from the government. We have weekly meetings where we discuss communal issues and what we can do to help. We are even planning on opening a nursery, it will serve the poorest of mothers and help take care of their children. We believe we can make a difference if we can teach the children and provide at least one meal a day.”





Askalech's story

The plight of domestic migrant workers

Many Ethiopians have lost their lives trying to make the treacherous journey to the Middle East with hopes of a better future. A combination of factors, including poverty, unemployment, and drought have driven hundreds of thousands of people to illegal migration.

Askalech is one of the many women who made the journey to the Middle East at a young age. She was raised in a family of 8 children, in the rural town of Soro, in the SNNP region of Ethiopia. She was forced to drop out of school in 4th grade because her family could not afford to send her to school. Her family were farmers, who had a small plot of land but it was not enough to sustain them. Thus, Askalech stayed home to handle household chores and assist on the farm. She then started working on coffee roasting and selling coffee beans. She was only 11 years old when she started working to help her family.

When Askalech was 17 years old, her father fell ill, and as the oldest daughter the burden of supporting the family fell on her. With the money she would make from selling coffee beans, she took care of her younger siblings. But the little money she made was not enough to sustain the family. Thus, her parents decided to send her to the Middle East for work. They learned about what is needed to make the illegal journey possible from a neighbor who recently sent their daughter to the Middle East. The neighbors connected her to a broker who promised to facilitate her migration process. Askalech was hesitant to follow up on the process, like girls her age, she pleaded with her parents to let her stay to continue her education. But her family was insistent.

Askalech finished the process for her passport in 2017 and left for Beirut when she was 18 years old. The trip in its entirety cost her family about 60,000 birr (1092 USD). Her family, believing she would change their lives, sold their land to pay the broker.

Askalech left her home with the broker, carrying a small bag. He took her to join other young women and men like her ready to make the treacherous journey; packed in cars, walking through the desert and the final leg would be made over the sea. "During the journey only 19 of the 29 of us made it out, the brokers would leave anyone who wasn't strong enough to continue," she recalls. The journey took them 3 months to reach their destination, Beirut.

According to Bereket Tadesse, Head of Women and Children Affairs at Hossana Town Administration Bureau, over 58 thousand people migrated through illegal means in the past 14 years in Hadiya zone, SNNPR, Ethiopia. She adds the main cause of illegal migration is unemployment. "The government allocated budget for job creation is very limited compared to the need. There are no industrial parks or factories in the zone, that would have created job opportunities for the youth. Even college graduates stay unemployed for 2-3 years. As a result, many believe that it is better to migrate illegally even at the risk of losing their lives."

On arrival, Askalech and the team met with a middleman who received them and took them to a warehouse until he could find work for all of them. They were kept there for two weeks surviving on bread and water. Askalech was later collected by her employers, who explained that she would work as a domestic worker and be paid monthly.



Askalech had to wake up every day at 6 AM and work without rest until 1 AM; 19 hours in total. "My employers were cruel people who would constantly berate me and make me redo work I had already done," she says. Though she had signed a contract for 3 years to be paid 150 \$ monthly, her payment came irregularly whenever her employers chose to pay her. Due to the harsh conditions, Askalech couldn't bear the thought of working for three full years. She decided to leave after one year. But since she hadn't completed her contract, her employers refused to pay her in full. She returned home with no money. "I regret that I wasted my time and wasted my parent's money by returning home with nothing," she adds. Despite returning with no money, Askalech's family welcomed her happily. "My employers didn't allow me to call my family the whole year. My family was worried that I was dead in the sea, so my return home brings joy to my family and relatives, even if I was empty-handed," she adds.

After her return, Askalech got married and is now a mother of two children. "Adjusting back home hasn't been easy. I tried to get back on my feet by starting a grain-selling business with money I borrowed from people. However, since I was working on debt so I was not able to make any profits," she says.

Askalech's story reflects the reality of many migrant domestic workers in Ethiopia. Action Aid's Combatting Modern Slavery project is implemented to prevent, identify and address modern slavery,

and to protect and monitor vulnerable groups and victims of modern slavery like Askalech.

The project aims to reach returnee women with life skills and business training as well as seed money support to help them start their own businesses. Askalech was recruited for this project to be a part of the training. She also received seed money support of 8000 Birr to help her start a business.

“ I was so happy, I immediately went and bought a calf with the money,” she says. Askalech is currently fattening her calf and expects to buy two calves with the profit she will get from selling this one when it’s ready. She is also still selling grain on the side and wants to increase the scale of that as well. When asked about her plans for the future she states that, “ I want to increase my business and aspire to educate and raise my children properly. I urge anyone, who is considering the same path I had taken to reconsider by sharing my experience, ” she says.





Ayalech's story

The dilemma of a single mother of seven children

When Ayalech's husband left her for another woman, the burden of raising their 7 children fell on her. She did not make enough money to feed her children by selling grain and vegetables. Thus she contemplated moving to the Middle East, leaving her children with her relatives.

Ayalech Achamo is a resident of Gidachama Kebelle, Gidachama Kebelle is located four hours drive from Hosanna in the SNNP region of Ethiopia. As a single mother, she tried to make ends meet by borrowing money and grain from silo owners. She tried to live off the profit by selling the grain but it was almost impossible. The money she made was owed and she was always returning most of what she made to lenders.

Ayalech lives in the part of the country where many young women and men leave for the Middle East and South Africa, through illegal traffickers. Thus, she had no difficulty connecting with brokers. After getting all the information she needed from the brokers, she started the process to get her passport. However, she later reconsidered when she learned of the horrors surrounding illegal migration.

Amidst her confusion due to a lack of options, Ayalech learned about the support provided by Action Aid and its local partner Emmanuel Development Association (EDA) to returnee migrants and vulnerable women at risk of irregular migration.

According to Daniel Boloche, the administrator of Gidachama Kebelle, Ayalech met most of the criteria used to select the beneficiaries as she was a single mother of seven, living in very poor conditions.

She received training in life skills and business as well as received seed money support. She spent a certain amount to purchase a goat. Another portion was reinvested into her vegetable trade, while the rest was spent on items for her home, such as shoes and clothes for her children.

When asked about what difference there was in her life following this training she answered that she was able to feed her family and cloth them better. She adds, "It is nice to have profit from what I sold that I didn't have to return to someone else but instead could reinvest into my business." She talks about how some of her older children had given up on school because their clothes were tattered, they had no shoes and they didn't have exercise books. Her daughter had even decided to leave the country and go looking for work. "But now I can provide for my children what they need, and they go to school dressed properly." She adds that her eldest son is now enrolled in a polytechnic college and she desires to see him complete his education and find work. "My dream is for all my children to be educated and graduate to become civil servants," she says.

When talking about how she planned to expand her business, she expressed her desire to purchase a donkey. "When I sell grain, I carry it on my back. So whatever amount I carry is not enough to turn a decent profit, however, if I could get a donkey to carry that weight I can move a lot of grain." She wishes that the seed money she received could be increased so she can expand her business.



Edir,

**in a fight
against
human
trafficking**

Many people in Hossana, Southern Ethiopia, would sell their land, and their house or borrow money to send their family members on a perilous journey to South Africa, through illegal traffickers. Members of the society acknowledge that many of those who left never reached their destination. They fall victim to traffickers and smugglers, who often abandon them in the desert without food and water. Some are thrown overboard while crossing the sea. Some die along the way due to starvation and dehydration. The dead bodies that made it back to their homeland, receive a hero's welcome in Hossana. Lavished in expensive coffins, hundreds of thousands of birr are spent on week-long funeral ceremonies.

"All that money could have been used to make a good living in their hometown, rather than on illegal traffickers and funeral festivities," wonders Mesfin Gizaw, an elderly man brimming with youthful vigor. Mesfin Gizaw is the current head of Arada Edir. An Edir is an integral part of Ethiopian communal life. It is a gathering where people make donations and participate in meetings. In the event of someone's passing the group helps the bereaved arrange the funeral and the gatherings for mourning. Mesfin's, Edir Arada is one of the oldest continuing societies of its kind. It claims to hail from the time of the second Italian invasion of Ethiopia; nearly 90 years.

While discussing the 'current epidemic of migration' in Hossana, Mesfin explains that a major issue in illegal migration is the significant

expenses incurred to send people abroad. Poverty-ridden families sell their land and take on enormous debt to send their children mainly to South Africa, through Moyale, at the border with Kenya. There are countless cases where families take these risks and the son or daughter being sent dies on the way. As a result, the families not only lose their children but also any assurance of recovering the money they spent. “They see one or two families in the area whose children managed to make a life for themselves and are sending back money, spurred by this they go into debt to send their children as well.”

The community lacks the awareness of impacts of illegal trafficking. According to Tesfaye Terkaso, Head of Labor and Social Affairs in Hossana, there is a saying in the community, “It is better to leave barefoot and return in a casket than to never go.”

Mesfin also describes the needlessly wasteful funeral rites that are prevalent in the area. When a family member dies, the family spends alarming amounts of money on caskets, elaborate tombs, and lavish feasts during the mourning. They slaughter oxen, buy beer, and push themselves into debt for these short-lived moments. He also elaborates on the competitive aspect, where families aim to outdo their neighbors instead of considering what they can afford. Thus, a lot of families have been turned out on the streets and become homeless. This often happens when a family loses the breadwinner or the head of the family and their family spends the children’s inheritance or borrows against their land to pay for the funeral.



He recounts how a friend of his lost his father and how the family spent around 700,000 birr on the funeral. “This is a detrimental aspect of our culture, and we, as Edir, are working to combat it. I received the training from Action Aid alongside other community and religious leaders. We were taught about the negative impact of illegal migration and extravagant funerals. In addition to that we were tasked with educating the various communities we lead.” Following the training, they have formed 21 collectives, each consisting of 20 different Edirs. They have also collaborated with religious leaders from various dominations, to tirelessly teach the community the dangers of illegal migration. “We teach the community in various gatherings, not only on dangers of sending their children through illegal means but also of the needless competition with their neighbors of spending money either for the trip or for funerals that could be used to guarantee their children’s future,” says Mesfin.

According to Tesfaye “the main reason behind illegal trafficking is poverty, unemployment and lack of awareness of the community on modern slavery.” Yonas Ashagari, the Combating Modern Slavery project focal person, from Action Aid’s local partner Emmanuel Development Association, also agrees that the main cause of illegal migration is poverty. He says, “The main reason behind illegal migration is poverty. Yet, people spend a lot of money on funerals due to traditions and customs. The cost of funerals only plunges the community into serious and long-term debt. We can change that through a series of awareness creation activities as well as economic empowerment of those affected by modern slavery.

More than 164 Edirr representatives and religious leaders are trained on the effects of illegal migration and child labor by Action Aid and its implementing partner Emmanuel Development Association (EDA). Following the training, The leaders succeeded in raising awareness within the community about illegal trafficking through their collaborative efforts; they are also able to reduce the number of illegal migrants.” He adds that, “ returnees also share their experience in public gatherings and teach the community to cut money spent on funerals.”

“We haven’t stopped at teaching people, we have been taking measures to enforce our message. Every Edir that is planning a funeral now instructs the family to provide only Nifro (boiled maize and chickpeas) and coffee; as is traditionally done. In addition, we warn people from sending their children abroad through illegal means. Anyone who insists on extravagance or sending their children into ‘slavery’ is warned, and if they refuse to heed reason, they are expelled from the Edir. We have to use firm measures like this to show people we are serious,” he adds.

When asked about people’s responses he explained that people were surprisingly receptive to this. A lot of families are relieved that they don’t have to take on these unnecessary expenses anymore. He says that this is still very much a problem in their city and the surrounding area but he remains optimistic that they can see this aspect of their culture gone for good.

Action Aid in partnership with Emmanuel Development Association (EDA) is able to reach communities by training community and religious leaders like Mesfin to combat modern slavery and its impacts.





Birhanu's Story

**“A
communi-
ty where
everyone
is a
broker”**

Human trafficking has been a global concern for many nations, including Ethiopia. Ethiopia has recently been identified as a country with an increasing human trafficking problem. The country is also exposed to both internal and external trafficking. However, it is difficult to find accurate rates of the number of trafficking victims. Many are trafficked through a network of brokers that stretch from small rural towns in Ethiopia to the Middle East, South Africa, and even Europe.

Birhanu Desta, first started trafficking children to the nearest town, with good intentions, not realizing the consequences of his actions. Birhanu was born and raised in Soro, a town located 44 km from Hossana, SNNP region, Ethiopia. Alaba zone, specifically Hossana and Soro town, is known for having one of the highest risks of illegal trafficking.

Birhanu intended to find a job for his younger sister so that she could assist in providing for the family. “I first took my sister to Hossana when she was only 11 years old so that she could work and support the family. When people in my hometown heard about this, they asked me if I could also take their children to Hossana and find them work,” he explains how he started off working as a broker.

Birhanu took his sister to Hossana and got her a job as a domestic worker for a 700 birr monthly salary. Her employers gave Birhanu 200 birr for bringing his sister to them and asked if he could also bring another child whom they could hire as a shepherd. Birhanu, took another child from his neighborhood, with the consent of the parents who hoped that the child would be able to work and support them. Birhanu got paid 150 birr for bringing in the shepherd boy. Birhanu worked as a broker until he met his wife. Birhanu explains how everyone in Hossana and neighboring towns is entangled in an informal trafficking system. People rarely identify anyone as a broker, for many took the role. Birhanu explains that “if a family sends their child to either Hossana, Addis Ababa or even South Africa; the family becomes aware of the system and starts to help others to be trafficked. If someone who has been illegally migrated abroad, returns home for a holiday, the community would ask him/her to take their children too. In other words, Hossana is a community where everyone is a broker.”

Tesfaye Dijimo, Head of Labor and Social Affairs in Soro woreda, also agrees with Birhanu. He adds, “We can’t identify and hold accountable the brokers in the Hadiya zone. They have a chain of networks from here, to Addis Ababa and even to South Africa. It is families, and members of the community that act as brokers, and take their children out of town. This made it difficult even to control trafficking on public transportation.”

Birhanu’s work as a broker started and continued as such until he met his wife. His wife, a staunch believer, told him that his work was not accepted in Christian beliefs. The church ministers also urged him to find another job. “Once I started going to church, I realized my actions were wrong, that it is the same as selling children. Due to unemployment, I got myself into a business of selling young children,” he adds.





Birhanu currently goes to a church where the ministers are part of a training on human trafficking and child labor given by Action Aid, Ethiopia. The training includes religious leaders from various denominations, community leaders, and high-risk community members. After taking part in the training, the religious leaders went back to their church and mosque, to teach what they had learned. Preventing illegal trafficking is challenging without community involvement. Thus, Action Aid Ethiopia can achieve awareness creation, and steps towards behavior change in the community, with the participation of the community to prevent illegal trafficking.

According to Yonas Ashagari, the Combating Modern Slavery project focal person, from Action Aid's local partner Emmanuel Development Association, the Combating Modern Slavery project strives to achieve sustainability by building the capacity of community structures to combat modern slavery at the community level. Thus, training was conducted for government officials, business sector, community & religious leaders. He adds, "The main cause of illegal migration is poverty and unemployment. The project has worked on economic empowerment of vulnerable groups and awareness creation of the community to tackle modern slavery."



Hanna's Story

Hope for the Hopeless

Hanna sits in her small yard with her twins, while her oldest daughter runs out on an errand. The oldest though obviously of mixed descent is the spitting image of her mother. When told, that her daughter is just as beautiful as she is, she lowers her head and says, "That beauty is no longer here, it's gone." A heartbreaking statement from the elderly talks less of a young woman. No one would guess the suffering Hanna endured in her life at such a young age.

Hanna Alemu, 30, was born in Burayu in an area called Gefersa, Oromia region, Ethiopia. She was raised in a poor family with an older brother and five younger siblings. She was not educated as her family could not afford to send her to school. Instead, she and her siblings collect and sell wood to support the family.

At the age of 12, her family sent her to live with a family who would pay them for the domestic work she did. Envyng children her age that go to school, Hanna worked as a domestic worker for three years for a wage of 200 birr. However, her salary goes into her father's pocket. Her father was later convinced that the family would make it out of poverty through her if she moved and worked abroad. At the age of 15, Hanna's father mortgaged their house to borrow money for her journey to Sudan. After the first 6 months of work, her salary was sent back to the middleman who sent her abroad and that was how their house was released.

"While I was there I would clean the house, it was a big house. I spent each day going upstairs and down cleaning. I also took care of their children as well. The only time I had to myself was the 2 - 3 hours I got to sleep," she says.

During a year and six months of working in Sudan, her employer raped her repeatedly by drugging her. Recalling the first time she was raped, she says "It was painful and I was sick for days."

Towards the end of her contract, she found out that she had conceived. "I was so young, I had no idea that I could get pregnant from what he did," she says in a small voice. Her co-worker confessed to her that she had helped their employer drug her because he would kill her if she refused. "She would slip me pills in my drink, in my food while we ate. Later, she told me what she did and said, 'Now that you're pregnant, the lady of the house will kill you, so you have to flee.'"

"The first day I ran out of the house, I slept in a dumpster. I was caught by the police on the second day. I had no money and no identification. I stayed in prison for 3 months. I was 7 months pregnant when I left prison," she says.

When Hanna was released from prison, she called her family for help, but all they wanted her to do was to abort the child and find another job to keep supporting her siblings. She was able to return to Ethiopia when the government decreed the return of fleeing migrants. "I didn't want to go back home because my family thought I had done this of my own will," she says sadly. "Seeing my own story I wondered about my sisters who have to travel the long route. I experienced abuse from just one person, but I've heard about women who are subjected to assaults by as many as 4-5 individuals. They starve on the road and go through so many hardships. Of the many who leave it's only a few who can make it back home. Let this suffering end with me," she says.

When Hanna came back to Ethiopia, her older brother came to visit her. "He asked me to come back home with him but I refused. I told him I couldn't go home the way I was. He told me that I could either kill myself or abort the child and continue living, that these were my only options. I told him I wouldn't die." Her brother was furious she didn't abort the child. Feeling abandoned and



confused, Hanna attempted various methods, including medication, to terminate her pregnancy, but none were successful. Hanna then decided to go to Hosanna only because she had heard that people in Hosanna were good people and that they would take care of her. But when she reached the town, it was not as developed as she assumed it to be, thus she went further to a place called Homecho, 38 kilometers outside Hosanna town. "It was nighttime when I arrived there so I went to a church in the area and sat outside the gate. The ministers took me in. They helped me until I gave birth and took care of me while I recovered. They housed me in the church compound, clothed me, and fed me. Meanwhile, all I wanted to do was give birth and find somewhere to leave my child but they convinced me not to abandon her. They preached the Gospel to me and told me I could raise my child," she says.

She stayed at the church until her daughter was a year old then decided to move to town looking for a job. She started baking injera at a bar until her daughter turned three and she could go to kindergarten. The owner of the bar convinced her that she should work as a waitress. "The lady of the bar told me that I was beautiful and shouldn't ruin my good looks with smoke and soot in the back. I felt that I owed it to them because of how much they had taken care of us. I worked as a waitress for a few years. I wish I had never left the kitchen," she says.

"After my daughter got to the third year of kindergarten, I fell ill and I went to the hospital, they told me that I was HIV positive," she says. However, she refused to take the medication, because of rumors she heard. "I didn't want to take medicine because I was not educated and I'd heard people say the medicine would kill faster. I knew that if I died, no one would take care of my daughter and she would be out in the streets and face the same problems I faced, so I refused to take medicine until she got to the fifth grade."

She then left the bar to work as a manual laborer. However, "the money I made was never enough to make ends meet. I resorted to selling my body at night." She later got married with hopes of having siblings for her daughter, "all her life my daughter has had no one but me. If I die, who will take care of her?" she says. Her husband was also HIV positive. As she wished, she gave birth to twins, a girl, and a boy. She mentioned how grateful she is that her children are HIV-negative.





However, Hanna and her daughter often encountered discrimination from the community due to her daughter's mixed appearance. Even her family would call her names. "My daughter would always ask me who her father is because she also has my father's surname. 'Why is my father's name the same as yours?' she would ask." My daughter is my sister, my friend, my everything. I realized what a precious gift she was as she continued to grow. I didn't want to lose that," she adds.

As her small family starts to take shape, Hanna's husband leaves them for another woman. "For a year after my husband left, I would go to the Kebele and ask them to help me or take the children off my hands because I couldn't raise them. The women that work in the Kebele would give me a few things from what they had, they'd buy clothes for my children. Hanna was not able to work to support her family because after she got sick she no longer had the strength to continue manual labor.

Kibnesh Sodiso, Head of Women and Children Affairs in Bobicho Kebele witnessed a great change in Hanna's life after she took part in the training. "Change in people's lives comes in the mindset first, then it is revealed in people's lives. I have seen a great change in Hanna. Now, Hanna believes she can change her life. I am grateful that Action Aid has developed this project to reach women like Hanna," Kibnesh says.

When the opportunity from Action Aid came for returnee migrants, the kebele advised her to take part in the training. She received training in life skills and business. She also received seed money support to help her start a business. She bought teff, an oven and started an injera selling business. Later she evaluated her income and expenses and considered switching to selling tea and coffee. On the side, she also washed clothes and made injera. Through the profit she makes, she can now pay her rent and provide for her children. "It doesn't matter how small you start, you can get anywhere if you try," she says.

According to Kibnesh Sodiso, 65 women like Hanna, have benefited from Action Aid support in the kebele. "Many women are helped out of the depths of poverty through Action Aid support." The

women have received life skill and business training and received seed money support of 8000 birr. According to Kibnesh, “the work done by Action Aid at kebele level would bring about impact on zonal, city and country level.”

Hanna adds, “I am indebted to Action Aid. This opportunity came at the right time for me, when I was down and had been reduced to begging. When I heard about the seed money I didn’t believe it to be true, until the money was in my hands, because I’d never seen this much money before. I’m so thankful because they gave me hope when I had lost all hope. Now I have hope, I want to teach people that they can do anything in life. I want to teach people about HIV because I know so much more about it now.”

“When I was in commercial sex work I never thought about the consequences of what I was doing. All I cared about was raising my daughter. I never thought about how many people were affected because of me. Only when I took part in Action Aid training, I thought of how many women and children are carriers of the virus because their husbands and fathers came to lie with me,” she said with regret.

“I want to advise my sisters in this country not to go abroad for work but instead finish their education and try to make something of themselves.” When asked about her plans for the future a hopeful look enters her eyes. “My plan for the future is to raise my children properly, I want them to be educated and not go through the same things that I did. I want my children to not only succeed but to help people as well. I also want to build my own house one day.” Despite the numerous hardships she faced, Hanna not only remains strong but also serves as a beacon of strength for anyone who sees her.

(The name of the protagonist is changed due to privacy reasons)





Hirut's Story

From homelessness to making a living

Nestled on the outskirts of a bustling market, one of the major ones in Hosanna town, SNNP region, Ethiopia, is Hirut's tea shed. It's a small but quiet place where people gather for tea, coffee, and a quick breakfast, surrounded by dozens of manual laborers. Amid her work, she was able to sit down and tell her story.

"I was born and raised in Wonji, my mother still lives there but my father passed away a few years back. I had to drop out of school in the fifth grade due to health reasons. I underwent surgery for intussusception, a condition where a portion of the intestine folds in on itself when I was around 15." Hirut Girma was around 15 when she had the surgery.

Hirut got married and was widowed at a young age. Her husband passed away from cancer, leaving her to take care of their 11-year-old daughter and her newborn son. She then moved back to her parents' house in Wonji. Her father used to work in the sugar factory, thus earning a decent income. But a few years after living with her family, her father passed away due to a sudden illness. She can no longer be a burden on her mother. "I had to go out and start looking for work," she says. She left her daughter with her mother and took her son with her when she left for Hosanna, her parents' birth town.

She spent two weeks at a broker's house looking for work but he could not find any work. She was not allowed to stay any longer at

the broker's house. Eventually, having nowhere to go with no money, she started to live on the street outside of a church. Living on the streets as a young woman with an infant, she encountered numerous challenges. There were incidents where drunkards would heckle her, and once some hoodlums physically assaulted her, and would have done worse if some security guards hadn't come to her rescue. She pulls up her sleeve to show a scar. "One of them swung a stick at me, and I raised my hands to shield my son, resulting in him hitting my forearm," she explains.

"I had my child with me wherever I went and I would go and nag the ladies at the Kebele, asking them for help. During that time I used to sleep at the gate of Holy Savior Church in Hosanna. It had been a year of living on the streets when the opportunity from Action Aid came," she says.

Bereket Tadesse, Head of Women and Children Affairs, Hossana Town Administration Bureau, states that Hirut used to regularly come to her office with torn and tattered scruffy clothes, and her baby on her back, begging for help. Tigist Firdu, Women and Children Affairs coordinator of the kebele, also recalls one of the days Hirut came to the kebele sobbing, asking for help. "We didn't have much to offer her back then. We counseled her and gave her some cash for food. She used to regularly come to the kebele asking us to find her a job. But one day we had something for her, as we were recruiting people for Action Aid's support," she says.

The women from the kebele were quick to bring Hirut in for support, as they were aware of her situation. She took part in the awareness creation sessions organized for vulnerable women and children at risk of trafficking. The training covered the risk of human trafficking and how women can prevent themselves from any forms of abuse and exploitation. It also includes Life skills (decision-making and problem-solving), how to resist illegal recruitment for trafficking, and legal instruments that they can cite to defend themselves from any illegal acts.





“Receiving the training and seed money support made me ecstatic as it marked the end of my days of begging and the beginning of earning a living,” she says. When asked about the training she received Hirut explains that she learned about saving and how to turn a profit. “I’ve been saving with my women’s group and I have been saving by myself as well, she says.

Bereket says that she is delighted to see how the project changed Hirut’s life. “I learned from the project that we can impact people’s lives by showing them directions. I used to think I helped Hirut because I gave her small cash for bread. But I have learned from Action Aid that we can empower women like Hirut by showing them directions on how to earn their own income and change their situations.”

Hirut currently resides in a squatter settlement, on the edge of town because she can’t afford rent in the city. Tigist Firdu, Coordinator of Women and Children Affairs of the kebele, explains, “The settlement is free; she doesn’t have to pay for housing, but it comes at a different kind of cost. She is constantly exposed to harm and abuse and she lives on the outskirts.” She wishes she could move closer to the city where the neighborhoods are much safer. Hirut hopes to make enough profit from her tea business so that she can afford the rent to move to a safer neighborhood.

When asked about her plans for the future, Hirut says, “I want to rent a place that’s bigger and more convenient to run my business. I now have business skills and I can cook, so I want to be able to open a proper cafeteria instead of working in this shed,” she says. She adds, “I wish for my son to be educated. I’ve been through a lot for his sake. I want him to have a good life.”

As she waves the flies away from her face while pouring coffee for a customer, some of the scars she has accumulated on her journey to build a life for herself and her son are evident.



Neima's Story

A returnee migrant aspiration to improve her life

Ten-year-old Neima is awakened at six in the morning by her employers to perform household chores and take care of their young children. Naima was born into a poor family in Hachamo, Silte area, SNNP region, Ethiopia. When her parents struggled to raise her and her siblings, they sent Nehima to Addis Ababa, where she worked as a nanny. Though a child herself, she was made to take care of an infant and toddler. She stayed in Addis Ababa for three years. She tried to continue her education through night school but she was often too tired to follow up her education after working throughout the day. As a result, she was forced to drop out of school in the 5th grade. She spent the next 3 years with this family and went back home for the following two years. The family she worked for, thinking they had done her a favor, helped her to be illegally trafficked to Dubai. They helped her get fake documents that stated she was of age to get a passport, though she was only 15.

According to Bereket Tadesse, Head of Women and Children Affairs, Hossana Town Administration Bureau, Getting fake identity cards, stating different ages from the actual ones, was a common practice to obtain a passport. She adds, "However the town administration has now worked with the Kebele to identify and tackle this problem. The Kebele even questions anyone coming to get an identity card in order to identify those that are at risk of illegal migration."

Nehima worked in Dubai for 2 years as a sanitation worker before transferring to kitchen work where she worked for over 3 years. The kitchen hours were very long, sometimes she would be working for as many as 16 hours a day. All that standing eventually became a strain on her feet and she needed to get an operation for varicose veins. But she refused to get the operation in a foreign land and decided to return to Ethiopia. She put all her savings into her medical treatment and set to start life anew in Ethiopia.

For two years since she left Dubai, she struggled to find a job. During this season, a relative introduced her to her now husband telling her that he was a good man and hardworking. However he happens to be verbally and physically abusive. "he has anger issues, and he beats me. He doesn't work, all he does is sit and chew khat. All the burden of managing the house is on me. At least I have my son, I am grateful for him," she says timidly, with fear of the man sitting outside the house a few feet away. Her son, however, who is also outside does not seem to share her timidity, nagging his father who is sprawled on a carpet chewing Chat.

After Nehima came to Hossana, she tried to find work and even started her own. She tried selling vegetables and even opened a tea shop. Nothing worked. "No matter what I tried, things weren't improving. I couldn't get anything off the ground, I had given up. One gloomy day, my husband had beaten me and broken a jug, throwing it at me," she said. "I have had enough;" before too long she was contemplating fleeing or suicide. She runs out of her house to the nearest river. She stood by the river thinking of jumping in and ending all her misery. A bystander came to her rescue and convinced her to seek help.

The following day Nehima went to the Kebele seeking advice. The women at the kebele consulted her and informed her about the Action Aid project working in the area, for vulnerable women and children affected by child labor and illegal trafficking. She also took part in training on life skills and business. She also received seed money support to help her start her own business. Realizing the marriage problem she is in, representatives from the Kebele administration regularly came to her house to counsel the couple. Nehima testifies that her husband has improved since then.



According to Bereket, “the selection of project beneficiaries covered returnee migrants, potential migrants as well as single women who are in deep poverty. The beneficiaries received life skill and entrepreneurship training; economic empowerment support and access to justice for survivors of modern slavery.” She adds that, “it had been difficult for the government to cover the vast problem of unemployment in the town, which led to illegal trafficking. Thus, Action Aid’s support in partnership with Emmanuel Development Association helped to cover this gap by economically empowering this vulnerable group of the society.”

“With the seed money support I received from Action Aid, I started a coffee and tea business. She also sells bread, which she brings in from a bakery. I make sure to save according to my training, so I can put that money back into my business,” she adds.

Despite all her hard work, her business hasn’t been able to take off because the area she operates in is on the far edge of town, where there isn’t a significant market for coffee and tea. But she refuses to quit, she keeps changing her product to match the needs of the area. When coffee wouldn’t sell she started selling Samosas, when those wouldn’t move she switched over to bread.

“If I could work in a better market, I could improve my business so much more. I will work towards providing a better future for my son. We could change our lives, Alhamdulillah”

From potential migrant to role model in small business

Nigatwa Kassa, a 25-year-old, was born and raised with her two older sisters in Hossana, SNNP region, Ethiopia. Nigatwa always had a passion for art, though her living conditions made it difficult for her to pursue her dreams. In her community, pursuing art is considered a luxury. However, her mother believed in her. After Nigatwa completed 10th grade, her mother gave her small savings so that she could go to Addis Ababa to learn Theatre and Filmmaking. Nigatwa was only 16 years old when she moved to Addis Ababa. "I was young, so my mother supported me with my bills. She would help cover my rent but I would have to buy my groceries," she says. Nigatwa has to work to support herself. She recounts the different positions she was employed in, "I worked as a security guard, as a sanitation worker, as a waitress, and many more."

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Nigatwa didn't want to return to her hometown, fearing she would become the subject of rumors for attending college yet remaining unemployed. However, she decided to move back to Hossana, when an opportunity knocked on her door to return to be part of a documentary production team. Unfortunately, the production project failed at an early stage. Though the task left her bankrupt, she met her husband during the project. They have now been married and have a 3-year-old son.

Nigatwa, her husband, and their son lived with her mother because they struggled to make a living as artists. She resented being a burden on her elderly mother and considered moving to the Middle East to make a living. Before making any decisions about moving, she sought advice from the kebele. During this time she was introduced to the Action Aid program, working in her community to tackle modern slavery. She took part in life skills and business training, which turned her life around for good. "It was invaluable to me, I learned a lot about starting a business, and managing my income as well as my expenses. Plus I learned the importance of saving and living off my profits, in addition, I learned how to reinvest into my business," she says.

The first thing Nigatwa ventured into was poultry. She bought 100 chickens with the seed money support she got. She also bought their feed and built their coop with the money. "It was moving along quite well and I was making a lot of profit, especially during holidays," she adds. Nigatwa was featured on local television as a role model in setting up a small business.

When the rainy season came, Nigatwa's chickens started to become ill. She didn't give up easily; part of her life skill training covered how to manage such challenges. "I decided to sell the majority of my chickens and wait for the rainy season to be over before bringing in a new group of chickens, and venture other business ideas in the meantime," she adds.

In addition to her poultry business, Nigatwa started running a music shop business where she rents movies, and sells music and some minor electronic devices.



Nigatwa has been hard at work and her husband has been supporting her in everything. According to the Women's and Social affairs officer of Arada Kebele, Bizunesh Biurkae "Nigatwa and her husband are hard workers, set to achieve great things. They are facing challenges in acquiring land (provided by the government to small enterprises) to expand their poultry business because they lack a certain amount in their bank account, which they are saving towards that goal."

Nigatwa plans to expand her poultry business. "Once the rainy season is over I plan to jump back into the poultry business and expand it. By doing so I want to provide a better life and education for my son," she says.

According to Teshome Aclkaechu, Head of Bobicho kebele, the government has done a lot to create awareness in society about illegal migration. However, it has been challenging to tackle due to problems faced by the community, such as poverty and unemployment, which drive many towards illegal migration. But now Action Aid has created opportunities for vulnerable women by providing them with skill training and seed money support. "This organization has covered a big gap," he adds.

Like Nigatwa, Action Aid Ethiopia in partnership with Emmanuel Development Association has identified 684 women in its project areas in Hossana and Soro. It has supported the women through alternative livelihoods training, 189 women received farming inputs, including small ruminants such as goats and sheep and a total of 497 women had received start-up capital of 8000 birr. Awareness creation was also conducted for these vulnerable children, women, and farming communities at risk of trafficking to resist recruitment on how to seek justice.





Shashitu's Story

A plight of migrant domestic worker

"My employer would always insult and beat me for no good reason. Whenever she left the house, her husband had a habit of sneaking into my room," says Shashitu. She was verbally, physically, and sexually abused by her employers in Saudi Arabia consistently for two years, where she worked as a domestic worker.

Shashitu Yalew, migrated to Saudi Arabia when she was 20 years old, in search of a better life. Born and raised in Hossana town, SNNP region, Ethiopia, Shashitu was one of three children born into a poor family. Due to poverty, her parents were forced to give her to relatives who promised to raise her well. However, they were not able to do so due to economic reasons. As a result, Shashitu dropped out of school in 5th grade to start working and assist her guardians.

By the age of twenty, Shashitu decided to move to Addis Ababa to search for work where she worked as a domestic worker for a short while. During her time in Addis Ababa, she heard from friends that she could have a better life if she moved to the Middle East.

Shashitu decided to move abroad to Saudi Arabia through illegal brokers. She borrowed money from her uncle that she needed to make the journey. "The road was hard," she recalls. "We went over land in containers and were crammed in small boats over sea." She talks about how much harder the journey was for her as a woman. "We were six girls in a group of fifty, some of the guys would try to rape us in the

night, but the girls stuck together and fought them. The traffickers would beat the men, but they did not beat us because we were girls, instead, they would punish us with starvation,” she said.

After a brief stint in prison, she finally made it to Saudi Arabia. Her employer had negotiated a two-year contract with the middleman that received her. “I am not educated, I can’t read and they didn’t tell me what was on the contract,” she says. Shashitu’s working hours were long and she only got to sleep a few hours, as she had to get up at 6:00 am and work without rest until 1:00 am. She recalls with no emotion the cruelty of her employer. “She was a hard woman, she would mistreat me and beat me, and sometimes she would try to push me off the building in anger. It was inhuman treatment, she insulted me and sometimes would throw water in my face if she felt like it.” To make matters worse the woman’s husband had a habit of sneaking into her room when the wife was away. “It was hard but I had to complete my contract to go back home. I wasn’t even able to collect my pay when I left,” she added. The ease with which she recalls her suffering is terrifying.

When she returned to Ethiopia, she got married with hopes of starting a new life. But soon after their daughter was born her husband left her for another woman. She was burdened to face life alone with her daughter. However, Shashitu couldn’t keep a job. For a certain time she worked as a waitress in a cafe, she also worked as a domestic worker but couldn’t stay for long because of the trauma she had endured from her previous employer in Saudi Arabia. “I couldn’t look at people the same way. I would go somewhere and they would look like her to me.”

Israel Lemma, Head of Women and Children’s Affairs, Sechduna Kebele, “Shasitu was mentally unstable for some years following her return from Saudi Arabia. Thus she struggled to find and maintain a proper job.”

As a result, Shashitu was not able to afford a rent of a decent place to live in, instead, she lived in a shabby place that would leak when it rained. Thus, she would often go to the Kebele





administration office and beg them for help. She lived off support she got from the kebele who paid her rent and paid for her daughter's school expenses. "

Shashitu was then advised by the kebele to take part in a life skill training given by Action Aid. She was trained on how to create small businesses how to diversify her service and how to handle customers.

Following the training, she received seed money support to start a business. The Kebele administration also gave her a small area to put up her coffee shed and allowed her to use it rent-free. She now sells coffee and tea. In addition, she serves a diverse menu for breakfast and lunch.

"I am now able to pay my rent, we have a roof over our heads, I can send my daughter to school and still save 100 birr per month," says Shashitu. Starting her coffee business Shashitu struggled to maintain the business as other people were also running a coffee business in the same location. Thus, she decided to diversify her market and sell breakfast and lunch meals along with the coffee business.

When asked what she would say to people leaving the country illegally, "I advise people not to go abroad illegally, regardless of their situation. Because when I look at myself, I realize that I could had a different life if I had someone here who advised me to stay here." Thinking of her future, she says "I want to have something substantial so that I can help people. Because others helped me when I had nothing."



Tariku's Story

"I would rather starve and beg in my country than to go through that journey again!"

Sitting under a tree to get away from the afternoon scorching sun, Tariku GebreYohannes, age 40 shares his story. "I had been a farmer even when I was in school, but with farming, there is no improvement and no promotion. So I finally decided to try my luck in South Africa," he says. Tariku sold the entirety of his livestock to fund his trip. "I sold my sheep, milking cows, not even the chickens were left," he adds.

In July of 2018 at age 35, Tariku left his wife and 4 children at home to pursue employment in South Africa. After leaving the country with 40 other hopefuls they were loaded onto a large truck that was already carrying grain and soft drinks. As they made their slow and treacherous way through the desert seven people died from heat exhaustion. He recounts how the traffickers were unbothered by these deaths, simply carrying out the corpses and dumping them in the middle of the desert. "It was horrifying, the road is so harsh. We go through the wilderness hearing predators call, fearing they would smell us. The brokers were worse than any wild animals, they would beat us, starve us, they even threatened to sell our organs," he says.

When they entered Malawi a fight broke out between the middlemen, so they were stranded in the desert. "The man who brought us left and the connecting middleman refused to take us further. We had no options because they had taken our phones, our money, and even our identification," says Tariku.

Since they couldn't go further from Malawi the authorities finally found them. The police told them that they loved Ethiopians and that they would take them back to Tanzania and meanwhile would keep them fed. This was untrue. They were starved for two weeks until they were taken to Tanzania.

"Tanzania was even worse. Three people died in the prison." He remembers with horror how the prison wardens would beat them and subject them to all kinds of torture. "Even after our brothers had died and we were sitting there crying, they would stand laughing amidst the dead bodies."

They were imprisoned for three years and five months before they made it to Dar es Salaam and were connected to the Ethiopian embassy. "I felt like I had already gone back home, I was emotional and overjoyed," he says. A month later, Tariku was standing on Ethiopian soil once more. "I thought I would be buried there, I never thought I would make it back," he adds.

Tariku is one of the beneficiaries of the Combatting Modern Slavery project of Action Aid and Emmanuel Development Association (EDA), (a local implementing partner of Action Aid).

According to Yonas Ashagari, Combating Modern Slavery project focal person, of Action Aid's local partner Emmanuel Development Association, the project has benefited 684 returnee migrants, and potential migrants with a tendency for illegal trafficking due to poverty. The beneficiaries have received life skill and entrepreneurship training and seed money support to help them start a business. Victims of illegal trafficking like Tariku have also received psychosocial support and medical and legal support.

"This support was like a gift from heaven. I had been back in my country for a year and was sitting at home with nothing when I was told about the training. I went down to Gimbichu and took part in the training, then I was given seed money to start a livelihood. I bought a sheep and a goat and I am saving the rest of the money." Tariku plans to fatten his goat and sheep and sell them for profit.





“When I came back home, I thought I would rather starve and beg in my country than go through that again. Thanks be to God I am not starving and I am not begging. In this area, anyone with a yoke of oxen is a rich man, and a person who feeds himself and has money left is well off. That means I am rich,” he says laughing.

When asked about his plans for the future, he declares his dream of going back to school and finishing his education. He wants to raise his children properly and see them find employment in a government position.

